

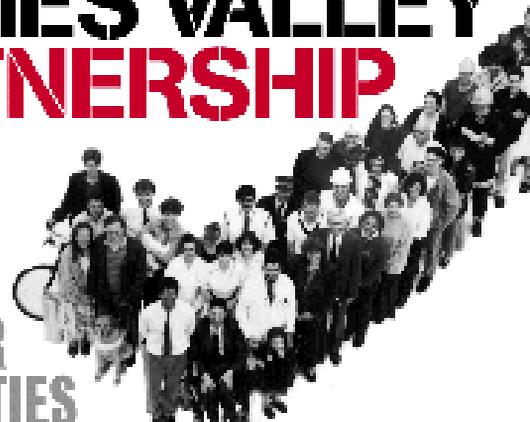
Breaking The Cycle

Evaluation Report

June 2002

**THAMES VALLEY
PARTNERSHIP**

WORKING
FOR SAFER
COMMUNITIES



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1. Introduction

The Calouste Gulbekain Foundation provided the Thames Valley Partnership with £10,000 towards the Theatre ADAD 'Breaking The Cycle' project in Windsor and Maidenhead over the academic year 2001/2002.

This report is the appraisal and evaluation of this project.

2. Project Background

2.1 Historical Perspective

The Partnership's 'Behind Closed Doors' programme provides a range of responses and projects to address the issue of domestic violence within the Thames Valley. An essential element of any such programme is to tackle the issue in schools, via a preventative educational programme.

In 1997, to achieve this aim the educational workshop 'Breaking The Cycle' was designed by Theatre ADAD and the Thames Valley Partnership. The resultant dramatic workshop sought to address and challenge young people's attitudes and expectations regarding 'relationships'. In so doing it hoped to positively influence the formulation of their adult relationships and ultimately to reduce the prevalence of domestic violence in the future. The Home Office cited the programme as an example of good practice and it has proven to be an effective way of engaging young people, challenging their perceptions and providing the training needed for teachers to give them the confidence to deal with these complex issues. In addition it was hoped that the production would encourage disclosure among students and would improve the school's capacity to deal effectively with these disclosures.

The production was successfully piloted in 1998 and 1999 in secondary schools and other venues including a young offender institution and specialist education units across the Thames Valley. The response both from teachers and students was enthusiastic and positive and during this period the workshop was adapted and improved to take into account any critical considerations from teachers and students.

2.2 The Educational Programme

The programme as presented in schools has three elements: -

The Play – A short dramatic representation of Kate's Story:

One day Kate with her best friend Gemma meets Danny. As her relationship with Danny develops, we see an increasing strain on her friendship with Gemma. Danny dislikes Gemma and puts increasing pressure on Kate to spend time within him in preference to her. As time goes by we see how Danny exerts increasing control over Kate. Matters reach breaking point when Kate is forced to choose between helping Gemma who is in crisis or appeasing an angry or agitated Danny.

The Workshop – Interactive discussion with cast and students:

The workshop addresses many issues raised in the play. The students are encouraged to define different types of relationships and how to behave in each. Attention is turned to acceptable behaviour and boundaries in an attempt to define where abuse begins. The students consider the behaviour of the characters and question whether any one person was abusing another. They are free to meet and question the characters. Finally volunteers are asked to take the places of both

Danny and Kate. They are encouraged to explore ways in which Danny could have managed his anger and frustrations better and to look how they both could have communicated more effectively with each other to resolve the problems in their relationship. The workshop seeks to address issues related to gender and stereotype, power and control, what constitutes abuse, effective anger management and communication and equality, individuality and respect.

The Teachers Pack:

The teacher's pack is a comprehensive information resource which includes a complete series of follow-up lessons, discussion topics and role-playing exercises, enabling teachers to provide a clear and structured programme to support the workshop. In addition there is supporting documentation on the means and processes of supporting disclosures, subject definitions, background information and statistics on abuse and a range of other relevant information.

2.3 The Need For An Expanded Programme

The initial piloted programme received a very positive response from all audience groups and consistently achieved its stated objectives. However the programme did not attract much further response from the education service and few other schools adopted the programme as part of their PHSE curriculum. The reasons for this did not reflect the evident quality of the programme but rather the cost implications for individual schools, the lack of available time within the tight PHSE programme and a perceived lack of expertise by school staff to tackle these issues.

Thus this project sought to secure funding to further incorporate this programme into the mainstream work of the local educational authority as a means of: -

- Ensuring its place within the PHSE and citizenship curriculum
- To reinforce the importance of putting in place proper procedures to deal with disclosure within schools
- To provide training for teachers
- To facilitate protocols with regard to child protection

The original aim of this project was 'to evaluate in one Local Education Authority (LEA) as a pilot for an approach to be developed across the Thames Valley and promoted to the DfEE for wider application'. The project was to include inset training for designated teachers, provision of the education workshop in schools for year nine pupils, follow up lessons in schools together with monitoring and evaluation. Efforts were to be made to liaise with LEA advisors, enhance links with Local Authority Child Protection Services and to provide support for teachers, advisory teachers and those with pastoral responsibilities. The funding was to cover: -

- Teacher training days by Theatre ADAD
- Theatre workshops in schools
- Teacher's pack & resource material
- Follow-up sessions
- Management and support by Thames Valley Partnership
- Monitoring, evaluation & follow-up

The LEA was to provide staff time for training, venues and a commitment to an advisory group. In addition it was hoped that there would be a contribution to local authority strategy on domestic violence. The Thames Valley Partnership and Theatre ADAD were responsible for programme delivery, administration, developing links with support services, resource materials, sharing best practice, evaluation and dissemination.

The key tasks identified were: -

- Five schools to be engaged in the programme
- Training for teachers and local education authority staff
- 1000 pupils involved in the workshops
- Policy & procedures for schools and local education authority
- Evaluation report

3. Project Progress

The project was undertaken in Windsor and Maidenhead involving the following participating schools.

Windsor Boys School, Maidenhead Road, Windsor, Berks SL4 5EH

Windsor Girls School, Imperial Road, Windsor, Berks SL4 3RT

Desborough School, Shoppenhangers Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 2BQ

Altwood School, Altwood Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 4PU

Churchmead School, Priory Way, Datchet, Berks SL3 9QJ

The schools were selected by the Education Department's specialist Behaviour Support Service and were deemed to be a representative cross-section of the borough's schools. Those schools selected also showed a willingness to have the programme and to include the workshop within their PHSE curriculum.

It had previously been established both by the pilot evaluations and in the experience of Theatre ADAD that the most appropriate year group to attend the production and take part in the evaluation was year nine (13 – 14 years).

3.1 Inset Day

An inset training day was held on September 14th 2001 at the Princess Margaret Royal Free School for 13 participants. The agenda for the day included the performance of the in-school workshop by Theatre ADAD, a discussion session, and training for teachers on delivery of follow up lessons, background awareness training and a sign-posting links the session. The audience consisted of PHSE teachers from each of the five participating schools and representatives of local education support service, social service outreach department, Thames Valley Police and Victim Support.

The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and the response to the day was both enthusiastic and positive. Of the questionnaires completed they all felt the day had been informative and that the production would have a positive impact on their students. The most important elements of the programme were considered to be:

- Understanding how to deal with these difficult issues with young people
- The fact that the content was relevant to a wide range of relationships
- How the production dealt with peer pressure

Everyone felt that the production would be very effective in their school, as it would allow the students to empathise with the characters and assess their individual behaviour in relation to others, and how moderating their attitude affects the response of others. One commented that the techniques employed by the cast could form the basis of training for all teachers required to teach PHSE, as this is often a problematic area for teachers as there is little formal training.

Most felt that the follow up sessions could form the basis of future interesting work in the classroom, but concerns were expressed as to whether follow-up work would be feasible for a variety of reasons. These included: -

- Any further sessions would rely on the support and input of other teaching staff
- Often the time allocated by school for PHSE is minimal therefore the opportunity for follow-up sessions with the students would be very restricted
- Many teachers feel they do not have the expertise or would not be confident in tackling those issues raised in follow up sessions. Often these sessions would result in teachers having to become more personally involved with the students. Fear of possible disclosures and the resultant knock on effects that this may have were a cause for concern
- Some felt that their colleagues did not feel that teaching PHSE was part of their job

The teacher's pack was well received and all felt they had received sufficient information. In terms of mainstreaming these topics into the curriculum, it was thought that there was scope both within PHSE and English or Drama, but that it would be dependent on the teaching staff seeing the worth of such topics. Two additional comments stated that: -

'Excellent – I would like to see this sort of positive initiative being expanded'

'Hope this programme becomes a success – best way for young people to learn life and social skills'

During the course of the inset day there were opportunities for discussion with the participants and the following feedback was noted: -

- Content and production were excellent
- These issues should form a part of PHSE curriculum
- It was difficult to incorporate as part of PHSE due to: -
 - The lack of dedicated PHSE teachers
 - Curriculum time constraints
 - PHSE being considered a secondary subject due to lack of official exams etc
 - Lack of consistency of teaching within PHSE
 - Lack of funding available in schools for this type of programme
- The problems teaching staff face when dealing with these personal issues and the boundaries – lack of training in this area. Many teachers are either unwilling or do not feel capable of addressing these topics

3.2 In School Production

In the week beginning 17th September 2001, Theatre ADAD performed the production in each of the five participating schools to the whole year 9 group, split over a morning and afternoon session. Across the five schools some 850 students were involved in the production and workshop. Theatre ADAD's artistic director recorded the following reactions in each school: -

3.2.1 Altwood School – Mixed (Approx 120 Students)

The organisation of the workshop within the school was a little chaotic and as a result some of the sessions were lost. However the students were enthusiastic and although the reception was noisy, they participated in the debates.

3.2.2 Churchmead School - Mixed (Approx 130 Students)

The school was hospitable and the teaching staff supportive. The boys dominated the workshop initially vocalising some sexist and immature attitudes. The boys stifled the girls in the first session, but after the break into gender groups the girls became more involved and vocal. The ADAD staff discussed the attitudes amongst the boys with the teachers who resolved to make this a focus of follow up work.

3.2.3 Desborough School – Boys Only (Approx 200 Students)

The school was hospitable and the teaching staff supportive. There was an element of immaturity amongst some of the boys, but on the whole the group engaged well in the workshop and had some excellent debates around the issues.

3.2.4 Windsor Boys School – Boys Only (Approx 230 Students)

The school was hospitable. The group displayed poor listening skills during the session and found it difficult to focus on the workshop and take the issues seriously. Overall there appeared to be a prevailing negative attitude towards women and there were some offensive and sexist responses.

3.2.5 Windsor Girls School – Girls Only (Approx 160 Students)

The school was supportive and teaching staff attentive. The group was reticent at first, but soon became more responsive and discussed the issues in a mature manner demonstrating good listening skills. Some girls expressed the view that they would be unable to discuss such issues with the teaching staff as they may become the object of 'gossip'; the teachers made every effort to counter this view, explain procedure and agreed the issues would be followed up with later sessions at the school.

In the majority of schools one or two teachers accompanied the students to the production, but did not necessarily participate with the students or attend for the full session. In most cases the teacher who attended the inset day did not accompany the students. It would have been preferable if more of the teaching staff had been able to attend the sessions. In addition a variety of guests were invited from the education authority, social services, police and community safety organisations to participate and see the production in operation but only one or two were ultimately able to attend. This limited guest attendance was disappointing in the light of the support expressed at the inset day and not only gave an impression of a lack of consistency and commitment to the project, but also limited the basis for effective follow-up and evaluation.

3.3 Follow-up Lessons and Evaluation

In October 2001, the participating schools were approached with two follow up questionnaires, one aimed at the teachers, the other for the students (see Appendices 2 and 3).

Only two schools responded and provided completed teacher and student questionnaires. In both cases the completed student questionnaires were from a limited sample of the students present at the production and in some cases the students had not completed the forms seriously or had been unable to express their thoughts in this way.

The teachers felt (two questionnaires completed): -

- That the workshop had been effective because a realistic situation had been depicted and was performed in a direct way
- The content was relevant because it looked at issues that the students face and was presented in language they could relate to. One felt that possibly year nine was too young and it may be better aimed at an older group
- The most effective part of the session was felt to be the play because the students were very focussed. The workshop session was sometimes more difficult as the audience was large (60 – 100 students)
- One school had covered aspects of male/female stereotyping in a later session and the other intended to run future sessions
- Both schools recorded a very positive student response claiming they were keen to participate in later discussions
- The impact on the students was felt to be that it would make them consider their own views and approaches
- Relationship topics should form an integral part of the of the PHSE curriculum as they are key in their lives
- In terms of the National Curriculum, one felt it should be included; the other that there were too many demands on it already
- Other resources required would include relevant information and leaflets, plus visits from other professionals
- Other topics identified as suitable for in-school drama were bullying, parent problems, friendship topics and other PHSE subjects

The students felt (18 questionnaires completed): -

- 88% enjoyed the workshop – positive comments included “realistic, funny, relevant to teenagers, enjoyed participating and expressing their thoughts and hearing others views”

‘Because you could talk to them and the play was good and discussed things we wouldn’t usually.’

- 88% found the content interesting, because it covered serious issues that need to be discussed, relevant to their age group, opened their eyes to reality, had a good story line, gave good advice and addressed issues not usually raised

- 33% most enjoyed the play because it was serious but presented in an understandable way, well performed with good acting and it gave an insight into what others have to deal with
- 22% most enjoyed the question and answer session because you could express your opinion and find out what others feel
- 22% most enjoyed the gender groups because they were amusing and covered topics they enjoy discussing
- 17% enjoyed the role-playing as it was enjoying and amusing, enabling them to participate
- 17% stated they had thought about the workshop afterwards, especially the gender issues and when an incident had occurred at school
- 50% stated that they had discussed it with friends especially gender issues and verbal abuse. Some said that it had helped their friends and that it was useful to discuss these issues
- 56% felt it had influenced their views with regard to temper control, being more sensitive to others, being more aware of their attitudes to others and reconsidering their views
- 67% felt that relationship topics should be included in PHSE because they would be interesting and relevant, would help young people to communicate more effectively, make young people more open-minded, provide greater coping mechanisms and facilitate their own relationships
- Other topics which students felt should be addressed were bullying, racism, rape, drugs, important recent news items, alternative therapies, religions, life skills and the problems of adolescents
- 77% thought that drama was an effective method of teaching because it was an enjoyable way to learn, it was more realistic and it gives a greater insight into others feelings and perceptions
- 'I think 'Behind Closed Doors' was very effective in many ways. It gave us images of what could be happening and choices we might have to make in the future

3.4 Teachers' Evaluation

An important aspect of this programme was to re-evaluate with the schools and the education authority the longer-term effect of the programme and whether follow up sessions and lessons had been effective in the schools. There was also a need to assess the impact on both individual schools and LEA's policy and procedures to deal with disclosures and whether the programme had influenced their child protection procedures to include domestic violence and whether this had led to any further staff training.

Towards this end the Thames Valley Partnership endeavoured during the winter term 2001/02 to organise a twilight re-evaluation meeting with the schools, Theatre ADAD and members of the Local Education Authority. However despite scheduling two alternative dates there was no take up response from any of the schools and a limited response from the LEA. These meetings were therefore cancelled and as yet the re-evaluation from the schools has not been assessed.

It would, however, be fair to say that the response from teachers and students was positive in relation to the production and certainly the student evaluations available show that follow up sessions on such topics would be interesting and relevant and would

reinforce the ideas and debate initiated in the workshop. Only one school appeared to have engaged in any follow-up sessions.

4. Appraisal and Future Outcomes

In terms of the stated objectives of this project, five schools did engage in the programme, teachers and members of the LEA did receive training and some 850 students participated in the workshop. Policy and procedure issues were raised with the LEA and involved schools and limited evaluation was undertaken. The direct funding costs did cover the provision of the workshop, training for teachers, the provision of teacher resource material and follow-up evaluation by the Partnership.

However it has proved impossible to date to further engage either individual schools or the LEA in progressing these topics within the scope of the PHSE curriculum or child protection procedures.

It seems that if external funding is available, schools will be willing to accept the opportunity to include the dramatic element of the workshop for their students. However despite the consistent acknowledgement of the value of this type of programme by both teachers and students it has not been possible to either include the programme within the overall PHSE curriculum, attempt or evaluate any follow-up work in the schools or to advance this proposal within education departments.

The students had a very positive view of the workshop experience and it seemed that they would have valued follow-up sessions related to these issues, as 'they are not usually raised'. The question did arise both from teachers and from the response to the workshop that it should be considered whether the production would be better presented to an older age group, namely year ten.

4.1 Future Proposals

The Thames Valley Partnership is still endeavouring to further progress this work and to this end have organised two specific events and supported other initiatives.

The Partnership hosts a bi-annual networking meeting for domestic violence forums and others, related to all the work of 'Behind Closed Doors'. At the meeting in May 2002, Theatre ADAD presented a review of this area of their work and engaged the audience of practitioners in a lively debate of the topic. It was hoped that this information could be disseminated directly to workers in the field of education across the Thames Valley.

In addition the Partnership has planned a special half-day event on June 19th 2002. This will include a presentation of the actual workshop by Theatre ADAD to a group of teenage drama students from the local Wheatley Park School, who will be either year 10 or 11. It will provide an opportunity for visitors to view the workshop in action and then to take part in a follow-up discussion on the problems encountered in the mainstreaming of this work. The intended audience will include education department representatives, school governors and any other interested parties involved in community safety issues. It is hoped that this event will prompt discussion among the correct strategic audience and provide a platform for this work to be taken forward within the Thames Valley.

The Partnership will also support the development of a Theatre ADAD website which will facilitate feedback from both teachers and students. It also intends to investigate any opportunities which may become available under Education Action Zones or the Healthy Schools initiatives to promote this work.

The Partnership is also supporting an initiative led by Slough LEA and other agencies associated with the Britwell Estate, to be held at the Beechwood School in Slough in June 2002. The intention is that Theatre ADAD will present their workshop to all of year nine in the school, but will then follow this up with a presentation of the same workshop to the parents of that year group and other interested local visitors in the evening. The aim is to initiate a community response on the Britwell Estate centred on the local school and to examine the usefulness of involving parents in this type of programme.

4.2 Future Planning

In the future it may be necessary to adopt different techniques and approaches to create an environment within schools where these issues can be addressed. It is obvious that further lobbying will be required with education departments both locally and nationally to take advantage of these pro-active initiatives. In addition there is still a need to specifically address the issue of domestic violence within the field of child protection policy and procedures within both education departments and schools.

Issues concerning school curricula are inherently difficult to address due to competing priorities and the demands of examination requirements. Inevitably in this prevailing environment PHSE topics are often insufficiently addressed, lack specialist dedicated teaching or suffer a lack of will to incorporate new topics or to deal in any depth with more challenging issues. Perhaps it would be beneficial for education to review the role of PHSE within schools especially in relation to the 'Healthy Schools' programme and the need for community safety and life skills topics to be addressed within the curriculum. Until PHSE is considered a core subject with the subsequent investment in specially trained teaching staff, curriculum research and a directly allocated budget, it will be difficult to enact these changes within the current structures. It is too daunting for teachers to take on these complex teaching issues without appropriate training and the driving force for the need for these topics to be addressed. The importance of both PHSE and citizenship education as yet does not have the equality of importance in schools as mainstream academic subjects.

There is no doubt of the impact and potential of dramatic presentations in schools as has been proven in other fields e.g. drug awareness, sex education etc, but as yet no significant progress has been made in the field of relationships and associated topics of gender, acceptable behaviours and protective factors within schools.

'BREAKING THE CYCLE'

SPONSORED BY THE CALOUSTE GULBENKIN FOUNDATION
FRIDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2001

INSET DAY EVALUATION

Thank you for attending this inset day, we would be grateful if you could complete this evaluation.

What did you think of the inset day and its overall content?

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.....
.....

What aspects were most relevant to you?

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Do you think that the workshop will be effective in the schools?

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Do you think the follow up sessions will be effective in the schools?

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.....
.....

Do you feel confident working with the teacher's pack?

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.....
.....

Is there any other information that would be useful?

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.....
.....

In what ways do you feel that these topics can be 'mainstreamed' into the curriculum?

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.....
.....

Additional Comments:

.....
.....

Name :

Agency:

Contact Details :

.....

Thames Valley Partnership
Working for Safer Communities

Please return to Julia Worms
Thames Valley Partnership, Townhill Barn, Dorton Road, Chilton, Bucks HP18 9NA

**'Behind Closed Doors'
Theatre ADAD**

Teacher Questionnaire

Please help us with our research and evaluation by completing this questionnaire

1. Was the workshop effective? Yes / No

Why? _____

2. Was the content relevant? Yes / No

Why? _____

3. Which part was most effective?

Play Question Answer Session
Gender Groups Behaviour Role Play

Why? _____

4. Have you followed up the workshop with the year group? Yes / No

Which Aspects? _____

5. Did you get a positive response from them? Yes / No

In What Way? _____

6. Do you think the workshop will have an impact on the students? Yes / No

In what way? _____

7. Do you think relationship topics should be included in PSE lessons? Yes / No

Why? _____

8. Should these topics be included in the National Curriculum? Yes / No

How can this be achieved? _____

9. What help do you need to successfully include these topics?

10. What other PSE topics would benefit from a drama workshop approach?

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE
THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**'Behind Closed Doors'
Theatre ADAD**

Student Questionnaire

Please help us with our research and evaluation by completing this questionnaire.

1. Did you enjoy the workshop? Yes / No

Why? _____

2. Did you find the content interesting? Yes / No

Why? _____

3. Which part was most interesting?

Play Question Answer Session
Gender Groups Behaviour Role Play

Why? _____

4. Have you thought about the workshop in the last few weeks? Yes / No

Which Parts? _____

5. Have you discussed the workshop with your friends? Yes / No

Which Parts? _____

And What Do You All Think?

6. Do you think the workshop will influence your views? Yes / No

In what way? _____

7. Do you think relationship topics should be included in your PSE lessons?

Yes / No

Why? _____

8. What other topics would you like to be covered in these lessons?

9. Do you think drama is an effective method of teaching? Yes / No

Why? _____

9. Any other comments

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US WITH OUR RESEARCH BY COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Addendum

Following publication of this document further progress was made on the plans outlined in section 4.1 Future Proposals.

Theatre ADAD Special Event

On June 19th 2002 a special half-day event was held at the Partnership. Theatre ADAD presented their complete two-hour workshop to a group of year ten drama students from a local school - Wheatley Park and an invited audience. Guests included representatives from the Police, Community Safety, Social Services, Education (curriculum consultants), Youth Offending Teams, Women's Aid, Connexions, Health Authority and local councils.

The workshop was very successful with excellent input and feedback both from the students and the audience. It was followed by a lively discussion on the impact of the workshop and methods of taking this work forward. All agreed that the workshop was very effective and that there was a need to address these issues within schools. The students felt that the content was relevant and addressed the subject in a realistic way. It was suggested that a possible means of further addressing these issues within schools, would be to explore the 'Skills for Adolescents' programmes and the 'Living with Teenagers' workshops that involve direct work with parents. Any endeavour to further this work within the PHSE curricula in schools would need to include specialist staff training dealing with boundaries, confidence, trust and the availability of support networks.

Beechwood School – Community Response

On June 18th 2002, Theatre ADAD presented their workshop to the entire year nine at Beechwood School in Slough. In the evening the parents of the students were invited to attend a similar presentation so that they could view the workshop their children had seen and engage them in a more involved approach. It was advertised under the banner of 'Promoting Positive Relationships in Our Community' and as an opportunity to explore issues around communication and anger in relationships.

The student workshops during the day were very successful and there was positive feedback from the students, teaching staff and the Theatre ADAD team. The evening presentation included representatives of local agencies including education, police, voluntary organisations and 'Positive Steps'. Unfortunately there was limited uptake by the parents and whilst the evening was useful in promoting co-operation among agencies, it failed to engage the local community on this occasion. It would seem that this is not perhaps the most effective way of trying to involve parents and maybe supports the suggestion that approaches should be made through adolescent and parenting programmes rather than directly as a school initiative. An evaluation meeting to discuss the outcomes has been arranged in July 2002 and an evaluation report will be issued.

Theatre ADAD Website

This site is available at www.theatreadad.com