

A banner featuring three flags: the Scottish Saltire (blue and white), the Ukrainian national flag (blue and yellow), and the Ukrainian tricolor (blue, yellow, and red) with a traditional Ukrainian embroidery pattern on the left. Overlaid on the flags is a yellow rectangular box containing the text "FOCC WEST LOTHIAN DAILY BLOG 2016" in a serif font.

FOCC WEST LOTHIAN DAILY BLOG 2016

Monday 15 August – School/Soft Play

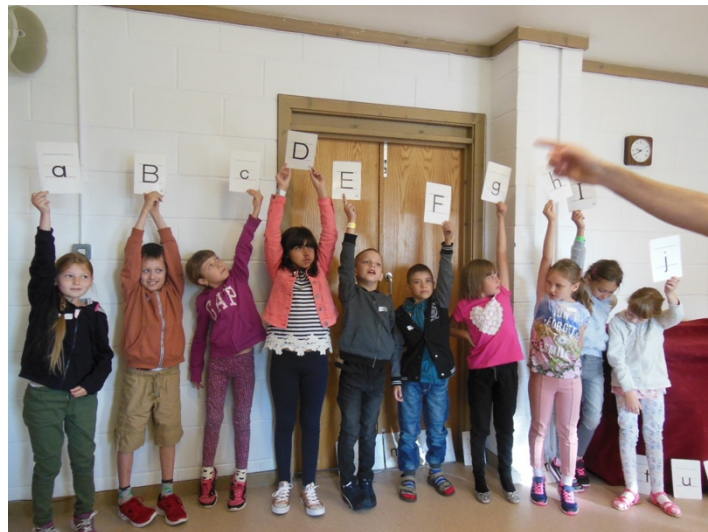
Our visit got underway on a nice sunny day. But first we had much to do indoors. A talk about safety in the hall, outside and at home went down well before we headed outside to practise what we had learned. This also gave us the opportunity to visit Grieves undertakers to thank them for their recent donations. We then went back to the hall and made lots of beautiful thank you cards. After packed lunch we decided to have some time in the sunshine playing in the local park before going to our scheduled visit to Overboard soft play. The children all let off plenty of steam in both places and also had a shot each on the electric go-karts at Overboard. Best driver of the day was Alina F who didn't crash once and was on full power for all her laps. We went back to the hall to finish our day with a look at some concert items and of course some games too. A nice start to the visit with all children settled in well.





Tuesday 16 August – School/Swimming

Once all the children had arrived in the hall we started the day with English lessons from Chris. Chris was very good at engaging with the kids and had them singing head, shoulders, knees and toes amongst others. After a snack it was off to Broxburn Swimming Pool for lessons and some fun time with instructor Aaron who ended up in the pool with his clothes on. Lunch was very quiet and peaceful (which may surprise you) before everyone headed to the park for some games in the sunshine. 23 degrees. Not bad for Scotland. After we tired them out at the park it was back to the hall for some concert practice. Must say it looks like it will be lots of fun. Then it was home to the host parents hopefully all tired out (I know I was) after having a fun and educational day.





Wednesday 17 August – School/Owl Centre

This was my (Gavin Spence) first stint as the daily coordinator and I have to say it was great. I was actually pretty surprised at just how fast the morning went in, full of fun activities and plenty buzz. The break saw us dish out some drinks to the children and some much needed caffeine to the adults. Once the break was over it was a trip to Polkemmet Country Park, by minibus with a very loud CD player that was playing Russian tunes. I was quite taken aback to find this guy swamped by our charges, turned out that the children recognised Mike Cowan and they all gave him the typical kid welcome. He really seemed a great guy very friendly and keen to know all that was going on. We played on the swings roundabout and all the other kit in the playground. The children's laughter giving strong indication that they were having fun. Lunch time arrived and the children split into two groups and made use of the picnic tables. I've lived in Broxburn for over 10 years now and have to say that I'm ashamed to admit that this was the first time I had visited the owl centre - genuinely a great place to visit. The venue had enough exhibits to keep the young and old enthralled when looking around. We even had time to take part in an owl in flight show. I can assure you I counted our kids in and then back out as I can tell you there were some pretty big birds in there. I was very glad they all had the orange caps on. After the show we spent some more time walking around the venue and playing on the slide. Some ice lollies were bought for the children which went down well, and us adults enjoyed them too. Time for more fun in the swing park to burn off some energy and delay the return journey in the Belarus discotheque. Back to the church hall where the children had some more fun singing and playing games before the respective host families dropped in to pick up the children. I enjoyed the day and thought it went well, for my fist attempt - no children lost, no owls managed to grab any of the charges and we all had a great time. I'm going to buy a CD of the best of bagpipes for the minibus though....





Thursday 18 August – Dentist/Potter Around

Our day started with an English lesson from Chris. Already the children are coming on leaps and bounds with today's main lines being "what age are you?" "I am" I have to say none of us adults were enamoured by their reaction to our ages! Our morning outing was a trip to Potter Around in Kirknewton. What a fabulous place. The children got to pick a cat or dog and paint it how they wished. This took some deep concentration with some budding wee artists showing off their skills. After finishing the painting, we were all provided with juice and home baking. Yum! The afternoon came and it was time for the dentist. I don't think any of us were looking forward to it but the children were amazing. They all went in without a drama and took the treatment in their stride. This is when you realise that it isn't just them learning from us but we also get to learn valuable lessons from them. A big well done to them all and especially Zarina who didn't need any treatment.





Friday 19 August – School/Soft Play

We left the hall ahead of schedule today to head to the Kelpies. We knew it was going to rain about lunchtime plus we had to get the bus back to the BB's quite sharp as it was needed for a camping trip. We also had visitors with us today, Katia Boss and her daughter Lisa who joined in with the activities. Kenny took some photos of the Kelpies eating out the hands of the children and interpreters. After the Kelpies we walked to Helix park for lots of fun and running around for just over an hour, I think I ran about more than the kids. We then headed back to the church to start dance practise and concert rehearsals. Stephanie (the dance teacher) arrived about 14:00 and wasn't feeling too good but she powered through the dance lessons anyway. We then had a snack about 15:30 before playing games for the rest of the afternoon. Musical chairs were one of them but have no idea what the other game was called.



