



Howick C.E. School

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Sarah Yates and I am Key Stage 2 Leader and RE Co-ordinator at Howick C.E. Primary School in Penwortham, near Preston. I have recently worked with Waqaus Ali during our school Faith Week in March.

Howick Primary is a small school with just 103 children on roll. The school is surrounded by small, rural villages and as a result the school has a very narrow catchment area. The children in school are predominantly from white, middle class backgrounds and have a very restricted knowledge of the wider world. As a faith school, the majority of our religious education curriculum centres around Christian beliefs as does our daily whole school worship. As a result of this, our children have a very basic knowledge of other world faiths and have certainly rarely, if ever spoken to someone who is different to themselves. Our faith week was planned around the theme of 'being closer to God' with the aim of providing our children with a greater understanding of the beliefs of others.

Waqaus began our week with an assembly for the children about the 5 Pillars of Islam. The children really enjoyed the assembly in which Waqaus talked about the way he dresses and what the 5 Pillars meant to him. He engaged older children by using a PowerPoint presentation - putting pictures to the new vocabulary the children were learning. Waqaus also set the children a challenge, to recall the 5 pillars which they did with enthusiasm.

Later, Waqaus and his wife worked more closely with Year 5 and 6 to talk about the pillars in more detail. I believe this really benefited the class as they had a deeper understanding of the beliefs and values that underpin Islam. After all, it can be the lack of understanding between different cultures that causes tension and hatred. The children could also put a face to a belief and realise that followers of Islam were 'normal people.' As Waqaus brought his wife with him it also enabled older girls to learn about the life styles of other women in society - giving them a different perspective that the typical celebrity culture. I believe his visit helped to remove some of the stereotypical ideas the older children may have had of Islam.

Overall, Waqaus was the most remembered visitor from faith week, with all children still talking about him now, recalling the 5 pillars easily.

Yours Sincerely

Sarah Yates
R.E Co-ordinator and Key Stage 2 Leader