

# Woodheys Primary School, Sale.

Woodheys Primary School in Sale, Trafford has been part of a British Council funded 3 year project with two schools in Durban, South Africa. Gordon Road Independent Girls School and Vumokuhle, a large primary school with over 900 pupils in the Township of Umlawsi.

These contrasting schools form a very strong 'triangle' of mutual support – to the extent that, three years on into the project, all three schools have adopted the U.K's motto TEAM 'Together Everyone Achieves More'.

Woodheys Primary School is known nationally and internationally for its pioneering environmental work, culminating in the school being awarded 1<sup>st</sup> in the UK for Environmental Cleanliness in 2005. David Bellamy presented the school with £8,000 which they used to build an exemplary Outdoor Classroom and Wild Area with a pond. CBeebies filmed SpringWatch and AutumnWatch there ( see our developing website for further details [www.woodheysprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.woodheysprimaryschool.co.uk) )



In 2007 the school was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> in the U.K for Energy Conservation. The £15,000 prize money was presented at the Ashden Awards in London to the Headteacher Laura Daniels by her environmental 'hero' Al Gore. In her acceptance speech, Laura thanked Al Gore and people like him for activating 'Positive Energy' around the globe, in order to help preserve Mother Earth for future generations. She also highlighted the crucial importance of education; as the words of the song go:

*'The children are our future,  
Teach them well and let them lead the way!'*

Al Gore, back in 1982 in his book 'Earth in the Balance' recognised that the root of the problems mankind is now facing, stems from a lack of engagement with 'spirituality and nature.'

In March, Laura Daniels presented to the British Council International Climate Change Champions about the important work that the youth of today face regarding sustainable issues. Laura Daniels and Freda Eyden (Environmental Co-ordinator) share these concerns and have drawn these strands together in ways which have brought the school and it's successful teaching methods to national and international prominence.

Through a three year teaching exchange with the British Council this union is now shared with the two schools in Durban and good practice shared. The Environmental link has now shifted towards multi-faith collaboration due to the installation of a J.P. Joule Positive Energy Labyrinth' which was opened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May with a ceremony which reflected the gathering which the Pope held in Assisi, Italy in 1986. All the faith leaders from the world's major religions gathered to say their own prayer for Global Peace. As Laura Daniels noted at the Woodheys ceremony, if you remove words such as 'God' and 'Allah', the thoughts and words are almost identical. There are far more similarities than differences between faiths.



Due to its environmental work and Global Links, Woodheys is very proud of its growing multi-cultural community. Most schools in the area have approx 5%, Woodheys has 35%.

Laura Daniels has recently come across a super teaching aid to support diversity and community cohesion, the Peacemala bracelet!

( [www.peacemala.org.uk](http://www.peacemala.org.uk) ) The Peacemala comprises of 14 rainbow coloured beads with a central white

bead. The beads represent the major faiths and spiritual paths and their peace messages for the world – again all very similar. 'Treat other as you would like them to treat you'. The central white bead represents the uniqueness of you the wearer. Finally all the beads are pulled together with a clear bead, which represents unity and harmony.

The rainbow is an important symbolic link between heaven and earth in many cultures. The Peacemala represents friendship, respect and peace between the faiths and all people in our world.



In July 2008, the school were delighted to hear that they have jointly won the Peacemala Junior Youth Awards and will attend the award ceremony in Cardiff at the Temple of Peace on 17<sup>th</sup> September.

Very excitedly, Woodheys are welcoming two staff from their Durban school, which will coincidentally arrive at the same time as a Hungarian student who is studying for a Masters in Peace studies, in Manchester on 21<sup>st</sup> September, World Peace Day!

Woodheys have also just been informed that their Global links work have enabled them to be awarded 'International Schools' status. Also they have won 1<sup>st</sup> in the North West in the National Teaching Awards: 'Sustainable Schools' category. Mrs Daniels and Mrs Eyden (Environmental Co-ordinator) will travel to London for the televised ceremony on 19<sup>th</sup> October, to see how the school has been ranked for the National Award. Fingers crossed!

The staff will work with Woodheys pupils on Peace projects and on setting up a 'Peace Council' with badges representing the Peacemala Dove. Gordon Road already has a 'Peace Council' and their staff will train our children in mediating skills and conflict resolution. The children will also, through Skype, have an opportunity to speak 'face to face' about common issues.

Laura is a passionate advocate of the spiritual power made available to users of the Labyrinth which she distinguishes from a maze 'a Labyrinth is designed to find yourself'. Gordon Road in Durban, have just raised the money to build their own Labyrinth and are eager to find out more about how Labyrinths release the right hand creative side of the brain, which links with the work which the Headteacher of Gorton Road Mrs Yvonne Johnstone, does in the area of emotional intelligence.

Both Mrs Johnstone and the Headteacher of the Township school Mrs Muzabane are keen potentially to get involved in the creation of a South African Peacemala, through a co-operative.

Whilst in Cape Town Laura Daniels was lucky enough to walk the Chartres style Labyrinth at Desmond Tutu's old cathedral St. Georges. Laura gave the new Dean his own Peacemala. Desmond Tutu himself has endorsed the Peacemala project as has the Dalai Lama.

[www.childseyemedia.com](http://www.childseyemedia.com) [www.labyrinth.org.uk](http://www.labyrinth.org.uk)

[www.labyrinthireland.com](http://www.labyrinthireland.com)

[www.labyrinthcompany.com](http://www.labyrinthcompany.com)

[www.stgeorgescathedral.com](http://www.stgeorgescathedral.com)



...this cathedral became widely known as a site and *focus of residence against apartheid*. And so *St George's won the splendid accolade contained in the title 'The People's Cathedral' – Archbishop Desmond Tutu.*