

Pupil Perception Interviews

9th March 2020

Vicky Uff, SEN governor for the All Saints Schools Federation, visited Laxfield Primary School to talk with a number of pupils who have SEN about their experiences in school.

"I had the pleasure of meeting 7 pupils over the course of the day, covering the entire range of year groups and different classes. They were all an absolute joy to chat with, and were eager to show me their work and tell me about all their achievements."

Vicky summarised the most salient points from the interviews, alongside her own observations.

- Focus can be a difficulty for many children with additional needs - all pupils interviewed report that their T.A and/or teacher helps them to concentrate when they find it difficult, often by breaking up instructions into chunks, helping to sequence and plan how to tackle the task or using gentle reminders of the focus of the task.
- Differentiation is evident when children discuss the subjects they find most difficult, and the ways in which their working is structured in order to support them - effective use of small group work and additional support from T.A's to allow greater time focusing on building key foundational skills in core subjects.
- Differentiation also evidenced by key positioning of pupils within class, sharing tables with peers of similar ability, allowing for good peer-to-peer support (as reported by most of the children interviewed).
- Use of specific resources to support individual needs - children report using personalised activity boxes (during quiet class reading time first thing in the morning), using laptops and the

Clicker programme to help with writing, access to ear defenders to help with noise-based anxiety in certain situations, use of iPads to support phonics and letter formation, overlays to help with reading.

- Visual aids are often helpful - visual timetable on classroom wall to help with understanding of what will happen next, both helping to reduce anxiety and supporting steps towards greater independence.
- Input from external professionals such as a dyslexia outreach team and SALT - children talk of these sessions with enthusiasm.

Additional points to note are that ALL the children showed really high levels of self-esteem and self-awareness, which was absolutely fantastic to see. They can identify easily the areas in which they recognise some difficulty, but are equally happy to talk about their strengths and the achievements of which they are proud. They also report that their strengths are acknowledged by their teachers and peers, and as such they clearly feel a part of the "family" of the school. This correlates with what I have seen when I have attended school events. Inclusivity is the absolute normal here and that ethos is clear in both the day-to-day running of the school, and the values of the pupils and staff.

One final point which was notable, was the number of times peer support was referenced (both academic and social). Some pupils reported difficulties with socialising (particularly at breaktimes and lunchtimes) but were able to tell me that when this had been the case, they were able to talk to either a member of staff or another child who was able to help them. They were also able to tell me, and discuss between themselves, of occasions when they might be able to provide this support to those around them - this really illustrates the supportive nature of the pupil body as a whole and should be celebrated.

Some quotes from the children:

"I am proud of my handwriting, I am learning to do joined-up handwriting".

"Clicker helps me to write and helps me to remember what I've done and helps me with difficult words."

"I am very clever and I know lots of facts about my favourite topics."

"I like doing phonics games - I am good at phonics now."

"If my friend is feeling worried, I could go and play games with him"

"Maths is hard and I can't do the same work as my friends, but my T.A helps me get better and now I like column addition."