

## Collaborate, Inspire and Create: working together to experience culture in our outdoor areas

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Grangeview staff creating a stylescape

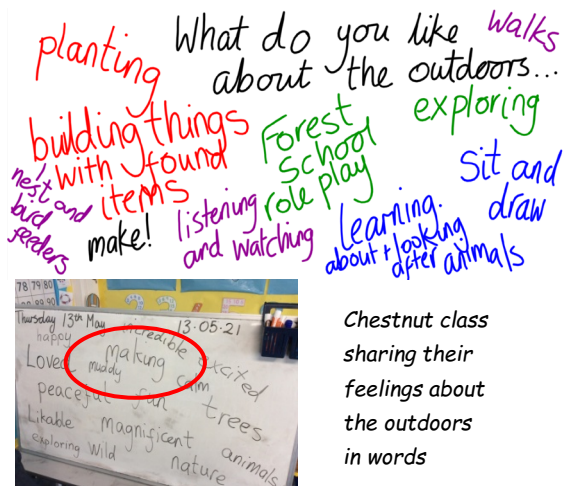
The rationale behind reflecting on what a cultural identity looks like at Grangeview, based on our outdoor area, was initially in response to our ongoing Arts Mark journey. One of our aims was too "...ensure we are utilising our exciting outdoor learning spaces..." Who we are and what we like to do determine our cultural identity and so, for a first step into getting the school to begin to think of itself (if it didn't already) as a cultural entity, was for me to gather together the staff and ask them to bring 3 things...

- 3 words that come to mind about the outdoors
- An image/object that reflects your feelings about the outdoors
- A dream activity you would like to do in the outdoors.

**What we found:** Our responses were creative, individual and varied. Words that came to mind were...

Free, relaxed, learning, play, exploring, adventure, change, nature, fresh, freedom and fun...what we realised was that all the words were exciting, positive, powerful, engaging and lead to curiosity and enjoyable experiences.

**What we would dream to do:** team building activities, mud pit sculptures, wood crafts, DT skills, outdoor reading area, friendship benches, sensory area, musical instruments, water feature, thrive area, quiet area, picnic area, art area, tunnels, problem solving tasks, orienteering, community garden (produce), keeping chickens, invention shed...



Chestnut class sharing their feelings about the outdoors in words

The next step was to ask the children and so Chestnut class were given 2 key questions. **How do you feel about the outdoor area?** And, **what activities do you like to do in the outdoor areas?** This led to class discussions around what things the children did outdoors at home and at school, what their favourite activities were and what

things they would like to do more of...Finally we came up with a collection of words and ideas, which was used to help decide what activity we would engage in, in our forest area. One thing that became very clear from our discussions was that the class really enjoyed creating in the outdoor spaces and so the first step in deciding on our project outcome was to incorporate some form of creation activity.

**Challenges:** colleagues were very open to supporting with ideas, but to add more onto their time was unfair at this stage and so we looked at how the outdoors could be used in lessons that were already planned and share these later to develop a plan for the future. With this in mind I decided to use my outdoor time linked to our castles topic to create 3D sculptures as an extension of our lesson on Norman castle building.



**The activity:** in our teams the class were given a very open brief to make a 3D sculpture using anything they found in the outdoor forest area, we had a quick discussion about what 3D meant and what areas we could use and then we were off. We worked alongside the new School forest leader, which was great and meant that I could collaborate and share observations for future ideas with a different colleague.

The children really immersed themselves and engaged with the activity finding all sorts of different objects that they could use and using them in different and imaginative ways. Looking at how to make things taller using branches and sticks as well as making our sculptures pretty by adding flowers and leaves in a decorative pattern.

**Outcomes:** the impact of this activity was amazing! From observations, both mine and the forest lead, we could see how the children worked together in a team something rarely seen in class. The impact of this has been greater team work, building listening skills and sharing what we are doing in a positive way. It has continued as we have used the outdoor area more frequently.

Colleagues also shared some things they did and the Thrive leader has created an outdoor space to support her sessions due to a lack of appropriate space for her sessions. We now have a developing outdoor thrive area.

