

Holocaust Memorial Day 2018

Introduction

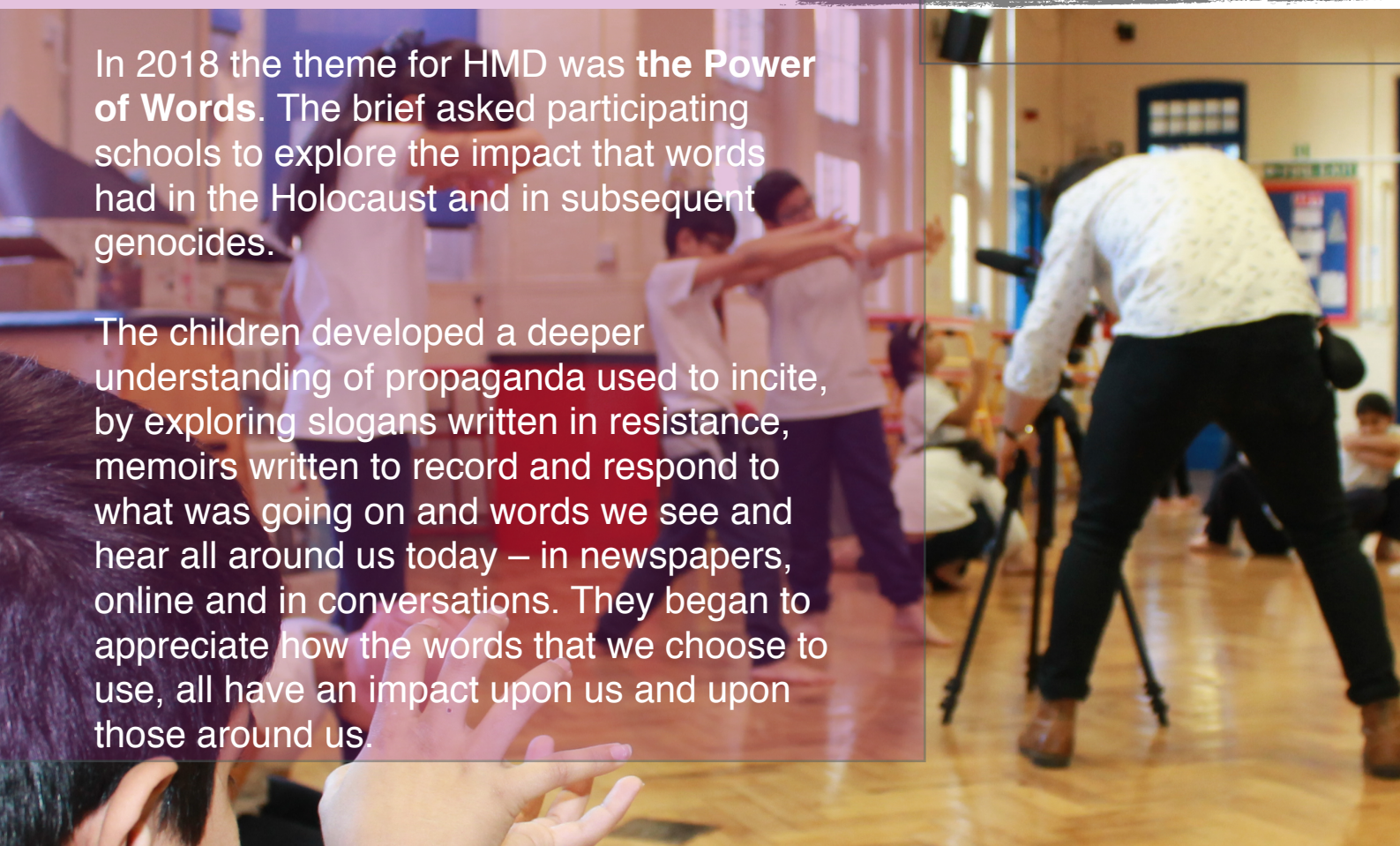
THE POWER OF WORDS
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2018

> 'I want to go on living even after my death! And that's why I am so grateful to God for having given me this gift, which I can use to develop myself and to express all that's in me. When I write I can shake off all my cares; my sorrow disappears; my spirits are revived.'
>
> - Anne Frank, written in her diary, 5 April 1944

Each year, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust chooses a different theme to enable audiences on Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) to learn something new about the past; to take part in engaging and thought-provoking activities. It provides an opportunity for pupils to learn about the life stories of those who were murdered and those who survived, as well as the experiences of resisters, rescuers and witnesses.

In 2018 the theme for HMD was **the Power of Words**. The brief asked participating schools to explore the impact that words had in the Holocaust and in subsequent genocides.

The children developed a deeper understanding of propaganda used to incite, by exploring slogans written in resistance, memoirs written to record and respond to what was going on and words we see and hear all around us today – in newspapers, online and in conversations. They began to appreciate how the words that we choose to use, all have an impact upon us and upon those around us.



Cleveland Road Primary School was approached by the HMD trust to respond to this year's theme of the *Power of Words* as part of the London Borough of Redbridge's remembrance and tribute to the victims of the Holocaust. In a combined project, Cleveland Road Primary School, Parkhill Junior School and Valentines High School worked with professional artists (in art, creative writing, film and dance) to create and curate a collaborative exhibition hosted by Valentines Mansion.

Learning about the Holocaust, across different subjects and perspectives, deepened the children's understanding of this event. Due to their involvement in the exhibition, the memorial service had greater meaning for the children taking part. The empathy and sensitivity shown through their reflections about the atrocities, both during the project and on Holocaust Memorial Day, highlighted how deeply the project had resonated with the class.

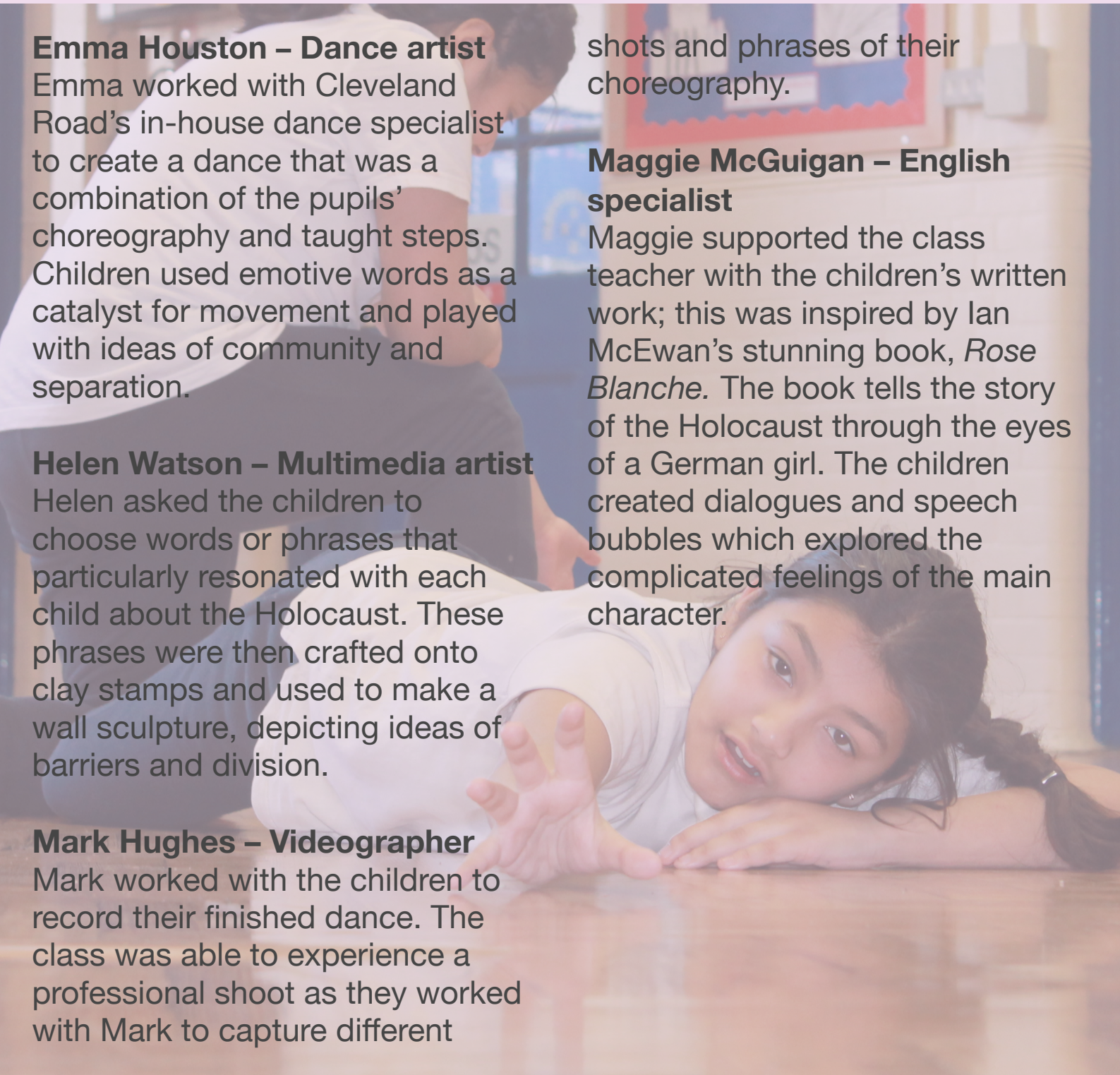
> "Learning about the Holocaust in lots of different subjects helped me understand how the people had suffered. I liked that it was so creative because we really got to understand people's feelings and the artists were really exciting because they all taught us something new."
>
> -Tejal Patel, Year 5 teacher



Creative Outcomes

Through their involvement in the project, the children in Year 5 were able to:

- Learn about the Holocaust in a cross-curricular and creative environment
- Work with external specialists in art, dance and videography
- Choreograph a professional dance-film
- Create a collaborative art-installation
- Compose pieces of creative writing
- Relate *the Power of Words* theme to their lives today
- Develop a deep understanding of a historical event and its impact in the world today
- Work remotely with neighbouring schools
- See their work on display in a professional and public setting



Emma Houston – Dance artist
Emma worked with Cleveland Road's in-house dance specialist to create a dance that was a combination of the pupils' choreography and taught steps. Children used emotive words as a catalyst for movement and played with ideas of community and separation.

Helen Watson – Multimedia artist
Helen asked the children to choose words or phrases that particularly resonated with each child about the Holocaust. These phrases were then crafted onto clay stamps and used to make a wall sculpture, depicting ideas of barriers and division.

Mark Hughes – Videographer
Mark worked with the children to record their finished dance. The class was able to experience a professional shoot as they worked with Mark to capture different shots and phrases of their choreography.

Maggie McGuigan – English specialist
Maggie supported the class teacher with the children's written work; this was inspired by Ian McEwan's stunning book, *Rose Blanche.* The book tells the story of the Holocaust through the eyes of a German girl. The children created dialogues and speech bubbles which explored the complicated feelings of the main character.

The Exhibition

> I felt really happy to see my work in a real exhibition because lots of people could see how creative we are and how much we had enjoyed learning about the Holocaust. It showed us that we should never let something like that happen again.

> I was a little nervous to show my work in a public exhibition because I didn't know what people would think, but in the end it was exciting and I felt very proud of what I had made!

> When I saw our artwork up and people walking around looking at it, I felt really proud of myself and all of 5P. We had worked really hard as a class to bring it all together. I felt proud and famous!

On 28th January 2018, children and staff from across the community gathered for the Redbridge Service of Remembrance in the Ilford War Memorial Gardens. Hundreds of Redbridge residents came together to reflect on the power of words, to both incite hatred and foster unity. Entrance to the exhibition at Valentines Mansion, showcasing the children's work, followed shortly after.

Seeing their work in a public space on such an important day had a huge impact on the pupils. Firstly, to be involved with the event and learn about the Holocaust developed a new and deeper understanding of the importance of the memorial service. The children understood why it was crucial to not forget the atrocities from the past and why it was relevant to their present and to their future.

Secondly, the feelings of ownership and pride were evident in all the children after seeing their own work on display. It was an incredibly powerful experience for the children to see their art in a public and professional space and opened their eyes to what is possible. It raised confidence levels and gave the children a sense of empowerment.



Impact

Cleveland Road Primary School is currently working towards Artsmark status. Artsmark identifies seven Quality Principles to raise the quality of work by, with and for children and young people. These principles are embedded within the arts curriculum at Cleveland and extend into the special events in which we choose to take part in. The Holocaust Memorial Day project is an excellent example of how the Quality Principles can be followed to achieve high-quality arts and culture provision.

Artsmark Quality Principles

1. Striving for excellence and innovation
The variety of arts activities and specialists brought a depth and maturity to the children's learning, producing high-quality work. This was the first time the HMD trust had worked with Redbridge schools in this way, setting the framework for future projects within and beyond the local authority.

2. Being authentic
Interaction with professional artists, visiting the exhibition and seeing the public react to their work, contributed to a high level of authenticity and real-world application within the project.

3. Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
The children were excited and engaged throughout the entirety of the project, all reporting that this was due to the creative and novel approach of the external specialists. The whole class were keen to learn and contribute to the final outcome.

4. Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
The artwork and choreography was created through individual input of the children themselves, ensuring that all children were able to contribute. Work from every child was represented at the exhibition, and the whole class visited Valentines Mansion to see their work on show.

5. Actively involving children and young people
The children's own ideas, thoughts and realisations about the Holocaust were at the heart of the pieces they created. They were also able to decide how they wanted their work to be presented at the exhibition.

6. Enabling personal progression
Participation in the project has provided a strong foundation in understanding the events of the Holocaust, which pupils will encounter again at secondary school. Their achievements in choreography have led to higher engagement within their weekly dance classes.

7. Developing belonging and ownership
Due to the high level of engagement and pupil-led learning throughout, all children reported strong feelings of pride. As the the only class in the school to take part in the project they felt the sense of responsibility and privilege. As a result the children developed stronger bonds through this shared experience. Participation has led to a more cohesive learning environment have bonded through the experience. Participation has led to a more cohesive learning environment within the classroom.