Free running? (key stages 1 and 2)

What the photos say
The use of ‘space’, especially if the space is being used in a way that it was not specifically designed for, can be a particularly contentious issue for different groups of people. The young bikers are at a skateboard park on the shores of Lake Tuggerah, NSW, Australia; the street scene is in Cambridge, UK.

Lesson ideas
These activities focus on children’s ‘everyday geographies’, exploring children’s personal experiences of places to play/be active in the environment. This will help them see that geography is as much about their own experience of living in the world as it is about the experience of others.

Other resources
- maps and photographs of your local area
- websites (for Session 1): http://tinyurl.com/atlqux (how to create a Quikmap) and http://tinyurl.com/d9w67h (how to create a Google My Map)

Session 1
Use the skateboard park photograph to stimulate a discussion about places (spaces) where the children enjoy playing or being active in the local area. Then ask them to think about places they dislike and say why. Organise children with a talking partner so everyone has a chance to take part.

Suggested questions:
Is this a ‘boys only’ space? Is it an official, or unofficial, place to take part in this activity?
Where do you go to skateboard, ride your bike or scooter in your local area?
Would other people (parents, older people, police) approve of this use of the space? If not, why not?
What other activities can you take part in within your local area?
What makes you choose a place to play?
What makes you feel that you cannot use a space?
Where in the world do young people use space in this way?

Using Quikmaps or Google Maps, display a satellite view of your local area. Drag emoticon icons onto your map to display information about how children feel about places in their local area.

Alternatively, provide the children with an outline map of the local area that they can annotate. See www.geography.org.uk/projects/valuingplaces/cpdunits/thinkmaps.

Session 2
Ask children to take digital photographs of places they like/dislike playing in. Alternatively, you may be able to locate photographs for your area on Geograph (www.geograph.org.uk). These images can be displayed on the IWB and talked about. Are there places that everyone enjoys going to? Are these always ‘officially designated’ play spaces, such as a skateboard park, or are some of them completely un-regulated? See questions for Session 1.

Session 3
Install your interactive whiteboard software in your ICT suite so that all children can take part in this hands-on activity. Using the photographs that children have taken/collected, ask them to create a ‘Capture the shot’ activity using the IWB software. Back in the classroom, ask them to present their ideas using the class IWB. See the Notebook activity on the Himalaya pages of the Geography Teaching Today website (http://tinyurl.com/dj5pac) for an example of this activity.

Curriculum opportunities
Any discussion of these issues provides a link to citizenship and also a starting point for exploring ‘community cohesion’ and how to resolve conflicts about how different sections of the community use space. A useful way of exploring this would be to look at a particular activity from the viewpoint of different members of the community, i.e. the children’s parents, an elderly resident, the police.

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