



Outdoor Learning Guidance

Homerswood Primary
and Nursery School

Written: December 2022

Review: December 2023

Outdoor Learning Guidance

Aims of the guidance

- To establish an agreed approach to what constitutes quality teaching and learning in Outdoor Learning
- To enable staff to identify key features of effective teaching and learning and help ensure they match the abilities, attainments, interests and experiences of pupils
- To provide an agreed focus for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in Outdoor Learning
- To instil a love of learning and the ability to make connections
- To incorporate other aspects of the curriculum as outlined in the school's curriculum overview document.

Underlying Principles

The following principles form the basis of this document:

- The needs and progress of the learner are central to planning, delivery and assessment of the curriculum
- Learning promotes sustained progress and achievement for all pupils, including those with SEND, disadvantaged and most able pupils.

Intent

At Homerswood we aim to use the Outdoor Learning environment that our school has to offer, to enrich, consolidate and extend the learning and understanding that occurs within the classroom. Outdoor Learning mirrors the Homerswood Pathways Curriculum as it fosters respect, curiosity, well being, social development, confidence, independence and self exploration as well as inspiring learning and creating memorable experiences for the children. Outdoor Learning offers the physical space for wider exploration and provides the children with the opportunity to experience the seasons and changing nature around them.

The Outdoor Learning Curriculum is adapted from The National Curriculum Outdoors Scheme but it is not restrictive. There is an opportunity to include current material, incidental learning and more personalised learning as specific areas of the curriculum can be addressed and consolidated outdoors. The outdoor space is used as an inspiration for writing, a practical resource for Maths and an opportunity for children to discover Science first hand thereby reaching their own conclusions. Foundation subjects are also covered. These include Geography, History, Art and Design, RE, Modern Foreign Languages and Music. Quality texts are often used as a stimulus and vocabulary enriched.

By the end of Primary School we would like all children to feel comfortable outdoors and develop a curiosity for exploration. As a result they should grow to respect their environment and understand the current issues in the world in which they live.

Implementation

At Homerswood, we have implemented a progressive curriculum which has been planned to enrich and enhance the children's in school learning experience. Our range of Outdoor spaces are utilised by all year groups. Classes of approximately 30 children will be timetabled for a one hour weekly Outdoor Learning session. At the beginning of each term children are made aware of the Outdoor Safety Guidelines and boundaries and are encouraged to promote a respect for nature and for living things. The children have opportunities to learn specific outdoor skills, for example: using a flint and steel to light fires, using compasses for orienteering activities, handling loppers for chopping wood and tying knots. They have access to a range of relevant resources and learn to be responsible for these.

Each lesson will have a subject area focus and cross-curricular links will be established where possible. A warm up game is included before each activity and children are introduced to an outdoor word of the week. These are generally content specific and subject related and are displayed on the vocabulary word wall in the outdoor learning area. All work is collated in a folder which accompanies the children as they move up to the next year group. Work and photographs are regularly updated on the school website. Children are encouraged to share interesting outdoor finds and there is an Outdoor Learning display. Visitors are invited to come in and share their expertise with the children when opportunities are available. For example: The Hornbeam Hedgehog Sanctuary.

Learning will be scaffolded for SEND or less confident children. Research shows that SEND children actively choose outdoor activities and children are provided with an opportunity to see learning in a different way to classroom based. Thoughtful questioning is used to encourage and promote deeper thinking for those working at greater depth. Challenges are also provided and ideas to extend further learning in the classroom are detailed.

Impact

Outdoor Learning provides opportunities for pupils to study across concepts and deepen their understanding. As a result pupils have the confidence and are inspired to further their knowledge. Although there are no formal assessments, Outdoor Learning constantly creates new opportunities for learning and development. Questioning and conversations with the children will demonstrate their engagement and curiosity, display aspects of learning they have retained or enjoyed as well as identifying any misconceptions. There are regular opportunities for the Outdoor Learning teacher and Class Teacher to converse. As a result specific areas of learning can be addressed and consolidated during Outdoor sessions when necessary.

Children will become more confident and resilient learners. As they grow in confidence in their abilities they will begin to understand, assess and manage their own risk and safety. They develop as problem solvers, learn to think logically and self-reflect. Children learn to support each other when collaborating in Outdoor Learning experiences so by aiding social development and team work. They learn how to explain current issues around the environment and propose how to tackle them. They are successful in designing and completing investigations in their local environment as well as developing a care and respect for nature and the environment in which we live. Children learn how to appreciate their limits and learn the importance of perseverance.

Safeguarding Links

At Homerswood, we ensure we establish a safe, open and positive learning environment. The children's safety is of prime importance and has been risk assessed with our site manager. The children are fully aware of the Outdoor boundaries and how to return to a central meeting point when called by members of staff. They are aware of their surroundings and are familiar with the location of brambles and stinging nettles and understand these are avoided. A first aid pack is available and Outdoor staff are able to make easy contact with the school office in case of emergencies.

Consultation

This guidance was written in conjunction with The Outdoor Learning Scheme documents and discussion with teachers, the site manager and teaching assistants.

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