

Birmingham Conversations Project – December 2016

Wednesday, 06 January 2016

During December 2015, we ran a series of Positive Interfaith Workshops that were delivered with three local schools in Handsworth Wood, to discuss local matters that affect them and why? The schools involved were at Holyhead Academy, Nishkam Primary School and Nishkam Secondary School.

The workshops were funded by the Near Neighbours scheme as a continuation of our local partnership with St Andrews Church. We agreed to and adapted the 'Birmingham Conversations' model used by the adult forum during 2015, that Rabiya K Latif was invited to attend. The sessions were adapted to be delivered with pupils from Key stage 2 to 4.

The fund aims to support local communities to engage in positive interfaith dialogue. On this occasion we decided to work with schools to engage a large number of pupils.

Below is a concise collection of what matters/issues pupils shared and their evaluation of the session. Some visual displays are also included from the activities delivered with pupils to share what they thought the issues were and what the solutions might be.

No of Pupils engaged:

Holyhead Academy – 15 pupils
Nishkam Primary School – 30 pupils
Nishkam Secondary School – 50 pupils

Schools who agreed to participate in the workshops were also able to engage pupils in a WW1 theatre production 'All Our Heroes' which 2 schools took up.

Holyhead Academy – 60 pupils
Nishkam Primary – 30 pupils for St Andrews show
Nishkam Secondary – 200 pupils

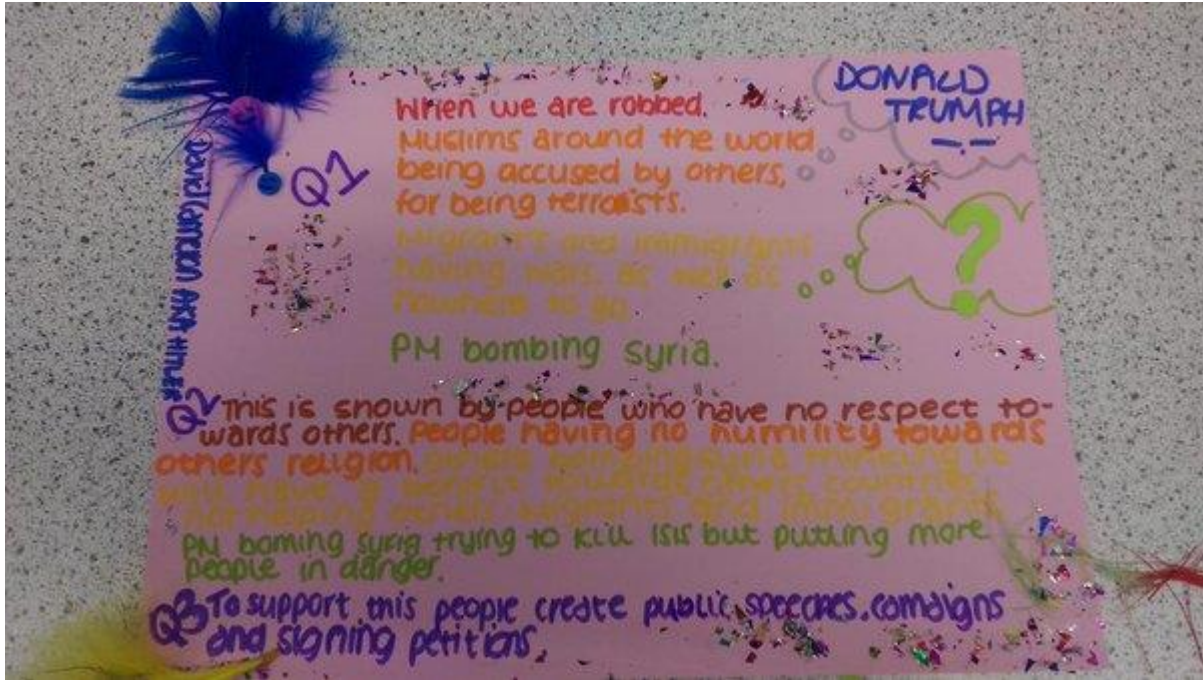
TOTAL – 385 pupils

Activity 1 – Pupils share their fears - anonymous

- Losing faith in god
- I fear racism and discrimination
- I have a fear of being attacked because I am of a certain religion
- The world from being bombed
- God – because if I do something wrong, God will be watching me
- I am scared of Bombs and Wars
- Our country might get ruined by others. Riots and bombing
- Spiders / Bugs. Hurting someone I care for or being hurt by them
- I fear God!
- I am worried whether I will go to Heaven or Hell
- I fear god and what he shall do if I am to make a mistake which I do not mean
- God
- I have a fear of being left alone – not wanted
- Death Bombs
- Parents and God
- People talking in a different language. I feel scared because you don't know what to expect
- Getting into Trouble
- Losing a close best friend
- Terrorism
- I have a fear of terrorism. I don't like to be called names or teased
- ISIS attacks globally. Innocent people are being killed!
- I have a fear of terrorism. I would not like anything to happen to my area and other places in the world.
- ISIS could kill all
- Terrorism
- ISIS attacks around the world
- I fear of people being killed and attacks like Syria
- My fear is bombings and war
- I fear Terrorism. I have seen the damage it causes and I would not like to be in the same situation as people who are in terrorism
- Fear of people of religions dying because of other religions

'Bringing compassion into education and learning'

Activity 2 – Pupils discuss and share solutions



Evaluations – sample from each school taken

Nishkam Primary School

- I think you should not be violent now I know how people feel when they are hurt.
- Sometimes you might not actually know what you feel
- I learnt how people feel when they are targeted
- Don't keep your worries to yourself. Tell people who are close to you
- How to be kind
- I have learnt: What is Victimisation, how we can help the community
- I think this lesson was fun. I learnt what victimise means and how it affects us
- I learnt about emotions
- Today I have learnt about being Compassion
- I now know how it feels like being bullied, attacked, targeted, not welcome and abused AND RACISM
- More Compassion

Nishkam Secondary School

- I think this lesson was really good. It was a different lesson and I would like to do something like this again. Me and my group got to share what we think about our community and I enjoyed that.
- I thought this lesson was very useful as it helped us to understand certain things
- This session has been really good on a social level and on a religious level for those of faith and those of none. I believe that this will make people feel more comfortable to talk about their personal feelings
- I really liked this session. Other students got to share their perspectives on different faith communities and world problems. This gave me an idea of what other people think about these world problems
- I thought this session was great as it gave us a chance to share our opinions and feelings with one another
- I have learnt that just because someone is a certain religion, it's not our job to say anything to them. You have to be kind to everyone
- I thought today's lesson was about how to develop and understand a deeper meaning of faiths in the world. I found the lesson very inspiring
- I thought today's lesson was very good as we could express our feelings and our opinions on worldwide incidents and our faiths
- This session has been very fun and unique. We got a chance to speak about what we believe in and how that makes us feel.

'Bringing compassion into education and learning'

- I learnt more about being aware of what is going on around the world and how other people feel about it
- I have really enjoyed this lesson as I have learnt a lot about kindness, compassion, love, support. Furthermore, it was one of the most fun lessons.
- I think the session was interesting because I got to learn some of my class mate's opinions on these questions
- I thought it was great – we rarely do this. It was good because the feelings deep inside you came out and you were to reflect and write it on paper.

Holyhead Academy

- I have found these sessions eye opening. Also educating in a way
- I think these workshops have been useful in talking about issues that are happening around the world and what affect this is having on the UK.
- It helped me to develop debating skills within the group and putting across my opinions and listening to others.
- I thought that the questions opened an interesting debate that wouldn't have got talked about at our age. However, I do think we were given a short amount of time to discuss. Longer please
- Involve more people
- I think this experience was interesting and more pupils should be involved so that they become aware of the changes happening in society

Teachers were surprised with pupil responses as they did not realise how much they were affected by the impact of multi-media around current affairs.

Pupils showed a real interest in the workshop and engaged fully once they were comfortable.

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