

## Habitats in the school environment

### Fieldwork

Key Question Can I live here?

#### Learning Objectives

*To observe and record*

*To use fieldwork skills*

*To identify and describe where places are.*

#### Learning Outcomes

To find out which animals live in our school environment.

To produce an annotated map of the habitats in the school grounds.

#### Resources

Digital cameras, video cameras, clipboards, habitats fans, animal puppets, measuring equipment including a trundle wheel if the children are going to produce a scale map of the grounds.

#### Pre-fieldwork activity

Prior to going out on our walk the children looked at photographs I had taken around the school grounds. With limited input from myself, they worked in groups talking about the pictures they had got. They wrote down all the creatures they thought would live in their particular habitat. This was very interesting as many of them had extremely good and realistic ideas about the types of animals which we could expect to have living around our school grounds. It also highlighted the gaps in their understanding of habitats. Most children wrote about birds or insects. There was very little consideration of the mammals which might live there. (See Figure 2 and 3)

#### The Activity - Fieldwork.

Recording animals and plants living around our school, record using photos, audio recordings, video, sketching.

#### Objectives:

***To use fieldwork skills*** – mapping, sketching.

***To identify and describe where places are.***

Walk around the school grounds. In our case it was the field and playground but it could be a designated place of your choice, perhaps the environmental area or school garden. The walk could have a theme – i.e. water or trees. Stop at points around the grounds to discuss the various habitats the children can find. Number these points to make it easier to record what the children see. Children draw what they can see at each stopping point on an outline plan of school grounds. Talk about where these places are using appropriate geographical vocabulary. (See figure 6)

Use habitats fans – stopping along the route of the walk ask the children to show the correct picture on their fan matching the habitat(s) they can see. These fans could show words, pictures or map symbols depending on your focus.

Encourage children to use digital cameras to take photographs and use Blue Movie makers to make a video of our route as we walk round. It is important to give children ownership of their pictures and provides a good opportunity to develop ICT skills. It shouldn't always be the adult who uses the camera.

All fieldwork activities should provide children with a way of recording what they can see outside, as well as forming part of the materials to be used in the follow-up activities.

### Differentiation

Out in the field, much of the differentiation will be through adult support and outcome. Less able children can show what they can see through the use of the habitat fans and using the digital cameras to record what they can see. Audio recordings provide children with the opportunity to talk about what they can see and make that instant record, without the need to write.

The walk can be adapted for children with mobility problems. If possible, they can take an easier route around the grounds if necessary but still 'visiting' a range of habitat locations. If the children work in mixed ability pairs, then their partner can go and photograph an inaccessible area, or bring samples back for the other child to see or feel.

More able children can take video clips with a view to writing a commentary back in the classroom. They can make audio recordings of the sounds they can hear. Prior to the visit, they could draw their own outline map of the school grounds to annotate out in the field.

Out in the field encourage children to look all around them, it should be a fully interactive experience. There should be a balance between children discovering for themselves and teacher directed experiences. So much of what we, as adults take for granted, may be very new to the children. Never assume the children have a knowledge of where you are. As one child said "I didn't know birds lived in trees". Use fieldwork as an opportunity to explore these new discoveries.

### Extension

More able children could produce a scale map of the school grounds using a trundle wheel and applying a simple scale.

Less able to annotate their map with captions as well as drawing pictures.