Transcript EdT3, 17/2/21

ANDREW:… I know sometimes it’ll put folk off from talking, which is fair enough and then I’ll revert to note writing. I say it saves me work, but it does take me ages to type up stuff as well. Just before we start, I know I’d sent you the wee leaflet and I know you’d seen it before, and I know I did a wee informal visit as well… but, there’s a couple of things I wanted to pick out just to really… erm… emphasise and that’s about consent and confidentiality. So, although [org] has agreed to this research, each of you individually has absolutely the right to give and withdraw consent as you see fit. I really approach consent with you guys as I would with children, you know, you can give consent and then you can remove it. You can change your mind. You don’t need to explain to me why you’re changing your mind or anything like that at all – you can just go ahead and do that. You can consent to be involved in things like this, or a wee interview and not in other parts, or in other parts and not an interview. You can pick and choose and I’ll often, when I’m up – actually there, I’ll often check in with folk ‘are you alright if I write that down or make a note’? I’ll often do that, you know, just to make sure that it’s always ongoing consent and that you’re a part of that and that you’ve got as much power as possible when it comes to the research. I suppose, related to that is confidentiality. So, it’s important to know ‘oh, what’s going to happen here’. So, the minute I type up the thing today, I’ll change your names and identifying details. So there’ll no be a record of who it was that said what or whatever, and when we do reports we’ll not use [org’s] name either. So if we produce a report or go to a conference, we’ll talk about a residential school in Scotland

BOTH: Right, ok

ANDREW: So, in that sense, externally it’s, we’ll try and anonymise it as far as possible. The only limitation I would say for you guys, in terms of confidentiality, is you guys know each other really well, you know the kids really well. So, as much as I could change your name, your details, if I’m using, for example, a quote of a story a particular piece of practice or activity, you be able to say ‘oh, I recognise that story, that’s Kirsteen because she’s told me that as well’…

BOTH: Yeah, ok, of course

ANDREW: So, there’s a limitation to level of confidentiality within that. So, that’s important to think about if you’re giving your consent as well so that you know that. So, are you ok to proceed on that basis, is that alright?

BOTH: Yes, yes

ANDREW: Well, these are, these are kinda exploratory, I suppose, chats for me… I was hoping to be there and do these kinds of things in person just in the moment. With the residential, I’ve did a few with the residential, I’ve started to get a good idea about the processes, how things work, how shifts work, what things happen and things like that. So, I wondered, I know I’ve been for a wee visit, but I wondered if you could talk me through a typical day in your class? How do things work on a day-to-day basis?

KIRSTEEN: So, we have got… we’ve just changed our class size – we now have five children in our class. One day pupil and four residential children. They come down anytime between 8.45 and 9.30 really… we start our day with a ‘soft start’. So, on a Monday we do ‘a hug and a mug’ where we have – this is stolen from another class, this is Laura’s idea – so we have hot chocolate and we have a catch up about the weekend and everyone takes turns sharing their stories… and I have emotions cards out on the table and the kids pick emotions cards and they can talk about that emotion particularly or… one of our boys likes choosing the cards but not speaking about them. So, they can use them in whatever way they fancy. That goes on for about half an hour to 45 minutes. Then we do a little bit of individual literacy – reading, spelling, writing… a bit of handwriting practice. Then we, if we have time – sometimes that runs over – we do a health and wellbeing focus and, for this term, we’re looking at getting help in emergency situations and learning targets. So, that changes each term. Then it’s break and we go outside for some fresh air, some outdoor play. Then we come in and have snack and then we do another literacy task and then topic RME – that slot sort of changes. Then we have lunch and we all – we’ve got a really nice routine for lunch now – that we all sit round the big table together. We set it with place mats and napkins and jugs of juice and really it’s all about turn-taking and the rituals of sharing the food and really building up those social skills and then, the afternoon is a little bit softer. It could be expressive arts or planning for ‘woodshed’ or design and technology… yeah, different things like that in the afternoon and then we wind, we sort start winding down about 2 o’clock till 2.30 we start to wind down. And that’s the… general routine for the whole week. We do ‘hug and a mug’ on a Monday morning and then it’s just a normal soft start 9-9.30. On a Tuesday and Thursday, Annie leads art and craft activities and on a Monday and Friday it could be board games or a puzzle and things like that. Then a Wednesday is our health and wellbeing day when we are out and about places.

ANDREW: ok, my God! Ok, there’s loads going on there and, I suppose, you know, really interesting for me. I’ve got like 1000 questions! Just one point of clarification – what is Woodshed? That’s something I’ve never heard.

KIRSTEEN: So, Woodshed was the blue shed out by the Yurt?

ANDREW: Oh, I seen the Yurt certainly, yep.

KIRSTEEN: So, we have a gentleman - [name] – who used to be an Education Support Worker here but, he’s since retired and now comes back twice a week and the children use tools and build shelves, or models, or… whatever they fancy…

ANNIE: all wood, all wood-related… bird houses. One of our boys built a bird house this week and one of our boys likes to do big massive shields about that size [indicates size with outstretched arms for width then height] and they really all, all get a lot out of it.

KIRSTEEN: *yeah*, yeah. So, obviously risk-assessed to the hills! They’re using real tools, in real life situations, planning, measuring, the whole shebang. So, really good.

ANDREW: Yeah. So, see when you say ‘they get a lot out of it’ then, Annie, what do you… how do you know that? How can you tell?

ANNIE: It’s their enthusiasm to go. To want to [name] first and it’s they joy and pride they have when they come back with their finished work. You know, and the fact that they’ve sat… erm… Kirsteen’s got a little leaflet thing that she’s already – pre going to Woodshed – they design things. So, they design their own, what they’re going to make, and what tools they might need, how they want it to be, what size. That’s all in their little document and… it’s just the sheer pride they have and, you know, some of them, the more they get to do it: ‘oh this week I got to use some bigger or, you know, more advanced tool’. They just thrive on it, they just seem to thrive and it’s lovely to see the pride in their work.

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, absolutely! And [name] is brilliant with them. He’s so good at dialling into what is the correct level of *responsibility* and *skill*… and so, we have one young person, Norman, who is excellent

ANNIE: Oh, yeah

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, straight away, right off the bat [name] was able to measure him up and be ‘right, ok, we can do X, Y and Z’. Whereas Graham – like one of our other boys – isn’t quite there yet. So, the skills that he’s developing are different to those… so it’s really differentiated to meet their needs. It’s brilliant.

ANDREW: that sounds fantastic, doesn’t it… that they, if somebody’s got a wee talent for something that that’s really nurtured and brought on because, you know, well, ‘nothing succeeds like success’ they say don’t they? So, do you find that individual tailoring then… is that something that you incorporate into your general work then because you’ve got a range of things going on in the class? [yes] Have you got some examples you could talk about?

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, so, this is the first… so, I’ve been at [org] for five years and this is the first combination where we’ve actually been able to do the majority of *group* learning. Normally, I would have four or five individuals on four or five individual timetables. Whereas this group are a… really quite able at working together and the differentiation comes in by myself or the ladies supporting them or, if we have a scaffold – so, if we’re doing story writing, for example – Daniel can just sit and write away or type. He prefers typing. He can just sit and type away whereas Fergus needs lot of scaffolding for spelling and sentence structure? So, we sort of differentiate either through adult support or through the resources we use to get them to the *same* end point. So, they’re all working towards the same target most of the time, but it’s how they get there is slightly different.

ANNIE: and at their level and capability – what makes them feel comfortable.

ANDREW: It sounds great. I mean, I’m desperate to actually be there and be involved – get to make something in the Woodshed as well [all laughing]! For sure, that’s the beauty of ethnography – you get to be a participant in some of the stuff. So that sounds fantastic, the stuff that’s going on there. Could you explain to me then, are there similarities and differences between your roles in the class for you guys? In terms of the, things that you would do that everybody would do and that you share and then, things that you might do because you have a particular role within the class?

KIRSTEEN: So, as class teacher, my role is slightly different in that I lead the lessons and I do all the planning and assessment for it as well… and then Patsy [couldn’t make the meeting today] and Annie… [dog enters the screen] Sorry, this is Sparky

ANDREW: I’ve met Sparky [all laughing and dog jumping around over people]

ANNIE: He’s feeling left out, aren’t you darling [to dog]… I’m just going to get him his biscuit, it’s his end of the day biscuit…

KIRSTEEN: and then, Annie and Patsy, I involve them in the planning so that we’re all on the same page and we know what the expectation is… and then… the ladies have a role in supporting the children who, sort of, need that one-to-one adult support to achieve the targets. I suppose that’s what’s different between our roles but, between the three of us, we’ve got a very… balanced working partnership. I would never say that I was ‘the boss’. The three of us work on an equal level and the children engage with us on an equal level I would say as well? [to Annie]

ANNIE: Yes

KIRSTEEN: and, it’s more like a united front between the three of us and each of us have our own skills and talents that we bring – we all balance each other out really well.

ANDREW: Ok – have you three worked together for a long time? So, you’ve been there for five years…

BOTH: No, no!

ANNIE: August… since August.

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, so, I worked with Patsy when I first joined and then I’ve had a different team since then… and then all the teams got moved around in August and, yeah, we’re just a really good fit.

ANDREW: Ah, good!

ANNIE: It is, it’s wonderful. We just seem to… read each other and work as one and it’s… it’s, you know, it’s lovely. It really is nice.

ANDREW: And so that’s, one of the things I was interested in is, you know your class is called [name] and there’s one that’s [name] are these inspirational names or are they… is there a reason that one class is called [name] and another is called [name] or anything…?

ANNIE: No, there were just given names, I think at the point, when we first used these names, we were asked what one we wanted to be… cause it’s the [name of organisational branding] here at [org] so we picked one of the [brand characters] that we wanted at that time. I voted for [name of current class] in the class I was in at the time but Kirsteen had already got it [both laughing].

ANDREW: You eventually got [name], you got it eventually… it must’ve been on the cards. And, then, that recent change then… in terms of the children and that, is that something that happens from time to time? Is there like a staff meeting that ‘oh, look, we think this child might be better in that group’ or… how does that work?

KIRSTEEN: Oh, so… So that happen in lots of different ways – some better than others. Sometimes, it is a response to risk. If a child is a risk to the other children, a move might happen quite quickly and then that means that there’s no, there’s no transition really. It’s more of a ‘this is an immediate risk’ so it needs to be dealt with now. So, that is obviously not the ideal situation because we would want to prepare the child for that and prepare the new class for that but sometimes that doesn’t happen. With Graham, who joined us, it’s actually been quite a nice transition because… he has been joining us for, like, the odd activities…

ANNIE: quite a few

KIRSTEEN: yeah, for quite a few weeks before the decision was actually made to move him in with us. His old class was having quite a bit of a tricky time of it and he was quite scared by some of the behaviour of the other children. So, something that’s brilliant about [org] is that we, sort of, *absorb* other children when we need to and the staff are really great at helping out when something is going on. So, we would just sort of adopt Graham…

ANNIE: [laughing] we did!

KIRSTEEN: …for a day, an afternoon, or just 20 minutes – whatever was needed. So the transition for Graham actually quite nice because he had sort of been with us quite a bit and then Joan and Fraser made the decision that, for the dynamics, they thought it would be better to make it a permanent move

ANNIE: for Graham

KIRSTEEN: yeah, yeah… but, unfortunately, sometimes we don’t have that luxury depending on the risk factor.

ANDREW: yeah, yeah, I understand… It’s just sometimes the situation is the situation and it needs to be resolved?

KIRSTEEN: yeah… and sometimes we have short-term moves as well where, if there’s a particular issue in a class with another child, they sometimes – quite often this class actually gets a lot of, erm… visitors [laughing]

ANNIE: we like having visitors, that’s what we’re all about at [org] is helping each other out and going, you know, adopting children for a few hours or a few minutes, like we need to. Yeah. Some of them have now taken it… we’ve got one wee boy in the other class that his safe place now, if it’s getting a bit noisy for him, he immediately comes to us. So, then his class know that he comes but we always, once he arrives at the door, go and say ‘by the way, we’ve got the child with us’. He’s now found us as a wee safety quiet place for a wee bit till he feels he’s ready to go back. So, it’s nice that…

ANDREW: Do you know, when you’re saying that, I’m, I don’t know about, maybe I’m being a bit narcissistic but I think I’d be… quite flattered by that?

BOTH: Yeah! Yeah

ANNIE: It’s nice, it is nice that they actually feel that, you know, they’re going to be welcomed here and feel safe for that time until other people can make I safer for them to go back to their class.

ANDREW: Yeah, he’s choosing you

ANNIE: He’s now called me [details how this boy made a play on her actual name – to describe it and my responses would risk confidentiality]

ANDREW: that is nice, yeah, that sounds lovely. I’m wondering, erm, so five years Kirsteen is that right? [yes] and Annie, how long have you worked there?

ANNIE: 22 years

ANDREW: Oh right! A long time then [all laughing and affirming]… you’ll have seen a lot of changes. In terms of where you worked before Kirsteen, or maybe for you Annie, the changes you’ve seen over time, do you think your previous experience… how does that interact with the current practice, the way that you do things?

ANNIE: erm… I think as time’s went on, I think a lot to do with the Curriculum for Excellence as well… has helped. Because a lot of things we did throughout the years previously in [org] by Education, what is it, Education Scotland was looked on that we weren’t doing enough for our children. But, actually, we were in advance of doing Curriculum for Excellence. You know, so, we used to find it very hard to have the evidence and, you know, and to make them understand *why* we were doing certain things because of our children’s needs and, all of a sudden, we actually, we’re doing it for so long for that… and it’s more, I just feel, they’re more thoughtful towards our children.. since Curriculum for Excellence came in… that, you know, we can do more with, the things we *were* doing that they’re more accepted…

ANDREW: Yeah, recognised?

ANNIE: Recognised, yeah, that’s the word.

ANDREW: And do you, how have you found… I’m interested in this transition, you know, the everyday and therapeutic, in terms of the DDP training coming in Annie – how have you found that since it came in? Have you found it useful? Is it just confirming what you were already doing practice-wise or…?

ANNIE: yeah, I think it was confirming, it’s what we were already doing. But having, you know, [consultant] then always keeping on top, and having these talks with [consultant] you know, just reminds you and keeps you ‘yeah, I am doing the right thing’ and it makes a big difference that you’ve got somebody that’s, although, putting into words what you were doing before, we were doing all this but there’s not a… a name for it. You know? And it’s always nice to have that refreshing talk of *why* we’re doing it, you know the reasons, and I like having the DDP, you know, getting that every so often. It’s good.

ANDREW: And, Kirsteen, were you working in mainstream education before you came then?

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, I was, erm, mainstream for… five years before I moved here and I lived, my mum and dad lived not far away, and I always drove past [org] and I was like ‘oh, I’d always like to work there’ and I was having a bit of a… not a crisis of confidence at work, I don’t know what it was. But, erm, I’d gone on looking at Myjobscotland and [org] was available. So, it was a very serendipitous moment for me to come because so much of the DDP practice and of the children that we work with, is the reason that I got into teaching in the first place and, like Annie says, when I looked into DDP and when I was doing my interview, I was like ‘oh this is what, this is what I do already’. This is how I want to interact with my children and, just before I left, I had a child who’d erm, had a terrible, traumatic bereavement and I was getting told on by my colleagues because I was sitting hugging a crying child in the cloak room… and I wasn’t able to spend time with him and support him the way that I wanted and I really felt that mainstream school, at that time, was just so unaware of the impact of any sort of adverse experience for children. So, [org] selfishly was a great way for me to actually feel like I was making a bit of a difference.

ANDREW: ok, so that, the formal education system, at the time when you were leaving, it still being quite detached and being quite ‘this is how we do education and you have to fit that’ rather than the education being tailored to the children [yeah yeah]. So, I’m pleased that you’re in [org] because it sounds like you’re…

ANNIE: oh, so are we! [all laughing] We’re delighted to have her and she’s *never* leaving!

ANDREW: It’s sounds like, you know, it’s good for the kids but it sounds like it’s good for you as well actually?

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, yeah… I mean, it’s the *most* challenging job. It’s *so* difficult at times and I feel so lucky and blessed with our class group at the moment because this is the most settled class I’ve had in five years… erm… but, even when it was so difficult, I *love it*! Yeah, I absolutely, it’s the reason I get up in the morning… I don’t think you, you can’t not love this job. It would be impossible to do.

ANNIE: I mean it has it’s good days, you know, some days are hard but the good days kinda, you know, make up for it in ways

KIRSTEEN: Yeah… and even when you have the crap days, the support network that we have as an education team gets you through… and I wouldn’t be able to do the job without Annie and Patsy and then the wider team.

ANDREW: Yeah, I was going to say ‘how do you deal with the difficult days’, you know, how does that look in terms of how you process and deal with that? Is that, is it just team meetings at the end or, do you recognise each other’s you know ‘something’s going on’…

ANNIE: I think you do. Well, we do in here, recognise, you know, like I just ‘I’m going into the cupboard for five minutes ok’? I’ll go in there and tidy it up – I just need that, you know. That’s one of the things that Kirsteen did, I thought ‘that’s a good idea’… or you just go for a wee walk and we know, you just say ‘I’m just going’ and everybody needs that couple of minutes sometimes. Then, at the end of the day, if we’ve had a relatively bad day we all sit down and discuss it and, you know, make sure we’re all feeling good before we leave.

KIRSTEEN: Yeah… it’s a bit trickier with COVID because we’re not allowed to spend as much time with other classes. But, prior to COVID… erm… because… we would work, we worked in class teams, but we also worked *as a school team*? So, we would maybe swap in and out as a change of face [audio/visual disturbance to recording] back and forth with staff. So we always knew if someone had had a difficult day and, then, there would never be an official debrief [note – this was said in a way that emphasised the organic nature of support rather than giving the impression that official debriefs never actually took place] we would just congregate around this person and be like ‘we’ve got you. How are you feeling? Are you alright? What can we do’. So yeah, it’s a very intuitive team in the School, which I’ve never experience before.

ANNIE: We can go for a cup of tea and take ten minutes and we’re not taking no for an answer! [laughing] And take them away and we’ll do what needs to be done until they are ready to come back.

ANDREW: Yeah, looking after each other as well as looking after the kids actually, which is…

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, definitely

ANDREW: yeah, really important… and I suppose speaks to the value you have for each other as well? Yeah, do you, it sounds like there is a real team mentality at the school then? You know all the other staff really well, you know all the children really well as well, for the whole school?

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, yes.

ANDREW: Cause, I think I seen you on a walk, I was out on the basketball court when you came round for a walk, and the two kids from the other class came running over to Kirsteen I think?

KIRSTEEN: Yeah… It’s really lovely that we just… I don’t know, I don’t know what it is about the school, but they just, you just sort of…

ANNIE: I think it’s, you know, that a class is unsettled and sometimes you have to go in to help support, but not going in to help support a child, you’re going in to help support the atmosphere in the class and just maybe sit and do somebody’s reading or to take the stress away from whatever else is happening. So, that’s how we get to know children and, you know, have time with them and so you will have children in a class who’ve done that ‘oh, I need a hug Annie’ and you’re going ‘yeah’…

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, and it’s the beauty of a small school as well. I mean, we’re capped at 21 kids and it’s like… it’s so lovely coming from, so my mainstream school wasn’t massive, it was 170, but even just coming down to 21 kids, 4 classrooms, you know, you just know everyone… even if it’s just that passing in the corridor ‘oh morning Dom, how are you’? It’s really, really nice.

ANDREW: Excellent. In terms of, I mean there’s loads of stuff I, you know one of the questions, one of the wee things I’ve got noted down here is ‘what works well’ and we’ve actually, we’ve covered that quite a bit, but anything else that you would particularly pull out in terms of what works well you think in the day-to-day…?

KIRSTEEN: Routine. Yeah, so our timetable doesn’t really change much at all. So, we have like, that slot before lunch where that could be RME or topic or health and wellbeing. That one sort of changes, but the rest of our day is *very* predictable and… that, I think that creates an air of safety for the children as well? They’re not going to be sideswiped by something totally out of the blue. There is a little bit, there is flexibility within the week and, obviously, we have specialists in on a Monday and Friday and sometimes that changes and the kids are able to manage that because they know… that the rest of our day is going to happy *this way*. So, I think structure and boundaries is really important… and we’ve got, so one of our young people has autism but I think it is so important for the rest of our kids as well to have that structure

ANNIE: yeah, for all children yeah

ANDREW: yeah, predictability seems to be a thing that comes through that is very important for these children – that they know what’s going to happen and when it’s going to happen?

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, definitely.

ANNIE: A structured routine and not a lot of, as we used to call it, ‘dead time’. You know, it’s going from one activity to the other or, you know, they do so many of their activities and then they get their ‘choosing time’

KIRSTEEN: that’s ‘this or this’

ANNIE: yeah, it’s ‘this or that’ [emphasising a limited choice]. Our boys love playing with the Lego and the garages and the cars and, iPads they really don’t care about them. Do you know what I mean? So, it’s lovely to see them playing and… it’s just the routine of doing things like that. Always having something, you’re always, so you’re not just sitting having nothing to do…

ANDREW: staring at a screen, yeah, or just sitting with nothing? You need some kind of structure, something…

ANNIE: Yeah

KIRSTEEN: Yeah, I think also, the predictability in the staff as well and, as a school, that obviously is easier than on the care campus… to have the same staff every day and, obviously, that can’t happen on the care campus. So, I think that’s definitely something that makes it… easier, for us in a sense is that, our boys come in and they know that they are going to have Annie, Kirsteen and Patsy and they know that, this is how they are going to be with me, this is how… yeah, they just…

ANNIE: the boundaries are set in place and they know that the three of us are on the same page with boundaries and acceptance of behaviour and things like that. Whereas I know sometimes that, because maybe they don’t know may people in the bungalows that are coming in on shift, then

KIRSTEEN: they might be testing…

ANNIE: they will test, you know, to see what they can… do…

ANDREW: yeah, skilled social actors are children

ANNIE: very, yeah, very skilled, yes

ANDREW: see an opportunity and exploit it, like all human beings to be fair to them! [all laughing] The other thing that I had, as a kind of follow up to that… I wondered fi there is anything that you’re thinking about trying, or that you might like to try or, something that’s… maybe you’re experimenting with just now or anything like that, just if there’s anything that you’re thinking about?

[pause, look at each other]

KIRSTEEN: hmm, well, I’d like to develop outdoor learning more for the children… erm, again, the combination that I had previously so.. October? [to Annie – yeah] So, prior to October, I had a different combination where the risk assessment meant… outdoor learning was very tricky. So, that’s something I would like to get into more with this current group… because I think they would respond really well to it and I think… they would be safe as well. So that’s something that I would really like to try… erm… I don’t know, we’ve kind of got into like a good routine with them at the moment…

ANNIE: Yeah… but then, we’re also quite quick to see if ‘that’s not working’ where we maybe need to do something different that day, like ‘let’s go for a walk’. We’ll do that but, we’ll do it in a way that’s it’s, it’s part of our structure, it was part of our day. But, sometimes, you’ve just got to kinda down tools and say…

KIRSTEEN: yeah, flexibility

ANNIE: …let’s do this instead… take them out or [inaudible] or something like that.

KIRSTEEN: or it’s a ‘oh, so we’re not going to be able to manage a table-based maths lesson, let’s go and do some cooking and we’ll do some measuring’ and get a bit creative, yeah.

ANDREW: Yeah, just adapt, adapt, adapt? Yeah, I was reflecting on it yesterday with someone that you try so hard to get predictability in for the children, there’s quite a lot of unpredictability for you I guess?

KIRSTEEN: Yes, yes!

ANDREW: But you just have to adjust to that…

ANNIE: I think that, a lot of the preparation that Kirsteen does as a teacher is all very engaging, so we very rarely have that problem to do that but, it’s just sometimes when, maybe outside this class when you can hear the noise level, or out there, that can unsettle our children, we’ll do it more for that kind of reason, just to…

KIRSTEEN: change the environment, yeah

ANNIE: she’s [Kirsteen] very creative in her learning so, our kids seem to enjoy and interact really well with what Kirsteen presents, so it’s really nice.

ANDREW: and do you have to put, so, I’ve always got questions, sorry! [all laughing] How is that getting the time to do the prep and the review and stuff like that, you know, do you, is that before the class in the morning, after the class in the evening, are you having to invest your own time in that as well?

KIRSTEEN: So, my work-life balance here is better than it ever was in any mainstream school. So, the way it, because we work right the way through the day – no lunch break Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – and then we’re entitled to our reduced class contact time as well? We are actually not committed to the children on a Wednesday. So, I have a whole Wednesday to do prep and do that. So, that is a godsend. So, even though I’m in the school and I see the kinds and we’re sort of like, popping in and out, I’ve got a big chunk of time on a Wednesday, which reduces what I have to do at home mostly. That really helpful, yeah.

ANDREW: Is that when they’re doing stuff with Clayton? Is it Clayton that does stuff with them on a Wednesday is that right?

ANNIE: Yeah, well, it’s the, it’s like the support staff and Clayton might go with one class and then we’ll all go to different things with our classes.

ANDREW: ah, I see, right, ok.

ANNIE: It’s always four individual activities we’re doing. Now and again you’ll go with another class, but, it’s not always working well when there’s more than one class going to something but, yeah, it just depends on what it is. Clayton is always in charge of one, erm, like the mountain biking, climbing and things like that…

KIRSTEEN: yeah, skiing

ANNIE: … and then we’ll go to different things. Maybe trampolining with our own children or something like that… but then, nothing is open at the moment, so it’s roaming round parks, so… and snow. We’ve had loads of snow, so they’ve been sledging today - they’ve been away [a local] glen sledging cause there’s still loads of snow up there.

ANDREW: You’ve still got snow? It’s all melted in Glasgow.

ANNIE: not so much here but, about half a mile up the road then there’s load of snow up on the hills – so they had a great time.

ANDREW: Yeah, great… Can I just check, see the Monday Friday specialists that you mentioned, is that like a speech and language therapist or play therapy or…?

KIRSTEEN: No. So, on a Monday we have [name] who does Yoga, [name] who does music and [name] who does Woodshed and then on a Friday we’ve got [two of them – yoga/woodshed] again.

ANDREW: right, ok, so it’s activity based. I just wasn’t sure because I knew that there was a speech and language therapist and I knew that there’s a play therapist… I wasn’t sure if they were coming into the school to do their stuff or if that’s…

KIRSTEEN: No. [name] our play therapist works out of the shepherd’s hut up at the bungalows – I don’t know if you saw that? Yeah, it’s in the woods… and then, one of the bungalow managers, [name], she’s also done Theraplay, so she comes down to school on a Thursday and works with small groups and individuals in the Yurt on a Thursday… not with any of our youngsters? [to Annie – no, no] And then we have a new speech and language lady who, she was, she’s doing an audit at the moment to see what’s the best way to use her time… but I don’t know if she is going to be class- school-based some of the time, we haven’t found that out yet. And then, we also have [name] who works with therapositive? She brings in bug, I don’t know if you’ve met bug? [Andrew – no] and she does dog therapy.

ANDREW: ah, right, ok

KIRSTEEN: she’s done individuals and she’s done some class work as well. That’s on a Thursday too.

ANDREW: right, interesting. Loads going on! Listen, I’m aware of the time and I know your time is precious and I don’t want to go over it. So, thank you very much. Just to check if there are any questions you’ve got for me or anything that you need clarified?

BOTH: no, no.

ANDREW: I hope to speak to you again at some point, *hopefully* in person but possibly online depending on how things go but it was, that’s just *so* useful for me and *so* helpful

ANNIE: I really enjoyed speaking to you

KIRSTEEN: yeah, each of the classes are so different, I think you’ll find, like, once you’ve spoken to the four of us – we all work completely differently, the routines are all different, the priorities are different. It’s such an interesting place to work cause nothing is the same [laughs]

ANDREW: Yeah, well, all the children are different individuals, all the staff are different individuals, so it would be tough to expect it to just be same really I suppose… and that’s certainly what’s coming across to me in loads of different ways… yeah, loads of lovely individuals.

ANNIE: thank you!

KIRSTEEN: Ok, well thanks Andy

ANNIE: we hope to see you soon

ANDREW: Yeah, well, hopefully in person, yeah, I’ll get to see your feet and everything! [all laughing] Ok, thanks again, thanks very much, take care bye

BOTH: Bye [waving]