The Memory Box Network is a Dundee based charity set up in 2011 that is developing OurBigBox.com, an online system designed to improve the quality of life for people affected by dementia.

The Memory Box Schools topic has been designed for P6/7 pupils working within the second level of Curriculum for Excellence and has an initial focus on Social Studies, Health and Well-being and Language. The overall objective of the topic is to raise awareness of the impact of dementia and the use of reminiscence to reduce the fear and anxiety that can prevent people of different generations talking.

In April 2014 The Memory Box Network successfully completed a pilot project in partnership with two local schools, Abernyte Primary (Perth and Kinross) and St Pius RC Primary (Dundee). The schools took very different approaches to integrating The Memory Box Network topic into the curriculum.

Abernyte Primary took a condensed approach to the project over six weeks from February to March 2014. As a small school of 13 pupils with a composite class of 10 from Primary 4-7 they found the project easy to adapt to suit the variety of ages. The topic was integrated into an existing project looking at the river Tay from a historical perspective. They adopted a strong arts based interpretation of the project with support from Perth and Kinross Council Living Communities team. This resulted in some imaginative and lasting arts pieces. The pupils looked at interviewing techniques before a group of 6 children went to visit a local care home. They did an end of term show of work to the local community and incorporated their own ‘Technologies’ outcomes into the project.

St Pius Primary integrated the topic into their existing planned project which looked at ‘India and the role of the family’ with a P7 class of 24 pupils. They did this over 12 weeks, from January to March 2014. They used a mix of the MBN resources and some of their own very creative ones, including an ‘experiment’ which gave the children an opportunity to experience what it might physically be like for someone with dementia. They created memory scrapbooks of a family member then invited friends and family in to share what they had learned about dementia and share their scrapbooks. The teacher did some drama work looking at how the children might react to different situations with people with dementia and how they could react positively.

"It’s like watching a film in your head about your life"
Ross (St Pius Primary School) - what memory is?
What did the children think?

Describe Memory St. Pius Primary School P7
‘Memory allows you to remember important things’ (Declan)
‘It is like a diary of your life’ (Devon)
‘A box that stores good and bad memories’ (Deano)
‘It’s like watching a film in your head about your life’ (Ross)
‘It stores precious memories of your past’ (Beth)
‘It’s like a filing cabinet holding lots of folders about your life’ (Michael)

P4-P6 Abernyte School speaking about their visit to Balhousie Care Home 2nd April 2014.
‘I enjoyed it because I got to meet new people and it was a good chance of interviewing people that I wouldn’t normally have the chance to do’ (Elise)
‘I think it is a social way to bond with people and it is not only nice for the older people but it is enjoyable for the younger generation’ (Archie)
‘I thought it was a bit scary because I had never done anything like that before’ (Layla)
‘I thought it was harder than I had originally thought it was going to be because the older people were quieter than I thought they would be’ (Elise)
‘I learned that people may think that elderly people are scary but when you meet face to face it is an enjoyable experience’ (Archie)
‘It would make me more confident in speaking to older people in the future’ (Molly)

The specific aims of the topic:
• Children will develop an understanding about the condition dementia.
• Children will know what reminiscence is and how it is used to help people affected by dementia.
• Children will be able to interpret historical evidence from a range of periods to help to build a picture of their local heritage.
• Children will be able to discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence or timeline to develop a sense of chronology.
• Children will be able to gather both primary and secondary sources selectively to research what the local area was like in the past.
• Children will develop an understanding of when it is important to preserve memories for the future and the ways we can do this.
• Children will be able to understand the importance of: Mental and Emotional wellbeing; Social wellbeing and Relationships, in helping them to establish a pattern of health and well-being which will be sustained into adult life.
Get in touch
Zoey McClellan - Education Development

Unit 17 City Quay | Camperdown Street
Dundee DD1 3JA | Phone: 0845 475 2820
zoey.mcclellan@memoryboxnetwork.org | www.memoryboxnetwork.org