

# Changes and Achievements in our teaching and the Children's learning



Rachael Spence

Skerne Park Primary  
School

# Year One - 2009 - 10

- Understanding the ethos/aims of the project:
  - How it benefits children and practitioners in the early years.
- Role of the adults: as facilitator/observer:
  - learning to **support and guide**, not do! - stepping back and observing, listening, giving children time.
  - learning new skills: climbing, using tools, fire, classroom sessions
  - new parents helping during visits to the woods
- Initial concerns: Climbing: how high? Exploring: how far? **NOT PANIC!**
- New routines:
  - Dressing in waterproofs
  - Walk to the woods
  - Camp circle and rules: flag - exploring, dogs, climbing.
- Developing teaching style and provision:
  - altering the usual timetable and beginning to adapt planning and become more flexible.
  - being more spontaneous and daring with my teaching, not setting down detailed plans but planning from children's interests and fascinations daily and weekly.
  - developing spaces/areas to accommodate interests and skills: dens, clay, natural materials, large creative table
  - Incorporating the project into everything I taught: not following the typical **topics** anymore but using what was exciting and relevant to the children as a basis for their learning.
- Practicalities:
  - consent from all parents: keeping them informed, staffing.



# Year Two - 2010 - 11

## Due to the success of the previous year we:

- Secured a commissioning bid from the local authority to fund the project:
  - How it benefits children in early years and practitioners.
- Sharing:
  - Raising the profile of the project and its benefits : informing/inspiring others!
  - led presentations to headteacher and full staff in school: r.e IMPACT
  - Invited staff from other settings to join us in the woods: share good practice.
  - led presentations to practitioners from 'cluster settings': get others on board.
- Role of the adults: as facilitator/observer:
  - now established: **confidence – new skills to take us and children forward**
  - regular parent volunteers
  - same ELiN staff involved as in the previous year – **VERY IMPORTANT** in terms of the smooth transition into the next year.
- Practical issues resolved:
  - bought full set of waterproofs, new resources to support work in school/out.
  - walk to and from the woods: now familiar to all staff.
  - Systems in place: welly boxes, children dressed in waterproofs by parents.
  - Same routine kept...camp circle, flag, rules- all familiar to staff – **PREPARED:**  
shared with children prior to project beginning.
- Established parent links – through:
  - Home/school books – sent home weekly – included learning stories/inviting parents comments **SUCCESS**
  - Children's laminated stories went home as 'library books'
  - Parent Volunteers.
  - Parents/siblings visiting the woods for special celebrations 'May day' etc
  - Parents meetings: inviting parents to see what their child had been involved in- Slideshow – **HIGH ATTENDANCE**
  - **Full support from parents: they recognised the value 'learning in nature' can have, impact on their child and the impact it can have outside of school – positive feedback.**



- Areas of Learning that developed in Year Two :

## Narrative/ Creating Stories



- Through Experiences: Mud: 'mud monsters', Fire, Using natural materials  
Digging : 'Annie's dog tail'.
- Through Collecting/Finding: worm, horseshoe, rock, scorpion.
- Through interests: 'Star wars'.
- Incorporating Story language
- Ownership and pride
- Sharing with others – in the woods, at school and home.

# Year Three - 2011 - 12

- **By the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the project:**
  - We, as a school, are funding the project ourselves:
    - realising the value it had on children in Reception and how it impacted on EY's results (2010 Moderation and EYFS data)
- **Now involving both Reception classes: whole cohort involved:**
  - Jayne Lye – reception teacher working with Sightlines professionals, learning new skills, embedding 'ELiN' across the early years.
- **Project moving through into Year One** – children visiting the woods half-termly, classroom based work with Sightlines and continuing with children's interests/fascinations within the classroom – planning/provision/classroom changes. **Continuing with narratives/imaginative theories:** building on skills/successes of last year.

## Myself:

- **Gained the confidence to move forward on my own:**
- Continue to develop ELiN initiative with my class: taking skills/expertise acquired in the last 2 years to carry on without Sightlines professionals.
- Setting up 'Parent Volunteer' group to join us on visits to the woods: parents learning new skills in observations, supporting, facilitating.
- Develop and support areas of learning : benefits of learning outdoors, improving speaking and listening skills – narrative/stories, imaginative theories, sharing, role-play, Creativity, Personal and social skills - collaboration, turn-taking, teamwork, friendships, supporting one another



What it's all been about...enjoyment!