



Connor Downs Academy

Head of School: Mrs J Eddy



Outdoor Learning

Spring Term 2022

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We are reaching the end of what has been a tremendous spring term of outdoor learning. As part of our extensive outdoor learning opportunities, children have been exploring Cultivating Futures through nature hunts, observing wildlife and investigating plants and insects in their habitats. The children have been participating in fun and engaging team games, improving teamwork and communication skills while building trust. The benefits of outdoor learning have been clear to see across all year groups building those valuable life skills.

It has without doubt been a fun packed Spring term of outdoor learning. We are



looking forward to an amazing summer term of outdoor learning where we will continue to immerse ourselves in nature. We are all getting ready!

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Children in the EYFS have been participating in weekly sessions with Mr Costello, exploring Cultivating Futures and caring for our animals. They have continued to grow with confidence, helping prepare our garden planters for sowing seeds and transplanting seedlings.



They have been observing the birds that visit our pond area, taking part in the RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch. They have been getting close to our animals, learning how to care for them, describing and comparing their features. While exploring Cultivating Futures, our children conducted a sensory trail, looking for our animals, listening to the sounds of nature, smelling the aroma of herbs and feeling the texture of the bark of trees.

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A favourite activity has been the pond dipping experience. Children have explored nature around our pond, discovered creatures using a net and observed these closely. They were amazed to discover many newts and some of the children were eager to hold them.



These outdoor learning lessons continue to enrich the EYFS curriculum, supporting children's understanding of the world, their physical development and spoken language.

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EYFS explorers – some pictures from an amazing spring term of outdoor learning.



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In Year 1, we have been exploring Cultivating Futures, learning how to use garden tools safely and preparing soil ready for planting strawberry plants and sowing a variety of seeds. All our children have learnt about the parts of a common plant, sowed sunflower seeds and observed their growth over the past six weeks. Soon they will be ready to transplant outdoors.



The children have also enjoyed caring for our animals and learning the basic needs of pets. The rabbits are always a favourite request and many children read to them for World Book Day. They watched the tadpoles and stick insects grow. Many of the children were brave enough to hold the stick insects while learning



more about them.

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Children have particularly enjoyed exploring our pond habitat, discovering the many creatures that live there and observed them closely. They were delighted to find so many newts and hold them carefully.

They have also been comparing the features of reptiles and amphibians,



observing a snakes skin, looking closely at newts and frogs.



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The children were excited to take a virtual tour around the United Kingdom learning more about where we live while using maps to identify our location. They have also been learning how to care for our animals.



Y1 thoroughly children enjoyed taking part in the sensory trail.

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Year 2 children have had so much fun exploring, discovering and observing nature over the spring term. They have been getting close to our animals, learning about the needs of pets and the seven characteristics of living things. Our stick insects have been a great hit and they have observed these growing from a tiny egg to a young adult. Recently they have been able to handle them carefully while learning how to look after them. They also learnt about the importance of insects and why every living thing plays a valuable part in nature.



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They have particularly enjoyed learning about our pond habitat, which attracts an array of wildlife both vertebrates and invertebrates. Pond safety has been taught and they have taken part in pond dipping sessions, where they have discovered many creatures, which they have identified and observed closely.

The life cycle of a frog has also been observed. We collected the frog spawn from the pond and observed the changes over eight weeks, before releasing them back into the pond. While learning about animals we have discussed the importance of food chains, highlighting producers, consumers, predators and prey.



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The children have also been observing the changes in the seasons, learning about the weather and how we record it. They have taken information from the equipment, recorded it on a chart and used words and symbols to describe the weather. We also



looked at where we live in the United Kingdom, identifying countries and cities of Great Britain and the United Kingdom on a map and the



distances between them.

Finally, they have taken part in our RHS young gardeners programme, learning about the growth of a seed into a fully grown plant. We have sowed a variety of seeds including beans as part of our wacky bean challenge.



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In Year 3, our children have been learning about the importance of habitats. They have identified different habitats and the animals that live there. The children particularly enjoyed



The children have been learning about the importance of insects. They also observed our stick insects closely.



learning about owls and their senses. We completed an animal scavenger hunt and described the animals and how they move.



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Children have been observing a snake's skin while learning about animals with a backbone. They have also participated in mini beast hunts to identify those without a backbone.

They have also been learning about the impact litter has on our environment and wildlife. They have shown care with litter picks and discussing what can be done to

improve this and why it matters. Some of our Y3 children have been learning about directions, grid references and coordinates. They have used orienteering to gain an understanding of directions and learnt how to use a compass.



With Miss Pedley, the children have gained knowledge about the needs of pets and how these differ between species. They have also

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learned about how to be safe at the beach and gained an understanding about the flags and the signs to look out for.



They have been participating in team game challenges, obstacle courses and relays. They have also worked as a team to build dens and created

outdoor art.

Our pond has come alive as spring has progressed, with an array of creatures appearing.

Our children have learnt about pond safety and explored the pond through pond dipping sessions. They discovered many creatures, which were observed, identified and recorded on a tally chart.



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This term has also given us the opportunity to get our hands dirty in the garden, preparing the soil for planting and sowing a variety of seeds. They prepared their plant pots and sowed tomato and sunflower seeds. They also created a wildflower area.



Meanwhile in Year 4, children have continued their topic about living things, their habitats and grouping animals in

different ways. They have been comparing the features and life cycles of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish.

They have also been identifying and



comparing the different invertebrates that live around us.

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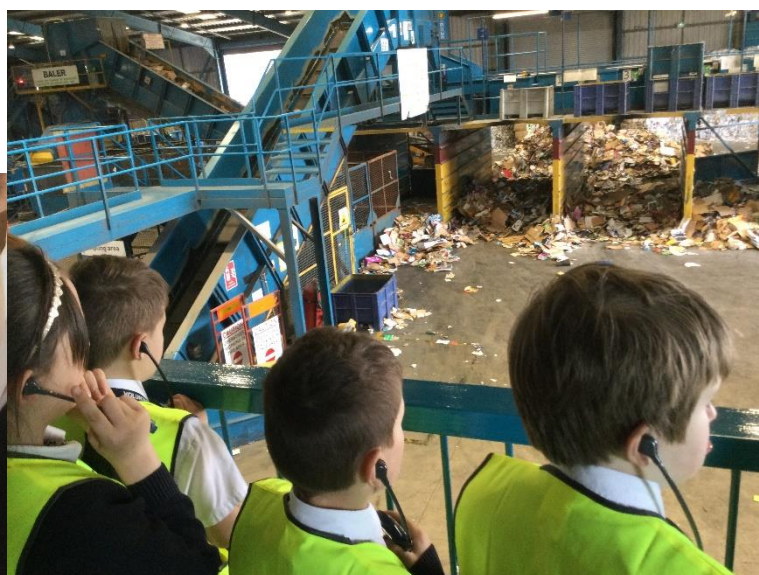
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Our children have also been learning more about the creatures that live in our pond. They observed and compared the many different creatures, including invertebrates and vertebrates. They also designed a pond safety poster to highlight the importance of being safe near ponds. They observed the exoskeleton of a dragonfly nymph and compared this to a dragonfly.



Our children have been learning about the importance of reduce, reuse and recycle including what more can be done to improve environmental issues. They have looked at how litter harms wildlife both on land and in our oceans.



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We have enhanced this learning with a visit to the Bodmin recycling facility where they participated in a zerowaste lunch box challenge, a tour of the facility, a recycling game and activity that involved making items from waste. Our children enjoyed this interactive visit that gave them an insight into what actually happens to our rubbish



and recycling, while teaching them the importance of recycling correctly.

Our children particularly enjoyed learning about pollination through the dissection of a daffodil. They followed instructions and carefully dissected the daffodil, understanding how each part played an important process in pollination. We went outside and sketched our daffodils and created a poem.

The children in Y4 have also been preparing our garden planters, digging up weeds and raking the soil. They have also learned how to sow a variety of seeds, spacing them correctly so that they don't grow too close together.

In year 5 our children completed the weather topic, gaining an understanding of how our



weather forms, how it is measured and the effects of it on our planet. They have recorded our weather during the week on a chart and compared to other cities in the UK. They have also



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learnt about the global climate zones and the difference between weather and climate.

They have been learning about the importance of insects and how pollination occurs. They all became scientists for the afternoon, putting their gloves on, and dissecting the daffodil, piece by piece to help them understand the role of each part. They not only found this activity enjoyable and relaxing, but they commented on how it helped them understand the pollination process while identifying each part of the flower.



In cultivating futures, we have been preparing our planters for the spring, raking out the stones and weeds, digging over the soil and adding compost. They have also enjoyed taking in the scenery, sketching what they could see, while using natural materials to add colour and depth.

They have explored our pond area, observed wildlife and compared the life cycles of different insects including a dragonfly and a butterfly.



They carried out a survey of the creatures in the pond using nets, comparing their size and learning more about the predators of the pond. They particularly enjoyed identifying and observing the newts that they had discovered.



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Some of our year 5 children have been looking at the inventions that have changed the world over the last 100 years. As part of our James Dyson school engineering programme, the characteristics that enabled famous inventors to be successful design engineers were discussed. We looked at everyday items to see if we could improve them and how. They then created their own designs hoping to design a new product for tomorrow's world. The Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner was looked at in detail, highlighting the important design ideas that led to this being a successful product. The floor tool was



disassembled carefully and put back together.

Year 5 animal cadets have continued to gain knowledge and confidence in their animal care skills.



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Year 5 children have been participating in team building games and building dens.



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Year 6, our children have completed their topic about energy, how we use it, where it comes from and why it is important. They have learnt about the national grid and the difference between renewable and non-renewable energy. They have learned the importance of having sufficient renewable solutions in place for the future.



They have enjoyed learning about the wide variety of invertebrates that live on planet earth, comparing the different groups and identifying their features. They particularly enjoyed exploring our pond, discovering the many invertebrates that rely on this important habitat. While exploring the pond they collected the creatures, using nets and then compared their sizes. They were delighted to discover lots of newts and handling these carefully.

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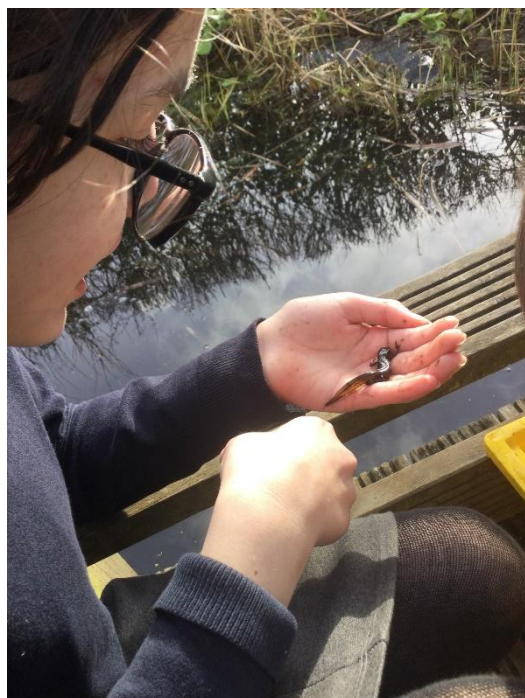
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Some of the creatures found include caddisfly in their cases, water boatmen, leeches, dragonfly nymphs, tadpoles and many newts.



They have enjoyed participating in team games, obstacle relays and scavenger hunts. They also looked at country facts and flags while completing an around the world fact finding mission. They used their teamwork skills to build a den, using canes, rope and tarpaulin sheets.



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Year 6 children have been participating in the Dyson innovation and design programme. They learned about famous inventions from the past 100 years while understanding what characteristics the inventors needed to succeed in creating a successful invention. They developed their own ideas by thinking of items that frustrated them and thought of ways that they could improve it. A Dyson vacuum cleaner was looked at in detail and it was carefully taken apart and reassembled.

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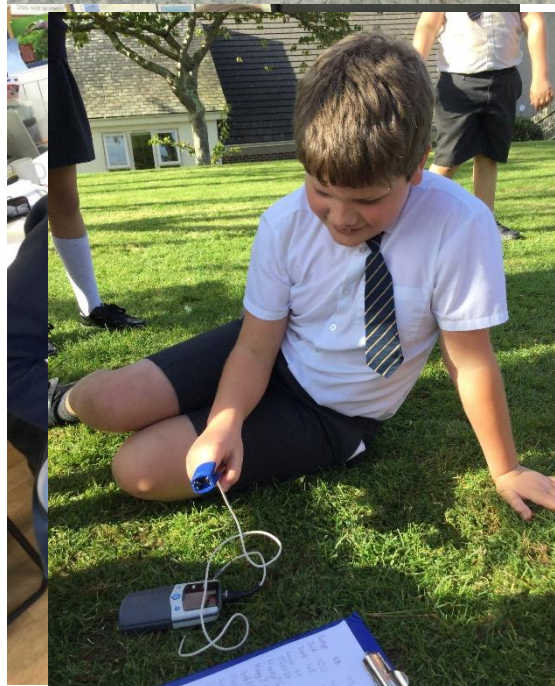
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With Miss Pedley, our children have completed their introduction to first aid as part of their 'Mini Medics' course, looking at the importance of providing important first aid



at the scene. They have learned how to assess a situation (danger, response, airway, breathing and circulation), call for help and place the patient in the correct recovery position. They have also learnt how to provide CPR if necessary. This is an important life skill and during the summer term their skills will be assessed by a trained paramedic with a certificate at the end of the course.



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