

MEADOWPARK – NEWSLETTER – WEEK 11 – 03.11.17

Kayaking resumed this week and I volunteered my services to support two of our pupils – Jack and Declan on the River Tyne. I was delighted to see how confident these two boys were on the water. Jack was in a kayak by himself and paddled hard and fast against the current upstream, pulling way ahead of me. Declan began the session in a canoe with instructor Antony Stone but was able to move into a canoe by himself on the return journey and paddled downstream confidently and purposefully.

The water was calm, the wind was light and the smile on all our faces was huge. Both these boys face high levels of anxiety, daily – facing the demands of school, personal and social challenges and finding their place in society. To see them on the water, successfully manoeuvring the boats created a sense of achievement for them and reassurance for me that the core of our approach that Health and Well-being for All is an essential element of Meadowpark philosophy.

All pupils had a Spooktacular Hallowe'en party on Tuesday and I would like to extend huge thanks to the whole team for encouraging all pupils to participate, try new sensory games and have lots of fun, dancing ... and cake!

Class 1 ventured out and about this week, leaving the city limits of Haddington. They have been participating in a topic of Transport – collecting views and opinions of how we travel, including horse, hovercraft and sledge, looking at travel through the ages, and predicting how fast a car will travel on different surfaces as well as planning a trip to Edinburgh Airport using bus and tram timetables to ensure a smooth journey. All pupils – and staff - reported having an excellent day.

The sun shone on Thursday afternoon and Classes 2 and 3 joined forces with two S6 pupils Kara Singh and Ailsa Wrinn and creatively used items from Loose Parts Play to create two seated areas under the shelter in the south playground in Meadowpark. Pupils' imagination was fired by using willow to tie netting together, ropes and string to hold the tarpaulin in place, logs and palette to make one table, and the bottom half of an old gym horse with a board from play equipment to make another.

I had a fascinating meeting with Kelly Clarke from Loose Parts Play on Wednesday and I am very excited at some of the ideas she has for our incredible outdoor spaces. Sometimes we have to wait for the right person at the right time and I know that with Kelly and her enthusiasm I have found a like-minded visionary who wants play to feature high on all pupil's curricula. When we consider some of the Play Types – Locomotor, Communication, Social, Exploratory, Mastery, Recapitulative, Symbolic, Creative, Fantasy, Deep, Imaginative, Object, Role and Socio-Dramatic Play, we are developing resilience, negotiation, challenge and progression.

As I reflect on the previous week it is with a real sense of joy to see how relaxed and happy Meadowpark pupils can be.

C. Prime 03.11.17