

During June and July 2016, Annabelle Palmer, Jo Warboys and Suzie Hayden went to visit Taonga school in Zambia for four weeks. We helped out as teaching assistants in any of the 4 classes ranging from "Baby Class" (reception) to grade 3, often doing one-to-one reading with grades 1 and 2 part way through the school day.

A typical school day began at 7.30 in the morning just as the children began arriving at school. The mornings were cold as it was cold season, and some of the children would be huddled around a coal heater with woolly hats and scarfs to keep warm. Others would be playing with a car tyre or a ball, and some would be playing with our hair, sitting on our laps, or taking selfies!

Soon after they would have their porridge and then go to assembly. Abi Brown (or 'Teacher Abi'), would put us each in a different class for the lessons. In grade 3 we did a range of things from learning about Thomas Edison inventing the light bulb, to rehearsing a traditional Zambian wedding ceremony- which was very amusing as the children certainly do not lack enthusiasm!

In Baby Class the children would begin to learn their alphabet and know their numbers. They do lots of learning through play, which is very exciting of course!

In grade 1 they continued to learn addition and subtraction and in grade 2, division and multiplication. Both classes also learned about gardening- which involved a couple of very exciting trips down to the farm! They planted a few crops just behind the school which they could harvest and eat later in the year.

One day Abi and ourselves sorted through well over three suitcases of clothing that we had brought over from the UK in addition to other clothes that had been donated. That day every child received a couple items of clothing. Some of the children wore the clothes every day for the next four weeks- they were all very excited!

During our time in Zambia we helped with painting a large section of the new school building which was great fun! Then in our last week there were some Americans that came over that are involved with the Arise Africa charity, and they did some fantastic and very exciting activities with the children as part of a Bible holiday club.

Working at the school was such an amazing experience. I don't think we will ever forget the smiles or the hugs that we were given every day from these amazing children. Also, many thanks to Abi Brown who has made all this possible and who is making such an amazing difference in these children's lives.

Annabelle Palmer, Suzie Hayden and Jo Warboys