



Religious Education Art Competition

Project Brief:

Durham SACRE joined with the North East Religious Learning Resource Centre (NERLRC) and Durham Cathedral to organise and run an art competition as part of the Celebrate RE month. We wanted to offer our students the opportunity to consider the subject of RE by creating a piece of art that would illustrate one of the following:

- Why RE? (the value of RE in schools)
- Religion makes a difference (how religions can have an impact positive/negative/both) on individuals and communities)
- Diversity in Durham and beyond (religious diversity in the North East)

The winners:

The art work poured in from around the county, the panel of judges (from SACRE, Durham Cathedral and NERLRC) met together and deliberated. After much consideration a shortlist was formed. Each piece was commendable but the judges were able to identify five winning pieces:

- Harriet Wall - religion makes a difference. *One of the most visually striking pieces that used a variety of media.*
- Daniel Lucy, Daniel Skilbeck, Thomas Dunlop - Religion. *A very thought provoking and considered piece addressing both positive and negative impacts of religion.*
- Lauren Pull and Emily Eggett - What is the value of RE in schools and diversity in Durham. *The positive and expressive slogan at the heart of this piece made it stand out.*



- Jacob Crow, Oliver Littlefaire and Jonathan Hann - Why RE? An interesting piece exploring the child as the centre of religious enquiry.



- Emma Thompson and Anna Lowrie - Why RE and diversity in Durham. A Visually appealing piece around the theme of respect.

Experience Day:

The winners were invited to a day of exploring art in the north east. The first stop was Durham Cathedral, where the focus was on how religion was expressed through art.



Elizabeth Baker the Education Officer for Durham Cathedral directed the winners to different pieces of art in the cathedral. Time was spent reflecting on the Daily Bread Window the Annunciation statue by Joseph Pyrz amongst other pieces. The students were also given time to explore the cathedral and to see which pieces of art they were drawn to.

Following lunch the winners were then taken to the Angel of the North, where the focus changed to how art expresses religion.



Before the experience day, only one of the winning students had had the opportunity to sit at the feet of the angel. Time was spent considering the sculpture by Anthony Gormley. The students then moved around the sculpture and spent time reflecting on the angel from different positions and discovered their interpretation changed depending upon their location. Finally, the students discussed the meaning of N. Tassel's poem about the Angel. The day was completed with an ice-cream.

In addition to the experience day the RE departments of the winning entries were also able to work the Karenza Passmore from NERLRC to select £50 of resources that would support RE in their schools. It was a challenge to meet before the end of term but Karenza has been in contact with both Sharon Lupton from Sedgfield and Clare Dyer from Staindrop to discuss their needs. Sharon requested resources to support Islam and Karenza has supplied copies of the texts that Sharon did not have but which were recommended by the Durham Agreed Syllabus. If any of these prove particularly valuable Karenza will explore purchasing them on Sharon's behalf. Clare requested support with her Buddhism module, particularly artefacts. Artefacts can be expensive to purchase so Karenza has proposed that Clare's prize money be spent on hiring artefacts boxes from the Resources Centre.

In summary:

We were delighted by the responses from our 12 winning students and from the creativity and quality of the art work that was submitted from all of the students that took part in the competition. The competition raised the profile of RE and gave our students time to consider the purpose and value of the subject. Some RE departments now intend to run the competition in-school in future years. The experience day was a great success despite the weather. This can be seen in the following comments:

'A nice relaxed day out that explored RE themes in 'real life'. It gave the opportunity to look at and discuss things we would not have otherwise.'

'It was good to see the angel up close instead of just seeing it on the way to the Metro Centre.'

'I enjoyed comparing the two pieces of art about Mary in the Cathedral.'

'I enjoyed visiting Durham Cathedral for the very first time – I also liked seeing where Harry Potter was filmed.'