

# Capcoch Primary John Muir Award Case Study



## The brief:

Capcoch primary and Ignite UP worked together to create an innovative pilot program designed to develop a full cohort of year 6 children's independent learning to promote engagement with their local natural environment whilst also developing literacy, numeracy, social, physical and emotional skills and wellbeing.

## The program:

Using the John Muir Award, an internationally renowned and celebrated conservation and education award; a 14 week programme was agreed where 17 year children from Capcoch worked with an Ignite UP tutor. The head teacher Mr Stephen Gardner agreed that the programme needed to be emergent and child-led as to promote their independent learning.

Another unique feature of the programme was the idea proposed by Mr Gardner, that the children satisfy the "sharing" element of the award by supporting them to host a parent teach session that was developed, planned and delivered by the children. A fantastic parental engagement option.

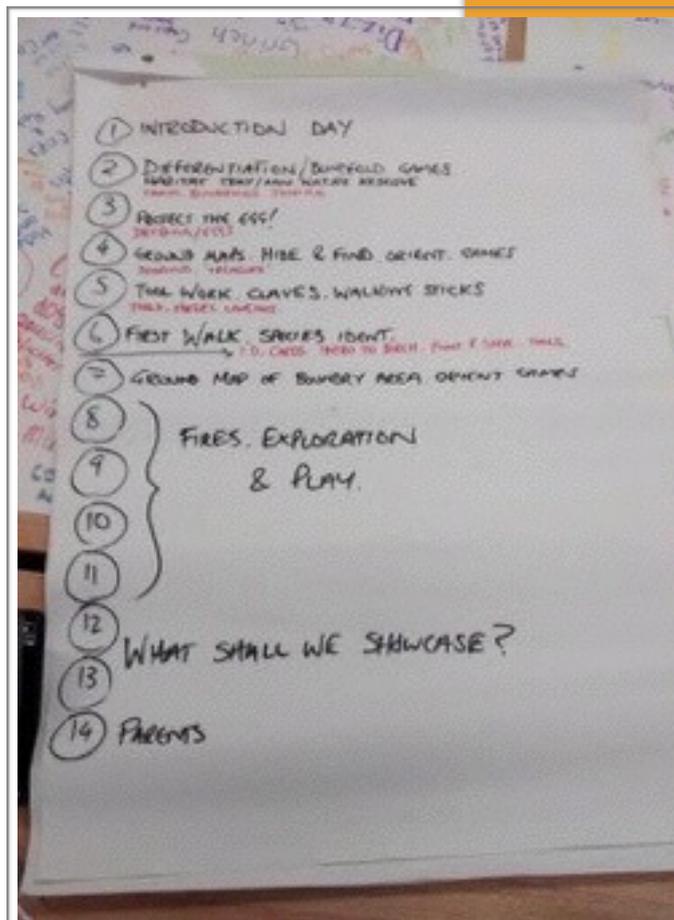
*Delivering the John Muir award in this fashion is a first for any primary school in the RCT Local Education Authority.*

Sessions 1 - 5 involved the children focusing on team work, using tools, discussing what they wanted to do and planning their sessions working towards the parents teach.

Sessions 6-12 involved the group utilising the school grounds and local forest to create their own 'learning environment' and outdoor camp.

The John Muir Award provided the perfect vehicle for the children to express themselves in a collaborative and supportive environment, something Capcoch Primary collectively has worked hard to develop as a theme within the school; often bringing specialist expertise and knowledge into the school to bolster the experiences of their children.

The children decided to create their own camp with 4 distinct areas for building shelters, making fires, wood work using hand tools, foraging natural materials and reflecting on their experience and learning.



## Outcome:

Discreet outcomes such as 98% attendance and successfully completing the parent teach were positive. The main measurement's of the children's development were observational.

The highlight of the program was the parent teach in week 12 (brought forward from week 14).

12 parents and grandparents attend the morning session and were confronted by 17 confident and knowledgeable "teachers". In a series of 20 minute rotations of whittling sticks, creating shelters, lighting fires and foraging wood, parents journeyed to each group, and were given lessons in how to use their tools safely, what to do, how to do it, using "show me, tell me, involve me" methods.

The children impressed every parent with their skills and ability to communicate and deliver their micro teach's as well as sharing their knowledge about:

- The local flora and fauna,
- What types of wood are good for burning or shelter making
- What temperature a spark burn at
- What materials are good and bad flammables
- Why it is important to conserve their natural area

## Tutor Observations:

1. Initial challenges to develop safety in the outdoors and with tools
2. Focusing children on tasks for 3 hour sessions
3. Emergence of leaders from week 8
4. Greater team work and cooperation as sessions progressed
5. High participation throughout
6. High inclusion in all activities
7. Using the woods and skills learned after-school
8. High confidence in delivering parent teach
9. Increased collective strategic thinking and ownership of parent teach

## Head teacher comment:

The John Muir Award focuses on developing skills for learning, life and work and recognising the breadth of children's achievements. It encourages an active, healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyle and aims to support children and parents to learn beyond the classroom.

"it was marvellous to see them so confident"

"I enjoyed being allowed to use tools and fire, Dee trusted us"

