

Who Do We Think We Are?

Steve Brace, Head of Education and Outdoor Learning at the Royal Geographical Society, encourages schools to get involved in Who Do We Think We Are? Week – taking place 22 – 27 June 2009

Who Do We Think We Are? Week, 22 – 27 June 2009: supporting primary and secondary schools in the exploration of identity, diversity and citizenship.

What are the factors that shape the character of our local communities? Is it:

- The faiths and beliefs of people who live there?
- The geography and history of an area?
- How a place is connected to other places, in the past and in the present?
- Where people came from and what they do?



Through its support for citizenship, geography, history and RE lessons, case studies and resources, the *Who Do We Think We Are? Week* project (WDWTWA) - supported by its accompanying website www.wdwtwa.org.uk - can help every school better understand their local, and national, community. And these explorations should not stop at the school gate; if you really want to understand your community you should be reaching out beyond the school grounds and seeing it 'for real'. This provides a wealth of learning outside the classroom opportunities be they within:

- Sacred spaces
- The built and natural environments
- Heritage buildings and places, or farm settings and the countryside
- The use of arts and creativity

During the WDWTWA pilot year in 2008 almost 500 schools took part with activities taking place in Bradford and Brighton, London and Cheshire. We hope that for 2009 and in future years, many more schools will become involved in the project. In

particular, we welcome approaches to WDWTWA that embed LOtC opportunities across the curriculum. For example, many schools have visited local places of worship, civic buildings and held celebratory events within their schools and other local venues. Other schools have been out into their local area to document its geography and history and then shared their findings with a school from a contrasting setting.

When we are asked 'where do you come from' we typically talk about a single place or a number of places connected by a journey or experiences. What the WDWTWA project does is help pupils and their teachers explore the many connections that bind our communities together, alongside those connections that link us with other people, other places and other times.

So whether primary or secondary, inner-city or leafy-shire this project helps all pupils, in all schools, to better understand their community, locally and nationally. And what better reason could there be for learning to take place beyond the four walls of the classroom?

WDWTWA is DCSF supported and run by the Association for Citizenship Teaching, Citizenship Foundation, Historical Association and Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) alongside key stakeholders such as the Schools Linking Network.

For more information please see www.wdwtwa.org.uk or email Harpreet Sanghera h.sanghera@rgs.org