Bede Primary Cragside notes

**The trip**

* Year 6 class (only 16 kids?) trip to Cragside, the first house in the world to be powered by hydroelectric power. The class had been studying inventors, including Lord Armstrong, who was the mind behind many of the innovations on the property.
* The day was split in two – a tour around the house’s grounds led by the teacher (around the woodland, powerhouse and formal gardens) and then around the house itself
* Tablets were used throughout the day – for general camera usage and also for Park:Learn during the outdoor half

**Attitudes towards and use of tablets**

* Storage space very valuable – tablets are shared between multiple teachers, so many apps get installed, images downloaded/taken. Space ran out on several tablets during the trip, had to delete downloads etc.
* To free up space, teacher gets the kids to wipe apps’ cache before use – need to test implications
* Tablets treated as a ‘finite resource’ – battery and storage need nursing. Kids told not to play with the tablet on the coach trip prior to arriving, but can play with them on the way back.
* Year 6 kids are very used to using the tablets for taking photos and videos. Taking them of their own volition using the normal camera app, without being asked to or directed. One girl taking video to gather opinions about the trip from her classmates. “We should make a blog when we get back”
* Tablets are no longer a novelty – sharing not an issue, not overly upset if it stopped working

**The Park:Learn activity**

* Teacher created an activity with 8 tasks – 2 take a photo, 2 photo match, 1 record audio, 1 record video, 1 map marking and 1 location hunt
* Some of the tasks quite prescriptive. The photo match ones asked kids to look for specific objects of interest (a large iron bridge in front of the house and a water pump). One of the photo tasks asked for photos of wooden bridges. The video task asked kids to record the Archimedes Screw in action. The location hunt was meant to lead the kids to the powerhouse, but the GPS point was a bit off.
* Some were more open – the second take a photo was “Find what you think is the most beautiful flower”. The record audio was “record the natural sound of the forest”
* Not much engagement with the activity’s optional extras – the activity description was “Y6 testing the app”. No activity icon was selected.
* The photo match images were downloaded from outside the app and selected from the gallery, as the trip was taking place quite far from the school, making a prep visit impractical.

**Park:Learn practicalities and impressions**

* Not all tablets had the most recent version of the app installed
* Teacher created and uploaded the activity the day before
* Kids instructed to enter the share code (written on the white board) to pre-download the activity while on WiFi
* *After this,* the teacher instructed the kids to clear the system’s app cache from the settings menu to clear some space. The kids were well acquainted with this process, they’ve done it before.
* Due to some of the tablets having older version there were some issues during the trip – some lost content (known bug, hopefully fixed in latest version. Didn’t happen on updated apps). One lost login details – could be related to clearing the cache. One kid didn’t enter the activity share code, so didn’t have it loaded.
* Teacher’s chosen location for the location hunt task was incorrectly placed
* Kids enjoyed the location hunt activity regardless, trying to work out what they were looking for. Especially enjoyed the sound and animation – “It’s getting crazier as I get closer!”
* Teacher included a map-marking task, which currently doesn’t work well offline due to a reliance on Google Maps. Kids confused about the context of the task as they couldn’t see the map, only their location and their placed markers
* Kids enjoyed the photo-matching tasks and were at first surprised by it. Wanted to get as close as possible. “Oh wow, you’ve got a target!”
* Kids informally created their own competition to not only find the most beautiful flower they could, but also get the best photo of it.