

ECO and Nature Learning at Boundary Primary School (LOtC)



“Look deeper into nature and then you will understand everything better,” Albert Einstein



Intent

At Boundary, our school vision is for all members to be ‘the best that we can be’. We build on character and encourage our children to practise this outside of the school grounds. As part of this vision, we have the opportunity to enhance the breath of our curriculum by incorporating a designated Nature Learning area. This then allows for outdoor learning to be as part of a routine. The aim is that this LOtC (Learning outside the classroom) will uphold the high expectations and high standards Boundary school sets for its pupils and will serve as a principle to increase their life skills and experiences throughout their primary school education.

Aims include-

- Build resilient, determined and autonomous learners,
- Build self-esteem and confidence in children,
- Transfer negative behaviours into positive ones,
- Enable children to gain respect for wildlife and their natural environment,
- Expand their life skills and experiences,
- Develop and build ideas of risk management and risk benefit,
- Encourage collaboration,
- Develop and boost creativity,
- Improve personal, social and emotional development,
- Let children be children.

Using a variety of outdoor learning strategies, these aims not only provide a constructive, pleasurable, creative and inspiring approach. They seek to aid children in their ability to transfer the skills and knowledge LOtC lessons offer, into the classroom and life beyond the school gates.

Implementation

At Boundary, we are blessed with an outdoor learning environment, containing 150 x 50 square feet of land. This is the main area for teaching, however we are hoping to expand to our wider community and environment. This will benefit children with a range of experiences and allow them to become more familiar with the world around them.

Each year group will have a timetabled session, once a week for three weeks and will meet again at a different time of year. This will allow for each class from reception to continue to and have partaken in, a minimum of six experiences, until its culmination and children leave in year six. To ensure this LOTC curriculum reaches the high standard and learning which we pride ourselves on at Boundary, this progressive curriculum will be in addition to the quality outdoor learning the children will engage in with their class teachers.

Nature Learning is a globally recognised system which aims to meet the intent of this curriculum through holistic learning. Its child led nature, engages children in the manner which is challenging to imitate consistently in the classroom. Therefore, new opportunities are created through learning and development which may not be accessed within regular schooling. Each child is unique, their learning habits, tastes, beliefs and responses, something here at Boundary we recognise, encourage and develop.

Impact

As children grow in confidence with their new found skills in the outdoor environment, they will begin to recognise, assess and manage their own risk and safety. From the sessions, children will become more well-rounded and prepared individuals, supporting and caring for their peers due to a focus placed on understanding and generating empathy.

Creating independent learners is important within Boundary as it allows for children to gain an understanding of how the world comes not only with risk but also reward. Furthermore, it will increase a child's awareness to decide their own limits. Taking part within activities which test them, can only allow for children to push through them. Forest school encourages problem solving logical thinking, self-reflection and evaluation but most of all pupils will see mistakes are not failures as learning is an instinct part of their life.

ECO curriculum at a glance

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	Waste	Climate change	Health and wellbeing	Recycling	Litter	Growing plants
Rec.	Recycling	Climate change	Waste	Water- how does it get to us?	Renewable energy	Growing plants
Year 1	Observing litter in the local area- walk to the library...	Recycling-	School grounds- litter	Nature and Biodiversity	Climate change	Growing plants
Year 2	Waste- recycling on earth	Transports- travelling cleaner	Bio diversity- nature and habitats	Water- why is it important?	Health and wellbeing	School- gardening
Year 3	Climate change	Switching off	Taking care of the environment	Water- why is it important?	Bio-diversity	Health and wellbeing in the community
Year 4	Renewable energy	Switching off	Climate change	Waste	School grounds- keeping tidy	Bio-diversity
Year 5	Harvest	Renewable energy	School grounds- keeping clean	Litter/recycling	Water- oceans	Switching off
Year 6	Harvest	Litter/recycling	Health and wellbeing	Waste	Switching off	School grounds- keeping clean

Planning

Weekly planning should include an opportunity to learn outside the classroom:

- Using year group classrooms and adults to 'mix it up' via group learning.
- Use corridors for activities, e.g. fact finding, Q and A activities.
- Beginning a journey.
- Building upon skills and knowledge.
- Accessed by all.
- Different learning styles / approaches used.

Teaching and Learning - DR ICE

Learning outside the classroom can include all parts of a DRICE lesson or if at the beginning of a topic be used to engage and enthuse.

D – Children think of a range of questions to ask a visitor.

R – Recording opportunities to refer to e.g. activities in the WOW recorded and referred back to.

I – Enthusiastic children prepared to be an active participant of a learning journey.

C – Can children retell the information learnt through LOTC in different forms, e.g. a trip to the tower could be used for map drawing. A trip to the zoo could be used to write a diary 'A day in the life of an elephant'.

E – Teachers are taking a 'hands off' approach. Children have the opportunity to learn through concrete experiences, which can be self-lead through prepared activities.

Assessment, recording and reporting

All LOTC can be assessed to inform future trips for the specific classes or where learning may be available for other year groups. A sample of LOTC can be recorded in floor books, class web pages and in the form of videos and photographs.

Monitoring and Evaluating

All classes are encouraged to use LOTC on a weekly basis. Visit and visitor impact will be evaluated by the organiser of events and used to inform future planning.

The LOTC leader will request evidence of LOTC, including photos and pupil voice, to be used on displays and in the floor book.