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| Fieldnote Note | 9 | Date | 18/5/21 |
| Locations | School (Ed Team 2) | Weather | Mainly sunny and warm |
| Child interactions | Eva, Dom, Dennis + 2 other children | Staff Interactions | Tanya, Geraldine and Pepper |
| Times | 8.30am – 3pm | Total Time in field | 6.5 hours |

Arrived on campus a little bit earlier this morning, which was good as I was able to have a chat with Tanya, Geraldine and Pepper about the information leaflets and the project and check if they had any questions. All three consent forms came back fine, and I was seen to have fitted in well yesterday and they didn’t ‘feel’ observed, which is good feedback. I discussed a few elements of the work from yesterday with Tanya – specifically about how she ‘reads the room’ through watching, listening, and feeling and then adjusts her strategy as required. She noted that she was interested in whether any change would come from my being here by virtue of someone from ‘outside’ looking at things but wasn’t specific about anything she thought needed changing.

With permission, I took a photograph of the timetable for today before any children arrived [photo saved seperately]:

The colouring exercises (of Victorian houses) were available on the desks for any children who arrived before 9am. The staff are involved and engaged with the children from the moment they arrive.

At 9am the orders go in for lunch and then the lesson begins. The first topic this morning was related to a project that was being led by an outside consultant (an archivist) on the history of the school/organisation. Today the children were to paint some large pictures they had made of children, and these were to be in the colour of historical and current uniforms that were used. These are going to form part of an exhibition and a curator is to be involved to help advise on how to show the various paintings and projects off.

Because the puppy had taken to getting on to one of the large drawings (it was on the floor due to its size), Pepper took Dennis and Eva into the ‘quiet room’ next door to complete their painting and I accompanied them. Pepper was in and out to the classroom to check for permission in terms of the colours that were supposed to be on this particular painting. The two children completed their respective parts in different colours, although there was a fair amount of encroachment on each other’s spaces. Pepper was encouraging them and keeping them on track and ‘dampening down’ any apparent friction that was coming up during the task. When this was finished, after some toing and froing, both this painting and the other one from the main classroom were put in the quiet room in order to dry without the interference of puppies. There was some discussion about this with other staff as the quiet room is used sometimes at speed when children are ‘not managing’. Indeed Pepper and Geraldine had to quickly leave and get the paintings out of there about 20 minutes later as the room was needed. The proximity of the quiet room to ‘our’ classroom meant that sometimes shouting and banging could be heard (I heard this yesterday). Today, it felt a bit difficult for me as I could hear a child shouting/screaming to be let go (must have been in a safe hold). I was thinking how difficult it must be for the child and for the staff to be in these situations and how it affects them emotionally. The children in this class do seem to be aware of when things are going on but are not always (outwardly at least) interested in them.

The next chapter of the story that has been ongoing during the Victorians topic was started, however, the puppy was in a mood for disruption and there were also other distractions from the quiet room and some staff coming and going to get assistance from Pepper. After a couple of valiant tries, Tanya allowed some choosing before outside play and I had a game of top trumps with Dom and another child. Tanya had brought in some Scatch (Velcro balls and catchers’ game) for the children to play with and they paired off for this outside.

After break, the children had snack (a digestive biscuit, some fruit, and some diluting juice). There is a lovely, relaxed attitude to spillages and children quickly get involved in any clean up. After snack, a continuation of the mental maths and multiplication exercises from yesterday. The children each getting turns individually and in pairs to complete 3x tables questions using the smart board. Interestingly, towards the end of the game, the children piked an adult to play in a team with (usually Tanya, but Dom picked Pepper). Some of the children’s confidence was immediately improved by their presence and they universally abandoned their number boards. This was noticed and feedback to them in terms of them having more ability than maybe they think. Dennis sits on the knee of Pepper for chunks of the morning and seeks comfort from this – other children were periodically on the knee of Tanya throughout the day as well.

Dom was struggling to concentrate during the multiplication exercises, and I was proving a bit of distraction to him even though I was trying to help. I moved later after Pepper asked me to and she sat next to him. He clocked this as it happened and asked me ‘what did Pepper say to you’ and I told him I wanted to be able to get a different view of the class and the activities from the other side of the table. There was a conversation about going out for basketball but only if ‘everyone could cope with it’ and it was suggested that Dom may have to play in the courtyard if he was unable to cope with how he was feeling. As they were all getting their basketballs and lining up, I went to the toilet and spent a bit longer in there than necessary to see if my getting out of Dom’s eyeline would help him to calm a bit. As I came out, everyone was heading out, but Pepper stayed behind with Dom.

We all went round to the ‘mugger’ where there’s a small astro-turf court that has basketball hoops. There was a discussion between Tanya and Fraser about needing more staff and Pepper could be made available to him if required. Pepper arrived with Dom shortly after this and he still seemed a bit ‘up’ in the sense that he booted a football away despite Pepper asking him not to. Tanya set up the teams and games for basketball and this all went well. After they had played a little, she split them into groups to go to each end of the court and practice throwing hoops. Dom started to get a bit frustrated at the far end and booted his basketball out of the court towards the end.

When we returned to the classroom (minus Pepper who was helping Fraser out), Tanya opened up a discussion on why Dennis and another child did not want to play with Dom – because he threw/kicked the ball too hard, and they were frightened about getting hurt. The other child explained how this made him feel. Dom apologised and they set up a 5-minute play session including Dom for him to have the opportunity to ‘show’ that he can play in a way, which was agreed to albeit rather reluctantly. This discussion was the health and wellbeing section and including a discussion on feelings and relationships.

Lunch arrived shortly after this and there was a relaxed, playful conversation around this including some jokes. After lunch, we had 15 minutes of outdoor play. The boys had their prearranged play although the two smaller boys checked-in to see when their ‘time was up’ of ‘having’ to do this. It seemed like these issues are long running between them and I thought about how the children learn to manage with each other’s behaviour as much as with their own, including being aware of difficult emotions of others and how they manifest themselves.

After we went back in, Dom’s behaviour escalated quite quickly and this must have been noticed/predicted by staff as happening as another staff member from another class arrived in as Dom ripped the painting that Eva and Dennis had finished that morning and, as he was taken out of the class, he managed to grab a bottle of peach paint and squeezed it all over the floor for good measure. The children who were left in the classroom helped with the clean-up operation along with me and Geraldine and then she got them started on the finger paintings that they had been working on last week. I thought that Eva and some of the other children seemed markedly different in their behaviour – nothing extreme but, not listening to Geraldine in terms of not smearing paint everywhere etc. If I were to guess at their emotions, I would say they looked and acted a bit anxious and this made me think about how they feel during tense moments as well – I know that I knot up a bit, so I wonder how they feel about it.

Tanya returned after a while and then, after another 20 minutes or so, Dom returned with Pepper. Shortly after this, an external teacher came in to do sex education with them – something they had been dreading saying that they felt awkward and would prefer if Tanya did these lessons. Eva went somewhere – another class? So it was just the boys. I thought the teacher was really good, but this didn’t stop the boys sinking into their chairs, covering their eyes with their hands, holding their tee-shirts over their faces at various points throughout the lesson. I suppose I did feel a little awkward myself at some points – but we’re perhaps socialised to feel like that. Dom’s social worker had come in for a visit and was also present throughout this lesson.

After this lesson and some clearing up, the children have some time to either play iPad or colouring until their lift arrives. The children gradually left although Dom was later and used some of his time left to torment one of the dogs and, sometimes, me. I don’t know what was going on for him today exactly, but it felt tough to me so was likely even worse for him. As I left, Tanya was discussing recent issues with Dom’s Social Worker.