



THORNDEN SCHOOL

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Headteacher Dr R A Sykes BA, PhD

Wednesday 19th July 2006

Dear Rex

I have put together a brief testimonial or report about our experiences here at Thornden School with SEM. I hope this will be of some use at the meeting with the Rotary Club in August. Thank you very much for approaching them on our behalf.

When SEM first contacted Thornden School, just over a year ago, we decided to invite them in for a trial session with some pupils studying our Religion and Human Relationships unit. The response to the initial session was very positive and on that basis, over the past year, SEM has visited the school on 12 occasions. This has enabled all Year 11 pupils to meet in a classroom setting, of about 25 pupils, with the volunteer couples.

The work with SEM has enabled the pupils to explore their hopes and fears about marriage and to look at these in the context of a 'real' couple with real life experiences. One aspect of the sessions that the pupils have found particularly beneficial has been the opportunity to ask the pupils whatever questions they would like to. This has made possible the exploration of issues they might not feel comfortable to discuss with their parents or indeed their teachers, and vice versa.

The following are some of the pupil responses to the sessions which reflect how the pupils have benefited from the opportunity that SEM provide:

'I feel I have been able to see what a secure, comfortable marriage is like and that all marriages have problems and strengths. We were able to explore how the couple dealt with that and how they have coped with their many years of marriage.'

'I will now consider being in a long term relationship more seriously.'

'Maybe in any future relationship I have, if it falls apart I may try harder to keep it together.'

'I enjoyed the session and found it very beneficial. I am surprised by the honesty of the couple to talk to people they had only just met.'

'I will think more about who I marry.'



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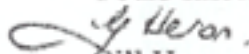
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'It has changed my perception of marriage and that it isn't as long and tedious as people make out.'

As a result of our experiences we would very much like to continue working with SEM again this year and with your support I hope this will be possible. I have also enclosed a newspaper article from the Hampshire Chronicle that featured the work of SEM at Thornden which you may find of interest.

Yours sincerely


Gill Heron
(Head of RE)