

## St Werburgh's Primary School: a global journey

### Background

The governors and staff at our school recognise that global issues are an important part of the lives of our students living in a world where economies are increasingly interdependent and global communication is a daily reality. We believe that giving children a greater understanding of the world they live in will help to prepare them for the future. The Global Learning Programme (GLP) aim of helping 'young people understand their role in a globally interdependent world and explore strategies by which they can make it more just and sustainable' also reflects what the school is trying to achieve.



'A global recognition of students' rights and responsibilities and their identity requires the school community to recognise, value and provide for diversity and this is what lies at the heart of St Werburgh's Primary School. We take ownership of the world and people, and work together to live in peace and harmony.'

Ghazala Farouk, International School Co-ordinator

### First steps towards a global journey

In 2008, I did some collaborative planning with a Year 4 teacher for a geography lesson. We wanted to make a comparison of the geographical as well as climatic features of our local area with another country. So I used my personal links with a school in Pakistan and we connected to a Year 4 class there. We had a live discussion on the similarities and differences between the UK and Pakistan in terms of weather and geography. Children were thrilled and highly engaged during those lessons.

'The links with Pakistan have been really important for our community and I think have led to increased engagement in other areas of school life from our Pakistani community.'

Helen Faulkner, St Werburgh's Deputy Head

This gave us food for thought and we hoped to start global connections in other curriculum areas and with other age groups. Each term, we collect internal data to analyse the pupils' progress. This revealed that our Pakistani children were not doing as well as the other bilingual groups, and our head teacher decided to investigate the reasons why. She launched the project 'Where are we

from in Pakistan?’ to break the barriers and give both parents and children the opportunity to talk about their identity and sense of belonging.

In 2009, Pakistan Day was celebrated to engage our Pakistani community – it was a huge success and was followed by the end-of-year celebration under the name of ‘**Connecting Communities**’. This event is a joint celebration in which other schools also take part, and where all the communities get together to present a show. Since then, it has become an annual event in the summer term to celebrate the diversity of our school.

‘Technology means the world is becoming a smaller place. Global journeys take full advantage of this in a truly positive way. Reaching out to other cultures and communities, and sharing experiences enables us to learn about and learn from each other.’

Catrin Evans, Teacher

### Developing global projects

The school has since established very strong links with four different schools in Pakistan, a school in Nigeria and one in India. The journey that started with one class has now become a core part of our curriculum (the impact of which is detailed in the next pages). St Werburgh’s whole-school approach to global learning has enabled us to get recognition from the British Council in the form of an **International School Award**<sup>1</sup> and we also achieved Level 1 of the **Rights Respecting Schools Award**.

Our ‘Connecting Classrooms’ projects are carefully organised around curricular areas and subjects to develop critical thinking and empathy in children, and are part of the whole-school curriculum.

The activities are planned by the International School Co-ordinator, who evaluates them regularly with the curriculum lead to assess the impact of global learning on the pupils. They range from class discussions to exchange of work with a partner class, and also some live skype collaborative activities and discussions.



<sup>1</sup> In 2012 the school began to engage with the International School Award, which helped to motivate and engage staff further in developing global learning approaches across the curriculum, considering impacts and strengthening links with the wider community. It became a key part of the School Improvement Plan, involving more international work across the school.

Since 2012, the school has a body of children acting as '**Global Leaders**'. They are actively engaged in organising international events and discussions in school. They meet up regularly to have discussions on global issues and then share them with the whole school. They write letters to local MPs and other people to raise their concerns about any global or local issue – e.g. recycling, peace, etc. – thus developing critical thinking.

**International visits** are an integral part of our school's global journey. Our teachers and Senior Leadership Team have all been involved in visiting other countries including St Vincent, France, Nigeria, India and Pakistan. We have also been a host to many international visitors from the same countries – we have recently hosted Nigerian pupils and teachers. These reciprocal visits by the teachers or head teachers of the link schools have helped to create a deeper impact on pupils, as they were learning at first hand about a country and its culture.

### The impact of global learning

Through this global journey, our school community has developed a deeper understanding of different people and different countries. The pupils have developed their critical thinking skills, which help them to take a responsible role in the world. They now have a better understanding of the similarities and differences between communities, and are working together to take a proactive attitude to find solutions to world problems. This is evident through the regular 'Global Leaders' meetings where pupils show a growing interest in global issues.

'Connecting communities helped me not to be so self-centred and to think of other people in other countries as well.'

Year 6 pupil

Global learning has helped to raise awareness about stereotypes linked to some communities, and to boost the pupils' and the parents' self-esteem. Our Pakistani parents are more engaged and find the school more approachable after our work on the 'Connecting Classrooms' projects.

The idea of social justice – and moving away from a charity mentality, one of the GLP aims – seemed quite alien to the children at the beginning of this journey, however they now have a better understanding of the differences in living standards and people's access to basic needs.

'The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is excellent. Pupils celebrate the rich diversity of cultures within the school without forgetting the values of being British.'

Ofsted report, 2014

Finally, the school's global curriculum had an impact on the children's writing. We arranged a Skype session between Year 1 pupils and our partner school in Pakistan. After the session, we asked pupils to write letters to the children in Pakistan. Knowing that their teacher was soon going to visit the same school and that they would get a reply, all the children were highly engaged and produced high-quality work. For some of them who were finding writing difficult, it appeared to be their best writing, which was shared with the whole school.

We are hoping to continue climbing our global ladder to get highly engaged children with high self-esteem, critical thinking and desire for social justice to make a difference to this world.

‘Our school has been at the forefront of developing global citizens. We have empowered our children to take responsibility for their world, to understand their place in it and to be proud of who they are. Bravo! Developing global citizens is the feature of good education.’

Claire Banks, St Werburgh’s Head Teacher