

**Happiness inspection**

**Billingham South Community Primary School**

Visit by James Hilton for **Art of Brilliance** Wednesday 22nd of March 2017

Following input with pupils and staff by Darrell Woodman and Tony Seymour of Art Brilliance in Autumn 2016, this visit was to assess the levels of happiness within the school against five criteria.

* Individual happiness
* Class level learning
* School level happiness
* Family level well being
* Community level impact

During my visit I spent time talking with Mr Squire (Headteacher), Mrs Hendy (Deputy headteacher) , Miss Rushall, (PSHE co-ordinator) and Mrs Jagger (Parent- Governor). I also had an extensive guided tour of all the classes, speaking to many children and spent time on the playground.

Judgement: **This is an outstandingly happy school**

The Head and Deputy Headteachers have a very clear vision for the school that is built in part that pupils need to develop resilience and raise their aspirations in order to thrive in challenging situations. It is also built on the belief that children learn best when happy and relaxed. This is a vision supported by staff at all levels. It is also clear that this philosophy is supported by the school’s governing body who are receive regular reports on the happiness and well-being of both pupils and staff.

It is clear that the school had already done much to promote this philosophy prior to the involvement of ‘Art of Brilliance’ trainers. They have used the opportunities that the training presented to enhance the existing provision most effectively, helping to give the children the opportunity to help shape and drive the ‘happiness agenda’

**Individual Happiness**

The school has a clear set of five values:

Happiness, Trust, Resilience, Quality and Courage.

Pupils receive a colour coded sticker on a wall chart when they display each of the five values. When they have achieved all five, they are awarded a values badge which they clearly wear with pride. I witnessed a number of wall displays demonstrating the principle of the ‘Sausage Machine of Life’ (ie you get out what you put in) From pupils have set themselves HUGGS (Huge, unbelievably great goals). Many have clear aspirations of what they would like to do when they grow up and are taking personal responsibility to work hard in order to achieve these goals. Pupils have clear targets and work hard to achieve them. They are developing strategies to remain resilient when they find work challenging. Children are cheerful and friendly about school and report that they feel safe and happy at playtimes.

Some pupils have independently designed ‘I’m Happy’ stickers which they give out around the school.

**Class level learning**

There is a clear consistency of approach between parallel classes. Resilience is encouraged from the earliest stages of education. For example, children in Nursery and Reception sing the ‘Have a Go Song’. Some Year 1 children showed me a class happiness diary and sang me their ‘The more we get together…’ Happiness song.

Older pupils have ‘Random Acts of Kindness’ and/or Happiness display boards in their classrooms.

There are clear rules and boundaries for children and lessons are regarded as fun. There are a variety of rewards schemes in place which the children enjoy engaging with. Children take pride in their class identity and have come up with class names that reflect the ideas of happiness, positivity or resilience eg ‘Atkinson’s Achievers’

**School level happiness**

There is a clear culture of positivity in the school. Happiness is a featured priority on the School Improvement Plan and the Governing Body have recently requested that it be included in the Headteacher’s Report to Governors format. There is an active School Council who are committed to improving their school. Some pupils take on the role of ant-bullying ambassadors. Children on the playground told me that they feel safe and happy in school. TV screens around the school have a rolling display that promote Random Acts of Kindness. A school wide ‘Dojo’ reward scheme has recently been introduced, which the children are enjoying. Good work and deeds are celebrated regularly and children look forward to the Headteacher’s rewards assemblies. A staff ‘shout- out ‘ board in the staffroom gives all staff the opportunity to give recognition to the positive outlook and good deeds of colleagues.

**Family-level Wellbeing**

A parents evening was recently held to engage parents with the school’s agenda around resilience and positivity. This was very successful with over one hundred parents attending the event. The school uses social media to good effect to involve parents in the life of the school. A ‘Passport to Learning’ scheme is in operation which suggests activities that families could consider engaging in outside of school. A topic based approach to homework encourages families to work together with fun activities eg the displays of weather vanes and models of the solar system. Improvements for families are included in school improvement planning. The Parent and Staff Association assist vulnerable families.

**Community-level impact**

The governing body are actively involved in the life of the school and keen to promote the happiness of pupils and staff alike, recognising that this is key to the success of the school. Children take part in a wide range of activities involving the local community eg visiting local care homes and the Billingham Folklore festival. Children in the Support Base have been actively involved in renovating a local community pond area.

**Conclusion.**

This is an outstandingly happy school.

Would I be happy for my own children to attend this school? Certainly!



