

The Household Cavalry Barracks, The House of Lords and Afternoon Tea at the Ritz





Specific Activity Risk Assessment

The Risk Identified: Pear Tree School Educational Visit to Major Cities such as London and Edinburgh using public transport.

The information below may also be useful and equally apply to smaller group visits at other times outside of school also.

Why do it? – This is a high value experience and a target in the Personal Holistic Competence assessment. It broadens horizons, a great educational visit with a lot of cross curricula content. It promotes social skills, a real fun day and has an overall therapeutic impact. Please see details of assessment.

Who could be harmed: Staff and young people

It presents a number of risks which are as follows.

- Risk of absconding.
- Risk of abandonment
- Risk of inappropriate sexual behaviour in quiet contained settings such as train seats, whilst cramped closely together on the Underground, in museum or exhibition areas.
- Risk of collision with fast moving vehicles whilst walking through busy streets.

Many of the above are a constant at any time and in any town or city and are very much lived with looking after the vulnerable children we do. A trip to London intensifies this and therefore requires forward planning and thinking things through in advance. By doing so you avoid walking blindly into chaos.

Is the risk: High Medium Low

Action to be taken to reduce/remove risk:

- Each child being considered must satisfy The Suitability Risk Assessment criteria.

The following guidance and good practice policy must be adhered to by all staff which addresses the above risks in a managed way.

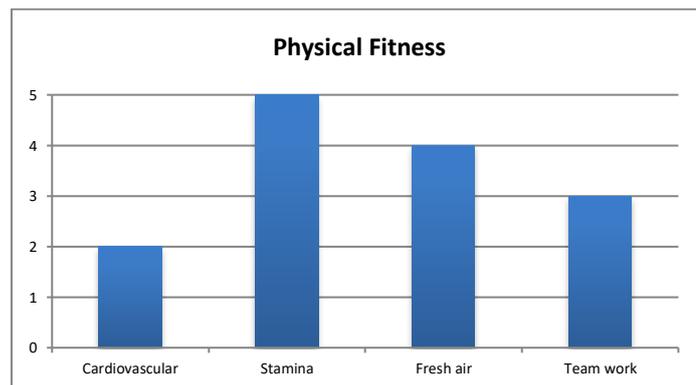
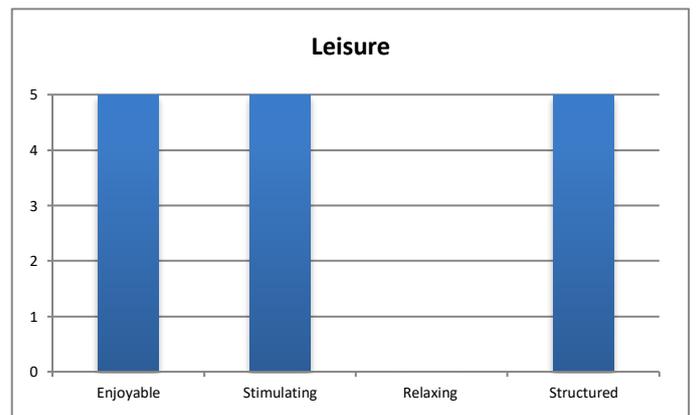
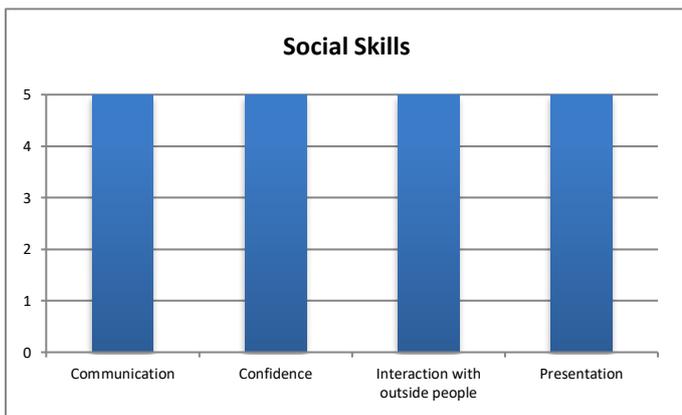
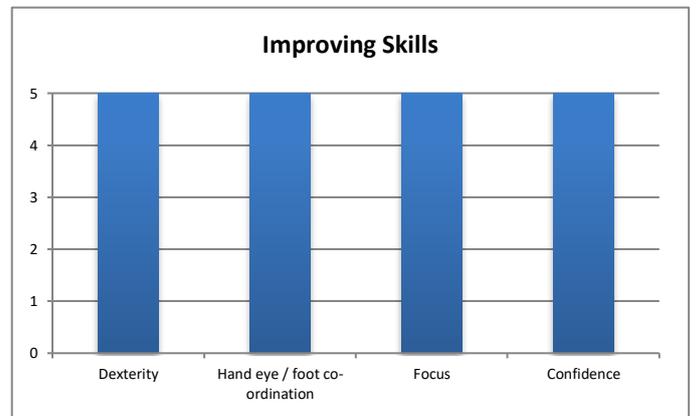
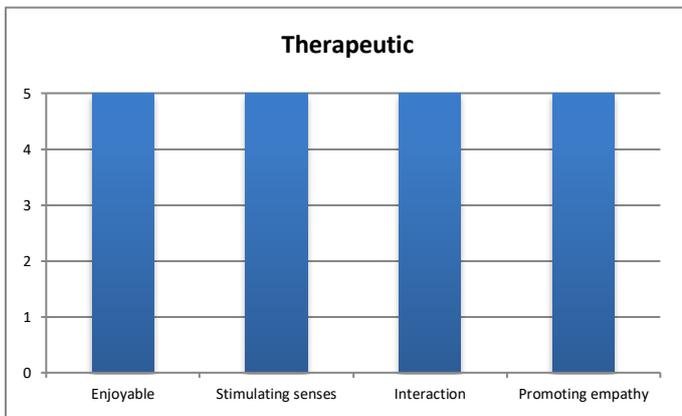
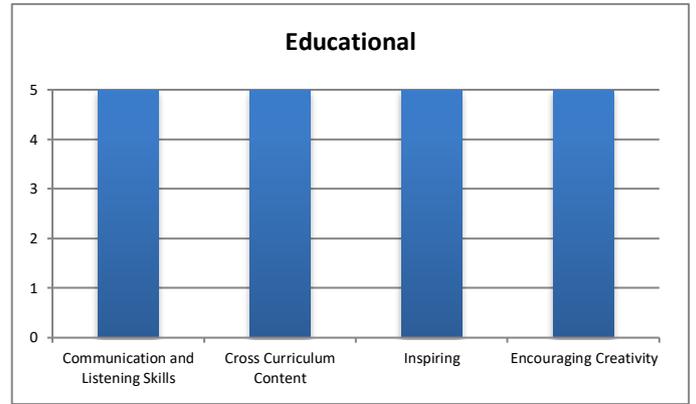
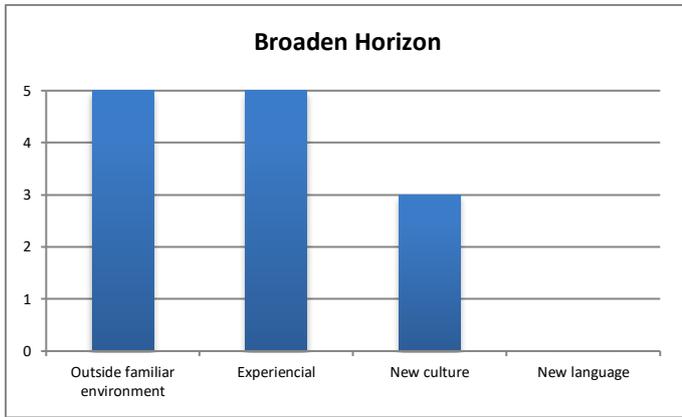
Staff must remember that any dress code expectations for the children apply to staff also e.g., comfortable shoes no trainers.

- Gather at meeting point before barriers at the station.
- Move through barriers together.
- One person controls tickets.
- As one group sit on the platform for a briefing.
- Leader nominates backmarker.
- Explain we are one group and no one is behind backmarker.
- Once on the train. Control seating arrangements. Adults sit in aisle seats to give reassurance of containment and facilitate mobility when needed.
- Word searches and dominos are an advantage.
- Wet wipes essential and one member of staff must have available.
- Eat food after Peterborough. (London only)
- Bin packages so nothing to carry.
- Control the mood.
- Control toilet breaks.
- At tube, if packed tightly together ensure hands are visible.
- Visit to the National Gallery can be done in half an hour from entry. This also provides an opportunity for a controlled group toilet break. (London)
- Allow an hour to walk down Mall to Buckingham Palace and back to Horse Guards. (London)

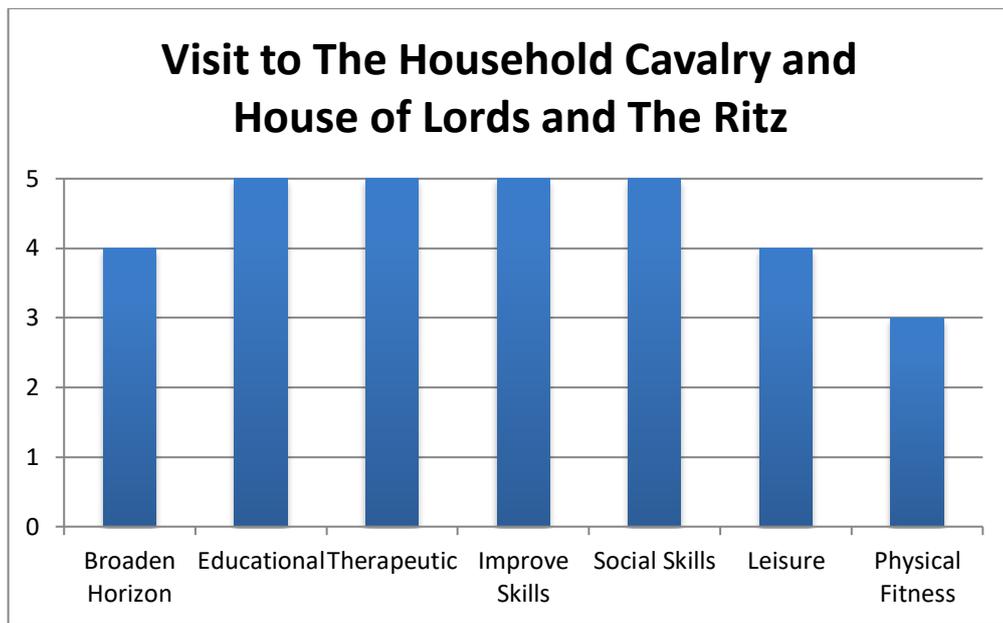
- London Eye takes an hour from arrival to leaving. (London)
- Whilst walking through the city staff should be placing themselves equidistant throughout the group to be able to break the group up when needed whilst crossing the road.
- Always use the green cross code and set an example by leading by example.
- Staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children at all times and be a constant mentor, remembering to spread out during visits to places of interest as you would whilst walking through the streets. This is to guide conversations and monitor safeguarding issues.
- Mealtime. Starter or pudding, not both.
- Encourage other options other than fizzy drinks.
- Check. Little people can eat adult's portion if not child's menu.
- Try to get concessions at museum, not restaurant.
- Allow half an hour to get to Kings Cross from Piccadilly. (London)
- Plan to get to the train Station half an hour before the train departs.
- Once on train no one uses the toilet until train departs.

Visit to The Household Cavalry and House of Lords and The Ritz

Graph showing assessment of elements.



Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes.



The Household Cavalry Barracks, The House of Lords and Afternoon Tea at The Ritz.

The above title has all the expectations associated with exclusivity and elitism yet you will be pleased to know is exactly what two of our young people were able to experience in a way that I hope inspires them and others now and in the future. I make the full story and details known to avoid scepticism and uninformed conjecture.

Lord and Lady Houghton of Richmond live in a relatively modest cottage not far from Stapleton Manor. They are titled as a result of their own hard work and commitment over a lifetime. Lord Houghton graduated from Sandhurst Military Academy, starting his career as a young Captain and worked his way up through the ranks to the very top and I mean very top. He became Chief of Defence Staff, responsible for the country's entire armed forces. He retired in 2016 and became Constable of the Tower of London.

Lady Houghton (Lady H or Maggie) has closer links than you may appreciate. At the age of 16 years old her first job was that of groom to Mrs Stevenson of Stapleton Manor whose ashes are under the oak tree next to the lake. As a live in groom her accommodation was in what is now * office at The Manor. She married a young Captain and has been at his side through every Military campaign this country has been involved in since the late seventies, early eighties. If you think about our countries history through this time, that in itself is remarkable. In civilian terms she became the First Lady of our armed forces and continues to hold the respect that goes with such experience and contribution.

Their London address is The Queens House The Tower of London. When they are in London, Maggie's Horse Mingle comes to stay at Toy Top and has been enjoyed by most children who are encouraged to ride her. It is indeed through the horse world that I was to come to know and respect them over ten years ago and consider them both close personal friends.

Throughout that time, Maggie has always made it clear if there was anything she could do to help our children she would like to. At one time she was mentor to * while he worked at the Kennels. He was one of our young people who joined The Scott's Guards and has maintained employment ever since he left our care.

When two of our current students began to display the skill set and aptitude suitable for The Mounted Regiments, I have encouraged this knowing that whilst we may encourage they have no real concept of what it may all be about or their accessibility to it. I therefore asked Maggie if it would be possible to visit the barracks at Knightsbridge in a similar way to that which she had invited myself in 2010. (I was indeed honoured to be their guest at a function at St James Palace to raise money for an armed forces charity and was invited to ride out with the Cavalry through Hyde Park the following morning.)

This proposed visit was to inspire and continue to encourage. What I expected was the opportunity to show our young people the set up and for them to realise there are so many similarities with what they are familiar with at Toy Top and to use that as a confidence booster. To value their education whilst with us and realise there are places to go to that build on top of what they have learnt in a real pragmatic way. I was delighted when Maggie said she would like to join us and made sure our diaries could coordinate such a visit. What I hadn't appreciated was how our visit would be seen by those accommodating our request and the fact we were to be shown such courtesy and respect and be treated like VIPs.

With an idea of what was to happen, I built on this ensuring the young people were dressed as if going for an interview. The suit bought for our silver service dinner dance became important along with the skills learned at the dinner dance which will become apparent. We also travelled by train 1st Class. The extra cost for this was about £15 each but allowed for breakfast on the way and a return evening meal in the price.

On arrival at the barracks, we were shown around the stables, although located in what from the outside appears to be an underground car park built in the sixties with a tower block on top (which is where the soldiers live) it is very similar in layout and function to the main barn at Toy Top. We were shown the forge where seven full time farriers shoe between 150 - 300 horses. The saddlery and the armoury where the value of the contents in one room was put at £16M. * was asked to hold a gold braided coat to the value of £7 - 16k and commented it was the most valuable thing he has held. * was given a sword to hold and that look came over her face which made me appreciate she was in a good mood. (From lying on the rail track to this in 3 1/2 years is remarkable).



We were taken outside to watch the returning Guard ride into the barracks from Horseguards. Lady H was asked to 'dismount the troops' which was similar to



taking a salute. We watched as the troops undertook a procedure required just to be able to get off their horse safely as the uniform and swords weigh appropriately 2 stone as well as being cumbersome.

We were then asked to join them for lunch, I had been invited the night before and was still expecting a works canteen with the lads. No it was in the officers mess, a silver service on a long table waited on by staff surrounded by fine paintings. The British Army can make a sixties concrete block exude class and opulence, one of the paintings was of a Cavalry Officer by Mullen's valued in the millions but as an organisation formed in the 1600s, it has collected many treasures just as we do and long may they do so.

The Colonel sat in the centre, myself opposite to his left. Lady H opposite to his right and an Officer in between us. * sat next to him to his right and * and * to his left. Surrounded by half a dozen other

officers. * and *’s table manners were excellent and the Col made conversation with them both about their hopes and aspirations. When I explained that they ride out as part of their timetable, both play sport and drive tractors, he commented “well you’re almost over qualified to come and start here”. When not on ceremonial duties the regiment drive tanks and light armoured vehicles on operations. If you can drive a tractor and equipment at 15 years old and make it complete tasks, tanks will be no problem.

The Col being an excellent host demonstrated a perfect example of controlling the space and skill fully arranged us in order to see everyone and give us all the right amount of attention the meal warranted. A valuable social skill when working with people, especially children. He made the point that as the regiment uses horses the time off work for all ranks can be measured in hours not days as they are always to look after and the job was indeed one of the most physically demanding in terms of routine and time on a seven day week basis. Those who may think someone like * spends too much time in the stables may now appreciate as he does that this process is all part of providing a genuine preparation for this kind of employment. * who was working on the yard on Christmas Day nodded in agreement.

Up to this point, the lessons learnt in social skills whilst in our care form being appropriately dressed, the importance of uniform to how to use a knife and fork, were clearly appreciated by both young people who were being stretched to the limit of their comfort zone. In discussion afterwards, they were surprised to hear both myself and Lady H explain that we all still get nervous in situations like that regardless of how experienced we may be. We said our goodbyes and I expressed my huge thanks, the Col made the genuine offer if they were still considering joining for them to return and spend time with the lads on the shop floor to learn about it from their perspective.

From there, we had a short trip across town to catch up with the General who happened to be sitting in The House of Lords. We were indeed invited into The Palace of Westminster and were met by Lord Houghton who was keen to show us around. The tour included a visit to the great hall as seen in the recent film ‘The Darkest Hour’ and at one point it was explained we were walking the route taken by HM the Queen during the State opening of Parliament. This fact clearly resonated with * as her face showed. We then went in to the house to hear a debate.

On a previous visit with my family we had beforehand been present during a military ceremony at The Tower and were dressed in lounge suits as the dress code expected civilians to be. On our arrival at the entrance to the House of Lords the gate keeper expressed his appreciation for the fact that as visitors we were all well dressed and I was keen for us all to be seen in the same way on this occasion also. Their presentation was exactly as requested and required. Strict instructions were to switch mobile phones off as we listened to two debates of historical and personal significance.

The first on the possibility of a second referendum regarding Brexit. The second the importance of legislation to protect children from digital technology. It was at this point that we had our only difficulty as * began to flash her mobile phone around as if in a nervous action. She was firmly told to switch it off which it was already. On request she handed the phone to me as if to get it away from her as quickly as possible. On reflection afterwards Lady H suggested he had mistaken the photograph on the cover for an active phone. The irony was obvious but no harm done.

At one point a lady walked in who Maggie thought we may recognise but she couldn’t remember who it was. I recognised her as Baroness Flowela Benjamin and with my hands made the sign of a circle a triangle and a square which was noted by the General sat on the benches with amusement. Baroness Benjamin first became known to most of us in the children’s TV programme Play School where children were encouraged to look through the different shaped windows. On my previous visit I found myself sat behind Dr Robert Winston (now Lord Winston who I have quoted in my own literature) in the tea room. People’s perception of The House of Lords varies and is often based on the historical method of power by birth right with hereditary peers. This is now less and less relevant. The fact we have a higher office occupied by older experienced people who have reached the highest possible level of their occupation being experts in their chosen fields, to oversee the work of elected career politicians who happened to say the right things to their party and the country during elections, extremely refreshing. Anyone who

has followed politics in the last 3 years should appreciate what I mean. It was amazing to see this level of scrutiny take place. We stayed as long as we thought they could cope with and then had a drink in the Peers Tea Room.

We left the Palace of Westminster in what we hoped would give us time to visit Westminster Abbey before our appointment at The Ritz. As we walked around the corner we saw the length of the admission queue. Lady H's face dropped as she said "I'm not used to queues," which brought a smile to my face and we walked on by as there simply wasn't time to wait and it would seriously alter the tone of our trip up to that time.

I explained to * and * that I had chosen the next place for a number of reasons. It is iconically recognised as the most high class hotel the world over. As such it would be recognised by anyone to hear of our visit and it demonstrated that our young people can indeed live up to the standards and expectations anyone may set anywhere. Walking through the entrance to The Ritz * quietly said "I'm out of my comfort zone here" to which I replied "that's why I've brought you, so you can never feel somewhere is too good for you".



We sat in opulent ambience listening to live piano music and experiencing silver service afternoon tea. * was brave enough to try different teas and a variety of foods never tasted before. * appeared to take it all in his stride. It was here I made the point that whilst this was also a good place to bring Lady H to thank her for all that she had organised for us but it had to be said it was the least remarkable of the day. Both looked puzzled at me for this comment. I explained that the only requirement for admission to The Ritz is to be appropriately dressed, behave appropriately and not take your jacket off and be able to pay the bill. (£52 per person paid for out my private account). Everywhere else we had been that day required an invitation and security clearance. The reality of this was both a surprise yet obvious.

This brought an end to a remarkable day and one from which * and * should find life changing if only to demonstrate there are no boundaries to their aspirations. Positive behaviour results in positive responses whoever you are and politeness, social skills and being able to converse with people in all situations are the important foundations upon which everything else of value can be built. Interestingly enough at no point during our day was the issues of GCSE's ever discussed or considered. It is my sincere hope that this account is influential to all our people young and older for many years in the future.

Whilst letters of thanks will be going from myself, * and * to all involved in that special day, I also extend my thanks to everyone who has contributed to looking after these two aspiring young people. The kind of progress they have made is not without commitment and dedication. It doesn't happen on its own, for that I thank you all.

Kind regards,
David Bartlett MBE