

Moroccan trip 'School in a Box' bags treasured



Students from Sevenoaks School travelled to Morocco during the Easter holidays

STUDENTS from Sevenoaks School visited Morocco during the Easter holidays, taking learning resources to a women's association and meeting girls at a boarding school they support through fundraising.

The 19 Lower Sixth pupils, who are all studying Geography for their International Baccalaureate, were in Morocco on a field trip.

During their visit, they visited a women's association just outside Zagora in south-eastern Morocco. The association supports women who have

recently been widowed or divorced and require refuge. The women collaboratively work together to grow food, look after children and teach each other craft skills that can lead to employment, including weaving and textiles.

The Sevenoaks students took 'school in a box' bags to hand out to the children. The brightly coloured rucksacks were full of stationery, such as pencils, maths sets and calculators, as well as workbooks, and toys, providing them with the tools they need to continue their education.

Geography teacher Elen Harris said: "All of the children loved the bags and the women and children at the refuge were hugely appreciative. In fact many of the kids did not worry about what was inside – the fact that they had a bright rucksack to wear appeared to make their day! This highlights the stark demographic and economic contrasts between this poor part of Morocco and the lives our students lead."

The school in a box bags are an extension of Sevenoaks School's Outreach Box programme, which was

launched in September 2017 and provides fun and specialist learning resources for primary schools in the school's local network. The bags are a new venture, enabling Sevenoaks School to share the initiative globally.

While in Morocco, the IB students also visited a

boarding house that enables girls from mountain villages to have an education. The house is run by the charity Education for All, which Sevenoaks School has supported for a number of years, publishing a geography calendar every year using photographs submitted by pupils, staff,

parents and alumni, and donating the profits. This year they successfully raised £2,000. Several of the sixth formers had contacted the girls at the Education for All house in advance and, through sharing ideas, images and language, generated a highly valuable cultural exchange.