

St. David's Day on the Isle of Wight

In early 2020, Matt Anthony, Welsh Language Development Officer was contacted by Sue Cory a Reception Teacher at St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Ryde on the Isle of Wight. She was planning on celebrating St David's Day with her class and could he send her some resources that would help teach the children about the language, culture and values of Wales. Sue reports on the children's experiences below, giving us a fascinating insight into the perspective of children living in not only another country but on a small island...

"Although the world is allegedly becoming a smaller place and people travel around the world, it sometimes feels that the United Kingdom is becoming more insular. I find when teaching children, they have little knowledge or experience of other parts of the UK. The children on the Isle of Wight are no exception. In their minds the Isle of Wight is a country and the Big Island across the water is very foreign place. It is difficult to teach British values to children who have no or little understanding or knowledge of the nations of the UK and their separate political and cultural institutions. As a teacher I care passionately that children should know about the rich history and culture of our British Isles.

"We started the day with some magic. We were going to Wales (but don't tell Mark Drakeford). We got in our car and drove down to the Red Funnel ferry. An hour later we docked in Southampton and drove on the motorway all the way to the Severn Bridge. Thrilled to find out we no longer have to pay a toll; we drove on to Cardiff. There we found out about the country of Wales, its castles, traditions, food, landscape and, of course, the mountains of Snowdonia. To celebrate we made Welsh cakes and ate them for snack while listening to Hymns and Arias. A clip of the Welsh anthem being sung at the Millennium Stadium was shown in honour of Saturdays Triple Crown win. Some children commented that it was really loud and I agreed, although unfortunately I have never had the privilege of hearing it sung in Cardiff, even though I am old enough to remember watching the likes of JPR, JJ, Gareth and Merv the swerve on the TV!

"We then had a variety of activities to carry out, starting with sending a postcard back to school from Wales, making love spoons, using a Bee-Bot to travel from the Isle of Wight to Caernarfon Castle, flags, making daffodils, looking at leeks and spelling words with the 'ee' phoneme and of course a rugby session.

"I found out that a parent in my class had lived in Wales and learnt Welsh for A Level. She made two excellent videos teaching us to count to 10 and sing Yellow Bird in Welsh. We already had books that Early Years Wales had sent us, and I showed them the dual language road signs and that 'll' is pronounced differently. It was approaching the end of our day and time to go back to the Isle of Wight, hoping the ferry wasn't delayed or cancelled!

A great day was had by all, both at home and school.

"In a few weeks' time we are off to Ireland for St Patrick's Day, so we will be passing through Wales. We will remember to wave. "A huge thanks to Matt Anthony from Early Years Wales for his support. Ffarwell Cymru"



experiencing some
Welsh culture



Wales

Isle of Wight