

COMMUNITYNEWS

Taking advantage of the great outdoors

Since the start of the pandemic and that first shocking briefing led by the Prime Minister in which we were told that schools would close to the majority, educational professionals have been battling with negative vocabulary such as 'catch up', 'lost learning' and 'recovery'.

In my first year as the headteacher at Almond Hill Junior school, I have found it challenging to be constantly referring to my daily work in such negative terms. As a school, both staff and governors have constantly striven, like most schools I am sure, to focus on a more optimistic outlook.

It is out of this aim to seek the positives from what has happened that a key element of our school improvement plan this year emerged.

During the second lockdown, schools were encouraged to take learning outside as much as possible (even though it took place in

Emma Fordham, headteacher at Almond Hill Junior School, talks about how lockdown has revolutionised outdoor learning

the months of January and February!) and this is what we did with our key worker provision.

In particular, I recall Geography lessons that might have more typically been taught in the classroom, atlas in hand, that took place outside.

Huge hand-drawn maps of the world appeared across the playground and the language of direction was acted out in every nook and cranny of the grounds.

What crossed my mind whilst observing some of this

practice, was not only was one of Almond Hill's learning behaviours 'Enjoy Learning' evident in abundance but also just how on task and engaged every single learner was.

At Almond Hill we are very lucky to have large and beautiful grounds and open spaces surround our buildings on all sides.

Therefore, we have committed to taking far greater advantage of this and will be adapting our curriculum to ensure that every opportunity to learn outside is exploited to maximum effect.

One positive that I am sure most people have taken from the pandemic is a greater appreciation of the natural world around us and added to the current focus on climate change I think this is a very worthwhile direction in which to take the curriculum for the next generation.

Each week during term time the Comet features a different headteacher from a local Stevenage school.



Almond Hill Junior School in Stevenage

Picture: GOOGLE STREET VIEW

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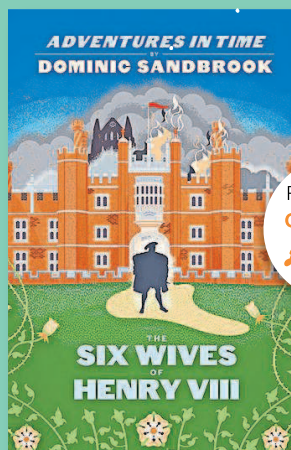
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