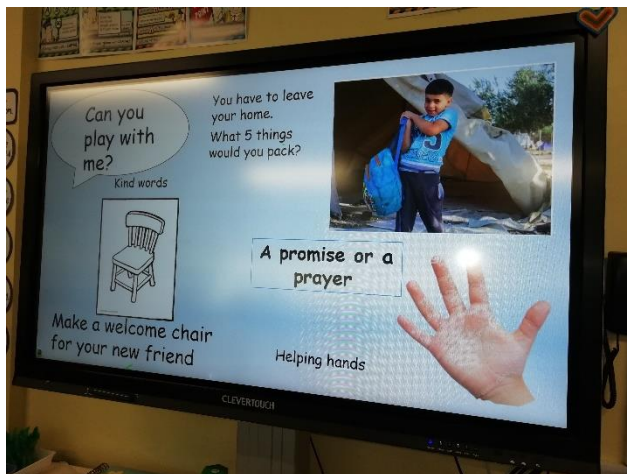




Kent Schools of Sanctuary – Our journey so far ...

In 2017, a small NGO called Samphire collaborated with Canterbury Diocese with a vision to bring the Schools of Sanctuary movement to East Kent. What began as a pilot project has grown into a network of primary and secondary schools across the area. Based in Dover, the front line of a humanitarian battle for rights of sanctuary, Samphire has witnessed a disturbing rise in hostility towards migrants; we recognised that by supporting Schools of Sanctuary, we could equip our youngest generation to be educators of their families and communities and so change attitudes.

Schools recognise the divisive nature of issues of migration, especially here on the Kent Coast, but often lack the tools needed to address this topic in a way that nurtures an empathetic and welcoming learning community. We have been welcomed into 29 schools so far and have work to support their individual needs. Initially we took assemblies and ran workshops; these provided a foundation on which schools could create an ethos of welcome to all children. More recently, we have recognised that most people learn about issues of migration via the media. To counter this constant stream of misinformation and hostility we now offer school staff training; this has proven very popular and means that teachers can have confidence in talking about refugees and asylum-seekers in an informed and sensitive way.



Activities for KS1



*'Conversations with Stones'
(Led by our partner, Peter St Ange)*

Some schools are new to the idea of receiving children from migrant backgrounds, and others have been working hard to be welcoming and inclusive; many schools find that they are already doing much to meet the criteria of a School of Sanctuary and just need a little support and encouragement to try out new ideas. We have seen some fantastic examples of outreach to migrant families and

have met so many children with hearts eager to welcome others into their school. One school has a changing display to show off the culture and language of different students which range from Mali to Scotland. Another school takes part in an Erasmus programme, this brings new ideas and a wider world view into the classroom.

Once schools have gained their School of sanctuary status we continue to support them, touching base yearly and encouraging them to be active in the East Kent Network; here they can share best practice as well as any issues they encounter. We send out a regular news letter where schools can find out about campaigns to support refugees, local initiatives and ideas to feed the momentum of the Sanctuary ethos. As another way of encouraging sustainability ownership of their status, students can become Sanctuary Ambassadors; we have worked with schools to decide how this role could look and



Deal Parochial school receive their School of Sanctuary certificate at the Dover Together Festival



Migrant students proudly show exchange teachers Dover's cultural heritage. (Green Park school)

to the Dover Together Festival where many of them have had the opportunity to participate in dance or music workshops, then perform on stage in the centre of Dover; it's a wonderful way to show how communities can unite and enjoy our commonality and diversity.

Frederika Treeby
Samphire Community Engagement Team
email: communityengagement@samphireproject.org.uk

have kept it flexible to fit with individual schools. Once a year we invite our schools



Changing attitudes to, and improving the lives of, ex-detainees and migrant communities

