

Governor Name: Claire Hall

Date of Visit: 5/6/13

**Subject: Watoto African Children's
Choir visit to school**

**Subject Leader: Introduced by Mrs
Smith and led by the Watoto Choir**

Focus of Visit

The Governors were invited to the school by Mrs Smith to a special assembly led by the visiting Watoto African Children's Choir. Governors were able to observe the whole school and staff in a special assembly. It also meant that the school could see the governors. Several governors were able to attend.

Watoto is a Christian "holistic care program" in Uganda, Africa, caring for children who have lost one or both parents from AIDS or war. They take care of medical needs and provide an education, counselling, spiritual guidance and shelter that the children would otherwise not have. Watoto choirs travel around the world and show the Watoto vision and mission through their stories, music and dance.

Summary of Visit

A stage area had been made by the choir with a cloth backdrop. The school entered the hall in their classes and sat on the floor quietly. The year 6 children (proudly wearing their leaver's hoodies) sat on a bench at the back.

The choir were introduced to the school, staff and governors by Mrs Smith. The choir and the adults travelling with them had been staying with Barnabas Oley families.

The choir then filled the school hall with their music, singing and dancing along with huge smiles. One of the younger members of the choir said that she was 11 years old and told us all that both of her parents had died. She explained that Watoto had given her shelter and an education and that she felt very proud to be part of the wider Christian family.

One of the adult members then asked the school what they thought Watoto was all about. Lots of children put their hands up and all waited to be asked to speak. They had lots of ideas and thoughts about Watoto and were clearly thinking beyond seeing the choir about the wider purpose of Watoto.

The choir involved everybody with singing, swaying and clapping. Even a few dance moves were spotted amongst the staff and governors! The whole school had been learning one of the songs sung by the Watoto choir and sang it with them.

The older boys and adults then played drums, which you could really feel in your stomach! The morning was clearly much enjoyed by both the Watoto choir and Barnabas Oley. Everywhere I looked there were very big smiles.



At the end of the choir's performance Mrs Smith and the school thanked them. The school made their way out of the hall in their classes very sensibly, negotiating chairs and sound and light equipment.

A photographer from the Cambridge News was also present and a photo and article followed in the Cambridge News along with lots of photos on their website. The photos in this report were taken by Ms Jane Hodges.



Other Comments

I asked some of the children about the visit a few days later. They said that they had loved watching the choir and enjoyed it very much. They also spoke about the improvements that Watoto had made to the children's lives and about the differences in their own lives compared to those of the children in the choir.

Thank you to Mrs Smith for inviting the governors.