



A message from Miss Arnold, our Outdoor Learning Lead

I am extremely passionate about the environment and nature. I love teaching in the outdoors and supporting our children to engage in outdoor learning. Outdoor Learning helps our children to make connections with each other and nature too. It is rewarding in so many ways. As an Outdoor Specialist and Beach/Coastal teacher we make use of our local area and extensive school environment within the curriculum. I also share expertise with other schools and collaborate with European schools having had the pleasure of learning about the roots of open-air culture and teaching in other countries.

Outdoor learning is part of the connected curriculum with strong links to geography, environmental science, DT and food technology – we love to cook outdoors! I work closely with other specialists with links to Art using natural resources and creating outdoor sculptures alongside METAL. During local visits and residential, children engage in outward bound activities and orienteering too. Outdoor learning is great for developing the children's learning and life skills but also for their wellbeing.

Design and Do

The Outdoor Learning curriculum is a bespoke package that is child-centred. It offers opportunities for holistic growth of the whole child through regular lessons outside. It supports exploration and risk taking. It develops our children's natural fascination of the world and helps facilitate knowledge gathering but also develop their confidence and self-esteem. It helps our children to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually alongside their health, mindfulness and spirituality.

Connections are made to our connected curriculum subjects of science, geography, art, history and design technology across the year, deepening understanding within units of study. The curriculum allows our children to make links across relevant subjects. Links are also made to our community and local environment through visits to woodland, the beach and museums. Children develop their knowledge of physical and human characteristics, places and habitats.

Progression is mapped across the year groups and linked to the Learning and Life Skills using the following strands: Orienteering and map studies, fieldwork, environmental science, nature studies, gardening, cooking, outdoor art and sculpture

In Outdoor Learning we use natural and manmade tools with links to technology. This includes food technology with outdoor cooking. We grow our own plants and vegetables within the allotment. The children also care for the wildlife through providing habitats, food and animal care as they learn about biodiversity, bees and care for our own duck.

Each outdoor learning lesson starts with a key question and follow a series of layers allowing children to show what they know, discovery and do. This includes the development of subject terminology for outdoor learning but also application of vocabulary across the connected curriculum.

Difference

Children gain a strong understanding of the world around them during their time at Darlinghurst. Our hands-on approach to outdoor learning means that children gain a range of skills but also respect and responsibility for the environment. Due to the connections made across the connected curriculum and to learning and life skills children enhance and apply their understanding of other subject matter through a hands on approach. Learning and Life skills are integral to lessons:

- Learning together – e.g. team work, negotiation, compromise, collaboration, turn taking, team roles
- It's up to me – e.g. responsibility, independence, contribution, decision making, effort etc.
- Becoming better learners – involvement, making choices, taking ownership, persistence, risk taking
- Knowing me, knowing you-understanding self and others, impact on others including the world, building confidence, showing empathy etc.
- Think, Think, Think-problem solving, investigation, questioning, ask – what if? E.g. creativity, think outside the box, reason and enquire, evaluate.

- Speaking and listening – e.g. communication, opinions, discussion, sharing views, meaningful conversation, pupil voice, developing vocabulary

Outdoor learning develops children's understanding and their actions. They grow as caring and responsible individuals. Many families engage in community projects to care for the grounds and environment such as tree planting and enhancing our allotment area. There is a positive pupil and parental voice for outdoor learning with engagement in projects that support the academy grounds amongst families, staff and communities. This is also reflected in parental choice for the academy with recognition of the importance of learning outside the classroom and our approach. Children have an extensive environment to thrive in and enjoy all areas from the woodland, wild gardens, allotments, animal corner, the pond, outdoor classroom and more.

'Achieving Excellence Together'