

# Environmental Education

For early years and Key Stages 1 and 2



At High Woods  
Country Park,  
Colchester

## High Woods Country Park hosts 370 acres of wonderful countryside with a variety of habitats including woodland, grassland, pasture, scrub and wetland.



It is situated on the northern edge of Colchester and is easily accessible by road, rail and local bus services. The Visitor Centre is accessible to wheelchairs and provides bag-drop facilities, toilet facilities (including an accessible toilet), and a small gift shop. There are several picnic areas close to the Visitor Centre and a new natural play area to discover. A dedicated coach-parking space is available opposite the Visitor Centre.

The park is an ideal place to consolidate classroom work for a range of subjects including science, geography, history, literacy, numeracy, citizenship, art and design, design and technology and PE.

We offer a range of staff-led environmental education programmes that support national curriculum requirements for Early Years and Key Stages 1 & 2. We can also provide support and equipment for you to lead your class on any of the activities.

Our activities offer children a unique hands-on experience in safe and natural outdoor classrooms. Choose from the programme below or contact us to discuss your specific needs.



“ Brilliant visit - staff, children and parent helpers all commented on how this trip was the best ever. I totally agree! Thank you. ”

Class Teacher  
Tollesbury Primary School  
June 2011

### Environmental Education Programme

|  |            |                               |              |
|--|------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Minibeast Hunt                         | EY KS1 KS2 | Autumn Fruits, Seeds & Leaves | EY KS1       |
| Plants in the BIG Garden (Friday only) | KS1 KS2    | Sensory Experience            | EY KS1       |
| Pond Dipping                           | EY KS1 KS2 | Woodland Tree Study           | KS1 KS2      |
| Stream Studies                         | KS2        | Orienteering                  | KS1 KS2      |
| Soils                                  | KS2        | Den Building                  | EY, KS1, KS2 |

Contact & Booking Information - See final page

# Minibeast Hunt

## EY, KS1 & 2



If you ask children how many different sorts of minibeasts they can name, they would probably come up with a dozen.

Most will have seen a worm, snail, ant or spider at sometime or other. But chances are that they have never examined these minibeasts closely and do not realise that there are many other kinds of minibeast living in the soil, under dead leaves or in the long grass.

### Aims of the activity (depending on age):

- To show that it is important to take care of minibeasts and their environment
- Use a simple key to identify and name minibeasts
- Understand that the term 'minibeast' describes a wide range of small creatures including insects, worms, snails, centipedes and woodlice
- Investigate different habitats and make comparisons between the different minibeasts found in each
- Investigate what minibeasts eat, feeding relationships and food chains
- Show that different minibeasts are adapted to live in different habitats

This activity can be extended for KS2 to include a study of the relationship between flowers and insects.

# Plants in the BIG Garden

## KS1 & 2



Working in the BIG Garden organic allotment, this activity looks at plants and what they need to grow in a practical setting. It involves sowing seeds and planting out young plants from pots into the garden. It also explores how plants are pollinated, and the sustainability and benefits of locally grown fruit and vegetables.

### Aims of the activity (depending on age):

- Understand what plants need to grow
- A look at the different parts of a plant and their role
- Understand that different plants are pollinated in different ways
- Understand that providing the best growing conditions and caring for vegetable plants will produce more food



This activity is only available on Fridays.

Contact & Booking Information - See final page

# Pond dipping

EY, KS1 & 2

Working from purpose built pond dipping platforms and using long handled pond nets, this is a unique opportunity to observe the fascinating creatures that live in ponds.

## Aims of the activity (depending on age):

- To show that it is important to take care of creatures and their environment
- Use a simple key to identify and name pond creatures
- Show that pond plants are essential for shelter, food and oxygen
- Show that different creatures are adapted to live in different areas of the pond
- Show that creatures have different mechanisms for moving and breathing in water
- Investigate what pond creatures eat, feeding relationships and food chains
- Discuss pollution and the fragility of a wetland ecosystem



# Stream studies

KS1

The Country Park is fortunate in having a wide range of water features - a small stream, a lake and an extensive marsh area. The stream displays all the features of the middle stage of a river: meandering, erosion, deposition, variation in depth, width and current flow, graded pebbles etc. It is shallow, never dry, and has easy access for taking measurements, sketching and following over a set distance.

## Aims of the activity (depending on age):

With children working at various points along the stream this activity looks at:

- The width of the stream
- The depth of the stream
- The flow rate
- The stream bed
- Bank material
- Erosion
- Deposition



# Soils

EY2

Digging up soil from the BIG Garden allotment and woodland the children investigate the differences in soils and consider why these differences occur.

## Aims of the activity (depending on age):

- Understand that under all soil is rock
- Appreciate that soil will differ depending on location
- Establish what soil contains
- Understand the importance of soil
- Understand that climate and humans affect soil
- Appreciate the interconnections between soil and all living things



Contact & Booking Information - See final page

# Autumn Fruits, Seeds and Leaves

EY, KS1

This programme investigates the different kinds of seeds found in a woodland, and how they are dispersed.

We also look at how the woodland changes during the autumn.

## Aims of the activity (depending on age):

- Look at autumn fruits, seeds and leaves and seed dispersal
- Understand what happens to trees in winter
- Appreciate that different trees have different shaped leaves
- Appreciate that not all trees lose their leaves in winter
- Investigate the colours of autumn leaves



# Sensory Experience

Environmental awareness activities were introduced in American summer camps by Steve van Matre. Children are encouraged to explore, experiment and discover nature for themselves through a series of educational 'games' using their senses.

EY, KS1

## Aims of the activity (depending on age):

- To explore nature using the senses of sight, smell, hearing and touch
- To encourage children to look at nature's colours and textures
- To help children to appreciate and care for the natural environment



# Woodland Tree Study

EY, KS1, KS2

Trees are the most important long-lived components of the woodland ecosystem. They provide shelter for countless numbers of animals from squirrels and birds, to bees and tiny insect larvae. They provide food for many animals including mice, birds, bark beetles and numerous other minibeasts - as well as humans who consume many of the fruits and seeds of trees. They are even used by other plants, such as mosses, lichens and honeysuckle.

## This programme includes:

- Meet a tree
- How old is your tree
- How tall is your tree
- Bark rubbing
- Leaf identification
- Woodland walk



Contact & Booking Information - See final page

# Orienteering

**KS1 & 2**

A chance to develop map reading skills and to test your sense of direction! The Park has 2 orienteering courses; a

beginners course of approximately one mile is ideal for younger children. The intermediate course covers about 3 miles and is a great opportunity to see the variety of habitats found at the Country Park. A trail for the beginners course and a quiz for the intermediate course are available if required.

**This is a self led activity**



# Den Building

**EY, KS1, KS2**

Children love to build dens! As well as being fun, this den building activity has many important learning outcomes for children. This activity links well with the 'Homes' topic.

## Aims of the activity (depending on age):

- To use natural and man-made materials to construct a shelter
- To plan different ways of using materials to make a sound structure
- To work as part of a team
- To use natural materials in a creative way



# Contact & Booking Information:

For further information or to make a booking please contact:

Visitor Centre Officer High Woods  
Country Park  
Turner Road  
Colchester  
CO4 5JR  
Tel: 01206 853588

**We look forward to  
welcoming you to High  
Woods Country Park!**

The charge for a half-day staff led activity is £3.60 per child. There is no charge for school staff or adult helpers.

