69 Angreen Road
Gainsborough
DN29 4PL

23rd July 2016

To whom it may concern,

On Wednesday July 8th, my daughter visited your park as part of a class trip. Before the event, parents were invited to pay £2.90 for a pack from the shop as we were informed there was not going to be enough time for children to visit the gift shop.

When she arrived home, her pack consisted of a pad, pen and pencil – all of which were pink. She was quite upset at this, and said she wanted a blue one (this is her favourite colour) but was not given a choice. I could not offer her an acceptable explanation, but I promised her I would contact you.

I first tried your Facebook page, and left a post there; two days later I received a response:

"It's the schools that dictate to us what they want in their goodie bags. Sorry u weren't happy with them"

As well as the informal letter substitution the response used, the apology seemed rather shallow, especially since it wasn't me who was unhappy, but my seven-year-old daughter. I also found it hard to believe that the school could have dictated this; surely it is you who decides what goes into the bags, considering you were the ones to offer this facility to the school in the first place?

However, I did challenge the school about this, and was immediately met with the response that was not the school who chose the bags; the teacher on the trip specifically asked for bags with items of the same colour, and was informed by the staff that blue and pink bags had already been prepared and they needed to know how many girls and how many boys there were so they could label the bags.

I am now contacting you to express my extreme frustration at the situation. Given the dismissive response I was given on my Facebook post I felt a more formal approach was perhaps needed.

I have spent the last five years battling gender stereotyping in the media so my children can make choices free from those dictated by out-dated gender roles, and feel that this act is undermining the work I have done. I am sure this decision will have happened unconsciously, rather than as part of a specific agenda, but I almost feel if this *is* the case, that is somehow worse: that these stereotypes are so deeply ingrained people just aren't aware of them. As a teacher myself, I come into contact with hundreds of children each year, and very few fit into neat categories despite what the media would have us believe.

I am very aware that there is nothing that can be done now, and that my frustration may seem insignificant, but I am asking that perhaps in future, students could be allowed to make their own choices, or, if time/resources mean it is impossible, choose the same colour items, perhaps even a 'gender neutral' colour.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, since having children it is something that I (clearly!) feel very passionate about.

Yours sincerely,

Fem Nist