**Autumn term 2013 Beach School sessions evaluation**

In the Autumn term 2013, our beach school’s practitioners took a small group of children to the beach on three different occasions.

The evaluation of this experienced clearly showed the value of the beach school initiative and due to this we are extending the small group three times approach to the Spring and Summer terms.

**Child A**: (Pupil premium) missed first session – **2nd session**: initially reluctant to communicate verbally and give ideas although engaged in the task. Practitioner identified that he needed encouragement to share his ideas. **3rd session**: Actively engaged/communicating with peers in group. Wow moment! With encouragement child A stood up in front of everyone to share his special beach object. Class teacher reports that Child A has become more confident in contributing in class.

**Child B**: Actively engaged in tasks, following instructions from outset.

“I like that I’ve made a new friend and we play together at lunchtimes now.” Helping other group members to create game/explore and identify the rock pool inhabitants.

**Child C**: (Pupil premium) **1st session**: keeping to himself within the group, engaged in the task though not actively sharing ideas. Happy to take instruction from others. **2nd session**: Keen to start exploring, taking the lead through rock pools, initiating conversation to share ideas about natural object identification. **3rd session**: Child C was observed actively engaged and talking to his group whilst capturing the ocean and stood up and shared his thoughts with everybody present.

**Child D**: (Pupil premium) **1st session**: Very talkative and keen to participate, difficulty listening to others ideas and instructions. Inclined to talk over the top of others.

**2nd session**: Child D was clearly seen to listen to others when exploring the rock pools and identifying discoveries. More two way turn taking conversation. **3rd session**: Cooperating, turn taking whilst capturing the ocean, less interrupting was observed and good listening witnessed. She waited patiently to share her object with her peers. Very enthusiastic about the beach trips. “I love exploring and finding things with everyone.”

**Child E**: Actively engaged in activities from outset, responding positively to instructions and helping others. She worked well socially within the group and was a positive role model to her peers. “I loved going to the beach, when can we go again? I didn’t know about all those things in the pools.”

**Child F**: (Pupil premium) **1st session:** absent. **2nd session:** Engaged in the rock pooling activities giving ideas when encouraged. He turned to the adults frequently when working for reassurance and to check/talk about what he’d discovered. “Is it ok to...”. **3rd session:** actively engaged and enjoying capturing the ocean with his group. He was very enthusiastic to share his findings with his peers (didn’t stop smiling!) at the beach and back in school. Great turn taking and communicating with other group members.

**Child G**: (Pupil premium) **1st session**: absent. **2nd session:** Focussed and actively engaged in rock pool activity although working with little initiated communication. Listening skills were limited and attention wandered when other children shared their thoughts and ideas, would twist foot in the sand. Enjoyed using the cameras and would have spent a lot longer taking photographs if possible.  **3rd session**: similar behaviour observed re engagement and listening skills. When sharing his object Child G was animated, but his attention wandered when it was the turn of others. Believe would benefit from more sessions.

**Child H**: Actively engaged, enthusiastic, helping others, responding positively to instructions and enjoying every second right from the outset. Wow moment! Very keen to share previous knowledge of a ‘mermaids purse’ and asking well thought out questions. “I love learning all these things! It’s so fun!”

**Child I**: She was quietly engaged in the activities very much keeping herself to herself during the 1st session. She spoke in response to others but was not observed initiating conversation. **2nd session:** She worked with a partner in her group exploring rock pools and was observed to be more animated than previous session and initiating conversation when trying to identify discoveries. “I really liked using the camera, it was hard to choose what to photograph though.”

She shared adjectives in the bothy. **3rd session**: Working cooperatively to capture the ocean taking part in conversation and effective turn taking. She was the quieter member of the group, happy to go along for the ride in the group but was enthusiastic when sharing her favourite object from the beach with her peers.

**Conclusion:** The impact of these sessions has shown an increase in confidence and social skills for the children participating in the trips. This demonstrates the value of using the beach as a learning environment and to provide opportunity and space to participate and build social relationships safely in small groups outside of the classroom. However, some children would definitely benefit from more than 3 sessions to build their trust and confidence in communicating.

It is interesting to note that the greatest impact was observed for the Pupil Premium children.