

A Recount of The Criminal Justice System Talk

On Friday 14th October, pupils in Year 5 and 6 attended a talk about The Criminal Justice System. The talk was given by Mrs Gautama, a Legal Advisor and Mr Westlake, a volunteer Magistrate. They both work in Hammersmith.

Our speakers showed us a D.V.D. that gave us information about whether the level of crime is getting better or worse in London. It showed that levels of crime were falling. They also explained the different types of punishment a criminal found guilty could expect to receive. We handled a tag, which is an unbreakable electronic band that is fastened to the ankle. This registers in an alarm box placed in the criminal's house. It shows if they leave the building during their curfew. Other types of punishment are doing Community Service or having a prison sentence.

Mr Westlake surveyed the pupils in Year 5 and 6 to see what rules and punishments they have at home. The rules included not kicking footballs at the windows and not riding bikes in the house. Punishments included not being allowed to watch the television or having no access to the computer.

We also watched a D.V.D. of a trial which was acted by children. The trial was based on a knife crime. One of the interesting facts we learnt from watching the D.V.D. was that there have to be three magistrates present at the trial and this is so that there can be a majority verdict of two.

This was followed by a discussion about the age children can be tried in the courts as criminals. The age is ten and above. 97% of trials start in the Magistrates Courts and around 90% are settled there. They do not need to go on to Crown Court. Of the ones that do go on to Crown Court 70% go on to have trials.

The talk gave us lots of information in an enjoyable and interesting way. It was followed by a delicious piece of cake.

Jack Plevin Year 6