

## **Governors' Learning Walk: 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Five Governors took part in the first Learning Walk of the 2015-16 academic year, the theme of which was SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) and School/British values.

Under the Education Act 2002, all maintained schools must promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of their pupils. Through ensuring pupils' SMSC development, schools can also demonstrate they are actively promoting fundamental British values.

Meeting requirements for collective worship, establishing a strong school ethos supported by effective relationships throughout the school and providing relevant activities beyond the classroom are ways of ensuring pupils' SMSC development.

Pupils must be encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance. They are also expected to understand that while different people may hold different views about what is 'right' and 'wrong', all people living in England are subject to its law.

The morning started by meeting with the Pupil's Parliament. It was fantastic to meet such an enthusiastic group of MPs and their Prime Minister! They all had a very clear understanding of what their purpose was within the school and how they can help to make school a better place. They talked us through the democratic process which takes place across the school and within individual classes to elect their members and PM. The importance of fairness was very evident to them. It was also evident that they could relate this to how our own UK Government is established and what it exists for. We talked about a number of projects they have been involved with and they updated us on the amazing progress of #TeamTom. This is a brilliant example of kindness and generosity of spirit of the children at the school.

The Pupils' Parliament was able to tell us all of the school values. But more importantly they were able to demonstrate how the values manifested themselves in daily school life.

We also talked about how the views of children in Reception and Year 1 are taken into account as these groups are not currently represented on the Pupils' Parliament. The way in which updates are provided to the rest of the school was also a topic for debate and potential further improvement.

We finished up by talking about school assemblies and the sort of topics which are covered within them. There was a clear understanding of the role that Canon Brian and Rev. Nicki play and how different religions have a place in society. The children clearly love assemblies with an 'awards' theme because their achievements can be celebrated and shared with others.

We then had the opportunity to meet with other pupils from across all school Years (except Reception). They too were amazing, confident, enthusiastic and very keen to answer all our questions!

We asked them about the Pupils' Parliament and the role that it plays. They were very aware of what the Parliament does and what it stands for. They also knew who their MPs were and how they were democratically elected. We also discussed the process for electing MPs in the UK and the importance of it being fair.

The children also clearly demonstrated detailed knowledge of the school values, what these meant to them, why we have them, why they are important and how these were relevant to day-to-day activities in school.

We also discussed school assemblies and the different things that are talked about. They gave us examples of the shoebox appeal, Children in Need and helping people who are not as fortunate as they are. Remembrance Day was also still very fresh in their minds. They understood its significance and that it was a time to 'remember' rather than to 'glorify'. It was also clear that 'Awards' assemblies were very important to the children, together with assemblies to which parents/carers are invited to celebrate the children's achievements.

Finally, we had the opportunity to talk to the Head Teacher and Mrs De La Salle, who has oversight for SMSC across the school. They took us through the SMSC journey the school has been on over the last 11 years and how this important area of learning has developed. We reviewed the curriculum plans for RE and also the GO-Givers structure from the Citizenship Foundation. The emphasis on 'behaviour for effective learning' is clearly very important and embedded in our school.

It was evident from our session that SMSC and both school and British values are alive and very well understood and demonstrated throughout the entire school. There is a very strong sense of what is right and how they should react if they felt something was not right. The Curriculum plans developed and set out also clearly aim to achieve all of the outcomes related to this area and the school clearly wants to produce good citizens.

We identified some opportunities for further developing the role of members of the Parliament, having discussed with them how they might let the classes they represent know what has been discussed in the Parliament and the work the Parliament is doing. As an example it would be good for the MPs to have a regular slot in class time when their 'constituency' can ask them questions and/or ask them to raise things at the next session. It would also provide an opportunity for them to feedback to their 'electorate' too.

Also Reception and Year 1 do not elect MPs. Whilst it is fully understood why this was the case, the Parliament felt it was important to let them know what is happening and give them a chance for their voice to be heard too.

The Governors agreed with the Parliament that we would attend one of their future sessions so that they can bring us up-to-date with their plans for making sure their electorate and very young potential electorate know what they are doing.

As always, our Learning Walk was extremely informative and a huge success and our thanks go to all of the children who helped us with our learning. Yet again this Learning Walk made me feel very proud to be a Parent and a Governor of our school and everything that it sets out to achieve.

Andy Taylor

Co-opted Governor