

Case Study:

Westwood Primary and Holy Trinity Primary School, Oldham

Background to the schools:

Westwood Primary is an inner city school with 99.9% pupils of Bangladesh heritage whereas Holy Trinity Primary is a rural school with pupils almost entirely of white British heritage. Both schools have over 300 pupils.

Main contrasts of the link:

Rural / Urban

Schools with different racial backgrounds

Main Themes:

Various joint curriculum projects.

Staff links.

Main curriculum areas covered:

Art

Citizenship

Dance

Drama

Key learning outcomes for students:

'It is breaking down barriers and preconceptions, making them more thoughtful and reflective about their situation and what they say'.

Teacher evaluation of link:

'During the residential outsiders thought they were from the same school as the two groups of pupils had developed such close friendships'.

'Face to face contact between children has really helped develop positive attitudes towards

English
PSHE
RE
Sports

Aims of the link:

- A whole school link involving the curriculum,
- To be partner schools learning from one another about how to move forward for the benefit of each other.

(Note: they wanted the link to be more than just looking at differences and religion).

How did the link get started?

The link was initially set up by the Local Authority Ethnic Minority Support Service as a pilot project linking schools of different racial backgrounds. Oldham has a history of racial segregation, the link was initially set up in 2000, a year later the riots in 2001 made the link even more relevant. Holy Trinity already had a link with Namibia but they felt it was important to engage with local cultural diversity as well. There was also a personal connection as the head teacher at Westwood had a son at Holy Trinity.

What activities have taken place?

- Exchange visits by head teachers and chairs of governors then staff.
- A joint staff meeting to standardise pieces of writing

race’.

Staff feel they are learning from each other, sharing ideas and raising awareness for all. ‘It extends boundaries and makes the curriculum more real’. In 2002 Holy Trinity Primary had a press photo as one of the HMI/Ofsted top 200 schools; the Head teacher of Westwood Primary was included as it is seen as an important part of Holy Trinity’s work. The pupils have had opportunities they would not have had before in terms of initiatives, as well as the social side.

done for national literacy tests.

- Paired staff links – exchanges for half/whole days to understand the differences involved between the two schools before the pupils, so that the staff would feel confident in handling pupil reactions.
- Governors from both schools attended a race and cultural awareness session.
- Pupil exchanges to see assemblies put on by different year groups, which parents also attended.
- Pupils went on a trip to the theatre together and took part in a sport and joint projects schemes out of school hours organised by the Local Authority.
- Both schools worked with a rap poet from Liverpool and emailed their work to each other, the end result was a book of poems.
- A joint residential focussing on ICT and outdoor activities for older pupils.
- A drama project involving the young pupils, which resulted in a performance at a local college theatre.
- The head teacher from Westwood Primary gave an assembly on Eid at Holy Trinity and Class 2 visited Westwood for an Eid party.
- The head teacher from Holy Trinity gave an assembly on advent at Westwood primary and class 2 will be visiting Holy Trinity to see the nativity play.

Developments:

More work will be done with staff on curriculum planning and using staff expertise in different areas, as well as joint use of resources. Currently work is being planned on RE and a Local Study (history and geography) – comparing and contrasting

areas. An art project is being planned with Gallery Oldham. The schools want to get parents more involved and to provide positive role models e.g. swapping support staff as well as teaching staff.