

Case study 10 - Nutfield Day Nursery

Nutfield Day Nursery has an exceptional outdoor area including a garden area with a 'hill' for running down, trees, a field and paddock as well as more enclosed areas for younger children. Outdoor play happens in all weathers with children well equipped for the mud and cold with nursery spares of wellies. Practitioners have focused on increased use of mathematical language and mathematical concepts during all aspects of the nursery day and especially in outdoor play. Although the nursery is very fortunate in its outdoor space, the materials used to enhance the mathematical environments are widely available often at little or no cost.



Where are my wellies? Can you find the pairs?

During the visit of 2 February 2015 the pre-school children went outdoors on a very cold, winter afternoon. They understood the routine and counted each other before leaving the pre-school room, confidently counting to 12 with a good understanding that each number represented a child.

Outdoors they initially played separately. some children climbed on the rope ladder, others used the swings in the trees. They counted spontaneously – 'I can manage three steps'.



One, two, three – this is hard!

One recognised the log making the swing as a cylinder. The practitioners supported play well. One timed how long children could dangle from the rope, celebrating success from three counts to 23.



I can hang here for 23 counts.

Another practitioner joined in with the children running down the hill using language of position 'first', 'second' and also faster, fastest, far and farthest with the children.



I can run fast down the hill.

Other children played in the interesting structures in the grounds and eventually the majority of the children went in the old boat and developed a game of a crocodile chasing them. They decided to hide in one structure deciding if everyone could fit in. The game extended to the climbing frame again with children working out how many could hide in each area.



We can all fit in here.

The grounds are full of natural materials that are used to enhance children's understanding of shape, space and measurement. One child noticed a sphere shape made by a bush, elsewhere in the nursery a twig 'tree' with twigs of different sizes had been made by the children.



What shapes can you find here?



We made a tree with the sticks we collected, mine was the longest!