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| Fieldnote Note | 8 | Date | 17/5/21 |
| Locations | School (Ed Team 2) | Weather | Cloudy |
| Child interactions | Eva, Dom, Dennis + 2 other children | Staff Interactions | Tanya, Geraldine and Pepper |
| Times | 8.45am – 2.45pm | Total Time in field | 6 hours |

Arrived at the school campus this morning and into Ed Team 2’s class where Dom and 2 other students were already in class. Dom returns from weekends home directly to school on a Monday and leaves directly from school on a Friday. The other two children are day pupils and there is no consent in place, so no data will be recorded in relation to them.

Eva joined the class at 9am and Dennis a little while after that. (There were also 4 black Labradors in the class all day and, for the most part, you wouldn’t have known – they were very well behaved despite the fact some of them were still just puppies).

The day is divided up in activity segments that balance between more formal learning (reading, spelling, maths etc) and play activities, which include ‘choosing’ (children can pick something to do for 5 minutes) and outdoor play. Also going on today were yoga and play therapy. All of the children went for one yoga session (individually – I went on one with Eva) although only one went for play therapy today. Choosing appeared to be used as a means of breaking up longer periods of learning/concentration and Tayna may have added an extra one in today as she said ‘ok, have some choosing because that’s been quite a long time listening’.

The order of the day is up on the wall under the white board with little laminated cards with pictures and words so that the children know what they will be doing. Yoga and basketball were up and to the side and I learned at the end of the day from Tayna that, although they go more or less to basketball at the same time each day, when it appears in the schedule, some of the children can organise their behaviour around that. So, they would not engage earlier in the day and then engage as it gets towards basketball and then disengage after that activity as well. She has learned to keep them out of the schedule to improve overall engagement in each of the activities.

There are other things up on the wall – quite an impressive art piece which was related to Egypt, which had been a previous topic of study. Currently, the students are looking at Victorians and many of the tasks through the day link back into this topic – children colouring in before the start of class were colouring in their own pictures of Victorian houses. There were also various sections of the wall laid out with topics – e.g. maths, time (days of the week, months of the year etc), and emotions.

Tanya leads the topics and activities and has the most authority in the class. She seems also to be the person that the children most want to impress (look at this Tanya, did you see me doing that). There have recently been some changes in staff as Lexi retired and Davina moved to another class. However, Pepper has been in this class since summer last year, but I must have missed her when I visited and also when I did the online interview with this team. Geraldine has only been here four weeks and so is just settling in.

During the different learning activities (reading, listening, spelling, maths, the Victorians), the staff moved according to individual children’s needs. For example, during spelling Tanya asked Geraldine to move next to a particular child during that exercise while Pepper helped another. Then, during maths, Pepper was with Dennis who sat on her knee and sought her out for physical contact throughout the day. Some children used ‘privacy boards’ for the activities. It seemed that these were used to help children who struggle with social anxiety in relation to tasks. So, for example, if someone maybe struggled with spelling, it was easier for them to do it behind a privacy board with the help of one of the staff. Privacy boards are small, grey, three tiered folding boards that sit up on the desk and shield the child from the gaze of others, or perhaps from having to watch how quickly others do things that they find more difficult?

‘Hands up to talk’ seemed to be a useful tool that allowed Tanya to bring children into topics that they felt less sure about and to generally give everyone a turn at giving answers/responding in the discussion. As well as the white board and smart board, a range of other tools were used to assist in the activities today – small white boards (some with number columns on them), number boards, and the desks were used in the spelling exercises – they write directly on them with white board markers. The children clean up their desks and areas after each task – wiping the desk, putting away any materials etc.

During choosing, I played a few card games with Dom throughout the day. Before the break, Tanya discussed with the children the fact that Simone (who was not in today) had been ‘struggling’ recently and that she was going to spend some time in other classes. It was not known if or when she would return to this class, but it was ok for the children to say to her that they hoped she was ok and that they missed her if they wanted. The children had specifically asked about Simone in the morning and Tanya had agreed to talk about it today.

During the morning break, outdoor play was the order of the day, and the children took to running around and doing different things including looking after some of the dogs, playing with rugby and footballs. The breaks are staggered so that it is generally only one class that is outside at any one time. Geraldine said later (during the afternoon break) that it allows them ‘space to be themselves’.

The ‘mental maths session’ after break made use of a game on the Smart board where each child had a go at one sum and then some children had a go at a ‘full board’ of questions. Dennis seemed to lack some confidence in this and got a number board, although he hardly looked at this and it seemed to just give him confidence in answering – something that was picked up on and mentioned to him by Tanya. Dom was pretty good at this task, and he was allowed a harder board to do himself as well. Adaptations and permutations to take into account each individual child’s needs, levels, and interests.

Late morning, we went out to the back court for some basketball. Dom returned there having been for his Yoga and it was Eva’s turn. I agreed to go with her having been offered. The yoga is held in the Yurt, which was really warm with a log burner in the middle of it. The yoga instructor (who I think is specialist) takes each child through a session tailored to each child’s needs (I was filled in on this at the end). For example, Eva does the yoga part really well and is very flexible, so the focus of her session was on meditation and allowing feelings to ‘flow past’. I took part in the session and focussed on what the instructor said as I wanted to make sure I was not a distraction for Eva who seemed a bit distracted at first. During it, while I was relaxing, I was thinking how interesting it was that children are getting exposed different philosophies and a lot of emotional language in these sessions, and I wondered whether this may be helpful for them in being able to express themselves.

After the session we went back to class, where lunch is brought into each class by the staff there – in this case Pepper was collecting the different meals, which had been ordered from a menu in the morning at the start of class. The other staff were praising the children who had been playing 2 against 2 at basketball and had worked well as teams and had been really encouraging and kind to each other throughout – I was sorry to have missed it!

There was a nice, relaxed feel to lunch as various conversations ebbed and flow across the tables.

After lunch and some more outdoor play (rugby this time), the basketball session was used as an example for the Health and Wellbeing session where they talked through how ‘good teamwork’ was evidenced in behaviour and how those behaviours would have made the individuals involved feel while also taking the opportunity to give a lot of praise and reinforce this type of behaviour.

The session on the Victorians made use of the smart board and also some physical activity in the form of ‘drills’ for physical exercise. Tanya plans to take the children to the Scotland Street Museum in Glasgow when she is able to.

The last 25 minutes of class, the children were allowed to take an iPad and play games on that and there was a bit of scramble to get them. The taxi showed up early for the two day-pupils and they left. Fraser came into class to let whichever pupils know that their lift from the bungalows was here and then they would leave. While this was happening, I was sitting with Geraldine who filled out a diary sheet for each child for the day, which detailed what subject they had done and the other activities – these could be accessed by the staff at the bungalows who could see what kind of day each child had had. I remembered that photos of various activities had also been taken through the day and the staff are mindful that children may want to come back and look at their records etc. in the future as well, so they record (in writing and pictures) everyday things that occur.

I took time to explain the project to Pepper and Geraldine and give them staff information booklets, discussing confidentiality and consent. I left consent forms for them to have a look at as well. They were going to do the training for safe holds – after I had left, I thought I should have asked to observe this also as it may have been an interesting angle in terms of everyday care and ‘therapy’ and the tensions that exist in some of the work that they do.