

## Woodland Adventure

Pupils from Secondary classes and top juniors can often be found out in the woods as we have a teacher trained as a "Forest School Leader". This experience is called Forest Schools in most schools around the country but we have had to find a different name! Woodland Adventure provides an outdoor learning experience offering pupils the opportunity to take risks, make choices and learn about nature. We often go to Nidd Gorge and enjoy walking along the woodland adventure trail, walking by the river and exploring the woods. At our camp area pupils use a variety of tools such as peelers, bow saws, knives and loppers. Sometimes we visit other places such as Golden Acre Park, The Hollies and Harlow Carr Gardens.

Amongst the many benefits we see from this activity are that pupils learn to work as a team, to follow rules and to help each other. Some pupils, who can find it a real challenge to behave appropriately in school, often show a different side to them and they thrive in the outdoor setting. We also see an improvement in their fitness levels over time and they benefit from being out in the fresh air!

### What activities do the pupils participate in during sessions?

- Walking along the trail
- Scavenger hunt
- Forest Mobiles: make from items found on the ground
- Use magnifying glasses to look at things
- Learning different knots
- Making Wood Cookies (circular name tags)
- Making stars using 5 sticks and string
- Making a xylophone, kazoo, name tag or mallet
- Disappearing habitat game
- Tying ropes around trees to make a course to follow blindfolded
- Tree recognition activities
- Make a shelter for a toy
- Shelter building
- Collecting sticks for the fire

The following risk assessments are in place:

Woodland Adventure site; Travel and transport; Use of tools; Use of ropes and string; Having a campfire; Building a shelter; Collecting natural materials.

Back at school we have our own fire pit and the pupils are able to learn how to safely light their own fires using a fire steel. We toast marshmallows and cook welsh cakes on our fire!

## Duke of Edinburgh's Award

In September 2012 we started a Duke of Edinburgh's Award group for the first time and we currently have 5 pupils participating in the Bronze Award. There are four sections which are Physical, Skill, Volunteering and Expedition. This is a very exciting opportunity for our pupils.

Expedition: we go out walking one day each week and it has been a privilege to see the progress the pupils have made, both in terms of developing their fitness and learning to work as a team. When we are out walking we are able witness them supporting each other, walking together, working out routes and discussing options, helping those struggling at the back and talking about the wonderful things they see in the outdoors. The group also learn to care for and enjoy walking Miss Adams' dog, Inca. They share responsibility for her, look after her, play with her and know when to put her on a lead.

Volunteering: presently some pupils are helping in Primary classes and organising the management of recycling within school.

Physical: some pupils get involved in activities such as swimming in the Harrogate Disability Squad, climbing, after school PE club or trampolining.

Skills: at the moment some pupils are learning new skills through involvement in the school musical, photography or flute lessons.

When asked about their experiences and how they feel about the forthcoming expedition pupils said:

### Kallum

*"I have enjoyed learning how to read maps. I have improved a lot with my walking. I like seeing the views."*

The expedition? *"I am excited"*.

### Charli

*"I like walking further and getting used to not stopping and needing breaks. I like playing with and chasing Inca. I have learnt not to get upset and how to ignore people when they are winding me up."*

The expedition? *"I think I am going to do really well on it."*

### Joshua

*"I like seeing all the sights and all the different kinds of nature. I learnt how to read directions. I like getting pictures of Inca."*

The expedition? *"I wish we could go to Mount Everest. I want to find Big Foot in Scotland"*.

### Frances

*"I liked holding Inca. I like having a picnic. I like having a coffee break. I like to go walking."*

The expedition? *"It makes me feel happy."*

Callum

*"I have enjoyed taking pictures of our pupils and the nature around us. I have taken landscapes, up close, sight shots, 3D HD shots with 1080p Dual IOS."*

The expedition?     *"Awesome."*

Miss Adams

(Duke of Edinburgh's Award Leader and Expedition Supervisor)