

Nick Clitheroe with founding members of Spice Academy

Many different communities have settled in the town since the 1950s and Victoria Park Primary Academy is setting out to capture stories and memories from local people. The 450-pupil school will be researching how the use of spices has shaped cultural traditions, festivals, ceremonies, cooking and costumes.

Some will visit the Birmingham factory of East End Foods, where the major West Midlands firm prepares and packages many different spices. Others will go to Smethwick's Sallop Drive Market Garden to see how spices have been cultivated in the heart of the community for over 50 years.

Community workshops are planned to help unlock people's memories about the use of spices and these personal histories will be recorded. The information gathered from the various sources will be used to create a Spice Heritage Album which will be made available in printed form for distribution to libraries, other local schools, community centres and care homes, as well as in an online version.

A Spice Map of Smethwick will also be created linking different spices with their uses. This will be available on the school website and displayed at various locations around the town.

Reyahn King, Head of HLF, West Midlands, said: "The academy has hit on an imaginative way for children to learn about the heritage of diverse local communities and then share their newly-acquired knowledge with people of all ages."

Nick Clitheroe, who is leading the project at Victoria Park Primary Academy, said: “Children investigating and recording how spices are used in the different parts of our community will bring people together, breed understanding and create a lasting legacy making people proud of the heritage of their local area.”

Notes to editors

This year Victoria Park Primary Academy is also setting up a new social enterprise, supported by the Real Ideas Organisation. Ballot Street Spice will create opportunities for children attending the school, their parents and the wider community by harnessing the rich and diverse cultural spice heritage of the local area. To find out more follow the school on Twitter: @thespiceacademy

Further information

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