



Outdoor Learning at Yaxley Infant School

"The best classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky." Margaret McMillan

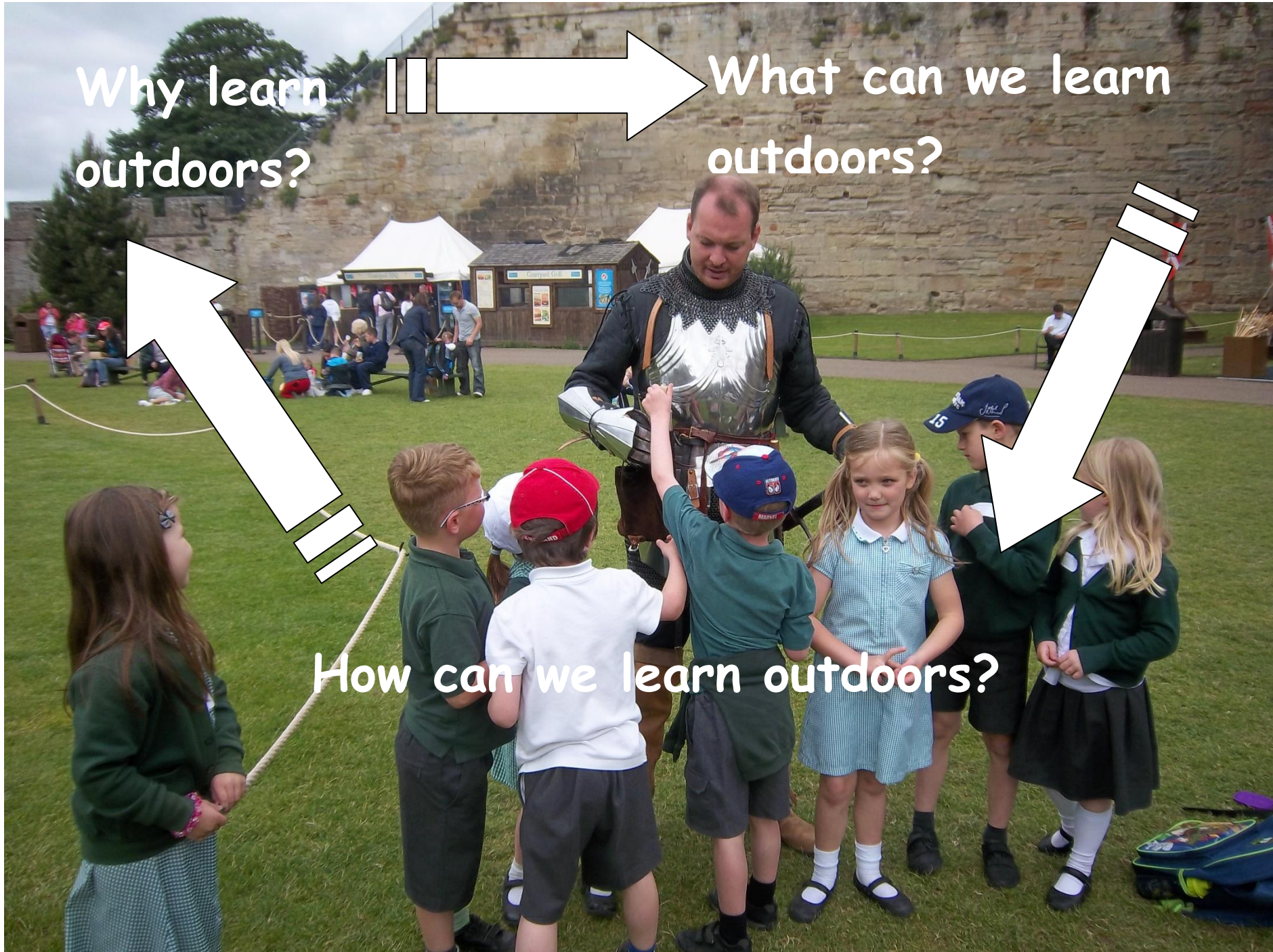
Outdoor learning can include, amongst other activities, cultural visits, science and geography fieldwork, environmental and countryside education, outdoor and adventurous group activities, learning through outdoor play/tasks/activities/investigations and visits to museums and heritage sites. It offers challenge, enjoyment, coherence and relevance, and remains essential to children's health development and wellbeing. Learning outdoors provides children with rich and varied opportunities for resourcefulness, inventiveness and imagination. It is therefore vital that we maximise children's opportunities to learn out of doors.



Why learn
outdoors?

What can we learn
outdoors?

How can we learn outdoors?



Outdoor Learning

Why?

- It provides a real-world context for all learning.
- It encourages knowledge, wonder and concern for the natural environment.
- It offers opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement.
- It impacts positively on children and young people's attitudes, beliefs and self perceptions.
- It enables increasing independence, self-sufficiency and confidence, including considerations of risk and consequence.
- It compliments indoor learning and is equally important.
- It embraces different approaches to learning and teaching.

What?

- Many experiences and outcomes can be delivered outdoors, allowing children and young people opportunities to apply new skills and knowledge across a range of contexts.

How?

- By exploring relationships and connections within the natural and built environment in and surrounding the school setting.
- By using the wider environment.
- By enabling children to lead planning and learning.
- By using knowledge of local and national resources.
- By enabling creative and active approaches to learning.



“Outdoor learning experiences are often remembered for a lifetime. Integrating learning and outdoor experiences, whether through play in the immediate grounds or adventures further afield, provides relevance and depth to the curriculum in ways that are difficult to achieve indoors.

Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning, Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010

Examples of good practice at Yaxley Infant School

FOUNDATION STAGE

We endeavour to make all learning activities available to the children both indoors and outdoors. In addition we aim to exploit the exciting possibilities that only the outdoors can offer.

Examples of successful practice in our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum:

- Our Gruffalo writing den-heavy drapes over a table, paper stuck to the bottom of the table and a torch (strengthens fine motor muscles!)
- Gruffalo soup-collecting natural resources (yucky ingredients) to make Gruffalo soup and writing the recipes.
- Dragon trail-mysterious clues which children read, leading them to four tasks one of which was making the sound of a dragons's roar with natural materials. Another was collecting different shades of green which reminded us of dragons' scales. The trail culminates in the discovery of a dragon's egg in the outdoor classroom and an outdoor story of 'George and the Egg'. This prompted a Philosophy 4 Children Session as the children wondered about the questions "Should we look after the dragon egg or are all dragons bad?"
- Building castles using different materials and sheets and making bows and arrows from twigs.



-Finding the length of flowers as Castle Gardeners tasked by the King to care for them and make sure they are growing.

-Using the outdoor home corner to celebrate Diwali. Decorating the threshold with authentic sand and chalk rangoli patterns and acting out a street party with pompom firework dances.



YEAR 1

We have worked extensively outdoors across the curriculum.

A notable learning experience was when we carried out a whole literacy unit - a Fantasy Story “The Kiss that Missed” . The outdoor classroom became the forest and castle setting for a series of drama lessons.



Because the children acted out the story in a ‘real’ forest the learning came alive as they were able to hear the sounds and feel how the characters may have felt as they hid behind trees and in the long grass.



Our outdoor learning also takes us into the local community for example when we visited a greengrocer shop. Following the real life experience of visiting the shop and buying fruit and vegetables the children designed and made their own greengrocers in our outdoor area. During maths lessons they role played shopper and shopkeeper,



weighing items and using coins to purchase items.

YEAR 2



A variety of outdoor learning activities has strengthened learning across a range of curriculum subjects. For example, celebrating Sukkot in an outdoor 'Sukkah' gave the children a first hand experience of the Jewish Festival of Harvest. This resulted in high quality writing as they then moved indoors to produce their order of service booklets.



Outdoor learning beyond the school community offers opportunities of experiencing new and exciting learning opportunities. For example we attended Stibbington Environmental Centre for a Victorian Christmas. Children explored a nature trail to gather items to make a table decoration and took part in many other activities which gave



them a first hand experience of a Victorian Christmas. The children produced work of a very high standard when this theme was continued back at school.

