

TETBURY ADVERTISER

You've Got A Friend In Me

1475 KB

A local primary school's "Buddies" scheme is a Win-Win

- 1 I was delighted to read that Leighterton Primary School, just over the valley from Tetbury, runs a Buddies scheme. The school's version of mentoring is great - both for older children, who have to apply for the role of Buddy - and the younger children in their care.
- 2 [Leighterton Primary School](#) are by no means the only school running such a scheme. This is all a far cry from the long-ago days when I was at school! And in a good way.
- 3 Leighterton School's focus, it appears from the Tetbury Advertiser article [Nov21, p 59], is on personal development, friendship and conversations over lunch.
- 4 Older children, in the last two years of school - in Year 5 and 6 - apply to be Buddies. They have to write a letter of application - which is great for the development and application of their communications skills.

They also have to be interviewed by the school head - how scary is that?! But what a fantastic preparation for the future! Obviously, this will be great experience for applying for jobs and university places, but it goes much further, by building their confidence for presenting themselves in all kinds of life areas.
- 5 Once the children have been trained as Buddies, they are allocated to one or two younger children, new to school life. Again, what a brilliant preparation for their future lives, having to take some responsibility for other children.

Buddies sit with their younger charges in assembly, acting as their role models in terms of behaviour. The younger children are never left out at playtime because the Buddies make sure they are involved.
- 6 Other schools go further with their Buddies schemes.

At the [Coppice Primary School](#) in Derbyshire, Buddies receive training on how to deal with problems in the playground. They learn how to solve friendship issues and disagreements, and to know when an issue cannot be solved by them and requires an adult.

7 [Willington Primary School](#) in Durham, meanwhile, uses a Buddy Scheme to help to deal with bullying.

Their scheme aims to encourage positive relationships between children, helping them understand how it feels to be a victim of bullying and building self-esteem, listening skills and understanding other people's feelings.

8 The Tetbury Advertiser article didn't say so, but I'd say that the two-way benefits to children from having or being a Buddy must go quite some way towards making up for a lack in the lives of many children.

9 Some years ago, the phrase "Argos Catalogue Family" entered the lexicon. This phrase was shorthand for a household whose children, asked to take a book to school, took an Argos catalogue – the only book in the home.

There is an emotional equivalent to the Argos Catalogue Family. It is the family in which the experiences of nurture, taking responsibility voluntarily for someone else - and even simply having conversations - is largely, or even completely, absent.

10 Any way in which schools address this lack, by supplying these essentials for their students, is more than welcome.

I'd even go further and argue that supplying these essentials for their students is the main role of schools. Not just primary schools, but secondary schools, too.

Most people who "fall through the cracks" as adults, don't do so because they didn't learn the Periodic Table by heart, or because they forgot who succeeded King Charles the second to the throne.

They fell through the cracks because nobody showed them, when they really needed to know it, that they mattered!

CONNECT'S Maxim and Oath

Connect is only interested in finding and sharing the TRUTH.
In search of that TRUTH, we only pose questions – we have no answers.

By: Helen King

Source: Tetbury CONNECT: [Magazine](#)

[LINK](#): Leighterton Primary School

[LINK](#): Coppice Primary School – Buddies scheme

[LINK](#): Willington Primary School – Buddies scheme

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