



On Friday 13th of March, Natalie Light, who is a dog behaviourist, came to Ludlow Junior School. Before she visited we prepared some questions for her to answer, for example "How old were you when you decided you wanted to be a dog behaviourist?" When we interviewed her it was really fun and interesting to find out the answers to our questions.

Natalie has 5 dogs their names are Jack, Fish, Mouse, Drax and Gru. Their breeds are Irish Wolf Hound, Border Collie, and Jack Russell. Drax and Fish are 18 months, Mouse and Gru are 6 and Jack is 13-that's old for a dog!



It took Natalie about 10 years to train and it was a mixture of hands on experience and University. When Natalie was 10 years old, she got her first dog job, which was walking her neighbour's dogs. When she left school to work with dogs, she ended up in a charity called Hampshire Wildlife Trust. She also worked at a boarding kennel when the owners of the dogs went away on holiday or dogs were left on the streets.

Right now, she helps people to relax if there dog has strange behaviours. She goes to people's houses or they come to her in her field. Sometimes she works with school dogs like Hamish, that's how Hamish got used to our school. She has worked with other sorts of therapy dogs, one dog helped its owner who was a diabetic.



She studied Zoology at University of Southampton and then Applied Animal Behaviour at the University of Newcastle.

She changes a dog's behaviour by 1) Trying to find out why. 2) Deciding what she wants the dog to do instead of the difficult behaviour. 3) Rewarding them for doing the new behaviour. Natalie thinks the best bit of her job is meeting lots of different people and helping them with their dogs and spending time with the different breeds – which she thinks is amazing!

We asked her what breed of dog she likes working with best and her first answer was all of them. Her second answer (if she had to choose) was Border Collies because they are very intelligent. Jess asked her what was the hardest breed to work with and the answer was (funnily) humans! 😊 She rounded up all the dogs she had trained and it added up to a whopping 10,000 dogs.

The weirdest behaviour she has had to face is dogs that eat their own poo (*coprophasia*) YUK! Natalie sadly can't help all the dogs she works with because they might be in the wrong environment or they are too poorly to work with. The most challenging behaviour Natalie has faced is when she gives instructions to owners of dogs and they don't follow it. 😞 .

Natalie's favourite dogs are her own because they are rescue dogs and she loves them to bits. Natalie has sooooo many funny stories with dogs but her favourite was when she went over to help some dogs to stop barking whenever the phone rang. She visited them and when the phone rang Natalie spotted a ferret in the garden and she thought that was the problem. She tried to catch it and put it in a box and it bit her finger. Natalie went away with a ferret and a ferret bite.

Natalie says that she's not famous but we think she's famous around here!

We enjoyed our experience with Natalie Light and Hamish. We also enjoyed the flapjack/muffin and juice/milk we had in the meeting room. We are looking forward to going on a walk with Hamish to Royal Victoria Country Park.



Holly, James, Jess, Ritchie, Sidney and Hamish (Hamish News Hounds)

