



Diversity Day

Shared Education Project 2018/19

Background Information

Schools involved: Belfast Boys' Model School and Mercy College, co-ordinators Lyndsay Hesbrook (also HOD for LLW), Laura Henry

Year group: Year 9

Area of Learning: LLW Local and Global Citizenship – Key concept Diversity and Inclusion

Duration: October – December for shared subject classes, sessions with Youth Service Jan/Feb culminating in Full Day event 'Diversity Day' in April.

The partnership between Belfast Boys' Model School and Mercy College had been in place long before the idea of the Shared Education Signature Project came about. Pupils from both schools have been learning together and taking part in activities in subjects such as maths, science, ICT, careers and sports for as long as I can remember, sharing facilities and expertise. This made the process of formalising the partnership easier, as we did not need to look for a partner school. It made sense to keep doing what had already been successful and use the opportunities awarded by the project funding to take it further.

Objectives: What outcomes are we targeting?

The Northern Ireland Curriculum supports reconciliation through the Key Elements which underpin Learning for Life and Work. Through the planned activities, this project aimed to address reconciliation by focusing on:

- Similarities and Differences
- Learning to Live as Members of the Community
- Tolerance and Respect
- Openness to New Ideas.

The Diversity Day project led to pupils developing a number of skills, including communication, analysis, and applying prior learning to examples of activities. These skills also included the following:

- Being Creative – searching for meaning and experimenting with ideas
- Managing Information – asking focused questions
- Working with Others – taking the initiative and working collaboratively.



Educational Outcomes

The Shared Education outcomes that we wanted pupils to know and understand in the context of LLW were tolerance, respect, and resolving conflict.

In class we looked at how pupils express their own identity, and then at how others express their identity. We used a range of resources to look at the similarities and differences between them. This gave pupils a concrete experience, as well as allowing them to understand why conflict may arise between individuals and groups, so that they could hopefully understand that conflict is often caused by a lack of understanding, and can be avoided. A number of pupils from both our schools were also involved in training by the Youth Service to help them develop their leadership and communication skills, looking at how to engage others and making sure that everyone took part in the final event.

Within Learning for Life and Work there are a number of Statutory Statements that must be covered by all pupils in Northern Ireland schools. The statements that related to this project are as follows:

Investigate ways in which individuals and groups express their identity, for example, *dress code, language, musical and sporting traditions, religious and political opinion, beliefs etc.*

Investigate ways of managing conflict and promoting community relations, reconciliation.

Investigate the opportunities arising from diversity and multiculturalism and possible ways of promoting inclusion, for example, *community relations work, shared festivals and sporting events, integrated education.*

The aim of this project was to reinforce the learning taking place in LLW where we look at cultural diversity and respect for other cultures, both in Northern Ireland and in the wider world. In class pupils learned about the range of cultures in Northern Ireland, and their similarities and differences. During Diversity Day they get a hands-on experience of some of the aspects of those cultures including dance, food, arts and crafts. Some of our own pupils who originally come from different countries also talk about some features of their culture. This helps the pupils get to know one another and form relationships in a safe environment.

Our aim was that the pupils would enjoy seeing demonstrations of things which they have never experienced before. The aim was that they would gain an understanding from the facilitators about life in their home countries, and aspects of their culture which they may not have thought about. I also hoped that they would build on the relationships they have formed over the past weeks.



The Activity

The final activity was our Annual 'Diversity Day' where we bring the year 9 pupils from both schools together to experience concrete real-life examples of how different cultures express their identity in Northern Ireland. It is a whole-day event with 15 activities for pupils to take part in, including music, dance, drumming, arts and crafts, and cookery.

Both co-ordinators and all LLW teachers in both schools (10 in total) were involved in the project. Approximately 250 pupils from both schools attended the final event. Thirty pupils from the partnership were chosen to be facilitators and were involved in the planning and running of the day.

Classes covering the subject content ran in both schools from October to December and workshops/shared classes with the Youth Service ran in January to March. The final event, 'Diversity Day' took place in April 2019.

On Diversity Day, pupils and staff took part in a number of workshops facilitated by Arsekta and The Confucius Institute. Some pupils originally from countries outside the UK also took part to help the pupils to gain a little understanding about life and culture in their country.

Outcomes: How do you know you achieved your intended outcomes?

Shared education initiatives like this are important to broaden the horizons of pupils and to encourage them to be open-minded, tolerant, and respectful of others. It gives them the opportunity to mix in an otherwise divided society. Over the years, we have seen the pupils forming lasting friendships and wider support networks that will only benefit them in the future.

The main beneficiaries of the Diversity Day and the classes and activities leading up to it are the pupils. They get to have experiences that they may never encounter in normal day-to-day life and make lasting friendships that will hopefully contribute to making Northern Ireland a less conflicted society to live in. It also opens up more educational opportunities to them, as they will go into life outside of school with an open and tolerant approach to new people and experiences.

What was the impact of the activity on reconciliation and educational outcomes?

The main impact on our pupils that we have observed is that they have developed relationships with pupils from a different background to themselves. They can see beyond the past conflict in Northern Ireland and have become much more willing to take part in activities not in their comfort zone. Their confidence in speaking in an unfamiliar group has increased. They have developed their leadership skills as well as being able to study subjects that are offered outside their school, thus improving their educational outcomes. They are much more tolerant of others' beliefs, and understanding of others' expressions of identity. This became obvious in the results of the short survey done at the end of the day and in the evaluations.



Since the programme has run for a number of years we can also see a longer-term impact on our two school communities, as we have pupils from both schools who have formed lasting friendships. These pupils have reported that they now feel totally comfortable attending sessions in each other's schools, meeting up on a regular basis in what would be considered 'non-neutral' venues. They feel that, without these opportunities, they would not have met, or had the experiences they have had. They have broadened their horizons and views.

Did you achieve your objectives?

From the evaluations completed, 89% of pupils really enjoyed the day and the activities, 94% felt they had learned something they didn't know before, and 78% felt comfortable attending sessions with pupils from another school. 85% of pupils would like to have more classes together and 97% of pupils better understand cultural identity in Northern Ireland.

Reflections: What was the learning for practitioners?

Joint working: Planning

We have run this sort of day in various forms over the last four years and have learned lessons each year about the planning, and the length of time it takes. The attached action plan has all of the activities undertaken month by month. It has been refined over the last number of years to help promote a smoothly run event ([see attached action plan](#)).

The main challenge was the time it takes, and the logistics of co-ordinating the different groups for the same event as well as having the event on a day which does not interfere with exams, testing, or other things happening in school. Another issue is co-ordinating the curriculum in both schools to be able to have the event when the topics have been taught to all pupils. Having run this event and others like it before, we know that the key is to get the pupils to engage with one another and activities that may be outside of their comfort zone. We have also learned that you really need your staff on board to organise an event like this, as there is a lot to do for just one person in each school while still teaching. Timetabling the groups is definitely a task for someone who likes logic puzzles as there are lots of things to take into account such as manageable group sizes, breaks and lunches. It is important not to overload the facilities, and to try and time things so that the groups are not moving around the building at the same time as a class changeover: this can become a problem when over 100 pupils are moving from class to class.

We start planning for this day in May of the previous year to co-ordinate the curriculum. We are very lucky that we have had such close contacts between the schools, so co-ordinating the teaching and learning is fairly easy. We share resources frequently between the two LLW departments and are in contact for much of the year about the curriculum and other projects we think we might run.

By September we have an idea of the time of year we want the event to run, and have our assessment timetable set out in both schools. We then contact Artsekta (and this year The Confucius Institute), and we liaise with



our HE department at BBMS at ensure that we are not disrupting transition programmes or testing within school.

We then begin to organise shared classes. It is not possible to have shared classes for the whole year as yet, due to finance, and disruption to teaching and learning; however, one class from each school begins to meet together. They use youthwork methodology to begin with, to get to know each other and to look at leadership skills. This also helps to foster tolerance and respect, which is a vital part of the LLW curriculum. All other pupils in the year group cover the same LLW lessons, looking at identity and how it is expressed. The next thing we have to do is book all of the venues. There are a lot of school events and assemblies on a weekly basis, so it is essential to book venues so we can facilitate all of the groups who want to come on the day.

We are very lucky to have a supportive senior management and colleagues who help out in any way they can, like getting everyone who is here fed on the day! Once the bookings are all finalised we look at our timetable to try to organise our groups into manageable sizes so that they can get the best out of the day. We then book transport and food with the school canteen for breaks and lunch. The most important thing is to get your senior management on board and to enlist colleagues to help, especially in the school that hosts the event.

Lessons Learned

The most important things are:

- Don't underestimate how far in advance you need to plan things, and how much time it takes.
- Be flexible with your arrangements.
- Ask your teaching staff and senior team to help.
- Be prepared to answer lots of questions for parents who have not had any experience of shared education and might be concerned about their child attending events or classes in another school.
- Make sure that you keep all stakeholders informed, as this will help things run much more smoothly.
- Don't be afraid to negotiate on price with suppliers and facilitators: most will be able to do something for you at a cost that suits.
- Plan for activities that have a range of outcomes, not just one.
- Make sure that you keep detailed notes of all conversations and meetings, as you will need to refer back to them regularly.

As with everything, there are always small changes to be made. We consulted with the pupils who were helping run the event as well as those who experienced it, and they gave us their preferences. They stated that they would prefer to not have as many activities, and instead to spend longer at each activity, and to have them all in separate rooms rather than in the main hall in school. They expressed much more enjoyment and had a greater understanding of the activities that they took part in in the separate classrooms. This is an area we will look at in next year's planning.

Lyndsay Hesbrook SE Coordinator BBMS



Action Plan for Diversity Day

Month	Action
May 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meetings with Vice Principal to agree actions for the 18/19 Action Plan. 2. Liaise with Shared Education (SE) Officer From Education Authority (EA). 3. Meetings with Heads of Department (HOD) for Learning for Life and Work (LLW) to agree engagement. 4. Contact Artsketa and other facilitators to investigate possible facilitation. 5. Agree provisional budget. 6. Lining up of timetable for class chosen as facilitators from each school. 7. Submit Action Plan to EA for approval.
June 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once letter of offer is received from EA to formalise the budget for 18/19, liaise with Artsketa to negotiate price for facilitation and number of facilitators. 2. Set month of the activity, final date to be confirmed once year plan is available from both schools. 3. Contact Youth Service to agree input into training pupil facilitators prior to event.
August 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaise with LLW HODs to agree dates for teaching Local and Global Citizenship – Diversity in N. Ireland unit (all pupils in both schools will study the unit but one class from each school will have sessions together). 2. Book buses for engagement. 3. Produce information and permission slips for shared classes, sessions with the Youth Service and activity in shared classes and filming on the day of the event. 4. Update action plan and profiled budget, if required. 5. Communicate information to SE officer.
September 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review resources and materials for shared classes. 2. Meetings with Youth Service to finalise dates of workshops for pupil facilitators. 3. Issue permission slips for shared classes.
October 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citizenship classes running. 2. Update school website and social media.
November 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citizenship classes running. 2. Update school website and social media.
December 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citizenship classes running. 2. Update school website and social media.
January 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshops with Youth Service begin on respect, tolerance, celebrations of identity in Northern Ireland, conflict resolution and how to facilitate an event as well as planning the event for BBMS/Mercy College. 2. Evaluation of citizenship classes by teachers and pupils. 3. Finalise date of event. 4. Book venues in school for day of event (assembly hall, sports hall, library, classrooms for music, conference room). 5. Book transport for the day. 6. Finalise attendance with external facilitators and numbers coming. 7. Issue invitations for local media and SE officer and any other interested parties. 8. Update social media. 9. Regular contact with LLW HODs.



Action Plan for Diversity Day

Month	Action
February 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshops with Youth Service running on respect, tolerance, celebrations of identity in Northern Ireland, conflict resolution and how to facilitate an event as well as planning the event for BBMS/Mercy College. 2. Contact facilitators about dietary requirements. 3. Organise teacher cover needed. 4. Let school facilities management company know about event and requirements on the day. 5. Communicate with SE Officer. 6. Ensure all invoices have been issued to school for prompt payment.
March 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find out how many pupils in partner school attending are entitled to FSM so they can receive lunch on day of event. 2. Liaise with school canteen and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to organise hosting of 100+ extra pupils at break and lunch. 3. Book catering for facilitators. 4. Organise extra duty rota for event day. 5. Finalise timetable – 20 min sessions at each station (with pupil input at Youth Service session). 6. Issue and collect permission slips for event day. 7. Update social media. 8. Meetings with LLW HODs. 9. Complete risk assessments and file with Health & Safety officer in school.
April 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Month of the event. 2. Issue guidance to all staff re pupils absent from class, visitors attending, duty rotas, length of event. 3. Update social media. 4. Meetings with SLT. 5. Arrange decoration of venues. 6. Arrange refreshments for arrival.
May 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation of event by pupils and staff. 2. Begin planning for next year.



Activities: 15 in total

Activity	Description	Provider
Chinese Dance	Pupils will observe a dance demonstration and then learn a simple dance.	Artsekta
African Drumming	Pupils will learn how to use African drums and participate in a drum circle involving games.	Artsekta
Indian Arts and Culture	Pupils will hear about aspects of Indian art and culture. They will then get the opportunity to make a piece of art to take away, and possibly try on traditional Indian costume.	Artsekta
Polish Arts and Culture	Pupils will hear about aspects of Polish art and culture. They will then get the opportunity to make a piece of art to take away, and possibly try on traditional Polish costume.	Artsekta
Russian Arts and Culture	Pupils will hear about aspects of Russian art and culture. They will then get the opportunity to make a piece of art to take away, and possibly try on traditional Russian costume.	Artsekta
Iranian Arts and Culture	Pupils will hear about aspects of Iranian art and culture. They will then get the opportunity to make a piece of art to take away, and possibly try on traditional Iranian costume.	Artsekta
Mexican Folk Art	Pupils will hear about aspects of Mexican art and culture. They will then get the opportunity to make a piece of art to take away, and possibly try on traditional Mexican costume.	Artsekta
Islamic Culture	Pupils will hear about aspects of Islamic art and culture. They will then get the opportunity to make a piece of art to take away, and possibly try on traditional Islamic costume.	Artsekta



Activities: 15 in total

Activity	Description	Provider
Cookery	Pupils will take part in preparing and cooking a traditional dish from Canada.	BBMS
Newcomer Pupils	Three pupils will speak to a small number of others about aspects of the culture from their home country.	BBMS Pupils
Chinese towel and Kongfu Fan	Pupils will experience a demonstration of Chinese martial arts and dance.	Confucius Institute
Chinese Calligraphy/ Chinese Name	There will be a demonstration and talk on the history of calligraphy and the pupils will have the opportunity to find out their Chinese name, what it means, and how to write it using traditional brushes.	Confucius Institute
Chinese Knot	Pupils will be shown a demonstration of art created by Chinese knots.	Confucius Institute
Traditional Chinese music —Er Hu	Pupils will hear the music of a traditional Chinese stringed instrument and an explanation of how musical stories are told using this.	Confucius Institute
Traditional Chinese music —Di Zi (Chinese Flute)	Pupils will hear an explanation of the stories told through traditional Chinese music using a flute.	Confucius Institute