

Magistrate Visit - Year 5/6

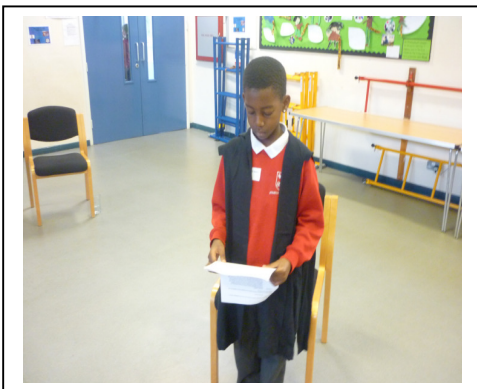
A Trial in the Magistrates Court



The children in Year 5 and 6 had a visit from two local magistrates to discuss the court system and British Justice. Information was shared about how magistrates work in a voluntary capacity and complete the job to support the local community. No legal experience is needed and anybody over 18 with no criminal convictions can become a magistrate.

A 'right or wrong' session followed which allowed the children to consider factual evidence. Two scenarios were shared with the children and they had to discuss whether people were innocent or guilty based on facts and evidence. Children were actively engaged and encouraged to back-up their verdict with reasons/evidence.

The magistrates discussed what sentencing powers they have and how more serious cases are referred to the Crown Court. It was explained that usually there will be three magistrates in court to consider the case.



DENNIS THE MENACE TRIAL

The children took part in a mock trial and were given parts to play. A defendant was selected to stand trial by three magistrates. This session encouraged the children to consider evidence and question witnesses. After the Prosecution and Defence had questioned the defendant and witnesses, the magistrates had to consider the case and deliver a verdict. All children contributed and demonstrated the ability to consider factual evidence.

The children were praised by the magistrates for being attentive and well behaved. It was commented that they asked some very good questions and thought carefully about their responses. One of the magistrates commented on the ethos of the school and praised the headteacher. When questioned after the session, the children said it was an enjoyable experience and that they had learnt some important information about the British Justice System.

