

SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY NEWSLETTER

The Schools of Sanctuary Newsletter is released every term. Sign up to receive the newsletter straight to your email account [here](#).

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

Schools' Solidarity with People Seeking Sanctuary

Over the winter term, schools across the UK joined the wider movement to stand in solidarity with people seeking sanctuary against the Nationality and Borders Bill going through parliament. The Bill is the government's proposed new rules around nationality, asylum and immigration and the changes represent one of most significant roll back of refugee rights that this country has ever seen.

Given how schools are often the centres of their communities, they have a powerful reach. By supporting students to learn about this issue and then share what they've learnt with parents, families and the wider community, schools can help people who would otherwise not be aware of this Bill to understand its dangerous implications and show their support of people seeking sanctuary. Schools' efforts to raise awareness of this topic often don't go unnoticed and are quickly picked up by local or even national press – helping to promote messages of support for people seeking



St Joseph's in Swansea and Orchard Park, Bristol.



Orange Hearts from Springwell Park Primary School in Bootle

sanctuary and change public opinion. For the students themselves, getting involved in campaigns and learning to contact their representatives about issues of importance to them helps them to become informed and active citizens and see the power of their voices.

This has been clear in the activities of many of the schools across the network, who joined the Together with Refugees campaign to stand in opposition to this Bill.

Many schools developed their own 'Together with Refugees' orange heart displays to illustrate their solidarity with people seeking sanctuary. In Coventry, students, staff and parents at Earlsdon wrote messages of compassion and support for people seeking sanctuary, combining them to make a giant heart that is displayed in Coventry Carriers of Hope Hub. Orchard School in Bristol did something similar, displaying their heart in the school library.

Schools' Solidarity with People Seeking Sanctuary continued...

Some schools took their support a step further. Students at Abbey Roman Catholic Primary School wrote to their MP to express their support for refugees and people seeking safety – and heard back, with their MP committing to continue to push back against the Bill. Students at Holy Cross Primary School in Walmley also picked up their pens to urge their MP to support people seeking sanctuary. Staff and students at St Dunstan's, also in Birmingham, woke up early one morning in October to wave off a local group of people seeking sanctuary with whom they had spoken who were attending a rally in solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers at the Houses of Parliament. They took with them the students' banners and posters, later sharing photos of their banners outside Buckingham Palace.

Students from St Dunstan's prepare to wave off people attending the rally in support of refugees in London



Seven schools in Birmingham also attended an event at the Library of Birmingham where they talked to Councillor John Cotton about their efforts to support people seeking sanctuary. He praised the students for their passion and activities, saying "It is these children who give us hope for the future."



The Chaplaincy Team at Abbey RC Primary School, Birmingham with the reply from their MP.

To see all schools' hearts and hear about their efforts, have a look at [the full post on the Schools of Sanctuary website](#).

There's also still time for your school to get involved – have a look at the [Together with Refugees Schools' Activity Pack](#) and then get in touch to share photos of your efforts and the impact on your students, wider school community and even local MP!



Hearts from Wyndcliffe Primary School, Birmingham and Earlsdon Primary School, Coventry.



Many thanks to the Birmingham Schools of Sanctuary Team for their support in promoting schools' involvement in the Together with Refugee Campaign.

Walking the Walk: Learning about and Welcoming Little Amal

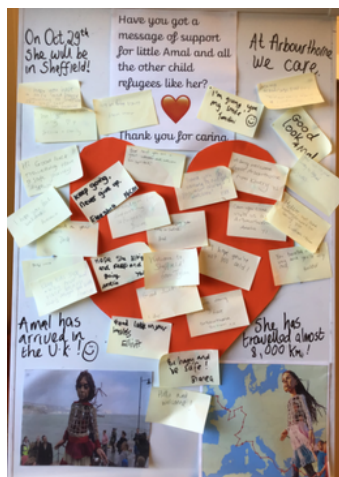
On the 11th November, Little Amal ended her over 8,000km journey from the Syrian border to Manchester. Over the course of her journey, many schools across the network took the opportunity to learn about the experiences of people travelling to the UK to seek safety and share their compassion for people fleeing war and violence.

In Sheffield, students at Arbourthorne Primary School talked about what it would feel like to have to leave home and their families and what they would take with them on their journey. They followed Little Amal's Walk and how she was welcomed at each other places on her way to the UK. The children were inspired to write letters which were sent off to the European Parliament in which they pressed leaders to offer support and welcome to child refugees like Amal. Finally, just before the arrival of Little Amal in Sheffield, the schools collected well wishes to pass to her and several students and their families (and teachers too!) were there to welcome Little Amal, despite it being half term.

Schools in other parts of the UK were also able to greet Little Amal on her journey - including students from Newman Catholic College in Brent and St Mary's Primary School in Lewisham.

In Salford, having talked about how important it is to treat people seeking sanctuary, like Little Amal, with kindness and compassion, students at Clarendon Road Community Primary School decided to proactively reach

out to newly arrived Afghan refugees in the area, and offer the warmest welcome possible. Putting pen to paper, students wrote letters of welcome and shared what they thought new arrivals might like best about living in the UK. With the help of Liz Hibberd from City of Sanctuary Manchester,

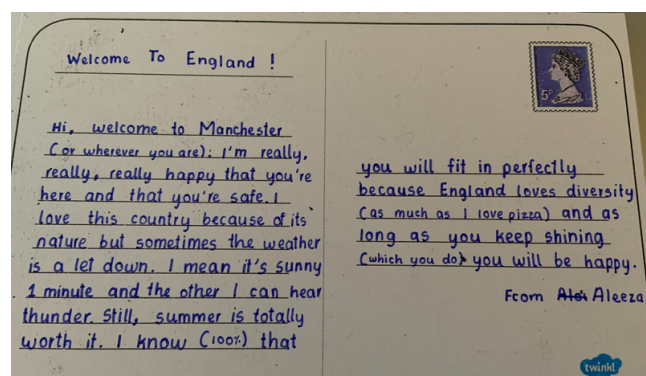


Students from St Mary's and Newman Catholic College greet Little Amal in London.



the welcome letters will be distributed at a refugee coffee morning where Afghan families and children will have the opportunity to read the letters and also send some back!

Although Little Amal's journey has now ended, you can continue to use the fantastic [Education Pack](#) from Good Chance Theatre, the creators of the Walk, available on their website.



Messages to Little Amal from students at Arbourthorne Primary, Sheffield and a postcard to a newly arrived Afghan from a student at Clarendon Road in Salford.

Important Research Highlights the Challenges Facing Students Seeking Sanctuary

New research from the Education Policy Institute (EPI), highlights worrying patterns in the educational outcomes of students from sanctuary seeking backgrounds in England. The study, looking at attainment, attendance and exclusions, offers important insight into the educational outcomes of students from refugee and asylum-seeking students, issues with little prior data. Key findings from the report include:

School attainment

- Separated children* in England in 2016/17 were on average 37.4 months behind non-migrant children across all GCSE subjects. This attainment gap is similar in size to the gap experienced by children with the most severe educational needs.
- Resettled refugee or asylum-seeking children were estimated to be 17.3 months behind non-migrant children across all GCSE subjects.

School absence and exclusion rates

- School absence rates for separated children in Year 11 in 2017 were on average 6.8%, compared with a 6.6% average for non-migrant children. In contrast, year 11 children who have been resettled or are receiving asylum-support were estimated to be absent for 5% of their time in school.
- Separated children experience higher rates (7.1%) of fixed period exclusions than the non-migrant population (5.2%), while resettled refugee or asylum support children are estimated to be less likely to experience a fixed period exclusion (4.4%). Nonetheless, separated, resettled refugee and asylum-seeking students experience far lower rates of permanent exclusion.



These findings offer useful insight into the experiences of students from sanctuary seeking backgrounds. Understanding the disparities in outcomes for students seeking sanctuary depending on their migration status is even more important given the implications of the proposed Nationality and Borders Bill – making it more difficult for people to quickly receive stability and security in the UK by obtaining refugee status and/or be reunited with family members abroad.

Drawing on the early findings of PhD research from Ilona Pinter which looks at the needs, experiences and outcomes of children and families living on Asylum Support, we can contextualise the current difficulties children and families waiting for a decision on their claim experience – which will only be worsened with the New Plan for Immigration.

Children Seeking Asylum

Between 2021-20, almost 23% of UK asylum applicants were children. Whilst most arrived with their families, around 6% of asylum applicants were separated children.

At the end of 2019, 34% of people receiving Asylum Support were children. The length of time that asylum seekers are spending on Asylum Support has increased in recent years even before the pandemic. At the end of 2020, 73% of people receiving the main form of support for people waiting for a decision on their claim had been doing so for over a year but the proportion was highest for families with children. The vast majority of families with children under 18 (83%), had been on this support for over a year while 19% of families had been on support for over five years. This represents a significant increase from 2017 when 13% of families had been on support for over five years.

This data highlights the number of children surviving on minimal funds (Section 95 support equates to £39.63 per person, per week) for lengthening periods of time. These experiences of insecurity, instability and poverty are likely to have a significant impact on both students' home and school experiences and should be taken into consideration in school practice and support for the student and their household.

Many thanks to Ilona Pinter for her support bringing this data together. She is still interested in speaking with families in receipt of asylum support and the schools supporting them for her PhD research. To get involved please email I.Pinter@lse.ac.uk.

*by separated children we mean unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. To understand why we prefer to us 'separated children' see our [Guide to Use of Language](#).

Anti-Racist Practice in the Early Years

Acorn Nursery in Brighton used anti-racism as a central pillar to form the foundation of their journey to become recognised as a nursery of Sanctuary. Within their efforts to embed anti-racist practise in the nursery setting, staff began by taking advantage of training offered by the Brighton and Hove City Council around equalities, micro aggressions, unconscious bias and anti-racism. Working from this, staff collaboratively developed an anti-racist pledge around which they intend to orientate their practice at the nursery.

Nursery staff then conducted a diversity walk alongside the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service team to review the whole nursery environment and the experiences of children of colour within the nursery setting. This included looking at their displays and the organisation and availability of different, for example in consultation with parent/carers, staff reviewed the toys available in Home Corner to make sure they reflect the real-life objects in children's homes, including the foods in the kitchen and the clothes and hair combs in the dressing up box. Following this review, children were encouraged to share pictures of their immediate and wider family, their homes, bedrooms and pets and shared examples of the foods they eat at home to show the diversity of family and home contexts amongst children at the nursery. Children also took part in creative activities in which they drew pictures of themselves and their classmates and talked about their similarities and differences.

As part of their ongoing work, they are also collating testimonials from parents in their first language/s, talking about their time at nursery and the settling in process in order to further improve how they welcome newly arrived families and support them when they join Acorn Nursery.

To read the full case study outlining [Acorn Nursery's anti-racist practice](#), have a look at our website. You can also read a case study from Acorn Nursery on [approaching learning activities around sanctuary with very young children](#).



Promoting Multilingualism

In December, Schools of Sanctuary spoke alongside Dr. Sabine Little from the Lost Wor(l)ds project at a seminar series hosted by the Migration Research Group at the University of Sheffield about the importance of [promoting multilingualism in school as a social justice issue](#).

Dr. Little outlined the falling prioritisation of multilingualism in education policy across the UK over past decades whilst outlining concrete steps schools can take to move beyond 'moments of multilingualism' to embedding the recognition and promotion of multilingualism in schools. Megan Greenwood, from Schools of Sanctuary, drew on case studies from across the network, including from St Mary the Virgin Primary School in Cardiff to highlight good practice and explained how the promotion of multilingualism in school is as a way of embedding an ethos of welcome and inclusion, one of the minimum criteria for being recognised as a School of Sanctuary.

Following the event, we pulled together the key ideas and resources from Lost Wor(l)ds in a post on the website to help schools develop their practice around multilingualism. For more information, see the [website](#).



Do you have News from Your School?

We are now accepting submissions for the next Schools of Sanctuary newsletter which will be published in April 2022 term.

We aim to include stories from schools across the network, highlighting examples of creative ways of learning about immigration and best practice in inclusive practice.

If you think you have something to share, please get in touch with Megan at megan@uk.cityofsanctuary.org by the 1st April 2022.

Campaigning #Families Together

Families Together is a coalition of over 90 organisations in the UK who are campaigning together to change the refugee family reunion rules. Imagine fleeing war, but having to leave your mum, dad, brother, sister or grandparents behind during a traumatic escape. Eventually you reach safety in the UK and are allowed to stay here. But your family is still in danger. The law means they can't join you. You worry about them constantly- the uncertainty and stress mean you're unable to rebuild your life.

Right now, this is the reality for many refugees, denied the right to be with the people they love by needlessly strict UK laws. Such rules are leaving vulnerable people isolated, traumatised and alone. This must change. You can help refugees reunite with their families and put their lives back together.

Currently adult refugees can sponsor only their very closest relatives to join them- their partners and children under 18 years old. This means that mothers and fathers in the UK are unable to bring their children over the age of 18 to join them. Refugee children do not have the right to sponsor any family members to



Welcome to the Network



Staff and students from Abbey RC Primary School's award ceremony (Birmingham).

We'd like to extend a warm welcome and congratulations to the following schools who have recently joined or renewed their membership of the Schools of Sanctuary network:

Abbey RC Primary School, Birmingham
Holy Cross Primary, Birmingham
St Dunstan's Primary School, Birmingham
St Peter's Primary School, Birmingham
Shaw Hill Primary School, Birmingham (reaccredited)
Somerville Primary School, Birmingham (reaccredited)
Blaise High School, Bristol
Easton CE Academy, Bristol
Spring Grove Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Huddersfield
St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool
Bluecoat Beechdale Academy, Nottingham

and in our Sister Stream, FE Colleges of Sanctuary, we welcome Bristol City College.

We are now a network of 332 recognised schools, nurseries and Sixth Forms with over 200 settings working to be recognised as a School of Sanctuary. We look forward to growing more in 2022!

Campaigning:

#Families Together (continued)

... join them. This means that refugee children in the UK who arrived unaccompanied are forced to live apart from their parents and siblings. Further, refugees are unable to bring elderly relatives to live with them in safety, being forced to leave their elderly parents and grandparents behind.

This term, you can support people who have been needlessly separated from their families by supporting the #FamiliesTogether campaign. Using the case studies and resources available in the [Families Together Schools' Toolkit](#), you can help students learn about family reunification laws and take part in suggested activities.

We ask that having learnt about rules separating families in the UK, schools help students demonstrate their support by taking part in a jigsaw activity - using the template resource ask students to draw a picture of their family or loved ones and cut out the jigsaw pieces. Only together can the picture be complete - representing how families should be together. Share your jigsaws on social media with the hashtag #FamiliesTogether, tagging @SchsofSanctuary and @FamiliesTogetherCo. For more information [see our website with all the resources](#).

Upcoming Events

24th Jan - International Day of Education

27th Jan - [Supporting Newly Arrived Afghan Students in FE Colleges](#)

(Hosted by Colleges of Sanctuary with Refugee Education UK and British Red Cross)

27th Jan - Holocaust Memorial Day

February - LGBT History Month

2nd Feb - [Community Languages and EAL Can Benefit Each Other](#) (Bell Foundation)

9th Feb - [Welcoming Refugee Children: Advice and Guidance for Schools](#)

(Hosted by the Bell Foundation with a panel from Schools of Sanctuary, Refugee Education UK and Nottingham Education Sanctuary Team)

21st Feb - World Mother Language Day

5th March - World Book Day

8th March - International Women's Day

20th March - International Day of Happiness

21st March - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Topic of the Term

Global Diversity and School Connections

To become a School of Sanctuary, schools are expected to undertake learning activities about the reasons why people seek sanctuary and their experiences in the UK. Often, however, these activities often fail to link migration with the school community and the students themselves, particularly in school contexts where the local community has little recent history of migration.



In these contexts, it is even more important that schools connect learning about migration to students' own experiences and families - countering the misconception that migration

as something that happens to someone else or in other parts of the world.

Instead, consider exploring students' own links with other parts of the world. Have students of a member of their family lived in other countries? Does anyone in their family speak another language - if so which? Alternatively, they should research their local area's migration histories - what links does your town/area have with other parts of the world? How have these links made it what it is?

These learning activities will inevitably surprise you - bringing to light links with unexpected parts of the world and bring home the understanding that migration is something with which we are all closely connected. Have a look at the [post on our website](#) for more detailed suggestions of activities including examples from St Andrew's Primary School in the Wirral and Avenue Road Primary School in Norfolk.

Latest Resources

[Schools Resource Pack](#)

Finally available in hard copy, the brand new Schools of Sanctuary resource offers a clear summary of the process and minimum criteria that must be met to become a School of Sanctuary. It is also full of case stories, ideas, and resources to help your school develop learning and practice.

[Supporting Afghan Students in Schools and Youth Programmes](#) - The International Rescue Committee

A comprehensive pack for those working with Afghan youth in the UK, outlining information about possible past educational experiences and cultural contexts before sharing considerations for school practice and ideas to help prepare for new arrivals from Afghanistan.

[Promoting Multilingualism in School](#)

In this post, we draw on the presentation of Dr. Sabine Little from Lost Wor(l)ds project at the Migration Research Group Seminar in December to share guidance, practical activities and resources to help schools embed the promotion of multilingualism in school.

[Global Diversity and School Connections](#)

In this post, we draw on case studies from schools within the network to share suggested learning activities to help students connect migration to themselves and their local areas.

[Supporting Afghan Students in Schools Event Recording and Resources](#) - Schools of Sanctuary and Refugee Education UK

Have a look at the recording and associated resources shared from our event 'Supporting Afghan Students in Schools' held in October with speakers from Refugee Education UK.

[Welcome Packs for New Afghan Arrivals](#) - Refugee Education UK

Available in English, Dari and Pashto these packs are a vital resource for new students and their families arriving from Afghanistan. The packs cover background information to the education system in England, what to expect in school, and how parent/carers can best support their children.

CPD Opportunities

[The Bell Foundation - Community Languages and EAL Can Benefit Each Other](#)

In this one-off webinar on 2nd February, speakers from the Bell Foundation focus on the benefits of multilingualism and provide guidance on how to support multilingual learners in the classroom.

[Coursera - Diversity and Inclusion in Education](#)

During this four week course, participants will develop a critical understanding of the concepts and assumptions about diversity and difference, and build knowledge about ways to develop inclusive and equitable quality education for all learners, taking into account their diverse characteristics and needs. Developed and moderated by academics at the University of Glasgow.

[Future Learn - Promoting Democracy in the Classroom: A Practical Guide for Teachers](#)

On this three-week course, you'll learn how to educate your pupils in the values of democracy, exploring what democratic education means and how you can put it into practice in your classroom. Developed in partnership between Manchester Metropolitan University, Lisbon School of Education and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Book Club

Primary

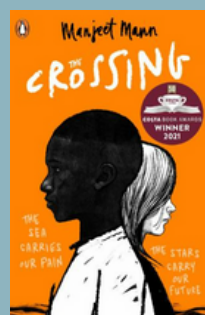
'My name is not Refugee' by Kate Milner is a powerful book accessible for those aged from 4-8 about one young boy's journey to safety.

Talking with his mother, the young boy learns that they have to leave their town and say goodbye to their family and friends. The journey is sometimes exciting and sometimes scary but often quite boring too, although he sees lots of new and different things. When they arrive at a safe place to call home, his mother reminds him that although people might call him 'refugee' that is not his real name.

A fantastic book to help students think about the different feelings they might experience if they were forced to move country and the different aspects of their identities they would take with them.



Secondary



The award-winning 'The Crossing' by Manjeet Mann is the must-have read for teens for 2022. The book which is written in verse, tells the story of two teens from different parts of the world, and their attempts to cross the Channel for two different, but linked reasons.

Natalie, from Dover, wants to swim the Channel to raise money for refugees whilst Sammy, from Eritrea, hopes to cross it to end his long journey to seek safety.

Recently awarded the Children's Book prize at the Costa Book Awards, this is an important story for young people to read given ongoing media coverage of Channel crossings, and a great resource to start discussions about the current lack of safe routes to the UK. After reading, ask students to think of what they could do to support people forced to take dangerous journeys across the Channel and turn learning into action.

For teachers



"Voices from the 'Jungle'" is a collection of stories from people living in the refugee camps near Calais in Northern France, often referred to as 'the Jungle'.

As media headlines fixate on people crossing the channel, this book raises the voices of those looking out across the water, hoping to build their lives in the UK. The stories focus as much on their childhood dreams, their hopes for their futures and their love for family as much as the violence that forced them to flee and their challenging realities of living in the camp and travelling across borders. A must read to counter the dehumanising narratives in the media.

COMPETITION CORNER

Winter Edition Winners

Over the Winter Term we set the competition for students across the School of Sanctuary network to create artwork exploring the link between climate and migration in recognition of COP 26 in Glasgow in November. A huge well done and thank you to all the students that submit entries but a particular congratulations to the winning entry and runners up below.

Winning Entry

Jasmine M in Year 6 at St Dunstan's Primary School, Birmingham



Congratulations Jasmine - a certificate is on its way to you. The judges were awed by your artistic talent and the clear link to the competition theme. Well done!

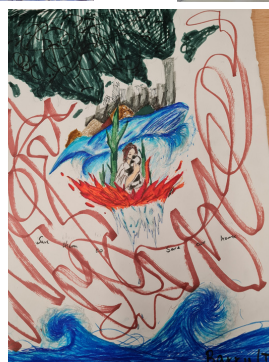
Runners Up



Renata, St Mary and St John's Primary School



Lewi, St Mary and St John's Primary School,



Barry, St Mary and St John's Primary School



Ola, St Dunstan's Primary School



Ash, St Dunstan's Primary School

Spring Edition Competition

To support the Families Together campaign, we ask that student submit short poems around the theme of 'Families should be together'. Students should think about: what happens when they get together with their family? How do they feel? Why is family important to them? How would they feel if they couldn't be with their family?

Each entry should be submitted as a separate document saved as 'Student Name - School Name - Town/Area - Student age' and submissions should be sent to schools@uk.cityofsanctuary.org email by the 1st April. The winning entry will be announced in the next newsletter with the winner receiving a Schools of Sanctuary certificate. All entries will also be shared with the Families Together Coalition to support their campaign.

Connect and Engage

Schools of Sanctuary Website

<http://>



The Schools of Sanctuary website has a wealth of information and resources for those interested in becoming a School of Sanctuary and for those who have already been recognised to continue to learn and embed positive policies and practices. We're constantly updating so check back regularly for the latest.

Want to know more about a certain topic or in need of a particular resource? Get in touch with Megan at megan@uk.cityofsanctuary.org and we will see if we can share or develop something to help you.

Connect with Schools of Sanctuary

Follow us on Facebook and our new Twitter account for the latest news, events, resources and chat...



Connect with City of Sanctuary UK

Follow City of Sanctuary UK on Facebook and Twitter for news across the network and to learn more about working to make the UK a place of welcome, safety and respect.





Schools of
Sanctuary