

## **Orrets Meadow School**

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

### **Governor Class Visit**

As always it is a pleasure to visit my adoptive class and all the staff and children make me feel really welcome. During my visit today I was able to observe a group activity that involved speaking and listening I could appreciate how this plays into developing confidence, thinking skills and written work.

During governor meetings the headteacher has explained that children need to have the confidence to express their ideas and feelings. Oracy is a key focus this year. This is extremely important as communication difficulties with a lot of the children are such a barrier to learning. The school is committed to removing any barriers that will inhibit the child's progress and confidence.

The session began with all the children sitting in a circle at the front of the class and the teacher explained to me that the children had been exploring a story called An Eskimo's Tale, discussions around the title had previously taken place before introducing this story. Mrs Billington explained that the title might not be considered appropriate today, however, by keeping the title it did not detract from the story and folklore of the Inuit people.

The teacher reminded the children of the storyline and she asked lots of questions, each child had their mind map in their books so they could refer to it. The children were encouraged to remember the story and how it unfolded. Lots of questions and answers with the children. Mrs Billington gave each child the chance to speak and share and she made sure that everyone joined in. I was conscious of how the staff supporting the children were giving strategies to help their recall of the story. The use of a mind map to structure the timeline of the story so the children could be supported how the story started, what happened and how the story ended. After lots of questions and encouragement the children began to share their recollections. There was the emphasis to think about the story and how they could as individuals change the story and make different things happen. How would they change it, how could they express it etc.

This particular activity encouraged the children to speak in the group and share what they remembered and their ideas. Every child in Orrets has their own particular need and the staff are very much aware of that so they can support each child and give their assistance so they felt comfortable and confident in joining in.

The next activity involved writing in their books and again the children were divided up into three different ability groups. Plenty of adult support and encouragement and all the children were engaged with their learning and enjoying the activity. The use of the mind maps was used as well as box sequencing sheets that helped the child to process and order their thoughts so they could articulate them. One table was working on sentence structure and writing down their ideas, they had a spelling book and if they struggled to remember a word or a new word the teacher would write it down for them. The other two groups used the box sequence method and the adults at the table modelled words and sentences so the

children could copy. Constant reinforcement and encouragement you could see the children looked comfortable and engaged. This meant that each pupil was working at the appropriate level with the right support for them.

Mrs Billington showed me a couple of the books and you could see how the children had made progress. Some pupils could hardly write legibly at the start of the academic year and now they were able to structure simple sentences using appropriate grammar and language. I could see in the books how from simple shapes on the paper it developed into words and then simple sentences. The story of the boy who found the sun was a beautiful story and allowing children to appreciate different cultures and their folklore.

All too quickly it was playtime and it was time for me to go. I do always enjoy visiting and I look forward to returning. The story the children are working on will be completed on Friday so when I get the opportunity I will ask to see the finished results when I come back in.

A huge thank you to Mrs Billington and all the staff and children. The staff are wonderful with the children and they promote a positive and caring atmosphere so the children can flourish and enjoy their time at school.

**Cindy Cooper**

**Class Governor - Bears**