

Toon duo are on during a day at

the ball school



By Ruth Lognonne
Education Reporter
ruth.lognonne@trinitymirror.com

IT was back to school for Toon players Ryan Taylor and Mehdi Abeid.

And the football stars' knowledge of all things Newcastle United was put to the test when they took part in a quiz at Wallsend Jubilee School in Newcastle.

The high-profile visit was part of the Toon Times educational programme, which uses the story of Newcastle United to teach children about history.

The lads also stuck around to open the school's new gym.

Dad-of-two Taylor, 30, said stepping back into the classroom took him back to his younger days.

And he raised a cheer from his young fans when he told the class that the best goal he scored was against Newcastle's bitter rivals Sunderland, when the Toon won 1-0.

"It's nice to see how my children will be learning when they start school," he said.

"The facilities here are better than when I was a boy. We just had a playground to kick a ball around and we used school sweatshirts for goalposts.

"It's good to see the club giving something back to the youngsters in the city. I'm a dad and my children's future means a lot to me.

"I'm not great at Newcastle United trivia to be honest, but I do know my favourite player growing up was Alan Shearer.

"He came to Newcastle late in his career and made a huge impact at the club. He's a big inspiration to me."

Following the quiz, the players were happy to take questions from the classroom floor.

Taylor was asked what would he be if he wasn't a footballer and he said either a fireman or a policeman. He also told children that if he had to choose a job in Victorian times, he would be a carpenter.

Youngsters were also taught that Newcastle United in fact played in red and white - the colours of their arch rivals Sunderland - before changing to



Newcastle United players Ryan Taylor and Mehdi Abeid visit a class at Wallsend Jubilee school Wallsend

black and white in 1904.

Asked if he would wear the red and white colours, Taylor replied: "I'd have to dye the red to black or find a permanent marker from somewhere."

The lads were shown a pair of Victorian football boots, which raised their eyebrows.

Asked if he would play football in a pair of boots like that, Abeid said: "I

wouldn't fancy it."

Abeid said he enjoyed learning about the history of the club with the children.

"I wasn't very good at school," he confessed. "I always wanted to be a footballer and gave that 100 per cent. I would always encourage young people to do well at school and if they have a passion, to pursue it."