



# Armistice Day at Cragside CE Primary

Staff and pupils at Cragside Church of England Primary School, Cramlington, took part in a special collective worship in early November to commemorate the time in 1918 when the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare.

As part of the collective worship, the school paid tribute to Private Charles Gray, a soldier who was killed in action in 1917. By focussing on real diary entries from that period, there was a real sense of empathy from the children as well as an understanding of the impact that war has. We linked this to our work on peace and the role each of us can have to help bring peace into the world.

The children designed their own poppy and created information posters about Remembrance Day and the centenary of the start of World War One. The work that the children produced was outstanding and has made a wonderful display in our school entrance.

Cragside sold several hundred poppies in the weeks leading up to Armistice Day and we are very proud of the contribution that we have made to the Royal British Legion to support them in the work that they do. Mr. Rusby, the Headteacher, said, *"We held our own service on Tuesday 11th November and the whole school was completely silent at 11.00am. Children observed the silence impeccably and I was incredibly proud of them and the respect that they showed. A number of children brought in medals and information about great, great grandparents who had been involved in one of the two World Wars."*

Joanne Pringle,  
RE Subject Leader,  
Cragside Church of England Primary School, Cramlington.

# My experience as a 'School Direct' RE Trainee at Ponteland High School

*We are very pleased to publish this article from Caitlin Naylor, who is a School Direct RE trainee hosted by Ponteland High School. Caitlin's article provides an invaluable insight into how worthwhile School Direct approaches can be when the host school arranges the trainee's experiences with such care and imagination. Since an increasing number of Northumberland schools will offer support to School Direct trainees in years to come, we thought this would be a wonderful way for everyone to learn about the scheme's benefits.*

I began this academic year at Ponteland High School, perhaps quite ignorantly believing I would be faced with students who had lost sight of the importance and relevance of RE in the 21st Century. However, I soon began to see that students were engaged with the types of philosophical questions RE raises, which, unlike most subjects, allows students expression of opinion. My degree in Philosophy often aids my teaching, even in a Middle School. I find that students enjoy the questions posed and such questions are a brilliant tool for differentiation.

The 'School Direct' route into teaching is new, and some might argue it is where the critical and evaluative aspects come into play. I will be awarded my PGCE at the end of the training for attending University one day every two weeks and by submitting three in-depth assignments, two of those being at a Master's level. The School Direct route allows trainees to train in two schools, with one school being the host school. The University-based days allow guidance and reflection of what has taken place in school and lecturers urge us to grab every opportunity, hence me offering myself as a reading mentor to one student in the school. Essentially, we are in the driver's seat of our training. This route into teaching has allowed me to become a member of staff rather than a student and is giving me the confidence to teach RE creatively and effectively. It gives me the chance of regularly planning lessons, influencing the way things will be taught as a department and getting to know the students I will see for the majority of the year. As someone from outside the school, I have had a wonderful insight into teaching methods and of how to make RE both creative and engaging.

Everything is new to me, from teaching technique to teaching content. However, by observing lessons in an environment that you are beginning to recognise and feel confident in has given me so many valuable skills. Being part of a department and observing across the school has provided me with a bank of resources, knowledge and techniques that I am sure every teacher would love to have access to. I have witnessed what has worked well and sometimes what has not, and all of this I can take away and use appropriately. It has become clear, through observing teachers in their subject expertise, that, especially as students get older, RE is increasingly required to keep up with the modern world. Throughout my training, I have realised that it can be hard to deviate from and progress further with lessons graded outstanding by Ofsted, but it has been clear that the classes which make the most progress are the ones where teachers adapt their teaching and move it forward, thereby keeping it up-to-date and accessible.

The School Direct route is continuing to give me opportunities and vital experience and, once qualified, I know I will be well-equipped to start my career. I have taught a wide range of activities in RE, giving me a brilliant portfolio for future ideas, from stained glass window-making and Fairtrade baking in a Middle School, to engaging debates and enthusing questions in the High School. It is a brilliant balance and one that allows me to bring together both the creativity and the theory, to get the best out of the students. RE is needed more today than ever before and students can apply what they have learnt in lessons to their social situations, as well as to global issues. As a trainee, everything is reflected upon. Something worth noting is that RE teachers are not merely teaching their subject; RE is used to aid other subjects, particularly writing/literacy and arguing skills, which will form the basis of my first written assignment. RE is thoroughly cross-curricular and is a subject that has creativity at its fingertips.

Caitlin Naylor,  
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