



Helping churches and schools bring RE to life in Reading and beyond

September 2017

TITLE: Trainee LLM comes to REInspired!

Oxfordshire trainee LLM, Rosemary Sandbach, from Upper Basildon, came to REInspired for two months and renewed her love of working with children. She spent her placement with REInspired, who brings RE to life in schools in Reading and beyond. Julia Jones, Project Director, trained and mentored Rosemary during the two months and involved her in a variety of sessions in primary and secondary schools.



Rosemary had bumped into one of REInspired's Trustees at a local Christian Community Action (CCA) shop where she worked as an accountant. She was invited to observe a session and had loved it and she wanted to see more. Rosemary was exploring other avenues wanting to fulfil her desire to become an LLM. This became a reality when she was accepted for training in December 2015. Rosemary sought out REInspired as her placement. Julia was excited as not many LLM's choose schools work. Julia organised a programme for her with a diverse range of working with different teams at sessions in both Primary and Secondary schools.



Rosemary's experience in the Year 12 Problem of Evil, held at the secondary school was amazing!" she explains. "It was my best time." Rosemary thought that some of the pupils gave thoughtful explanations and responses to questions on free will and they were so articulate! In the preparation for the session, she heard a new word - 'theodicies' - it means 'to try to answer the question of why a good God allows evil.' It's a helpful reminder that even as adults working with people and children we can always learn new things.

The Year 6 Transition Event in the local Leisure Centre hall was a mind-blowing experience for Rosemary. She was amazed at how REInspired's staff managed so many children (300 of them, along with their teachers) at the event. The pupils were put into groups with others going to the same new school. Julia explains, "Through activities we help them to reflect on how they feel about leaving Primary and moving to Secondary school, share excitement, worries and wisdom. Having taught these children since they started school, we pray God's blessing and protection over them as they journey on."

Rosemary smiles and says, "The experience was quite different from the quiet group of seven children at a similar event with my village school."



Rosemary was really interested with what went on in the Year 6 Big Questions session at Earley St Peter's church hall. There's time to be altogether, time for group work and time for hearing specific questions. She explains, "I got involved with the group work and was able to contribute to the small group discussion."

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Other sessions that Rosemary enjoyed were Year 6 Death, Funerals and the Christian and Year 5 Beliefs and Practices. She was impressed with the material REInspired provided to the volunteers and session leaders; the session plans and templates for activities were excellent. You can see more sessions on our website, www.reinspired.org.uk.

Rosemary was fascinated to hear that REInspired have 'family' groups in other parts of Reading and beyond, i.e. West Reading, Woodley, Caversham, Southcote, Chinnor, Houghton Regis, Headington and Guernsey. She says, "If you have time, get involved in your local area!" The family groups follow the REInspired model/way of working and use similar ways of sharing their faith to bring RE to life for children in schools.

This year Julia is piloting a new REInspired project for three schools in West and South Reading. She is building relationships with the local churches. And, there are another three schools anticipated next year in the Reading/Wokingham area who have asked for REInspired's support with their RE. Julia asks, "If you have a heart to work with children, live in these areas and would like to be involved, however small, please contact me. I'd love to hear from you!"

Once a youth group leader, Rosemary loves to explore what children are interested in, how they think and the best way to communicate with them. She explains, "REInspired has shown me that if you structure a session correctly, in the way REInspired does, the children are interested in what is said and respond enthusiastically when given the freedom to express their questions. It's brilliant that they have something to say about the issues being discussed. When I was at school," Rosemary continues, "I used to sit in the classroom with the teacher writing on the blackboard and talking from the front. It was boring." She exclaims, "REInspired make it so interesting and all the children are involved!"



Thank you, Rosemary, and hope to see you back in REInspired soon.