

'This is what it looks like to think'

Queenie (4:6)



Beginning with a question: *what makes me, me?*

In 2013/14, as part of a nursery-wide focus on sculpture, Preschool 2 children became particularly interested in exploring their own faces with mirrors and photographs, and made representations of themselves in line drawings and clay. They looked closely at each other too, noting similarities and differences. The question of individual identity arose from these explorations:

'I've got straight hair, look, so straight and long' Emily (4:2)

'Look, I've got a chin' Seb (4:5)

'We have the same eyes and the same birthday, but we are not the same person, are we Lily?' Maria (4:7)

'It looks funny seeing me in the mirror' Yasmina (4:6)

Initial observations focussed largely on physical identity, but when the children gave titles to their sculptures and talked about them, other inner qualities were recognised:

'This is me, big strong Seb' Seb (4:5)

'It's me, rock and roll boy' Stellan (4:8)

Who we are on the inside, and what we look like on the outside had both been linked to identity. We decided to examine these aspects of individuality further, through structured discussion, observational and interpretive drawing, and sculpture.



Looking inside the outside

Each morning a group of four year olds engaged in philosophical enquiry. Some difficult questions were posed:

You used to be babies and now you are much bigger, are you still the same person? If two children have the same name and the same hair colour, are they the same? What can and what can't change about myself for me still to be me? What is it that makes me, me?

To this last question Ben replied:

'Your brain actually...'cos you can think about things in your brain' Ben (4:2)

Other children agreed that the brain was significant and seemed intrigued to describe and define this important part of themselves that they couldn't see. They returned to their expressive languages of drawing and clay sculpture, making models of the brain and its internal connections. A very large image of the brain was projected onto a blank wall covered in paper. It was big enough to get inside and journey around.

