

Day 1

When St Cyprian's School opened, fifteen years ago, I was asked why I was so involved as my own daughters were too old to attend. My reply, "God willing, one day I may have grandchildren who will attend St Cyprian's". Here we are, first grand-daughter puts on her 'unicom' each day, schoolbag on her shoulders and in we go! O Theos ine Axios!

Today I was able to join her in the Nursery for a parent/carer taster session as part of Inclusion Week. Together with an assortment of parents, grandparents and carers we took our positions and with little ones either holding on or running around, the morning session begun.

Quickly the children were summoned and one by one they sat in front of their teacher who greeted each one either in Greek or English. And what a delight, each one responded clearly and with confidence, no embarrassing silences. The learning begun immediately with the date, day, month and even a word about the weather with visual stimulus. Each little character begun to emerge, from the very alert who eagerly put their hands up at every question, to the still, sleepyheads who at just three years old probably felt a little aggrieved at being roused. By the end of this opening activity they were all eager to choose their first learning activity.

The three members of Staff were all cajoling, supporting and directing the children so that a busy and purposeful atmosphere was soon created and each child engaged with their chosen activity.

As a secondary school teacher, I am always amazed how primary teachers function. Their vitality, rigour and constant high energy levels needed to support many little ones in a variety of activities, at the same time, is quite astounding. The team did not disappoint! With the teacher, calling time, control of the learning was thorough, clearly shared and the children responded effectively at each stage. The happiness, sense of purpose and joy was echoed all around the room and outside in their playground. Painting, cycling, sand and water as well as mobility activities were in full swing. Giant puzzle letters, card making and of course dressing-up with giggling and purposeful chattering were a delight to experience! Sitting on the carpet, listening to a story gave everyone a little respite and energy levels were up again for more activities!!!

The adults too were participating quite well but reluctantly, our time was soon over and with lots of hugs and kisses, our little ones ushered us out to continue with their work!

Many thanks to the Staff of Thassos class for an invigorating and very happy session!

Day 2

Wow! What a start to the day with Pink Breakfast! Pupils, Teachers, Parents and many others connected to the school, came together, adorned with something pink or red, to share a breakfast and raise money for Cancer Research. Wigs and party dresses, even some bridesmaids with hair decorations, all mixed with bits of school uniform, filled the hall. Much laughter and fun all round.

The Staff had been busy making bunting with messages and wonderful craft work which decorated the entrance and main hall. Hot bacon baguettes and croissants were available with drinks for everyone. The friendliness, fun and sheer excitement of being together was amazing!

What an advert for Inclusion! With thirty-eight languages spoken at the school, and as many different cultural backgrounds, how wonderful to see everyone working and participating together in this special way.

The ethos of family, which the school was originally based on, is truer today more than ever. We welcome all the new nationalities who have joined us in recent years knowing that only when we work together as in the Pink Breakfast event, can we achieve happiness for our children and our wider community.

I sincerely thank everyone for their hard work, donations and for joining-in, but a special big thank you goes to Joshua who greeted me by asking if I am Mrs Baron's mum!

Day 3

As I walked into the workshop on African Dance, I heard the dance instructor say "When I saw your school's name, I thought you would all be Greek!" The children confidently replied "I am from Egypt", "I am from Romania", "I am from Somalia", "I am from Athens", "I am from Portugal", "My grandparents are from Cyprus".....

What a great illustration how our school implements all that is great about an inclusive society through the provision of excellent education available for all children.

The dance workshop was based on the idea of digging, preparing the land, planting seeds, growing them and celebrating, finally thanking God for the harvest. The music used was African but surely the activity and understanding is universal.

The children soon picked up the rhythms, movements and their meanings, and by the end of the session were able to perform their dance to an appreciative audience made up of the younger classes.

All the children were attentive, extremely well behaved and enjoyed the routines. Their confidence is a joy to see as they volunteered to present various sections of the dance.

What a great way to end my visits to the school during this Inclusion Week. The variety of events I have experienced confirm the school's commitment to re-enforcing our Christian values and traditions of family and love for each other.

Thank you to everyone for making this week so special.