

What does outdoor learning in the curriculum look like?

There are practical ways in which each subject can be enhanced through outdoor learning.

English

Using English skills outside the classroom helps learners build confidence in listening, speaking, telling stories, and writing in a different environment. It is also a great way to extend vocabulary and inspire creative language use. Activities which can support English skills in the outdoors include: cloud gazing to create stories, retelling traditional tales, extending vocabulary through observation and movement, creating pictures to match stories, debate and discussion around environmental issues and much more besides.

Maths

Mathematical learning outside can consolidate abstract concepts in learned within the classroom by seeing them in a real-life context. What was theory becomes reality, and skills which seemed unrelated to the children develop reason. Topics in maths which lend themselves to the outdoors include: shape, measurement, area, perimeter, volume, scale drawing, pattern and angles.

Science

Science is obviously a subject which can be taken outdoors easily. The biological and environmental science are natural choices for outdoor learning as the children can see for themselves the animals, plants and habitats they have been studying inside. In addition, there is the opportunity to explore physical concepts and chemistry in action in the outside world. Science topics that might explored as part of outdoor learning are: habitats, growth and change, weather, forces, light and the Earth and space, to name but a few.

History

Whilst the links between outdoor learning and history may not be obvious, there are in fact lots of practical ways it can be taught in the outdoor classroom. As the way civilisation has developed has been influenced by the environment, there are ways history can be explored outside. Examples of these historical activities are: creating new settlements, exploring how homes were built in the past, tribal culture, mixing dyes, re-enacting battles of the past, making historical transport and testing it.

Geography

Geographical concepts can easily be explored outside. The outdoor classroom is made for teaching weather, landscape, gathering geographical data, looking at the formation of different land features and exploring river courses. Real-life visual representations of ideas come to life in the outdoor environment, helping the children to understand what they are learning through experiencing it first-hand.

Design technology

The children can explore different ways of joining materials and creating structures. They can follow the design, make and evaluate process when creating shelters, boats or other projects from natural materials.

Art

Using artists such as Andrew Goldsworthy, Lorenzo M. Duran, Walter Mason and Richard Long as inspiration will help the children to create their own artwork using natural materials. They can concentrate on sculpture for 3D artwork, manipulating leaves, flowers and stones to create pictures or using photography as a means for exploring their creativity outdoors.

PSHCE

The outdoors offers plenty of opportunities for working together as a team, learning about looking after our environment, community projects, gardening, our responsibilities to each other and ourselves and a chance to work on our own personal health and wellbeing.

PE

Part of our PE curriculum is participating in outdoor and adventurous activities which include games such as hide and seek, tasks such as orienteering and safe movement around more challenging environments. All of these lend themselves to an outdoor learning environment.

Music

Experiencing the sounds of the outdoors and using them as inspiration for composing music or connecting them to the pieces of music others have written is a great way to use the outdoors as part of the music curriculum. Stopping to listen to the range of sounds and helping that to support the learning of musical vocabulary can help to give children the experience of pianissimo, legato, staccato etc which in turn will help them describe this in the music they hear and create.