



Presentation for Spirit Blazers to CCPP Board 26/03/24 **Board of Education 27/03/24**

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Welcome to our presentation today. Our group came together for the first time on 4th October 2023. Our group is made up of 4 children from St James primary school, Bishop Bridgeman primary school, St Maxentius primary school and Canon Slade secondary school. We meet every Tuesday from 2.30pm – 4pm, at Canon Slade.

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We spent the first few sessions building a vision together and defining our mutual purpose. We spent time discussing ideas for our group logo, name and a bible quote that our work is grounded in. After discussions as a group and in our own schools we voted and our group is called Spirit Blazers and decided on our logo. The bible verse that we decided would remind us of our purpose is **“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” 1 Timothy 4:12.** Together with Rachel we decided that our first project would be to research how children and young people access worship in their schools and churches. We think it is important to ask our children and schools communities what they love about worship, how they worship and how worship in our schools and churches can be made even better for everyone to develop their relationship with God and their spirituality.

We had a discussion. around these questions

What are we trying to find out for CCPP?

What would make our group even better?

How can we include other children and young people in our project?

What will make this project really fun to do?

How are we going to report to CCPP Board?

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We spent time deciding on the ground rules we would work by as a group. Also the different roles we take on each week to ensure our group works well. It has been really good to have members of the Children Changing Places team join us each session. This has enabled us to understand more about the Children Changing Places Project and how we can bring the voice of children and young people to the project.

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As a group we decided that we would base our research around 2 main questions. - ‘What is Worship’ and ‘What do you want in worship’

We carried out a mind mapping activity as a group first to gain our thoughts and ideas. We used a large sheet of paper so we could see all our thoughts and ideas.

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Sessions 4, 5, 6 and 7 we looked at the skills in interviewing and asking the right questions to different groups of people. In order to practice this, as one of our gap tasks, we set up ‘graffiti’ tables in each of our schools asking our schools communities 2 questions - ‘What is Worship’ and ‘What do you want in worship’. We also carried out some practice interviews that we analysed together.

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We considered the following in questions in pairs and then in a group:

What was it like to see all the responses on your graffiti table?

How did it make you feel?

Did anything surprise you?

What research actions does it create?

Then we considered the questions we would ask to different groups of people

Good research depends on good questions. A research project involves asking (and answering) a few really big questions but asking lots and lots of much smaller questions in interviews and when looking at your data.

We discussed the difference between types of questions and the use of supplementary questions to dig for more information.

We made a list of questions that we would like to ask different types of people e.g. pupils, staff, governor and church.

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We decided as a group that we would interview a different group of people each week. We looked at children/ young people, school staff, Governors, church leaders and members of the congregation.

We decided on the following questions to use in our interview

Pupils and Young People

1. What do you like in worship?
2. Do you like going into worship?
3. When do you worship?
4. How do you worship?
5. Is your worship fun/ interactive?
6. Do you feel you can speak in worship?
7. How can worship improve?
8. What do adults need to do to make worship fun?
9. Do you feel included in worship?
10. Does worship help you through the day?
11. How does worship help your relationship with God?
12. Does worship enable you to develop spiritually?
13. What are the 3 top things you would want to see in worship?
14. Do you have a worship routine?

School Staff

1. What things, parts, activities or elements do you prefer in worship?
2. Do you like going into worship?
3. How often do you get to go into worship?
4. How do you worship?
5. Do you find worship interesting and do you learn anything?
6. How can worship improve your spirituality?
7. How are children with additional needs supported and encouraged to join in with worship?
8. Does worship help you through the day?
9. How does worship help your relationship with God?
10. What are the 3 top things you would want to see in worship?
11. Does worship help you through the day?

Governors

1. What things, parts, activities or elements do you prefer in worship?
2. Do you like going into worship?
3. How often do you get to go into worship?
4. How does your school worship?
5. Do you find worship interesting and do you learn anything?
6. How can worship improve your spirituality?
7. How are children with additional needs supported and encouraged to join in with worship?
8. Does worship help you through the day?
9. How does worship help your relationship with God?
10. What are the 3 top things you would want to see in worship at your school?

Church

1. What do you like in worship?
2. Do you like going into worship?
3. When do you worship?
4. How do you worship?
5. Is your worship fun/ interactive?

6. Do you feel you can join in with worship?
7. How can worship improve?
8. What do adults need to do to make worship fun?
9. Do you feel included in worship?
10. Does worship help you through the day?
11. How does worship help your relationship with God?
12. Does worship enable you to develop spiritually?
13. What are the 3 top things you would want to see in worship?
14. Do you have a worship routine?

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In a gap task we carried out some practice interviews. We asked members of staff in our schools to be our practice subjects.

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In one of our sessions we looked at interviews we videoed and recorded the responses. It was really useful to observe our interviewing skills and look at the thoughts and ideas from staff.

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We had a long discussion, to decide on the way we would collect all the responses to the interview questions. We decided to create a huge recording sheet so each school could use post it notes to record answers to the questions.

Slide 11 and 12

Session 8 we collated our responses from children and young people on a huge sheet of paper.

Session 9 we collated our responses from staff in our schools.

Session 10 we collated our responses from Governors in our schools.

Session 11 we collated our responses from our churches.

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In session 12 we began to analyse our responses for recurring comments, patterns and trends. We drew together our findings. Here are some of the main themes and thoughts for CCPP to consider.

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In response to

Q1. What do you like in worship?

- * praise God
- * Interactive – Role play and acting out
- * Hymns and songs and singing
- * Bible quotes to help you through the day
- * Stories and storytelling not just reading a story
- * Building relationships, connect with other people and God
- * Helps to understand the purpose of life
- * Focusing on Jesus
- * You can bring everything to God and He will accept it
- * When everybody is together
- * Praying together
- * Children at the front, coming out to act, telling stories, action songs
- * Seeing the school family gathered together
- * I like talks by the vicar when I can use what they say in the week and learn from them.

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2. Do you like going into worship?

- * YES! When the adult is interactive and fun
- * We can reflect spiritually and connect with God
- * We get to be with God and reflect
- * Yes as I can put problems aside and spend time with Jesus

- * Yes I like seeing my school family altogether, enjoy worshipping together.
- * Yes I can think through the day and invite Jesus into my day
- * I love leading worship especially when it is interactive and the children are involved
- * being in God's presence
- * Just worshipping in the congregation

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3. When do you worship?

- * I like to worship everywhere
- * School and church
- * Times of need
- * Yes as I can put problems aside and spend time with Jesus
- * Yes I like seeing my school family altogether, enjoy worshipping together.
- * Yes I can think through the day and invite Jesus into my day
- * Not that much as school, I love it when I get to go in worship
- * One or two times a week though I would love to go in every day

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4. How do you worship?

- * Read the Bible and reflect on my relationship with God
- * Reflecting, singing and praying
- * Thank God for opportunities and how you are feeling -let it out
- * Singing, listen to music, action songs, upbeat songs
- * There is no right way to worship
- * Through fun and laughter with others
- * Talking to others

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5. Is your worship fun/ interactive?

- * Songs for all ages and action songs
 - * Yes because you can colour
 - * Not all the time, especially if an adult just reads a story
 - * Sometimes, because you get to do acting
 - * yes by acting and singing
 - * I learn who God actually is
 - * Yes, I find it interesting because I like to learn the modern songs and learn about the Bible
 - * Yes, I love learning the stories
 - * Worship is interactive through the words we say as part of the service on a Sunday and in the songs we sing.
 - * Sometimes the talk that the vicar gives has some humour in it.
- moving into drawing up our recommendations which we will invite Rachel to in session 14 or 15. We have some initial thoughts and findings but it is too early to share at this stage.

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6. Do you feel you can speak in worship?

- * Prayer jar, put prayers in if they don't want to speak about it then others can pray about it as well.
- * Yes because you get to answer questions
- * Yes, because we sometimes get to talk among ourselves about questions
- * Yes, when adults ask questions for us to think about
- * It is hard if new people come to church as they don't know the service.

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7. How can worship improve?

- * More interactive for younger children because they can get bored
- * More songs for younger children to connect with
- * More dancing and acting
- * Role play

- * By getting more children involved
- * More acting and more hymns
- * Quizzes
- * Use windows, mirrors and doors more
- * Children to lead worship more
- * More doors challenges and the children sharing and setting the doors challenge
- * More practical approach
- * More interactive with the congregation

- * Not always speak from the pulpit come into the congregation

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8. What do adults need to do to make worship fun?

- * Need to get more people involved
- * I think more stories could be told
- * Adults need to make it more fun because worship can be boring and not very interesting
- * Adults need to make sure that the older children don't get embarrassed by doing the things that the younger ones enjoy
- * More visitors
- * Do more crafts and make it fun

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9. Do you feel included in worship?

- * Yes because the teachers ask questions
- * Not really because we are such a big school that a lot of us are not included
- * Yes because the teachers ask questions
- * Yes but some people don't
- * Yes because I am chosen to help
- * Teachers ask questions
- * Someone is chosen to light the candle
- * Children with additional needs find it hard to concentrate in worship or they just don't come in

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10. Does worship help you through the day?

- * Motivates throughout the day
- * Yes because you can remember and keep going
- * Yes because I can remember the message and it is fun

11. How does worship help your relationship with God?

- * It just does and you feel every little emotion and feeling
- * We pray to him so yes
- * Worship helps me connect and learn more about God.
- * It enables me to believe that I can do more than I think
- * Hear God's message, hear God's heart

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12. Does worship enable you to develop spiritually?

- * Through the Bible and prayer God communicates with us
- * Yes it makes me feel connected to people of different faiths
- * It makes you feel good
- * It makes me appreciate things
- * Worship should provide a safe space to encounter God
- * You can find out more about yourself and others
- * Your spirit says hi to God
- * It makes you feel worthy
- * I feel God's presence
- * It is about worship moments and our school's Christian vision

- * It is like food that feeds us spiritually
- * Yes when he sings hymns and prays and watches the acting he feels connected to the things he loves.
- * Think about the readings add something that relates to the theme of the worship
- * It brings me closer to God and it shows you the understanding of God.
- * By praying we learn more about God, ourselves and others and we develop our relationship with God
- * Yes, definitely. It provided a space to talk to God, to pray and praise. It is beneficial to worship in church with other people. I can reflect on the week during Sunday worship.
- * Yes refilled with the Holy Spirit every day
- * Being with others
- * It makes you in awe of God's presence and awesomeness
- * When you are in that moment you are filled with the Holy Spirit which creates an atmosphere where you just want to be in the present.

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13. What are the 3 top things you would want to see in worship?

- * Peace, quiet, sensible
- * Children involved more, worship routine and tell stories
- * Wiggle worship, role play, prayer, have fun and enjoy worship then you will remember it
- * Visitors
- * Children leading worship
- * Music, action songs make it more engaging
- * Animated adults telling the stories
- * Singing more pupil led worship by Ethos groups and they get confidence older children and adults see new things from a different perspective. Children relate to other children and understand more
- * More interaction

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14. Do you have a worship routine?

- * Yes I always pray in the evenings and I say "Thank you Lord" before I am eating
- * Lighting worship candle, school prayer, music
- * Prayer before worship so you are more open to God's message
- * Routines help you in your faith and helps younger children
- * It is a way of living not just going to church every Sunday
- * Pray, sing hymns, thankful, repent, praise, bring requests to God

Slide 27 and 28

15. How are children with additional needs supported and encouraged to join in with worship?

- * I have never really thought about it!
- * Sometimes I feel sorry for them as they are not connected with other children.
- * They need to be included in the role play
- * Perhaps they need a time for worship that enables them to move more, play games and give them change to talk more as they may feel uncomfortable to talk in front of the whole school.
- * Asking different questions
- * Songs with easy to remember lyrics
- * Someone there who acts as additional support
- * They are allowed to have things that help them
- * They are allowed to be themselves so everyone can be included in worship
- * Teachers may need some help or training for planning worship to include children with additional needs
- * This is something I have not thought about but will take the question back to my school.
- * It is a very difficult question!
- * If I really think about it, I am not sure children with additional needs are enabled to access worship or be provided with opportunities to have a spiritual encounter??
- * We don't have many children attend church but I think it must be very difficult to modify things to enable children or adults with additional needs to access worship rather than just being there.

- * I think we could do more to encourage families with children with additional needs to come to worship. Make worship more relaxed and use toys/ games etc.
- * Some children have an adult to sit next to them or have a fidget toy
- * There are ways that we already help but there is more we could do
- * Talking to the kids and small groups of people – explaining
- * Visual screens
- * Books that introduce people to worship
- * I don't know who has additional needs but I pick anyone with their hand up
- * It should be more inclusive I think it is boring for children and young people with additional needs
- * Through opportunities in Junior church with child friendly material. It could be improved by asking the children with additional needs what they would need.
- * Encouraged to be part of the worship by coming to the front
- * Often parents are encouraged to bring children along and support them and be part of the worship
- * Encouraged by youth leaders and made comfortable and welcome

We hope our main findings are interesting and informative to you as CCPP team and Board.

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All our work on what children, and young people enjoy about worship and what they want from worship time has now formed some recommendations that we would like to put to the CCPP team and Board.

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1. To promote worship for children and young people to be fun and interactive.
2. To provide more training for schools and churches in ways to make worship interactive.
3. To make something like Wiggle for older children
4. More children and young people leading worship in school and in church.
5. Share Spirit Blazers main findings

The huge surprise and now a challenge is our findings regarding children and young people accessing worship who have additional needs, therefore our main recommendation is

To write some materials to help teachers, teaching assistants, church leaders and clergy to engage and provide children and young people with additional needs with a quality worship experience.
To train adults and raise this issue with schools and churches.

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We would be happy to answer any questions

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We have just started our next project looking at racial justice. We have had many discussions and looked at many ideas and have now decided on an art textile project as a vehicle for our discussions with the children and staff back in our schools. We will make 600 A3 size portraits depicting and celebrating all the peoples of the world. We will be working closely with Ni-Cola in our Tuesday sessions. Canon Pilling is facilitating the art work in each school. Spirit Blazers and Shades Ambassadors will make the portraits with other children and in doing so talk about race. Here is a sneak peak of a few we have made at St James.

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We will be installing our art work on the pitch at Bolton Wanderers on Thursday 23rd May at 1.30pm, we would love to invite you to join us. We have also got the opportunity to speak about our racial justice project on Bolton FM. Once each school has completed their portraits they will use them to carry out a reflective worship session for the whole school. We will circulate the date of each worship with an open invitation for you to join if you can.