

Learning Outside the Classroom at Downview



Intent: This is why we teach what we teach:

At Downview Primary, Learning Outside the classroom is fully inclusive to every child. Our aims are to: fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum for Outdoor learning, provide a broad and balanced curriculum and ensure the progressive development of knowledge and skills.

We will instil a love of the great outdoors. Learning Outside the Classroom provides free and stimulating learning experiences. It aids young children of all abilities in finding a love and appreciation for the natural world around them. It enables them to learn respect and care for their own local environment. Through hands on exploratory play we focus on providing a well-rounded outdoor learning experience, building independence, increasing social skills, fostering emotional regulation, freedom to experiment and push boundaries, and implementing problem solving skills in a variety of situations. The children will learn to abide by rules and set standards of behaviour, to work cooperatively in groups and to respect each other. It will develop children's self-esteem and self-confidence through the setting of small achievable tasks. It allows all children to test themselves; build self-esteem and pride; develop new skills and learn the art of reflection.

Implementation: This is what we do:

To ensure high standards of teaching while Learning Outside the Classroom, we implement a curriculum that is progressive throughout the whole school.

Developing the 'whole child', creating opportunities for different experiences outside of the classroom promotes development of personal, social, and emotional skills as well as communication and higher order thinking skills. This encourages children to work on who they are and how they think instead of simply what they know.

- Reducing anxiety - spending time in nature promotes feelings of calm in a fast-paced environment. It gives children the opportunity to relax and take a break from pressures they are faced with during the day.
- Fostering a 'can do', 'have a go' attitude - the open-ended nature and lowered pressure of outdoor learning reduces the perceived scope for error and therefore encourages the uptake of learning opportunities across the curriculum.
- Improving behaviour and co-operation - new challenges and decreased stress in fresh air encourages collaboration between adults and peers. Behaviour is improved and strategies for managing emotion and behaviour can be established and begin to seep into other areas.

Impact: By the time children leave our school, they will:

Within Learning Outside the Classroom we strive to create a supportive and collaborative ethos for learning by providing investigative and enquiry based learning opportunities to help children gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of each unit of work covered throughout the school.

At Downview children learn to become more in touch with themselves and their emotions through reflective and peaceful time in nature. This helps them understand how to preserve their mental health and become increasingly aware of how they behave and learn.

Children are encouraged to ask questions, find answers and think outside of the box. Unrestricted, exploratory outdoor learning promotes the use of higher order thinking (HOT) skills and increases valuable problem solving abilities.

Downview children are excited to learn because they are inspired by the outdoor environment they work in. It provides a welcome break from important classroom learning, making them more relaxed and ready to concentrate when they return. They feel their needs are met. They feel respected, listened to and appreciated.