

This time last year we were finishing for the Easter break and in spite of many attempts to explain why Easter changes it still baffles me that there can be a month's difference in dates which has a significant impact on those teaching a programme of study and those studying for exams, completing assignments and assessments. Staff and pupils are justifiably tired but the longer lighter days make it bearable.

Forth Class went to the Food Bank in Tranent on Thursday and feedback from staff and pupils has been very positive. The class watched a superb video in preparation and this certainly helped to dispel any myths about who uses a food bank. The narrator was a working mum struggling to put a decent meal on the table for her children. She described the process with empathy and clarity and while acknowledged that a wide variety of people might require accessing the food bank, their needs were genuine and no-one was ever judged or made to feel inadequate. Statistics were found online as to the number of children living in poverty in Scotland and Meadowpark pupils displayed not only empathy but citizenship and responsibility by collecting items to take along and actively engage with staff. Many of our pupils believe in social justice and the conversations and debates can be very insightful at times.

Our Play Pod renovation is complete and has allowed for much easier access to Loose Parts Play resources. We will be collaborating with Kelly Clarke next week to refill some of our boxes and based on some of the Tweets I have seen, I am excited to see what she comes up with. However not only are the resources better organised, the floor space has been tidied and pupils have greater access to the bikes and scooters which is providing excellent opportunities for pupils to get moving. For two of our pupils this has been hugely important and has enabled them to self-regulate their distress and build resilience.

Cycling and bike maintenance have become a popular if not essential element to the curriculum here and offers an opportunity for negotiation, collaboration and success. Pupils are getting fitter and there has been a surge of confidence and ability to self-regulate.

There can be misunderstanding that young people with autism having no or little empathy but sometimes they just need a nudge and appropriate resources heartfelt work to be produced. Today pupils in all classes were given the opportunity to make a card for Mother's Day adding detail that was personal to them and a reflection of the love and support they get from home.

We try as best we can to replicate that care and support and it is so much more than corporate parenting, as we attempt to manage the needs of all our young people. As in life there are hic-cups and we recognise that some situations don't go as well as anticipated, but the incredible team work I see all day and every day at Meadowpark from staff who genuinely care about getting it right for the young people in front of them, often holding them in mind long after the school day or even week is done, is truly inspirational.

Have a peaceful weekend.

C. Prime 29.03.19