

Focus of Visit

Having recently spent some time with Key Stage 1 children in Maple class, I also wanted to observe and talk to the KS1 children in Holly Class (i.e. the Year 1s). As before, the focus of the visit was to talk to the children about what they are learning and how they learn. There are eight Year 1 children in Holly Class, and I had a discussion with four of them.

Observations

My visit to Holly Class began by observing the displays around the classroom. The main wall was dedicated to Year One work where the overall theme was ‘how things are made?’ The display showed that the Year One pupils had completed a project on toys.

On the wall were drawings of their favourite toys which the children had created using the 2Simple Publish PC package, and they had written sentences underneath describing their toys. The display clearly indicated what children had been learning and what tools they had used in researching and producing their work.

Another display heading said ‘Famous Teddies – we found out about famous teddy bears’. Underneath was an interesting timeline that each pupil had produced showing when famous teddies had been created i.e. Rupert, Winnie-the-Pooh, Paddington, and then the children had added their own teddy to the timeline, indicating how old it was. It was clear that the children had used the Internet to help them with researching the famous bears.



There was also some written work by the children about Theodore Roosevelt and how the ‘teddy bear’ was named.

It was very nice to see on display some photographs of Mrs. Brawn as a child, taken whilst holding her favourite toys. Later on the children were keen to show me these photographs!

The children had also made their own toys, and a collection of peg dolls were on display along with a set of instructions that they had obviously followed. Some wording alongside said “I made my peg doll out of wood, material and wool”.

Other things I noticed around the classroom were Easter cards and repeating pattern pictures.

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Later I observed some guided reading sessions. There were two groups of four KS1 children with a TA. They all seemed very enthusiastic about changing their books, and all were keen to get on with their reading.

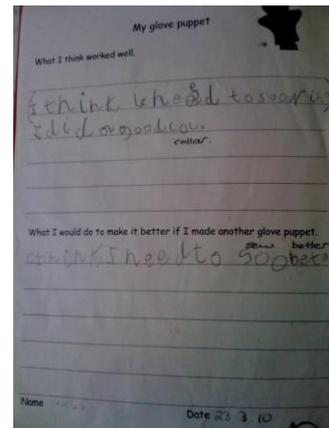
One group were reading a book of poems and were using the Contents page of the book to locate a specific poem, rather than reading the whole book in one go. They all took it in turns to read phrases from the poems and they all listened to each other intently when they had to wait their turn.

They worked as a team when deciphering some unfamiliar words, and working in small groups allowed them to speak confidently with each other. I observed two boys sitting together after their guided reading session, and they continued to share their thoughts on the new reading books. Two girls also continued to help each other read and sound out new words. I thought it was excellent that they could help with each other's learning in this way.

Discussions

I spoke with four Year 1 children, Fleur, Lauren, Charlie and Ben. We found that it helped to use their topic books as an aide for discussion.

As part of the 'how things are made' theme, the children said they had made glove puppets. They had to draw a design first and then make the puppets using fabric.



In their topic books they had to write what worked well and what they could do better, if they had to make them again. As the photograph above shows, one pupil states, 'I think I need to sew better'.

I asked the pupils how they know if they have done something right or good. They said by awards such as stickers, stamps, or house points. They didn't seem to use the traffic light system that I have seen in Maple Class, where pupils can tag their own work as easy, hard or ok.

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When I asked them who helps them with their learning, they said, teachers and TAs, but one of the boys added that *he* had helped one of his friends with his homework, whilst on a 'play-date'.

When asked what they enjoy learning at school, one of the girls said that she enjoys making things, because she likes copying what she has made at home.

They all said they enjoy their Handy Homework sheets, and they informed me of the Wow Card system that the Reception children are involved with, where a family member can issue the cards for good deeds accomplished at home.

The children also spoke about how much they enjoyed Science week. They spoke fondly of the mums helping to make giant mud pies outside!

The children then showed me their topic books in more detail and also the aforementioned display on 'how things are made'. They were eager and animated in doing so, and they were obviously very proud of their work.

Summary

Having seen the project work on display and in the topic books, I saw evidence of design, research, and evaluation. Through observations, I witnessed independent learning and teamwork. The pupils themselves all seem to be aware of the process of learning and who can help them, and that they can help others too.

Many thanks to Mrs. Brawn, Mrs Rastogi and Miss Ditch for allowing me to visit on a *very* busy Monday morning!

Jane Hodges
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