

The times they are a-changing!

After all the disruption of the last year, it's so encouraging to be able to report in this newsletter on real life work that is taking place in actual schools! We are continuing to produce online assemblies, and the ways in which we are working when we are in schools continue to be affected by Covid-19 restrictions, but it has been such a privilege to be welcomed back for face to face work in so many schools over recent weeks.

Of course, things are different now to before lockdowns and, looking ahead, they are likely to change yet further with the introduction of a new RE syllabus for Bexley added into the mix, as schools seek to get learning back on track for children and young people. As part of this, there are new elements to what we are offering schools; most notably the CAP Money Kids and Youth courses, providing an introduction to money management skills from a Christian perspective in both primary and secondary schools.

The last year has seen changes to the team as well; David, our Secondary lead, and Karen, our Fundraiser have both moved on during the pandemic, and we miss them both. And in the summer, Simon, our Business Manager is retiring. Simon has been a huge support to me, over the last year especially, and CRIBS will be very different without him! We are in the process of recruiting to fill some of these gaps – more details in due course – but it all demonstrates the intense level of change that is part of life at the moment.

At the start of the pandemic last year we asked that you would pray that we would have wisdom to, "navigate these uncharted waters", that we will "know which way to go since we have never been this way before" (Joshua 3:4)." As you read about all that we have been, and are, doing and as we emerge slowly out of the pandemic, can I ask the same again? Thank you for all you support in every way.

Mark

Farewell and bon voyage



David Hancock



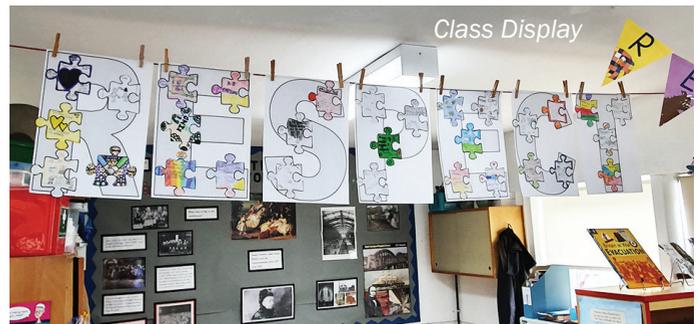
Karen Jefferys



Simon Davidson

Respect

For the past 6 months, we've had the opportunity to run a workshop about respect. The workshop gives pupils in Years 5 and 6 the opportunity to explore what respectful behaviour is, how to respect difference and how to respond to disrespectful behaviour that they might encounter.



Since September, we have reached approximately 1700 students delivering the workshop face-to-face in 8 schools, and another 8 schools opting for an online version, developed in response to the challenges posed this year by Covid-19.

The strength of the workshop is that it gives different classes opportunity to discuss their own issues around respect. For example, one class identified that they needed to show more respect when playing sports together. For another class, the discussions centred around behaviour online.

We will continue to offer the respect workshop as part of our portfolio of support to schools in the future and hope to continue to see good take up.

"Children were very engaged in sessions and gained a good understanding of respect, respecting others and being a better person in day-to-day life." Teacher

"The lesson made me realise that being respectful has a big impact on somebody else." Pupil

b:You and Boys Noise together

This term the two teams have had the opportunity to work together with a whole Year 3 class of boys and girls at a primary school in Swanley.

35 children are taking part in 'Heartsense' sessions during the school day, and it has been great to see the class take on board the principles of understanding and expressing their emotions in a positive way. They are able to support each other in this as the whole class are learning the same skills at the same time. We have also seen 28 of the class attend the after-school club, where we have had lots of fun together doing crafts, enjoying games and learning how to play fairly.

The programme will complete in July and we're confident of seeing a significant improvement in the behaviour of the children towards each other.

REfresh to REconnect

The Primary team were so pleased to be able to return to schools in March, following the 'lockdown' in the new year, albeit armed with anti-bac hand gel, visors and masks alongside resources (themselves often adapted to accommodate the restrictions for classroom teaching), and undertaking regular covid self-tests.

We have been so blessed by the positive, welcoming response from so many of our schools to our return and in the first half of the summer term our timetables were almost full and we were thankful for the support of Abigail and Wendy to be able to fulfil the demand for lessons.

Paul has been in Castilion Primary, teaching all classes across 3 days each week and one of the teachers even commented to him that he is seen as part of the school staff team and missed when he's not there – that is certainly how Paul feels as well!



Feedback from children supports how much the lessons are enjoyed and the teaching is appreciated by those of Christian faith, other faith or none – *"I love CRiBS because it helps me learn about my religion and know more about God and it made me love God really more", "As a muslim I have learnt a lot about Christians. Thank you for teaching me."*



Carole added that it's been such a privilege being back in schools, particularly in these difficult times, and that children and staff alike are so pleased to see the CRiBS team. One of the children told her that CRiBS is their favourite lesson in the week.

Teachers value the resources that the CRiBS team are able to take into school to facilitate the teaching. Some feedback comments include *"The props brought in, such as the 'Ark' for Noah's ark, help to engage the children and enhance the children's experience"* and *"The children were engaged with the puppet 'Barry' and given time to share their ideas and experiences."*

Jason reflected how children can say the funniest things... A class were exploring the life of William Tyndale, the man who bravely translated the Bible into English in the 16th Century whilst those in power hunted him down for daring to challenge their somewhat 'creative' use of the Scriptures.

The children thought about the challenges of Bible translators today and how they seek alternative imagery and metaphor to help a particular people group better understand the biblical texts. How would you translate the story of "Daniel in the lions' den" for the Inuit people? Would you keep the word 'lion' when they would never have seen one, or would you consider using an alternative animal that communicates a similar meaning?

The year 5 class discussed these questions in pairs before offering some feedback. Some answers seemed to hit the nail on the

head: *"I'd use a polar bear"* said one; *"I'd use a snow leopard"* said another (which led to the question as to whether snow leopards live in the Arctic). Then, a boy at the front suggested he'd use 'penguins'.

Now, laughing out loud at a child's answer isn't usually a good thing to do, but the imagery of being thrown into a den of man-eating penguins was fabulous. Jason hoped the boy wasn't offended. Although, despite his deadpan expression, there was a twinkle in his eye. Children say the funniest things!



'REfresh' has been the name used for CRiBS library of primary school lessons for the last 7 years. Bexley Borough has now launched a new RE syllabus so we are in the process of preparing ourselves to deliver 'new' lessons, workshops, and possibly online resources, to offer and deliver to schools from September. However, given the range of schools that we work with – local authority, academies, church schools, other boroughs – there is no longer one syllabus that we are linking in with for our teaching so this is more complex than it has ever been!

In view of this, and the 'new' working arrangements, partnerships and 'return' to schools, we are re-branding our primary school work 'REconnect'.

We are so grateful to all who steadfastly support our work in so many ways and value your continued prayers as we move into this new season.



"The show must go on" ...

... and so, in April, CRiBS had its second online quiz. 13 teams rose to the challenge but there could be only one winner and it

was reigning champions "Quiz Kamara"

who again led the field, having had only one incorrect answer! As well as being a fun evening, and an opportunity to 'see' each other, the event raised £400 for CRiBS work. Thank you so much to those that joined us, and to those that gave a gift even though they couldn't participate.

We are intending to have our next quiz in the autumn so why not join us - details will be sent out nearer the time.

Unlimited

Since schools have been re-opened to the majority of pupils, some of our team have been getting involved with mentoring at St Columba's Boys' School, where our office is based. While secondary schools have tended to be unwilling to let visitors in during the pandemic, the advantage of being based in a school has become clear, both to us and to the school, in these challenging times dealing with increased levels of need for support. We are starting to talk to our volunteer mentors, and to schools, to see what might be possible in terms of re-starting more mentoring from September, and also looking to relaunch our work with Christian Unions in the new academic year. As well as that, the CAP Money course has a Youth version, and we already have two schools that are interested in having that for their Year 9 and 10 pupils. Please pray for wisdom and the ability to meet opportunities as they come along.