

# A walk in the park

-becomes so  
much more







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Listen to the voices of children, teachers and artists on <http://tinyurl.com/oasis-cluster>



# Introduction

WE STARTED WITH A CHALLENGE: "A walk in the park, could become so much more". Corporation Park is already used regularly by schools and has a vibrant education service, so our team of artists set out to work with schools in new ways, taking a different slant on familiar themes or stepping into new curriculum areas for outdoor learning for both schools and practitioners.

There were 6 schools, 7 artists and lots of ideas and enthusiasms. Working with our groups, we wanted to develop activities that could be used again – by these schools, by other schools or by families visiting the Park themselves. So, on the whole, we aimed for activities that needed fairly simple equipment and used ideas that children could explain to their families.

And then we went to Corporation Park to see what inspirations might unfold. School topics were explored through different scenarios, storylines that let us take the topic and play with it. A request to combine "drawing and sculpture with oral descriptions of nature" turned a group into Time Travellers exploring the past, present and future of the Park. "Plants" sent another group off on an expedition into the unknown, writing journals, describing plants and the animals associated with them, learning names and terms and inventing new names, describing new plants and, possibly, never getting home again. "Global Warming" sent yet another group into a changing world with wandering, lost polar bears and new ways of building homes.

We offer those topics, scenarios and activities here for you to try. We have set our activities against maps of the Park, showing where our adventures led us. You could take the same ideas elsewhere, turn them inside out and try them in different ways. Most of our adventures grew over several half-day visits to the Park so you might need to adjust activities to suit your timescale. At the end of the booklet there is a list of the different resources different groups took with them.

Take a walk in the park with a bag or two of useful things and enjoy the excitement of whatever might happen next!

**Gordon MacLellan**, *Creeping Toad*,  
lead artist for "A Walk in the Park"

## Schools

Brookhouse Primary School  
Cedars Infant School  
Hawthorns Junior School  
St James School  
St Michael with St John Primary School  
Seven Trees Children's Centre

## Artists

Karen Alderson  
Kerris Casey St Pierre  
Ruth Evans  
Rosie Fenwick  
Gordon MacLellan  
Thea Soltau  
John Spedding

# Oasis Cluster

THE OASIS CLUSTER OF SCHOOLS is situated in the Bastwell area of Blackburn close to the town centre and within a short walking distance of Corporation Park. The park with its large open space, traditional Victorian structures, and central conservatory gave the Oasis cluster of schools the inspiration for this project.

Children, Teachers, Head Teachers, Staff from the Children Centre, Blackburn with Darwen Arts Services and Extended Schools have worked with Mid Pennine Arts and various artists to develop the project.

Visits to the park with the artists have developed our children's experiences providing a broad, rich and enjoyable environment to enhance oral and literacy skills. The children have produced many pieces of art, writing, and dance; some of which can be seen in this booklet.

I am sure you will agree when you look at this booklet that this project has provided an opportunity for our children that they will remember and use again in the future.

Many thanks to Extended Schools, to Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery for exhibition space, Jon McCaughy from Blackburn Youth Service for the sound recordings, Graham Dean from the City Learning Centre for our web pages, and to everyone involved in the project, especially our children.



For details of the education services offered by Corporation Park for schools and families contact Park Warden, Emma Fielding on 01254 692179.

**Karen Caton**  
Extended Schools Locality Coordinator  
Oasis Cluster



# Brookhouse Primary School

## Minibeasts and Natural Materials

-  Brookhouse school areas worked in
-  Areas suitable for similar work



**ARTIST:** Kerris Casey-St.Pierre

**PUPILS:** Year 2

**THEME:** minibeasts and sculpture with natural materials

**SCENARIO:** developing our skills as artists: the group spent time working with materials and exploring ideas before heading out into the Park, giving confidence and skills to apply to wilder settings



*Rather than working along a route, the activities could happen in different areas of the park*

### Preparation in school

**1. Drawing minibeasts and their environments** using natural materials, and documenting through photography. Laying out materials on long sheets of paper, sorting materials, talking about minibeasts. Making pictures on paper with those materials, photographing, then animating and filming frame by frame.

**2. Designing, labelling and creating 3D models** of minibeasts and their environment using clay and found natural materials. Starting with drawings (on paper) labelling drawings with materials to use. Using clay to form shapes and experimenting with clay to join parts together. Using natural materials to create an environment for models to inhabit.

### Out in the park

**3. Taking minibeast ideas outside** - identify suitable areas, select and collect materials, to work in pairs to create and install small sculptures using found materials and clay. Spend time on habitat and location. Find, draw and identify living minibeasts.

**4. Experiment with sizes**, from small creatures go for bigger minibeasts using more dramatic materials: fallen logs, big stones. Take time to plan, to look at possible sites, to discuss designs and materials. Experiment. View and record this gallery of giant creatures. Are there stories to tell here?

### Back in school

Identify animals found, materials used. Discuss or write about techniques used, successes, failures, excitements. View animations. Work with images – drawn or photographed. Plan slideshows or powerpoints.



# Cedars Infant School

## Every Statue Tells a Story

ARTIST: Thea Soltau

PUPILS: Reception

THEME: "Dance: 'Beware Fallen Angels!' – linking to architecture & canals of Venice"

SCENARIO: using the Park to inspire stories and then using those stories to develop the theme more. Planning a trail using architecture or sculpture in the park as a stimulus to explore stories, movement, rhymes and games.

### 1. Flora statue

Introduce Flora with a well-known skipping song as a clapping rhyme with a partner, or in a circle with a whole class.

*Flora, Flora, touch the sky (clap hands, then reach up)  
Flora, Flora, jump up high (clap hands then jump up)  
Flora, Flora, turn around (clap hands then turn around)  
Flora, Flora, touch the ground (clap hands then crouch down)*

Let children add own words and movement. Take a camera to record ideas. (This could be learnt in school as preparation)

2. Take some time **just sitting** in front of Flora discussing how she might have arrived at the park, what she was made of, what she was carrying.

*She lived in Italy in a glass house. Flora was gardening in her house. She likes to plant flowers. She put seeds in the soil and waters them and looks after them.*

Look at what Flora could see...

*Flora came to Blackburn to meet us because she wanted to help us grow flowers. She went to everybody's house and our school garden to plant flowers.*

3. Two gilt/gold **cherubs** clinging to the fountain opposite. Think about these 'angel babies' and the angels in the middle of the pond next to the playground. As the angels are in pairs try making your own statues in pairs. Take it in turns to lead and copy each other aiming to match a partner's movement. Try leaning, balancing, different levels. Look at symmetry. Add several movements together to make a sequence. Take shoes and socks off and try this on the grass in the park.

Out of these movements, think about the cherubs: what are they like? How might they fit into Flora's story?

4. Pause and use found materials to make a **picture of a scene** from your story. Use air-drying clay to make a small model of Flora, or another character to fit into the scene. Tell us more. What could happen next?

### 5. Conservatory

Look at the building (inside or out). Talk about shapes, patterns, feelings. Try similar activities here, maybe as groups of 4 children looking at shapes, movements and sequences. How might this building be part of Flora's story?

*The angels fly to Flora and take her to the white glass house. The angels turn her back to who she was. (She had been frozen by the troll that lives in the waterfall)*

### Back at school

1. **Share stories** with each other, combining ideas to make a 'class story'. Act out characters: create a statue of each character and then explore how each one moved. Add emotions with first statues and then movement. Move around as the character and as they meet someone else; say hello as the character. Write down some speech bubbles. For Flora (or another main character), explore emotions at different points in the story. Following each exploration write on the board what you could hear and see, extending the vocabulary for re-telling.

Outside, re-tell story with member of staff as narrator and children as performers, using movements, descriptions and speech bubbles. Do you want to add some cloth for costumes or use found materials for props?

Write down, photograph or film final stories.

### 2. Flora Painting

Black and white photos taken of Flora during the visit were blown up to A3 size and the children have worked on these with paint to bring the black and white pictures to life with colour (which fits in with the Roman Legend of Flora bringing spring).

### FLORA TIG: AN IDEA IN DEVELOPMENT

Divide the group into 3, one will be 'Floras' one 'Trolls' (the trolls live in the waterfall next to Flora!), one will be the cherubs or angels. When a Flora is tagged by a Troll she must stand still and can only be released by an angel. We need to work on the aim of the game but it's a great start and designed by 4-5 year olds!

### FINGER/HAND RHYMES

Similar to 'here is the church, here is the steeple' except we substituted features of the park!





# Hawthorns Junior School Global Warming

ARTISTS: Ruth Evans & Jon Spedding

PUPILS: Year 5

THEME: Climate change

SCENARIO: Our world is changing and how we live and the animals and plants around us will also change. What might a new world be like?



## Out in the Park

**1. Setting the scene:** discussing global warming, use a potato as the earth and then smash it with a hammer to illustrate what might happen if we don't take steps to stop it. Think about ways of making a difference by making small changes in our way of living. Labels with ideas for this can be hidden in the woods, which the children can hunt for and discuss. Come up with new ideas.

**2. Useful things:** living in a changing world? Can you find objects we could use if we start running out of other resources? Look around as you walk: wood for? New food to eat? Find a new sort of button!

**3. Possible futures:** looking at the conservatory and the tropical plants inside to see what might grow in the park in the future if the climate heats up. We found bananas!

**4. Discuss new homes:** what would it be like to live in a tropical rain forest? How might we adopt a more nomadic, simpler way of life? Moving where new food sources can be found?

**5. New homes:** split the class into tribes giving each tribe same materials – a tarpaulin, a washing line, a rubber mallet and some camouflage net.

Build a shelter to live in that would keep off the rain and be camouflaged against wild animals.

### *I Want to Live Here Forever...*

*Sites were chosen and tribal shelters were constructed, tribal names chosen and chiefs elected and crowned. Chalk paint was used to decorate faces and hands. Messengers were sent out to other tribes to see how they had made their camps and to send the news that a pride of hungry lions was heading our way so we had to disassemble our camps leaving the woods exactly as we found them.*

### *End of first trip*

**6. Drawing the Future...** consider evidence of melting icecaps and decide this would be very bad for the polar wildlife. Or if our climate changes, possibly getting colder, the animals would come to live in the park – penguins in the pond and polar bears in the trees!

If the climate became hotter, then we might have a desert watering hole in the park that would be visited by lions, crocodiles, hippos and monkeys!

Using cut-out animals, find new homes of displaced animals, write or draw about their arrival in the Park and the impact on local children.

**7. Ugly Bug Ball:** as the climate changes, minibeasts might evolve as well. Make and name giant bugs from sawn, sections of log with holes drilled for stick legs and antennae and recycled felt eyes...

Make bug houses, mounds and webs in the woods. Photograph and write about or record the discovery.

## Back in school Powering Up

Discuss new ways of living and powering our homes. Encourage wild ideas and design or build using scrap and recycled materials, the inventions that will be needed. Eco-house with chicken powered kitchen. Possum powered house. Carrot powered aeroplane.

### New options "treasure hunt".

Using the ideas from Stop 1, children could come up with their own climate change action list and plan a trail round the Park or round the school where each idea leads to the next...perhaps an "action" stop could lead to a consequence where a clue to the next station could be found.

**"New wildlife" documentary:** use discoveries in the Park to write a script and film or record a programme on new and unexpected wildlife encountered in the Park.





# St James School Time Travellers!

ARTIST: Karen Alderson

PUPILS: Year 3

THEME: Drawing, sculpture and oral descriptions of the natural world

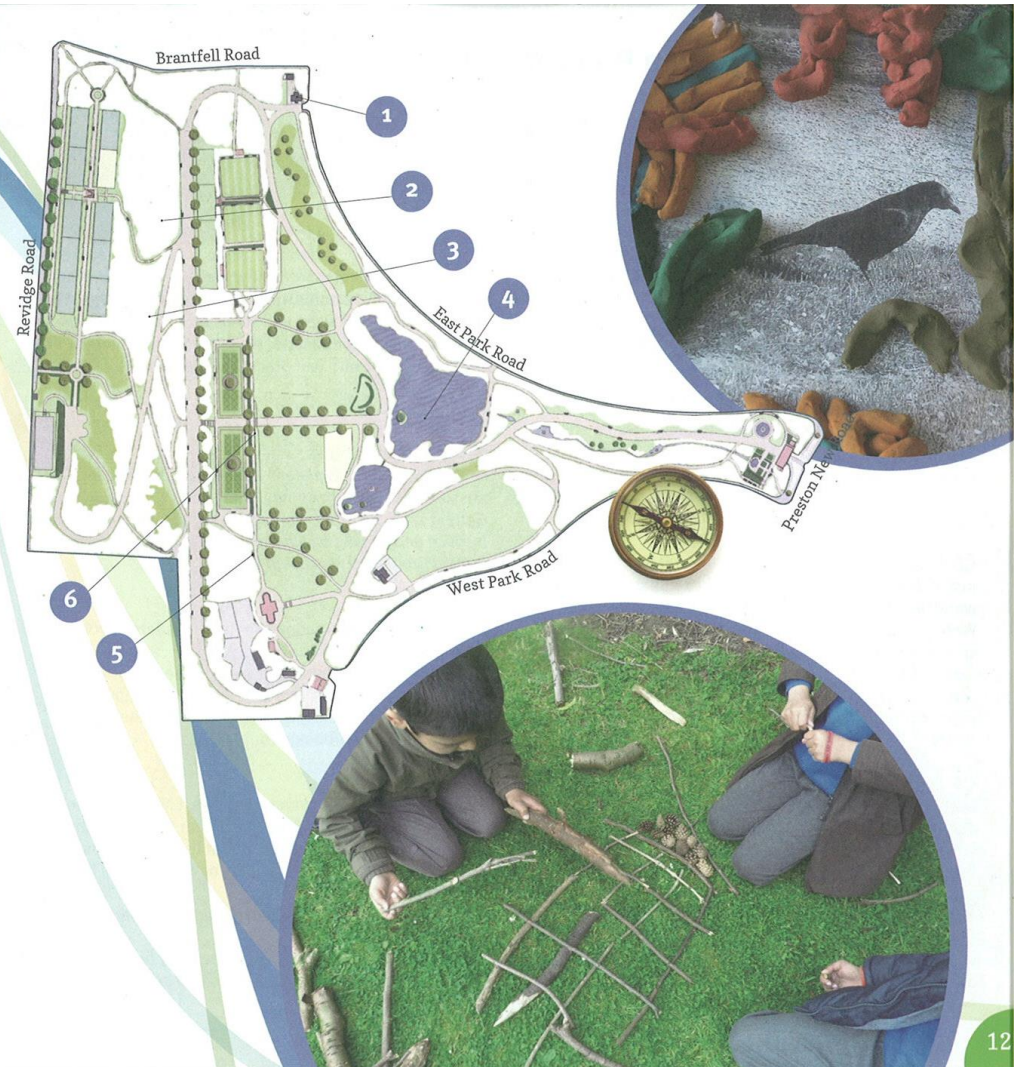
SCENARIO: We became time travelers who had landed in the Park. Our mission was to collect information about the natural environment & to imagine what it was like in the past and visualise how the park would be in the future. We would be using the research tools of observation, drawing and sculpture.

## Preparation in School

In school, prepare for the mission with mark-making & model making: experimenting with different marks, strokes, lines, shapes and patterns that might depict different feelings and experiences

## Activities

1. **Landing at the top of East Park Road:** initial observations & drawings. What do we see, How do we feel? What is this place like?
2. **Close up observation of patterns on trees** by using bark rubbings, collecting leaves and recording the different shapes, patterns and colours.
3. **Investigating the past.** Touching the prehistoric river bed and imagining the types of fish that may have lived in the water. Later, make into models in school.
4. **Water patterns**  
As part of the natural environment, look at the pond. Are the carp descended from the prehistoric fish, the ducks from prehistoric birds? Look at the patterns on the water: ripples from wind, rain or birds. Draw? Photograph? Use mark-making practice.
5. **Sculpture with found natural materials**  
Remembering the patterns & marks observed and sketched, try making these patterns with found materials in the park. Think about best materials, size, texture, colour; and the best location to show the chosen pattern: sunlight, shade, moved by the wind.
6. **Future Musings**  
After close up observation of plants with magnifying glasses and from different angles, later looking at the landscape of the park, consider how the park might look in the future. As time travelers, write down & draw ideas and back in school make models of Corporation Park in the future. Collect fallen material on the way out of the Park to use for this.





# St Michael with St John Primary School Plants!

ARTIST: Gordon MacLellan

PUPILS: Year 5

THEME: "Plants": looking at the natural history and life cycles of plants

SCENARIO: We became explorers heading off into the unknown to find new, strange and wonderful plants and the animals that live with them. Our adventure was spread over two visits...

## Activities

### 1. First impressions

Just inside the Park, pause to listen to this strange new world, what do we hear? What can we smell, feel, see? Write phrases rather than listing words...descriptions can stay based on immediate sense or wander into more fantastic realms.  
*I can hear the lovely birds singing in the trees... there was a tiny mushroom growing in the middle of the flowers*

### 2. Further in: investigating

Look for animals: note what you see, large (squirrels, ducks, dogs) and small (butterflies, bees, beetles, ladybirds). Spend time on a bug hunt. Identify and draw the animals you find.

### 3. The strangest creatures yet

Using only found material (no tape, no string, etc) in groups of 2 - 5 children, build a new animal that you encounter on your journey. Tell everyone else about its lifecycle and habits. Photograph and let it go back to the wild.



### 4. Variety of plants in this new land

Using long sticky-boards, take small samples to show the variety of leaves, flowers and seeds around us. Stick these onto the double-sided tape. Make notes on the rest of the card or colour it with leaf-stains and earth-patterns.

*(end of first visit)*

### 5. Risks and dangers

On postcards, scribble ideas as you walk, looking for possible disasters that might befall you.  
*Getting stuck up trees, sinking in swamps, being nibbled by mice and chased by squirrels. One child went swimming in Snig Brook and was eaten by eels.*

### 6. Becoming experts

Write your own information sheets for readers of your books, either:  
Looking at how one particular plant is used by different animals or finding four very different types of flowers and describing them and the insects that visited them.  
Drawing, writing, rubbings could all used.

### 7. Trees

Relax on your journey under a tall tree. Enjoy its shade. Looking at the tree either as an explorer or even as the tree itself, write a set of comments about the different parts of the tree, what they do or look like, or how the tree feels about them...  
*These roots of mine are wrapped round treasures under the ground...  
These branches of mine lift up the nests of birds...  
My tree's leaves are green and gold and split sunshine into shadows*

### 8. Big leaves (in the conservatory if possible)

Look at the tropical plants in the glasshouse. In your journey you are now deep in a jungle. Use earlier ideas to look at animals around the plants or signs of animal life around them. Choose one plant and take time to do some small sketches of its leaves, its flowers, the whole plant. Then on A3 paper do a big drawing of one part of that plant, looking at shape, structure, detail.  
*For leaves, look at the veins, draw them first, like drawing a skeleton, add the rest of the leaf afterwards*

### 9. New names

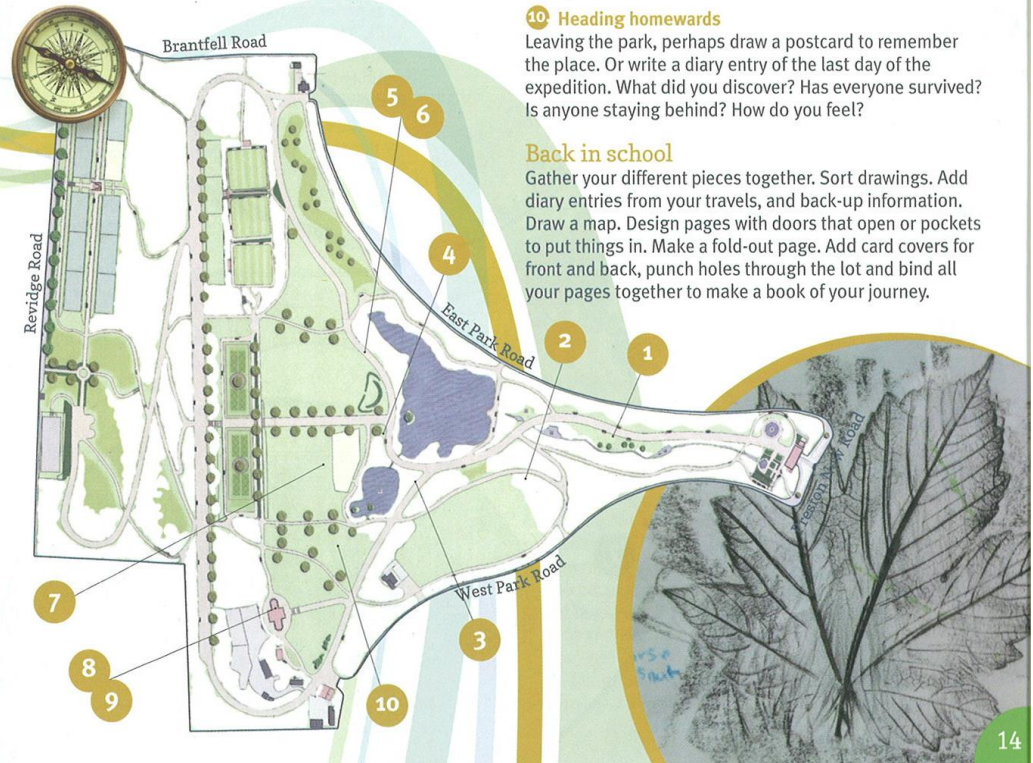
Look at your plant, think about its shapes and colours. Leaf shapes are good for names: they might be heart-shaped, spear-shaped, round, jagged edged or smooth, or spiky, soft and furry or smooth and polished, palmate (like a hand), composite (made up of lots of little leaflets). Stand up and describe this new plant, your discovery to the rest of the expedition.  
*Jazzy leaf tree, hip-hop tree, spear beam, spikebeam, aching tree*

### 10. Heading homewards

Leaving the park, perhaps draw a postcard to remember the place. Or write a diary entry of the last day of the expedition. What did you discover? Has everyone survived? Is anyone staying behind? How do you feel?

### Back in school

Gather your different pieces together. Sort drawings. Add diary entries from your travels, and back-up information. Draw a map. Design pages with doors that open or pockets to put things in. Make a fold-out page. Add card covers for front and back, punch holes through the lot and bind all your pages together to make a book of your journey.





# Seven Trees Children's Centre Bear Hunt

ARTIST: Rosie Fenwick

PUPILS: Early years

THEME: Exploration of the natural environment

SCENARIO: We used the "going on a bear-hunt" story to give a shape and structure and sense of excitement to our explorations. A similar set of experiences took another group on a Jungle Walk. These walks used very little equipment, responding to the experiences of simply walking through the Park and involving ourselves in whatever we came across. They gave wonderful opportunities for shaping adventures and immersing ourselves in the moment



What follows is one route through the Park. The same ideas could go in any direction: give children choices and use whatever you find!

## Activities

**1. Magic Tree:** come upon a tree festooned with red and white threads with everyone picking one of each colour. Twisting them together to make a bracelet for protection against bears!

(Preparation: someone needs to hang strands of wool in the tree in advance!)

Good logs here for looking under – how would bears use these?  
"Big black beetles looking at me"

**2. Long grass:** try wading through the grass, enjoying the experience.  
"Tickly, soft, wet like a jungle" "like stroking a cat - it's kitty grass"

**3.** Down the steep, **steep steps** and onto the **never-ending path**. Keep going! Don't stop! Signs of bears? Can you invent some as you go? Make pawprints? Squelch in mud like a bear might.

**4. Slippery stone:** might be worth sliding down!

**5.** Through the **Dark Forest** (stop! listen! as quiet as you can, creep through the trees. Maybe you could play statues with a teacher as a bear?) to the **Glass House** **6.** Is it open? Look for bears inside, or pause for a snack on the grass. There is a good hill for rolling down here, maybe.

**7. Crickly crackly wood:** make sounds with feet on the ground. Find a fallen twig to snap! Find other things that you can beat to make a sound...either to scare bears away or perhaps to call them to you? Look at the flowers, Stand beside them. Smell them. Are there any tall enough for you to stand under them?

**8. At the pond,** look out for floating crocodiles and enjoy the ducks. Try quacking and walking like ducks.

**9.** As you leave the Park, **collect fallen leaves** and twigs to use back in school.

## Back in school

(The first two activities could also be done in the Park)  
Use clay to make **small animals** – maybe bears, or animals seen or talked about in the park.  
Use more clay and found materials to make **small environments** in plant trays that these animals can inhabit. Talk to each other about these places.  
**felted bugs:** you might also try making felt around tennis balls to give bodies and adding pipecleaner legs and googly eyes to give some wild felted bugs. Using fleece in the felt-making itself felt like a natural extension of the sensory experiences of the Park activities.



# Equipment Lists for the Activities

## Minibeasts and natural materials

### Things to take with you

Clay (natural; not air-drying), cameras, card, pencils, magnifying glasses maybe?

### Back in school

Clay, long strips of paper, cameras, flip- or film- cameras, access to computers.

## Every statue tells a story

### Things to take with you

Paper, pencils, air-drying clay, cameras

### Back in school

Paper, pencils, cloth for improvising costumes?



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## Global warming

### Things to take with you

Cards on strings to hang in tree/hide in woods with eco-friendly strategies to use. Clipboards, paper, pencils, cardboard cut-out animals (polar bears, monkeys, penguins, lions – or let children design their own).

*Dens:* a set of tarpaulin, washing line, camouflage netting, rubber mallet for each group of 6 – 8 children.

*Ugly bugs:* short logs with holes drilled in them, have tacks or a staple gun or string for people to tie other twigs together.

*Powering up:* assorted boxes and plastic bottle and tub scrap. Tapes, paper fasteners, staples for fixing things together.

## Time Travelers!

### Things to take with you

Clipboards, pencils, a selection of papers, wax crayons, coloured pencils.

### Model making resources in school

Tape, string, scarp materials, straws, thin wood and dowel, found materials from the Park.

## Plants!

### Things to take with you

Postcards (A6 blank card) enough for 2 or 3 for everyone. Pencils. Magnifying glasses. Pencils. Coloured pencils. Long stickyboards (A4 card cut in half lengthways with a strip of double-sided tape down the middle, one each). Clipboards. Paper for drawing on. A3 paper and oil pastels, coloured pencils for big sketches. Wax crayons for leaf rubbings. *Sheets:* maybe leaf, flower and minibeast identification sheets.

### Back in school

A variety of papers (A5 size usually OK) and things to draw with. A5 card for book covers. Hole punches, Wool. Gluesticks.

## Bear Hunt!

### Things to take with you

Red and white strands of wool, some snacks for a picnic, bags to put finds in, maybe some clay for making animals.

### Back in school

Clay, twigs, leaves, cones, etc.



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Booklet design by [www.sourcecreative.co.uk](http://www.sourcecreative.co.uk)