

Workers' Report 2016/17

The academic year of 2016/2017 was a positive period of both consolidation of our existing work and some new opportunities.

In September 2016 we welcomed Chris Mason back on board into the Secondary team. Chris brought a strong gifting to the team in terms of his relationship building, creativity and mentoring skills.

Question Point

The activity known as Information Point was renamed as Question Point in this period to reflect a change in emphasis. Questions which evoke a student to think and then express an answer allows them to consider either a topical issue or a personal thought. An example would be "What is faith?". Students would respond in a range of ways and record their answer on a large sheet of paper. Commonly students read other responses and this initiates conversation. Week after week, the same faces come and chat and in some schools have asked some deeper faith questions and we have also become a safe informal place to chat.

In 2016/17 QP took place at Ryburn, Brighthouse, Brooksbank and Todmorden. Some schools keep the posters we produce and have used the results in tutor times and RS lessons.

At Rastrick, we use the format in our lunchtime club aimed at Year 7-9s for a starter activity and then with the addition of themed games and discussions we explore the question and link it to a faith question of bible lesson.

Lessons

We undertake a mix of lesson support and lesson delivery. The lesson support involves, by invitation, sitting in on a Religious Studies lesson but with the clear understanding we are there to offer personal experience and knowledge of the Christian faith. We have a positive response from teachers who feel the students gain a chance to learn from a person, rather than a text book and also to ask freely questions of us which help them work out their own beliefs.

We also delivered lessons during this academic period, on "What is a Christian?" "Poverty and a Christian Response". "What do Christians believe about God?" "What is Prayer".

This academic year, this service was delivered in Ryburn and Brighthouse School.

In addition, at Rastrick School, we were guests at the annual Year 7 Carol service and gave bible readings.

Mentoring

This element of our work is funded by local schools as and when needed.

We believe that part of our support of local schools is to use our wider gifts as Christians and experienced school's workers, and we do this by providing an informal service offering a listening ear to students who are specifically referred to us for a set period. Typical reasons may be for Anger management, self esteem or sometimes literally just working through the teenage pressures of life. Feedback from school staff has been positive and they have seen a change in students from this extra input.

Assemblies

We have a regular booking to deliver to all year groups, assemblies based on Easter and Christmas at Brighthouse High School. We had a comment from a senior teacher that we had become a regular fixture in the school calendar and the school looks forward to our input each season.

And we serve school staff too!

In addition, to our work with students, we also have a good reputation amongst various schools with staff. In between set activities we can be found in staff rooms, reception areas and classrooms having conversations about life, about their own lives outside of schools and at times on a faith related question. These informal times are invaluable to our work too.

Volunteers

Neil and Chris wish to thank those who volunteer so much to CICS. The trustees keep busy holding the practical side together and some volunteer in our activities. We wish to thank particularly Angela who had volunteered a number of hours into schools for a few years and took a well earned step back at the end of 2016/17.

Local church volunteers pitching on this year included Kiki from Halifax NTCOG, Neil Deakin from Kings Church Halifax and Claire Whybrow from Brighthouse Salvation Army.

2017/2018 so far...

This year saw a slight change in team roles, in that the Primary and Secondary teams agreed to be generally just known as schools workers. This adaption has meant as CICS all staff can serve in either sectors when opportunities arise.

The positive fruit of that has been Nancy and volunteers doing their Question Point in Todmorden, and Angie and volunteers were able to start a new Question Point in Crossley Heath.

Angie became involved too in the Twelve24 mission week in January which was a partnership of several Calderdale churches and groups and became known as Fuse Calderdale. The band did some work in Calder High and in Crossley Heath and this was followed up by a larger scale concert in the Attik club in Halifax. The whole initiative was a success and is continued through the regular youth nights being held at the Costa Coffee shop in Halifax. Feedback has been very good and Angie did an incredible job as the CICS member of that wider team.

Question Point continues in Brighouse, Todmorden and now in Crossley Heath. Our lunch club in Rastrick continues and is very popular, particularly amongst Year 8s.

In Ryburn, we changed our lunchtime approach and we have in the summer term just launched a new lunch club called "Thanks". Students explore a question or issue and then through practical activities and discussion they express their thoughts and answers.

Lessons have also continued in a few schools and we were pleased to deliver a series of lessons on Holy Week to Lightcliffe Academy, as a reconnected school to us. We are looking forward to further work there as the summer term progresses.

We are actively looking ahead to the Its Your Move season and engaging with local volunteers and with Schools.

This year has been challenging as previous volunteers have moved on but we have a God of provision and look to who will be able to step up and join us in the coming months. We want to thank Claire Whybrow who has served a long period helping with lunchtime club at Rastrick.

Neil Harris, CICS Lead Worker