

News release

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Dental Visits Leave Children with Happy Smiles

Nervous appointments at the dentist are now a thing of the past for 80 Sunderland children following a series of special visits designed to reduce the fear associated with dental treatments.

As part of National Smile Month and to celebrate the surgery's 25th anniversary, David Vaughan Dental Care has opened its doors to two Sunderland schools with the aim of improving the children's oral health while helping to break down the barriers that prevent many people from visiting the dentist.

The unique visits, which were organised by Sunderland Extended Services (in and around schools) and David Vaughan Dental Care, offered the children from Millfield Community Nursery and Diamond Hall Infants with the opportunity to learn about caring for their teeth in a fun and positive way.

After arriving at the dental practice in Pallion the children were able to meet the surgery's team, including its dentist, hygienist, dental nurse and reception team. A special role play session with the dental nurse explained what happens during a visit to the dentist and showed the children what each member of the surgery's team does.

David Vaughan, the practice's dentist then showed the little ones how to care for their teeth properly, including how long to brush for, how much toothpaste to use and when to visit the dentist. The children also learnt how different foods can affect teeth, which are the best to eat and when to avoid certain foods, with the surgery's hygienist.

Councillor Pat Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services within Sunderland City Council, said: "Many people who are frightened to visit the dentist can trace their phobias back to a perhaps unpleasant experience as a child. Through trips like these it allows the children to become more familiar with the process involved with visiting the dentist in a relaxed and informal environment. By walking the children through a visit to the dentist and getting the

children involved in fun role plays, helps to make it easier when it comes to future appointments, while also showing them the dentist isn't a scary experience."

Sheryn Vaughan, Practice Manager at David Vaughan Dental Care, added: "Good oral health is extremely important to your overall health whatever your age and regular visits to the dentist are an essential part of this process. We decided to help host these visits as part of National Smile Month so the children could come into the surgery and have fun and hopefully will be more comfortable when their next appointment comes around. The children certainly seemed to enjoy themselves and I hope to be able to organise other visits with Sunderland Extended Services so more youngsters can benefit."

Following the trip each child received a special oral health goody bag, which included a suitable toothbrush, toothpaste, a two-minute timer, a tooth brushing chart and dental care literature for parents as well as a special certificate. To help support the trips Pauline Wright, Oral Health Promoter for South of Tyne & Wear Teaching Primary Care Trust, will also visit each of the schools to further promote the importance of dental care and healthy eating.

The dental visits form part of the Sunderland Extended Services (in and around schools) programme to help promote healthy lives across the city through working in partnership with local businesses, Sunderland Children's Centres and the Teaching Primary Care Trust.