



News from Whitchurch C of E Primary School

Whenever we interview a candidate for a teaching post or support staff post at Whitchurch we ask the question, 'Why do you want to work at our school?' A frequent response that comes up is around the impact we can have on children. The driver behind many people who work in education is, as is often mentioned, the joy and job satisfaction that comes when a child has a 'lightbulb moment' – when their face lights up, you see the penny drop and suddenly they know something they did not know before, or can do something they could not do before – and you have had an instrumental role in helping them to have that moment of realisation. This is, without doubt, one of the best things about working in schools – to see the progress that children make and feel that you have somehow contributed to that.

When I reflect on this, I think about recent moments I have had when I have had the privilege of seeing that progress and the pride we feel, as adults, in that child, echoing the pride they have in themselves. In our Year 1 nativity before Christmas (which seems very far away now!) it was an absolute delight to watch the children perform on stage with confidence and assuredness. In particular, I noted three or four children who had not been able to do this in Year R (the year before) – who had been overwhelmed by the audience or the hall or the occasion and had not been able to get on stage, or participate in the way that their parents, and they, so very much wanted. This year, they were all there – mostly in costume, on the stage and able to join in – their faces beamed, and our hearts filled with the joy of seeing their progress. On the playground last week, I noted a child who really struggled to come into school last year, due to anxiety. As I watched that child tearing about the playground, laughing with friends, I was so glad that the strategies he has been taught to manage those worries, seem to have paid off brilliantly – the anxiety may still be there, but it is now not so overwhelming or debilitating. In lessons, it is always lovely to chat to the children and discuss what they are learning – at times they will respond with an 'Oh...yeah!' as they connect the dots and then rush on to complete the task they have been grappling with. One child, who found learning really tricky last year, will now come and regularly share her work; explaining what she has done and how she did it – and I am always delighted to hear this and share in her growing confidence in herself as a learner. Finally, there are those who find self-regulation difficult, and this can really challenge their ability to access lessons and learning in the way we would like. Last week, I sat with two such children, playing a game, and was able to smile both outwardly and inwardly at their improving capacity to take turns, to share and to remain calm, even when things did not go their way.

Working in schools today is, without doubt, a real challenge at times. We see all of societies stresses and issues and how they impact upon our families and our children. So, to share in these moments of progress and development is a real joy and privilege. Sometimes the steps forward are tiny, sometimes huge – but they are always a cause for celebration and ensure that as grown ups working with our pupils we can say, 'I have a great job!'