

# BRANCHING OUT

## School

Primary school  
(Welsh Medium).

## Creative audit participants

18 children  
(Years 5 and 6),  
15 staff.

## Creative audit activities

STOP/ START  
plates;  
UNESCO image  
mapping.

## Starting out

I'm a foundation phase teacher in a Welsh primary school with approximately 180 pupils from Nursery age to Year 6. The school was established within the last decade in response to the increasing demand for Welsh-medium education.

Our junior department is still relatively small but our infant department continues to grow on a yearly basis with 30 children currently in our reception class. Two years ago I was appointed as Healthy Schools Coordinator and at the last minute our head teacher nominated me to come on the professional RSE learning programme.

## Making RSE Matter

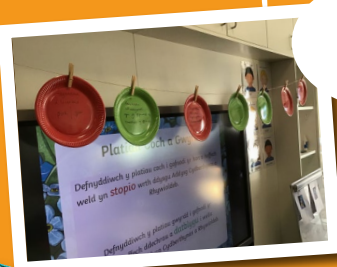
Everybody is different;  
Fingerprint tree;  
Wiring our Bodies;  
Moving with our Feelings.



## My creative audit with teachers

I started by doing a creative audit with staff at my school. I had 45 minutes to work with all staff as part of an INSET session. I used the CRUSH cards as a way of opening up conversations about RSE. This led to staff talking about their own experiences of RSE and how they learnt about sexuality and relationships.

When I talked about the changes to the RSE curriculum staff were very supportive.



They felt that they had received very little RSE at school when they were younger and could see the need for positive change in Wales.

Next we used the **UNESCO themes** to map what RSE is currently being delivered at our school but we ran out of time.

Bringing everybody together to share what we are all doing was useful, because it has helped us realise how much RSE we are already doing embedded within the different areas of learning.

Finally I asked staff to use red and green plates to write down practices they wanted to stop and start for future RSE provision within the school.

## Children's Creative Audit (Part 1): breaking the ice and exploring RSE themes

Next I worked with 18 children from Years 5 and 6. I didn't know the children very well and have never taught this age group before so I decided to start by doing some creative activities centred around some RSE themes.

I took the children off timetable for the day and used some of the Primary AGENDA activities to explore themes of feelings, bodies and emotions, diversity and difference.

I wanted to break the ice, have some fun and get to know the children, before diving in and asking them about their experiences and opinions about RSE curriculum.







## Difference and Diversity

We started by watching the youtube videos **"Everyone Is Different" by Lanny Sherwin** and **'This is me' by The Greatest Showman Cast**. This was followed by the Fingerprint tree activity. We drew a tree and then filled the trunk and branches with our fingerprints. We used a magnifying glass to look at our fingerprints in detail and talked about the fact that we are all similar but unique. We made notes around the tree about things that are similar and different between us in our group.



## Wiring our bodies

This activity was adapted from the Primary AGENDA resource Wyred Bodies (see [www.agendaonline.co.uk/everybody-matters](http://www.agendaonline.co.uk/everybody-matters)).

We each made a pipe cleaner body and then talked about how we would take care of them. We made a list of what you need to do to keep yourself and others safe and then for the rest of the day the children looked after their 'bodies'. They took this really seriously. One child made a blanket to keep their body warm when they went outside.



## Moving with our feelings

The children moved their bodies to two songs - one sad song (*Bridge over Troubled Water* by Artists for Grenfell) and one happy song (*Happy* by Pharrell Williams) and then talked about how they felt. We used some sentence starters to encourage children to talk about their own bodies and feelings - I feel good in my body when... I feel bad in my body when... Then they split into two groups and each drew a body outline to show how they had been feeling - one sad body, one happy. They swapped 'bodies' and annotated them, writing their feelings and experiences in and around the body.

## STOP / START plates

Finally we moved on to having a discussion about RSE. We used the red and green plates to talk about what the children liked and didn't like about RSE. It was difficult because they didn't know much about what RSE is and so weren't able to give very much feedback.



**I didn't think that the children would open up to me in the first session because I don't usually teach them, but they really did. They loved the activities and the discussions and told me that they wanted to do more.**

# Children's creative audit (Part 2): mapping RSE at our school

In the second session we had more of a focus on mapping and evaluating RSE at our school. I asked children to share their thoughts and feelings on 10 topics from within the UNESCO themes, using a set of images developed by one of the teachers on the professional learning programme. It was really helpful to have the images as prompts for each of the topics, particularly as they showed diverse relationships and communities. This helped the children to be inclusive in their discussions from the start. For each topic I asked the children to use two different coloured post-it notes to map what they already know about the topic (e.g. families) and what they would like to know about the topic.

From this I learnt that the children at our school would like to know everything! Some of the topics they said they wanted to know more about were: different types of families, different kinds of relationships - including multi-faith and multi-racial relationships, relationships with disabled people, being friends with someone who's different to you, two women / two men loving each other, how disabled relationships work, sexuality, sex, babies, people of different shapes and sizes and body image. They also said that they wanted to learn about these things more than once in primary school and for talk about sex and body parts to become more normalised and less taboo.



## Key creative audit findings – children

- 1 All children wanted to know more about all RSE topics.**
- 2 Children's current level of knowledge and understanding is uneven.**
- 3 Children were keen to share and to learn from their peers in open discussions.**

The creative audit made it clear that the children at our school are keen to engage in RSE and want to share and learn from their peers in open discussions.

**I learnt that the children know a lot already but they want to know much more!  
I also realised that not everything they know is correct and it is clear that some children know much more than others.**

There was a particular child within the class that already had a lot of knowledge about sex and relationships. She openly spoke about her feelings on different types of relationships and whilst many of the other children said that they understood what was being said I wasn't sure that they did. It's clear that we need to create a level playing field so that all children are provided with the same knowledge to support their understanding.

## What's next?

We are currently in the process of writing a new RSE policy for our school. Once this is complete we will make RSE compulsory, with no parental opt-out from September onwards. We will be letting parents know and offering them an open evening to discuss any questions or concerns that they may have.

I'm also going to work with the teachers to map what we are currently delivering across the new six RSE themes that were recently announced by the Welsh Government.

Once we've taken stock of what we are currently doing we will plan a way forward for our school.