

## Reviews

***Us and Them: Buddhism and community:*** An online interactive resource for Buddhism and community cohesion/citizenship at KS3 & 4 - Unlimited school site licence £49.

Many readers will already be familiar with the excellent materials to support learning about Buddhism produced by the Clear Vision Trust. In recent years a very user-friendly and attractive website has been developed to promote good learning about and from Buddhism

Their latest on-line resource, ***Us and Them: Buddhism and Community***, aimed at 12 – 16 year old students, consists of ten videos that allow students and teachers to explore Buddhist teachings on the self and community-building. These videos are supported by questions, discussion topics, activities and links and a 42-page handbook.

The materials cover topics including:

- identity and belonging
- generosity and volunteering
- ethical communication
- democracy
- karma and the environment

The site is easily navigated, having separate areas for students and teachers. The teachers' section allows staff to set up, view and comment on classes' and individual pupil's work. The attractive handbook is a very useful support to teachers [and parents] as it gives an overview of the materials and activities from the student area of the site. It also outlines aspects of Buddhist teachings and lived tradition. A glossary and support materials are also welcome.

The structure of each section in the students' area supports effective learning. Background information and discussion topics introduce each section. Discussion of on-line questions precedes the viewing of a 2 – 10 minute video. Well chosen, engaging questions are then answered by pupils online e.g. 'If your parents are Buddhists does that make you a Buddhist?' Tasks develop a range of skills especially reflection, empathy and evaluation. Accessible activities away from the computer are suggested to support learning about and learning from the faith. Links to other Clear Vision video and resources make this a rich resource that will allow pupils to explore at levels suited to their level of achievement.

There is a strong emphasis on learning from Buddhism to encourage reflection while considering contemporary examples of living tradition. The focus on young people and contemporary issues is particularly effective. Filming Buddhist examples from the UK is also refreshing and very helpful in balancing the many resources that focus on Buddhism purely as a far eastern practice.

My only concern was that it took a while [couple of minutes] to download some of the links in the 'Information' area – but this may be down to my PC. This was a minor problem as the vast majority of the site worked smoothly

This on-line, reasonably priced resource has been thoughtfully created and will be a welcome site to empower teachers and students to develop and engage in active and engaging learning activities. The topics explored would allow cross-curricular planning in KS3, especially with citizenship and PSHE, while also aiding effective GCSE delivery. It also makes a strong contribution to concepts linked to Community Cohesion.

I would strongly recommend 'Us and Them'.

Helen **Harrison**

Pupil pages [www.cvinteractive.org/usandthem](http://www.cvinteractive.org/usandthem)

Teacher's page [www.cvinteractive.org/usandthem/teachers](http://www.cvinteractive.org/usandthem/teachers)