

## Meaningful Learning Experiences

Strategic Commitment	✓	Part of a large academy trust's curriculum strategy
Curriculum Provision	✓	Bringing to life the topic of Hygiene and Self-Care
Employer Partnerships	✓	Part of an initiative to promote Allied Health Professions
Reflective Young People	✓	Encouraging reflection about potentially sensitive topics
Informed Career Choices	✓	Inspiring young children about a career in Dramatherapy

### Dramatherapists help reception class children explore sensitive matters about Hygiene

Children in the Reception classes at Barton Hill Academy in Torquay learn about Hygiene and develop independent self-care skills, such as handwashing, teeth brushing and general washing, in school and at home. Teaching staff pointed out that, *'This is a huge topic- especially with the current situation. We encourage children to learn the importance of hand washing before eating lunch/snack and after toileting. We address this early in the year as part of introduction to the school daily routine. This is normally taught through songs, videos and modelling, however it is something we are still encouraging and reminding as the year continues.'*

The possibility of working with a Dramatherapist was received positively: *'We loved the idea of using a teddy or baby toy to model and encourage self-care. Children really respond to taking care of these through their natural role play and I believe it could be an excellent way of emphasising this sometimes sensitive topic further.'*

Discussions with the British Association of Dramatherapists resulted in one of their experienced practitioners providing a short video message about 'Staying Healthy', including ways of dealing with worries. Teachers used this as a basis for discussion in class, allowing children to explore their thoughts and ideas, alongside support from adults. *'The direction of developing the 'whole child' would really play to our strengths and provide important time for reflection for our children.'*

The school sent a summary of the children's responses to the Dramatherapist, along with a couple of short video clips with children voicing these – knowing they would be sent to the expert practitioner.

### Benefits for the Students

*'Reflecting on a character who had had worries or a problem to overcome was a great entry of conversation for the children ... This led to so many really thoughtful reflections for this age of children and it is a thought process that I know in my class we have reflected upon a number of times outside of the session when children have had their own conflicts ... This really helped the children branch out beyond usual thoughts of 'eat your vegetables' to different ways we need to keep our full body healthy ... We then moved onto discussions of how we are all different and therefore all enjoy different ways to express ourselves and have calm time. This is a huge element of the Early Years Curriculum ...'*

### Benefits for the School

- *'In my class, we had so many discussions we ended up watching a section each week as our discussions grew and grew!'*
- *'I have referred to the film a number of times since and even recommended it as a point of discussion for my Year 1 colleagues. So many, many thanks for providing us with a springboard and a chance for us to ignite those conversations.'*

### Benefits for the Employer

- *'That is so great to hear, I am really glad the classes found it helpful and hope the conversations continue as the year goes on. This may be the therapist in me but I particularly loved the last comment about being kind hearted as a way to stay healthy. What a lovely end to my day!'*
- The project helped to present dramatherapy to very young children as a potential future career path, emphasising that it is primarily about the *'... healing aspects of drama and theatre as the therapeutic process'* (BADTh website)



An inspiring and engaging short video greeting from an experienced Dramatherapist – recorded on a mobile phone during lockdown – encouraged children in Reception classes to reflect on how they can stay healthy and deal with worries.

