

## **Beach Schools Evaluation Spring 1 2017**

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

(Enhance personal and social development and develop a deeper relationship with nature). Marine creature investigation, ecology.

**(Article 29, Article 24, Article 13)**

### 28.1.17 – Inside classroom

The decision was taken to hold an inside 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.

Marine object exploration (linked to aims): During this session the group were set the task of investigating a variety of unidentified marine objects. They were encouraged to use their senses to pick up, feel, and closely observe the objects in the tray and think about where on the beach they might be found and what they thought they were and why. Magnifying glasses were available for closer inspection. The children were observed to share their thoughts and ideas with their peers. **(Article 12)**



"It's sharp and I think it might crack things."





"I like the sparkly stone. It's like treasure."



"I think this is a spider crab's claw."



"I think it's a mussel shell, the inside you can eat, it's tasty."

The identity of the objects was not revealed as a trip to the beach a few days later was planned for further identification and discovery. All the children were engaged and focussed during their investigations and were observed to use all of their senses to gather clues about the objects. One child in particular was observed to be fully engrossed in the tactile task and was very keen to share their observations and ideas with the adults in the room.

**Beach Art (linked to aims):-** Investigations were followed with a beach art activity. The children were set an open task of creating a beach / underwater picture on to a paper plate using their choice of media, collage materials and sand. The children thought about the story we'd read and previous trips to the beach. Peer suggestions were shared as to what their art could depict and included 'a favourite time on the beach, how they feel at the beach, what creatures may say about rubbish in the ocean (taken from the story discussion / illustrations) 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. All the children chose to work alone for this activity. One child found it difficult to decide what they'd like to show in their art and displayed signs of anxiety as they tried to think of a design.

After discussion with an adult another child expressed that their favourite time at the beach is at sunset "because it makes me feel all warm and calm, and it's beautiful". Continuous activity with intense moments of concentration and thought were observed in all of the children who appeared involved and not easily distracted.



"I love the beach at sunset,  
it is beautiful."



"Take your rubbish home with you  
to keep our water healthy."

The group presented and talked about their finished beach art to their peers in turn. Each 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. A further child led short discussion about rubbish on the sea and beach continued as a result of their sharing.

### 31.1.17 –Worthing Beach

An adapted shorter than planned session due to cold temperatures.

Independent exploration of the mid / high tide zone – There were strand lines of seaweed littered with marine objects and various pieces of rubbish along for the group to discover and explore along Worthing beach. Magnifying glasses and pots, identification sheets, and rubber gloves were available for them to use should they choose to. The children 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. Many of the group referred back to the previous session when they had explored a variety of objects in order to compare, identify and validate similar discoveries on the mid tide zone. Children appeared animated as they began to identify objects they had explored previously. They were observed smiling a lot as they initiated communication with peers about their findings and often approached adults for approval of identifications.

One child was once again observed to move confidently in their tactile / sensory explorations and stated "I love feeling the things on the beach, and they look wonderful with the glass (magnifying). Can we stay?"

Every member of the group showed continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement in their investigations, with spontaneous expressive actions. Initiated communication with peers was observed and many smiles evident despite the cold temperatures.

### 8.2.17 –Worthing Beach

Independent exploration of the low tide / rock pool zone –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 rock pools made for a great collaborative exploring area where children were observed to help each other in and out of the ankle deep pools of water and across the rocks that were a little slippery with seaweed and seawater. The low tide sand area lent itself to as a canvas for land art as the consistency of the sand allowed for drawings to be created with natural objects discovered on the beach. Some of the group chose to work with peers whilst others chose to work alone. Every member of the group displayed a self-assurance in their movements and were observed in continuous activity revealing the greatest involvement in their investigations, with spontaneous expressive actions and smiles evident.



Exploring the texture of the sand. "We're sinking, it's so wet."



"It's a sea creature. I used stones and there's a flipper."



"There might be something under here hiding."

**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 marine creatures has been seen to develop through the investigation of objects and the beach environment with independent learning evident from their explorations.

A deeper knowledge has further been demonstrated through the messages in their art and the discussion's that have taken place between the children over the duration of the three sessions, more particularly the affects that weather, waves and rubbish have on the creatures in the rock pools and those under the sea.

This supports the previous findings that levels of knowledge, involvement, wellbeing and social communication skills develop when using the beach as a learning environment. Children who are not as self-confident as others in the class room initiated conversations and worked collaboratively within the Beach School environment.