Report of the Summer Tea Meeting

Wednesday 17th June 2009

This year for the first time we held our Summer Tea at the Malthouse in Risbygate Street. Twenty-three people attended. The speaker was Dave Rushton from St Nicholas Hospice, and the theme of his talk was “helping children through bereavement”.

Dave started by showing a short, animated (silent) film that demonstrated some of the feelings that can arise as a result of bereavement. He talked about how children experience bereavement in a different way to adults, how they find it difficult to put into words how they are feeling, and how terrifying it can be for them. He described some of the behaviours that were fairly common among bereaved children. Members of the audience were able to ask questions in relation to situations they had experienced both as teachers and on a personal level.

It was reported in the TES this week that bereavement affects two children a year in each school on average, but schools are struggling to help those affected. Eight in ten schools do not have a written bereavement support policy, and of those that do, many have policies that are inadequate. Few of the policies provide comprehensive advice for teachers.

All those who attended felt this had been a worthwhile topic to discuss.

Our new venue for general meetings was declared a hit, and the cream teas were delicious.

The meeting ended at 7pm.