



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School July 2019



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School 16th and 17th July 2019

I attended St Joseph's Catholic Primary school on the 16th and 17th July. I was made very welcome by the staff and pupils. On the first day I shared the profiles of three soldiers with the children; William Gallagher, Joseph King and Edward Dunlavy. My research revealed that none of these soldier's homes are still standing, but we knew that they would have lived close to the school.

The pupils were interested to learn that Charles Gallagher had been a pupil at the original St Joseph's school. We discussed the fact that the school used to be housed in a building adjoined to St Joseph's church, which is the church closely connected to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The pupils were fascinated by a clipping from the Dewsbury Reporter which explained the sad story about what happened to Charles. He was injured in both knees and had to have a leg amputated. Unfortunately, he never recovered consciousness and died soon after. The clipping from the paper featured an extract from a letter from the Matron at the hospital, in which she described how he 'was often speaking of you.'

The children were surprised to learn that Joseph King had also died soon after having a leg amputated. They were very interested in the letters that were featured in the Dewsbury Reporter at the time. One of these was written to his mother, in which Joseph informed her 'the bullet went through my leg and broke it' but then told her to 'cheer up' as he hoped to be better soon and home for Christmas. They also read an extract from a letter that Private King sent to his sister a few days before he died, in which he described being spoken to by King George V, who enquired how he was, during a royal visit to the hospital.

I showed the children the Dewsbury Sacrifices website and how to use the search bar to look up their relatives. They were very keen to find out if they had a relation listed on the war memorial. Lots of children used their Chromebooks to search under their surname and I printed out some of the profiles for them to take home and share with their family. On the second day the pupils planned and wrote their postcards. As we had some time left, I shared my collection of original WW1 embroidered silk postcards with them. They created designs of a similar style for the back of their postcards.

I was delighted with the interest and enthusiasm shown by the pupils, particularly as it was the last week of term. They produced some excellent work, which they seemed very proud of.

Suzanne Hudson

