Class Visit Tigers 3 March 2023

Today’s focus was on PE. The lesson was held in the hall. The lesson started with a warm up exercise using football cones. Three children assembled the cones on the floor either turned down (“domes”) or turned up (“dishes”). The class was split into two teams and the object was either to turn all the cones into dishes or domes depending on the team the child was in. Mrs Gordon reflected after the practice warm up exercise on how we use school values when playing games. She asked the class to think about whether we are being honest, whether we are being responsible, whether we are working hard and whether we are respecting the rules pointing out that hogging one area of cones or following one particular person around flipping all their cones didn’t always reflect those values. The children then played the warm up game again and Mrs Gordon congratulated them on using those values. Some of the children were then asked to be equipment leader and collect all the cones in. Having that responsibility was very important to one child who wanted to know the teacher was happy with him for doing his duties. It was good to see positive reinforcement being used throughout the lesson.

The children then sat in a circle and Mrs Gordon introduced the new topic of Team Games. There was group discussion about different types of ball games and which ones the children enjoyed playing. The children offered lots of examples of ball games they enjoyed and referred back to when they had been offered as lunchtime clubs. One child said he preferred to watch rather than play and Mrs Gordon said that watching was also an important role because cheering on your team helps motivate them.

Mrs Gordon then asked the children to think about how we use balls in different sports. The first question was how you move a ball. The children had lots of ideas about this and were very willing to demonstrate when asked (pretending to use a racket or club, bowl, kick or throw into a hoop). The next question related to how you stopped a ball and again the children had lots of ideas about this and were willing to demonstrate. There was then discussion and demonstration about how we catch balls and some practice of body movements without balls to show how you would position your body to catch a ball. This was an interesting session as it got the children thinking in depth about the different ways of using balls in play and preparing for the next part of the session rather than diving headlong into an activity. It was also a useful visual representation of how to use a ball. The children would sometimes be asked to wave or give thumbs up to confirm recognition and understanding (which is another form of visual communication).

The class was then split into four groups. Mrs Gordon, Mrs Wynne, Mrs Bridson and Kieran supervised them. They took turns throwing balls to each other in a circle. Mrs Gordon then asked if they could think about how to make the game a bit more challenging and the children came up with some good ideas like make the circle bigger or not throwing in the same order every time. It was impressive to see how enthusiastic the children were with their ideas. At the end Mrs Gordon checked in with the children to see how confident they now felt with throwing and catching balls.

The next part of the lesson gave the children the opportunity to use their imagination, creativity and team building skills. They stayed in the same groups and could choose quoits, bean bags, cones, spots and hoops to create their own games. The staff gave them prompts when required and I noted that Kieran also developed a theme using one boy’s special interest to engage him in the activity. It was amazing to see the progress made with this particular boy since previous visits to the school. He was laughing, smiling and joking and showing joy in the task. The improvement in his confidence and engagement was quite astonishing and really lovely to see. The staff members were very good at explaining to the children what was required in the task and asking questions like “will this challenge your team mates?” The children were taking turns to listen and talk which is a very useful sill. They were eager to share their ideas. Everyone was engaged in the task no matter what their ability.

The children then demonstrated their games to the class which shows confidence and presentation skills. The children then had an opportunity to play the games devised by the other teams with one original team member remaining to explain the game to the newcomers showing leadership. All of these team building skills are so valuable and the children showed confidence and resilience. When children got it wrong they laughed rather than got upset. There was no hint of embarrassment among their peers when things didn’t go to plan. When one child missed a hoop (the airport) with his beanbag (the plane) he laughed and said “my plan has crashed!”

After tidying away the games Mrs Gordon put on a video that the children clearly liked called Hi My Name is Joe by Cosmic Kids Dance yoga. All the children and staff participated - even one boy who wanted to sit out because “it’s not very good my body” he did the exercise sitting down and probably used up more energy than those standing in the end! The children clearly enjoyed this video very much and a few flopped to the floor for a lie down afterwards as it was high energy exercise (and a strangely addictive video, very hard not to participate!).

Mrs Gordon then provided a recap of the lesson and awarded house points to certain children for demonstrating the school values of happiness, resilience, friendship, equality and responsibility. I was impressed how often the school values were incorporated into the lesson and the children were reminded of the skills they were learning throughout. After the lesson I spoke to Kieran and Mrs Gordon to convey how impressed I was with the engagement of all the children in the class even those with clear challenges in PE. Adaptions were made for those children who needed it so they could still engage with the lesson and I enjoyed seeing the clever use of special interests to increase engagement.