

BOLDON NURSERY SCHOOL – OUTDOOR NURSERY, ENGLAND

Case Study



A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Baldon Nursery School-Outdoor Nursery is a Local Authority maintained nursery school, one of only 4 in our Local Authority and set in an area of high deprivation. The focus in all nursery schools is on narrowing the attainment gap between children to enable all children to have the best start in life, making outstanding progress during their time in nursery. The school, by law, needs its own Headteacher, who is a qualified teacher with innovative Leadership and Management skills and a qualified teacher to lead the teaching and learning. Our approach to learning outdoors is unique, and although some other settings offer 'forest school' sessions, there are very few nursery schools in the country who offers experiences outdoors for 80% or more of the time- in all weathers. In England, Nursery Schools are inspected by Ofsted to the same framework as Primary schools, carried out by Ofsted or HMI inspectors. The school is currently

judged to be outstanding for the second consecutive time, although we work in a way that is so different to everywhere else. This is because despite pushing the boundaries and following what we believe is right of young children, the teaching and

A home from home, celebrating childhood in and with nature – all day, everyday, whatever the weather.

learning is recognised as 'high quality' and 'innovative' seeing young children learn in nature without exception. In our culture, children being outside particularly in cold and wet conditions is not seen as 'acceptable' and in addition to that families and even professionals have great

concerns over young children taking risks, due to significant health and safety restraints alongside 'a claim culture'. This making our daily practice very different and outside of the 'norm' in our country - something we are very proud of!



80% OF THE CHILD'S NURSERY TIME IS OUTDOORS

THE CHILDREN'S LEARNING HAPPENS IN SYNCHRONISATION WITH THE SEASONS. IN THE AUTUMN TERM WE FORAGE AND COLLECT TREASURES AND STORE THEM FOR THE HARD WINTER. IN THE WINTER MONTHS THE BARE TREES DRAW OUR EYES INTO LINEAR MOTION AND TO THE DETAIL BEHIND.

AN ETHOS THAT INSPIRES A RESPECT FOR NATURE

AS SPRING ARRIVES THE CHILDREN CONTINUE TO GROW AND CHANGE, FLOURISHING AND EXPANDING INTO THE WORLD - JUST LIKE THE NEW BUDS OPENING ON THE PLANTS AND TREES. AS WE TAKE TIME AND SPACE TO ENSURE THE CHILDREN LEARN AT THEIR OWN PACE AND RE-VISIT EXISTING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE CONTINUOUSLY WE PREPARE FOR AN EXCITING SUMMER TERM.

IN THE SUMMER THE CHILDREN BEGIN THEIR TRANSITION INTO SCHOOLAGED 4, HAVING MADE THE STRONGEST LINKS BETWEEN EXPERIENCES THAT ENSURE SKILLS FOR LIFE.

THESE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS DEVELOPED WITH AND THROUGH NATURE BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS FOR FUTURE LEARNING.

At Baldon the children have a garden space that has been developed to allow for wild and natural spaces that they can experience and be part of all day, every day in nature that is ever changing throughout the seasons. Although not a forest or open meadow, it is an oasis in the centre of a built up colliery town. Despite having houses on all sides the space is big and uninterrupted with special places bursting with opportunities for play and exploration at its best. As well as children, our space is home to ducks and chickens who live in the allotment. We grow our own crops to harvest and eat (and often cook on the fire) and bake with our hens eggs - every child needs a birthday cake! As well as this we trudge through long grass and manoeuvre tricky terrain, as well climb tall trees reach-

ing new heights daily. The garden is a haven for wildlife and mini-beasts, something the children get to experience first-hand, helping them to make sense of their world. Our fire house really is the 'hub' of the nursery - a shelter but also an important meeting place to chat and share food. We keep warm in the winter by roaring flames and enjoy soup prepared by the children, we make our own charcoal pencils from willow and as a result we are inspired to write and make marks. Each of the special spaces from the mud kitchen to our beach which replicates our coastal cultures encourages the children to challenge themselves, form friendships and develop learning



across our whole National Curriculum - this includes developing their self-esteem and confidence but also their specific skills such as maths and literacy. We climb the tallest trees, splash in the deepest puddles and immerse ourselves completely in everything nature has to offer - dancing in the heavy rain or drinking hot chocolate by fire in freezing temperatures, holding ice in our warm hands and watching it melt. Real experiences mean real learning and life-long skills for all!

PLEASE, CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AT

www.baldonnurserieschool.co.uk

SEE FOOTAGE FROM BOLDON AT <https://youtu.be/XzsdFZRPIrY>

NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER



Sue Stokoe, Headteacher, on inspiring the use of nature in her setting and the staff's pedagogy:

"To create a place where children have time and space to explore their interests and fascinations, where childhood is celebrated. To use nature, its seasons and elements as a provocation for the learning for children, parents and staff - this continues to embed and inspire our practice."