

## **Beach Schools Evaluation Autumn 2 2016**

**Session Dates: 8.11.16, 21.11.16, 23.11.16**

**Focus:** Confidence building, social skills and the Five C's.

(Enhance personal and social development and develop a deeper relationship with nature). Winter beach investigation.

### **Organisation / Risk Assessment:**

Nothing unexpected arose on the trips and the risk assessments were appropriate for the trips. Call back worked effectively. All children dressed appropriately for activities and weather conditions either in their own or school wet/cold weather gear. The session on the 21.11.16 was an outdoor classroom beach session due to torrential rain. **(RRS Article 24, Article 27).**

**Adult/Child ratio satisfactory:** Adult /child ratio was appropriate with 4 adults between 12 children. The ratio for inside Beach School carried out when weather conditions prevented outside activities was appropriate with 2 adults between 12 children.

The activities planned and adjusted were appropriate in duration and pace (important to keep moving due to the time of year). All children were engaged and participating in the activities; some chose to work within groups, whilst others chose to work to one side. **(RRS Article 24, Article 27).**

### **Session Evaluations:**

#### **8.11.16 – Worthing Beach**

This was the first session for this particular group of children together, although some within the group had participated in Beach School previously behaviour expectations were discussed prior to the trip. Once on the beach the children practised the call back and were reminded of the 'Beach Code' and the safety rules and the area boundaries for the session were set. All of the children demonstrated self- regulation and control by staying within the boundaries independently and responding quickly to call backs and the open activities set.

Independent exploration (connected to aims): - The group had time to explore the beach independently with resources available (Magnifying glasses and pots, identification sheets, rubber gloves) for them to use should they choose to. Without exception the group chose to explore independently, with communication and social skills evident as the children were observed to approach peers to share and discuss the objects they'd discovered collaboratively.

Sand consistency investigation:-The group were set an open task of investigating the sand in different zones of the beach to explore similarities and differences. The investigation was undertaken in a variety of ways independently chosen by the children, including drawing in different zones and observing the resulting affects (counting to see how long the picture stayed before filling back in), using their feet to push down on the sand and noticing colour changes, and picking up the sand and allowing it to run through their fingers. Most of the children were involved in continuous activity with intense moments and at all times they seemed involved in their explorations and were not easily distracted. Child A initially appeared to experience discomfort at this activity. She was reluctant to touch the sand and her posture, expressions and actions (hanging back) indicated a feeling of unease. However, as the other children continued with their exploration she was seen to observe them from the side and eventually began to touch the sand, and push her feet down using different pressures to explore and appeared to relax with no signs of stress or tension apparent. She cried out and then laughed when her feet began to sink in the sand as she investigated with her peers.



'If I hit the sand it's hard but when I hold it, it drips.'



'The sand sucks your feet in and it fills the holes. It's really wet, you can tell by the colour because it's darker.'



'If the sands a little bit wet the lines stay.'



## 21.11.16 – Outdoor classroom

The decision was taken to hold an outdoor classroom session due to poor weather conditions. To begin with the story 'Sharing a Shell' was read and the colours used in the illustrations discussed, as well as predictions, ideas, and previous knowledge about the objects in the story shared.

Sand Art (linked to aims): The group were set the task of creating a sand picture with sand that they mixed with their chosen colour of powder paint. Peer suggestions were shared as to what their art could depict and included 'a favourite memory from the beach, how they feel at the beach, a cool beach creature etc. but the choice was ultimately theirs. They had the option to work alone or with others of their choice and all very quickly decided what they were going to do. Child B and C, and Child D and E decided to partner up whilst the rest of the group chose to work alone. Continuous activity with intense moments were observed with all the children seeming involved and not easily distracted.

Child B and C worked extremely well together, listening and sharing ideas and working as a team to collect and create the resources. They were observed using effective social communication skills to discuss their ideas and deciding how to go about their task. They both looked happy and smiled repeatedly appearing relaxed with each other. Their collaborative, social skills were very different together in the outdoor classroom than often observed in class. In the classroom/playground environment conflict between the two has been observed with adult intervention sometimes required and they choose to sit apart when asked to make good choices in a whole class surrounding about who they can sit sensibly next to.

Child F found it difficult to have a free choice with his design and approached adults to request help and actively seek ideas saying 'I don't know what to do.' He exhibited signs of discomfort with making an independent choice and became very quiet, appearing despondent, but once he had been supported to make a choice actively became continuously involved and focussed. He was keen to present his work to the adults for comment as he progressed through the session. Child F 'finished' earlier than the rest of the group and then chose

from various options given to read a book, settling down in a corner appearing to be satisfied as he hummed whilst reading.

The group presented and talked about their finished sand art to their peers in turn. Every child appeared happy to do so, each concentrating as they spoke about their work and questions were encouraged from peers in order to further develop personal and social skills.



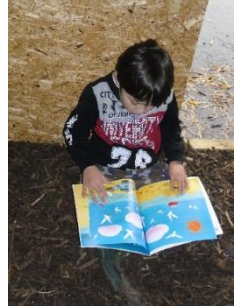
'The sea makes me happy because it's bright and shiny.'



'It's our favourite bit from the story 'Sharing a Shell.''



'I like seeing the beach huts in a row.'



'We're making a sunset picture because it's nice to go down when the moon is coming out.'

## 23.11.16 – Worthing Beach

An adapted shorter than planned session due to cold temperatures.

Independent exploration of the low / mid tide zone – Due to high winds and rough seas the previous week there were thick strand lines of seaweed littered with objects for the group to discover and explore along Worthing beach. Magnifying glasses and pots, identification sheets, rubber gloves were available once again for them to use should they choose to. Each child chose to explore independently, with communication and social skills evident as they were observed calling and beckoning to peers to discuss, share, show and identify the objects they'd discovered. The low tide sand area had many dips and gullies left by digging fishermen and the fierce wave moment in previous days. These made great collaborative exploring areas where children were observed to help each other in and out of the ankle deep pools of water left behind by the receding tide. Every member of the group showed continuous



and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement in their investigations, with spontaneous expressive actions and smiles evident.



'I wonder what made these holes, there are lots. Maybe the sea wears it out.'



'Look at all the seaweed, things hide inside.'



'The big waves have made the sand all bumpy. I think they pushed it around.'

Tower Challenge – An open challenge was set to build the tallest tower using stones in 3 minutes. The children independently decided how to make it and who if anybody they would work with. Groups were organised very quickly and effectively with great effective team work observed. All children had their roles within the group (gatherer, builder, and leader) that appeared to be naturally assumed by different children with the minimum of fuss. All children were consistently concentrated and actively engaged for the duration of the challenge, expressing a self-confidence and self-assurance with their role and the challenge that had been set. Signs of satisfaction were observed from all without exception (smiles, energetic, cheerfulness) as the groups shared their towers with their peers.



'We tried to start with big stones and then get smaller. It was hard to stay up.'



'We kind of piled it to make it tall. It doesn't really look like a tower though.'



'This works, the stones get smaller and they're flat so it helps them balance.'

**Summary:** The focus of confidence building and developing social skills within these sessions has been observed to have taken place and progressed for most of the children participating in the trips. A deeper knowledge and understanding of the autumnal / winter coast environment has been demonstrated in discussion by the children over the duration of the three sessions, particularly the affects that strong winds and waves have on the tidal zones and strandline. This supports the previous findings that levels of knowledge, involvement, wellbeing and social communication skills develop when using the beach as a learning environment, as children who exhibited discomfort or an unease to touch anything on the beach were seen to develop confidence and by session three were on their knees scooping up sand and shingle for the tower challenge.