

# NWRPDN News



...putting the world in your class

Issue 2 - March 2007

Welcome to the second issue of NWRPDN News. This publication, available termly, to all schools in the North West of England aims to keep schools up to date with news of how the global dimension is impacting in schools across the region.

## British Council News Update for Schools

**Africa links** We have a free factsheet out now about school partnerships in Africa. This is because many schools are not sure about how to get a partnership started, what their options are, and those that are linked often find communication is slow. Please email [editor@globalgateway.org](mailto:editor@globalgateway.org) with Factsheet in the subject line, and a few details.

**India, Poland, Romania, Vietnam, China, Egypt, Ghana, Zambia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Tanzania...** strong availability of partner schools. Please email [editor@globalgateway.org](mailto:editor@globalgateway.org) with the country name in the subject line.

**Gulf region** So far 50 UK secondary school teachers have made the trip out to Saudi Arabia and to Qatar to meet their Middle East partners. It's an all expenses paid opportunity to link with a school that can help address preconceptions about Muslim culture, provide a taster for Arabic and collaborate in many school subject areas. Please email [editor@globalgateway.org](mailto:editor@globalgateway.org) with Middle East in the subject line. (11s-14s only)

**Primary project: Our landscape** A project to do with a European partner school using digital images to show the landscape and geographical features around your school and describe it, then exchange with them. Free to join. Please email [editor@globalgateway.org](mailto:editor@globalgateway.org) with Landscape in the subject line for more details.

**Primary project: Folk tales** A way of learning about life's customs, traditions, problems and beliefs, folk tales often share common themes, such as the struggle between good and evil, or wisdom and ignorance. This project, started in Russia, looks at cultural diversity through folk tales. Free to join. Please email [editor@globalgateway.org](mailto:editor@globalgateway.org) with Folk tales in the subject line for more details.

**Project: Memory of Europe** A project template for finding out about World War Two through memories, and sharing this with a partner school. Please email [editor@globalgateway.org](mailto:editor@globalgateway.org) with Memory in the subject line. Other templates are available. Free to join.

Get ready for Global Education Week Prepare for a special week of activities curriculum linked to children's rights and the millennium goals - make a paper chain or work on a special resource. **April 23-29** - more information at:

<http://www.campaignforeducation.org/joinup/index.php>



[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org) & [www.globalgateway.org.uk](http://www.globalgateway.org.uk)

# Storysacks Project

## Heswall Primary (Wirral) and Lucan School (Ireland)

In January 2007 the British Council funded Comenius Project enabled Chair of Governors Dave Baines, Deputy Cathy Pepper & KS2 teacher Jon Lawrenson to visit our partnership school, the Lucan Educates School on the outskirts of Dublin in Ireland to develop our storysacks project.

Although comparatively few miles separate the two schools, a world of difference was found between the way education is experienced.

### The similarities

- the wonderfully warm ethos,
- the eagerness of the children to learn,
- the dedication of the staff
- the wide range of opportunities offered.

### The contrasts

- the size, age and capacity of the two schools, ours is very small in comparison
- our children are mainly British with few children from other cultures whilst there are 43 nationalities in the Lucan school
- Our children wear uniform whilst Lucan's children do not.

Staff and children made us very welcome, as we compared and contrasted our two schools. Our visit culminated in a memorable assembly of Irish music, singing and dance. We are planning to continue these partnerships by hosting visits from Dublin and Poland.

Although this project is in its infancy, an assembly was held to talk to the children about the recent visits to Ireland and the Storysacks which had been given to us by the Irish and Polish schools. The children at the Lucan school had performed a dance to our staff and, on hearing about this, our Y6 children were inspired to devise and develop their own dance. They are planning to video this to send to the Lucan school, as well as to perform it when the visit is reciprocated. The children have been very interested in the contents of the Storysacks and have been looking at the books, artwork and posters, asking questions about Ireland and Poland and how the children learn.



# Halton - Kenya

## Halton High links Watamu Island



Working towards raising self – esteem and aspirations are some of the ways we endeavor to support our school and its pupils. We run various programmes throughout the year, supporting young people and their transition into high school and adolescence. During the academic year 2004/05 we delivered a Youth Challenge ASDAN Award (a qualification recognized by the DfEs) as part of this objective.

The pupils were required to fulfill a number of challenges, in order to gain their accreditation over a four month period; they developed a portfolio of work and carried out public speaking, fundraising and team building challenge activities. In doing this, they developed confidence, organization and literacy skills through their letter writing and other activities.

The pupils were a credit to the school and this alone contributed to raised self – esteem and aspirations. We are proud to say that last year's pupils were all highly successful and in the process of completing the challenges they raised £1000 which was donated to The Paper Chase Trust Charity. Louisa and I worked with the charity to deliver the money raised to Watamu Island; the money was used to build a classroom for the children on the island. For all their efforts the pupils not only received their ASDAN accreditation but were also awarded a Global Citizenship Award.

Due to the success of last years programme we decided to continue the programme with a new group of pupils. Fourteen young people in year 7 & 8 were selected to take part in the programme. This year we aim to return to Watamu Island with a cheque for £2000, this will provide the island with a reservoir of clean drinking water.

The pupils have been working extremely hard to meet their ambitious target of £2000, challenges have included cake making, raffles, card making and a challenging day with the Army all of which were undertaken in the pupils own time (holidays and weekends). In addition the pupils have been responsibly for selling refreshments during a school celebration.

The pupils have delivered an assembly to both year groups and have contacted companies by letter and telephone all of which have enhanced their communication, developed their social skills and has provided them with a knowledge and understanding of global issues. Furthermore the pupils have shown commitment, determination and enthusiasm throughout the duration of the programme. All these skills have contributed to the pupil's positive attitude and willingness to learn.

We felt proud when the current programme received a further two awards - The Princes Diana Award and the Champions school of the year award in addition we have recently won the international award.

The programme will continue as Halton High School will support their 'twinned' school in Africa. Furthermore the Park Primary school alongside Halton High School will continue to fund Christopher (15 year old boy who until this year has never been educated due to lack of funds) in school, Christopher regularly keeps in touch with myself to keep us informed on his progress. Children from Kenya write to pupils in Halton High as pen pals.

Jaime Daire  
Transition Mentor  
& Youth Challenge Coordinator

# Lancashire - Kenya

St Francis of Assisi School  
Skelmersdale

After visiting the Kwazulu Natal region of South Africa in the summer of 2005, I returned home with the intention of linking up with Zimema Primary School. It was a bit like 'love at first sight'. I knew instantly that this was the school for us!

Zimema is situated in the remote region of Harding, about seventy kilometres inland from the East coast of the Indian Ocean. In November of that year, our link with Zimema Primary School began.

Our intention was to inspire a global dimension within both schools and widen our own understanding of cultural diversity. We wanted to create an opportunity for our children and the children of Zimema to gain an insight into a completely different culture and community. Not only would this foster and develop a huge sense of tolerance in our children but it would create the potential for a better citizen.

It has been a unique opportunity for us and one which has gone from strength to strength. Over 900 children from both schools have corresponded through letters. This created a huge amount of excitement and was a great success. Both schools proudly share their link and our joint philosophy of 'discovery through learning'.

We believe this is an ethos which embeds and awakens creativity, tolerance and understanding.

This summer, four members of staff from our school are hoping to visit Zimema Primary school, taking part in the Teacher's International Professional Development programme. This is an opportunity for us to embed our link further into the curriculum and finally meet our friends in South Africa.

Jackie McNally

# Liverpool

TIPD visit to Canada

A TIPD Group Leader's Experience

I was privileged to lead a group of teachers on a 'Thinking Skills' visit to Northern Ontario in the heart of winter 2007.

The group consisted of eleven teachers drawn from primary schools across Liverpool. The main objectives of the visit were to identify how host schools integrate the development of thinking skills into the curriculum, to gain practical ideas and strategies for motivating staff and pupils to think more creatively and to evaluate the impact of thinking skills on pupil levels of oral communication and general academic progress.

From the outset we were impressed by the generous hospitality and the warmth of the welcome offered by our Canadian colleagues. A large yellow school bus was waiting for us at Sault Ste Marie airport and was available for our use throughout the week. We were all presented with a variety of gifts at the hotel and as the week unfolded we were provided with an inspiring schedule of educational and recreational activities.

We observed excellent practice in every school we visited and noted that pupils were polite and articulate in their conversations with us. We concluded that the consistent focus on oral communication from Kindergarten through to High School has promoted a high level of confidence and maturity in pupils of all ages and abilities.

Other highlights of the trip included a 'show-shoe' experience by Lake Superior (when the temperature dropped to - 30%), an evening of tobogganing and a visit to a Sault Ste Marie ice hockey match.

The visit was judged by every member of the group to be an outstanding success, in terms of meeting our agreed objectives and in gaining valuable cultural experiences.

Marian Shaw  
Senior School Improvement Officer  
Liverpool Children's Services

# Knowsley

## The Spirit of the Dragon

During October half-term 2006, Knowsley young people took part in a range of exciting activities as part of the Spirit of the Dragon October half term project being hosted at Knowsley City Learning Centres. The young people made their very own passport which allows them to record their experiences and work. The children also took part in range of Chinese cultural experiences, Paper Cutting which is inspired by nature, language, customs, rituals, myths, stories and scenes of everyday life. Calligraphy (learning how to write their name in Mandarin) and have made a range of beautiful sculptures using origami techniques. Lion Dancing, Kite Making, Chinese cookery and collage making. They have worked with a number of practitioners from the Chinese community and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to be immersed in Chinese culture. The children made daily contact with children in the Eden English Language School in Nanning using the latest Skype technology and the project has been supported by a bi-lingual website which can be viewed at [www.thespiritofthedragon.org.uk](http://www.thespiritofthedragon.org.uk).

There was 66 children taking part in the activity all from year 5 to 8 and the programme has been designed in consultation with primary consultants to address literacy, numeracy and ICT. This is a continuation of previous successful summer programmes with an international theme including Explorers Wanted (Siberia), Spirit of the Jaguar (Brazil), Fire and Ice (Iceland) and Spirit of the Dragon Summer 2006 (China).

Parent evaluation forms received by the CLCs identified that 94% of parents thought the organisation and communication of the activity was excellent and 6% rated it as good and 100% would send their children to another activity. Some of the comments made by the parents were:

*My son Jack has loved the Club and would love to come back, he has talked about it everyday and have loved the teacher Kate and has made a lot of friends, I would like to say thank you to you all.*

*Connor enjoyed this week very much and will be informing Northern Primary of how well organised and secure and informative, well done.*

*I was very impressed at how much they learnt and done in 5 days. The presentation was very well done and we will be cooking chicken chow mein every week it was gorgeous, thanks for the receipt.*

*The presentation today exceeded all expectations of the children. I can only say that this is all due to the time and dedication of the CLC and the staff who come in to work with our children, many thanks for all you hard work.*



# Knowsley

## Whiston Wills Primary (Knowsley)

Last Year myself and three colleagues went to South Africa as part of a bid through the NCSL. The Seventh Conference of School Principals was held in Capetown the ...theme of the conference being "Ubuntu"...a Zulu word that means you can only be a true person when working with others .The speakers at the conference were world class and we even had the chance to meet Archbishop Desmond Tutu as closed the conference with the story of the starfish....

As my children at school knew that I was going on the trip they wanted to send some gifts for a school out there and they made friendship bracelets (scoobies!!).

At the conference hall I met a lady selling ornaments made by the street children in Mandela Park Township ...this is how I found Gertrude Sgwentu a black South African lady working in the township in very difficult circumstance trying to run a crèche in a run down shack house in the middle of the worst part of Mandela. We formed an immediate bond and together we promised each other that we would work together to improve the conditions for the children...all HIV/Aids positive and many of them orphans.

The other partnership schools in the South of Knowsley took to the project immediately on our return and the hard work has not stopped since. In twelve months after trying to renovate the old crèche we have built a new educare centre called, "The Angel/Starfish Educare Centre" which is being run by Gertrude and another two members of staff. The new facility is now on the outskirts of the township and is accessed by 36 little ones from 0-6 all HIV and most orphans. The centre has been furnished and resourced by massive fundraising efforts and we are in weekly contact by telephone and now by our new computer that we have sent over!

The centre is called Angels because we believe in angels and Starfish because Desmond Tutu told the story of the starfish being thrown up onto the shores in Capetown .The story tells of the old African gentleman painstakingly throwing the hundreds of starfish that had been thrown up on the beach back into the sea. The young African questions this and tells the man not to bother because there are so many of them." But it matters to the one that you throw back in." This story stood for the message that spurs us all on in the next phase of our work.

Gertrude and her husband Tetile have been to the UK to visit us and to tell their own amazing stories of growing up in poverty in Africa. The children and myself have had so much to learn. They talk now about the children in the centre as if they are their very special friends...they know so much about Africa as a country.. they are beginning to understand just how lucky they are and how much they can give to help make the difference in the lives of the 36 angels and starfish. The waiting list for the centre is enormous... life expectancy is short...

The next phase in our long term plan is the combi or mini bus that is needed to get the children from the township to the centre and back again. Fundraising is going well and with the help of John Masons the international removals company the children will never be short of clothes ,toys ,shoes ,medical aid and even cupboard foods. Thanks to the kindness of some Knowsley people there are sponsor forms being filled in to enable Gertrude and Tetile to pay the helpers and not to worry about much needed food .

We are working with the British Council and looking at bids and grants to make sure that we can go back to the centre to look at the curriculum further and update our financial plans!!

Elaine Maloney Headteacher Whiston Willis Community Primary School

The next issue of NWRPDN News will be available at the beginning of June. If you wish to contribute an article please contact either of the NWRPDN Co-ordinators:

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