

BE INSPIRED BY.....

TETHERDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Images courtesy of Tetherdown Primary

60

children

7

members of staff

2

hours travel

2

nights away from home

STARTING SMALL

Year 4 children get a taste of what's to come with a mini-residential, helping to build progression in educational visits. In this article, Deputy Headteacher Rachel Gillingham shares how Tetherdown Primary School launched its new residential visit and what they learnt along the way.

At Tetherdown Primary School, we pride ourselves on providing engaging and exciting educational visits including: Forest Fridays in reception, seaside trips in year 2 and 5, a Viking workshop in year 4 and a week long activity residential in year 6.

By the time they reach year 6, we've seen our children grow in confidence, collaborative skills and feel prepared for their final year with us.

Over the last few years, we started to see that our children are having fewer opportunities to stay away for a night or two from their parents/caregivers to build their confidence and resilience, which would usually help prepare them for the week-long residential in year 6.

We knew we needed to change the way we approach residential at our school to support our children.

We decided to investigate a possible two-night residential for our year 4 children which would prepare them for their year 6 experience but would also provide further outdoor learning opportunities to support the year 4 curriculum.

After an extensive search, I was very excited to discover Juniper Hall, a residential centre in Surrey run by the Field Studies Council. As an environmental educational charity their focus for primary schools is to offer 'first-hand' experiences in nature, which fitted perfectly with our ideas for a curriculum-focused

visit, including problem solving, mapping and outdoor adventure skills.

The trip was a huge success and will become a permanent fixture in the school calendar from now on.



Early spring (March) – the weather wasn't always on side!

So, how did we do it?

As you can imagine, with any new residential there was an enormous amount of preparation. The visit presented us with several challenges, opportunities, and benefits. Here are a few of those to help others who may be considering doing something similar:

WHAT WORKED WELL?



Group planning to encourage new friendships

A few weeks before the trip, teachers allocated the children to rooms and activity groups. We mix year 4 when they go into year 5 and so this was a perfect opportunity to see different children in different groups.

We hope this will ensure that the children settle into their new classes even more smoothly having had these opportunities to mix with the other classes more.



Reassuring parents (with a back-up plan)

We had a meeting for all parents to explain the trip, and our EVC and class teachers met with parents individually who were nervous about their children attending. For most families, we were able to encourage them to send their child for one night instead of two, but pack for the full 2 nights in case they changed their mind.

We had four children whose parents sent them for one night and all four children ended up staying for the entire trip. I was very proud of their resilience, but it was also a testimony to how much fun they were having and how well prepared they were.



Clear communication between staff

During our stay, we used the same strategy that we had for our year 6 residential where all our staff joined a WhatsApp group and all communication went on there. It really helped staff all access the same, up-to-date information.

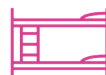


Thoughtful sleeping arrangements

I bring one night light for each room which plugs into a socket and automatically turns on when the room is dark. It is perfect for those children that want to sleep with a night light on without needing the entire room ablaze! When the children first found their bedrooms, we displayed the children's name on each door. This helped them find their room and settle quickly.

Rachel Gillingham is Deputy Headteacher and Deputy DSL at Tetherdown Primary School, a two-form entry primary school in Muswell Hill, London.
www.tetherdownschool.org

CHALLENGES



Homemaking skills

Something we hadn't prepared for was that the children were expected to make their own beds – 60 year four children trying to put a duvet into their duvet cover was quite a challenge! Next year, we will be asking parents/ caregivers to help children practice putting a duvet into a duvet cover, a pillow into a pillow cover and a sheet on the bed.



Activities included making fires, hiking, shelter building, and egg drop competitions.

Why is progression important?

Gradually developing the level of complexity by introducing educational visits over time, encourages learners to develop a range of skills and qualities, e.g.:



EYFS local learning area visit – walking a short distance to the library. Early road awareness and confidence to learn away from their normal learning environment.



Progression to venues further afield – using public transport; working in small groups. Introducing indirect supervision promotes independence, awareness of time, and boundaries.



Confidence and resilience developed on earlier visits, which may have taken them out of their comfort zone, helps to prepare learners for the independence needed when away from home e.g. on residential visits.

See OEAP National Guidance 2.4c Research Supporting Outdoor Learning