

Dear Team

A mother gave the Principal a big hug and exclaimed, “If I were a child again, I will surely want to come to this school!” Other parents were not quite as effusive but they nodded and smiled. Most gave the Principal a warm handshake and thanked her sincerely for the hospitality extended.

The Principal was waiting at the lobby as we accompanied 14 parents and 17 children to Zhangde Primary for a sense of what primary school would be like. The children were from our child development centre and even though only 4 of them will be in Zhangde next year, the school graciously agreed to host all our 6 year olds and their parents. We can’t speak for the parents but upon arriving at school we experienced a familiar discomfort that we had not had for some time. We were 10 minutes late and we spotted the Principal standing not too far away looking at us. But, she immediately put us at ease with a cheery hello and showing us our seats. As she handed us drinks, she introduced herself, the teachers present and 20 students who were all eager and ready to show us around.

The students were wonderful ambassadors for the schools as they showed us around and answered our questions politely and clearly. They had obviously prepared themselves well for the task and carried it out with pride and joy. We could not ask for better hosts. After 30 minutes, we were ushered into an air-conditioned room. There we learnt that the school cultivates their students to become GIVERS; which is the acronym for their core values of Generosity, Integrity, Versatility, Empathy and Responsibility. The Principal made sure the parents understood her and switched to Mandarin wherever needed. She honoured the parents as their child’s first educators and they completely agreed with her when she said that together they could build a “happy learning school.” She believed that when children are happy in school, they will learn well.

This morning the trains were less busy than I had expected and so I showed up more than 30 minutes early for an awards day at another Primary School. As I walked in, the hall was already filled with parents and I was the only one sitting in my section for partners of the school. Immediately, it hit me that they were there for their children while I was there for an event. The family is the natural environment for the growth and well-being of children. As such, we would regard them as the precedent partner for children’s education. We are grateful that the primary school orientation session at Zhangde helped the parents who attended feel rightly so.

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

*Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.” – Albert Einstein*