

North Cornelly School Visit to SOCSI: a Mutual Learning Experience

By Gabrielle Ivinson

30 year 6 children, their teacher and a classroom assistant from Afon-y-Felin Primary School in North Cornelly descended on the Glamorgan building on Friday 30th November 2007 as part of outreach work organised by the Regeneration Institute and widening access scheme initiated by the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. While the Westminster Government has suggested that every secondary school in England should be linked up to a university, we in Wales have decided to start younger, at the primary school level. The visit was part of on-going liaison between the school and the university, aimed at telling children in some of the far flung communities of south Wales that university life is for them. 17 undergraduate students studying social and developmental psychology in SOCSI paired up with the primary school children and got down to the business of 'getting to know each other'. The children had prepared questions and had come ready to conduct an interview with a 'real live' university student about life at Cardiff University. Favourite questions turned out to be 'do you have a car' and 'do you have a girl/boyfriend?' Two third year social psychology students collared our willing volunteers into undertaking some of the activities and questionnaires they had designed for their third year dissertation project, providing a learning situation for both sides. The children found out what it was like to take part in a 'real' piece of research and the undergraduates found out that 'real' children won't put up with unrealistic questions. Annie Mitchell our Widening Access Manager in Public Relations and Communications designed a 'lecture' presentation and a fun quiz to inform the children about the many diverse subjects that can be studied here. She also gave out the converted Cardiff University Teddy Bears along with information about our outreach courses to be taken back home. It was a fantastic day for all and next time we just have to remember not to put the chocolate éclairs out for lunch at the same time as the ham sandwiches. This semester we hope to exploit the power of cfNexus technology, with the help of our Innovation Officer, Ian Jones to create a website and continue the communication between undergraduates here in Social Sciences and the children in North Cornelly.