

A MEETING OF PRIME MINISTERS

Room 2 have been studying how to develop and take responsibility for rules and regulations in a society, by establishing their own Government and passing their own legislation through their Class Parliament. This group of seven year olds have also been learning about the democratic process of electing leaders and representatives.

One of the decisions their Parliament made was to write to the NZ Prime Minister to advise what they were achieving and to invite Mr Key to visit one of their Parliamentary sessions. This letter, written by the 'Class Prime Minister' Damian Fraser that also included an invitation to visit, aroused the interest of New Zealand's very own Prime Minister.

So there was a great deal of excitement around the school when John Key accepted Damian's invitation and visited the school last Thursday. For the children of Room 2 there was a special connection made when Mr Key participated in their "Class Parliament Session" where a number of Bills were presented for debate. Several discussions took place including whether the female and male representation in their Class Parliament should be equal, fiscal responsibilities, incentives for keeping their tote trays tidy and of course the length of time a Prime Minister can be in office. In this class two weeks in Office enables good governance to be maintained whilst adhering to the democratic process of regular re-elections. The Class Parliament has its own Treasury and the children have been learning about investments, debt and in particular how to get their own significant deficit back under control. They shared this with the country's leader who offered some suggestions for their consideration, as well as sharing the similarity to what his Government is also facing. This all seems quite "high powered" for seven year olds to be engaged in such deliberation, yet when observing and hearing the debating that goes on in this classroom, one is reminded that our children are far more astute with their capacity to engage in advanced thinking, than might be expected.

Mr Key seemed very impressed with the level of interaction occurring and the thought processes being developed within this group. He readily answered all questions and even took time to visit other areas of the school, engage with some parents and pose for photographs.

Our thanks go to Ben Cording, Room 2's teacher, for his lateral approach to educational extension of this age group. The Parliamentary study that the class has been engaging in for some time has been full of communication interaction, actual experiences for the children and the type of inquiry focus that is rich in mental stimulation. It has had a direct relevance to our current world and has demonstrated how children thrive in this type of environment.

At a time when everyone in Christchurch has been coping with the stresses of continuing aftershocks, this visit from the Prime Minister to our school brought a great sense of positivity and optimism for us all going forward. Check out some great snapshots of the day.

Kevin Gooch
Principal