Adopt a Class Visit – Class 3

Today I visited school to watch some of the children carrying out reading activities which are part of the everyday diet for children at Orrets. There were eight children in Mr McAteers class, 6 boys and 2 girls, who were a mixture of Year 5 and Year 6. The class is for children with Social Communication Difficulties and who have literacy difficulties..

The first child I observed was a Year 5 girl who carried out the activities confidently. She was reading words with trans- in them on yellow paper which helps to calm down the eyes when reading. She read 64 words in one minute and then read from her reading book which was a Jacqueline Wilson book, Double Act, which she read with expression and confidence. Having been at Orrets for about 18 months, she is obviously making excellent progress. The assistant was very positive and recorded what had been covered and set homework.

At the same time a year 5 boy was working with another assistant using the Bug Club computer software. This is a program which is very interactive and which the child was happy to use. The program assesses the child and presents reading at a suitable level. The boy’s level of reading was quite low and the child was assisted with the reading in a very supportive way. The program asks question about what is being read and also asks literacy questions. The children are able to access this program at home and I assume the teacher’s can access the reading being done at home.

The second girl was Year 6 and came to do her probes and reading. She was far less fluent and was reading at a fairly low level. She seemed very shy. She achieved 33 words in a minute and read from a Dandelion book at Level 1. The books were well organised with the assistant having all the children’s books changed for them earlier so there was no time spent doing that during the session. It was all very efficient.

By the end of the session I had listened to each child read and it was impressive how the assistants managed the children supporting those children who were more reticent.

There was one Year 5 boy who did not want to do his reading probe so eventually he agreed to read his list of words without it being timed.

Some of the children seemed very tired and the assistant put this down to doing their reading in the afternoon but then we realised it was probably more to do with the children being up late for Bonfire Night last night.

Mr McAteer was very helpful explaining how the children are monitored regularly throughout the year and the assistant explained how the probe sheets are developed using this information.

During the morning phonic work is done which is for 45 minutes and involves multi- sensory teaching and engages all learning styles: - kinaesthetic, auditory and visual. Perhaps I would be able to see this on another visit.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this time with the children.

D. Swailes

6/11/2014