



Outdoor Learning – Autumn Term 2023

Open Space – Open Hearts – Open Minds.

We are coming towards the end of what has been an exciting autumn term of outdoor learning. Our children have been truly inspired by getting closer to nature. They have been caring for our animals, exploring Cultivating Futures, observing wildlife and digging deep to find out what's under our feet. Our children have experienced the diverse opportunities that our space offers, which can't be replicated indoors. This has had a positive impact on our children and shows that nature is a 'superpower' that can energise us all.



The children have been participating in fun and engaging team games, improving communication skills while building trust. They have helped to care for our animals in Cultivating Futures.

T: 01736 753135

E: hello@connordowns.org.uk

W: www.connordowns.org.uk

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Registered Office: Aspire Academy Trust, Unit 20, St Austell Business Park, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4FD



**Connor Downs
Academy**

Connor Downs Academy

Head of School: Mrs J Eddy

The children have been comparing different mini beasts. They particularly enjoyed learning about insects and getting closer to our stick insects.



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During one of their outdoor lessons, children created some wonderful pictures using objects from nature. Sticks were used as pencils, nasturtium leaves and their flowers for adding colour, and different textured soils for the ink. They were not only surprised at how easy it was to paint in this way but delighted with their final creations.



Children were challenged to create a woodland scene including trees, flowers and birds.

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Many of the children have enjoyed spending time with our chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs. They talked about the animals and described their features while learning how to care for them. They also compared the features of mammals to those of birds.



The children collected eggs from our chickens, and gradually gained confidence being around them.



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All lessons begin with a discussion and warm up exercises which the children enjoy. They also participate in circle time and team building activities to help build their confidence.



We started the Autumn term with a sensory exploration journey around Cultivating Futures. 'What would they hear, what would they see, what would they smell and what could they feel'?



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[More pictures from their sensory journey around Cultivating Futures.](#)



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EYFS children have been learning lifelong gardening skills.



All children got their hands dirty while learning how to use junior garden tools safely. They enjoyed watering the plants and learning using the wheelbarrow.

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Nature has given them a helping hand during their maths on the go sessions.



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Children in EYFS have enjoyed exploring, digging, discovering and observing in nature. They really enjoyed the animal scavenger hunt and memory game.



It has been a busy and exciting half term, and we are looking forward to a spring term of being super nature detectives.

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Year 1 children began the autumn term learning about the basic needs of animals with our rabbits, guinea pigs and chickens. They thoroughly enjoyed brushing the guinea pigs and learning about the differences between animal groups.



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The children visited our rabbits and chickens as part of a sensory journey around Cultivating Futures. They compared and described their main features before writing a sentence on a whiteboard. This activity enriched their learning, helping them to understand and remember more about the characteristics of living things.



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“Let nature be your teacher” – William Wordsworth.

Children in year 1 have also been exploring Cultivating Futures, looking for the signs of autumn, observing the changing weather, learning about the world we live in and our local environment. They have been discovering and identifying mini beasts in various habitats.



Children used magnifying glasses and lenses to observe these creatures and compared the size of worms that they discovered find out the shortest and longest. They have participated in animal scavenger hunts, discussing food chains, carnivores, omnivores and herbivores.



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Children in Year 1 have particularly enjoyed getting close to our stick insects, learning more about their features and camouflage while comparing them to other mini-beasts.

Many of the children were also brave enough to hold them.



All children have had the opportunity to use a variety of lenses and magnifying glasses to enable them to see both things that are alive, and those that were once alive, more closely.



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More pictures of Year 1 enjoying the great outdoors.



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Year 2 children have had an amazing time exploring, discovering and observing nature over the autumn term. They started the autumn term learning about the importance of plants. Children have learned how to use garden tools safely and have

gained knowledge about sowing and growing. They have been getting their hands dirty while harvesting vegetables, sowing seeds and learning about the parts of a plant that we eat.



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The children enjoyed harvesting the fruit and vegetables from the growing beds.



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The sun was shining on our Year 2 children in September while they collected leaves, various coloured petals and soil to create natural paints. They thoroughly enjoyed using sticks for pencils and created a beautiful woodland scene.



The children have enjoyed comparing different seeds, preparing their own plant pots and sowing seeds outdoors so they could see which germinated in the quickest time.

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Learning about fire safety, collecting the eggs and creating sparks



The children enjoyed the whole process of cooking their own omelette using eggs from our chickens and tomatoes from the poly tunnel.

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More pictures of Year 2 children enjoying their afternoon cooking around the fire.



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The children have also been learning about how to care for our guinea pigs.



The children brushed the guinea pigs, collected grass and other edible leaves, and gave them fresh water.

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Year 2 have had a very busy term of outdoor learning.



They have also been getting close to our chickens, comparing their features to other animals while learning how to care for them.



Harvesting tomatoes and cucumbers.



They enjoyed participating in the animal scavenger hunts, exploring and discovering different animals and placing them in the correct group. They have also been observing a variety of things that were once alive using different strength magnifying glasses and lenses.

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The children have enjoyed learning about our planet, where we live, why we have seasons and how we get day and night. They have been weather watchers, observing the changes, reading the weather instruments and recording the data.



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Meanwhile, in Year 3, children had a brilliant autumn term of exploration and discovery. They started the autumn term getting their hands dirty while learning how to use gardening tools safely. They enjoyed using the shovels and spades.



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The children were amazed at how many tomatoes had grown over the summer months and we were still collecting them during early October.



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Many of the Year 3 children have also been learning about the importance of plants in our diet. They matched different plants to the correct part of the plant that it comes from, stems, flowers, roots, leaves or seeds.



The children enjoyed tasting some of the fruit and vegetables, including celery, radish, cucumber, apple and mint.

< - The children showed lots of enthusiasm during our 'Go Find It' game. They also participated in animal fact finding missions where they had to locate the animal and group it in various ways.

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'Look deep in nature and then you will understand everything better' – Albert Einstein.

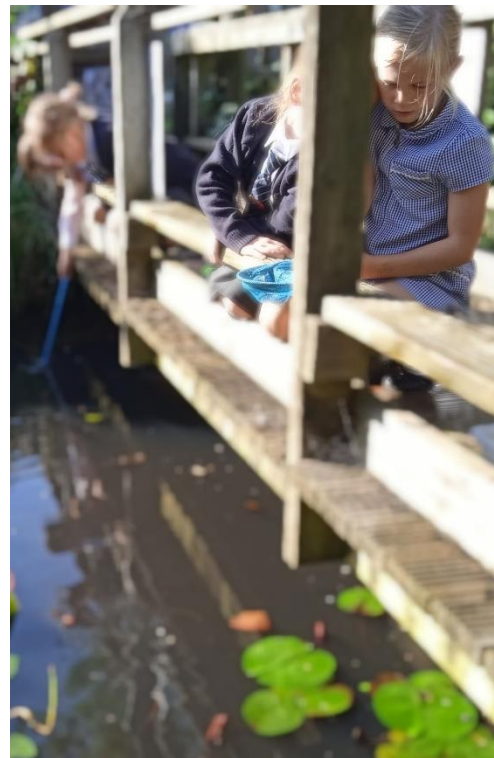
During September, the children in Year 3 enjoyed exploring our pond, discovering the many invertebrates that rely on this important habitat. While exploring the pond, they



collected the creatures using nets and then compared their sizes. They were delighted to discover a couple of large diving beetles.

Some of the other creatures found included caddisfly in their cases, water boatmen, leeches, dragonfly nymphs and pond skaters.

The children carefully collected these and observed them closely using magnifying glasses.



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More pictures of Y3 enjoying the September sunshine during a pond dipping session.



The children enjoyed discovering what lived in our pond and identified them.



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Year 3 children have been learning about seasons and what influences our weather in the UK.



The children learned about different weather types and the symbols associated with them. They then presented the weather.



They located familiar places in West Cornwall, measured the distance between two locations and participated in a go find the location game. The eight points of a compass were explored.

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Year 3 children have been learning about the importance of habitats. They have identified different habitats and the animals that live there. Children particularly enjoyed learning about animals both with and without a backbone and visited our animals to help them understand the differences between them. They compared the features of each group and designed information resources.



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More pictures of the Year 3 children enjoying the great outdoors.



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Year 4 have had a busy half term of outdoor learning, starting the term with a journey around Cultivating Futures looking for signs of autumn and making a journey stick.



In September, the children enjoyed visiting our polytunnel to find out how the tomatoes and cucumbers had grown over the summer holidays. They harvested tomatoes and other vegetables before helping with some important gardening tasks.

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Children have been learning about living things, their habitats and gaining a deeper understanding about the classification of animals and vertebrates. They have also been learning how to care for animals through hands on activities with our animals. They have taken part in the RSPCA's 'Compassionate Class', learning about empathy. At the beginning of autumn, they discovered the diverse range of creatures that live in our pond. They particularly enjoyed participating in team games, scavenger hunts and solving riddles around Cultivating Futures.



Observing Minibeasts



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“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better” - Albert Einstein.



Year 4 have had an great time exploring the dunes of Gwithian Towans. They climbed up to a high point and used binoculars to observe the surrounding area, and a compass and a map to understand location and directions. They continued their journey, stopping to observe the rabbit warrens and badger setts before running into a dune blow out where they learned about the formation of the dunes. They relaxed in the marram grass, listened to the sounds of nature before learning about the diverse wildlife that inhabits this habitat. Finally, they observed nature closely using lenses and magnifying equipment.

The children were amazed when they discovered a slow worm in the sand.

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More pictures of Year 4 on the dunes, exploring, discovering and observing nature.



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Y4 visited Gwithian towans during October and November in two smaller groups.



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Exploring the dunes has helped the children understand their local environment.



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Back in school, our children have also been learning about the basic needs of animals, including the rabbits, guinea pigs, stick insects.



Some children have particularly enjoyed getting close to our stick insects, learning more about their features and camouflage while comparing them to other mini-beasts. The children have also been helping to care for our African clawed frogs ensuring the water and filters are clean.

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The children have been observing the changes in the seasons, learning about the weather and using instruments to gather the data and record it.

They have also enjoyed making seed packets and observing creatures closely using some various lenses.



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Year 5 children have started their 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 learnt about the global climate zones and the difference between weather and climate. The children have been observing our weather instruments and recording data collected from the thermometer, barometer, anemometer and rain gauge. They have also used the globe to help them understand how we get day and night along with the seasons.



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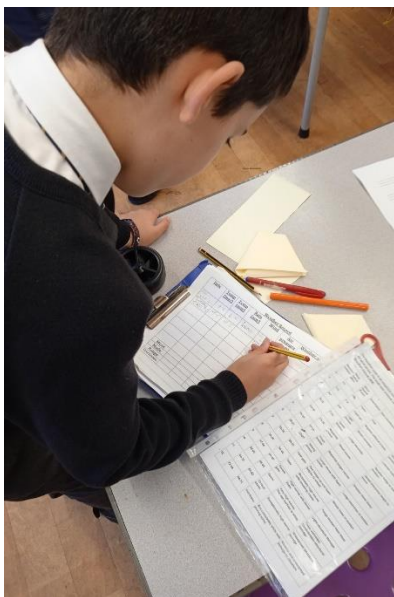
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The children have been playing 'True, False, Unsure' to discuss weather statements.



The children have been learning about the formation of the wind, how to read the Beaufort scale and how to record it.

On our recent visit to the dunes at Gwithian, the children used the anemometer to record the wind and compare this to the speed at school.

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Many of the Year 5 children have been creating sparks during our outdoor lessons.



They learned about fire safety, and the benefits and dangers of fire before looking at the fire triangle. Then they created sparks using the flint and steel to light the tinder.



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The Year 5 early morning gardening team have been working hard to design a new outdoor garden area. They displayed a resilient attitude to work, come rain or shine.



They cleaned out the poly tunnel of all the old tomato and cucumber plants, dug over the outdoor area, laid weed control blanket and moved tyres to use as planters. They covered the weed blanket with bark that came from our oldest tree, which was blown over in the November storm.



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Year 5 particularly enjoyed discovering nature, participating in team games, and the fact-finding missions around Cultivating Futures. They have gained knowledge about directions, grid references and coordinates through orienteering, modelling the use of a compass and using a map of Cultivating Futures to locate key features.

Everyone used an orienteering map of Cultivating Futures to navigate around the control points in order, staple the card and collect the letters. These letters had to be sorted to find the mystery animal.



They also enjoyed participating in mini beast hunts and observing these using a variety of magnifying glasses, lenses and microscopes.

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Year 5 outdoor learning group had an amazing time exploring the dunes of Upton Towans. They climbed up to a high point and used binoculars to observe the surrounding area, a compass and a map to understand location and directions.



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They continued their journey, running into a dune blow out where they learned about the formation of the dunes. They relaxed in the marram grass, listened to the sounds of nature before learning about the diverse wildlife that inhabits this habitat. Finally, they observed nature closely using lenses and magnifying equipment.



Looking out to sea



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Connor Downs
Academy

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Head of School: Mrs J Eddy

More pictures of Year 5 learning, smiling and engaging with nature.



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Year 5 animal cadets have gained confidence in helping to care for our animals and can now carry out animal health checks. The team help at the end of most days to ensure the animals have everything they need to stay happy and healthy overnight.



A litter pick is carried out each week

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In Year 6, our children have been learning about energy, how we use it, where it comes from and why it is important. They have gained significant knowledge about the national grid, the difference between renewable and non-renewable energy and the importance of having sufficient renewable solutions in place for the future.



The children have been participating in energy fact finding missions around Cultivating Futures and discussing climate change, what it is, how we know it is happening and what can be done to minimise the effects. They have also been participating in mini beast hunts and learning about the importance of insects.



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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.

Some of the creatures found included caddisfly in their cases, water boatmen, leeches, dragonfly nymphs, diving beetles and pond skaters.



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Year 6 children have also participated in orienteering challenges, map work and fact-finding missions. They have enjoyed participating in team games and scavenger hunts.

They measured the distance between two places and converted from km to miles.



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Children in Year 6 have been learning about fire safety while attempting to light a fire using a flint and steel. They persevered and succeeded, leading to a roaring fire and children enjoying hot chocolate and omelette. The Y6 children were joined by some children from EYFS who also enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate. The children thoroughly enjoyed their afternoon around the campfire.



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More pictures of the Y6 children enjoying learning outdoors. They have also been caring for our animals, working with the EYFS children, and making objects from willow.



EYFS children using a microscope to observe objects closely with the help of Y6 children.

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With Miss Pedley, many of the 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 learned how to provide CPR if necessary. This is an important life skill and during the summer term they will learn more skills before being assessed.



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It has been a fun packed autumn term. We are looking forward to a spring term of outdoor learning where we will continue to immerse ourselves in nature.



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