

Visit to Darrick Wood School on 2nd March 2015

This visit was undertaken by the SACRE Chairman and the RE Consultant. We were met by the Head teacher and the head of the RE department, Mr Morrell. The school has expanded and has 260 pupils in each year and 300 pupils in the 6th form. Although the school has extended several times there is a very good and obvious ethos of care amongst the staff and pupils.

After a short discussion we attended the Year 7 Collective Worship. Mr Hammond, the assistant achievement coordinator, presented some slides on school classrooms around the world and asked the pupils to reflect on the facilities that some pupils lacked. The pupils sang a hymn and listened to a prayer and then all said the Grace together. We were told about the Easter assemblies that were coming up and how the school tries to celebrate different religious festivals during Collective Worship time. We were told that there are no withdrawals from collective worship at the school.

Mr Morrell took us on a trip around the school pointing out the art works and the inspirational displays to encourage pupils to do their best. We also saw a display of a school in Africa sponsored by, and also called, Darrick Wood School. There was a lot of information about the different charities that the school helps and also interesting 'thoughts' and items to reflect on as we went through the different departments. The school's motto is 'Respect, Responsibility, Honesty' which is vigorously promoted in all areas of school life.

We saw some of two lessons both with Year 8 pupils and both on the subject of Islam. One was led by a newly qualified teacher who showed a video of the differences and similarities between Islam and Christianity and then got the pupils to look at some phrases from the film and put them into the correct order, this was a good way of getting pupils to listen very carefully when looking at a media presentation. The other lesson by Miss McGuinness was on the Five Pillars of Islam and pupils in groups had to share information that they had discovered on each of the five pillars. It was very interesting to see the different approaches taken by the two teachers with similar pupils and on the same topic.

As on previous visits we had a very interesting discussion with Mr Morrell and the head teacher on the merits of the RE department. We also discussed the RE quality mark and it is hoped that the RE department will have time to apply for the quality mark as I am certain that they would be able to achieve it with ease.

Visit to Chislehurst Girls School Tuesday 3rd February 2015

This visit was undertaken by the RE Consultant, Mrs Smith-Orr, the Chairman of SACRE, Rev R Bristow, and a Church of England representative, Rev S Varney. Due to the snowy conditions on the morning a fourth member of SACRE was unable to attend.

We had a discussion with the head of department Miss Winson and the deputy Head, Mrs Forder, who manages the Humanities curriculum in the school. We were given a comprehensive document on the assessment plan for religious education and discussed the importance that religious education is given in the school, there are five RE specialist teachers. There is a good budget for the department and the school has a large number of artefacts for use in all lessons. The latest results were that 80% of pupils had achieved GCSE A*-C grades and 80% pupils had achieved A*-C in the A" examinations. The school use AQA as an exam board.

Rev Varney had managed to get to the school in advance of the other members and saw a Year 12 class, his comments were as follows; 'There were around 12 girls present. the topic was the "Argument from Design" with reference to Swinburne. The material went way over my head. The students were fully attentive and when the teacher asked for answers to questions from the whole unit to be written up on small white boards, it seemed that all gave the right answers and quickly. They all knew their stuff'

We all saw part of a lesson with mixed ability pupils which was very interesting on the concept of heaven and hell and there was some interaction between the girls and the two visiting reverends on what might be found in heaven. We also saw parts of lessons on Islam and Hinduism. All the pupils were very engaged and able to voice their opinions clearly. The teachers were knowledgeable and the lessons were delivered in an interesting and engaging way.

Regarding collective worship there are ten big events through the year and Tutor time of ten minutes each day includes a time of reflection on a theme.

We discussed the RE Quality Mark and it is hoped that the school will consider applying for it in the future. The school is clearly committed to excellent RE Teaching and Learning and the commitment of the lead teacher was clearly demonstrated on our visit and by the fact that she has been attending the Bromley SACRE meetings as a teacher representative.