



## PLACES AND THEIR CULTURE

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Victoria Infants and Junior Schools were amalgamated in February 2008 and moved to one site. The school entry is one and a half which can have 315 children. Victoria Primary School is situated close to the town centre in Wellingborough serving a multicultural community. EAL is significantly above national and local averages at 55% and rising due to the influx of European migrants. 23 languages are spoken in the school. FSM is currently 15.6%. There is a high level of pupil transience. During 2008-9 there were 74 admissions and 77 leavers. Many of the pupils have unstable backgrounds, both socially and academically. The current head teacher started in September 2009, this is her first headship.

## Aims and Objectives

A natural choice for the Leadership Study was to celebrate and build on the individual strength and diversity of Victoria Primary School. The school is well placed to be at the forefront of the global education agenda. The idea was to begin using citizenship and global awareness as a dimension that runs through the curriculum. The children would benefit from finding out about cultures of the UK and of other countries by incorporating diversity into the Geography programme of study.

- Pupils have an understanding of their own and other cultures and traditions
- To accept their culture within the context of the British heritage
- To celebrate Britain as a diverse society
- Have a strong sense of their own place in the world.
- Look at how we depend on different countries (for food, clothes etc).
- appreciate the benefits of diversity
- have a sense of self-worth and personal identity
- relate well to others and form good relationship

# Methodology

## ***FIRST STAGE***

After the initial discussion with the head teacher, it was decided that the New Primary Curriculum based on a review led by Sir Jim Rose would be used as the focal point for embedding the project into the teaching and learning. The school was due to undertake the new government framework starting in the new academic year of September 2011. So it seemed like a good opportunity to trial this New Primary Curriculum, report findings to staff and then be in a position to speak with knowledge and experience about working through the recommendations.

A consultation also took place with the History co-ordinator who was enthusiastic for any feedback about leading the project and the outcome.

## ***SECOND STAGE***

During the year group team meeting, the new project was promoted and explained to the team. Opportunities were made for them to give their input and any ideas about the project. This was a change from the original long term planning of "Weather Around the World". The idea was to review and modify the existing programme of study and make the learning more relevant to the children. The undertaking would be historical, geographical and socially based.

The year group staff was made aware of the new approach to the children's learning. This meant that the children would be given more autonomy during their learning. The year group staff gave their full support to the new style learning and teaching. As the team leader it was my responsibility to highlight the benefits of working in this style. Also to ensure the planning, development and drive were all in place in order for the project to be successful. The ethos was to incorporate more of a cultural and social understanding about the world around them. The expectation was that children should demonstrate the following features:

- Understand that places in the world have similarities and differences.
- That they have thought about what a place is like and teaches the reader about the place.
- To learn about countries and continent and understand that each place has its own climate and geographical features.
- The cross curricular concept of diversity discussions around values identities and diversity.

### **THIRD STAGE**

Children were informed about the project. They understood that they would be independent learners, with the teacher as the facilitator. They were keen to choose their own place to research. Giving the pupils a voice at this stage meant they had more ownership of where the subject was heading. They put forward some interesting ideas which included:

- A national costume day
- Learning to play games from other countries
- Setting up a themed area
- Bring a book day (about the place being researched)

Most of the children enjoyed this more independent learning; however support was given to those who found the task more challenging.

### **Main Findings**

Leading the project was testing and inspiring. The majority of children stayed focussed on the task. Giving the children ownership of the task proved to be very successful. Their ideas for producing evidence for the research varied in many ways. Although, they were directed to work in pairs or three's, some of the work was carried out independently as individuals spoke to their parents to obtain information which was then distributed to the group. The project was very successful. It proved to be such a big hit with the classes that the decision was made to expand it to a twelve week instead of a six week unit.

The lessons were more relevant to them, culturally and historically because they were looking at the history and present day life of a place that they wanted to learn more about.

The project took on another focus as it was the world cup football. Many were researching countries that would play in the world cup. The children looked at individual players and their journey to the South Africa World Cup.

The final aim is to present the pupil's work during a year group assembly where parents will be invited to share their success.

### **Outcome**

The aims and objectives were achieved, as the children had a better sense of their place in the world and had begun to understand why cultures are different and that one culture was no more important than the other. Most came to a realisation that we all have an inter dependency on each other.

As the facilitator of this project, I found both benefits and disenchantment.

## **DISENCHANTMENT**

- As the project was carried out only with my year team it did not provide the exposure for the school witnessing my leadership skills
- Many of the children's ideas did not come to fruition.
- Due to finance shortage, school visit suggestions could not take place
- The New Primary Curriculum has been withdrawn.
- Parents sharing information about their culture was difficult due to the required CRB checks.
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## **BENEFITS**

- With this new autonomy, the children were able to shine in a way that I have never seen before.
- The children showed much enthusiasm in wanting to share their work.
- The quality of work of work produced by the children was raised.
- The exercise was very rewarding.
- Taking part in the EAP programme has allowed me to dip my toes in the water. I now feel more confident to take the full plunge.

Whilst leading the project the intention was also to be a good facilitator, by providing opportunities for the team to contribute and participate at each stage of the project. It is not my style to dominate but with credit to the team, all member were very supportive and the task did not stretch me as much as I had hoped. However, the next academic year will offer more opportunities to raise my leadership profile. This will happen with a change of staff to the team that may not be as supportive as the previous members. The intension is to use this new situation as a chance to make an impact on the team, the pupils learning and their well being. As advised, I have also expressed to the CPD officer my request in applying for The Leadership Pathway course.

## **Evaluation of the EAP programme**

Taking part of the leadership programme has given me a more positive view about myself. I have learnt that through good training, networking and encouragement I can become an effective team leader. The programme has helped me with strategies that can be used to overcome barriers on my leadership journey.