



University of Tampere
Hämeenlinnan normaalikoulu
Seminaarinkatu 2, 13130
Hämeenlinna
Finland



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Frankl Hochschule AU



Einladung/Invitation/Kutsu - Teachers' Visit One
Learning, Language and Diversity through European networking
europe4you

Host:	Vesa Toivonen (vesa.toivonen @uta.fi) and Marja Tuomi (marja.k.tuomi@uta.fi)
Time:	9 March 2010 (program starts 10:00 am) - 11 March 2010 excluding traveling days.
Location:	Hämeenlinnan normaalikoulu (http://www.uta.fi/hnk/www/?In_English) Seminaarinkatu 2, Hämeenlinna (http://www.hameenlinna.fi/english/) Flight destination is Helsinki or Tampere

Preliminary program of the Teachers' visit

This program is a basic structure for the visit and it's adjustable to your personal interests.

Before the meeting:

1. Filling in the form List of Attendees: expectations on the visit, information of diets etc
2. Introduction on etwinning Teacher visit forum and contacts/discussions with other visitors and host teachers

Tuesday

- 9.15 Meeting at the hotel reception
- 9.45 Meeting partner teachers in the staffroom
- 10.00 Introduction to Hämeenlinnan normaalikoulu - the head teacher Vesa Toivonen
- 10.20 Around the school about 11:00am, together with the partner teacher
- 11.40 School lunch (free, eat with children)
- 12.00 Coffee in the staffroom with teachers
- 12:15 Together with the partner teacher: shadowing/ teaching/meeting student teachers reflections.
- 14.30 Finnish Education system and Primary Teacher Education
Visiting afternoon club 7-8 year olds
- 18.30 Getting- to- know- each other- evening (warm outdoor clothes, all special national snacks and drinks are welcome)

Wednesday

- 8.10 Together with the partner teacher and lunch
- 12.00 Coffee in the staffroom with teachers
- 12.30 Peer Mediation session/ *Marja Tuomi*
With partner teacher
optional: collaborative writing 10 year olds, 12.30-14.00
- 14.15 Castle
- 18.00 Outdoor activities
- 19.00 Dinner together at Seiska restaurant and a possibility for sauna bath

Thursday

- 8.10 Together with the Partner Teacher
- 9.00 Pupils' council Meeting / *Mikko Horila*
- 13.15 optional Maths club
- 14.00 Discussion and reflections with teachers in the environmental classroom
Closing up the meeting

Question 1

English - Please comment on the philosophy and ethos of the school.

German - Beschreiben Sie die Philosophie der Schule.

Finish - Kuvaile koulun filosofiaa ja eetosta.

The philosophy of the school is where the children's learning comes first. The staff are very caring towards the children and in return the children are very respectful of the staff. There is a feeling that all children are given the responsibility for their own learning and make educational choices individually in order to enhance their learning experiences. The staff are given total autonomy to teach how and whatever they wish within the basic core curriculum. There is a feeling of calm all around the school, both inside classrooms and in open areas. The whole child is cared for and all children receive a free school meal every day. There is a sense of inclusion in the school, with special needs children being integrated into normal classes with great success.

The focus seems to be on subject based, content learning. Great value is placed upon quality and there seems to be a tight time schedule. To value and respect one another is treated with importance. Striking traits are that the entire school building is orderly and quiet. The school is very interested in innovation and maintains international relationships. As a result of the close link to the university and teacher training, the school is very academically committed.

It is my opinion that the basic concepts in this school are imbedded in the friendly and respectful manner in which people deal with one another. A focus of the school is the training of teachers. The school works closely together with the University and invests a great deal of time and is committed to the training of teachers. The school also maintains contacts abroad. The learning of foreign languages and the use of multimedia are important elements of the school. Large value is placed upon structure, accuracy and quiet. Children usually work within their class group on the same assignment, given to them by their teacher.

Our initial impression was based around the size of the school. Being such a large and spacious site, spread over two buildings with a large yard in between, we suspected that 'ethos' would not be felt amongst the children and staff, or would at best be fragmented or weak. With the third building on the site housing the teacher training centre, we imagined an ethos of formality and business as opposed to nurture and care. This was not accurate. After no time at all, we could sense the busy and frenetic nature of the school. For us, the staff interaction was evidence that teachers support and respect each other and have a shared commitment to the profession. Their responsibilities in providing year-round training opportunities for hopeful teachers again supports this feeling of business, commitment and professionalism. The children, who comprise 3 classes within each year group from pre-school to 6th Grade, also contribute to this ethos. Despite working firmly within clear class groups for the entire day, the children appear to share a common understanding of their role within the school and their purpose for being there. The children enjoy a lot of freedom (to move, to study independently, to play outside) and are well trusted by their teachers. This is a clearly mutual relationship, with the children showing great respect and well as genuine feelings for their teachers. Our impression of the school's main philosophy is of course, the care and education of the children there within. However, we sensed a larger agenda in their dedication to the creation of outstanding teachers for the wider education system. There feels to be a tangible pressure evident in the air to be the best. We do not believe that the children share this wider aim. That, for them, the core purpose of being at school is to learn for their future. The children are well looked after and the school is fantastically well resourced. It is also fabulously clean! Resources are stored in cupboards, indoor shoes are worn inside the buildings and cleaners work throughout the day in various areas of the school. The general sense of pride in the school building is apparent.

The school, Hameenlinna Normalikoulu, has a very calm and quiet atmosphere where staff are clearly focussed on the well being of the whole child. This ranges from liaison with parents/guardians, ensuring that work is completed to the best of the ability (including homework) to the provision of free school meals where pupils serve themselves a choice of 2, including seconds, if required. As staff eat, (but pay for their meal) with their pupils it is easy to pick up on any unusual eating patterns.

Soweit ich diese in der kurzen Zeit während meines Finnlandaufenthaltes feststellen konnte, handelt es sich um eine wertschätzende, stärkenorientierte und fördernde Pädagogik. Die SchülerInnen werden in ihrer Gesamtheit betrachtet, sie stehen im Mittelpunkt. Ihr Selbstwertgefühl wird aufgebaut. Die Stärken der Kinder werden betont. Erfolgsversprechende Lerntechniken werden von Beginn an vermittelt. Das Wichtigste jedoch für mich ist die Wohlfühl- Atmosphäre, die von allen am Schulleben Beteiligten verfolgt wird. Die Lehrer sind zusammen mit ihren Schülern durch Freude am Lernen erfolgreich.

Translated as close as possible into English as written in German:

As far as I could determine these in the short time during my Finland stay, it concerns an esteeming, strengthen-oriented and promoting Pädagogik. The pupils are regarded in their whole, they are located in the center. Their self value feeling is developed. The strengths of the children are stressed. Success-promising learning techniques are obtained from the beginning. The most important however for me is well-being feeling the atmosphere, which took

part from all in the school life are pursued. The teachers are successful together with their pupils by joy in learning.

Question 2

English - In what ways do the pupils and adults communicate within the school?

German - Beschreiben Sie die Kommunikation aller am Schulleben Beteiligten?

Finish - Millä tavoin lapset ja aikuiset kommunikoivat koulussa?

Pupils and adults communicate within the school by using first names on all occasions. All pupils have a mobile phone number for their class teacher as well as an email address. All pupils and parents are free to contact the class teacher at any time. Most classes have a system where they use a blog to communicate rather than via paper and a school newsletter is sent out twice a year.

Valuing and respecting one another influences the communication that takes place at the school. A trusting relationship among all is evident. The following of rules is of great importance and the breaking of rules is dealt with strictly. The behavior is discussed with the pupil who broke the rule, others involved as well as parents, and consequences result. Communication often takes place in written form. Great value is placed upon agreements and they are checked upon and kept.

I found that all communication that took place between teachers and pupils, as well as all others at the school was done in a very friendly and respecting manner. Value is placed upon being attentive and appreciative of partners. There is a close relationship between student teachers and teacher trainees. The teachers communicate within staff meetings and in school year teams. The internet is also used for communication between teachers and parents. There is close contact between parents and teachers. Parents are informed of physical violence on the same day. Consequences for the behaviour are decided upon together.

The children can (and mostly) spend their entire time during their school career with the same teacher. The teacher 'moves' with the child to each new year group/grade, often staying in the same classroom base. This is key in terms of staff-pupil relations. One Finnish teacher of grade 6, whom had taught the children since their first day, spoke of her affection for the children and their affection for her. She felt that she knew the children better than they knew themselves and that she had played a wonderful part in their upbringing towards adulthood. In this sense, many of the communications observed between children and staff were non-verbal. A glance across the room, body language/physical presence and a very busy and structured timetable meant that all children felt safe and comfortable in school. Teachers are called by their first names, dress more casually for work and share elements of their personal life (e.g. family, talents and hobbies) with the children, often bringing these elements into their lessons. One teacher observed talked about how her husband had contributed to geography lessons and that he was known personally to the children. The children are free to speak and appear to be listened to, particularly in the pastoral sense. Talking things through seems to be the order of the day: an openness and mutual respect between children and adults. Communication between staff models effective relationships to the children. With more than one teacher teaching elements of the children's learning (e.g. specialist PE, English, woodwork, textiles teachers), communication is key. This is extended to parents whom receive weekly feedback on the class' learning and whom can access the teachers through email communication at any point. A clear sanction policy of 'marks' to a child's name followed by a letter home to parents also ensures that less favourable aspects of a child's behaviour is shared. Any testing (non statutory until formal exams at age 16) administered within the class are sent home for the parents to see. These are signed and returned to school, again promoting shared responsibility in education. Termly Parent consultations are also provided should the parent wish to see the teacher. These are not compulsory and the child may or may not attend. The Head Teacher is obtainable according to staff here, who have given examples of times that he has made himself available for more personalised discussions with teachers about their careers or about individuals within their classes. MSN messages have proven to be a successful means of communication amongst staff. The school's website has also been developed in order to house private information for staff as well as general information for parents. Staff are also furnished with mobile phones which are used for on an ad hoc basis for communicating across the buildings.

In the spoken domain, adults and pupils are all on first name terms, with children occasionally using a shorthand 'Teacher'. All is done in a quiet, positive tone with corrections to behaviour initially dealt with by talking very quietly to the individual concerned. During a student lesson, I observed use of a count down to attract attention. There was also a tannoy system that I heard being used by the Head teacher to remind pupils about sensible behaviour on the piles of snow in the school playground, The adults all had computers in each classroom with email which were used for registers and general communication. There was also a peer mediation system with children around 2 years older than those seeking mediation. Again, the calm, respectful atmosphere was prevalent.

I saw a very vivid and open exchange in the staff room (before school started and during the breaks). There are teacher conferences and agreements in the different grades.

Die Grundlage aller am Schulleben Beteiligten (Schüler- Lehrer- Studenten- Eltern) ist geprägt durch den wechselseitigen Respekt Als fruchtbare Basis für die Zusammenarbeit wird die wechselseitige Respektierung der jeweiligen Meinungen, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des anderen gesehen. Ein partnerschaftlicher Umgangsstil wird

von allen gepflegt. Durch die Art, wie die Lehrer, Schüler bzw. Studenten angesprochen werden, wird zum Ausdruck gebracht, dass das Gegenüber akzeptiert und vollwertig behandelt und ernst genommen wird.

Translated as close as possible into English as written in German:

The basis of all in the school life took part (pupil teacher student parents) is by the mutual respect as fruitful basis for co-operation mutual respecting of the respective opinions, possibilities and borders of the other one one sees coined/shaped. A partnership handling style is maintained by all. By the kind, like the teachers, pupils and/or. Students to be addressed, it is expressed that the opposite accepted and is treated adequately and taken seriously.

Question 3

English - How well do pupils communicate (verbal and non-verbal) with each other and in what forms? German - Wie und in welcher Form kommunizieren die Schülerinnen und Schüler untereinander? Finish - Miten hyvin ja millä tavoin oppilaat kommunikoivat (verbaalisesti ja nonverbaalisesti) keskenään?
Pupils seem to communicate with one another extremely well. They all seem happy to sit where they are placed without any fuss of who they are sitting next too. If a pupil in the class is off task, a look or shake of the head from another pupil was enough to get the 'miscreant' back on task! All pupils seem to totally respect each others ideas and opinions, always listening attentively to what is said and responding appropriately. Pupils appear to act calmly around their peers, without fuss if something is done they do not like. The Peer- mediating system allows pupils to be able to sort out their problems at a peer level, only getting adults involved if the problem is too difficult or if those being mediated do not co-operate.
The pupils speak very little with one another during lessons. In occasional group work it is generally quiet, but typical group process problems do arise such as keeping agreements and arrangements. In the case of problems and conflict among pupils, there is the possibility to solve these on a voluntary basis in the peer/student mediation. Communication within this group follows a set of given points. Solutions are documented, signed and shown to the teacher. After several days, it is checked upon if the problem has been solved.
Pupils talk very little with each other during lessons as they are usually doing individual work. As a result communication processes between pupils take place mainly during breaks or during lunch. Children have the opportunity to have help solving conflicts with other children in peer mediation. If 10 year old children are interested and chosen, then they can be trained as a mediator. The children involved in the conflict and the mediators follow a set of criteria alone to solve the conflict but can ask a teacher for help if needed. Minutes are taken and handed in at the staff room. A teacher checks to see if agreements made are kept.
Pupil interactions are also very positive. Children appear calm and mature in their responses to each other. The school has adopted a peer mediation system for those times that children incur social difficulties. Trained mediators meet privately with the disputers, away from the teachers, to discuss the issue, how it felt for them and ways towards a solution. The promises made within these meetings are signed and agreed as if to form a contract. This is followed up at a later date. This system has proven to be successful, with up to 70 incidents a year resolved as a result of this process. We did not witness any incidents between children at all. The children seemed to be aware of each other and others needs throughout our time there. On only one occasion did we see a child who appeared to be disrespectful towards the needs of another child. We thought that this was fantastic and most enviable.
I observed excellent speaking in a forum, turn taking and active listening, with pupils rarely talking over each other and acting in a mature way by indicating their wish to speak by putting up their hand. In addition there appeared to be no face-pulling or impatience with each other.
The way, how the pupils communicate among themselves, is likewise coined/shaped by a high measure of mutual respect. Everyone accepts the opinion of the Gegenübers. The pupils learn of - and with one another. They respect themselves as a Coach, how I could observe in one indication hour genüsslich. They stand each other also at any time helpfully to the side and support each other mutually. Which was noticeable likewise was that nobody had to fear, independently of others to be laughed at, whether the answers were correct or wrong. <u>Translated as close as possible into English as written in German:</u> Die Art und Weise, wie die Schüler untereinander kommunizieren, ist ebenfalls durch ein hohes Maß an wechselseitigem Respekt geprägt. Jeder akzeptiert die Meinung des Gegenübers. Die SchülerInnen lernen von - und miteinander. Sie respektieren sich als Coach, wie ich in einer Zeichenstunde genüsslich beobachten konnte. Sie stehen einander auch jederzeit hilfreich zur Seite und unterstützen sich gegenseitig. Was ebenso auffiel war, dass niemand befürchten musste, von anderen ausgelacht zu werden, unabhängig davon, ob die Antworten richtig oder falsch waren.

Question 4

<p>English - How is the voice of the child heard in decisions about their learning and the leadership of the school? Give examples of democracy in action.</p> <p>German - In welchen Situationen haben Sie demokratisches Miteinander und demokratisches Lernen beobachten können?</p> <p>Finish - Millä tavoin oppilaan ääni kuuluu hänen oppimisessaan ja koulun päätöksenteossa? Anna esimerkkejä siitä, miten oppilaan vaikutusmahdollisuudet näkyvät käytännössä.</p>
<p>The voice of the children is heard largely through the school council, where each class from grades 3-6 has an elected representative. The council meet once every 2 weeks and discuss various issues related to school life. They receive 'post' from other pupils which normally involves questions about food and free time. During our visit the school council met and were deciding and made a decision about what competitive sports the school should participate in. The sports chosen will then be the sports which they compete in against other schools. The pupils make the decisions on such issues rather than the staff.</p>
<p>There is a student council in the school, in which there is a representative from each year 3 to 6 class. Officially the council is lead by an elected representative, however the teacher often intervenes to moderate and organize. Things which are important for the pupils are discussed within student council. Pupils have the possibility to drop suggestions and questions in a mail box during the week. These questions are worked through in student council meetings. Often they are related to school lunches or sports events. According to teachers, they tend to be topics that are of more interest to the students than to the teachers.</p>
<p>The school has a student council which meets every two weeks. There is a representative elected from each year 3-6 class. As a result of majority decision of the teachers first and second year pupils are excluded from student council. A year six pupil heads student council, whereby the supervising teacher is very involved in moderating the meetings. Children can throw topics which should be discussed at students council in a mail box. The topics are mainly about food, breaks or extracurricular activities. The teachers accept the decisions made by student council because they do not directly affect them. The supervising teacher writes minutes, which are sent to all class teachers by email. Pupils who are members of students' council report back to their individual classes.</p>
<p>The school has a 'council' which consists of one elected member from each class group. This group meet under a chairperson (also elected from year 6) and a secretary. A teacher member leads from the front, prepares the agenda and ensures the focus and pace of the meeting. The business of these meetings tends to be around smaller issues within school which directly relate to the children's experiences. For example, about school dinners, dress down days, special events etc. The curriculum is not part of these meetings. Feedback regarding the results of these meetings is down to the class teacher who must allow time for discussion within the busy timetable. A further example of 'pupil voice' could be evidenced through the organisation and planned use of certain rooms within the school. An independent maths room which houses various maths equipment can be used for free maths investigation. Similarly, the music room has instruments which are available for all to select. When these rooms are used however, remains the discretion of the teacher. Children who reach grade 3 begin English lessons. In addition to these lessons, the children at grade 4 may select an additional language from either French or German to study. Although a small choice, the children allowed the decision making power in this instance. Special Needs children and their parents also appear to enjoy a voice within this school. One child with physical disability had decided to opt out of PE sessions due to her personal difficulty with working alongside others and her frustrations over her condition. Her parents, as an alternative, will record her physical activity (e.g. weekend horse riding) and share this information with her teachers. A similar decision was made relating to her music education.</p>
<p>The school has a school council with Grades 3 - 6 voting for a class representative who attends meetings during lesson times. Open hand voting was observed to decide which sports the school should enter in the forthcoming inter-schools sports fixtures. There was also an issue about the catering - potatoes with the skin left on. This was a review of an earlier decision to try this on the menu and it was agreed to continue to do this.</p>
<p>The act of learning in school, the content of the subjects is provided, planned and arranged by the teachers. Concerning the transfer of the planning, the participation and the individual activity of the children there are huge differences. I experienced strictly teacher centred lessons as well as teamwork and in this respect participation and responsibility of the children. I couldn't participated in the children's parliament meeting. With 'Peer Review' the democratic aspect of 'participation in and responsibility for the social interactions' is very intense</p>
<p>At the school there are Peer Mediation. In addition once a meeting of the representatives from all classes takes place, in order to discuss pupil-relevant topics per week. Are led this kind of meetings of a pupil, who was selected by the group. The teacher functions as an advisor, who intervenes if necessary in the discussion. The pupils have the possibility of bringing in requests and over certain things (e.g. to decide whether the potatoes in the school cafeteria with or without bowl to be offered) in democratic tuning. The children are trained in such a way in decisions with merged the pupils as observers and referred into the evaluation of the performed work. E.G. in one essay hour., in at</p>

the end the group work phase the results both by the remaining pupils and by the group members, that had presented, to be evaluated and/or. an appropriate feedback is given. The pupils learn themselves to observe and the others and over it with one another reflect.

Translated as close as possible into English as written in German:

An der Schule gibt es Peer- Mediation. Außerdem findet einmal pro Woche eine Zusammenkunft der Vertreter aus allen Klassen statt, um über schülerrelevante Themen zu diskutieren. Geleitet werden diese Art von Versammlungen von einem Schüler, der von der Gruppe gewählt wurde. Der Lehrer fungiert als Berater, der nötigenfalls in die Diskussion eingreift. Die Schüler haben die Möglichkeit, Anträge einzubringen und über gewisse Dinge (z.B. ob die Kartoffeln in der Schulkantine mit oder ohne Schale angeboten werden) in demokratischer Abstimmung zu entscheiden. Die Kinder werden so in Entscheidungen mit eingebunden Die SchülerInnen werden als Beobachter geschult und in die Beurteilung der geleisteten Arbeit miteinbezogen. Z.B. in einer Aufsatzstunde., in der am Ende einer Gruppenarbeitsphase die Ergebnisse sowohl von den restlichen Schülern als auch von den Gruppenmitgliedern, die präsentiert hatten, bewertet werden bzw. ein entsprechendes Feedback gegeben wird. Die Schüler lernen sich und die anderen zu beobachten und darüber miteinander zu reflektieren.

Question 5

English - What is the meaning of inclusion in the school? Give examples of what you see.

German - Welchen Stellenwert hat Inklusion an Ihrer Schule? Geben Sie Beispiele.

Finish - Millä tavoin inklusio käsitetään tässä koulussa? Anna esimerkkejä siitä, mitä näet.

Within the School there is a feeling of total inclusion. Any child who has a special need meets with the Headteacher, the classroom teacher, the parents, the pupil and the school nurse, and together they decide on the help which is required for the pupil to succeed. In some schools there are 'special groups' for children who need extra help, when they are taught separately to other children. Children with physical disabilities are included in normal classes and the school provides an assistant to help them and there are lifts for mobility. If a child does not reach the required grades to move to the next class, after discussion with parents, they may be asked to repeat the year.

Currently inclusion does not seem to be a topic of importance at the school. As a result of the language barrier it was difficult to talk about this topic in more detail. According to the head teacher, the school tries to teach all pupils together as far as it is possible. Pupils with difficulties are helped by the special education teacher; however, there are pupils who cannot keep up with the lessons despite special help. When pupils have too many difficulties they visit a special school. There is a weekly meeting of the 'student welfare team'. This team includes the head teacher, special education teacher, class teacher, school nurse, psychologist and parents. The pupil is discussed as well as ways to help him/her. After speaking with the special education teacher it became evident that there were no pupils with identified special education needs at the school. She mainly helped children with writing problems. Individual pupils have problems with the pronunciation of individual sounds, especially the alveolar /r/. Special help takes place mainly outside of the class. Pupils are removed from the class and helped individually or in small groups in a separate room. Special help seldom takes within the class. During individual hours the special education teacher is the class at the same time as the class teacher. At this time projects are done with all pupils together. The relative accessibility sets the school apart. A pupil in a wheelchair can access all levels of the school building with a lift. One pupil in a wheelchair can for example take part in technical courses in the basement because it is accessible for her. She also has help through an aid. Inclusion is difficult as a result of the teaching form. There are often frontal teacher directed work phases and all pupils work on the same assignment at the same time. On a whole the school was interested in the topic, especially how it is approached in other systems. The teachers mentioned that the topic is becoming a current topic in Finland as well.

Inclusion does not currently seem to be in the forefront at the school. However, interest was shown for the subject in conversations and discussions. There do not seem to be any children at the school with identified special needs as we understand it, but children who are weaker or slower than other children within their learning group. These children receive help from a special education teacher. They are usually removed from their class and helped in small groups in a separate room. Sometimes the special education teacher is in the classroom together with the class teacher and then all children are taught together. The school is wheelchair accessible. There is a lift and wide halls, so that it is not a problem for a child in a wheelchair, presently at the school to be independently mobile.

Haameelina school is proud to purport that it is an inclusive school. Children of different special educational needs are welcomed alongside other children within the immediate catchment area. The catchment area of the school is economically stable, with the vast majority of homes being occupier owned. There are a significant percentage of white, Christian children and no cases of EAL. All children deemed to have a special need are allowed the support services of a teaching. This assistant was used in particular, for movement around the building (lifts are provided). Children whom are deemed violent or severely disabled are provided for in different ways. Children are grouped within their year group phases. This appears to be a mix of children born within the same school year. However, children who show after year 3, a particular talent in either music or art can be assessed to join special classes which have an emphasis in these areas. The classes of children, despite their talents are of mixed abilities. The teaching and learning that we witnessed was not necessarily differentiated to cater for a wide variety of needs. The same lesson and the same resources were used, no matter who the child. For certain subjects, such as maths and English lessons, the children are halved in numbers to allow for smaller group teaching. This equates to a total of 11-12 children in a group. The children in each group were not necessarily selected according to their ability in these subjects. Children could also be unsupervised in other areas of the school to work on aspects of their learning; showing the great trust in the children. Any children identified by the teacher, Head, SEN department and in discussion with parents deemed to be significantly behind, may be kept back a year group phases. This is rare but can happen according to Finnish teachers. One Finnish approach towards consolidation of learning for certain children was to hold additional lessons in the areas of need. For example, a small group of year 3 pupils were invited to join an additional sports lesson where they could focus on coordination skills. This was also true of booster maths clubs.

The school has an inclusion manager, who calls meetings of all appropriate staff, parents and the child, in order to put together a support package. Only one child was seen who used a wheelchair to get around. The main school building had a lift to all floors but some areas of the school were not ramped or had small lips to doors making independent

access difficult.

As far as I got it, inclusion is 'the regular' for your school. Sending a child to a class for special needs is a rare exception and is decided by a committee of the school after thinking about and weighing all other the possible options (cooperation of teachers, social workers, nurses,...). It is of your dearest interest to support all children and enable them to learn successfully. Your own statement is, that there are only very, very few children that are 'special in negative way'.

Inclusion means "a school for everything", which is called all humans welcome. Key elements of inclusive Pädagogik are ranges like - community education force-free communication - carrying values embody - a school for all pupils develop-democratic schools - internal-school support systems create - cooperative learning arrange the consideration of the individual Entwicklungspotenziale of each individual child could I for z. B. observe in one essay hour.

Achievement-weaker children co-operate in groups with excellent pupils. Each group member has the possibility of bringing itself into the group. The children are accepted in their individuality, the self-assurance is strengthened. The weaker ones profit from the support by good pupils. Also humans with handicaps (wheelchair users) are at school and thus from the education system excluded.

Translated as close as possible into English as written in German:

Inklusion bedeutet 'eine Schule für alle', die alle Menschen willkommen heißt. Schlüsselemente inklusiver Pädagogik sind Bereiche wie - Gemeinschaft bilden- gewaltfreie Kommunikation - Tragende Werte verankern - Eine Schule für alle Schüler entwickeln-Demokratische Schulen - Innerschulische Unterstützungssysteme kreieren - Kooperatives Lernen vermitteln Die Berücksichtigung der individuellen Entwicklungspotenziale jedes einzelnen Kindes konnte ich z. B. in einer Aufsatzstunde beobachten. Leistungsschwächere Kinder arbeiten in Gruppen mit ausgezeichneten Schülern zusammen. Jedes Gruppenmitglied hat die Möglichkeit, sich in die Gruppe einzubringen. Die Kinder werden in ihrer Individualität angenommen, das Selbstvertrauen wird gestärkt. Die Schwächeren profitieren von der Unterstützung durch gute Schüler. Auch Menschen mit Behinderungen (Rollstuhlfahrer) sind in der Schule und damit vom Bildungssystem nicht ausgeschlossen.

Question 6

English - How does the school promote the learning of languages?

German - Was tut die Schule zur Förderung von Sprache und Sprachen?

Finish - Millä tavoin koulu kannustaa kielten oppimiseen (eri äidinkielet, vieraat kielet jne)?

The school promotes languages in several ways. The largest way is through such projects as Comenius when pupils get to see that the languages they are learning are spoken by 'real' people and that there is a purpose for speaking the language. I think the fact that there are relatively few Finnish speakers (5.2 million) gives pupils a real incentive to be able to communicate in other languages. All Staff within the school speak English very well, which is a great role-model and encouragement to the pupils to learn English for themselves. From the age of 9 children are required to learn a compulsory language, which is normally English. At 10 children are then allowed to choose a voluntary language French or German. They are not required to choose one if they do not wish to. Once children go to secondary school they once again have to take the compulsory language Swedish. Therefore by the end of their schooling they could know 4 different languages. There is a great emphasis on language teaching and learning and teachers are given the best chances of pupils achieving in a language. All language lessons (including the mother tongue) are taught in half classes with no more than about 12 pupils in a class. This is perfect and allows all pupils to achieve quickly and for quick progress to be made as well as individualised learning to be able to take place efficiently and effectively - an absolute dream!! Outside the classrooms languages doesn't seem to be hugely promoted (signs in other languages etc...) Which I think may be a lost opportunity, especially in trying to get more pupils to take a voluntary second language. (currently about 40% of grade opt for a second foreign language). Geography in the classes I saw was also taught using both Finnish and English within the same lessons.

According to the head teacher and teachers there are few pupils who have a native language other than Finnish. There are seldom pupils in the school, who do not speak Finnish. If this is the case, the pupil attends a special class for half a year in order to intensively learn the language. Following this half year they are integrated into a 'normal' class. Within the classrooms themselves there were no elements of language learning, for pupils with different native languages to be seen. This could be because of the lack of such pupils in the class. Foreign language learning appears to be of significant importance at the school. Pupils can already speak individual English words and phrases in preschool. In year three pupils can speak English on a simple level which allows them to communicate. In individual classes English is often used as the teaching language. In a year five classroom English words could be seen throughout the entire classroom. Important elements of the classroom were labeled in several languages. In addition to English as the first foreign language, the pupils choose a second foreign language in year four, either French or German. According to the teacher most students choose French. These languages are learned until the completion of school. In addition to the special foreign language teaching and the integration of foreign languages in other subjects, international exchange programs take place such as with Austria.

At this Finnish school the learning of foreign languages, especially English is very important. The children, who are in the affiliated preschool can already ask and answer simple questions in English and are not shy to use their skills. In several classes I observed greeting and farewell rituals in English. In the higher classes objects were labeled in Finnish and English. In one year five class the teacher spoke English whenever possible. The pupils could decide whether to answer in Finnish or English. All children begin English in year three, in year five a second foreign language is learned. The children can choose French or German at this time. The majority choose French. The learning groups are often split into smaller groups at this time, so that the children have more opportunities to speak. There are few children at the school, whose native language is not Finnish. If children come to the school and cannot speak Finnish then they are taught in a separate class for half a year and then integrated into the classroom again. Therefore it was not possible to observe other native languages in lessons or school life.

The school is highly effective at promoting the skill of language. All children from grade 3 will experience weekly English lessons taught by specialist teachers. From grade 4 onwards, the children in addition, are invited to select between French or German as their third language lesson. It was noted in all aspects of the school day, that English was used as a parallel language. For example, instructions outside of the 'English lesson' were often given in English. Labels throughout the school read in both Finnish and English. Teachers could be heard communicating in English with each other and clearly promoted its use. The children were happy to talk to their visitors in English and appeared to understand almost everything we said! Within their English lessons, the children learnt in a themed or topic based way. For example, one group of Grade 6 pupils were writing traditional tales in English using the 'once upon a time' opening. Another group were learning about South Africa by listening to, reading and writing the English language, IN this instance, the English language used was spoken with a South African accent. This is commonplace in Finnish English lessons.

Languages are very important to the Finnish people. With a population of 5.2 million there are two official languages - Finnish and Swedish (reflecting a long standing earlier relationship with Sweden. English language learning starts in Grade 3 (9-10 year olds) and seems popular with young people, probably as it is the language of popular music. The

general level of English is very good, having observed a Grade 5 English lesson focussing on the different types of packaging of food - tins, cartons, jar etc and reminded me just how difficult English can be. Other options include French (approximately 35% uptake and German - but not observed). In addition trainee teachers have to be fluent in English and I was privileged to sit in on the final six-week trainee teacher review partially conducted in English.
English is spoken in the subjects (not only in English lessons) as well as in every day life. English lessons are done in small groups. The main focus is on the spoken word and getting the children to speak.
At the school English is taught as the first living foreign language. An auxiliary offer within the foreign language range are the free articles "French" and/or. "German", whereby there is no group of Germans at present in the context of the Comenius project however learns the pupils of the class participating in it very probably additionally German. They partly communicate with their partner pupils from Austria in German, English and Finnish. <u>Translated as close as possible into English as written in German:</u> An der Schule wird Englisch als erste lebende Fremdsprache gelehrt. Ein Zusatzangebot im Fremdsprachenbereich sind die Freigegegenstände 'Französisch' bzw. 'Deutsch', wobei es derzeit keine Deutschgruppe gibt Im Rahmen des Comenius-Projektes hingegen lernen die Schüler der daran teilnehmenden Klasse sehr wohl zusätzlich Deutsch. Sie kommunizieren mit ihren PartnerschülerInnen aus Österreich teilweise in Deutsch, Englisch und Finnisch.

Question 7

English - What did you personally gain from the school visit?

German - Was ist für Sie der persönliche Lernzuwachs aufgrund Ihres Schulbesuchs?

Finish - Mikä oli vierailun anti sinulle?

From the school visit I gained a better understanding of the Finnish education system. For me it was great to be able to communicate with other teachers in a different language, mainly German and be able to sharpen up my own language skills. It was exciting and intriguing to be able to talk about and see different education systems and discuss that although we are all from different countries, that we all have the same pressures and the same problems. I have come away from Finland with some great ideas on how we can change things and make them better, but also I am left with questions which I think will take me a while to work out in my head, I certainly do not think that just because I am back in the UK that that is the end of the visit. I found it fascinating seeing the choices the children made about their education and how these were managed within the infrastructure of the school. An excellent experience I will not forget.

This school visit awaked an enthusiasm in me which is difficult to define. It is both a personal and professional enrichment to look 'beyond one's own backyard'. How does learning work in other schools? What are pupils like in other schools? What are the teachers like? How do they see things? Many of my questions were answered and new ones were created. It was exciting to see that school, learning and people in Europe can be so different and yet so similar. Children are children everywhere, with similar interest, fascinations, ways of learning and problems. The visit opens one's point of view and allows one to see oneself in a different light, and to see one's own work from another perspective. How do I work? How do others work? What do I like better there? What do I like better here? What can I take along? What do I not want to take along? The professional exchange with others inspires and motivates work for oneself. Many thought processes were triggered, which permanently accompany me and are in the back of my mind in my daily work, discussions, processes and conversations. Through the experience one automatically passes things on to others. The exchange is a living process, which influences one's personality and the way one see things, it inspires and changes one. The opportunity to take part in this exchange is an experience that moves and which one does not forget. Europe becomes touchable. Links, similarities, and interests can all be experienced.

My personal learning through this visit can be described as a n invaluable gift. I took uncountable impressions with me and had many interesting and open conversations with very friendly people. It is enriching to leave one's own daily routine and to experience a new system, because I was urged to observe, reflect and compare to my own school life and lessons. Something concrete that I will do is use English more in maydaily routine, because I realised what a gain it was to be able to exchange ideas with people in a different language.

CM - I personally gained an insight to a country I had never visited previously. I was also reminded of the effectiveness of music teaching in creating and developing academic and socially confident children. In terms of finding the secret behind Finnish education systems and policies, I did not necessarily find the answer. However, as discussed at a sauna, I proposed that Finland's key success in their education system is based on their teaching training, their society's value of teaching as a profession and the financial reward for holding such a well respected job. At no point up until the children finish compulsory education, are they tested and league tables and inspections do not exist. This, I feel, is paramount to the success of Finland. HR - I have learnt that standards within PE are high. Obesity is clearly a National low. I feel that this is achieved through excellent resources and provision, teaching training standards (5 years trained to masters level for all and the provision of specialist teachers), the relevance of the curriculum for the children in terms of the sports covered i.e. ice skating, Nordic walking, cross country skiing - all of which will be used outside of school life and into adulthood. There is a clear emphasis and value placed on PE as a subject, a further indication towards its success. I strongly feel that the Finnish Government's clear commitment towards the development of the whole child in their provision of free meals and education until they are beyond 25 years old explains the uniqueness and success of Finnish education. EW- I have found several significant differences within the pre-school education system in Finland compared to England. Preschool begins at 6 years of age and they enter compulsory grade one at the age of 7. Their school day is shorter, with the parents being allowed to decide the starting time of the child's day (either 8am or 9am). The children have only one dedicated session of maths and Literacy a week. This is adult directed. Other sessions include free play, art based sessions, music sessions and so on. Sessions do not last more than one hour. Each child has his/her own Literacy and Numeracy work book which they progress through during the school year. This is the only formal written recorded work that they have to do. I have learnt that these different methods do not seem to hinder the children in terms of standards. They appear to learn very quickly and demonstrate very happy behaviours and clear enjoyment within their setting. Games feature heavily, included those that are adult directed and have an educational basis. The children greatly benefited from being a smaller number. In pre-school, I observed that there were 10 children for three adults. Large open spaces within the classrooms and the outside area proved to benefit the children. I found that the discussions within the Comenius group were informative and I learnt a lot about cultures and beliefs within different educational system.

Class sizes are small in comparison to England with 18 - 22 in each class, and some instances (DT) of groups of 8. School facilities and resources were excellent, printed work books for every child in virtually all subjects. The use of exercise books seemed limited to literacy whereas we have exercise books for everything, with text books or photocopies to refer to. In terms of teaching it seemed to be largely text led, with learning objectives rarely communicated and feedback and assessment limited to summative formats. Practical lessons did allow children the chance to use the correct tools and implements, which were usually used with great maturity. I saw one collaborative literacy session and the children seemed to be actively enjoying it.

- the implicitness and normality of English in all the grades - the pupils have their own space to arrive and to be in good hands at, including a drawer for their personal stuff. - Insight in your way of university and apprenticeship being a time for expe

First I would like to thank you completely cordially for the perfect organization by Marija. My special thanks apply also for my partner colleague Tapani and naturally all other colleagues, which accepted us very cordially. For me it was my first Finland attendance, and some Finnish words, although few, are hung remained. Likewise I received a small view of the Finnish mentality. Which was noticeable to me particularly, is the well-being feeling atmosphere at the school. Also openness and the self-confident its surprised me the pupil. For me the Finnlanndbesuch a suggestion was personal and/or. a special kind of motivation of reflecting over my own school acting. Which particularly pleased me, was the active exchange with the colleagues from Germany and England. Thank You.

Translated as close as possible into English as written in German:

Zunächst möchte ich mich ganz herzlich für die perfekte Organisation durch Marija bedanken. Mein besonderer Dank gilt auch meinem Partnerkollegen Tapani und natürlich allen anderen KollegInnen, die uns sehr herzlich aufgenommen haben. Für mich war es mein erster Finnlandbesuch, und einige finnische Wörter, wenn auch wenige, sind hängen geblieben. Ebenso habe ich einen kleinen Einblick in die finnische Mentalität erhalten. Was mir besonders auffiel, ist die Wohlfühl-Atmosphäre an der Schule. Mich hat auch die Offenheit und das Selbstbewusstsein der Schüler überrascht. Für mich persönlich war der Finnlanndbesuch eine Anregung bzw. eine besondere Art von Motivation, über mein eigenes schulisches Handeln zu reflektieren. Was mir besonders gefiel, war der rege Austausch mit den Kolleginnen aus Deutschland und England. Kiitos