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1. Project overview

A twelve week pilot project was launched taking children from a local primary school (participant group 1) once a week to spend the morning learning and participating in educational and creative workshops with a group of residents in a local care home (participant group 2).

The programme was devised to meet seven specific criteria (see below) laid down by the participating school for a cohort of reception class children aged four to five, and to measure improvements in social engagement, mobility and mood for a group of elderly residents living in a care home. The youngest pupil in the programme was 4, the oldest resident 104.

Several workshops were planned throughout the morning, beginning with the arrival of the children at 10:15 and ending with the children’s return to school after lunch. Activities ran for a duration of twenty minutes.
• **1.1 – Project staffing and resourcing**

The project required the onsite weekly presence of a project coordinator, project support assistant and various project artists from Independent Arts (IA). IA staff were responsible for planning and preparing workshop content and delivery of workshops. The project coordinator and project support assistant gathered weekly evaluation data. Workshops were photographed and filmed by the project support assistant.

2. **Participant profiles**

• **2. 1 - Participant Group 1** – Reception aged children with a mixed range of abilities and from mixed backgrounds. Social and family issues arising included:-
  - Poor home and family role models
  - Parents with mental health problems
  - Disrupted living environments
  - Single parent households
  - Social isolation
  - Low income families

Behavioural and learning issues included:-
  - Lack of nurture
  - Negative attention seeking behaviour
  - Poor academic outcomes
• NB the school opted to include a small percentage of higher achieving pupils from more stable and supported households in the programme, with the expectation that these pupils would provide a reassuring and supportive presence for their peers.

• **2.2 - Participant Group 2** – Elderly residents in a local care home. Physical and cognitive challenges faced include
  - Poor sight
  - Poor mobility
  - Arthritis
  - Dementia
  - Diabetes
  - Stroke recovery
  - Parkinson’s
  - Low mood
  - Depression
  - Loneliness and isolation

3. Project evaluation models
3.1 - Quantitative models

Both the children and the residents were evaluated at the beginning of the project and at the end of the project. Quantitative questionnaires measured the following seven criteria for the children with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent.

- The Child is able to adjust their behaviour and take changes in situations in their stride.
- The child is able to show sensitivity to others needs and feelings
- The child is able to form positive relationships with adults and other children.
- The child is confident to try new activities and explain why they like some activities more than others.
- The child is able to follow instructions involving several ideas and actions.
- The child is able to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through music, art and stories.

Residents were also scored against the criteria set out below, with 1 being low and 5 being high.

- General physical health (mobility, dexterity, level of dementia, alertness, engagement)
- Mood and wellbeing (depression, anxiety, confidence, mood, social isolation)

3.2 - Monitoring and observation

Comprehensive session reports were produced each week to observe and record both the levels of engagement of the participants and the efficacy of the intervention. A weekly register was also kept to record attendance and absence. Barriers to inclusion were also noted in these reports.

4. - Project objectives:-

Improve confidence
Improve group social skills
Reduce loneliness
Improve interpersonal relationships
Improve outcomes in learning, comprehension and personal expression
Improve levels of engagement
Improve aspiration
Improve wellbeing
Improve quality of life
Improve outcomes in health
Improve mobility (participant group 2 only)
Improve fine motor skills
Improve dexterity

4.1 - Overview of the workshops programme

The workshop programme included a mix of music, the Makaton method of signing, art, poetry and gardening. Weekly session write-ups give a more detailed account of workshop content, aims and observations.

Short movement sessions were included in the programme every week, as was a sit down shared lunch.

Residents and children participated in all workshops together. On occasions residents took the lead in group work, and with particular projects (i.e. gardening)

Below is a detailed breakdown of how the workshops themes and content measured and addressed the seven criteria set out by the school and the areas for evaluation identified by the care home for their residents.

4.2 - Detailed breakdown of how the workshop programme met the school’s seven criteria
Criteria 1) The child is able to adjust their behaviour and take changes in situations in their stride

Taught learning

Prior to starting the project the form teacher spoke to the class about visiting the care home, what they might expect, and some of the difficulties faced in older age. She also visited the home herself to meet the residents who had elected to join the programme

Embedded practise (programme attendance)

In the care home environment, the children encountered challenging behaviour, adults in distress and unforeseen medical situations. As far as possible the children were supported in their understanding of the individual challenges as they arose. In the early stages of the project some of the children became anxious about attending but with support and encouragement all children successfully completed the programme.

Criteria 2) The child is able to understand the differences between families, communities and traditions
Taught learning

- **Music workshops** – (resources – music sack – collection of songs – percussion instruments). As part of the music workshops participants looked at how music was played and experienced many years ago in contrast to today. The children learned to use a gramophone and gramophone records, and heard stories from residents about their own memories of playing gramophone records. The children then showed the residents various devices (phones/mp3 players) used to store and play music today.

- **Printing workshops** – (resources – maps – images of Indian life - images of Indian palaces – hand carved wooden printing blocks – rollers, ink and paper for printing). As part of the printing workshops participants learned about the tradition of Indian block printing. This included learning about Indian culture, and Indian traditions.

- **Toys and games workshop** – (resources – IA traditional games box – large format floor dominoes). For this workshop the children were shown a range of traditional board, card and dice games. The residents were encouraged to talk to the children about entertainment before the arrival of television or computer gaming devices. A group game was then played by all. It is of note that many of the children had never played a board game at home, or family game.

**Embedded practise** (shared lunch and workshop engagement)

Across the eleven weeks of delivery through conversations that took place in the workshops the children became very aware of the different lives the residents had experienced and the very different worlds they described. Memories from resident’s childhoods included experiences from the WWII, school life, families and travel. Residents talked about everything from having a pony to ride to school, to living in Ethiopia under the emperor Haile Selasse, to memory machines and George Orwell’s lost memory machine.
Criteria 3) The child is confident to try new activities and explain why they like some more than others

Taught learning

- **Art Workshops** (resources – Books, reproductions of works by famous artists – felting tools and felt. Clay and natural ephemera – shells, fossils, pebbles, seeds. Paint, marbles, trays. Lino cuts, printing inks and rollers – group discussion) Apart from clay, neither the children nor the residents were familiar with many of the media or methods introduced in the art workshops. Everyone was very keen and enthusiastic to try all art activities, and participated fully. Preferences, if any, weren’t overtly expressed.

- **Makaton** (resources – Makaton signing system – weekly learning games and group activities - range of signed songs) The children had never encountered Makaton or learned any form of sign language prior to joining the programme. They all listened well and worked hard learning to use a range of different signs. They also took their learning back to school to share with fellow pupils.

- When asked to do so the majority of the children confidently demonstrated signing to the rest of group. Some needed support to do so, but through joining in with learning games, more gentle participation and individual support, all children felt able to join in with confidence.

- **Gardening** (resources – seeds, seed trays, compost, gardening tools, read stories, songs, poems, colouring and matching worksheets, wild flower worksheets) Some of the children didn’t have access to a garden at home and the notion of creating a garden and growing plants was very new to them, nonetheless all the children were very excited to take part in the gardening workshops and expressed wonderment as they nurtured the plants each week bringing them from seed to harvest.
Embedded practise (programme attendance – workshop participation – shared discussion)

Criteria 4) The child is able to show sensitivity to others needs and feelings

Taught learning

- **Friendship workshop** (resources – Read story - *Chester’s Way* – Group discussion). This story was chosen because it incorporated ideas of tolerance, understanding and acceptance. The children and residents listened to the story and talked about the importance of showing kindness and compassion. Both the children and the residents offered valuable contributions, and as the programme progressed demonstrated a well-developed understanding of sensitivity and kindness.

- **Makaton** (resources – as above) Introducing Makaton included an opening discussion between everyone about inclusivity and the challenges that many face communicating (examples cited were, deafness, poor speech, poor vision). The children understood simple ideas about how this could lead to a sense of isolation and exclusion, and understood the value of learning a means by which everyone can communicate and express themselves.

- **Memory workshop** (resources – Read stories – *Paper Dolls* and *Hairy McLairy* - shared discussion and learning games). The story *Paper Dolls* presents ideas about memory and the world of thought and recollection in a highly creative and imaginative way. Both the residents and children really contributed well to this discussion. The residents in particular, having collected a wealth of treasured memories, and many were shared. The children learned about the effects of aging for the memory, and the necessity for understanding and patience. The story *Hairy McLary* was chosen because it uses rhyming and repeated lines to exercise memory. The children were more successful remembering the repeated rhymes and this was reflected across the board for all activities that required strong memory and recall skills (i.e. Makaton). As the programme progressed the children learned to be supportive of the residents when memories failed. Helping them with their Makaton signs, and helping them to remember names.
Embedded practise (programme attendance – workshop participation – shared discussion) Observation and monitoring notes also show the children being supportive and considerate of one another and of the residents, both in group workshops and out at play. Examples included a pupil helping a resident with a broken arm to retrieve items from ‘the music sack’ and thereby participate more fully in a music workshop. Pupils taking time to visit a resident in their room.
Criteria 5) Is able to follow instructions involving several ideas and actions

Taught learning

- **Art workshop** (resources and content as above)
- **Makaton workshops** (resources and content as above)
- **Gardening workshops** (resources and content as above)

The children and residents were required to follow a significant amount of instructions to enable them to complete the workshops listed above, some more complex than others. It is worth noting that both the Makaton and art workshops incorporated ideas and concepts that were fairly abstract. All participants did very well discussion and considering abstract concepts in art and learning to use an abstract signing system.

Some children and residents needed more individual support, particularly those with poor fine motor skills. For these individuals completion of written work sheets proved more difficult. Pictorial representation proved to be a good alternative.

**Embedded practise** – Working in small groups was particularly helpful for all participants to be able to listen to instructions involving several ideas and actions at any one time – and have plenty of opportunity to ask questions, or be given support when needed.
C6) The child is able to form positive relationships with adults and other children

Taught programme format

- **Overall programme participation** - As an intergenerational project the programme format offered great opportunities for participating children to form positive relationships with each other and with the older residents.

- **Group work** - The workshop activities were completed in small groups of 2-3 children working with a home’s resident plus and additional adult group leader. On one or two occasions staff absence meant that elderly residents were running their own groups. This provided a great opportunity for the children and residents to work together effectively and positively.

- **Shared lunches** - A shared cooked lunch also formed an integral part of each weekly visit. This provided a great opportunity for conversations between the participants both young and old.

Prior to the project beginning, the school had reported the some pupils were starting school unable and unused to sitting down together for lunch. During the shared lunches the children proved to be bright, lively and confident in their conversation with the residents, sharing and comparing stories about their lives both in and out of school.

Lunch was also observed as an isolating experience in the care home environment. Residents tended to be served lunch in their seats in the residents lounge. This really only being appropriate or necessary where residents had challenging mobility issues.

Many of the residents that participated in the project took the opportunity to join the children in the dining room for lunch. One resident in particular who preferred to have her lunch in her bedroom alone attended the majority of the shared lunches with the children and as a result began to form friendships with other residents.

Embedded practise – covered above

Criteria 7) The child is able to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through music, art and stories

Taught programme format

- **Art and textiles workshops** (resources as above)
- **Poetry** (poems, poetry workshop resources – painting – group discussion)
- **Music** (selected songs – Makaton signed songs – song sack)
- **Makaton** (resources as above)

As the programmed progressed all participants gained confidence expressing their thoughts and feelings freely and imaginatively through music, art and stories. In the textiles workshops the residents and children enjoyed discussing concepts as abstract as synaesthesia. Offering beautiful and evocative images and sounds to represent different colours (examples given included a crashing drum for blue – light stringed instruments such as the harp for yellow – and the sound of wind through grass for green).

In the art and painting workshops the children and residents looked at representations of nature in the abstract sculptures of Barbara Hepworth and talked about mood and feeling in abstract expressionism and American action art. In the resulting painting workshop all participants produced highly expressive abstract works, choosing their own themes such as tranquillity, firelight, woodland, and the rays of the sun.
In the poetry workshops the children worked imaginatively with rhyme listening to the nonsense poems of Edward Lear and using language imaginatively to create their own rhymes. The children and residents really enjoyed looking at the magic door and the magic key resources. The residents and children also worked together painting their own magic doors and sharing their ideas for where the magic door may lead.

In the Makaton workshops the children were also very inventive with the language creating their own signs for words and using the signs inventively. The residents also made insightful contributions teaching the children to use the ‘V’ for victory sign.

**Embedded practise** (covered above)

5. How did the programme address challenges faced by the residents in the care home:

- **5.1** Loneliness and isolation.
- **5.2** Lack of engagement with others.
- **5.3** Lack of engagement with community.
- **5.4** Loss of confidence.
- **5.5** Loss of mobility.
- **5.6** Loss of dexterity.
- **5.7** Low mood.
The programme format directly addressed areas of concern in the following ways:

5.1 – Loneliness and Isolation.

- Residents were invited to the lounge each week to participate alongside the children in a programme of arts workshops.
- Residents were encouraged to work with the group as a whole (20 participants) and also in smaller working groups of 4-5 participants.
- Residents were encouraged to contribute both verbally and physically to all activities.
- Residents were invited to join the children each week for a shared lunch.
- Residents were encouraged to work and engage with one another as well as with the children.

5.2 – Lack of engagement with others.

- By participating in the workshops residents engaged throughout the morning with each other, with the group practitioners and with the pupils.
- Residents were encouraged to contribute both verbally to group discussions and through physically joining in with planned activities.
- Residents compared their life experiences and particularly their growing-up experiences with the children, but also with each other. Subsequently they gained new insights into one another.
- Residents appeared to really enjoy sharing lunch with the children and with each other. Session notes reveal that after one particular lunchtime had ended, and the children had returned to school, the residents remained seated at the tables during pack-up and began singing impromptu songs together.

5.3 – Lack of engagement with the community.

- By linking the home with the school community residents were given the opportunity to engage with others many generations younger.
• Progress and project news bulletins were regularly posted on the school’s families and friends’ communication platform (Tapestry). In this way families were made aware of the positive relationships that had formed between the residents and the children.
• Visiting project artists and musicians also served to open up the care home to the wider community.

5.4 – Loss of confidence.

• Confidence in physical activity was tackled by incorporating a weekly group movement activity into the programme. Taking residents out to work in the garden and inviting participants to join a shared lunch in the dining room also aimed to build physical confidence by getting residents more mobile.
• Participation in the programme’s creative activities worked towards building general confidence in resident’s artistic and expressive abilities.
• Verbal contribution to workshops and group discussion worked on building personal confidence.

5.5 – Loss of mobility.

• Weekly movement sessions encouraged all participants to improve their mobility, physical fitness, strength, balance and posture. The sessions were fun and inclusive and aimed at engaging everyone.
• The gardening workshops were a great opportunity for residents to be up and moving around, improving mobility, strength in the legs, balance and confidence.
• Relocating to the dining room for lunch rather than the usual lap-lunch also involved a lot more moving around.
• General engagement in the project brought residents out of their rooms and out of their beds more frequently.
5.6 – Loss of dexterity.

- Many residents at the home were living with a loss of dexterity, be it age related, the result of arthritic joints, or neurological (Parkinson’s).
- Workshops that focussed on dexterity such as clay and felting built confidence and ability.
5.7– Low mood.

- Through the series of music workshops residents were encouraged to join in with singing and playing musical accompaniment. Using well known nursery rhymes and musical games the sessions generated a lot of fun and humour. One particular example being elderly residents dancing and singing along to the Hokey Cokey playing on an old fashioned gramophone.
- The benefits of regular exercise for lifting mood are well documented and session records show that all residents joined in at some level in spite of the many physical challenges and limitations they faced.
- The gardening workshops offered residents who rarely visited the garden the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors again. One resident in particular benefited significantly, taking a lead with gardening throughout the project. As a result he mobilised far more frequently, and constantly expressed the joy the garden brought him.

“I absolutely love having a garden again, I so miss my garden at home. I can happily spend hours out in the garden. I’ve always loved growing things, it’s been wonderful” E

- The residents benefited enormously from their ongoing engagement with the pupils and from joining in with the workshops. Observation notes from the sessions.

6 - Outcomes and results for participant group 1 (pupils)

Independent Arts – project Evaluation August 2018 20
At the close of the project the school were provided with an evaluation questionnaire. Some pertinent responses to the questions included below, demonstrate the measure of success the school consider the project achieved for the pupils involved. (Answers provided by Michelle Cooper – Reception form teacher)

Considering the pupil evaluation results would you say that for the cohort selected the results demonstrated:-

A lack of improvement in all or some of the seven criteria listed that fell below expectations
An adequate improvement in all or some of the seven criteria listed that met expectations
A strong improvement in all or some of the seven criteria listed that exceeded expectations

Overall Results
Criteria 1 - Strong improvement
Criteria 2 - Strong improvement
Criteria 3 - Strong improvement
Criteria 4 - Strong improvement
Criteria 5 - Strong improvement
Criteria 6 – Strong improvement
Criteria 7 - Strong improvement

Detailed descriptions of outcomes
Criteria 1 - The children all adapted very well to this new weekly routine and they behaved amazingly well in such a new situation. They coped well with new noises and situations that could be quite unusual for them at times.

Criteria 2 - The children were very sensitive and thoughtful towards the residents, they understood that some residents struggled with particular things etc.

Criteria 3 - The children built relationships week by week, they obviously found this easier with the residents that were more chatty and engaging.

Criteria 4 - The children embraced each new activity each week and were always willing to have a go.

Criteria 5 - The children followed instructions each week and had a go at some lovely new activities and techniques.

Criteria 6 - As a result of the project the children have become more aware of similarities and differences between themselves and the residents. They took into consideration the residents stories and spoke about relatives in different countries.

Criteria 7 - All the children expressed themselves in different ways through the different music and art activities.
Please give examples of any changes of behaviour, improvement in social interaction (or otherwise), sensitivity to others (or otherwise), and overall levels of confidence that you have noted in any of the children selected for the project. As far as possible a detailed, descriptive response would be much appreciated.

‘Each week after our visits the children enjoyed sharing what they had done back in school with the rest of the class. They were able to talk about the residents and knew that some residents needed more sleep than others and that some needed help because their hands didn’t work as well etc so yes they were very sensitive. It was great to see their confidence with sign language improve and how they taught their friends and parents!’

Please provide any information or feedback you have received from parents and families that you believe might provide helpful insights as to the efficacy or otherwise of their child’s involvement in the project.

‘The parents felt it was a worthwhile experience and that it was good for their children to meet the older generation as some of them had no contact with older relatives etc. They also felt it was important for the children to understand why some people have to go into a care home etc. They were keen for their children to show sensitivity to old people’.

Please provide any information or feedback from any other members of staff that may have been involved in the project. A comment from your head teacher would provide a particularly helpful insight

‘The children and staff involved with this project have really enjoyed it and have been pleased to be working with residents in the local community. The benefits for both residents and the children have shone through and through observations each week it has been good to see children develop confidence and embrace new situations’. (Head teacher – Dover Park School)
6.1 – Results graphs - Pupils

**The child is able to adjust their behavior and take changes in situations in their stride.**

1=Poor - 5=Excellent

80% improvement across the pupil cohort.

**The child is able to show sensitivity to others needs and feelings.**

1=Poor - 5=Excellent

100% improvement across the pupil cohort.
The child is able to form positive relationships with adults & other children.

1=Poor - 5=Excellent

90% improvement across the pupil cohort

The child is confident to try new activities and explain why they like some more than others.

70% improvement across the pupil cohort
90% improvement across the pupil cohort

80% improvement across the pupil cohort
80% improvement across the pupil cohort

6.2 – Outcomes and results for individual pupils

For some of the pupils, improvements were particularly marked. The graphs below show in more detail examples of pupils who made significant progress over and above their peers. All three pupils come from low income, single parent families, some live with a noted lack of nurture and one of the three regularly displays negative attention seeking behaviours.

Strong improvements in behaviours, socialisation and learning for all three were noted in interviews with the form teacher following the end of the project.
7 Outcomes and results for participant group 2

Interview notes from discussions with the home’s Manager reveal that following the project there has been a marked difference in the level of conversation between the residents in the lounge, a marked difference in the number of residents now regularly visiting the residents lounge, and a marked difference in confidence and general happiness.

“Residents now speak to each other across the room, whereas previously they would tend to only speak to the person seated next to them or not speak at all. We hear a lot more laughter in the lounge now and friendships are forming”.

“Residents who wouldn’t come down to the lounge previously are now coming down and socialising more regularly”

“Residents are mobilising more, both coming down to the lounge and going out into the garden, this is great for their health, morale and confidence. During the project resident E, visited the garden so frequently he wore down the rubber stoppers on the bottom of his walking frame”
“Residents now regularly sit together in the dining room for lunch, rather than remaining in their rooms for lunch or having their lunch on a lap table.”

As a result of participating in the art workshops Resident C who suffers with chronic arthritis and was previously only able to drink from a beaker is now drinking from a glass and has improved levels of dexterity and strength in her hands.”

“Communication and engagement levels for all those who participated has improved, but in particular for those who have real difficulties with communication. Resident A (stroke recovery) has lost so much vocabulary and struggles with comprehension. She improved her ability to communicate through engaging with the children and joining in with the workshops. She gained most from the music workshops and now tries to communicate and speak to us through song. Resident M (progressed dementia) showed marked improvement in levels of engagement during and after the workshops. Both these residents are very isolated by their conditions and being able to join in with the project really helped to draw them out of themselves once again.”

“Levels of confidence for all those who participated have really improved, both for their general levels of physical ability and in themselves”

7.1 – Results graphs - Residents

80% improvement across resident group
80% improvement across the resident group

60% improvement across the resident group
70% improvement across the resident group

8  – Barriers

Barriers to inclusion for participant group 1 – Illness, anxiety

Barriers to inclusion for participant group 2 - Illness, hospitalisation, general frailty and moving from the home.

9  – Exit planning and sustainability

Both the care home and the school are keen to continue contact. Visits, letters and video logs are some suggestions being considered. The school are very keen to work on a similar project again, and in the upcoming term will monitor whether improvements recorded in pupil behaviour, socialisation and attainment are sustained.

The care home are also considering ways in which they might sustain the positive benefits of the programme. Continuing a short daily stretching and exercise programme, encouraging shared lunches and forming a gardening club are some of the ideas that have been put forward to the home.

Communicating the positive benefits of the project to parents, families and friends via the school’s communication platform (Tapestry) has been a very effective way of extending the reach of the project, but it may be that any future programme might include some provision for parents and families to join workshops. In this way the programme could aspire towards building the ‘family and community hubs’ envisaged in the governments Sure Start programme for pre-school children.
10 – Example Docs:-

10.2 Sample – Weekly observation and session notes (Shown below)

Week 1 – Session observation notes
Workshop 1 – Introduction to Makaton sign language
- Introducing sign language – How we use our hands and facial expressions in everyday speech.
- Understanding how sign language helps those who may not be able to communicate very well, hear very well, or see very well and can help us to communicate with everyone
- Learning how to use sign to say Good morning and how are you?
- Learning some signed responses to the above.
- Practise skills and using signs.

Dover Park Pupils – Workshop 1 - Exercise 1

Q. ‘Do any of you children speak another language?’
M speaks Romanian as well as English and showed the group how to say good morning in Romanian. A also put up her hand for this question telling us she has a secret language that only she and her brothers speak (later in the morning I noted her telling the group she was working with, how to say ‘good morning’ in her secret language).

Q. ‘Who can think of ways we already use sign language in everyday life?’
K was asked to think of an example of how she might already be using sign language in the playground. K needed help and encouragement but given time and a little prompting found a good example. R and J were also asked to think of an example – again both needed support but once an answer was forthcoming beamed as the group applauded their efforts.

Q. ‘Distinguishing between the signs for ‘happy’ and ‘very happy’ can anyone give us some examples of times they feel ‘very happy’
M suggested parties, A Christmas day, F said Halloween B and S – birthdays.
Asked to distinguish between the signs for ‘happy’ and ‘very happy’ H said that he was always ‘very happy’ on Wednesdays. Mrs Cooper picked this up – asking him why – H told us that Wednesday is the day he doesn’t go to after school club because his mother comes to collect him from school, and the happiest day of his week.

Overall observations
F, S and B each contributed well to all the group questions. B was particularly strong. S had some wonderful facial expressions during the practise runs.

H, R and J - All three appeared to lack confidence, and tended to hang back in all Makaton activities, happier to let others come forward. They also needed a lot of support and encouragement when asked to contribute independently. With help, however, they all achieved in some way, and I think the small group of ten offered a reassuring, supportive environment for them to feel able to contribute and I hope this will continue.

Workshop 1 - Cornelia Heights residents’ participations and responses
RH (Speaks French and some Spanish) – Told the children about the Romanian royal family visiting Llandudno in 1890 and of a road in Llandudno named after them (I did actually check this on Google later and it appears to be true) – R also told the children about Winston Churchill and his use of the V for victory sign during WW11. CF also said that she remembered many people using the sign in her childhood during the war. EH spoke about...
his school days telling the children that he was always in trouble for being naughty. RH was very sleepy and snoozed through most of the exercise. When he awoke the children showed him that they had learned to sign good morning and he immediately burst into a song of the same title from Westside Story. M was unable to contribute directly but appeared to be watching and listening (M will need a lot of one to one support to participate). B joined the group after the workshop had begun. She too is very quiet and seemed to prefer to watch rather than participate. B clearly has a strong clear mind and I hope, with encouragement she will come forward.

**Workshop 1 - Exercise 2 – Makaton collaborative pupil and resident exercise**

- Pupils were split into groups of three to work with two paired residents and IA or school staff to support.
- Working from a sheet of signed responses to the question ‘how are you’ Residents and pupils’ first practised learning and using the signs together.
- Each group then chose two signs to perform as the rest of the room tried to guess what they had signed.

Child M was a very expressive signer, and worked well with H. (M and H were paired with resident M) M is probably the most challenged of the residents and has very progressed dementia, this really limited her ability to interact with H and M. M was very considerate to resident M showing her the signs she and H had chosen. H was particularly good at signing ‘angry’ putting great gusto into his performance, but was a little wary of M’s stern exterior.

Children B and F were paired with residents CF and RH. R was very sleepy but CF’s signing of ‘angry’ was really good and made the children laugh.

Children, R, J and A were paired with RH and EH and both residents really participated well together, showing the children how to use the various signs and making the activity fun.
Children H and K were paired with residents B and A. B is extremely quiet and quietly spoken. She seemed a little overwhelmed by the performance element of this activity and I hope will still be encouraged to continue to attend. She clearly had a lot to offer in a quiet, reserved way.

**Short break - Group game of ‘Simon Says’**

Residents and children joined in this activity together. RH, E C and A all joined in with the game, playing alongside the children.

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**Workshop 2 Exercise 1 - Introduction to gardens and growing (looking at seeds and learning about how plants grow with IA practitioner Janice Thorn).**

This was an exercise of listening and contributing. Janice talked to the children about the different seasons and cycles of growth. She talked about what plants need to grow, asking lots of questions. All children participated and did exceptionally well (Mrs Cooper commented on how engaged they were with this workshop). F was particularly taken with the different sized seeds (Janice had selected tiny mustard seeds alongside large broad bean seeds) and asked some good independent questions. Interestingly child B spotted that H had been pushed back to the outskirts of the circle alerted Mrs Cooper. This was thoughtful and caring.
Workshop 2 – Residents’ participation

I would have liked to see more involvement of the residents and Janice had incorporated this into her workshop planning. Unfortunately, in the middle of the exercise a visitor arrived and in spite of being invited to join in with the workshop chose instead to speak loudly over Janice throughout. This was a challenge and rather lost the connection that had been established between the residents and the children. (I think I may need to chat with the manager at the home as to how we might avoid this happening in the future??)

Workshop 2 - Exercise 2 – Gardening work sheets – cutting out and colouring – Collaborative pupil and resident exercise

Resident M watched children M and H work but wasn’t able to join in. It was very sweet that once M had finished her sheet she took it to show resident M who smiled broadly at her. H carefully copying his IA name badge wrote his name in capital letters (Mrs Cooper commented that the children haven’t been taught to use capitals yet)
Resident CF has very bad arthritis in her hands and wasn’t able to physically participate. She was however encouraging to her group (F and B) telling them how well they were doing and smiling. It was interesting that whilst all the other children finished the exercise, B who is always the first to answer every question verbally only partially finished her sheet.

Residents Rh and EH were rather distracted by E’s visitor as two of the stronger more able residents this was a little bit disappointing. Child F (when asked) was very good at sharing his colouring pencils. Child R managed to write his name at the bottom of his sheet but this seemed to be a challenge for him?

Resident B watched H and K. B seems to have some curvature of the spine? (I will need to be sure activities are adapted for her to be able to join in.) Residents A and A had also joined the workshops at this point. Both ladies are jolly, warm and able. A sat beside B smiling and encouraging the children in the group. It was a pity that she arrived later I think she may have been some help to B and been a great addition to the group.

The same should be said of resident A who also arrived mid-way through this activity and sat with residents RH and EH. I hope both ladies will be able to come along to class next week.

**Morning break - Out to play in the garden** – The children had great fun out in the garden hunting out bugs, spotting bees and butterflies, looking at the various plants and flowers, and generally letting off steam. Residents’ rooms encircle the garden and some of the residents actually began waving to the children from their windows. The children merrily waved back and I was really pleased to think that perhaps more isolated bedbound residents had enjoyed watching those small children buzz about their garden in the sunshine.
There is a woodland mural decorating the side of a summer house in the garden and this was a great opportunity to spend some one to one time with children R and H spotting and identifying the different animals. H was faster and more able with this little game, and as her confidence grew it was difficult to make sure that R wasn’t forgotten. At one point R went to find Evie, to hold her hand.

**Songs before lunch.**
The children spent a lot of time playing in the garden which left only little time for singing (I’ll keep closer tabs on time management next week) – nevertheless residents and children enjoyed some short songs before lunch.

**Resident M**
Just as the children were waiting to go through to lunch, something quite remarkable happened with M. M who has very little speech suddenly told us that she had taught maths. She then counted back from 100-1. This took immense concentration and effort on her part, and her steely determination was really moving. If I could I would have willed her through it, I would. M remembered every number bar – 90, 80, 70, 60, 70, 50, 40, 30, 20, 10 (on each occasion she went from 91-98 and 81-79 and 71-69 etc.)
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