

Education Report for AGM 11th May 2019

We have had a busy and eventful year.

A group of Sierra Leone teachers visited us in October 2018, a small group visited Sierra Leone in March 2019 and we are working towards another Sierra Leone teachers visit to UK hopefully in June.

In addition, we have had some changes of school partnership due to the withdrawal of five University of Brighton Academy Trust (UBAT) Academies, and Ark Blacklands. The wonderful news is that we have replaced all but one of these schools in order to maintain the partnerships, and welcome Claverham Community College, Sedlescombe CE, St Mary Magdalene RC and Sacred Heart RC into our group. We now have 12 partnerships, and are hoping to make that 14 by the end of the academic year.

We are also closely involved in the Schools Sanitation Project, and our British Council project on 'Zero Waste'.

British Council work

At the beginning of academic year 2018/19 the British Council started a new round of grants and yet again changed the format for application. Schools needed to apply in 'clusters', with more stringent expectations. Each cluster is led by a 'Lead Cluster School' with a 'Lead Cluster Teacher' taking on the responsibility of organising their group. We have been successful in gaining grants for all of our schools by applying for 2 clusters, one led by Mandy Hinxman at All Saints, and one led by Faith Rew at Guestling Bradshaw. The grant covers the cost of a reciprocal visit for one teacher from each school in each country (24 teachers in all), as well as money to help fund projects and training. We are currently looking at possible training courses for individual or groups of schools to be carried out during Term 1 and 2 of 2019/20. Meanwhile we are busy preparing for the first of these visits, hopefully to take place in June.

As part of the grant application we had to agree on a joint project across both countries, and we chose 'Zero Waste' as a very important issue facing all of us wherever we live. Schools in both countries have been working on this project with some very interesting and effective results. Claverham Community College are doing an additional project on Technology for Africa in 21st century. See below for details.

Reciprocal School visits

October 2018

Six schools welcomed teachers for the visit in October accompanied by Francis Mason.

They were:

Battle and Langton - Cordelia Sannah - Jui Lower

St Leonards Academy - Sylvanus Huggins - Huntingdon Secondary

Battle Abbey Senior School – Christiana Palmer – Kellys

Christ Church CE – Osman Kamara – Kankalay

All Saints CE and Dudley – Jo James Kaindo – Edest

Hollington- Serrah Conteh – Jui Upper

It was a very successful week. The Sierra Leone teachers spent 5 days in their schools, working alongside their partners. They were very keen to learn about education in Hastings UK and took lots of good ideas back with them to try out in Hastings, Sierra Leone. They attended a full day workshop on 'What Makes a Good Teacher' hosted by Battle and

Langton School. To end the day, Kitty Davey at Battle Abbey arranged for a guided tour of the the abbey and the battle field.

Other activities included a very interesting tour of The Old Town led by Kevin Boorman, some crazy golf, a meal with Alison Baines, a meal at Mama Putts in St Leonards, and a wonderful Farewell event hosted by Christ Church CE.

February 2019

The visit took place from 26th February to 9th March. It had just the 4 participants, Christine Boulton Lane for the Health Centre, Richard Lane, who spent time in REC Hastings as well as leading on the Sanitation Project, Kris Cymer, IT Manager at Claverham, who was leading on the Solar Panel Project, and myself, Isabel Hodger. It was successful in achieving our main aims as follows.

School Improvement

The 6 teachers who visited UK in October helped me organise and run the two workshops. We met on the first afternoon and planned their involvement.

There were two workshops, one for teachers held at the Twin Town Centre, that included some more ideas for teaching mathematics, and one for Headteachers, held at Huntingdon Allentown, which included demonstrating the laptop and projector run by the solar panel set up by Kris Cymer. Each workshop covered aspects of school improvement – ‘What makes a good teacher/headteacher’, ‘What makes a good school’ – and a strategy for making those improvements. Each workshop also included a session from Richard Lane on the Sanitation Project, and a session from me on the Zero Waste project and the expectations from the British Council. Evaluations from both workshops were mostly positive.

Following that, Letitia and I visited as many schools as possible, talking through their plans for school improvement and Zero Waste, and watching some teachers teaching the maths we had covered.

I also gathered names of teachers who would be visiting in 2019 and 2010 and encouraged them to get their passports as soon as possible.

Other activities included attending an IPC meeting, meeting with the new head of the British Council Tony Reilly, discussing plans for the future with key teachers, and setting up a monitoring team lead by Letitia and Jaitta.

I am hoping they will set up community Head Teachers’ meetings to encourage each other to continue with their plans, and also pairs of Head Teachers working together to support each other. I am also hoping that there will be more sharing of ideas with teachers and more staff meetings and training workshops. These might take place at Huntingdon Allentown so that the laptop and projector can be used.

British Council projects

ICT using Solar Power

This project was set up between Claverham Community College and Huntingdon Allentown. Kris Cymer and Fiona Kemp, lead teacher at Claverham, worked very hard before the visit to ensure it was successful in its initial aims. Kris supervised the installation of a solar panel at the schools and linked it up to the laptop and projector he took with him. He then instructed teachers on how to use the system, and demonstrated how it could be used in a lesson. He then asked teachers to plan and teach their own lessons to demonstrate what

they had learnt. It was very popular with all teachers and towards the end of the visit, Kris also introduced it to some teachers from other schools
Incredibly successful initially, we are now hoping that it will be used regularly for its intended purpose, and we can eventually install similar systems in other schools.

Zero Waste

There are several projects already running in Sierra Leone to improve the waste problems there. One called The Green Club, which several of our schools belong to already, and one which is a country wide initiative called 'Clean Up Saturday'. This takes place once a month, when from dawn to 12 noon, no traffic is allowed anywhere, and everyone is expected to clean up their compounds and their streets. It happened while we were there and we took part in it, urged on by Christine!

Our own activities included promoting the project in the workshops and during visits to schools, attending an IPC (International Pupil Council) meeting where students expressed their views and ideas, and promoting community projects. We also met with the Deputy headman (a woman), and the secretary of Jui community (who is also a teacher at Huntingdon Jui), and they agreed to take back the idea of a village dump for all the plastic. I believe this project has been met with enthusiasm, and I am hopeful that it will be sustained to improve the environmental safety of the community.

Sanitation Project

Richard and I worked on this, with Richard leading the workshop section, and adding some very clever touches along the way! Richard also visited WHH headquarters with Cordelia Sannah, headteacher of Jui Lower. Please see attached report.

While we were there we learnt of other developments regarding the water supply which might influence our plans for the way forward.

Other activities

The boxes that were shipped to Sierra Leone from schools in UK in January 2019 arrived at the Twin Town Centre at the same time as our arrival. This was very timely as we could tell schools they were there and to collect them. Thanks to Christine Boulton Lane for doing all the packing and organisation on our behalf.

Christine and I attended a committee meeting of the Twin Town Centre.

We all had a meal with Cecil Coker, who gave us some very interesting and useful information about the water supply.

We had a meal at Sam French's house.

We talked several times with Frederick Coker about Twin Town Centre issues.

We had a trip out to Port Loko, where Francis has an office for a project working with mental health issues sponsored by Comic Relief. We also visited a school there, in the middle of the countryside, that he set up to provide education for children who could not get into the town. It was a cashew nut producing area.

We enjoyed a very good meal at Francis Mason's house.

We met up with Alex Gilchrist from Easy Solar at a very posh hotel in Freetown called The Hub.

We visited the new hotel being built in Hastings, and decided it would not be suitable for our group next year. The access by road was not suitable for a coach, and the access within the hotel was by a lot of slopes and uneven steps.

And after church on Sunday, spent a wonderful afternoon at the beach.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the crucial part that Francis and Abie Mason and Yvette John played in making our visit such a success. We could not have done it without them.

June 2019

We are hoping that visas will arrive in time for us to welcome 6 teachers and Francis Mason to Hastings UK in June 2019.

This will be the first use of the British Council grant money for overseas teachers.

The following schools are hosting.

St Mary Magdalene RC – Emelia Macauley, Beckley Preparatory School

All Saints CE – Bernadette Ramu Will, Edest Preparatory

Sedlescombe CE – Patricia Kamara, Jui Upper Primary

Claverham Community College – Sia Lovetta Mbayo, Huntingdon Secondary, Allentown

St Leonards CE – Trevina Lee, Baptist Model Primary

St Pauls CE – Clara Haffner, Kossoh Town Primary

We will be planning a similar programme to last October for them.

Annual Soccer Tournament

Roger Mitchell is organising this as usual. Unfortunately we have to change venues for the first time in 12 years as St Leonard's Academy (being a member of UBAT) is no longer allowed to host the event. It will take place on Tuesday June 11th at the Bulverhythe Playing Fields (entry from road to Household Recycling Depot) from 1.15 to 4.30pm. Nine Primary Schools are taking part and Teresa Bennett has agreed to organise the programme again in her role as Community Sports Co-ordinator. We are again hugely indebted to her and to Hastings Borough Council for agreeing the free use of the Playing Fields.

Isabel Hodger

05/05/19