



Port Community Fund Unity Partnership School Donation

Recently representatives from the Port of Felixstowe, Bidwells and Harwich Haven Authority all members of the Port Community Fund, joined Clare Gibson of Suffolk Community Foundation to visit Felixstowe's two Unity Partnership schools to find out a little more about how the donation from the Fund was being used to support students in Langer Primary Academy and Felixstowe School.

At Langer Primary Academy we met Mrs Morgan-Soanes the Headteacher and Ros Towns, Executive Headteacher, who explained that the Unity Partnership was a charity that supported children in schools from disadvantaged backgrounds. The work the school does is phenomenal, from identifying who needs help, to gently dealing with it, these ladies and their staff supporters are like 'Miss Marple' and modern-day heroes rolled into one. What comes across very clearly is, how much they truly care about their children.

Donations such as the one from the Port Community fund goes towards purchasing food, school uniform, toiletries, sometimes even beds or a scooter, the need, is identified and, addressed, so children can arrive at school ready to learn, with their basic needs met.

Our next port of call (pardon the pun) was the second Unity Partnership School, the Felixstowe School, here we met Emma Wilson-Downes the Headteacher and Rachel Baty, Deputy Head. As the Felixstowe School is the feeder school for Felixstowe Primary schools, it was heartening to know that children continued to receive support at this stage of their schooling too. Emma and Rachel explained how challenging it was to deal with a teenager who was hungry or 'hangry' as they put it. Students coming to school hungry meant they were in no state to learn. Unity enables the school to provide food, drink, breakfast, lunch, or both in some cases, sadly it appears not all students in need are eligible for free meals. Unity donations also provide the basic essentials such as, toiletries, school uniform, shoes, you name it, someone needs it.

Once again, it became starkly evident to us, this school cares, it cares about trying to level the playing field for its students experiencing issues stemming from financial constraints at home.

I can speak of all of us when I say we came away from both schools impressed and humbled by both Langer Primary and Felixstowe School's network of 'ear to the ground' individuals that make sure students are not suffering in silence and falling through the cracks. It was great to see in person, how donations from the Port Community Fund are making a difference in the lives of children struggling in our community. Also very evident, was the need for continued support of schemes such as the Unity Partnership programme.

By Rageenee Hope

