

## Visits to St Alban's Catholic Primary School

I have been working with the children of St Alban's for over ten years. It is always a delight to walk through the doors of this school. The children are exceptionally polite and engaged in everything I do with them. They come to my sessions with an extremely positive attitude and demonstrate their understanding of their faith by making links between the stories that I tell and other Bible stories and aspects of doctrine. Because they have been given such a solid base of Biblical scholarship and enabled to develop an understanding of their faith, they have a freedom of thought that enables them to engage with open-ended 'wondering' questions on a very high level. They show a deep level of spiritual engagement – their faith has real meaning in their lives, which they freely articulate. They are readily able to relax into a storytelling session and be guided by the Holy Spirit to think outside and beyond their own immediate experience. They are confident in expressing their own thoughts, listen to each other and respond to insights made by others. They have a good awareness of things that are going on in the world around them and are prayerfully committed to engagement with issues of social justice across the globe. I am impressed by the way that time for prayer is incorporated into the daily life of the school, and also has meaning to the children who obviously value their personal relationship with God. I work with all the year groups, so can see the progression that they make as they travel through the school. I recently had the privilege of leading a session for the school chaplains at the upper end of the school and came away personally enriched by their commitment and the way they are so naturally able to share their faith with others.

I also find the staff at the school to be extremely nurturing and supportive of the children – both in general, and of their faith formation in particular. I led a twilight Lent session for staff, as part of their professional and personal spiritual development, and could see that their care for the children flowed from their own faith and understanding and openness to the 'inspiration' of the Holy Spirit. I feel that my work is valued by staff, and they go out of their way to make me feel welcome.

I am a Mentor for OutoftheBox - a movement of storytellers engaged with developing resources for wellbeing and personal development. I use the materials in my work for faith and spiritual development in schools and churches. When asked if there were schools that I could be filmed in telling stories to children for our promotional video, my first choice was St Alban's. The film crew were blown away by the way the children engaged with the story and then responded to it through play.

Working with the children at St Alban's has also played a big part in the development of my role with the Church Schools of Cambridge. From my first days, the head teacher of St Alban's has shown enthusiasm and engagement with my work, personally made me welcome, said 'yes' to everything I suggest, and provided great inspiration to take things in new and exciting directions. He and the school have had a role in my own spiritual development, and I always come away from my sessions at St Alban's feeling that I have been blessed.

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