

Birmingham Schools and Colleges of Sanctuary

Newsletter No. 17 December 2023

As we come to the end of a busy term, we hope you'll enjoy reading about some of the activities which have been going on across our network. We know that this is only part of what schools do and that your warmth and hospitality, and inclusion and welcome for everybody, is ongoing!

This term we were delighted to present the Sanctuary Award to **St Ambrose Barlow Primary, St John & Monica's Primary**, and an updated **second award** to **Chandos Primary**!

It is so heartening to observe how steadfast and committed our schools are and how deeply embedded the School of Sanctuary vision is in the work and life of individual schools. A huge thanks to all members of staff and pupils who are ensuring that this work goes forward.

Even when things look really dark, there are glimpses of light - in November, representatives of City of Sanctuary were invited to London to meet King Charles and were very warmly received. Just imagine how that must feel to people who have not always been made to feel welcome in this country!



With very warm wishes for a well-deserved Christmas and New Year break,

Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary Team

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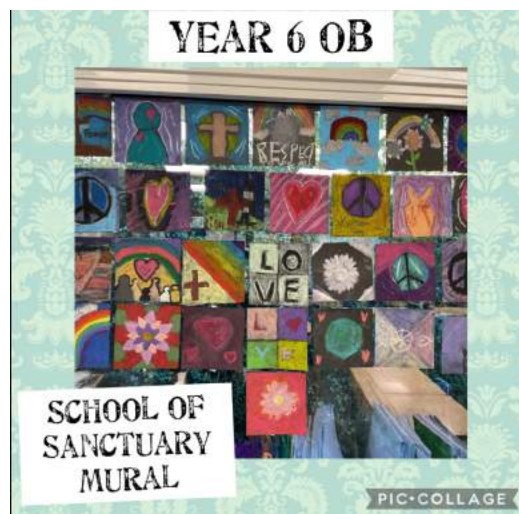
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We love it when schools share their commitment to the School of Sanctuary vision with everyone who enters their building.



St Ambrose Barlow RC Primary School in Hall Green proudly declares its support for refugees in the entrance foyer, and St Bernard's RC Primary in Moseley

proudly presents this mural created by Year 6 pupils.



Our schools are also known across the national network, and

Mr Clinton, Head Teacher of St Ambrose Barlow, was invited to take part in a panel at the CITY OF SANCTUARY NATIONAL CONFERENCE which took place in Birmingham in October.



And there was a lot of positive feedback from delegates from across the country for the Abbey Primary choir who rounded off the conference!



We love Award Assemblies and this term we were happy to visit St Ambrose Barlow and SS John and Monica. We also had special assemblies at Allens Croft Primary, and Halesowen College - both of which were receiving their **SECOND** Sanctuary Award! Chandos Primary also received their **second award** and will be having their Award Assembly next term.

At Allens Croft the children displayed some wonderful art work and shared some of the poems they had written for

National Poetry Day.



There is a girl called Mula,
who lives with her mum and cat.
They travel around the world,
but always come back.
But one terrible night,
there was a bus-crash and disaster.
A boy had his pocket,
and it made Mula splutter.
They had to go and take refuge,
Everybody needed to get a
Everyone was worried,
Even little the cat.
So one day went to the airport,
To catch a departing plane.
Mula knew she would miss her home and school,
And hoped she would soon get home again.
In one hour was goodbye,
Maybe from Israel or Ukraine,
Please welcome them with love,
And make them feel safe again.

Their local MP Steve McCabe was there in order to present a different award, but as he is a keen supporter of our Schools of Sanctuary, he was happy to be involved in our presentation too!



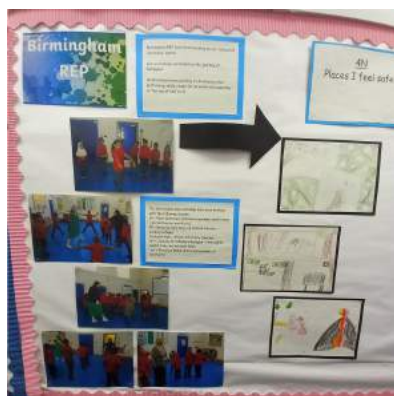
At Halesowen College we heard from the Principal and also directly from one of their ESOL pupils who confirmed the support and encouragement he and all his peers receive from the staff and the other pupils. This is a college which goes above and beyond - organising a summer school during the six-weeks holidays and already making plans for activities during the Christmas holidays so that the young people they care for will be able to keep in touch.



St Benedict's Primary School - Theatre Workshops with the Rep

St Benedict's Primary School in Small Heath was able to invite a specialist education worker from the Rep (Birmingham's Theatre of Sanctuary) to run sanctuary-themed workshops throughout the whole of the autumn term.

In October, they held the first part of their Festival of Sanctuary, where the children presented the results of their work looking at different aspects of Sanctuary. The children were supported by their parents, who also watched a beautiful video prepared by a Year 6 pupil.

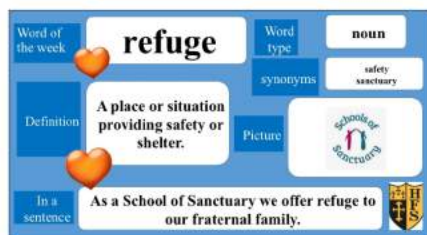


An explanatory display outlined the way the pupils had worked, and explained the different aspects covered - the Inclusion Hub looked at Animal Sanctuary (rescue), Year 2 looked at Plant Sanctuary (protecting the earth) Year 4 groups at Religious Sanctuary (seeking refuge after a natural disaster) and The Journey of a Modern Refugee (new sights, smells, fears, we welcome them) and Year 6 studied a historical example of sanctuary as experienced by evacuees during World War 2.

The Festival of Sanctuary was enjoyable and at times very moving - the children had obviously thought deeply about the issues raised in their work with the Rep.

If you would like to find out about educational opportunities with the Rep, please contact bhavik.parmar@birmingham-rep.co.uk.

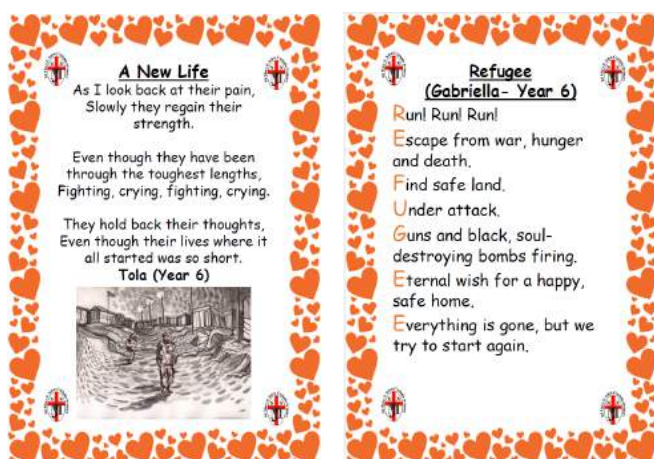
This year's **National Poetry Day** had the theme of “Refuge” and our schools were more than happy to embrace this topic and share their work.



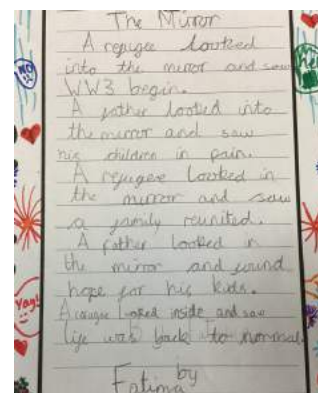
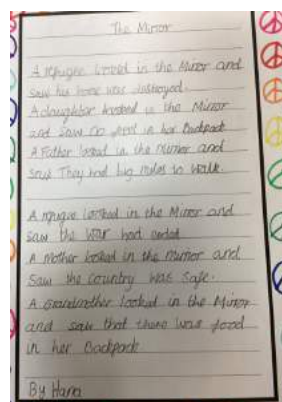
Holy Family (Small Heath) made REFUGE their Word of the Week and encouraged children from all across the school to produce very moving poems.



St Mary & St John (Erdington) used specially-designed ORANGE HEART paper for their poems:



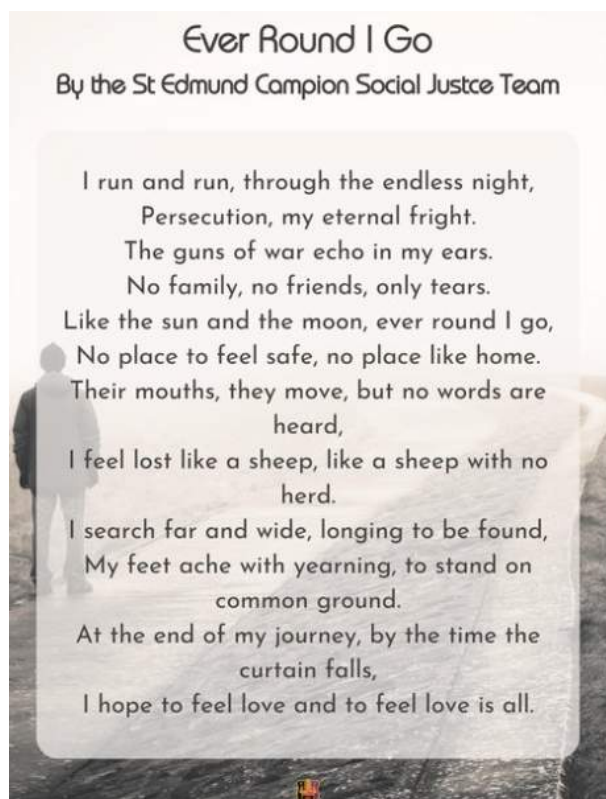
At St Martin de Porres (Moseley), pupils imagined looking into a mirror of despair and a mirror of hope.



Pupils at St Thomas More (Sheldon) used a Japanese technique to create their “Refuge” poems.



Poems can also be created by groups!



At St Edmund Campion Secondary (Erdington), the Social Justice team worked together to create a poem (left) which they will use to develop some performance poetry.

We will be your refuge by 3T

On the move again, seeking a warm embrace,
A sanctuary of calm in this wild race.
When life's storms are brewing, and winds blow wild,
In the hope of refuge, we find a smile.

Through trials and difficulties, we roam,
In search of a shelter we can call home.
In refuge's gentle hug, we find release,
A refuge of hope, a harbor of peace.

In a world so miserable, where troubles may brew,
Refuge is the lighthouse, that will lead us through.
With beating hearts, its doors swing wide,
Offering love and warmth inside.

In times of sadness, when hope seems thin,
Refuge is the embrace from deep within.
A beacon of delight, a source of light,
A lantern to guide us through the darkest night.

So let's remember, as we go along,
That home is where we all belong.
A place of love, where hearts can mend,
On the journey again, but refuge is a comforting friend.

And at St Mary's RC Primary (Harborne), Year 3 pupils collaborated to produce the poem "We will be your refuge" (right).

We were delighted to see local libraries welcoming our schools to display their poems about “Refuge”.

Benson Community School put up a display in Handsworth Library.



Holy Family School put up a display in Small Heath Library



In November, schools were encouraged to mark International Education Week by creating Orange Hearts.

St Gerard's Primary in Castle Vale led the way here with all year groups taking part and the children in Nursery even braved the November storms with their huge Orange Heart on the playground!



Meanwhile, Reception Class produced Orange Heart armbands to show that they will give all refugees a warm welcome.



The Orange Heart theme was repeated in Year 3.

Year 4 wanted their Orange Hearts to be visible on the window.



While Y5 and Y6 showed excellent collaborative skills to produce giant graffiti walls.



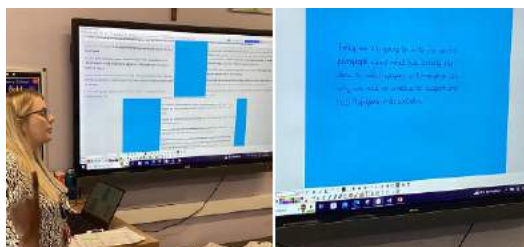
At St Martin de Porres Primary in Moseley, children drew welcome hearts on the playground.



And at St Bernard's Primary in Moseley, every child in the school contributed to a chalk mural expressing solidarity with those seeking sanctuary.



Our schools continue to speak up on behalf of asylum seekers, to express their solidarity, and to learn from books and from people with lived experience.



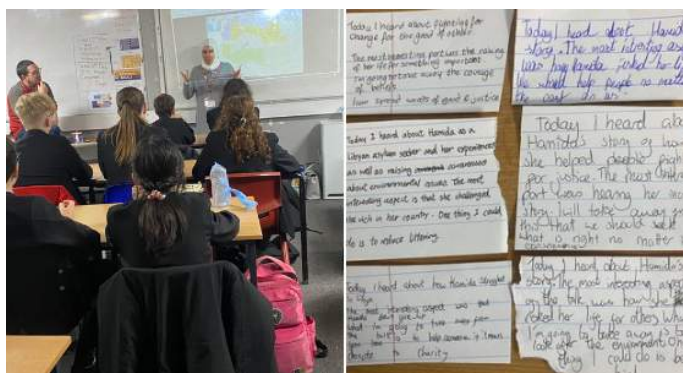
At Abbey Primary, Y5 pupils wrote letters to their MP about how we can better help asylum-seekers and refugees.

At St Thomas More Primary, Year 6 read "Oranges in No Man's Land".



The Rosary Primary in Alum Rock is working hard towards the Award!

At Bishop Challoner Secondary, Year 9 met Hamida, a lawyer who is an asylum-seeker from Libya. She spoke about her work in Libya fighting for environmental rights.



Art work at Nishkam High School

Nishkam High School is a Sikh-ethos secondary school in Newtown. As part of their learning about asylum-seekers and refugees, Years 8 and 10 created this stunning art work in their main foyer.

This art work is part of a declaration and pledge to be a 'School of

Sanctuary', raising awareness of the issues that face young people when forced to leave/flee their homes. It is a reminder that anybody can become a refugee; it is up to us to create a culture of welcome and inclusion for young people who are faced with many challenges so far away from their homes, parents or loved ones.



The portraits represent people just like us. Whilst their circumstances are different to our own, we should be reminded that becoming a refugee can happen to anybody.

There are different colours throughout the work. Imagine that all the faces you see belong to young people, this now signifies the children who have fled from their homes; at least 40% of refugees are children:

The clear/white represents children aged 15 – 17 years

The green represents children from the age of 0 – 4 years

The red represents 1 in every 3 children who are displaced and do not have a home. (statistics taken from UNICEF on refugees in Europe)

Finally, you may notice the art work almost looks like a fishnet. Small pieces of string were used to bind every pupil's piece of work. The fishnet is a reminder of the treacherous journey that many refugees must make, knowing there is a possibility they will not survive. The fishnet created by our Year 8s and Year 10s is a positive reminder for those who do survive, that we will provide them with a safe place and sanctuary to grow, develop and flourish to live out their hopes and dreams without fear.



Wyndcliffe Primary - the whole world in a school!

Rubina Begum reports on the EAL and World Cultural Day with celebration and language exchange.

At Wyndcliffe Primary School, we are an inclusive school with a large multi-cultural and multi-lingual cohort that is constantly evolving. Every year we welcome pupils, who have arrived in England from across the world, into year groups across the school. In the past two years alone we have welcomed over 55 pupils from across three continents and over nineteen countries including: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Pakistan, Somalia, India, Syria, Senegal, Afghanistan, Palestine, Bangladesh, Spain, Iraq, Italy, Belgium, France, Sudan and South Africa!



One of the many ways in which we celebrate our multi-cultural and multi-lingual cohort, is through our EAL and World Cultural Day celebrations. This year, all pupils and staff attended school in clothing that was traditional to their cultures. After having identified the many and varied languages and cultures present within their year groups, not only did pupils practise greeting each other in those languages, but they also then retold either a nursery rhyme or story, and also re-presented its book cover, in those languages and cultures. The many languages also included the PECS (Picture Exchange Communication) and Makaton systems of communication.



The day allowed us to celebrate our school's linguistic and cultural range, promote inclusion, mutual respect and tolerance, foster an appreciation of diversity in languages and cultures, develop an understanding of translation and accessibility, and to learn how nursery rhymes and stories can be represented through different languages, communication systems and cultures. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all!

We always like to welcome new schools to our network, and one of the most recent to join us is the King Solomon International Business School. Some of you may have seen this school while driving along the nearby dual carriageway, so we are delighted to share the information provided by Head Teacher Darren King:

King Solomon International Business School is a multi-denominational Christian school serving children in the heart of Birmingham from age 4 -19. As an all-through school, we have the opportunity to educate and nurture our young people from 'cradle to career'. We do this by following the Fruit of the Spirit - our relationships are built on Gentleness, Kindness, Joy, Patience, Self-control, Trustworthiness, Goodness, Peace... and love. We value and welcome everybody: this is who we are.

Put simply, everyone is welcome at King Solomon.



We are here to be a place of sanctuary as well as a place of learning for our children. A place where they feel safe and loved.

Therefore, we naturally share an ethos and vision with Schools of Sanctuary and feel privileged to partner up with an organisation that shares the same moral compass as ourselves.

On our recent visit to the school we were impressed by the way this former office block has been transformed into a friendly and colourful environment in which their pupils can feel safe and cared for.

As we noted at the beginning of the Newsletter, HALESOWEN COLLEGE recently received their **SECOND AWARD. Here, Schools Hub Manager Erika Walkington gives us an update on their latest activities.**

Halesowen College has been working with Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary since 2017. We were first awarded College of Sanctuary status in December 2019 and were the second college in the country to get this award. We were successfully re-accredited in July 2023. Staff sit on the National Colleges of Sanctuary Steering Committee and have helped design the current framework and mentor other colleges who are seeking accreditation. There are currently 16 Colleges of Sanctuary in the UK.

Halesowen College approaches sanctuary in a very broad way, aiming for college to be a safe space for all students. We offer a wide range of enrichment groups including such Chess, Warhammer, Craft and Lego groups. These groups are open to all students and attended by those from Foundation to L3. Most of our students who are refugees or asylum seekers are studying ESOL. Many of our ESOL students attend enrichment groups and we also arrange additional activities including ESOL Reading Buddies, ESOL Football and Ramadan Football tournament.



In August we ran a 4-week ESOL Summer Programme. During this programme we provided a day travel pass so students could get to college and have lunch each day they were on site. We arranged a variety of activities including Sport, Craft, Cooking on a Budget, Careers/employability sessions and time in our Animal Care Unit. 20 ESOL students attended the ESOL Summer Programme and we celebrated this with an award ceremony during the final session, attended by the College Principal and Chair of Governors.

We will be repeating a holiday programme for these students during the Christmas break.

