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TESTIMONIAL

Job Shadowing in Pärnu Kuninga Tänavä Põhikool, Estonia 20th and 24th April 2026

My recent job shadowing experience at Pärnu Kuninga Tänavä Põhikool provided me with a valuable insight into an inclusive, innovative, and highly organised educational environment. Throughout the visit, I had the opportunity to observe lessons, school routines, leadership practices, and student interactions across different age groups and educational settings. The experience was both inspiring and professionally enriching.

Despite the school currently operating from five different locations due to ongoing renovation works, the atmosphere remained calm, efficient, and welcoming. The renovations themselves reflect the school's strong commitment to sustainability and quality, particularly the gym refurbishment completed using eco-friendly natural flooring materials. The school community has adapted remarkably well to these temporary arrangements while continuing to maintain high educational standards.

Academic achievement is clearly one of the school's strongest priorities. National examinations are approached with exceptional professionalism and fairness. Examination papers are corrected centrally by the ministry and then returned for additional checking to ensure accuracy and consistency. Results are compared nationally among schools, and I learned that out of 273 middle schools, this school consistently ranks among the top ten. This success is clearly the result of strong collaboration between teachers, parents, and students. The school is also highly popular among families, particularly because of the Erasmus opportunities offered to students, which parents view as an important way of exposing children to other cultures and countries.

During classroom observations, I was impressed by the calm and student-centred learning environment. In one class of 24 students, children were encouraged to develop independence and responsibility. During break time, students had the option either to remain inside or go outdoors independently. Additional support is provided for students with special educational needs to ensure that all learners are able to progress according to their abilities.

The school also embraces digital learning opportunities, integrating technology even within physical education activities. Lessons demonstrated how technology and movement can be combined to create engaging and modern learning experiences.

One particularly memorable observation was a music lesson where students sang, moved, and played instruments such as xylophones while following musical notation from books. The teacher demonstrated excellent classroom management using calm, non-verbal strategies, including a simple hand gesture that immediately settled the class without the need to raise her voice. The students



responded respectfully and calmly, reflecting the positive relationships established within the classroom.

The school day is carefully structured to support students' wellbeing and concentration. Children are given regular breaks between lessons, including a twenty-minute lunch break during which meals are provided free of charge by the school. Students returned calmly to class and settled independently, showing strong routines and self-discipline.

Physical education lessons were equally engaging and creative. Thanks to the school's close proximity to the beach, students sometimes enjoy outdoor walks instead of remaining indoors for playtime. Traditional movement games encouraged teamwork, coordination, and inclusion, while ensuring that all children remained actively involved.

In the kindergarten setting, I observed highly interactive and developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Classes of approximately 18 to 20 children rotated through activities such as coding, drawing, puzzles, and counting tasks with the support of multiple adults. Teachers worked collaboratively during core hours, ensuring that children received individual attention and varied learning opportunities.

Music and movement sessions for younger children were especially impressive. Through the use of balls, ribbons, songs, and imaginative movement activities, children practised balance, coordination, listening skills, and body awareness. Activities flowed naturally from energetic movement to calming exercises accompanied by soft music, helping children regulate their emotions and transition smoothly between tasks.

The classroom environment in kindergarten was stimulating and child-centred. Instead of a traditional register, children identified themselves by hanging personalised flashcards. In a transport-themed activity, children confidently discussed toy vehicles while practising communication and social skills. Another activity adapted musical chairs using traffic light colours, combining movement with learning in a fun and meaningful way.

I also had the opportunity to visit a specialised school offering a simplified curriculum across three levels for students aged 7 to 18. The welcoming atmosphere was evident from the moment we arrived and were greeted by students performing musical pieces on the violin and flute. Music was taught using adapted methods involving colours and dots to support accessibility for all learners.

Overall, this job shadowing experience at Parnu Kuninga Tanava Pohikool highlighted the importance of inclusion, collaboration, creativity, and student wellbeing within education. The dedication of the leadership team, teachers, support staff, students, and parents was visible throughout every aspect of school life. The experience provided me with valuable ideas and practices that I look forward to reflecting upon and applying within my own professional context.



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