

Our village schools are setting a great example

At both Womersley and Shamley Green School and Longacre School the children spend valuable time outside exploring and appreciating nature. Most year groups are taken out for Forest School Learning once a week by a trained Forest School Leader like Moira Forde. Moira told me "whilst we use the woods to learn about the seasons, habitats, animals and plants (science), we are also just as likely to use the woods for other areas of the curriculum. So, we might use the leaves and acorns for art, or we might go looking for examples of 3D shapes (maths) or we might act out a story we've been studying in literacy". At Longacre, Forest school leader Charlotte Thorpe tells me, each year group also has one 'Empty Classroom Day' during the year when they have the entire day outside following their normal timetable of lessons.

I was also excited to learn that both schools also have Eco Councils. At Longacre their Eco Council is called the Green Team. They are in the process of creating a Wilderness Zone in their woods and are focusing on becoming a single use plastic free school with a big push to recycling more of their waste. In October the Longacre Green Team hosted their very first Green Team car boot sale in order to think about the things we buy, use and then throw away. 'We want to encourage people to pass on their unwanted things to someone who might want or need them and stop them going into landfill'.

At WSG, the Eco Council is all about improving the site and encouraging good practice in terms of the environment. All the ideas come from the children and two elected delegates from each class attend regular meetings, deciding on a plan of action. They are currently working on litter management; as well as setting up a rota of litter pickers they aim to improve how they dispose of the litter they collect. They are encouraging better use of composting at the school, and hope to tackle the overuse of plastic. Plans for the future include looking at how good WSG is at providing homes for nature.

It's great to hear about ways in which the school children in Shamley Green are learning about and thinking about nature and coming up with great ideas to protect the environment.

Henrietta Griffiths Shamley Green Environment Group.



The Green team at Longacre school



Forest School learning at Wonersh & Shamley Green Primary School