

Merchiston support National Outdoor Classroom day

Junior pupils at Merchiston Castle School in Colinton swapped their desks for learning in the great outdoors today to support National Outdoor Classroom day, an initiative the school promotes regularly.

The independent school for boys which has 440 boarder and day pupils combined, promotes an array of wellbeing initiatives across its academic curriculum as it understands the intrinsic link between the two.

National Outdoor Classroom Day encourages teachers to adapt and deliver lessons outside for the day to promote the positive impacts it is reported to have, which include improved behaviour and increased engagement from pupils. This extends to teachers reporting increased creativity and enhanced problem solving from outdoor sessions, which supports teaching critical life-skills.

Merchiston Castle pupils had a fully immersive outdoor learning day and enjoyed a programme of lessons which included:

- An outdoor percussion and drama sessions in place of a traditional music lessons
- A science lesson will be delivered in the garden where the boys made rockets
- Weekly library time was replaced with an outdoor creative storytelling session

. A 'Kinder Kitchen' initiative where boys enjoyed outdoor baking using ingredients foraged and produced on-site



*Merchiston Junior School pupils Egan and James take part in some outdoor music lessons as part of Outdoor Classroom Day
Photo Gareth Easton*

Alexandra Torrance, Lead Primary Teacher at Merchiston Castle, said: "We are incredibly lucky at Merchiston Castle to be able to use the outdoors on a daily basis in order to foster skills and enhance boys' learning.

"We are able to incorporate outdoor learning into a wide range of our lessons on a daily basis, such as foraging and collect eggs for baking in our Kinder Kitchen, incorporating nature walks into descriptive writing units, collecting autumnal leaves for art, and performing drama under the spectacular tree canopy.

"On a weekly basis throughout term we visit a local farm, Carsewell, to learn about where our food comes from and how we can make a positive impact on the environment by thinking

about food waste and food miles.”

Niamh Waldron, Head of Juniors at Merchiston, said: “We are embracing the opportunity of a day of outdoor learning, but this is not an unusual day for us. Outdoor learning helps to make lessons memorable, enhances personal and social skills, improves physical health, improves wellbeing, develops inquisitive thinking and problem solving, develops resilience, an appreciation for nature and a lifelong love of the outdoors.

“On Outdoor Classroom Day, the boys performed outdoors in drama, walked to Redford Barracks to learn about the Scottish Poppies, incorporated nature into science lessons and foraged to prepare food.”



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