

## Shared Education in Practice in Lurgan

### MUSIC

There's always been a history of Shared Education within the Lurgan area because Lurgan geographically has always been a very divided town and there has always been a community relations project running, and so we thought it was very important to keep that work going.

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So this project is a local history project. It's focused on Lurgan during World War Two. They learn about the experiences of the American soldiers here in the town of Lurgan and they also learn about the expectations.

They all love to hear about the war, you know you ask pupils about what their most interesting part of history is, it's to do with War and I think to bring that into the context of the whole of what was going on in Northern Ireland in 1941 when the American soldiers arrived and what they were told to do and not do, is brilliant, to bring that and make it relevant to Lurgan and the area they live in as well.

We looked at conflict and reconciliation not in an explicit way, so we were teaching the children about tolerance before we really move forward into our own society. We had the chance to have discussions about flags, discussions about symbols and different symbols of different communities. We also wanted to explore being creative and working with others so then we devised a way for music and art to come on board with the project and we just thought all these subjects coming together just really enriched the whole project not just to leave it to History but to bring all these other subjects in and have a true cross-curricular project.

About a month ago we had to teach them a lesson about what American soldiers were told to expect whenever they arrived in Northern Ireland rather than a pocket book of expectations that could have been handed to soldiers they were to put together an iMovie of what soldiers were told to expect when they were here. Equally another half of the group were looking at the experiences of American soldiers when they were here in Northern Ireland they were told to put together, almost like a video log of what things they actually experienced when they were here.

At the very start of the project for this year, we brought all the teachers together who were going to be involved in the project so that they were aware of what the project was about but also the planning requirements of it. Our project is focused on working with others and their skills and creativities.

Our pupils are continually thinking about how they can take other peoples viewpoints on board, looking at roles and responsibilities in the group to deliver a task and obviously respecting views and opinions and asking questions appropriately, so this has given them an opportunity that they can build foundations that they can build on as they go through second and third year and then eventually into the world of work after they leave school.

Our pupils and the pupils from St Ronan's very quickly see that whilst they might be different religions why they might come from other ends of the town that they actually have a lot of things in common.

What we've also done is we've put together a pupil council, like Shared Education ambassadors and they're able to tell us what's happening on the ground, what the feeling around the school is towards Shared Education and we can really use them to push Shared Education throughout the school.

We learnt about the experiences and expectations of the American soldiers in Northern Ireland.

I enjoy it because you get to meet new people from other schools, not just your own.

It teaches you things you might not learn from someone who does share your own beliefs our cultures our traditions, like do people see things differently than you do. Well most definitely the benefit from a pupil point of view is they have built up fantastic relationships, and that's the most important thing but it's great for us to work collaboratively with members of staff from other schools and get to experience other schools as well cause you're going to different campuses and is just something I think is very beneficial and it's enjoyable at the same time.

The key success factor to making Shared Education working at any school is support from management and support from the Board of Governors, if we have the management support we still need the parental support for their pupils and their children to be involved, if we don't have that, there is no project so management and parents is the most important thing.