



## Looking at Learning ~ Music Ensemble



# Looking at Learning ~ Forest Schools

## Sydenham Primary School Newsletter

**Forest schools** is a type of outdoor education in which school children visit forests or wooded areas, learning personal, social and technical skills. It has been defined as "an inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence through hands-on learning in a woodland environment".

Forest schools use the woods and forests as a means to build independence and self-esteem in school-age children. Topics include the natural environment, for example the role of trees in society, the complex ecosystem supported by a wilderness, and recognition of specific plants and animals. However, the personal skills are considered highly valuable, such as teamwork and problem solving. The woodland environment may be used to learn about more abstract concepts such as mathematics and communication.

Schedules within forest schools vary, but a typical approach is to take school children to woodland areas for once a week, for perhaps 6 weeks. The duration and frequency of visits influences the degree of outcome; more time spent in forest schools brings greater benefits. Visits should ideally continue throughout the year, allowing children to experience all weathers and the changing seasons.



Forest schools are often led by the child's interests. The main goals of forest schools in primary age children include encouraging curiosity and exploration with all of the senses, empowering children in the natural environment, and encouraging spatial awareness and motor development.

Children learn about flora and fauna but gain more abstract benefits in social skills such as team-building and cooperation,

project planning and recognition of each pupil's own achievements. By setting children small manageable tasks and giving praise, they are given a good foundation for future learning.

With high adult: child ratios, children can safely experience activities that are often prohibited, such as climbing trees or lighting fires. The programme allows children to grow in confidence and independence and extend their abilities. Currently, Mrs Thorneywork and Mrs Munday are trained Forest Schools practitioners at Sydenham Primary School. Forest Schools sessions take place every Friday, and we offer this exciting curriculum opportunity to every child in our school over the course of the year. All children are provided with smart red waterproof trousers and jackets, so they do not need to bring in a change of clothes, but they do need wellies or old trainers. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

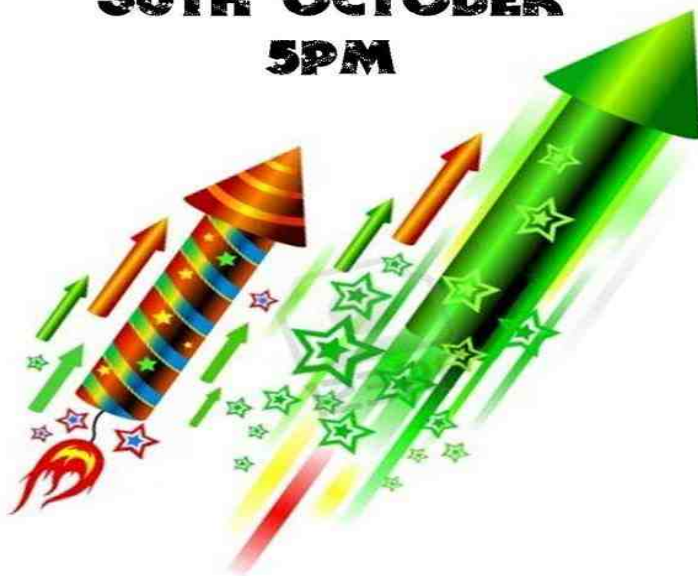
Juliette Westwood



MUSIC DANCE ARTS FOOD FUNFAIR FIREWORKS

# FESTIVAL

30TH OCTOBER  
5PM



# OF LIGHT

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

SYDNI VOLUNTEERS  
SOUTH LEAMINGTON COMMUNITY FORUM  
SHREE KRISHNA MANDIR  
SYDENHAM CHILDREN'S CENTRE  
PEOPLE IN ACTION  
CAMPION SCHOOL  
NATIONAL GRID



THE SYDNI CENTRE  
COTTAGE SQUARE  
SYDENHAM  
CV31 1PT



## Attendance Stars

Our whole school attendance target is 98% this academic year. We can't achieve this without your support!

### This week's attendance:

Class R MB: 98.7%  
Class R AH: 95.15%  
Class 1 JL: 98.4%  
Class 1 CG: 94.8%  
Class 2LC: 92%  
Class 2 JRL: 96.35%  
Class 3: 97.1%  
Class 4: 97.3%  
Class 5: 94.35%  
Class 6: 94.05%

**Congratulations to this week's winners: Class R MB**

**Overall Attendance: 95.82%**

Attendance is down this week due to a tummy bug ~ get well soon 😊

## Sydenham Super Stars!



## Mufti Days

Children may wear non-uniform on Mufti Days if they make a donation of £1 to our School Fund, which supports us in delivering our fantastic curriculum, and helps to provide exciting learning opportunities. Our next Mufti Day is Friday 24th October .



Have a lovely weekend!

Best wishes, Juliette Westwood, Executive Head Teacher



## Spooky Bats and Owls - Meet the Owls!

Market Hall Museum, Warwick



**Wednesday  
29th October**

10.30 am - 12.00 noon  
& 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm

Meet the Owls:

12.00 noon - 2.00 pm

Find out all about the nocturnal animals that come alive at night, like bats and owls! Make a Halloween decoration and an owl mask, and meet some of the Museum's natural history specimens face to face, and meet some real live owls at lunchtime with the Falconer from the Falconry and Hawking Centre.

Cost: £2.50 per child.  
Children must be accompanied by an adult. No need to book, just drop in.





# Learning Detectives



## ***What is a Learning Detective?***

Our Learning Detectives help the school's Senior Leadership Team to monitor the learning behaviours of the children at Sydenham Primary School.

## ***How do you become a Learning Detective?***

You can write a letter of application to Mrs Westwood, explaining why you would like to be a Learning Detective, and what skills you have that will help you to do this important job.

## ***Is there any training for Learning Detectives?***

Our Learning Detectives receive a day's training to look at how children learn best, and what to look for in a lesson. The training focuses on looking for effective learning.

## ***How do the Learning Detectives gather evidence?***

Our very first Learning Detectives designed their own evidence gathering form. We set protocols for what the Learning Detectives should do before, during and after evidence-gathering sessions.

## ***When do the Learning Detectives do their monitoring?***

They observe lessons in pairs, for approximately 10 minutes, with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Their evidence-gathering sheets track the observed children's learning behaviours. The Learning Detectives look for positive learning behaviours. Following the lesson, the two Learning Detectives have time to discuss their findings with a member of the SLT.

## ***What happens next?***

The Learning Detectives give verbal feedback to the children in the classrooms where they have observed. Sometimes, their evidence is shared at staff meetings or emailed to all teachers.

## ***Is their evidence shared with anyone else?***

Sometimes, the findings are shared with the school's governors and with parents and carers on the school newsletter or website. Also, the Learning Detectives occasionally lead whole school assemblies.

## ***What is the impact of the Learning Detectives (What difference have they made)?***

There is significant impact of the work of the Learning Detectives at several different levels.....

Firstly, the teaching staff have heard the feedback from the pupils and have made changes to the way they teach children (their pedagogy) because they have listened to the children saying what helps them to learn.

Secondly, the other pupils in our school, who hear the feedback at the end of the evidence-gathering lessons, have a deeper understanding of learning, and a greater sense of responsibility for their own learning (as well as supporting others' learning!).

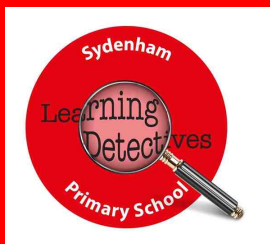
Thirdly, the Learning Detectives themselves understand and are able to unpick learning. They are able to discuss their understanding of themselves as learners, and the personal skills they have developed as Learning Detectives. They appreciate the leadership opportunity and responsibility.

## **Guiding Principles:**

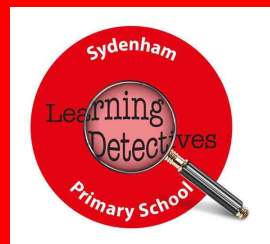
We have two principles we *must* always follow:

1. We only look at learning and learners, not teaching.
2. We focus on positive examples of great learning.





## Learning Detectives' Rules for Gathering Evidence in Lessons:



### **Before the lesson:**

1. Be prepared; make sure you have pens, pencils, logbooks, Learning Detective identity badge, sash etc.
2. Check with the teacher that they know you are coming, introduce yourself (the day before) and ask for 5 minutes at the end to give feedback to the class.
3. Inform your class teacher that you will be missing some of your own lesson, and ask her about catching up on the work you will miss.
4. Make sure you look smart (correct and smart uniform).
5. Arrive in good time, a couple of minutes before start of lesson.

### **During the lesson:**

6. Go in with an open mind, don't be biased.
7. Always record positive evidence ... never write down negatives.
8. Be polite to everyone in the lesson and treat everyone in the room with respect.
9. Don't draw attention to yourself and do not interrupt the learning in any way.
10. Pay close attention to the children and their learning ... don't get side-tracked by the lesson or the teacher!
11. Remember that you are there as an observer, and try to sit where you can see the learners' faces.
12. Remind the teacher that you need to talk to the children and then give clear and helpful feedback.

### **After the lesson:**

13. Thank the teacher for having you in the lesson.
14. Enter and leave the room with a smile.
15. Write a thank you letter to the teacher.

