

Erasmus Visit to Iceland by Sarajane Saville, Teacher

I was privileged to visit Iceland last week as part of the Erasmus programme. I highly valued the opportunity to meet professionals involved in education from other countries. I spent considerable time talking with people from Sweden and Estonia. We also had lots of interesting discussions with people from the UK.

I did a presentation about things of which I am particularly proud in our school. I included some drawings and written work from pupils in my class. Prior to the trip the area of learning in Literacy was Persuasive Writing and so the children were also able to express what they felt was good about their classroom and school.

We visited seven school sites, including two kindergartens. I was able to ask lots of questions from head teachers, staff and pupils. We had time as a group to discuss and reflect soon after each visit. Even during informal times such as meal times we were eagerly discussing what we had seen. I saw presentations from other schools. I was especially interested in the presentations about Icelandic education.

I feel the visit gave me the following:

- Confidence that what we do in our school is of a high standard.
- Enhanced motivation to ensure we try to teach children "to do what is right because they want to, not because they must" - a quote from an Icelandic Head.
- Determination to ensure children are spoken to calmly, with empathy, and that they are given freedom where appropriate.
- Some children need aids in order to have freedom and choice e.g. to communicate.
- Some would just benefit from a more relaxed approach and less rules about things that don't really matter.
- I'd also like to address healthy eating and emotional well-being. I'd like our schools to be more homely. I was struck, for

example, by nursery aged children eating boiled fish and fresh fruit, by people taking off shoes in school and by sofas in corridors.

- I was struck too by the emphasis on arts and crafts and creative subjects and by the way resources were repaired and children taught how to look after things.
- I was struck by the calibre of each of the smiling, welcoming, gracious head teachers. I felt they all had the well-being of their children uppermost. I agreed with the ethos they were promoting. I felt the quality of teaching and learning in each school was largely due to their influence and work, as indeed I feel about our own school.

If you would like further info please ask. I can chat for hours about this! I think I will always remember the visit and be influenced by what I saw and experienced.

Hello Pineapples and everyone else at Rowan Gate.

I've sent you some photos of me on an aeroplane flying to Iceland. I looked out of the little window and saw clouds underneath me! It was amazing!



When we arrived I breathed in and straightaway I noticed that the air was different. It was like when it's just snowed- really fresh and clean sort of air. I'm very excited.

There are teachers from Sweden and Estonia too. I've chatted a bit with them. The teacher in Sweden cycles to school like Kirsty does. We are all staying in a hotel. Can you find those countries on google maps?

This evening we had a meal in a restaurant. I popped outside to take photos for you as it was such a good view. You can see my hair blown in the wind. To eat I had a shellfish called scallops. I did not like it but I tried it to be polite and friendly. I did like the pudding - it was a delicious cheesecake.



Tomorrow we are going to visit a school. I will see what things they do which could be good for us to do too. Then in the afternoon I will show the other teachers photos of our school and some of your writing and great drawings.

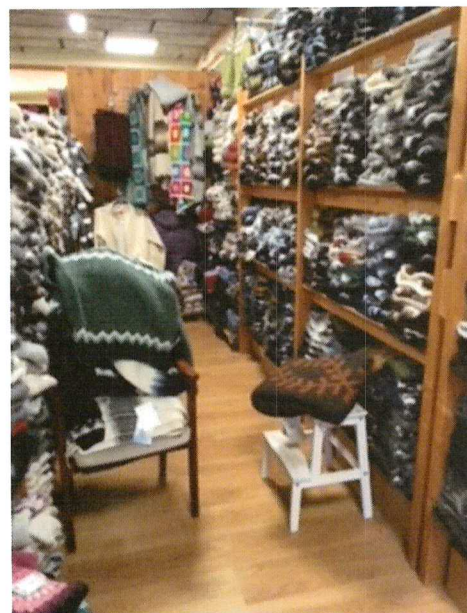
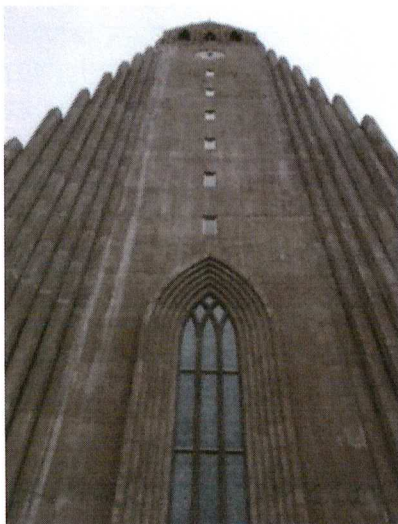
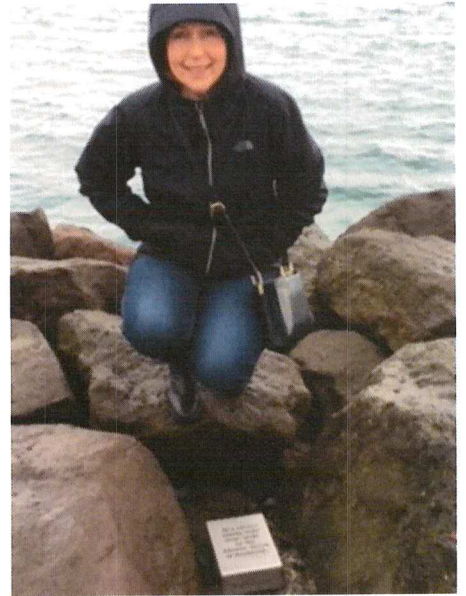
Hope you all have a good day at school. I'll try to send an email again tomorrow evening. Love from Sarajane

A cold day in Iceland

Hi everyone. Today it is much colder in Iceland. There is more snow on the mountains. I've had time to go shopping. I went to a shop full of amazing Icelandic jumpers and bought one. It was very dear though. Everything is very dear. Then I went up a church tower and took some photos of the views so you could see. The houses are made with corrugated metal. It is painted bright colours. I bet some of you could draw pictures of houses like that.

See you tomorrow.

Many thanks adults as I am sure you will have been working hard.
Sarajane



Another day in Iceland

Hi Pineapples and everyone else, here are lots more photos from our trip to Iceland.

Yesterday evening Katy and I had free time and we went to The Blue Lagoon. It's a huge pool of very warm water that comes from deep under the ground. It was like an amazing giant hot tub.

We went to more schools today. I took some photos of the children's work. I have noticed they do a LOT of drawing and making models of volcanoes. One school was going on a whole school run. Hope all is well for you.

Love Sarajane

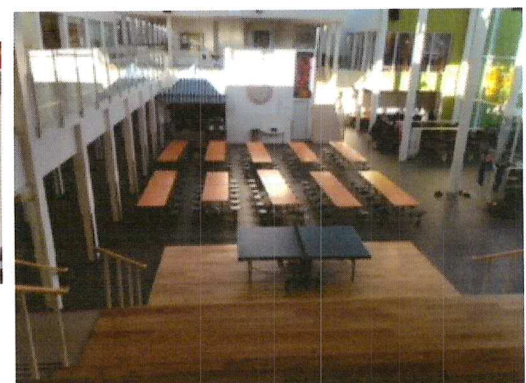
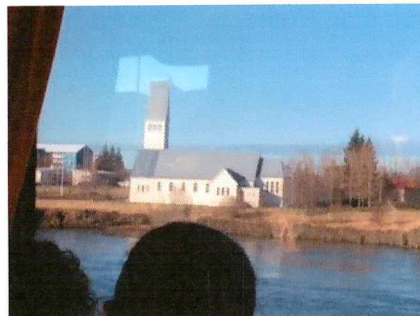


Visit to a School

Hi. Today we drove in a coach to visit an amazing school. I took photos on the way to show you. Look at all the bikes outside the school! See what you can learn from looking at the photos. No one wears shoes inside. They leave them in a space by the Icelandic flag.

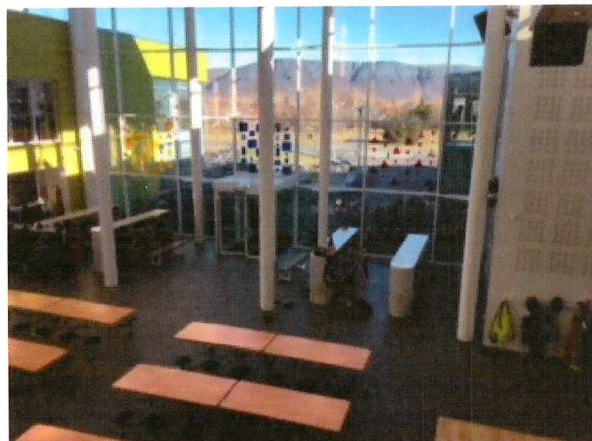
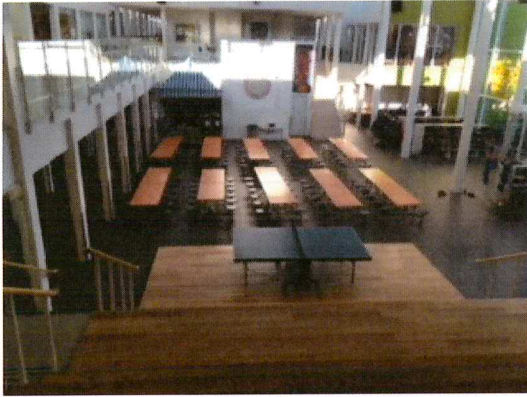
Some photos are from a kindergarten. Look at the colour of what's in the sandpit! See what the little children had for lunch. See what I could choose for breakfast. I wonder what you would have chosen.

I hope you are all enjoying your week. Love Sarajane x



An Icelandic School!

Look – An Icelandic School! All the children take their shoes off! What else can you see? Love Sarajane



Day 3

Today I went to the only special needs school in Iceland.

Iceland is half the size of the UK but only has about as many people as Northampton. The school was very similar to our school. Look at the photos and see what you can learn. I've also been chatting a lot to people from Estonia and Sweden.

This evening we will get free time and I will go to a pool called The Blue Lagoon. Look for it on Google images. I will put mud all over my face which should then make me look beautiful! Ha ha.

Love from Sarajane

