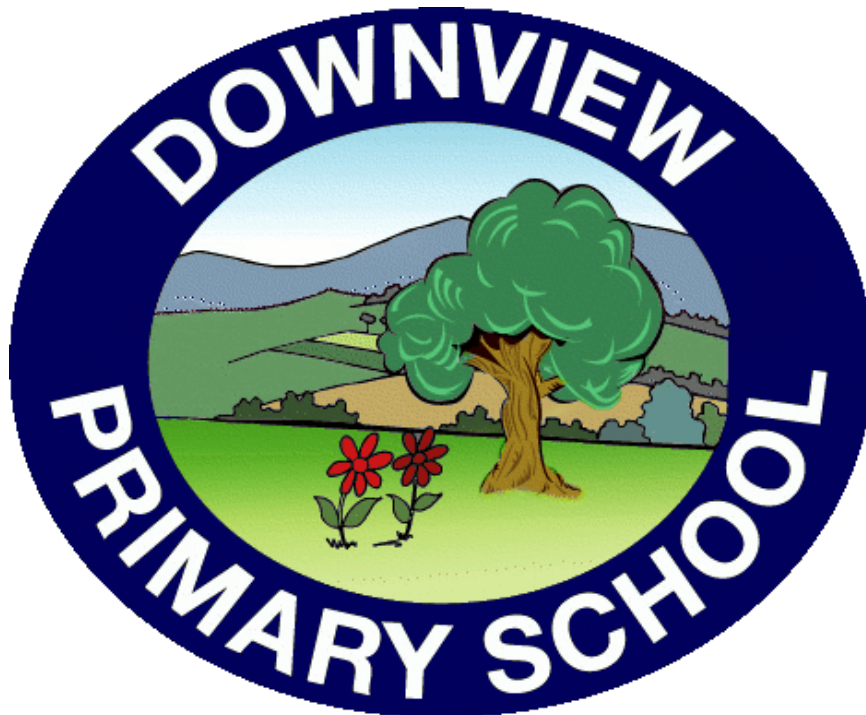


Lead member of staff	Head Teacher
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Woodland and Outdoor Learning Policy

2024

Introduction

Our outdoor learning policy aims to foster children's love of learning. At Downview Primary, we believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors.

What do we mean by Outdoor Learning?

Outdoor learning can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. Direct experience outdoors is powerful, motivating and has impact and credibility. The results from outdoor learning can be instantaneous as well as active and therefore impact on behaviour as well. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination and personal growth. Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication and problem solving.

Benefits of Outdoor Learning

- Outdoor learning provides opportunities that allow children to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.
- Outdoor learning enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions.
- Outdoor learning contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.
- Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- Outdoor learning contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.
- Outdoor learning has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development.

Aims

- To raise the profile of Outdoor Learning.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and reflective learners.
- To develop skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning.
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks.
- To encourage close links with parents and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- To encourage children to care for their environment.

Through Woodland and Outdoor Learning we can also:

- Improve pupils' skills in Literacy, Numeracy
- Improve pupil's skills in the wider curriculum
- Develop pupils' critical thinking skills
- Promote pupils' awareness and understanding of gender, cultural, spiritual and moral issues
- Develop pupils as active citizens

Organisation of Woodland and Outdoor Learning within the Curriculum

- National curriculum for the outdoors planning books
- Link to current topics
- Children given opportunities to express themselves
- Children given opportunities to critically think and problem solve
- Specialised Forest School Teacher to support children with SEND with guidance from SENCo and Teachers.

Managing the Delivery of Outdoor Learning

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning we closely monitor the use of outdoor learning as a key element of the learning experience at Downview Primary School. We provide support and professional development to enable staff to feel confident developing the expertise or knowledge base to adapt their practice to include opportunities for learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

The School Grounds

We are exceptionally lucky to have extensive grounds which offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning and Downview Primary School.

After-school Provision

We want to offer the scope for each and every child to find a passion, develop a talent, spark an interest or simply find pleasure in doing an activity with others. After-school clubs are a fantastic way of achieving this and we are excited to offer a wide range of clubs. Many of the clubs we have available take place in the outdoor environment. Clubs range from Running, Boccia to Woodland Club.

The Local Environment

The locality around school provides a wealth of opportunities within relatively accessible distance. Learners can develop their skills to explore their local environment. We actively encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school grounds, for example, Science, Geography or History fieldwork, surveys and collection of data.

Residential Visits

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team working. At Downview children have the opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in

which they may excel. Year 6 children enjoy a stay at Marchants Hill, an outdoor centre where they take part in a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities including climbing, abseiling, canoeing and rafting. Residential visits offer so many benefits including the opportunity to participate in first-hand learning.

The role of the Woodland Outdoor Learning co-ordinator is to:

- Support colleagues in teaching the subject content and developing their skills in planning, teaching and assessing skills.
- Renew, update and oversee the audit of resources needed to deliver the curriculum.
- Monitor and evaluate the learning and teaching.
- Develop assessment and record keeping ensuring progression and continuity.
- Keep abreast of developments in the teaching and learning.
- To liaise with the wider community/ agencies to provide support to staff and children.

Assessment

Comments are recorded for children who make significantly different progress (ie. working towards or working beyond early learning goal/level).

The best-fit level is recorded at the end of the year where the children are assessed against the progression of skills document.

SEN

Children with Additional Needs moving beyond the classroom has been found to have a range of advantages for children of all abilities and backgrounds. A particular benefit for SEND children can be the new, and sometimes therapeutic, visual and sensory stimulation they experience when learning in an outdoor environment. This can be liberating for those who struggle in a structured school atmosphere and is often demonstrated through improvements in children's social skills and behaviour. Risk Assessments are undertaken if appropriate to ensure children with SEND can access outdoor learning opportunities.

Outdoor learning offers opportunities to including personal research and develop a personal understanding of their place in the natural world, further developing an understanding of learning processes, enquiry and thinking skills; and that deepen and enrich subject learning. Outdoor Learning acts as a bridge to higher order learning and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and ways of thinking.

Disability Discrimination, Equality and fairness

The school has guidelines in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 our school will be taking measures to include the views of parents and children who have a disability. These will be used to make any necessary changes to our school policies, promoting positive behaviour/discipline procedures and other aspects of the life and work of our school. At Downview Primary School we will work hard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equal opportunities
- Eliminate disability related harassment

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled people

Equal Opportunities

All pupils at Downview have equal access to the facilities available, regardless of gender or nationality. When working in groups the teacher ensures that children take turns and share the equipment fairly. Teachers also give pupils opportunities to work individually to complete tasks by themselves.

Resources

When learning outside the classroom the children at Downview have the opportunity to use a range of the natural resources available to them as well as the hand tools, fire safety equipments, planting tools and low ropes.

Health and Safety

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Children will be taught to manage risks. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. Risk Assessments should be referred to and applied prior to any outdoor learning activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom; these can be found on EVOLVE. It is also important that the school applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks. It is equally important, however, that all involved, including parents acknowledge that a degree of residual risk remains. All children are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe. There is a shared understanding of how children safeguard themselves and others when undertaking outdoor learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process.

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