

Sujet : *The Holocaust? What was that, ask some pupils*

By Julie Henry, Adam Lusher and Peter Zimonjic

Many British children know shockingly little about the Holocaust, a survey by *The Telegraph* has demonstrated. Despite the publicity surrounding this week's memorial day, key facts still elude pupils, with a quarter unable to say what Auschwitz was and less than 40 per cent able to date the Second World War.

At William Farr, a Church of England specialist school, and Bexleyheath School, in the outer suburbs of south-east London, 12-year-olds were reassuringly knowledgeable in some areas, helped—perhaps—by some last-minute cramming before our visits. Ninety per cent could describe what the Holocaust was—though one child said simply that it was “something to do with WW2”—and 83 per cent could name the principal method of mass killing used at the concentration camps.

Less impressively, children could not say what Auschwitz was, while just 17 per cent knew that the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was six million. Estimates ranged from 1,000 to 37 million. More than half the children did not know that Auschwitz was in Poland.

A similar number could not name an ally of the Germans during the war. One child answered England but confessed that she did not know what the word ‘ally’ meant.

The worst-answered, but arguably toughest, question baffled every child in the poll. Guesses as to what Kristallnacht was ranged from the name for a German camp to a “kind of army”.

Some of the gaps in knowledge can be explained by the fact that these pupils have not studied the Holocaust yet. The Second World War is not taught in the National Curriculum until pupils are 14. In light of this, some displayed an impressive level of knowledge. At William Farr, which housed a Royal Air Force base during the Second World War, several children had read *The Diary of Anne Frank* in their own time. Many pupils had a sense of the horror of the Holocaust.

Adapted from *The Sunday Telegraph*, January 23<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

### Question

Give a structured account of the reasons why the students surveyed show such disparity in their knowledge of the Holocaust.