

Castleview Primary School

2D Greendykes Road, Edinburgh

Contact persons: Nicky Roy (Behaviour Support Teacher) and Iona Brockway (Learning Support Teacher)

Both teachers and two students of the 7th class (P7) greeted us at the door. Brief introduction and agenda for our visit (see enclosed document).

School tour with the teachers through the school building and the classes. We begin with the nursery class (kindergarten) – there the various areas are presented to us. Nursery class is for children from 3 to 5 years of age. Iona tells us that there several of the children here are listed in the “Child Protection Register” and have to spend a specific time in kindergarten (all day or half day) – the parents do not have to pay anything.

- 1) She showed us the Behaviour Table – on this magnet board (see illustration) there is a sun, a rainbow and two clouds (white = thinking cloud and grey = thunder cloud). The children all have their own small name panel and these are placed on one or the other picture depending on their behaviour.

The sun (well-behaved)

The rainbow (excellent behaviour)

The white cloud (they are not so well-behaved) and when they misbehave on more than one occasion their name panel moves to

The grey cloud and stays there until the next morning and then they start again at the sun.

Three messages have been laminated on yellow boards – “Be gentle”, “Be kind”, “Be safe”

- 2) On a different wall individual children’s rights have been laminated on the wall and the children have signed them with their handprints.
- 3) There is a parents’ room where parents can drink coffee and read magazines.
- 4) Chatter room: from the P7 peer mediators are named and they can meet in this room with two school children who have a conflict. There they can try to solve this conflict as mediators –they simply tell the teacher from the nursery class that they are in the chatter room. When the mediation is not successful, the class teachers are informed. A mediation should not last longer than ten minutes.

P1(1st primary class – children’s age: 5 years)

In the primary class 1 (P1) there is also a behaviour table. When the children earn 5 “golden coins” here, they receive a small present. Also the children’s rights are “signed” by the school children. From primary class 1 up there is also the “bubble time” – a magnet board on which each child has his/her own fish – in the middle of the board there is a bubble and when a child does not feel well/has a problem, it can put its fish in the bubble. The teacher then asks the child what’s wrong. Sometimes “the problem” is only “that lunch was not good.” In the library reading support is offered. As Nicky puts it “because of the area outside it’s safer for the children to stay all day in school” and she explains that many children come from families with up to six siblings and poverty and squalor are also common. She says that there can be up to 37 children in one class and two teachers and also a support teacher.

On a table there are photographs spread out of teachers and other people who work at the school – on the pin wall above it there are pictures of the various rooms of the school and the title of this particular corner is: “We are learning to recognise adults who can help us in school”.

From primary class 4 on there is now only one teacher in a class with 3 schoolchildren and this teacher sometimes is backed by the “support teachers” – but this option is only possible if the director supports it.

P2 (2nd primary class – age 6)

Here, too, the behaviour system is used – the children begin each morning by putting their name on the sun. Depending on their behaviour the sun then wanders towards the rainbow or to the thinking cloud. When they have been warned three times in a row, the name moves to the thundercloud and stays there for the remainder of the day or until the next morning.

A timetable is in each class

Each child also has a separate sheet hanging on the wall with 10 fields and their own name – for each outstanding performance or behaviour the children receive a “head-teacher award”, when the sheet is full of these golden head teacher award stickers, then the child receives a great present or can take a trip with the director, like going to the cinema. She told us that the children really love this head teacher award.

Iona tells us that she is employed for 35 hours a week and comes every morning at 7:30 and stays until 5 p.m. She says that in Scotland people expect a lot from teachers.

In the recreation area (playground) there are again large white boards on the wall – in each line the name of a child is listed with the right class – one table has a smiley "where the thumb points downward (thumbs down) or the other table has a smiley with a thumb that points upwards (thumbs up). When a child receives a thumbs-down sticker from the “learning assistant”, it must then go to “detention” and cannot go to the courtyard during the break. A letter is sent to the parents. Iona spoke about the so-called “detention folders” – they are negative but sometimes necessary.

P3 (3rd primary class – age: from seven on)

The class is there - but basically it is structured the same way as the two other classes.

Then we go to the upper level where we find P4 to P7 (8 – 11 years of age)

Here, too, there is a large recreation space (playground) in the middle and on the wall we see pictures of children from different cultural backgrounds. Iona tells us that there is a social group against racism (“social group happens in the afternoon where the children are learning empathy and how to respect each other”). Nicky, however, reports that there is no racism at the school. Last year there were only two racist incidents at the school.

P5

In this class (upper class) the behaviour table is not in the form of a sun with rainbow and clouds but in the form of a football field. The field is the sun – the gate the rainbow and there is also a yellow and a red card here. When the children land on the red card, the “bonus time” is reduced by 5 minutes (obviously the break time).

There is also a suggestion box where children can always throw in suggestions for changes in the class.

P6

This is described by Iona as the “most challenging class” – very many children from problematic families – alcoholism and violence at home – but she says that this has very much changed – here, too, there are the same areas with the titles Behaviour Table, Children’s rights, our responsibilities and the teachers’ responsibilities.

Some children sit a bit on the side in the large class room. The teacher says that this is often a preventive measure that the children then sit on the side before they make trouble or misbehave. When the children act up – violating rules, the teacher notes this is an agenda and the counselling teacher reads this and then later discusses it with the children in a one-on-one conversation. The children are not reprimanded by the teachers.

In the big break the “learning assistants” take over supervision and the teachers can all take a break together. The learning assistants also have children’s rights cards with them and the thumbs up and the thumbs down stickers with them and they use them often. The children also respect the learning assistants as authority figures.

In one class we see two large pictures of a knight and a damsel of the castle – next to it a closet with medieval costumes and the teacher (not sure which class) tells us that the children also like to dress up once a week and then they go to the Castle of Edinburgh.

Main break:

Iona reported that each teacher has their own laptop and that school-related issues or events are mainly communicated by email. Sometimes she receives up to 50 emails a day.

After the break we looked at a short power-point presentation in which the school presents its basic principles. “Positive Behaviour Policy”, The Overall Learning Intention – this is described by the curriculum for excellence, which in addition to math and language also includes “health well-being”. Nicky says that they are certainly very progressive with their curriculum. There is a separate business manager at the school who organizes the funding of the school and submits applications to the government for additional funding.

Once a week there is the “assembly” of teachers and parents (“whole school & teachers & parents”) – a sort of event in which current events are discussed.

She showed us books and Claire Murray’s chat board (claire.murray@emotiontalks.org) and recommended these materials that they also use in the assemblies, e.g., “How I feel”.