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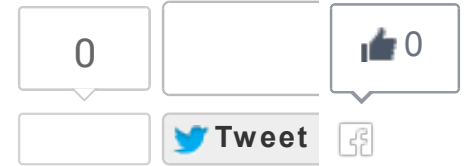
Primary pupils show a sharing philosophy

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The University of Wolverhampton is a regional hub for the Cambridge Primary Curriculum Review.

This particular project involved several primary schools working on a ‘philosophy project’. The overarching theme was ‘community’.

In one activity ,children from two ‘federated schools’ talked about the benefits of being federated under a single ‘Executive Head’, This they presented to the whole group, consisting of the 50 or so children, teachers, one or two student teachers and visiting speakers – including myself and Professor Mick Waters.

One of the young people explained to the compere that children from both schools studied and learnt about similar things. When probed about what she had found interesting she told us all that she was interested in the ancient Olympics, and had learnt about events which no longer took place in the Modern Olympics. She elaborated by explaining that in a wrestling event the participants fought to the

death.

The compere then invited the audience to formulate a question to the pupils.

Professor Mick Waters and I chatted, and came up, with what we thought was a witty, but challenging question:

“If they fought to the death, how did anyone get a silver medal?”

Quick as flash the 10-year-old girl replied: “We did some research and we learnt that in those days there was no honour in coming second, so silver medals were not awarded anyway”

Well, that told us! We proceeded to reflect on what a terrific answer that was, and how it demonstrated so many positives.

“We did some research . . .” and in “those days . . .” showed study skills, an understanding of history and a recognition that different cultures shape activity according to different norms and assumptions.

Another young man told me later how the community aspect of his school was formed in part by “the stories they tell about former pupils” (heritage).

Pupils from the federated schools talked, in conversation about sharing resources , such as a mini bus (sharing) , and also how when the boiler ‘blew up’ they were able to use classrooms in their partner school (caring) . They also explained that if one school faced challenge, the other could provide support.

At the end of the morning, the issue of whether everyone in the world could be in a single community was raised. This divided the group. I suspect the differing opinions were based on current politics and international relationships. However, given the deep understanding of community, I left with great hope for the future.

Philosophy is not on the National Curriculum. It would be difficult to ‘score’ the level of participation, understanding and ability of the children. However, I know they learnt a lot, taught us a lot, and are beginning to understand their own place in society.

What a great day – a tribute to the teachers, planners and most of all, the children themselves. Isn’t this what education should be about?



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Celebrating a student art exhibition at Walsall Gallery



It was brilliant. I've just had a fantastic day! A get together with students from The University of Wolverhampton, Walsall Campus, their friends and family, writes education blogger Zoe Renilson of Walsall Art

How interactive technology is changing the classroom



If you walk into most classrooms in the UK today, you will soon notice the big screen in the middle of the room at the front.

Gallery.

The SEN green paper - support and aspiration



The Government has announced that it is making £500,000 available to support the work of those who work with children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, writes Professor Kit Field our education blogger from the University of Wolverhampton.

Blog: The classroom of the future

On Good Friday, I was asked to link up, through Skype, with a conference taking place in India writes Professor Kit Field.



Comments for: "Primary pupils show a sharing philosophy"

Jason Buckley

January 23, 2012 10:37 am

Before the cynics start piling in and saying, "they should be learning to read and write, not worrying about philosophy", can I get my retaliation in first and say that it's not an either-or thing. Children write better and are more engaged when they spend time tackling more open-ended questions, especially when they have chosen those questions themselves in response to thought-provoking stimuli.

It's also "deep fun" for the children and for their teachers. If you google "P4C" you will see lots of other schools doing similar things (to declare an interest, you'll see my website as well).

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Primary Teaching Resources

January 25, 2012 9:47 am

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