



Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust Newsletter, Autumn Term 2020

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BSCWT can be found both on Facebook and Twitter at:
www.facebook.com/BSCWT and www.twitter.com/BSCWT.



“Serving school communities by providing Christian learning and support”



Persevering, pivoting & pioneering

Someone once said (and many have since repeated) that *the only constant is change!* We are living through a season in which that truth is more evident than ever, with frequent adaptations needed in how we respond to the current pandemic. As I write, a new 'lockdown' has just begun but, this time, schools remain open. Thankfully, the BSCWT team is still able to keep fulfilling our mission to serve school communities by providing Christian learning and support.

For example, our Chaplains are continuing to visit schools to support struggling pupils, many of whom are dealing with increased anxieties. Also, our assembly teams are still creating and delivering assembly messages by video. And we are producing digital resources for classroom lessons, including our Christmas projects such as *Christmas Unwrapped* and *Darkness to Light*.

Back in March, we recognised that the months ahead would involve plenty of perseverance, frequent adjustments ('pivoting') and the need to pioneer new ways of fulfilling our mission. And so it continues to be. To be honest with you, it's very challenging! But we remain convinced that helping pupils to learn about Christian faith and find support from Christian people is as vital as ever. As our friend, Chris Curtis (CEO of Youthscape), wrote back in July: *“Schools work is going to be different, but perhaps there's never been a moment when it could be more valuable.”* With this in mind, we are immensely grateful for your support and we hope you find encouragement in this newsletter. Whatever your own situation may be right now, I very much hope you remain safe and well.

“Perhaps there's never been a moment when schools work could be more valuable.”

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work

Praying for Schools

The most important thing Christians can do to serve and support schools is to pray for them. BSCWT began in response to Christians who were praying for our local schools and continuing to pray for schools has been at the heart of the Trust's work ever since. This is because Christians believe that God is good, he loves people and he has power to change lives.

During these challenging times, it has been our privilege to continue serving and supporting school communities, and we have repeatedly been able to tell people that we are praying for them, because it's true! It is always important to support schools in this way, but in the immense difficulties schools are facing currently, it is as vital as ever.

If you are a praying person, why not commit to pray regularly for your local school on your own or with others?

Please contact our office if you want to sign up to receive information to help you to pray.

Christmas is not cancelled!



Christmas Unwrapped last year!

We have led various Christmas lessons for primary schools for many years, including *Christmas Unwrapped* for year 6 pupils, then adding the *Darkness to Light* workshop for infants and, more recently, *Christmas Prayer Spaces* too. This year, our Christmas projects are changing and adapting again!

It is highly unlikely that schools will be making visits or receiving visitors, so we are planning to create an all new *Christmas Unwrapped* using a combination of films and worksheets, for teacher-led activities in school. A series of short 'Knitivity' films of the Nativity story will form the core of our new *Darkness to Light* lessons, along with resources to help children reflect on dark and light situations in the story and in their lives. And finally, our *Christmas Prayer Spaces* will take the form of resources to help whole schools to reflect on the Christmas Story.



Sue Evans, Schools Worker

It is our prayer, despite the restrictions, that we can still engage with pupils in their celebration of this wonderful Christian festival. Moreover, with these resources available online, we may be able to reach out to include even more schools in these wonderful activities.



Gelila Melaku, Project Administrator

Inside this issue:

From Ian: *Persevering, Pivoting & Pioneering*
Christmas is not cancelled!
The Importance of Praying for Schools
Chaplaincy Pupil Support.... in a pandemic
Primary & Secondary Assemblies by Video

Page

1
1
1
2
3

Fantasy vs Reality lessons
OT/NT Mini
Finance Update / 'Amazon Smile'
View from the Chair (of Trustees)
How can you be involved?

Page

3
3
4
4
4

Chaplaincy Pupil Support... in a Pandemic

Back in April, Sue and I attended a 'Zoom' conference on 'Youth and Mental Health', led by the charity 'Kintsugi Hope'. One of the statements that struck me, was **"as a result of the pandemic and lockdown, mental health experts are expecting there to be a 'mental health tsunami' in young people"**. Churches, youth leaders and schools workers were encouraged to 'get trained and get ready'. Pastoral pupil support has been something that BSCWT has done since 2007 through our team of Chaplains. It is now one of our core activities and an area that has seen a lot of demand from schools so far this term.



According to a survey by the charity Young Minds, **"many young people with mental health problems are struggling to cope as they return to secondary school, after months of living through the COVID-19 crisis"**, with 40% of respondents saying there was no school counsellor available to support students in their school (see <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/>). We are so grateful for our team of Chaplains, which includes most of our staff and some of our Associate Workers, who support young people in school every week. Some of our staff members' experiences are shared below. We are thankful for our continuing relationships with local schools. Above all, we are grateful to God and for those whose vision to begin Chaplaincy work through BSCWT, back in 2007, enabled us to have opportunities to support young people today, especially at this most challenging time.

Fiona Mason, Administrator & Schools Worker



Holly: "So much need"

It is always a privilege to sit with a young person and give them time and space to talk. I would say that for me, my experience so far this term has been the hardest yet – even more so than talking to the students during lockdown. There is SO much hurt amongst young people, and this has manifested itself in the worst ways imaginable. There is definitely lots of need out there and all prayers for this important work are very much appreciated!

Holly Coleman, Schools Worker

Alison: "Schools are welcoming our support"

I have been able to go back into 2 schools to re-start one-to-one student support work this term. One student had been asking to see me since the start of term! Many students have thanked us for the cards we sent to them during lockdown. We have noticed that many schools have been keen for us to re-connect with students we saw regularly before lockdown as well as to meet new students. There appears to be a real need for this type of support and we have waiting lists in some schools.

Alison Carmichael, Schools Worker



Frances: "There's power in listening"

I was invited into a school towards the end of the summer term to do one-to-one student support. Even after just 3 sessions with each student it was encouraging to see how much depth could be covered and to see positive developments too. I was asked back by the same school in September to continue to provide support to students. In the first session with one young person this term, although I didn't feel that I'd made a particularly useful contribution, the student said at the end, "I feel better now just being able to say all of that." There's power in the simplicity of being heard, being able to just talk and be listened to!

Frances Coe, Schools Worker

Fiona: "Anxiety & uncertainty"

I have continued with supporting 6th Form students one-to-one so far this term. Some students have welcomed the routine of school life after lockdown, albeit with new rules and restrictions to follow. Others however have felt very anxious, experienced panic attacks, found it hard to concentrate, are unsure what the future holds (especially in terms of what form exams will take next year) and how to even begin thinking about life after school. Please pray for all the young people we meet and for the Chaplains too, that we can provide the support that is desperately needed.

Fiona Mason, Administrator & Schools Worker



New this term... 'Rooted'

We are currently leading a small group called 'Rooted' in a local school with 6 girls from Key Stage 4 (age 14-16). 'Rooted' is a 10-week course covering topics such as self-esteem, confidence, identity, healthy lifestyle, relationships and the future. The 'Rooted' course was created by Scripture Union, and we are adapting it for our group. It contains lots of creative ideas to explore the themes, as well as opportunities for discussion. The first few sessions have gone well! The girls are fairly shy, so we are focusing on getting to know them and building up a relationship of trust. They had some great ideas for group rules and they are slowly communicating with us more. Due to the pandemic, we have to be creative in our planning, because of social distancing and not being able to share equipment – so each student has their own pack of resources to use throughout the course. We hope and pray that these pupils will find life-changing benefits of being part of 'Rooted'.

Alison Carmichael and Sue Evans, Schools Workers



Primary School Assemblies



Until March this year, taking assemblies in our primary, junior and infant schools was our most widespread activity, as we visited most of the schools in the Brentwood area at least once every half term. And we are not letting that change... we're just having to alter the way we achieve it!

Most schools are not running whole school assemblies in their halls, and many are holding classroom assemblies instead. In addition, any visitors to schools are an extra complication and risk. So we have moved to producing our assembly messages as videos uploaded to our [BSCWT YouTube channel](#). We have been working hard to edit not only filmed 'assemblies' - involving a cast of staff, volunteers and puppets - but also to create supporting materials with questions, reflections and activities to use to explore the ideas.

Our topic this year is the **Power of the Holy Spirit**, as seen through the stories in the book of Acts, and we are focusing on how God helped the early church to act, teach, forgive, heal and love. Our hope is that these stories will inspire the children to think about the situations they find themselves in and reflect on where their hope and help come from. Why don't you have a look by visiting <http://bit.ly/BSCWTYouTube>?

Sue Evans, Schools Worker

OT/NT Mini



As we know, things have had to change and adapt this year. One of these is our OT and NT Mini lessons (primary school lessons teaching the Bible stories of the Old and New Testament). Despite being unable to deliver some of these ourselves at this time, 'Walk Through the Bible' (WTB), who created the lessons and train presenters, have made some fantastic OT Mini videos, continuing to teach the stories through actions as well as fun and engaging activities and challenges.

Whilst things are never quite the same as having a personal, face to face interaction with the children, we are thankful for the hard work that the WTB team have done in order to put these lessons together to continue to share God's Word and His story with as many as possible. Please join us in praying for these lessons as we offer them out digitally to the schools of Brentwood, approaching new primary schools that have not had the 'live' lessons in the past, as well as those schools which are familiar with them. Please pray for them as they go out to other schools across the country also.

For further information, please visit:
<https://www.bible.org.uk/video-lessons.php>

Rosie Graham, Schools Worker



Recent feedback from a teacher: "Thanks for all your support... It is really appreciated across the school."

Fantasy vs Reality: online

With the new lockdown and schools doing what they can to keep students in safe 'bubbles', our **Fantasy vs Reality** lessons, exploring the impact and dangers of pornography, looked set to be missed this year.

However, after discussions and prayer, we felt that this is a subject that is too important to miss. So instead of taking the lesson in classrooms we have decided to adapt it to a digital format. Rather than a one hour lesson, we have chosen to reduce it to shorter, bite-sized chunks, to allow school staff to use them when convenient and to focus on a topic at a time. Our three 15-20 minute sessions will focus on the impact that pornography has on us as individuals; the brain, our family, friends and relationships; the heart and those around us; and the world. Each will share facts and a film in an engaging way as well as pose questions, allowing students to pause the videos and discuss, whether in a classroom setting or from home.

It is exciting to be able to continue to help students consider this topic and our hope is that, by putting these lessons into a digital format, it may be possible to offer them to more schools.

Please pray for these lessons as they go out in their new format and for all those that view them.

Rosie Graham, Schools Worker



Secondary School Assemblies

In 'normal' times, our team delivers assemblies to thousands of students in several local secondary schools. However, due to the changes caused by the current pandemic, as with our primary schools assemblies, we have been creating video messages for our local secondary schools to use in classrooms (you can visit our YouTube channel at <http://bit.ly/BSCWTYouTube>).

Covering themes such as Diversity, Perseverance and Advent, we are learning fast about this way of providing engaging, thought-provoking messages to help pupils to reflect and develop spiritually.

In relation to these 'assemblies', one Assistant Headteacher recently emailed us to say: "Thanks for all your support this half term. It is really appreciated across the school - staff and students alike."

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work



SCHOOLS WORK SUNDAY is on 7th February 2021

Around about the halfway point in the school year, please take the opportunity in your church to celebrate and pray for the work that Christians (including BSCWT, of course!) are doing to serve our local schools. Thank you so much for your support.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR:



The world continues to be an ever changing place and, with no end in sight to the restrictions and changes society is experiencing, this can lead to a feeling of despondency. The way we used to interact has altered dramatically and for many our support base has eroded.

The long term effects of this enforced separation are yet to be seen, but already our staff has received a significant increase in requests for help from schools for pupils who are struggling with various issues. And because the world has changed, the Trust is also trying to adapt and offer support and assistance wherever it can. The main thing still remains the main thing, however, in that our primary aim is to uphold the name of Christ amongst our young people and to show that in an ever changing world, He is the rock which is solid and unmovable.

I do not know your circumstances, but I know there are many that are fearful in this situation. I offer you a verse that I always turn to when I am anxious or face unknown circumstances for it offers comfort from a God who is firmly in control.

“Cast all your anxiety on Him for he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

May God keep you during these difficult times. Thank you for your partnership and support.

Kevin Gilderson, Chair of Trustees

How can you be involved?

If you are a Christian with a passion for schools, education, children and young people, and think you might be interested in being involved, please get in touch with us at the BSCWT office. Please join with us to:

GIVE: BSCWT depends on the continued generosity of people who support us financially. If you'd like to support the work financially, please:

- Set up a standing order or a donation via your online banking. Please contact us for a Gift Aid Declaration form, if applicable (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Contact us for a standing order mandate (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Donate online at www.give.net or send a cheque to our office address (see front of newsletter).
- For on-line banking/standing orders, please contact the BSCWT office for our bank account details.

BSCWT is a Local Mission Partner of



Scripture Union

If you no longer wish to receive communications from BSCWT, please contact us via the office at office@bscwt.org to be removed from our circulations.

Finance Update from the Treasurers & Trustees

Dear friends and supporters, we are most grateful for your continuing support, both in prayer and donations for the ongoing work and activities of the Trust with the young people of our Brentwood schools.

As to the Trust's finances, despite a reduction in support, the following report shows the accounts remain healthy.



Joe Nunn
Treasurer

Receipts to the end of August were £44,730, including a budgeted transfer of £14,700 from unrestricted funds. Payments were £38,765, leaving a net surplus of £5,963. Government support received from the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) was £3,364, thus maintaining the Trust's financial health and supporting furloughed staff. Recovery from HMRC of income tax on donations was £2,418. If you do not "gift aid" your donations, and can do so, please contact the Trust office for a gift aid declaration form.

The completed annual accounts for 2019/2020, authorised by our Independent Examiner, have been uploaded to the Charity Commission website. Again, thank you for your support, both prayerful and practical. Please pray that, despite Covid-19, we can pursue our opportunities to exercise the privilege we currently have of reaching out to our schools and their young people. (Prayer does work, see James 5:16.)

Peter Embling & Joe Nunn, Joint Treasurers



Peter Embling
Treasurer

Do you shop online at Amazon? If so, why not use 'Amazon Smile' at www.smile.amazon.co.uk. Select the Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust as your charity and Amazon will make a small donation to BSCWT from each qualifying purchase you make. Many thanks!

PRAY: We believe praying for our local schools, children and young people is really important. Please contact us to:

- Request our weekly prayer email, termly prayer calendar and newsletter by email or post. Contact us at office@bscwt.org or 01277 249275 or visit <https://forms.gle/VUjcfbi1QhuSNvFP6>.
- Start a prayer group for schools in your church or start/join a prayer group for a particular school.
- Just pray — on your own or with others!

VOLUNTEER: There are over 40 people who give their time and energy to volunteer with BSCWT:

- Our **Associate Workers** volunteer with us in schools, working with children and young people.
- Our **Trustees** oversee the running of the Trust.
- Our **Support Teams** assist the Staff and Trustees by doing important tasks in areas such as prayer, finance, human resources, policy-writing, events, monitoring and publicity.
- Our **Church Reps** help us to liaise with our local churches.
- We are also open to applications from people interested in doing an internship or work experience with us.