



WITNESS

to the word



13th March 2024

Spring Term Issue 5

Dear Colleagues in Catholic Education

Every second Wednesday, the Education Service provides schools with a wide variety of materials, resources, advice and updates on all matters relating to our schools and colleges. The content of these bulletins are for Headteachers, Senior Leaders, Teaching Staff, Governors, Clergy and anyone who may benefit from them.

Please feel free to share.

SUBJECT CONTENT IN THIS ISSUE

Upcoming Training Opportunities are [here](#)

Leadership and Governance Updates are [here](#)

Religious Education and Catholic Life Updates are [here](#)

Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity Updates are [here](#)

Caritas Updates are [here](#)

*Thank you for all you are doing for your school community
and for Catholic education!*

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Day and Time	Course	Booking Link
Thursday 21st March	<p>Primary Online Course - Getting to know the new RED: Branch 4 (Desert to Garden) - Subject Knowledge for RECs</p> <p>Time: 9.30am to 12.30pm</p> <p>Course Aim: The aim of this course is to develop and deepen RECs subject knowledge for Branch 4 (Desert to Garden) to support implementation of the RED.</p> <p>Course Content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide support RECs to get to know the content of the new RED. To provide subject knowledge input for RECs on Branch 4 (Desert to Garden) of the RED. To empower RECs to support teachers in school. <p>Target Audience: RECs</p>	Click Here: Booking Link
Monday 25th March	<p>EYFS Planning Workshop for the new RED (Reception and Nursery / Branch 5 & 6)</p> <p>Time: 9.30am to 3.30pm</p> <p>Course Aim: The aim of this course is to understand the content of the RED for EYFS and Develop Planning for Branches 5 & 6 (To the ends of the Earth & Dialogue & Encounter)</p> <p>Course Content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide subject knowledge for Branches 5 and 6 with an exploration of a suggested planning approach. To provide an opportunity for the sharing of resources of the new RED. To provide practical planning time with colleagues for implementation in school. <p>Target Audience: EYFS Practitioners (teachers, nursery nurses, TAs), EYFS Leads, RECs.</p> <p>Venue: London Jesuit Centre</p>	Click Here: Booking Link

CCRS - URGENT: Last chance to join CCRS this academic year!

Are you aspiring to Senior Leadership in a Catholic School?

Are you a teacher or teaching assistant, teaching RE, and need an introduction to theology to support your work? Are you a Governor in a Catholic School and want to develop your understanding of the Catholic Faith?

CCRS can develop your knowledge of subjects covered in Religious Education and can also support your teaching in accordance with the RED. We are a supportive learning community for all participants.

There is an opportunity to join a group in April, joining at Module 3, running online, 4-6pm on Thursdays, making up Modules 1 & 2 at a later date.

New groups will commence in September 2024.

- One group will run online on a Monday, 4-6pm, for 5 x Mondays, followed by time to work on an assignment before starting the next module.
- The other group will run online on a Saturday, 9-12pm, for 3 x Saturdays, followed by time to work on an assignment before starting the next module.

Please get in touch by email if you are interested in joining the group in April, or either of the new groups in September, or if you would like to learn more about this certificated course. Thank you to all the senior leaders who are supporting their staff to undertake this course.

Margaret Hanley, CCRS Co-ordinator, ccrs@rcdow.org.uk

THURSDAY 25TH TO FRIDAY 26TH APRIL

Diocesan Deputy Headteachers Residential Conference

Conference Aim: The aim of this conference is to explore major issues and challenges impacting upon the Catholic school and its distinctive nature. It also provides a much-needed opportunity for spiritual nourishment, reflection and prayer.

Conference Content:

- Keynote Speakers
- Sharing of Good Practice
- Opportunities for Networking
- Time for reflection, prayer and worship

Target Audience: Primary and Secondary Deputy Headteachers.

Venue: Voco Oxford Thames, Henley Road, Sandford-on-Thames, Oxford, OX4 4GX.
(Registration and check in will open at 9:00am on Thursday 25th April)

Click here to book your place:
<https://courses.rcdow.org.uk/event/diocesan-deputy-headteachers-conference/>



DEPUTY HEADTEACHERS
CONFERENCE - OXFORD

Click Here:

[Booking Link](https://courses.rcdow.org.uk/event/diocesan-deputy-headteachers-conference/)

Leadership and Governance Update

Leadership

We have now agreed a date of the 4th July for our Celebration of Service event. We will be asking you to nominate staff and governors who are leaving our schools this year after many years of service to Catholic Education. As a rough guide, we suggest that invitations should include school staff who have completed 20+ years in Catholic Education, and governors who have completed at least 2 terms of office. Because of space limitations, we can only promise to accommodate one guest alongside each nominee, although this might change when we have final numbers. More details about the event and how to nominate someone to attend will be sent out soon.

For other staff who have completed more than 5 years in your school and who are leaving, we are able to provide a certificate of thanks. Please send names to us at Education Admin eduadmin@rcdow.org.uk and we will email the certificate back to you. We can do this for anytime during the year.

If you are looking to replace longstanding members of staff, please remember that we need to be present at appointments for Senior leaders and Heads of RE. Please get in contact as soon as possible, as dates during these next few months are very busy.

We can advertise vacancies on our website. Please complete this form: [School Vacancies in the Westminster Diocese \(office.com\)](https://www.rcdow.org.uk/school-vacancies)

Governance

Many thanks to those of you who attended last week's Chair of governors meeting. We covered:

- CES census returns should now be completed.
- Schools who received a letter about academisation should have responded by now. If you did not receive a letter and are not currently engaged with the process of academisation, please contact eduadmin@rcdow.org.uk so that the letter can be resent.
- CSI self-evaluation documents are often long and time consuming. The department is looking at a shorter form to make the process easier for schools.
- Ofsted have launched [Ofsted Big Listen - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/campaigns/ofsted-big-listen) in order to gather views on the inspection process.

Future briefings will be held at 5pm on 9th May and 27th June and the link will be posted on GovernorHub. As ever, if the chair cannot attend, then another governor is invited in their place.

Date/Time	Online Courses	Booking
Tuesday 26th March	Safeguarding Training Online Course Time: 6.00pm to 7.30pm Course Aim: The aim of this course is to cover essential information you need in order to understand your responsibilities. Schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. Course Content: To provide latest updates on Keeping Children Safe in Education. To provide examples of monitoring for Safeguarding governors. To provide updates on Ofsted. Target Audience: All governors, but especially those responsible for child protection and safeguarding.	Click Here: Booking Link

RE and Catholic Life Resources

Pope Francis Prayer Intentions: March - For the new martyrs

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

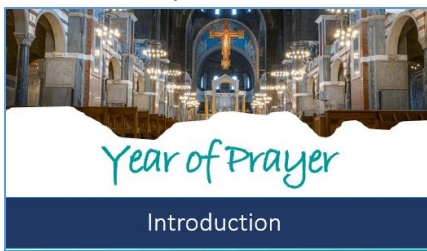
For the short words of Pope Francis on this theme, see Vatican News [HERE](#).

PRAYER INTENTIONS (Based on the liturgical year)	Liturgical Colour
Penitents and Wanderers	PURPLE/ ROSE
The Needy and Hungry of the World Especially on Lent Fast day (Friday after 1st Sunday of Lent)	
Candidates for the Sacraments Especially on the Sundays in Lent	
Women Especially on Women's World day of Prayer (1st Friday in March)	

LITURGICAL YEAR	NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS	OTHER FAITHS/CULTURES
March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Patrick (17th) St Cyril of Jerusalem (18th) St Joseph (19th) Annunciation (25th) 	March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Day of Happiness; French Language Day (20th) International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21st) World Poetry Day (21st) International Day of Forests (21st) World Water Day (22nd) World Meteorological Day (23rd) Remembrance of Victims of Slavery Day (23rd) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pesach (Jewish Passover Mar/Apr) Holla Mohalla (Sikh Olympics – 17th) Holi (Hindu Festival of Colours) Laylat al-Mi'raj (Islamic Mar/Apr)

Other faiths/worldviews - For a brief overview of festivals see [HERE](#).

Year of Prayer - 2024



In preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope', 2024 has been designated a Year of Prayer by Pope Francis. There is a particular focus on the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) this year, and this presents us with a great opportunity to reinvigorate the centrality of prayer within our schools. We have produced primary and secondary resources to support schools with the Year of Prayer. These have been emailed to all schools.

For CAFOD Year of Prayer materials click [HERE](#)

For Jesuit Year of Prayer materials click [HERE](#)



Developing subject knowledge and understanding of prayer and liturgy within Catholic tradition.

The Lent document has been updated to reflect the liturgical year (Year B) and this has been sent to all schools. This can be shared with all of your teaching staff to support subject knowledge and help with the preparation of both RE lessons and Prayer and Liturgy. It also includes various initiatives and resources linked to charities and Catholic Life and Mission.

Other Catholicism Unpacked materials to support the teaching and understanding of the Eucharist, Reconciliation, Baptism, Confirmation and Mary can be found [HERE](#).

Lent prayer resources

Mission Together primary resources: [HERE](#)

Mission Together secondary materials: [HERE](#)

CAFOD primary resources: [HERE](#)

CAFOD secondary resources: [HERE](#)

CCS primary resources: [HERE](#)

CCS secondary resources: [HERE](#)

SVP/Mini Vinnies primary and secondary resources: [HERE](#)

ACN primary and secondary resources: [HERE](#)

Caritas Westminster Lent prayer book: [HERE](#)

Mark 10 Mission videos and songs: [HERE](#)

Stations of the Cross

CAFOD (Secondary): [HERE](#)

CAFOD (Primary): [HERE](#)

ACN (Pupil activity booklet): [HERE](#)

Mini Vinnies (Visuals): [HERE](#)

St Patrick's Day

When is St Patrick's Day? Sunday 17th March 2024

What is St Patrick's Day?

St Patrick is one of the world's most popular saints, with celebrations on his feast of 17th March, taking place in over 200 countries. The day gives our schools the opportunity to find out about his life as a great missionary who introduced Christianity to Ireland. Pupils can learn about how St Patrick fulfilled his mission to love God and serve others, and how by following his example, our pupils can share the love and message of Jesus too.



St Patrick's Day Teaching Resources

You will find a collection of classroom resources for both Primary and Secondary schools to support the teaching of St Patrick's Day:

- Mission Together - St Patrick's Day Assembly [HERE](#)
- The story of St Patrick [HERE](#)

"No one should be afraid that God has allowed there to be different religions in the world. But we should be frightened if we are not doing the work of fraternity, of walking together in life as brothers and sisters of one human family."

Pope Francis

Ramadan

When is Ramadan? Monday 11th March 2024 – Tuesday 9th April 2024

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar, holds immense significance for the Muslim community. During this holy month:



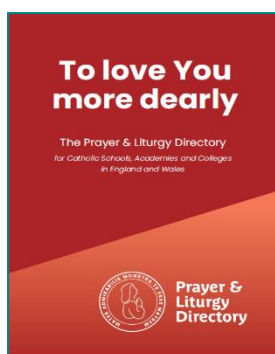
- Fasting is obligatory from dawn till dusk. Fasting involves abstaining from eating, drinking during daylight hours.
- Fasting is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, emphasizing piety, righteousness, and obedience to Allah's commandments.
- The pre-dawn meal before fasting begins is called "Suhoor", and the meal to break the fast after sunset (Maghrib Salah) is known as "Iftar." Traditionally, Muslims break the fast by eating a date.
- Millions of Muslims across the world observe fast during this sacred month, seeking spiritual growth, self-discipline, and closeness to Allah.

Ramadan Teaching Resources

You will find a collection of classroom resources for both Primary and Secondary schools to support the teaching of Ramadan:

- BBC Bitesize [HERE](#)
- Diocese of Westminster Education Service, Ramadan Assembly - [HERE](#)

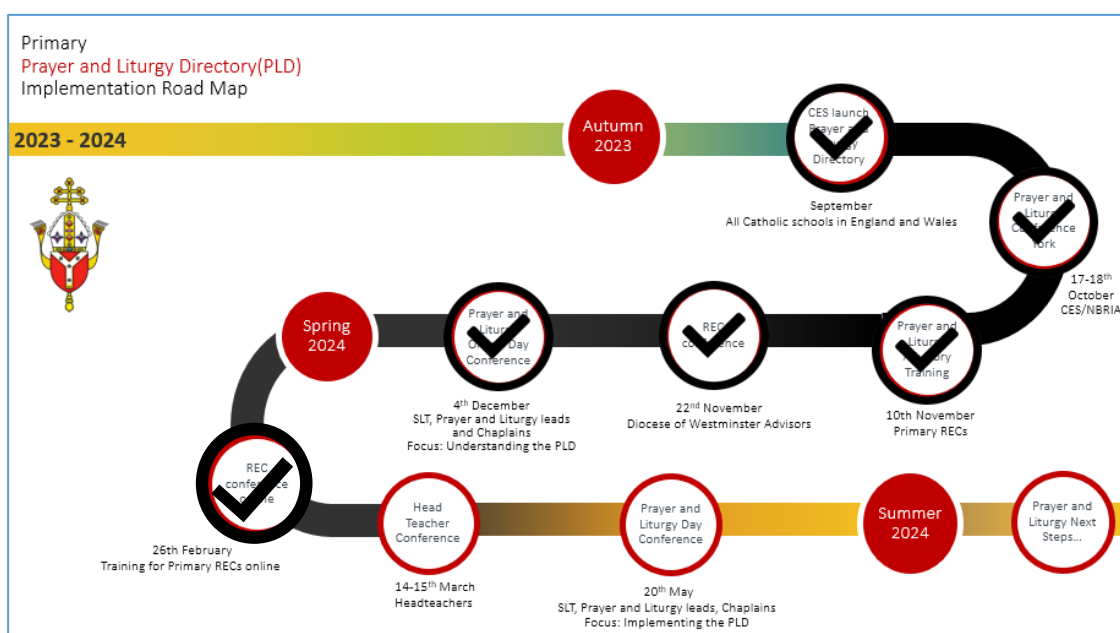
Prayer and Liturgy Directory Updates



The Prayer and Liturgy Directory has now been launched. It is an important and informative document which aims to enhance the excellent practices that already exists for Prayer and Liturgy within our schools and across the diocese. Please click [HERE](#) for the Prayer and Liturgy Directory. It includes a **model policy (p69)** as well as **progression of prayers (p72)** at the back of this document.

To support our schools, the Education Service provided training on understanding the Prayer and Liturgy Directory on 4th December. Further training will take place on **20th May – Book [HERE](#)**. This will provide support on implementing the Directory. Please do ensure your REC, Chaplains and Senior Leaders in Charge of Catholic Life can attend.

Here is the Primary Road Map for the Prayer and Liturgy Directory:



Here is the Secondary Road Map for the Prayer and Liturgy Directory:



Primary RED Implementation

Theology / Subject Knowledge Sessions

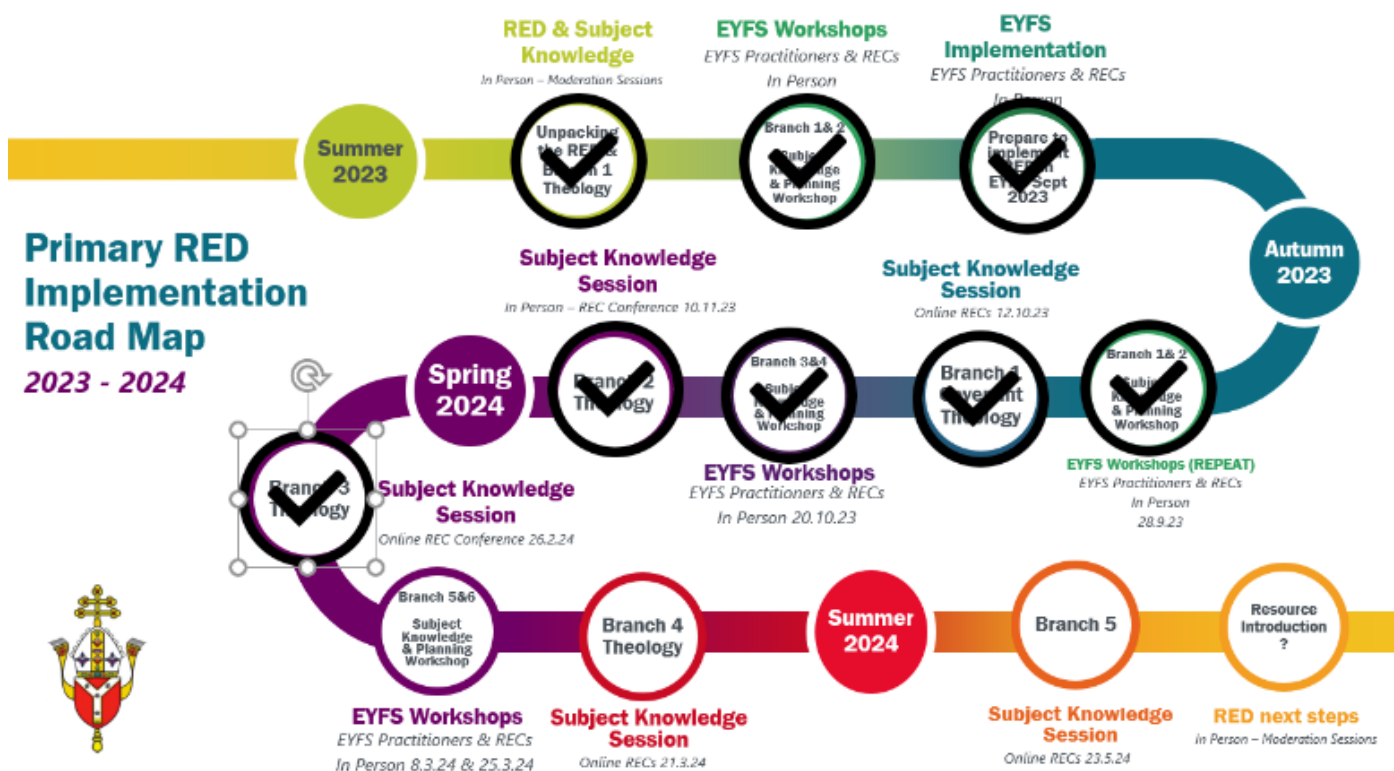
As advisors continue to support RECs with **Theology / subject knowledge sessions** to support the forthcoming implementation of the RED, please book on the following sessions. This year is a great opportunity for RECs to familiarise themselves with the subject knowledge required in the RED in preparation for implementation and to support planning for school team CPD. Don't forget to book on!

Branch 4 – Desert to Garden	Online	21.03.24	https://courses.rcdow.org.uk/event/getting-to-know-the-new-red-branch-4-desert-to-garden-subject-knowledge-for-recs/
Branch 5 – To the Ends of the Earth	Online	23.05.24	

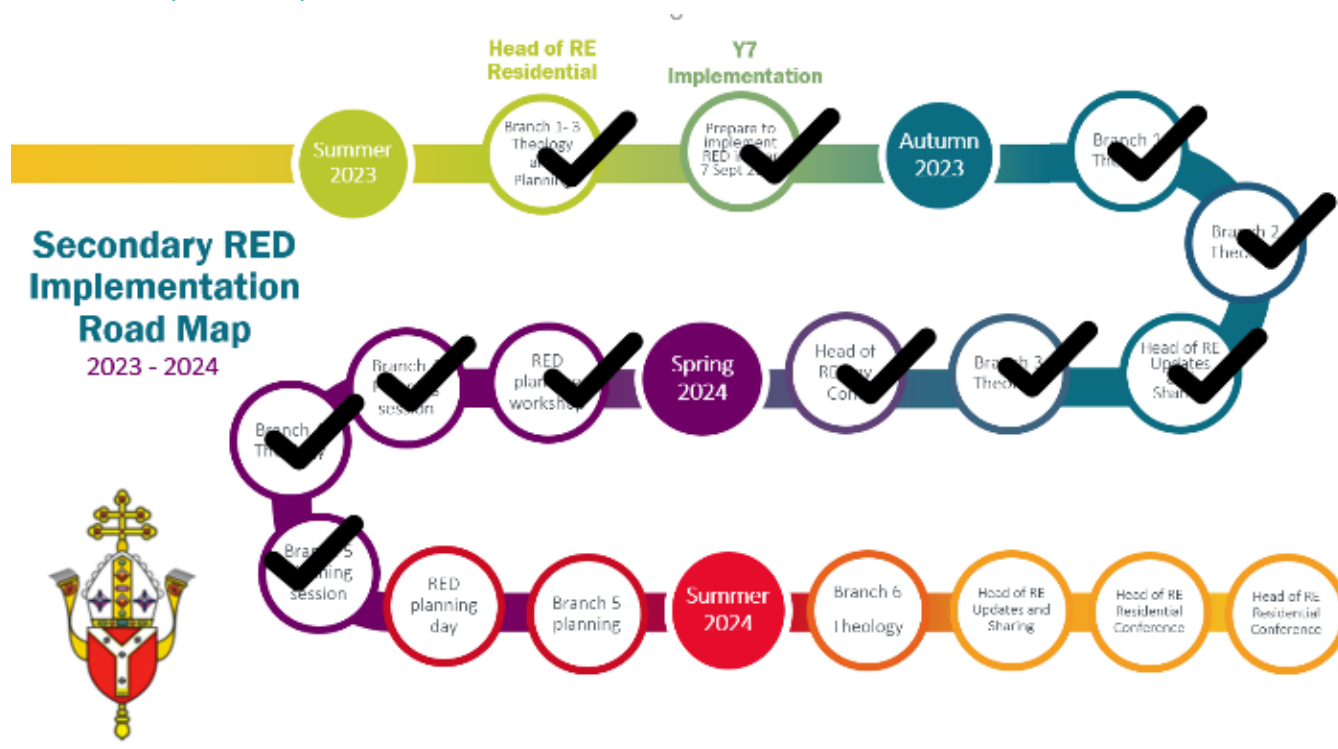
EYFS Branch Planning Workshops

The next planning workshops will take place on the following dates (please book through the CPD booking link)

Branch 5 & 6 Planning Workshop REPEAT		25.3.24	https://courses.rcdow.org.uk/event/eyfs-planning-workshop-for-the-new-red-reception-and-nursery-branch-5-6-2/
---------------------------------------	--	---------	---



Secondary RED Implementation



RSE Update

Cross Phase RSE conference

On February June 11th we are inviting all RSE leads to our cross phase RSE conference in Cathedral Hall. This is the first in-person training for RSE leads since 2019 and we are keen to get as many RSE leads together as possible to help to support them in their role and to have the opportunity to network with colleagues. We are delighted to have David Wells as our key note speaker on the Theology of Dignity and its importance in relationships. Please book your RSE lead onto the attend the conference [HERE](#).

Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity Update



Racial Justice Sunday (RJS)

The theme for RJS is: seeing one another in the life of the Church. This theme is relevant for the whole year and the bishops of England and Wales are encouraging all schools and parishes to celebrate the diversity of those who have led holy and exemplary lives. Our Catholic saints walked in this world as we do and were men and women of heroic virtue that can intercede for us to bring our prayers to the Lord. Here are some resources to support this:

See resources for primary and secondary schools: [HERE](#)

See Saints of Colour resources [HERE](#)



Saints of Colour

We celebrate the many saints of colour in the Catholic Church who have inspired the faithful in their devotions.

RJED Coordinators

Huge thank you to all the schools who have let us know who their RJED Coordinator is. If you have not yet please email claireoneill@rcdow.org.uk to let us know. Here are the upcoming meetings:

- RJED Update and Sharing Forum 3/3 - Embedding Policies, Procedures and Approaches
5th June 3.45-5pm Online

ONLINE COURSES, ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24

Session 1	9th October: 7.00pm to 8.30pm	What can Governors do? Guest Speaker: Shonagh Reid
Session 2	11th December: 1.30pm to 3pm	What can CEOs and Headteachers do? Guest Speaker: Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE
Session 3	5th February: 3.45pm to 5.00pm	What can Senior Leaders do? Guest Speaker: Aisha Thomas
Session 4	29th April: 3.45pm to 5.00pm	What can RECs and Chaplains do? Guest Speaker: Lat Blaylock
Session 5	24th June 3.45pm to 5.00pm	What can Classroom Teachers do? Guest Speaker: Orlene Badu

St Vincent de Paul Primary School, Stevenage

Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity: *Practice in Schools*



School Context:

The **St Vincent de Paul school** is an excitingly diverse community, 31 languages are spoken across our families with 31% of children fitting into an EAL category. 13 out of the 17 recorded ethnic groups are represented within our school with 61% of our pupils identifying as an ethnic group other than white British. We are a white British Head and Deputy Headteacher. Our school is a happy, Catholic school that believes it upholds the values of inclusion, equality and equity both for pupils and staff. We strive to offer the



What have we done:

Our journey began in September 2022 when we applied for the 'HFL Great Representations Project'. Having been accepted on the project we began to reflect on our current practices.

We reflected personally and professionally as leaders. We identified early on that we needed to stop, reflect and take time to acknowledge any unconscious biases. We needed to ensure that time was given to hold a diverse lens to every thought and decision made. Our mantra became "I see, I hear, I belong".

We reviewed our whole curriculum.

All religious icons and pictures were reviewed to ensure they were reflective of all.

We had recently reviewed and replenished our book stock with a wide selection of multicultural, diverse books for all.

We celebrated our differences and cultures in assemblies and general school life.

We made some changes to our curriculum to be more diverse.

However, following the first seminar we realised that we could and should do much more. Over the year we worked with a Hub group which consisted of 2 secondary and 2 primary schools. We listened to a range of inspirational speakers and authors. Quickly we knew we had both a personal and professional journey to go on – ultimately one of the most amazing, eye opening journeys to date!

Appendix 1 'Our Journal' Written from the heart.

We wanted our children to see themselves in all they do. The full curriculum was reviewed and rewritten from EYFS up to Year 6. We are not the same as every other school so our curriculum had to be for us and our children!

Soon the children's work started to reflect more diverse images and drawings – the way it should be!

<p>Time to step back and look at our website. What does our website show?</p> <p>Every member of staff took time to find out about their children in their class. Where are they from? What languages do they speak? Time to celebrate and acknowledge more than ever before.</p> <p>Resources being ordered were checked using the diverse lens.</p> <p>Our 'Great Representations' parent's meeting was held. Parents invited in so we could get information and find out how they felt.</p> <p>Whole school project. A simple project where every child was given an A4 piece of paper to celebrate their family. This half term project turned out to be one of the best things we have ever done.</p> <p>Our Advent assembly celebrated the traditions of our families in our school- shared with everyone.</p> <p>Our Christmas celebration ended with the Hail Mary being read in different languages. Our travelling crib visited different family homes and prayers in different languages recorded and shared back at school</p>	<p>Quickly we realised it didn't represent our community. In fact, unconscious bias was at work. Looking through our 'Diverse Lens' we were able to stop and reflect and make some changes.</p> <p>Children started to see themselves and became prouder of who they are. The diverse lens was being used in every decision and action made within the school, a time to stop and think! It was becoming a natural process.</p> <p>Early Years role corners had different foods and kitchen equipment to reflect more of their homes. Small world families reflect our children and their families. The list went on and still does!</p> <p>Our brave step forward... We invited our parents to comment about how they felt. Parents commented that they wanted to be more of a community. It raised the question – what can we do to make everyone feel that they belong and feel part of a welcoming school community?</p> <p>What a success! The amazing work was displayed all around the hall. Families came in after school to share every child's hard work. Families were invited to place a pin into our world map. Conversations between families began, friendships made and everyone was proud of who they are.</p> <p>The gasp of children who said – that's what we do and sat up taller in assembly than they had ever done, before made it so worth the time and effort. My research and information was gathered by speaking to my parents and staff. Before I knew it, I had groups of parents sending me photos and emails, chatting on the playground. I learnt so much and I felt so supported by my school community. They realised how important they are and were rightly proud to share.</p> <p>Families felt included, represented, and proud of their heritage and of who they are. Time for families to share traditions within their family and our wider community. Children proud to return the travelling crib and share in a tradition from another country. Heartfelt prayers shared with all.</p>
--	--

<p>We proactively seek different places to advertise job vacancies to ensure we reach out into all communities. We reviewed our advertising to ensure it is welcoming to all.</p> <p>Our weekly staff briefings reflect, remind and provoke conversations and the chance to challenge unconscious bias.</p> <p>The school Parliament Team recognised the importance of celebrating our families at the front gate and want them to feel they belong from the minute they walk in.</p> <p>Resources and materials are constantly reflected on. For example, the Diverse saints are those from countries where our families are from.</p>	<p>Not only where we advertise, what we advertise and the first impressions on our website would hopefully make our school welcoming to all.</p> <p>This ensures that we challenge ourselves and our unconscious bias. Ensuring our children and families feel “I see, I hear, I belong”.</p> <p>The children have researched the languages our families speak and are having a customised board created with welcome in all the languages. The minute anyone steps into our school, we want them to feel welcome.</p> <p>Children are interested and supportive of one another. They are proud to acknowledge their similarities and differences. To know they are a valued member of the school community.</p>
<p>Our next steps:</p> <p>We recently established a working party, that consists of parents, staff and governors. The working party will meet to review and discuss the work to date and to look for future opportunities to celebrate our diverse community.</p> <p>We will continue to use the lens “I see, I hear, I belong”. In ever decision made, every item bought and every image shown.</p>	<p>Useful links/resources:</p> <p>Wish we knew what to say <i>by Pragya Agarwal</i></p> <p>2min 50 second YouTube clip from The Royal Society called ‘Unconscious Bias’</p> <p><i>Belonging by Own Eastwood</i></p> <p>Herts For Learning speakers -Paul Miller and Cynthia Rowe</p>

This not a project that will ever end, in fact, we would go as far to say it’s life changing, or rather life-challenging. This project has changed perceptions, altered thinking, and highlighted unconscious bias. This project has been invaluable for everyone, but most importantly for our pupils and their families.

‘Many pupils are very happy at St Vincent de Paul School. They feel valued as unique individuals. Respecting differences is incredibly important. There are high levels of respect towards anyone who is different. Pupils are keen to share their views and opinions. They know their peers will listen attentively to them while they do this’.

Ofsted Nov 2023

Caritas Update

Volunteering Awards

Nominations are now open for the Diocese of Westminster 'Love in Action' Volunteering Awards 2024!

Caritas Westminster invite you to nominate the special volunteer(s) in your school and wider community for an award.

This year's award categories are: **School Social Action Award, Parish Social Action Award, Young Volunteer of the Year Award, St Thérèse of Lisieux Award** and **Ron Palmer Lifetime Achievement Award**.

For more information and the nomination form please visit the Caritas Westminster website [here](#) or contact Elke and Juliet at cvs@rcdow.org.uk.

Nominations close on **30 June 2024**.

Save the Date! This year's awards ceremony will take place at Westminster Cathedral Hall in the evening of 14th November 2024.

Be inspired by last year's winners of the School Social Action Awards:

- School Social Action Award (Primary school): Holy Family primary School West Acton, for hosting a tea-party for isolated elderly people, and a whole range of other social outreach activities.
- School Social Action Award (Secondary School): The Chaplaincy Outreach Team at Douay Martyrs school in Ickenham, for collecting items to send to Ukrainian Refugees, and supporting the local food bank, and setting an example for all students in the school.

A blog post with all of last year's winners is here:

<https://caritaswestminster.org.uk/news/volunteers-win-awards-from-the-diocese-of-westminster/>