
Decision Maker: **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education**

Date: **1st July 2014**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: **School Visits**

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Chief Officer: Executive Director: Education, Care and Health Services

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

Reports of the visits to three schools in Bromley by members of the committee

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members to read and discuss these reports and make themselves available for future school visits

3. COMMENTARY

Visit to Cudham Church of England primary School March 12th 2014

This visit was undertaken by Mrs Penny Smith-Orr, RE Consultant, and Revd. Roger Bristow. The school is a small stone built Primary school with a modern classroom in the playground. Every bit of space within the school is utilised in a creative way and provides a good learning environment for the pupils. There are 103 pupils in three classes each containing two year groups and a separate reception class. There are several special needs pupils including those with physical disabilities. The school has good links with Cudham church and everyone attends the church for worship twice a term.

Firstly we attended the Collective Worship. The hall is small but had displays by the classes and a Christian Values tree. The top class conducted the proceedings and several of their parents were also there to watch. The whole school were having a story telling week and the presentation followed this theme. The class had been looking at Christian parables and in groups acted several well know stories but with a modern twist and concluded each one with the moral that was to be gained from it. A lot of research and thinking had gone into the preparation and it was well received by the rest of the school and the parents.

After the collective worship the classes were taking turns to work with an African story teller and much fun was had using drums and instruments to accompany the story.

We were able to observe Willow class, which is made up of Year 1 and 2 pupils who were learning about the preparations that Christians make for Easter. Pupils joined in with a power point presentation of the activities of Christians during Holy Week and were able to talk about the season of Lent and what they had given up and why Christians give up something at this time. They had a discussion about what Christians generally do and what they specifically did to prepare.

The activity was divided between the age groups, Year 1 pupils thinking about what activities Christians do and why and Year 2 deciding what are the most important preparations. Later answers to 9 questions on a sheet were put onto egg shaped jigsaw pieces ready to be made in to a class display. Pupils had to put a green, red or orange sticker on their work to show their understanding of the lesson.

Finally we had a chat with the Head Teacher, who is also the RE coordinator. Cudham is a voluntary controlled school and uses the Bromley syllabus supplemented by the Diocesan syllabus. They take part in the annual Rochester festival and the HT is helping to organise this event. Pupils are not all Christian in faith but all take part in all the activities. Trips out to the Bromley Synagogue are made and we were asked about speakers from other faiths which we were able to help with.

Bromley SACRE Visit to Clare House Primary School 19th May 2014

This visit was undertaken by the RE consultant, Mr Mahmood and Reverend Roger Bristow. We were met by the RE coordinator, Mrs Cleaves, who has worked in the school for many years.

We had a discussion on the way that RE is taught throughout the school and looked at some examples of pupils work. We also discussed the new scheme of work A question regarding whether the themed units could be taught through collective worship and linked with SEAL was discussed, although there is a strong link between collective worship and religious education it is not possible to cover the topics in sufficient depth in collective worship. Mrs cleaves gave a copy of the draft proposals for the scheme of work to the RE Consultant who will be giving advice on it in due course. The local church, St Barnabus, is used for a year 1 visit and Y5/6 lead a Christmas service in the church. Year 4 visit Neasden Hindu temple. There are children of different faiths in the school and pupils are used as a resource, for example a Muslim girl in Year 6 had made a power point demonstration and helped to lead a lesson on Islam.

We observed the whole school collective worship led by the head teacher. The pupils were thoroughly engaged and the theme was one of the Christian values, perseverance. Collective worship is carried out every day and on Wednesdays P4C (Philosophy for Children) is the theme done in classrooms. It was requested by the head teacher that a copy of the Collective worship guidance for Bromley schools would be sent to him as he had not seen it.

Two visitors went to Year 1 to see an RE lesson that was linked with literacy and reported that they enjoyed the lesson on special places which was very inspiring and that the pupils were encouraged to have a sense of awe and wonder. The RE Consultant went to Year 3 and saw a lesson introducing Buddhism. The teacher used a mixture of strategies and the pupils were encouraged to ask and answer questions which they did in a very positive way. The classes are open plan but the pupils are very calm and not distracted by other activities.

The RE coordinator and the head teacher were both very positive about the role of RE in the school and we were very much welcomed.

Bromley SACRE Visit to Keston C of E Primary School 4th June 2014

This visit was undertaken by the RE Consultant, Mrs Whitman, Mrs Barnett and Reverend Varney.

We were greeted by the RE coordinator, Mrs Ross and the Head teacher Mrs Evison. The school is very small and has 8 classes as they had taken a 'bulge' class in the expectation that they would be able to expand but so far the building work has not taken place. One class is being taught in what was previously the library. However there is a very good sense of community and a happy atmosphere. The houses are named after famous people who have come from Keston and we were invited to leave a comment on a Christian values 'tree' in the entrance.

There are strong links with the local church, the school band plays at services, pupils took part in a Remembrance day event, a carol service and Leavers service is held there and Years 2,4 and 6 visit the church for RE. The Vicar generally leads a collective worship in the form of an Anglican service once a week. On the day of the visit she was on a course so the RE Coordinator lead this with the help of pupils. The atmosphere was very calm and pupils did readings and led the prayers. The theme was Ascension. Illustrated with the use of a golden helium balloon. A visitor played the piano for three hymns. A pupil had brought a Crucifix to show and this was treated reverently and put onto an Altar for the duration.

During the rest of the visit we were first given a tour of the school and then left to go in and out of lessons as we wanted. In Y4 we saw a display of their work on the Lord's prayer and observed them using Bibles to discuss types of prayers that people use, which led to work on worship. Year 1 were thinking about Islam, the Foundation stage were working on Special places and making different interpretations using a variety of material, they had pictures and a soft play church to help inspire them. Year 3 were looking at the story of Pentecost and the Spirit. In Y6 the pupils were

Remembering the Spirit and making up prayers for the World. In groups they worked with the teacher to make an individual cocktail of 3 of the Fruits of the Spirit with reasons why they had chosen those three. We all agreed that this was a very memorable experience.

It was really lovely to be able to wander around the school and see how the different lessons were progressing during the afternoon and we all appreciated the way we were welcomed by every teacher. We were also able to see the many displays stemming from previous RE work that decorated the corridors and classrooms.