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TESTIMONIAL

Job Shadowing in Pärnu Kuninga Tänav Põhikool, Estonia

20th and 24th April 2026

I recently visited **Pärnu Kuninga Tänav Põhikool in Estonia** for a job shadowing experience. Despite renovations that split lessons between buildings, teachers and students adapted remarkably well.

The headmistress greeted us in the newly built school gym, with visiting teachers from France, Spain, and Germany, as well as students from France and Spain participating in Erasmus mobility. The PE teacher showed how he uses digital tools and combines different subjects through interactive games, inviting us to join.

We also visited a kindergarten, where we observed a strong emphasis on movement and music. The children, aged up to 7, were encouraged to learn through play and exploration. Each class was assigned a bird, an animal, and a tree, and every child developed knowledge about these. This approach fosters an early interest in nature. Break times were spent outdoors, where each class had access to a shed filled with resources and games. During our visit, we discussed the education systems in Malta and Estonia with the kindergarten's head.

Another highlight was our visit to Year 1 classes located in a different school building. I was particularly struck by the calm and welcoming atmosphere. At the start of the day, children greeted each other and their teacher through singing and handshakes. Throughout the lessons, students were given frequent, well-organised movement breaks. When asked why, the teacher explained that she introduces these breaks whenever she notices the children becoming restless.

Throughout our visit, we observed lessons across various subjects, with a strong emphasis on active language use, movement, music, and hands-on learning. Activities were interactive and engaging, with students participating through games, singing, and group work. Regular movement breaks helped maintain a calm, positive environment, keeping children relaxed and focused.

Another impressive aspect was the level of independence given to students. Between lessons, children had a ten-minute break and could move freely around the school, go outside, or visit the library; yet they remained respectful and disciplined.

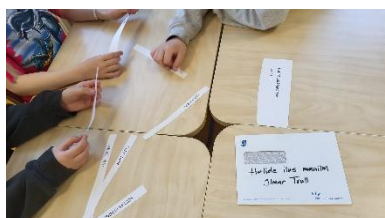
Continuing our observations, teachers demonstrated strong classroom management skills. One teacher used a small harmonica to signal for attention, and by raising her fingers to form a zero, she indicated that there should be no talking. It was impressive to see how quickly and effectively the students responded.

The school also offered students the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. For this, they attended a nearby music school, where they received individual lessons from specialised teachers. We observed music, dance, and art lessons. During Dance lessons, it was impressive to see how children were guided in movement and taught to hold each other's hands respectfully, promoting mutual respect and posture.

It was also impressed by the inclusive approach, with additional support provided for students who need it, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed. There were pull-out sessions where children received extra help from specialist teachers, and regular teachers also offered support three times a week before or after school. Additionally, there are special classes for students with special needs that follow a simplified syllabus with tailored learning objectives. This pathway can lead to higher vocational education.

At another school for students with special needs, music and hands-on activities like weaving and woodworking were emphasised. Music used a colour-coded system, and three students proudly performed for us.

This experience highlighted how a holistic approach to education, integrating academics with wellbeing, creativity, and movement, strengthens student engagement and development.





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