

How Circles for Learning helped a Year 2 class celebrate difference and manage anxiety.

'When baby Anna came into class, she was quiet and turned into her Mum's shoulder, playing with her hair. Her mum explained that she was now starting to try new foods. She described how Anna was exploring food in a different way from how her older brother and sister had. She described how Baby Anna instantly liked some foods and disliked others but that there were a few she couldn't seem to make her mind up about, liking one moment and spitting out the next. Mum described Anna as enjoying new things. This discussion led the class teacher to help the children to explore the work around temperament and how we deal with new situations. They explored what type of person each of them was, the type of person who liked to roll up our sleeves and get stuck in straight away? Or did they prefer to stand back and watch what others did and then tentatively join in? Or did new things frighten them and make them want to hide? During the discussion, children were able to explore how everyone was different and both thought about and dealt with new things in different ways. One of the girls said she didn't like new things as they frightened her. A group of boys found this really strange and so different points of view and the fact everyone is different was explored by their class teacher.'



These amazing reflections were then followed up and expanded by the class teacher through follow up activities. By celebrating difference children started to understand and then explore - if people were different then they needed different things to both cope and also succeed. This really helped the class start to understand why sometimes work was different and why their teacher provided different things for different children. The class teacher running the programme was part of the SLT and because the school was an Infant school she decided to explore the move up to Junior school with the children. This work on transition and the work they had already done on understanding everyone is different and needs different things led to some fascinating work on how to support the transition to the Infant school. With carefully structured activities the children were able to design and then implement their own transition plan meeting the needs of those adventurous children but also the more anxious. Children paired up with children and became Transition Buddies.

"The Circles for Learning programme enabled my class the space to explore and plan for transition and develop strategies to help each other cope. It was amazing as they became really supportive and respectful of each others needs."