

# Otley Christian Resources Hub CIO

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*Supporting Ministry to Children & Young People*

*Charity number 1169443*

## **Annual Report 2020**

2020 was a very varied year at OCRH. Building on the foundations laid in 2019 and working with an external consultant the trustees and staff invested a lot of time in the early part of the year producing a development and growth plan to move the organisation forward through the next two years. However, the disruption caused by Covid 19 meant that, in the short term, those plans were put on hold as we adapted to a new situation and the very real impact on our work with churches and schools. In the first 6 weeks of the pandemic this meant supporting our volunteers, providing encouragement and sharing information. As the lockdown and closure of schools continued the Hub Manager and Resource assistant posts were furloughed for a period of 10 weeks from mid-April to the beginning of July. The Resource Assistant fixed term contract ended in November and the trustees would like to thank Katie for her hard work in this role.

Although The impact of Covid can be seen in all areas of our work and therefore throughout this report. The Challenges presented have also led to opportunities to be creative and reimagine our projects to suit the new normal. By the start of the new academic year in September OCRH was ready to deliver work in new ways across all of our projects.

## **Open the Book**

### Schools work

At the start of 2020 our open the book project was supporting 15 Open the Book teams drawn from 16 churches going into 19 primary schools. During the first week of schools closures all of this work stopped as teams and schools adjusted to new ways of working. By September 4 teams had begun to offer online assemblies for their schools and this rose to 6 by December which is just over a third.

### Partnership work

Building on the work done in 2019 the Hub has worked hard to strengthen its relationship with the Open the Book National team. As part of this the Hub Manager attended a train the trainer event at Open the Book National in January and is now a recognised OTB trainer. This was followed, in March, by co-delivering a national training slot attended by approx. 50 new storytellers. The Hub also hosted the Head of Open the Book (Alison Clark) for a day to showcase our work and it was agreed that working more closely together would benefit everyone.

### Celebrating Achievement

Summer 2019 marked the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Open the Book in our local area. The planned birthday celebrations had to be cancelled. Given that many of our volunteers were not able to attend virtual events (for various reasons) it was decided that hosting an online celebration would not be inclusive to everyone. Instead the Hub produced a 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday thank you card which was sent out to all volunteer storytellers to mark the occasion.

### Renew and Refresh of Resources

After a lot of hard work by our Resources Assistant the review and up date of all OTB resources was completed by the end of November . The trustees are very grateful for the hard work put into this strand of our work.

### **What's The Story ?**

Due to the timing of the lockdown and schools closures all bookings for our Easter project for schools had to be cancelled . This was really disappointing but given the timescales and the fact schools were still adjusting to remote delivery of learning , there was no capacity to deliver an alternative.

By December this had changed as primary pupils were back in school and the Hub had put an online alternative in place meaning that WTS about Christmas was offered in 4 schools.

### **Godly Play**

Between January and March the Hub worked closely with one of our churches to develop a new after school provision based around Godly Play. Support was given in terms of planning, loaning resources and delivery of the first three sessions. Although this work was paused in March, the school are very keen to continue when restrictions allow.

The Leeds and Bradford Godly Play network, hosted by the Hub, has continued to meet throughout 2019 and moved to an online format in May. Membership has grown from 6 to 10 .

### **Children's Ministry**

Between Jan and early March 8 children's ministry teams borrowed storytelling and prayer resources from the Hub . In addition we supported a partner church in developing story/ busy bags for use in services and ran an introductory resource evening for another children's ministry team. We also supported teams with resource ideas via newsletter and facebook once lockdown started.

Children's Ministry work paused due to restrictions and staff furlough from Mid April to the end of June . From early July Churches were able to borrow resources again on a click and collect basis.

Over the Summer break staff re worked our January development plan and by September online events were being offered in place of original plans. Between September and December the Hub ran “An Introduction to Telling Stories online workshop”, a “Christmas Resources” workshop and established a monthly book group exploring Children’s Spirituality. This online work is now well established and set to continue in 2021.

### **Wider work**

In addition to work already outlined The Hub hosted a visit for the Bishop of Leeds Paul Slater and delivered an “Easter Resources for Families” workshop at one of our partner churches.

Staff also took opportunities to attend relevant online training and networking events throughout the Pandemic period and these included 3 workshops run by Faithful Generation, and an online Playtime Conference. The Hub Manager also attended training with Voluntary Action Leeds on fundraising and leadership.

### **Governance**

The trustees have met 5 times this year (transferring to virtual meetings on Zoom from August).

### **Thanks to :**

The trustees would like to thank all our staff and volunteers for their hard work and commitment in a very difficult year. We would also like to thank Paul Cayton for hosting our website and for IT support which is very much appreciated.