

Governor Name: L. Pitalis-Bliss

Date of Visit: 8th June 2017

Subject: WW2 Evacuation Day Visit

Summary of Visit

I accompanied KS2 on their WW2 Evacuation Day to Stibbington. The aims of the day were :

- To use role play to empathise with a child evacuated from London in the 1940s, and to understand the feelings and experiences of the evacuees.
- To learn about the impact of the Second World War on home life in the countryside, school lessons and play.
- To use historical terminology associated with wartime Britain accurately and confidently.
- To understand that a range of sources and resources can be used to find out about evacuation and life in wartime Britain.

The trip

On the morning of the trip, all children arrived at school dressed in 1940s style and with their 'new' names, which were in fact the names of actual children evacuated to Stibbington. This helped set the scene, as we were all to be in character for the rest of the day. The coach took us to Orton Mere Railway Station from where we boarded an old fashioned train to Stibbington. At Stibbington we were met by the very sprightly Miss Smith, who welcomed us all and explained that she was the village school teacher and she would be escorting us to Stibbington school, from where the evacuees would be picked up by their hosts.

After leaving the railway station we had a pleasant walk towards the village, with Miss Smith pointing out some of the host's houses. She also showed the children where there was a nice spot along the river for some fishing. She reminded them again and again how they should enjoy the wonderful, clean country air seeing as it was not something they were used to in London. We were shown where the railway signal man's office was, and it was explained that if anyone had anything spare that could be made into weapons (such as bones or metal) it should be given to him or left on the steps for him to collect.

Our walk took us past the church, where we observed the graves of those killed in WW1. Miss Smith briefed us on the meaning of the church bells ringing - this would signify that Britain had been invaded and we were to immediately go home and listen to the wireless for further information. We were also shown the location of the post box. This was very useful as it was painted with a special kind of paint that would bubble if there was gas in the air.

Once we arrived at the school Miss Smith welcomed everyone with a jam sandwich and proceeded with the lesson. This included completing new National Identity Cards and answering a quiz using the wartime wall posters to find the answers.

Lunch was served: spam or cheese sandwiches, spiced cake, an apple and a glass of squash. After lunch we went into the classroom for a busy session: singing 'It's a long way to Tipperary', listening to the 14 year old Princess Elizabeth send a radio message to the evacuees, doing a gas mask drill, copying spellings using a quill and blotting paper and escaping to the bomb shelter when the air raid siren went off!

The final part of the day was spent teaching the children to do laundry, as this could be a useful skill to help out their hosts. Everyone got a chance to wash the clothes in the dolly tub with the posser, grate the soap, put the clothes through the mangle and learn to correctly fold the dry sheets.

The children were then moved to a big tent, and Miss Smith gave them some last minute tips and advice for enjoying their stay with their hosts. She then exited the tent to bring the hosts in to pick up the children and take them to their new homes.

By this point the children were so engrossed in all that had happened that some of them actually looked surprised when nobody came back in with Miss Smith!

She then came out of character and had a little chat with everyone about the war, during which some children shared their own family's war stories, before waving us off goodbye.







Attitude to Learning – Pupil Perception

I was in the lucky position to spend the entire trip with the pupils, so I spoke with many of them as the day went on.

The air was thick with excitement from the moment we boarded the train. There was no need to ask them what they thought about it as all I could hear were gasps followed by: *"It's an Harry Potter train!"*. Many children agreed afterwards that the train had been their favourite part of the day.

At lunchtime most of the children initially turned down the Spam sandwich, but after a brief chat about how trying it would really show them what children ate in 1940, many decided to give it a go. Comments about the Spam were mainly positive: *"It's a lot nicer than it looks"*, *"Can you still buy this today? I'm going to ask my mum to get it!"*. Another food comment was that *"Cake was good in the war"*.

At the end of the trip, the children had clearly been reflecting on their experiences :

"It really felt like the last day I had seen my home"

"I think I understand a little bit what the evacuees felt"

"Although I knew it was pretend, the alarm and the air raid shelter were scary"

"It would have been quite a worrying time"

"I liked experiencing the feeling of being an evacuee"

"They did their washing quite differently back then"

"I was disappointed when Miss Smith did not bring in any hosts because I really did feel like I was an evacuee"

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)

This trip promoted the students' SMSC development as follows:

Spiritual - the school lesson opened with a prayer and we were taught (and encouraged to sing) an uplifting song, as Miss Smith explained that sometimes even if we feel down a cheerful tune can help people feel better.

Moral - the children were exposed to the moral implications that accompany a war. At one point Miss Smith explained how the Allies were bombing Germany and one little girl asked if the children in Germany were being evacuated too?

Social - there was great emphasis on community spirit, on everyone working together for a greater good, on looking after those less able or less fortunate.

Cultural - Miss Smith explained to the children that now they were in the countryside they could enjoy the fresh air, watch cows in the field, do a spot of fishing. She supposed that being city children from London they had never experienced anything of the sort, thus opening up the pupil's eyes to the fact that different parts of the country live(d) in different ways.

Values Observed

Every one of the school's vision and values were present on the trip:

Achievement - Successfully applying the gas mask as instructed was an important achievement.

Aspiration - On the way to the school we were shown the new 'modern' houses. Miss Smith was very enthusiastic in her description of them, especially of the 'inside loos', something all families could aspire to have one day...

Community - Children were encouraged to look out for each other, help out in the host houses and join the newly-formed youth club.

Creativity - Miss Smith explained how things that once would have been thrown away were being used for new things, such as animal's bones for ammunition.

Excitement - When the children boarded the train the atmosphere was thick with excitement!

Honesty - We were reminded many times during the day not to trust people we did not know, as they could possibly be German spies.

Inspiration - Miss Smith spoke highly of the clever pilots who were busy flying planes protecting our country.

Involvement - Doing laundry was a very social activity and every child got their turn.

Joy - The day was filled with joy, in a way that only a group of happy, chattering school children on a trip can provide.

Kindness - Whilst in the shelter some children felt a bit scared as it was very narrow and very dark. Their companions made sure they were ok and reassured them.

Partnership - We reflected on the fate of our partner in war, France, and how they were now an occupied country.

Respect - Miss Smith was a kind but firm teacher. The children showed her much respect!

This trip was also useful for highlighting British Values to children. We were reminded that our liberty and democracy were facing a real threat from the Germans and that it was important to respect the new rules that came with war (lights out after dark, not gossiping, growing our own food etc) and to be responsible for our own actions.

Other Comments

I would like to thank Miss Jarvis for letting me help out with Willow Class on the trip. The children were very well behaved and as usual I enjoyed my time with them. The experience gave me an insight into what life was like in the war and I learnt many new interesting facts. It was a wonderful day.