

Learning Outdoors



Since September 2013 we have been running an outdoor learning programme for all of the children at our school and we are keen to share with you some of the things we have done so far. I hope you enjoy reading about some of the fantastic things we have been doing.

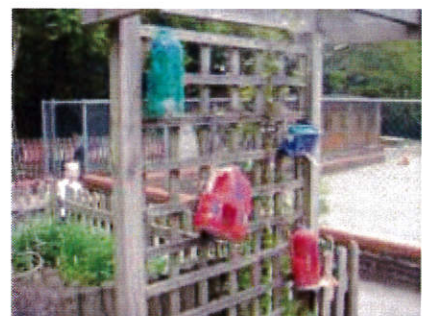
We are very lucky at Cadmore End School because we have got fantastic grounds and we are surrounded by beautiful woods, which we are allowed to use. Having learnt about the benefits of children learning in the outdoor environment, and looking ahead to the new curriculum, which includes far more outdoor activities, we decided it was time to utilise these more.

Well what an exciting start we have had for our new venture of outdoor learning. We have undertaken some great activities with children across the year groups and they are always very keen even when it's cold and rainy!

In the Autumn term we made stick towers- children had to work in groups to search for sticks that were roughly the same size and build a square based tower. They soon realised that they had to take turns and that the sticks had to be layered to make the tower stay up. Ruby's group made a triangular based tower.



We used milk bottles to make and decorate bird feeders. We also made bird feeders using fir cones, bird seed and lard.



Lots of measuring has taken place during our outdoor maths. The children had to build a house for Sammy snake and had to estimate how big the house had to be using their knowledge of working out area to help them.





We celebrated world mud day last year, the whole school took part in a range of activities that all included Mud! We made mud pies, created mud art and made mud sculptures. It was great fun



We have explored the woods for different types of Fungi, we looked at different varieties even some that puffed out 'smoke' when we tapped them.



We learnt how to whittle sticks to use to cook marsh mallows on the fire, then the children made the sticks smaller and we explored how charcoal is made by putting the small sticks in a sealed treacle tin and placing it in the fire.



Year 2 were learning all about toys, so we split into groups and made toys out of stuff the found in the woods and some string. Two of the class made a string phone. Some made a den for the animals.



At Christmas time we thought it would be nice to have a small decorated area where the children could sit to read or write Christmas stories. We started by wrapping some chicken wire around the trees and then we found twigs and leaves and wove them in, we decorated fir cones and leaves and then added a bit of tinsel.



We also decided to have a whole school session of singing carols



around the campfire. To showcase our woodland area and work children had done we invited local residents and parents to join us. The children took it in turns to toast marshmallows on the fire and afterwards we returned to the school playground for hot chocolate and cakes. It was a lovely way to end the term.

Over all it has been a great success, we have built dens in the woods, created story maps out of sticks and then recited our stories to the rest of the class, we have built bug hotels and set up an eco-area where we are learning how long it takes for certain household products and food waste to decompose. We have dug over the garden and planted some bulbs which we can just see peeping out of the earth. In the Spring the children will be planting vegetables which we will be able to cook a school. It is all very exciting and lots more adventures to come.

