

# *Transition Learning Team Project*

Using and developing the outdoor  
environment in Reception and Year 1

## *What is a Learning Team?*

A Learning Team is a group of schools working together with consultants/teacher advisers to focus on sharing and further developing good practice through action research in school.

## *Burnley Learning Team*

- 15 schools – 2 teachers, R / Y1
- Spanned a school year
- Focus on use of outdoor provision to facilitate teaching and learning
- Purpose to raise attainment in CLLD/literacy or PSRN/maths
- Identification of particular groups e.g. summer born, boys, girls
- Measuring the impact

# *Preparing the presentations for the final day*





# *Using the outdoor learning area to enhance boy's writing.*



# *Our different outdoor environments in Reception*





# *Activities for writing in Reception*

## **Plants and Growth**

We planted Primulas in our outside area.

We dug a flower bed & planted bean seeds in it



We wrote instructions for planting seeds. We kept a bean diary  
*See Appendix*

# *Space topic*

- A space ship crash landed on the field
- We investigated the site
- The children asked questions about what had happened
- We made a space role play







# Space!



- We used the outdoor area to find space rocks.
- Children used their own imagination to create stories – this was fuelled by being outdoors.
- This led to indoor and outdoor role play.
- The children wrote instructions for others to use our role play area – boys keen to write as they were telling others what to do!



***See Appendix***

# *My alien*

We thought about the alien that landed on the field. Each child invented their own alien. The children acted out their aliens.

We thought of ways for the boy to get back to the moon. The children discussed the ways with a partner & acted it out.



***See Appendix***

# *Snow*

We played out in the snow  
to experience what it was like.  
We thought of lots of words to  
describe the snow. Then we  
wrote our own snow poems



*See Appendix*



# *Encouraging writing in continuous provision*



# *Our different outdoor environments in Year 1*





# *Activities writing Year 1 Traditional stories*

## **The Three Little Pigs.**

We constructed outside it led to writing and speaking and listening.



We went on a materials hunt in our environment to learn about building materials. Working in pairs the children used clipboards to record their findings.



# *The gingerbread man*



A group of children decided to act out the story. They rolled out the gingerbread, practised the rhyme and working together planned the story outdoors. They acted it out for the other children. They then wrote their own versions in the classroom.



## *Jack and the Beanstalk*

- We read the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.
- We sorted different beans then we planted a selection and watched them grow.
- We read the story of Jim and the Beanstalk and liked the Giant's letter at the end of the story. It was very funny!
- The next day a letter arrived outside the classroom from THE GIANT!!!!

## *The Giant .*

- In the weeks to follow, the giant had many requests for the children to respond to.
- He wanted to know about hobbies, families, likes and dislikes.
- He asked for instructions on how to play darts (using foam javelins and a giant target.)
- He asked for a magic potion so that he could shrink and get access into school.



# *The Magic Potion*

We left the Giant a magic drink with lots of instructions to follow.

He shrank to the size of a finger!!!

He was scared in the big lonely playground because

there were lots of nasty cats and dogs and other creatures prowling about. The children built a playground and shelter from clever sticks and lego dacta to shelter the tiny character. He requested another magic potion to make him grow.



# *The Visitor*

- We made another potion and the giant grew to the size of a door.
- He wrote a letter saying he would visit.
- He arrived in school one afternoon, after reading all the children's letters.
- He was jolly, green and very loud!
- He listened to our stories and songs then he sang a song himself before waving goodbye.



The Jolly Green Giant  
*See Appendix*

# *Present children with challenges Plant Detectives.*

For this challenge, the boys were taken out into the school grounds to find examples of plant life.

They observed the plants, using magnifying glasses and recorded their findings on a sheet. Then they returned to the classroom to write a recount of the activity.

This activity was linked to Science, 'Growing Plants'.



See Appendix whittlefield



# *Planting Seeds challenge*

The boys were asked to plant seeds outside, whilst remembering the conditions necessary for growth. This was linked to our Science unit 'Growing Plants'.



# *Making ponds in our school grounds.*

We collected information on how to make a pond and set to work. We gathered the equipment we required and followed the instructions. We researched the type of plant food the tadpoles needed to grow and added them to the pond.



# *Minibeasts*

- We found a variety of insects and minibeasts and found them in our information books in class.



We walked around the school grounds to find snails in their natural environment.

We have been observing the snails in class and have written poems about them



# *Observing & collecting worms*



In our school grounds we observed worms in their natural environment



Back in class we looked at information on how to build a wormery

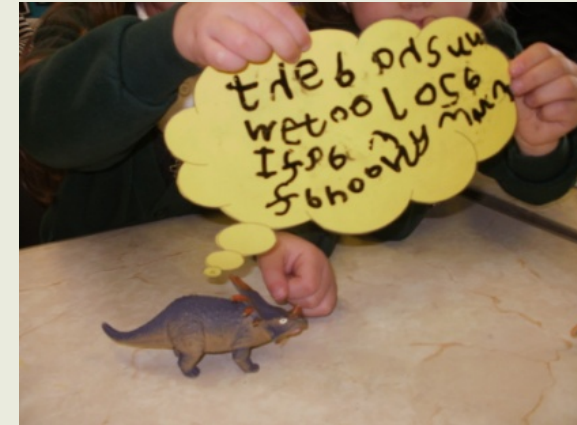
We picked out the bossy verbs and the resources needed and set to work

***See Appendix***



# Dinosaurs!

Children went on a walk around school grounds and 'discovered' an egg. They spent a lot of time thinking about what could be inside the egg. They completed many short writing tasks about dinosaurs. They used the outdoor area for role play which developed into stories.



# Out and About!

- Children received a letter from a “lonely bug” and were given the job of finding his friends!
- Outdoor exploration led to LOTS of writing tasks!
- Children wanted to bring the outdoors inside the classroom.
- Outside area used so much that the children were keen to explore another environment.
- We went on a trip to the woods (Hurstwood, Burnley), which gave the children a different experience and provided them with so much more to write about.
- Recounts, labelling things seen, emergent writing.
- Next steps!





# *“Writing walls”*

Two examples in the outdoors -all children were able to contribute





## *Measuring the Impact*

- Children enjoy numeracy and are more engaged and enthusiastic in the outdoors
- A more positive attitude towards maths
- Children were less dependant on resources and enjoyed the freedom of the outdoor space
- Children had greater confidence especially with mental activities
- Staff have observed children using and applying their mathematical skills and knowledge more spontaneously in the outdoor area

## *Impact on learning*

- Reluctant boys are beginning to write!
- Year R boy – J. – went from a reluctance to even make simple marks to attempting to write, using some clearly recognisable letters.
- Year 1 boy – L. – went from emergent writing to forming complete sentences.
- Behaviour has improved and more willing to participate in writing activities outside
- Improvement in writing shown in Y1 focus children
- Activities to improve speaking and listening skills have had a direct impact on children's willingness to write e.g acting as story characters and writing in speech bubbles

## *Outcomes*

- We found that because there isn't a correct answer boys are willing to have a go at writing
- We have more mark-making by the youngest children and improved writing evident in informal assessments
- Children (boys especially ) need to have an initial interest in order to produce quality writing e.g writing instructions on how to use a space ship
- Children now recognise the outdoor area as an extension of the classroom learning environment in Y 1
- Differentiated challenges are planned as appropriate
- Outdoors provides opportunities to use different equipment that can't be used indoors
- Writing activities that have previously taken place indoors are now being transferred to the outdoor environment



## *Outcomes continued*

- Year 1 now plan for outdoor learning experiences on a weekly basis
- Real experiences promote a greater engagement as writing is more meaningful
- we have learned that the reluctant writer is more willing to engage in written activities after having practical experiences in all areas of the curriculum.

- Whole school are taking on a topic led curriculum approach.
- Shared topics and working together are helping to make the transition process smoother.
- Other things planned.... Journeys/seaside topic, plans to turn outdoor area into a beach, with a stage area for Punch and Judy Shows.

## *Next steps*

- We will use our ongoing assessments to target children.....because the targeted children have made great progress.
- Continue to plan for outdoor learning as an integral part of the curriculum as a whole
- Consider using existing resources outdoors e.g. cameras, movie makers, sound recorders
- To be creative with existing resources e.g pirate ship can be a cruise liner, time ship, shipwreck
- Use local expertise and the immediate local environment to enhance learning
- To add notices and captions to encourage dialogue between pupils, staff, parents and their environment
- EYFS and Key Stage 1 work together to plan topics that are relevant and interesting, using the outdoors as much as possible.