

# Empowering the next generation



Twinning all of the school's toilets is one of the achievements by pupils at this rural primary school outside York which took part in the Global Neighbours pilot scheme. Naburn CofE Primary School is now set to become one of the first schools in England to apply for accreditation when the scheme officially launches in January 2018

## Introduction

Christian Aid has a long history of engaging learners with international development issues but a report in 2016 by a former Diocesan Director of Education showed a clear opportunity for closer working between Church of England (CofE) schools and Christian Aid.

The report recommended that Christian Aid should work with the CofE Education Office and a joint stakeholder group to develop a national school accreditation scheme. This scheme, now known as Global Neighbours, would help CofE schools express their character in line with the Church of England vision for church school education as 'deeply Christian and serving the common good'.

Launching in January 2018 the scheme has a vision to equip young pupils with not only an understanding of global injustice and the Christian imperative to act on it, but also of their capacity as global citizens to bring about change.

Key to developing the scheme was a core of CofE schools from across England who caught the vision and kindly agreed to take part in the pilot stage throughout 2016-2017. We are indebted to them for their support and feedback as we developed materials and systems to help other schools join us on the journey towards a fairer world.

## Naburn CofE Primary School, near York

This village primary school showed that size is no bar to thinking global - it may have only 83 pupils but its ethos of encouraging children to understand their role as world citizens meant the scheme was a perfect fit for them.

Year 5s and 6s took part in a simulation exercise on the theme of refugees and were given 30 seconds to gather items and leave the building. Year 3s and 4s learnt about natural disasters and earthquake resilient homes and researched charities that operate in the relief and development sector.

A Naburn resident has helped pupils build up a partnership with an orphanage in Malawi which has seen Naburn pupils make toys from recycled materials as they explore how necessity can drive innovation. Pupils have also learned about access to water, eaten typical Malawian meals and welcomed a pastor from Malawi.

Pupils had previously raised enough money to twin one of their toilets with a toilet in Uganda and at their 2017 Harvest service, attended by the Archbishop of York, the school raised sufficient funds to twin the two remaining toilets. Pupils on the School Council are currently choosing which countries to link the toilets with.

Headteacher Brenda Christison said: "It was amazing to welcome the Archbishop, who gave a very challenging and appropriate sermon on how it takes a whole village to educate a child.

"Our Christian values are at the heart of all we do at Naburn and part of that is teaching pupils that each and everyone has a part to play as a responsible member, of not only our learning environment, but also our local and global community.

"It is wonderful to see how the children are growing in confidence as agents of change. It is important that they are the ones choosing which toilets to twin with and they realise the change they are bringing about as a consequence of their own actions.

"Earlier this year we were judged 'outstanding' in our church school (SIAMS) inspection and taking part in the pilot was mentioned in the report as part of our global learning and distinctive Christian character. Global Neighbours not only gives the children recognition for what they are already achieving but also provides an opportunity for us all to push ourselves that bit further.

"We will keep exploring how we can truly be global citizens and have been invited by the Lord Mayor to a Fairtrade event in March at which our children will be given an award for their work on migration. The children will lead workshops and the grown-ups will listen."

### **St Wilfrid's CofE Primary School, Northenden, near Manchester**

From Jesus to Rita Ora, pupils at St Wilfrid's Primary School explored the experience of refugees and urged others to act to support them when they took part in a week of activities as a Global Neighbours pilot school.

Supported by the school's RE coordinator Hazel Deeley and Christian Aid volunteer teacher Nechen Mallam, the school is now keen to continue its journey exploring global injustice and plans to apply for accreditation.

In a special week of activities Year 2 pupils created mindmaps looking at why people are forced from their homes. They developed their literacy and persuasive writing skills, using factual information, to write moving reports and a newspaper article to encourage people to support refugees.

Hazel said: "Going into the week we really didn't know what to expect. It was humbling to see just how open and compassionate children are and it became a really positive experience all round.

"The pupils were really engaged and wanted to carry on. We were not only helping the children explore global injustice but also pupil leadership as they considered the role they can play. It fits perfectly with our school motto of 'belonging, believing, becoming' and our desire to be distinctively Christian and empower young people to live out values."

Year 5 and Year 6 pupils also took part, using Christian Aid resources to reflect on the personal experience of being forced to leave everything behind. They discussed what home means and what a refugee might see and experience.

Hazel said: "Some of the artwork was incredibly intricate with captions such as 'heal our world' and 'refugees need your help'.

"Our local vicar came in to talk about refugees and we really felt that there had been a whole-school impact."

### **How will it work?**

Any primary school can take part in the scheme which has bronze, silver and gold levels of accreditation.

The scheme will ask schools to demonstrate their commitment to tackling global injustice through the curriculum, collective worship, pupil action, community engagement and school leadership.

Church of England-approved assessors will examine material submitted in application for accreditation. Successful schools will keep the accreditation status for up to three years.

In some parts of the country volunteer Christian Aid Teachers are available to help support staff. To find out if there is a Christian Aid Teacher near you, contact your local office ([www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved-locally](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved-locally)) or email [schools@christian-aid.org](mailto:schools@christian-aid.org)

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