

# ‘WHO DO YOU SUPPORT?’

Sam Corrigan attends the launch of a new Olympic initiative that expands children's world view by asking them to pick a visiting team to cheer on at the 2012 Games...

Would you mind filling in as Seb for us?" It isn't every day someone asks you to pretend to be a member of the House of Lords and one of the most successful athletes in Olympic history, so what choice did I have? The staff and pupils at Perryfields Primary School in Oldbury, near Birmingham, were busy putting the finishing touches to their preparations and my arrival heralded the opportunity for a dry run of the special greeting pupils had prepared for Lord Coe

The main entrance to the school was flanked by pupils from every year group and, as I came to shake my first hand as an ersatz statesman, I was greeted with something I didn't expect: "muli shani" - the pupils in Y6 had chosen to support the Zambian Paralympic team next year and 'muli shani', as I later found out, is Zambian for hello.

Moving down the line I was greeted in the native tongue of

Ethiopia, Morocco, Egypt, South Africa and Kenya as pupils from each year group told me about which country they have been studying in preparation for London 2012.

All of this is part of the Support a Team initiative: a scheme within the London 2012 education programme 'Get Set goes global', which aims to help students explore how sport brings the world together and teaches them more about different cultures and people from across the world.

As Chair of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Sebastian Coe was visiting Perryfields Primary to launch the scheme and learn more about what pupils at the school have already achieved in relation to next year's Games.

## World view

Our earlier dress rehearsal had clearly paid off as, upon arrival, Lord Coe was greeted by a line of

confident children who spoke with enthusiasm and authority about athletics in their adopted nations of Ethiopia and Zambia.

Pupils at Perryfields Primary chose to support the Ethiopian Olympic team after being inspired by the performance of Haile Gebrselassie in the Great Birmingham Run in October, whilst also supporting the Zambian Paralympic team because of a link they share with a school in Zambia. As Lord Coe told *Teach Primary*, it is these learning and twinning opportunities that make this initiative so worthwhile. "We've got a school here that is not only supporting Team GB, but has also chosen to support five other countries,

to learn about those countries, learn about the athletes, and set up twinning arrangements between schools," he enthused. "We've got 204 nations coming to take part in the Games and it's a great opportunity for young people to understand a bit more about the world they live in through the athletes that will be coming here."

On top of the cultural legacy, Lord Coe also outlined







his desire for the Games to have a positive effect on the health of children in the UK and their interest in sport. "I want more young people playing sport, both Olympic and Paralympic," he said. "That's a very important legacy for me. I want young people to understand more about the Olympic movement, but also more about themselves, more about the values attached to the Olympics and to recognise that, as a nation, we have strong relationships around the world."

### Get set for the games

Get Set is the official London 2012 education programme. By providing teachers and students with access to free resources, it helps schools embrace the Olympic and Paralympic spirit and learn more about the world through the Games.

Perryfields is one of over 20,000 schools that have signed up to the Get Set programme and Lord Coe has been impressed by what's already been accomplished. "There have been some extraordinary projects and they've come about because teachers and pupils are truly excited by the Games," he said. "Whether it is about participation in sport, challenging misconceptions surrounding disability or learning more about the world they in live, the Games are allowing children to achieve their aims."

Schools looking to get involved with the scheme can find information and resources on the Get Set website ([getset.london2012.com](http://getset.london2012.com)). It's an expansive teaching aid and one that Heather Lawrence, deputy



head at Perryfields Primary Schools, has found a valuable source of inspiration. "There are so many angles from which teachers can approach the games," suggests Heather. "We have the Olympic and Paralympic values, which are great to work on in the classroom or during assemblies and circle-time. And when it comes to looking at the different countries, Get Set has resources that help children to investigate the history, geography and key athletic figures of competing nations. The resources also touch upon some of the problems faced by people living in these countries; for example, why there aren't as many Paralympians from Zambia." Those looking to take part in the

Support a Team initiative are encouraged to get behind a visiting nation as soon as possible; and to make the most of the opportunity, it's also a good idea to choose a country that has strong links with school, its community or the curriculum. Alternatively, supporting a team that's training in the local area can be a rewarding option, and the team selector tool on the Get Set website will help schools identify Olympic and Paralympic teams in their vicinity.

To find out more about the scheme and how to gain access to the wealth of resources available, visit the website ([london2012.com/getsetgoesglobal](http://london2012.com/getsetgoesglobal)).



### A QUESTION OF VALUES

#### OLYMPIC VALUES:

- > Respect > Excellence
- > Friendship

#### PARALYMPIC VALUES:

- > Courage > Determination
- > Inspiration > Equality

The tenets laid down by these values form the basis for the resources available through the Get Set website. With a selection of films, activity ideas and suggestions for assemblies separated into different age groups there is vast array of options available for teachers looking to make the most of London 2012. <http://getset.london2012.com/en/resources>