




















Subject statement: Learning Outdoors

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Aims:	<p>At Duncombe Primary School, we value the importance of our natural environment and the advantages it has on our health and wellbeing. We are aiming to teach more lessons outdoors as the impact on children's learning includes being more motivated and engaged, while increasing cooperation and team-work skills.</p> <p>In the EYFS we are developing the outdoor Reception area by extending into the garden to doubling our outdoor learning opportunities and making best use of the garden space we have.</p> <p>In KS1&2 we are increasing the number of lessons taught outdoors, whether it be in the school grounds or walking to a local park for a more immersive outdoor experience. As well as working with The Garden Classroom who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering inspirational lessons in local parks, tailored to meet the curriculum that specific year group are learning. • Inspiring our children through their pupil workshops to embrace nature and care for our environment. • Upskilling our teachers through modelling and supporting with next steps lesson ideas. <p>We see learning outdoors as valuable in its own right, but also as a means to support and enhance learning in other subjects. We aim to make the most of nearby green spaces such as Whittington Park, inviting parents to accompany trips so they too can see the benefits of being outdoors on our wellbeing.</p>
Progression ensuring skills and knowledge:	<p>In the Early years, inside provision is reflected outdoors in some ways (EG) using the core book on a larger scale, such as role playing the 3 pigs and being able to act in three different zones/houses which we cannot do inside due to space constraints. Or Maths discussions of that week's learning is reflected in our sand or water play.</p> <p>A key benefit of being outdoors is that things can be on a larger scale and where possible use natural resources. Children have less constraints and it is often easier to do so much learning through exploration and investigation. Cause and effect in the water tray using the bamboo ramps for example allow a whole host of learning that comes from their playful instincts.</p> <p>In KS1& 2 outdoor lessons are carefully planned to ensure that children have the opportunity to develop a variety of skills and that the learning is not the same as it would be inside. Instead it embraces the outdoors and the joys of exploration, investigation and nature. In science for example we learn about plants and growing through hands on gardening experiences, growing our own vegetables that we later harvest to eat. With The Garden Classroom we build up den making skills from miniature 'fairy' house creating, to A frame structures and knot tying to ensure a dry secure den for ourselves.</p> <p>A huge part of being in nature is the benefits to our emotional wellbeing, particularly in our current pandemic world where children have spent more time inside than usual, we aim to progress our wellbeing through nature immersion which in turn affects our other curriculum developments.</p>
Cultural Capital:	<p>We strive to give our pupils as many rich learning experiences as possible so they will become active, informed, thoughtful citizens. We aim to explore our local community, especially the places of natural beauty, so pupils can appreciate the value of nature and our environment.</p> <p>We recognise that when accruing 'cultural capital,' a child's family plays a huge role. We include parents regularly in what we do, with opportunities for them to join in our trips which often provide the ideas for outdoor activities as well.</p>
Learning Experiences:	<p>Experts say that outdoor learning is beneficial to students because it makes them healthier and happier, and they do better academically. The various benefits include:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students who get to experience an outdoor learning environment tend to be more attentive and, therefore, have a better recollection of the information that was shared. 2. Consistent exposure to nature decreases stress and anxiety, helps elevate mood, and helps with emotion. 3. Children often have too much exposure to digital screens via televisions, computers, and cell phones. This can result in a “nature deficit disorder,” which may lead to obesity and possible psychological and academic issues. Outdoor learning allows students to put their focus back on nature. 4. Outdoor environments naturally inspire children to be more physically active. 5. Students learn best when they’re motivated. Students who participated in an outdoor education program as part of their science curriculum reported significantly more intrinsic motivation to learn and felt more competent. 6. In outdoor settings, children are more motivated to work together in groups, which can improve their social skills. They learn to manage conflicts, communicate, and cooperate with their peers in a more effective manner. 7. Outdoor learning provides children with hands-on experiences in nature. Most children learn better by using their senses. Outdoor environments provide the perfect place to do this. Instead of viewing different types of plants or wildlife on a computer or TV screen, they can see, smell, hear, and touch them in nature. These hands-on experiences cultivate a love of nature and get them interested in our natural resources. 												
Environmental Issues links:	<p>As the children progress through school they will learn more about our environment and by being immersed in nature have a deeper understanding of environmental changes and the impact we have on our world. By being respectful towards nature and enjoying learning in the outdoors, they will hopefully be more inclined to care and protect the environment as they grow up.</p>												
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Word power and communication:	<p>We know that one of the keys to addressing disadvantage and ensuring success is a developing a wide vocabulary in our pupils. We know that memory links are formed when things are learnt in a multi-sensory way and just by being outdoors and not sitting at a desk already will increase pupils’ retention of information. The vocabulary they are exposed to whilst out in nature will be different to that in the class room regardless of the curriculum focus of the session and our pupils more than most need this immersion in nature to acquire a rich and varied vocabulary.</p>												

	As with most outdoor activities, when team work is required this encourages more talking and children usually have more opportunity to give their opinions and explain their reasoning.
Making a positive contribution:	These lessons aim to make a positive impact not only on children's interactions with their peers but also in their knowledge of the environment in a local and global context.
Resources used:	Items found in nature. Islington Education Library service resources including artefacts and books. Recycled resources from the scrap store.