



# Discover Your Park

## Morden Park Geography Pack

This pack has been created as a free resource for staff at local primary schools to encourage the use of Morden Park for geography education and recreation.

Youth Community & Education Team  
Trees for Cities



This project is supported by



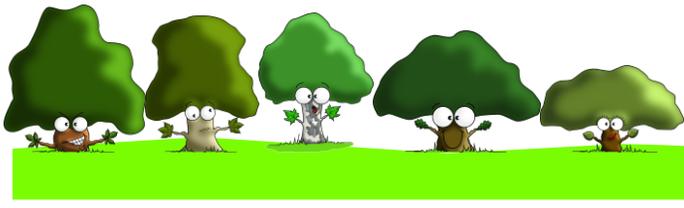


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A CD of resources is also provided with this pack, please see Page 13 for further details





# Capital Woodlands Project

This resource pack has been created by Trees for Cities and funded through the Capital Woodlands Project. It is a free resource for staff at local primary schools to encourage the use of Morden Park for geography education and recreation.

Capital Woodlands is a three-year London Biodiversity Partnership Project (2006-2009) supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project is managed by **Trees for Cities** who work in partnership with the Greater London Authority, Forestry Commission, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the London Boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Haringey, **Merton**, and Redbridge and the Peabody Trust to deliver the Capital Woodlands Project.

The Capital Woodlands Project aims to raise awareness and appreciation of London's woodlands and increase public benefit and participation in woodland activities. These aims will be achieved by improving access, biodiversity, community, education, and training opportunities in woodlands throughout London.

The Capital Woodlands Project has four pan-London programmes of work:

- Community and Education led by Trees for Cities
- Training in Woodland Management led by Trees for Cities
- Volunteering in Woodlands led by BTCV
- Woodland Management led by the Forestry Commission

[www.capitalwoodlands.org](http://www.capitalwoodlands.org)

Trees for Cities is an independent charity set up in 1993 (initially as Trees for London) to work with local communities on tree planting projects. Our aim is to tackle global warming, create social cohesion and beautify our cities through tree planting, community education and training initiatives in urban areas of greatest need.

**For more information contact Anna Kitteringham at Trees for Cities**

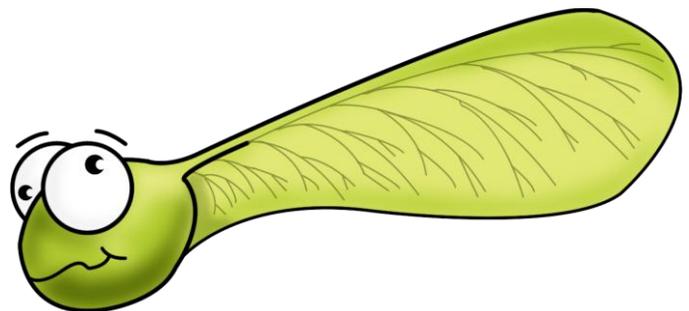
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# Outdoor Education

**'We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development whatever their age, ability or circumstances.'** Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto DFES 2006

'There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning' (DFES 2006). This resource pack highlights six areas within Morden Park for Outdoor Education and provides materials and ideas for site-based activities linked to Key Stage 1 and 2 of the Geography curriculum.

Trees for Cities has been engaging young people in outdoor education since 1993 as a core part of the National Curriculum. As Aim 2 of the National Curriculum states: "It (the National Curriculum) should develop (pupils') awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environments in which they live, and secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, local, national and global level." In addition learning outside the classroom provides a powerful route to the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, in particular enjoying and achieving, staying safe and being healthy' (DFES 2006).

Helping children develop a positive relationship with their local environment can be achieved in a variety of ways. While this pack focuses on the Geography curriculum there are many subjects that can be explored outdoors. The table below highlights units within other National Curriculum subjects and relevant themes within Education for Sustainable Development.

Science	Art and Design	Citizenship	Education for Sustainable Development
<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 1</b>
<b>Unit 1</b> Growing plants <b>Unit 2A:</b> Health and growth <b>Unit 2B</b> Plants and animals in the environment <b>Unit 2C</b> Variation	<b>Unit 2B</b> Mother Nature, designer	<b>Unit 1</b> Taking part – developing skills of communication and participation <b>Unit 2:</b> Choices	<b>Interdependence</b> - Understanding that what people, including themselves, do affects themselves, the places they live, other people, and plants and animals <b>Citizenship and stewardship</b> - Knowing how to care for themselves and others and how to care for their home, school and local environments <b>Diversity</b> – Knowing that there are many different kinds of plants and animals living in the local environment and in distant environments
<b>Key Stage 2</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>
<b>Unit 3B</b> Helping plants grow well <b>Unit 4B</b> Habitats <b>Unit 5B</b> Life cycles <b>Unit 5.6H:</b> Enquiry in environmental and technological contexts <b>Unit 6A</b> Interdependence and adaptation	<b>Unit 6C</b> Sense of Place	<b>Unit 1</b> Taking part – developing skills of communication and participation <b>Unit 2:</b> Choices <b>Unit 9:</b> Respect for property <b>Unit 11:</b> In the media - what's the news?	<b>Interdependence</b> - Understanding how people, animals and plants are interconnected through natural cycles and ecological/biological systems <b>Diversity</b> - Understanding what is meant by biodiversity in local and global contexts and the importance of maintaining biodiversity at local and global levels

Please see back page for further sources of information.



# Morden Park

Morden Park is a significantly large area of open space in an essentially urban area. As such, it provides a place where local people can enjoy contact with the natural environment without the need to travel. The park provides an excellent educational facility within walking distance of several local primary schools.

Morden Park is owned by Merton Council and is freely accessible to the public at all times (although no public rights of way exist across the site). It lies approximately 1 kilometre south west of Morden Town Centre adjacent to the A24. Much of Morden Park is short mown amenity grassland and other amenity facilities. However, the site also includes a variety of woodland and wetland habitats, as illustrated on the map below.  
[www.merton.gov.uk/](http://www.merton.gov.uk/)



Morden Park has been designated with the following status

- **Borough Grade 2 Importance for Nature Conservation**
- **Metropolitan Open Land**
- **Schedule Ancient Monument (The Mound)**
- **Conservation Area and Archaeological Priority Area within the Merton Unitary Development Plan (UDP).**



# Morden Park Outdoor Classrooms

Trees for Cities has identified several areas within Morden Park that would create excellent outdoor classrooms for aspects of the Key Stage 1 and 2 Geography Curriculum. The table below introduces six of these areas and their locations are clearly marked on an additional map on pages 5 and 13.

The following pages suggest at least two curriculum-linked activities per year group, the objective of the activity, a list of resources required and helpful pointers for completing a risk assessment. Although we have linked specific activities to particular areas, these are only suggestions. There are hundreds of educational possibilities. We hope that this resource provides teachers with ideas and encouragement to develop their own outdoor classroom activities.

Outdoor Learning Areas	Opportunities for Outdoor Education	Curriculum link	Site Photo
<b>1: Woodland Walk</b> There is a belt of woodland running around the perimeter with earth pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent access and good visibility</li> <li>• Range of mature tree species: oak, ash, evergreen, bracken, horse chestnut, hawthorn</li> <li>• Lots of wildlife activity especially birds and squirrels</li> <li>• Lots of newly fallen oak boughs + whole length of dead tree trunk</li> </ul>	<b>(Year 1)</b> <b>Unit 1:</b> Around our school – the local area <b>(Year 2)</b> <b>Unit 2:</b> Where in the world is Barnaby Bear?	
<b>2: Woodland Copses</b> There are several small copses within the parkland areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small areas with good access and clear boundaries</li> <li>• Pieces of deadwood and good leaf litter for minibeasts</li> <li>• Good range of tree species including: horse chestnut, oak, poplar, hornbeam, thorn</li> </ul>	<b>(Year 3)</b> <b>Unit 21:</b> How can we improve the area we see from our window? <b>(Year 4)</b> <b>Unit 8:</b> Improving the environment	
<b>3: Grasslands</b> During the summer large areas of the open parkland are left uncut to grow into meadows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long grass with a range of wildflowers</li> <li>• Good visibility and easy access</li> <li>• Species include various grasses, buttercup, clover, oxeye daisy, vetch, birdsfoot trefoil, goat's beard, sorrel and cut's leaf crane's-bill</li> </ul>	<b>(Year 2)</b> <b>Unit 2:</b> Where in the world is Barnaby Bear? <b>(Year 4)</b> <b>Unit 8:</b> Improving the environment	
<b>4: New Planting</b> Over the last three years around 5000 native saplings have been planted across the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good visibility</li> <li>• Lots of leaf litter and opportunities for leaf ID</li> <li>• Contain native mix: oak, dog rose, yew, birch, hawthorn, rowan</li> <li>• Opportunity to measure growth rates</li> </ul>	<b>(Year 1)</b> <b>Unit 1:</b> Around our school – the local area <b>(Year 4)</b> <b>Unit 8:</b> Improving the environment	
<b>5: Pyl Brook</b> The small brook runs gently alongside much of the Southern Woodland Walk with several access points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two safe crossing points</li> <li>• Slow moving shallow water with good visibility</li> <li>• Range of aquatic plant life</li> <li>• Direct access possible via sloping banks</li> </ul>	<b>(Year 2)</b> <b>Unit 2:</b> Where in the world is Barnaby Bear? <b>(Year 5)</b> <b>Unit 11:</b> Water	
<b>6: Cycle Track</b> The new track is designed to provide pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users with a green, quiet place to cycle or walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent access and well maintained pathway</li> <li>• Range of different environmental features along track</li> <li>• Good spot for surveys</li> </ul>	<b>(Year 2)</b> <b>Unit 2:</b> Where in the world is Barnaby Bear? <b>(Year 6)</b> <b>Unit 16:</b> What's in the news?	

Please note that resources mentioned on the following pages that are highlighted with a “\*\*” are available on the resources CD, please see page 13 for further details.



# Year 1

## Unit 1: Around our school - the local area

- What are our immediate surroundings like?
- Are there any changes taking place in our area?



Woodland Explorer: Photo Trees for Cities

### Activity 1: Investigating our local area

**Objectives:** To use a local park to practice asking questions about the local area. To explore local features and think about how different environments make us feel.

**Resources Required:** Face cards\*, digital camera, paper and pen for recording results, Year 1 questionnaire\*

**Task Description:** This activity can begin on the way to the park as the children walk through the local area. Introduce some key questions before setting out such as 'Can you describe what you see?' and 'How does this place make you feel?' Use a note book to jot down any adjectives and the

digital camera to record any key features. The face cards provided on the resource CD depict happy and sad expressions and can be used to help children express how they feel about the local area. A thumbs up/thumbs down voting system could be used, if this is more appropriate.

Within the woodland (outdoor learning area 1 on page 13), there are many features that could be investigated in more detail, such as a very large tree, a dead tree or some litter. The resource CD contains a simple questionnaire that you can use to rate the quality of features. These results can be taken back to the classroom to be presented on a graph, illustrated with photographs of the features and words that the children have used to describe them. This task could be extended by recording and comparing results about the woodland environment with the residential streets around the park or the school grounds.

### Activity 2: Looking for Changes

**Objectives:** To look at changes in the park and to think about how places will change over time. To use pictures to record information about the local area.

**Resources Required:** Paper, pencils, clipboard

**Task Description:** There are lots of new changes within Morden Park. This activity works really well in the newly planted woodlands (outdoor learning area 4 on page 13). Ask the children to walk around the new planting site and to choose a tree that they like. Ask them to draw a leaf from the tree and on the other side of their paper ask them to sketch the whole tree. Discuss with the class that eventually the little trees will grow into big trees and form a woodland like the one visited in activity 1. If time allows, go back to the mature woodland, asking them to look around at the trees and see if they can use their leaf pictures to identify a big version of the tree that they have drawn, to get an idea of how the tree will look in 70 years time. Discuss with them that change is continuous and that some change is good and some change is bad.

This task could be extended by looking at the map of the park (on page 5 or available on resource CD), and asking the children to work out where the new planting and their trees are situated.



### Points for Risk Assessment

Deadwood or debris overhead, bracken, uneven surfaces, old animal holes, fungi, litter, thorny plants, low branches, stinging nettles, trip hazards such as logs, dog walkers.



# Year 2

## Unit 2: Where in the world is Barnaby Bear?

- Where has Barnaby Bear travelled to this week or month?
- How did Barnaby travel to these places?



Barnaby Bear: Trees for Cities

### Activity 1: We're Going on a Bear Hunt

**Objectives:** To help children learn about other places. To experience a variety of parkland environments.

**Resources Required:** 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury, Bear Hunt Map\*, mat for children to sit on.

**Task Description:** We all know that Barnaby Bear likes to travel, but he can also have great adventures in his local park. 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' is a great story and as the map provided on the resource CD demonstrates, Morden Park provides a brilliant venue to act out the story.

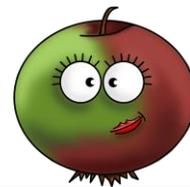
Start by sitting the children down in the wood and reading them the story to make sure children are familiar with the events in the book. Encourage them to join in with you as you read. Then use the map to lead your class and Barnaby through the long grass, along the river, through the wood and all the way to the cave. Once the story is finished talk about each of the different places and what they were like. You may want to collect things along the way, such as grass stalks, mud or twigs to create a display of the hunt back in the classroom.

**Activity 2:** How would Barnaby Bear and other visitors get to the park?

**Objectives:** To investigate how people travel to and through the park. To compare different forms of transport.

**Resources Required:** Travel Survey Sheet\*, clipboards and pencils.

**Task Description:** Sit the children along the cycle track or another main pathway through the park (on page 5 or available on resource CD) and give them each a travel survey sheet. These recording sheets have different methods of travel to the park, for example cycling, walking, bus and paws (this could be used for a dog). Ask the children to record (with a tick) how people are travelling when someone/animal goes past them. Use the third column on the survey to rate how fast each form of transport is. This can be used as a discussion point in the classroom about the impact on travel times. If there are not enough visitors to the park to collect good results, the children could ask each other how they travel to the park. To extend this piece of work, use the results to create a class graph.



### Points for Risk Assessment



Deadwood or debris overhead, bracken, uneven surfaces, thorny plants, low branches, stinging nettles, trip hazards such as logs especially in long grass, dog walkers and steep and slippery slopes near the brook.



# Year 3

**Unit 21:** How can we improve the area we see from our window?

- What is the view from our window like?
- What exactly are the features we can see?



Woodland Window: Photo Trees for Cities

## Activity 1: Making Windows

**Objectives:** To create their own window to investigate views of Morden Park. To recreate a view using natural resources.

**Resources Required:** String, scissors, woodland material.

**Task Description:** This activity follows on well from classroom work based around the book 'Window' by Jeannie Baker. Ask the children to find 4 sticks that are equal in size and approximately the length from their hand to their elbow. Show the children how to tie the sticks together to create a square window; this activity is easier if children work in pairs, so one can hold the sticks while the other ties the knots (examples of this are shown on the resource CD). Ask them to select a view

of the park using their window frame and then describe to their partner the main features of their view. Encourage them to think about how that view might change over time, either through the seasons or over several years. Ask the children to make a permanent record of the view they can see now by collecting resources from the woodland to represent the main features they can see through their windows. For example, sticks could represent a tree and a feather a bird. Children could either place the materials in the frame on the ground, or alternatively they can tie the materials to the frame so the view can be taken back to the classroom for display.

## Activity 2: Map Reading

**Objectives:** To use and interpret maps and plans. To identify and investigate physical and human features in Morden Park.

**Resources Required:** Map of Morden Park\*, clip boards, pencils, paper, digital camera, human and physical sorting cards\*

**Task Description:** Divide the children into groups, so that each group has an adult leader. Give each group a map of the park. Encourage the children to discuss what is meant by a physical and a human feature. A sorting exercise could be devised to explain this using the cards provided on the resource CD or your own props of man made and natural materials. Once this concept is understood, designate each group with a physical or human feature on the map e.g. the band stand, the cycle track, the mound, the woodlands, the brook or the pitch and putt course, but don't tell them which it is you have given them. Give each group a specified time to use the map to find their feature and to work out whether it is a physical or a human feature. Once found, the group will need to record their findings by collecting different forms of information and evidence e.g. photos, graphs, sketches, written descriptions etc. Most groups will find that their features have both human and natural influences. Use some classroom time for the groups to write up and display their results; they may also want to extend their research to look for other secondary sources of information such as aerial maps or websites.

## Points for Risk Assessment

Deadwood or debris overhead, bracken, uneven surfaces, old animal holes, fungi, litter, thorny plants, low branches, stinging nettles, trip hazards such as logs, dog walkers, cuts from scissors, splinters, getting lost!





# Year 4

## Unit 8: Improving the environment

- What is this place like and why? How can it be improved?



Sticker Poll: Photo Trees for Cities

### Activity 1: Sticker Poll

**Objectives:** To consider the impact of humans on an environment. To think about the maintenance of Morden Park.

**Resources Required:** Sticker Poll Sheets\*, stickers, string, scissors, sticker poll teachers' notes\*

**Task Description:** You can use the sticker poll sheets to investigate the way an area of the park is managed or to investigate an area of the park where there are problems. There are some teachers' notes on the resource CD to provide some background to these issues. Print and laminate the questions, feel free to adapt them if desired.

Once out in the park tie the sticker poll sheets to trees in the wood or weigh them down onto the grass. Give each child five stickers - one sticker for each question sheet. Ask the children to carefully read the questions and stick a sticker in the box that they agree with 'yes'/'no'. Encourage the children to think for themselves. When they have finished ask the children to return to the meeting point and use the sheets and their answers to stimulate a discussion about looking after the park.

### Activity 2: Muddy environmental questionnaire

**Objectives:** To investigate a range of environments. To collect and record evidence in order to answer questions.

**Resources Required:** Environmental questionnaire\*, clip boards, water (for mud thumb prints) and wet wipes (to clean thumbs with at the end)

**Task Description:** Give each child a questionnaire and ask them to find a partner. They will take it in turns to interview each other. Collect some soil in pots and add water to create a muddy mixture. The children will use muddy finger prints to record their partners answer for each question.

Ask the children to look out for positive and negative features in the park. At the first stop point (in the woodland) ask the children to take it in turns to complete question 3. When they are answering each question encourage them to think about why they like or dislike certain parts of the park and what features make it a pleasant/unpleasant place to be in. Continue along the route stopping at point 2 (grass area) and ask them to complete question 4. Walk along the path and up to the mound in the park (stop point 3). Stop next to the information board at the mound and ask them to complete the final questionnaire.

When the class has finished, all the answers can be collected together to create a class graph. This can be done back in the classroom, or outside using natural materials on the ground.



### Points for Risk Assessment

Deadwood or debris overhead, bracken, uneven surfaces, old animal holes, fungi, litter, thorny plants, low branches, stinging nettles, trip hazards such as logs, dog walkers.



## Unit 11: Water

- Is all water usable? How can water be made usable?



Water Filtering: Photo Trees for Cities

### Activity 1: Dirty Water

**Objectives:** To investigate how nature and humans make water dirty. To appreciate that access to clean water is important for the whole ecosystem (humans, plants and animals).

**Resource Required:** 7 clear plastic containers and clean water, you may want to bring additional pollution props e.g. a small jar of vegetable oil or some pieces of litter

**Task Description:** Gather the children around the brook and ask them to think about who uses water and what it

is used for. Ask them if it matters if the water is clean or dirty and what makes water dirty.

Split the class into 6 groups giving each group a container of clean water. Ask the groups to collect different things from the outdoor classroom that might find their way into the brook to make the water dirty, for example mud, leaves, litter. Add these things to the water pots to see what happens to the water. When they all have dirty water take an empty water container and collect some water from the brook. Ask the children to compare their water and the water from the brook. The water in the brook will probably seem cleaner, why is this so? Can dirty water be made clean?

### Activity 2: Cleaning Water

**Objective:** To think of innovative ways to clean water.

**Resources Required:** 6 containers of dirty water (from previous activity) and 6 empty containers

**Task Description:** Challenge the children to clean their dirty water using only the resources they find around them. Give each group an empty container to collect their clean water in, they must get as much clean water in the empty container as possible. To complete the challenge they can use anything they find around them except their fingers! Let them work out different ways that they can remove the things in the water, for example they could pick out leaves/litter out with sticks or create a barrier to prevent large things being poured into the new container. They could leave the mud to settle on the bottom of the container and then scoop out the rest of the water. Set a time limit and compare the results by looking at how much water has been cleaned and how clean that water is. Allow time for discussion about the activity and introduce the idea that some things that make the water dirty can't be seen such as chemicals or bacteria (you could demonstrate this by adding salt to some drinking water). Use this activity to lead on to discussions about how drinking water is cleaned and why this is an important process.



### Points for Risk Assessment

Slippery and steep access to brook, uneven surfaces, fungi, litter, thorny plants, low branches, stinging nettles, trip hazards such as logs, dog walkers



# Year 6

## Unit 16: What's in the news?

- What is happening in our local area? How and why is the place changing? How will people in the community respond?



Cycle Track: Photo Trees for Cities

### Activity 1: Morden Park in the news

**Objectives:** To collect primary data. To analyse collected data.

**Resources required:** Park newspaper article\*, clipboards, plain paper, digital cameras.

**Task Description:** Take the children to the new Cycle Track in the park (outdoor learning area 6 on page 13). Split the class into 4 groups. Give them the newspaper article about the cycle track and ask them to read it in their groups. Encourage them to have group discussions about the advantages and

disadvantages of this cycle track. Explain that the newspaper report is secondary data and that today they will be collecting primary data. Each group will collect a different type of primary data - Group 1 will photograph the cycle track, noting where each photo is taken and what it shows. Group 2 will carry out an environmental survey, walking along the track and noting any problems e.g. litter, damage to plants or left over building materials. Group 3 will complete a transect along the length of the cycle track, noting down the land use etc. Group 4 will look at who is using the track and create a user survey for the path. The class can then work together to share their results and to draw any conclusions from the data collected.

### Activity 2: Cycle Track Role Play

**Objectives:** To develop awareness of changes in a locality. To understand consequences of change for different members of a locality.

**Resources required:** Park user profiles\*

**Task Description:** Start the activity by having a broad discussion about the positive and negative points associated with the new cycle track based on the secondary and primary data collected.

The children will then work in groups to put themselves into the shoes of a local interest group or community member, for example: group 1 = Cyclist, Group 2 = Pedestrian/Dog Walker, Group 3 = Sustrans, Group 4 = Tress for Cities, Group 5 = Wildlife Lover. Each group needs to think about the implications of the cycle track for their particular character or group (a profile for each one is provided on the resource CD). Each group needs to come up with an opinion on the development of the cycle track and some justification for their viewpoint. Once agreed, the teacher can start to mix the groups up, so that those opinions are shared or challenged. If people are finding it difficult to listen to each other or have their say use a talking stick (only the person holding the stick is allowed to talk and must pass it on or return to the middle when finished).

Complete the sessions by discussing how opinions varied and how they can be used to help make decisions about changes to the local area. This could be linked closely with Citizenship Unit 10.



### Points for Risk Assessment

Uneven surfaces, old animal holes, fungi, litter, thorny plants, low branches, stinging nettles, trip hazards such as logs, dog walkers, cyclists.



# Activity Resources and Classroom Map

This resource pack comes with a CD of resources for you to print off and use with the relevant outdoor classroom activity. All of the resources have been created by Trees for Cities. The resources available include:

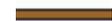
- Face Cards
- Year 1 Questionnaire
- Bear Hunt Map
- Travel Survey Sheet
- Window Example Sheet
- Map of Morden Park
- Human and Physical Sorting Cards
- Sticker Poll Sheets
- Sticker Poll Teacher's Notes
- Year 4 Environmental Questionnaire
- Park Newspaper Article
- Park User Profiles
- **Discover Your Park, Morden Park Science Pack**

## Outdoor Learning Areas Map



### KEY

#### Outdoor Learning Areas

-  1: Woodland Walk
-  2: Woodland Copses
-  3: Grasslands
-  4: New Planting
-  5: Pyl Brook
-  6: Cycle Track
-  Emergency Access point





# Health and Safety Outdoors

***'Responsibility for pupil safety mainly rests with the school, which should ensure that staff have received appropriate training and that policies and guidance are followed. The role of the local authority, head teacher and Education Visits Coordinator is central to the sensible management of any risk' (DFES 2006)***

Appropriate health and safety measures are fundamental to the success of outdoor education. There are a huge range of resources and information sources to support Educational Visit Coordinators, Head Teachers and Outdoor Education Supervisors. Training and support for these roles in Morden comes from the Merton Educational Directorate. Merton Council has produced a comprehensive outdoor education handbook for schools, 'There and Back Again', available from [www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/educationvisits.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/educationvisits.htm)

Other key information sources

- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/schooltrips/getitright.htm> - Provides separate H&S information for Leaders, Governors, Head teachers, Local Education Authorities, and parents/children
- The DfES's 1998 good practice guide 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational' visits also contains specific role information and can be downloaded freely from <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/visits/>

## Planning and preparation

As you start to think about building the outdoor classrooms into your lesson plans you will need to cover certain health and safety considerations. The Health and Safety Executive has provided 10 vital questions that should be considered before carrying out an educational visit.

- 1) What are the main objectives of the visit?
- 2) What is "Plan B" if the main objectives can't be achieved?
- 3) What could go wrong? Does the risk assessment cover:
  - The main activity
  - "Plan B"
  - Travel arrangements
  - Emergency procedures
  - Staff numbers, gender and skill mixes
  - Generic and site-specific hazards and risks (including for Plan B)
  - Variable hazards (including environmental and participants' personal abilities and the 'cut off' points).
- 4) What information will be provided for parents?
- 5) What consents will be sought?
- 6) What opportunities will parents have to ask questions (including any arrangements for a parents' meeting)?
- 7) What assurances are there of the leader(s) competencies?
- 8) What are the communication arrangements?
- 9) What are the arrangements for supervision, both during activities and 'free time' – is there a Code of Conduct?
- 10) What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the visit?

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/schooltrips/getitright.htm>



# Health and Safety Outdoors

## Risk Assessments

Merton Educational Directorate will provide 'generic risk assessments' to schools. These assessments aim to provide guidance of the common risks associated with off-site visits. When preparing your risk assessment do bear in mind that as well as keeping children safe *'it is also vital that young people learn how to manage challenge and risk for themselves in everyday situations, so they become confident capable adults'* (Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto DFES 2006).

The table below highlights some of potential risks likely to be found in Morden Park, based on Trees for Cities experience of using the site for educational workshops. There are also specific points for risk assessment on each of the outdoor classroom activity pages (pages 7 – 12).

Key things to look out for	Safety tips
<p><b>Dogs.</b> Morden Park is very popular with dog walkers and there are no requirements for dogs to be on leads. Dogs approaching a group are far more likely to cause a distraction than to actually cause an injury.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid activities on main thoroughfares</li> <li>• Advise children not to approach dogs</li> <li>• If a dog approaches advise children to remain still and calm and ask an adult to locate the owner</li> <li>• If working in a specific area put up signs to advise dog walkers that children are working and kindly ask them to keep their dogs on leads</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dangerous plants.</b> There are plants within the park that have poisonous leaves or berries. There are also plants that may sting or scratch.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show children examples of plants to avoid at the start of the workshop as part of a health and safety talk</li> <li>• Use hazard tape to mark areas to avoid</li> <li>• Tell children not to eat anything they find unless instructed to by a supervisor</li> <li>• Wash hands on return to school</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fungi.</b> These can add beauty and fascination to a woodland environment; however, some fungi can cause harm if eaten.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell children not to touch fungi</li> <li>• Wash hands on return to school</li> </ul>
<p><b>Trips and falls.</b> The terrain throughout the park is rarely flat. There are many microhabitats created by fallen logs and burrow holes. The ground is often hidden by long grass or leaf litter and in wet weather surfaces maybe slippery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important that children are advised to bring sensible footwear, particularly if the weather has been wet.</li> <li>• Avoid running games in areas with lots of trip hazards</li> <li>• Stick to main thoroughfares when travelling to outdoor sites</li> <li>• Use hazard tape to mark areas to avoid</li> </ul>

## Code of conduct

Although Morden Park is an urban open space there are many relevant aspects of the Countryside Code that will help ensure that the natural environment is used safely and sustainably. Some of the keypoints are summarised below:

- **Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.** Even when going out locally, it's best to get the latest information about weather and site conditions. Be prepared for the unexpected! For example, some areas of open land may be restricted while work is carried out, for safety reasons.
- **Leave gates and property as you find them.** This includes animal homes too! If you move stones or deadwood to look for creatures, or uncover the entrance to a nest or burrow, take care to leave the habitat as you found it.
- **Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.** Don't pick wildflowers, draw a picture instead. Release any creatures that you catch for observation and make sure you take all your resources home with you.
- **Consider other people.** Showing consideration and respect for other people makes the urban countryside a pleasant environment for everyone.

For a full version of the Countryside Code is visit [http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/things\\_to\\_know/countryside\\_code](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/things_to_know/countryside_code)



# Further Information

## Outdoor Education

### Books

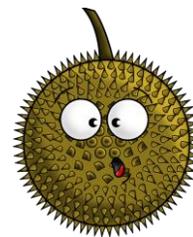
- Habitat Explorer: Forests and Woodlands. Fun ideas for things to do outdoors. By Nick Baker. Collins 2006.
- Habitat Explorer: Gardens and Parks. Fun ideas for things to do outdoors. By Nick Baker. Collins 2006.
- Nature's Playground. Activities, crafts and games to encourage children to get outdoors. By Fiona Danks & Jo Schofield. Francis Lincoln 2005
- Teaching Early Years Outdoors. A Sutton Ecology Centre Workpack. By Karen Fry 2001
- The get outside fun and learn project and nature book. By Clare Bradley & Cecelia Fitzsimons. Anness Publishing Ltd. 2006

### Websites

- <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/outsideclassroom/> - Download the DFES Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto. 2006
- [www.foresteducation.org](http://www.foresteducation.org) - The learning resources are split into subjects and age groups. You can search, using the pull-down menus above, for resources in any of the subjects for any specific age group - or even for resources suitable for all ages.
- [www.naturedetectives.org.uk](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk) - This website has a huge amount of downloadable and interactive resources on-line.
- [www.kidsplanet.org](http://www.kidsplanet.org)
- <http://www.naturegrid.org.uk/> - The Cambridge Environmental Education Centre includes key stage links, interactive pages and activities related to the local area.
- [www.eastendtalking.org.uk/safari/](http://www.eastendtalking.org.uk/safari/) - We're going on a safari to see what we can find in the East End. Links for young people, including pond dipping & wildlife. Links to explore including, habitats & improving the environment, events in the area, city farms and open spaces and lots more.
- [www.the-tree.org.uk](http://www.the-tree.org.uk) - The-Tree is a non-profit website dedicated to sharing information about the many different facets of knowledge about trees and forests.

## Education for Sustainable Development

- <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainable-schools/>
- <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/aboutus/sd/>



## Health and Safety Outdoors

- <http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/educationvisits.htm> - There and Back Again. The Outdoor Education Handbook. Merton Council 2004
- [http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/things\\_to\\_know/countryside\\_code](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/things_to_know/countryside_code) - For a full version of the Countryside Code and more resources.
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/schooltrips/getitright.htm> - Provides separate H&S information for Leaders, Governors, Head teachers, Local Education Authorities, and parents/children
- <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/visits/> The DfES's 1998 good practice guide Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits