

Making friends in Scandinavia



Linda Baston-Pitt, director of The Old School House Nursery

Linda Baston-Pitt tells NMT Editor Alison Gordon what she has learned about non-violent communication methods for pre-schoolers from Early Years partners in Norway

The Old School House Nursery is linking up with pre-schools and Kindergartens in Norway and Sweden as part of an EU scheme to create partnerships across Europe and improve education standards.

Following a recent visit to Norway in December 2009, relations have now been forged between The Old School House Nursery and colleagues in Norway and Sweden.

They have been teaching us about non-violent communication (NVC) or compassionate communication. The more I have learned, the more inspired I have become, which has now resulted in the development of a joint project with colleagues in Europe.

It was a wonderful experience to be able to visit Siggerud Gård Barnehage, a municipal kindergarten near Oslo, where I was so impressed by the wonderful energy and inspiration from our Scandinavian colleagues.

It is hoped that staff from The Old School House will visit their partners and work on joint projects over the next two years through the

Comenius programme, which is funded by the European Commission and managed in the UK by the British Council.

The programme provides funding and professional development to enable staff across Europe to work together and learn about each other's culture and education methods.

I recognise that early emotional and social experiences can shape the rest of a child's life, therefore when dealing with the feelings and behaviour of young children, it is important that we continually try to look at creative methods and approaches.

It is vital that adults are provided with the tools they need to help children develop social abilities that will contribute to developing a child's confidence and self-esteem enabling them to solve problems without resorting to aggression or violence.

High Scopes six-step conflict resolution process is one of the teaching strategies that staff within nursery have found especially useful, as a way of helping children to settle disputes and conflicts.

For this to happen in practice, positive behaviour must be built

on good relationships and communication.

Motivated by our desire to find mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict and recognising that one way to achieve this would be through improving the quality of our relationships and how we communicate. We then began to look more seriously into the concept of non violent communication.

NVC is an innovative model of communication developed by Marshal Rosenberg. NVC is used all over the world in nurseries, schools, hospitals and many other places to support relationship based work. It offers proven tools and processes to support inclusion and active participation.

Many practitioners that have applied the NVC model into practice have recognised the following benefits:

- fewer conflicts
- increased skill in mediating conflicts that do arise
- children, students and staff feeling safer and happier at school
- more listening to one another
- more engaged learning
- less resistance and more co-operation ■

NURSERY MANAGEMENT TODAY

nmt

The **ONLY** way to regularly obtain your copy of NMT is by subscription

See page 29 of this issue