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| Fieldnote Note | 25 | Date | 14/9/21 |
| Locations | Bungalow 1, Bungalow 2, Bungalow 3, Campus | Weather | Cloudy and humid |
| Child interactions | Dennis, Daniel, Graham, Junior, Dom | Staff Interactions | Donald, Thelma, Ronnie, Florence, Pru, Quin, Cheryl, Ailey |
| Times | 12pm-6pm | Total Time in field | 6 hours |

Stayed on campus after being up for planned interviews during the early shift. After the interview with Thelma, I discussed with her the idea of doing a drawing exercise with some of the children. The plan being to ask them to draw their [org] – keeping the bits they like, getting rid of bits they don’t like, and adding any bits that they would like. She thought that sounded like a good idea and we discussed trying to first of all see if any of the boys who would be in Bungalow 1 this afternoon would be up for it and, if not, to see if any of the kids in Bungalow 2 might be – Bungalow 3 were mainly going to be out this evening. I agreed to go to the handover meeting at 2pm to see how things were being organised for the children coming back from school.

In the meantime, I popped in to see Ronnie in Bungalow 2 to tell him about the possibility I could land in there later depending on how the activity went in Bungalow 1. After this, I headed up to Bungalow 3, meeting Florence on the way. Up there I chatted with Pru in the kitchen while she was preparing the dinner for that evening – she was on an early shift providing cover but noted how doing this would really help the staff out later as making the dinner and organising all of the other things that were going on in the bungalow could be quite a task. She noted how she thought that they should consider having a cook on site but that the thinking was to have each bungalow more ‘home-like’.

Other chats in the kitchen while having some lunch including discussing Red’s independent time and that he was visiting some ‘wee friends’ he has met in the local village and the fact he had been invited to tea there with one family. Florence noted how some SWs could be strict, insisting that the parents of the child should have a Disclosure done and how this could be off-putting for parents and add to some negative views of children who are living in residential units. Red’s current SW is not so strict, and Florence knows the family that have invited him, having been born and bred in the village herself – which was how she came to work at [org]. Both Florence and Pru had concerns that the children from [org] may be blamed for things that happen (e.g. anti-social behaviour) by virtue of where they live and that they both worry about the stigma that the children can have attached to them by others. Florence noted that, at 13, she had an expectation that Red would ‘get up to stuff’ when out as 13-year-olds do. There was an interesting tension for her when Red admitted to her that he had tried a puff of a cigarette and that he hadn’t liked it and wouldn’t do it again. She noted she had done the same but hadn’t told her parents – she praised his honesty but seemed to suggest that he should maybe be at the stage where he was able to discern what and when to disclose this type of information. Is this an effect of being in care? Is it that Florence (and the rest of us) bring our own experiences of being young to our expectations of how young people *should be*? During this time in Bungalow 3, Thelma brings a wee boy in to meet us and he is going to be joining Bungalow 1 from tomorrow.

The handover meeting was held in good humour again and all of the arrangements were put in place including how pick-ups from school would be ordered and what children were with what staff and what activities were planned. Donald was scheduled to be in Bungalow 1 with Daniel and Dennis today and so, as the meeting finished, I spoke to him about my idea for some drawing and he was agreeable.

I based myself in the kitchen of Bungalow 1, at the end of the table with some flipchart paper and all my coloured felt tips (permanent Sharpie markers removed) in a bag. As the children arrived back, Dennis came into the kitchen – “Andrew! Is that your red Volvo out there?” – he had wondered whose car this was and discussed with Donald and had guessed it was mine and was glad to find out he was right when he came in. He gave me a hug. Graham also gave me a hug when he arrived in and Daniel said hello. The three boys had various snacks that were available – sandwiches, fancies, and some crisps (there was a lively debate as to whether these Wotsit-like snacks were actually Wotsits or not and what flavour they were). Shortly after this, Graham headed off to swimming with Ailey.

After a slow reaction to my drawing suggestion with Daniel, I took all my colourful pens out of the bag and sat them on the table. These drew the attention of Dennis who organised them into rainbow order. He wanted to show me something in his room and while we were there, I explained to him my idea for the drawing activity, and he said he liked ‘everything about [org]’ and then was showing me how his drawers get stuck when Cheryl came in from another bungalow looking for something and got him to help her. When he came back to the kitchen, I explained he could add anything he liked to the drawing – he added a rainbow and a swimming pool and drew his bungalow from the front including showing me where his room window was.

[picture saved separately]

My plan was to talk with him during the drawing and ask him about the drawing when finished and recording him talking about it if he was ok with that. However, the drawing was over very quickly, and I never got a chance to record him talking about it. I was able to write down the conversation we had verbatim though:

*Dennis: I’ve put a rainbow in like the pens and I’ve added a swimming pool. [draws an outline for the bungalow] – it looks like a slice of cake!*

*Me: So it does! You can make it a cake if you want.*

*Dennis: No, I’ll add bricks and windows. Look, this is the quickest way to draw bricks [demonstrates] you do all the down lines and then you can just do one line across.*

*Me: You know all the tricks for drawing. Is that this bungalow from the front? Which room is yours?*

*Dennis: [indicating] That’s the living room, that’s the front door, and that’s my window, that’s Graham’s, and that’s Daniel’s*

*Me: do you like your room?*

*Dennis: It’s alright… is that a scooter [indicating my drawing]? It looks like a scooter.*

*Me: I was trying to draw a bike but I’m not very good at it. I drew the handlebars of a bike and then I didn’t know how to finish it, so I made it a scooter*

*Dennis: this is how you should draw a bike [leans over and demonstrates how to draw a bike]*

*Me: So, you said you liked everything about [org]. Is there anything that you especially like?*

*Dennis: I like Mary.*

*Me: What is it about Mary that you like so much?*

*Dennis: Well, she’s my key worker.*

*Me: What is it that a keyworker does?*

*[Dennis leaves the kitchen and goes into the lounge to ask Donald what a key worker does and then returns]*

*Dennis: Key workers write your reports and organise your budgets and that.*

*Me: and is this why you like Mary? Because she writes your reports?*

*Dennis: No, it’s because she’s part of my life. Finished! Will you play on the bikes with me?*

*Me: ok, if it’s ok with Donald, I’ll play on the bikes with you.*

Having previously observed the interaction between Mary and Dennis, I’m not surprised that he picks out this relationship as something that he especially likes. I feel like playing on bikes is reasonable recompense for his participation in this activity so, after clearing it with Donald, we head out to get some bikes from the storage hut. [Later, I think about why Dennis was keen to go outside and play on the bikes – it was so he could show me how good he was at jumps and tricks, and he gave me lessons in how to do these. I was reflecting on the importance of having things that we are good at and for these things to be recognised by others.]

We then spend some time trying to source helmets – he gets one, but I do not – I can risk it as an adult apparently, although I’m a bit worried about giving a mixed message to the children with this.

We do a couple of circuits of the bike track through the forest, with Dennis advising me on the route, places to avoid, appropriate speeds for clearing particular ramps etc. We end up back on main campus and he seems particularly interested in a game of football between a child who has recently joined bungalow 2 and a new member of staff [need to check consent situation for both]. The playfulness and energy of the staff member with the child, and the enjoyment of the game that both seem to be having looks to be attractive to Dennis and, eventually, both he and I get incorporated into this game (the other child is reluctant to play against Dennis but does agree to play with him against the adults).

After a while, Junior indicates that he would like to join in but struggles with the imposition of rules that are not of his making and it take a bit of negotiation and pacification (including from Dennis and the other child) to eventually incorporate him into the game.

We again take up the bikes, this time with Dennis showing me how to clear a ramp outside of Bungalow 3. While doing this, Ronnie comes up with Dom to get something from Bungalow 3 and while he is in getting it, Dom takes the opportunity to get some swearing and inappropriate comments into me, which I generally ignore. When Ronnie reappears, Dennis is quick to tell him that Dom was ‘being inappropriate to Andrew’ and recounted what Dom had said. Ronnie gets Dom to apologise to me and makes the point that he needs to behave more appropriately if he wants to go out in the van with Ronnie as planned.

Another circuit of the bike track including a stop to make a quick den with branches that Dennis makes me carry over to another tree. After we had been down there a while, I started to feel a little bit anxious being away from the staff gaze for such a length of time (maybe 15-20 minutes) and manage to casually get us back to biking as I didn’t like the gunk that was on the branches getting onto my hands.

There was a little bit more football on campus until the Bungalow 2 squad got called in for their Tea by Thelma who was working in there tonight. A worker I hadn’t met (part-time) came in about this time and chatted away to me and seemed very interested in the research. She was working in Bungalow 1 this evening to help out. Dennis asked me to film him jumping off a ramp on his bike and clearing a puddle – I got the Bungalow phone to do this after checking out it was alright – again, this was about being good at something and having a record of him being good at something.

We were called in for tea and I was nominated to eat Stewarts attempt at prawn stir-fry – it was ok despite the noodles being a bit overcooked. There was also fish and chips for Tea. Graham arrived back from swimming, and we all chatted around the table. When the conversation turned to possibly watch a Scooby-Do film, Graham and Dennis were impressed by my Scooby-Do impression and this led on to animal noises. Monkey, dog and cat were favourites, which they made me do again and again.

Dennis asked me where his picture was, so I made sure to put it in his room before I left, at which point Graham and Dennis were settling down watching TV with Donald and Daniel was listening to music in his room.