

## Report on Jalavapuisto school

Jalavapuisto is a relatively small school in Espoo, about 30 minutes and 20km from the capital of Helsinki. It serves children from 7-12 years of age which is Years 1 to 6 in Finland. Around half of its population are of Finnish heritage whilst around half of the school are bilingual in English as well as their native language. The school also has around 18 severely handicapped pupils in special needs classes with specialist facilities within the school building, however in many ways these pupils are also assimilated into mainstream school life. The school head is Paula Kotilainen, but our link to the school was via Anu Kahri who both works within the school and also for the Innokas network at the University of Helsinki.

### Time

In terms of time there is a very relaxed feel across the school, pace is evident in the lessons I saw but not in the sense of a British model where a lesson can feel cluttered or hurried. Pupils are given the time to digest their tasks and discuss to explore issues. I saw very young students (only 10 and 11) showing remarkable maturity in solving a problem on a programming app. This way of delivering has been long established with even the youngest pupils adept at problem solving, the teaching I saw was often with the teacher as a facilitator or orchestrator as the learning is predominantly pupil led. That said pupils have clear warm relationships with their teachers which enables this process further.



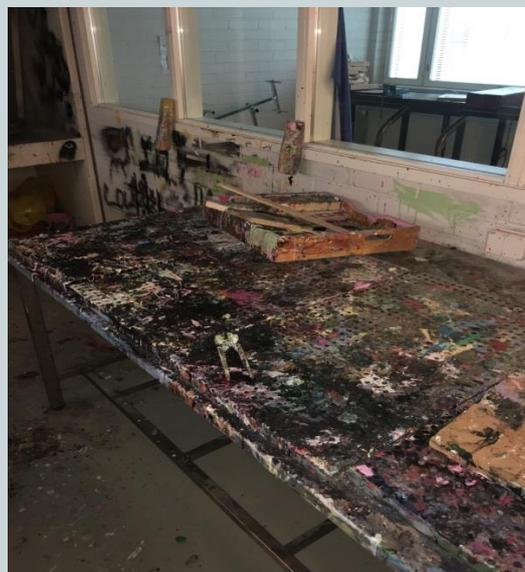
### Talent

The talent within the school is a partnership between the staff and pupils both lead and are responsible for the learning and this is clearly evident. There is a strong buy in by the pupils into the style of teaching and learning and this strikes you as part of a democratic process. It could appear to the untrained eye that there isn't a classic teacher/pupil relationship in our frame of reference (no uniform, teachers called by their first name, lots of freedom of movement) however there are still clear boundaries and respectful behaviour was evident.



### Technology

For a “primary” setting, the facilities were impressive, as was the space available. In terms of technology pupils have i-pads widely available in lessons and are accomplished at using this technology from an early age. However what’s also clear is that the pupils at Jalavapusto look at technology in a deeper sense than their British counterparts. They have four timetabled hours of Design Technology and Fabrics a week, a model we saw continued in older year groups and it does seem the philosophy is very hands on. This idea really struck a chord with me as I saw particularly young boys more motivated than I’d see back in the UK. I did see books and writing in two lessons but again it’s not used in the same way our framework might expect, this outwardly didn’t seem to inhibit learning however and pupils remained on the whole very engaged.



By Peter Thornes Westfield School