

## Outdoor Learning – Spring Term 2023

As we reach the end of another exciting term of outdoor learning, it is time to look back at some of the activities that each year group have participated in. 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, while improving teamwork and communication skills. They have also explored our local sand dunes and nature reserves, helping them to understand that these unique landscapes offer important habitats for wildlife.



The benefits of outdoor learning have been clear to see across all year groups building those valuable life skills.

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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Children in the EYFS have been participating in weekly sessions with Mr Costello, exploring Cultivating Futures and getting close to nature. They have been observing 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 got quite messy preparing their own bird feeder mix and hanging them outside for the birds to enjoy. They observed the many birds visiting a live camera feed and listened to their songs so they could identify later.



They have been getting close to our animals, learning how to care for them, describing and comparing their features, while gaining compassion for all animals.



The children particularly enjoyed getting close to our guinea pigs and hedgehog.

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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.



A favourite activity has been the pond dipping experience. We started with a pond safety lesson, discussing the importance of listening and following instructions. Children 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. While holding them, they observed them with magnifying glasses to take a closer look.

They also identified other pond creatures including leeches, water boatmen and caddisfly in their cases. They will continue to observe this important habitat as we head through the spring and into summer.



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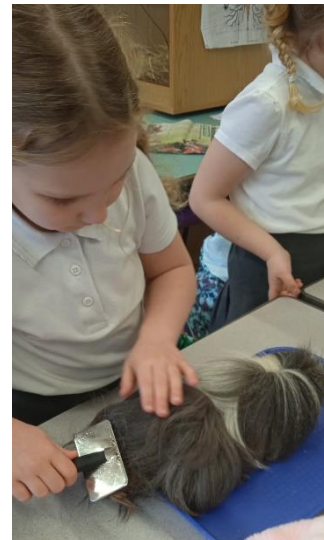


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# Connor Downs Academy

Head of School: Mrs J Eddy

**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 been learning about the importance of plants and the parts of a plant that we eat.



The children particularly enjoyed sorting the foods into the correct groups and trying some out. They sowed their own tomato seeds, which have now developed into healthy seedlings.



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Year 1 have been also learnt about the importance of trying healthy foods, **eat well...stay well!** They tried a rainbow of colours from red hot chilli peppers to raw cauliflower and discussed how important fruit and vegetables are with helping to fight infections and for growth.



The children have enjoyed learning about where our food comes from and are sowing new seeds on a regular basis.



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The children also planted some bedding plants in our recycled planters, which brightened up the entrance to the year one outside area.



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 observed a globe, identifying the continents and learning about the rotation of the earth, how we get day, night and the seasons. We played some memory games to test their knowledge.



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The children have particularly enjoyed getting close to our animals. They have been learning how to care for the rabbits, guinea pigs and stick insects. They learnt about the importance of insects and compared a variety of mini-beasts. They have also been comparing the features of reptiles and amphibians, observing a snake's skin, looking closely at newts and frogs while discussing their life cycles.

The children have had lots of opportunities to engage with our animals, helping to care for them and learn about compassion for all animals.



Observing a bumble bee closely.

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Ready – Set – Sow! Year 1 children are enjoying taking part in the RHS 'Big Seed Sow'



The children worked as a team, using spades and shovels to move compost, prepared our planters, harvested some leeks and sowed a variety of seeds. We are also going to find out who can grow the biggest sunflower.

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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.



They have been learning about the importance of insects and other mini-beasts while participating in a sensory nature trail. They observed a bumble bee closely using a microscope and other lenses.



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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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Children in year 2 have been getting close to our animals. They particularly enjoyed holding and observing our African pygmy hedgehog. They learnt a lot about these amazing small mammals before comparing them to other mammals.



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Year 2 children have also been taking part in our sow and grow campaign, sowing some wildflower seeds to help attract more pollinating insects over the coming months. They have learnt how to use garden tools safely and brush up their gardening skills. They have also been learning about the importance of trying healthy foods, **eat well...stay well!** They tried a rainbow of colours from red hot chilli peppers to raw cauliflower and discussed how important fruit and vegetables are with helping to fight infections and for growth.



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In Year 3, the children have been learning about the importance of plants and taking parts in the RHS Big, Seed Sow. They have learnt how to use garden tools safely, prepared a raised bed ready for sowing seeds and created a wildflower garden. They also identified the parts of a plant that we eat and made their own seed packets to keep their wildflower seeds in.



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The children have been participating in animal fact finding missions around cultivating futures. Their mission was to complete the course in order, naming the animals and placing them into the correct group before answering a question. They have also thoroughly enjoyed the team game challenges, displaying a never give up attitude.



With Miss Pedley, the children have gained knowledge about the needs of pets and how these differ between species. They have also learned about how to be safe at the beach and gained an understanding about the flags and the signs to look out for.



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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. The children were surprised to find so many newts in the pond. They enjoyed collecting frogspawn and returning them to the pond at a later date.



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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.



The children have also been busy in our poly tunnel, making sure it is ready for the season.



They have made use of old tyres for planting bulbs and wildflowers.



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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 while learning about the importance of insects. Some children became scientists for an afternoon, dissecting a daffodil carefully, piece by piece, identifying the parts, which helped them understand the process of pollination.



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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 were surprised to discover so many newts.



The children were fascinated by the quantity of newts they discovered in the pond.

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The outdoor learning group have been participating in animal fact finding missions and grouping animals on the move. They 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.

With Miss Pedley 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. They have also been learning how to stay safe outdoors during the winter weather.

The children particularly enjoyed cutting the willow, sorting, weaving and creating mini beasts and tools.



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The children in year 4 have been learning about the diverse range of mammals that live around us. They enjoyed getting up close to our African pygmy hedgehog while learning more about these amazing small mammals.



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In year 5 the final outdoor learning group had an amazing time exploring Upton Towans. They climbed up to a high point and used binoculars to observe the surrounding area and a compass to help them understand directions. They continued their journey, running into a

dune blow out where they learnt about the formation of the dunes and created their own dune system. While exploring the dunes on a rare beautiful, sunny day they also discovered rabbit warrens and badger setts.



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More pictures from the Y5 dunes visit this spring term.



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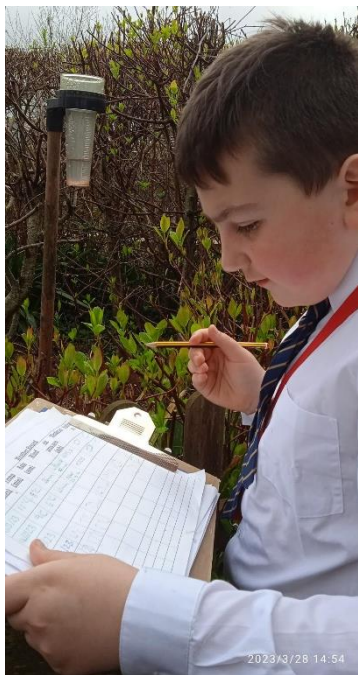
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In year 5 our children completed the weather topic, gaining an understanding of how our weather forms, how it is measured and the effects of it on our planet. They have recorded our weather during the week on a chart and compared to other cities in the UK. They have also learnt about the global climate zones and the difference between weather and climate.

The children have also been getting their hands dirty, helping to prepare the planters and sow a variety of seeds. They transplanted mint and sowed some sunflower seeds. They also learned how to use garden tools safely.



They enjoyed using the wheelbarrow to move the compost to our recycled tyre planters.



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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.



The children discovered numerous newts, water boatmen, caddisfly in their cases dragonfly nymphs and leeches.

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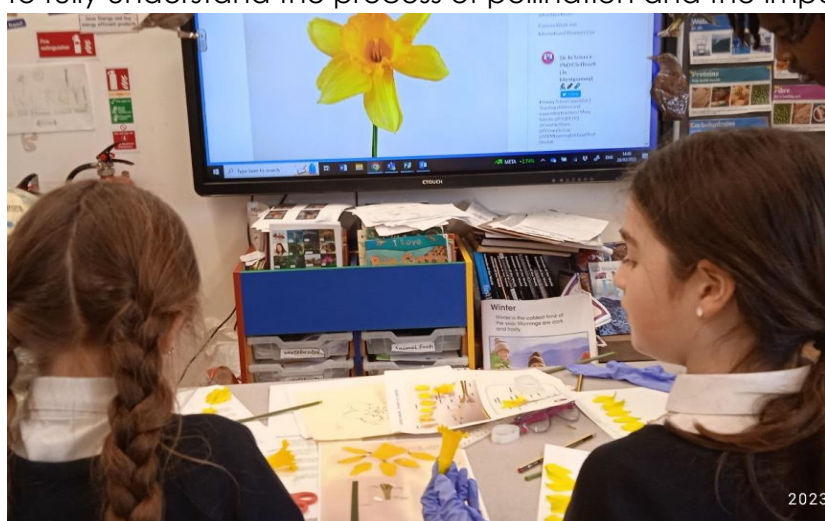
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To celebrate St David's Day we looked at the significance of the daffodil as the national emblem of Wales while also learning about the process of pollination. The children became scientists for the afternoon, carefully dissecting the daffodil, piece by piece so they could see each part of the flower closely before carefully placing these on the piece of card using double sided sticky tape. This allowed the children to fully understand the process of pollination and the importance of insects.



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

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In 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.



We have enhanced this learning with a visit to the Cornwall Energy Recovery Centre where they discovered how electricity is produced from our bin waste. Following an introduction to the facility the children went on a behind-the-scenes tour to see the processes involved and see the facility in

action.

They particularly enjoyed visiting the control room and using the interactive displays which enabled them to investigate sustainability and energy.

Finally, they participated in an interactive quiz before making their own pledges and sending them to the virtual cloud.



The children thoroughly enjoyed cutting back our willow and creating various tools. They used the tools safely after observing correct procedures.

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The children enhance their knowledge of orienteering maps, scales and keys while refreshing their knowledge on compass directions. They navigated the map to locate 10 control points in order around the school grounds. There was a letter on each control that had to be unscrambled to give them the



name of an animal.

The children enjoyed regular contact with our animals over the spring term, continuing to provide them with love and care. The rabbits trust the children and come up to them looking for food and cuddles.



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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. They were delighted to discover lots of newts and handling these carefully.

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



We were fortunate enough to get a brief break in the weather, allowing us to fully explore the pond. The children discovered over 50 newts, a new record for our pond.

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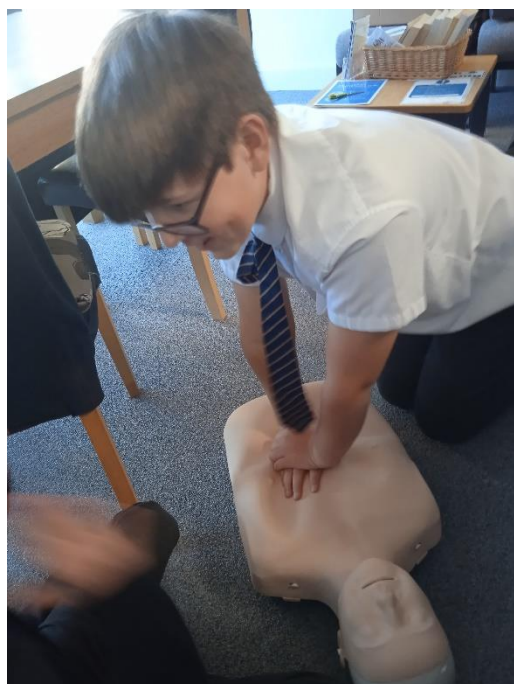
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With Miss Pedley, our children have completed their introduction to first aid as part of their 'Mini Medics' course, looking at the importance of providing important first aid

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 using the resuscitation Annie dolls,



The children have now been learning how to act when someone is choking and when a baby/infant requires CPR. This course is a valuable life skill for our children to take away with them.

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It has certainly been a busy half term of outdoor learning where our children have been getting close to nature and learning valuable life skills.

We are all looking forward to a fun packed, sunny, summer term.



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