



THE WORLD AROUND US



The Grove Nursery School has been awarded their third Eco Schools' Green flag for their environmental efforts. This is a great achievement for a nursery school and one of which we are extremely proud. The children daily recycle paper and card, take plastic milk bottles to the Amenity Site, make 'compost' from our food scraps, use scrap materials for art activities, collect old scrap materials for recycling, conserve water for our plants and energy by saving electricity. We have investigated more ideas re. energy efficiency by looking at wind turbines in the local area.

We grow and harvest our own vegetables and herbs (which the cook then uses for dinners), learn about minibeasts and native wild life, watch butterflies hatch and take care of our class guinea pigs and feed the wild birds in Winter. Last year's parents purchased a large bird table to enable us to do more bird watching while participating in the annual RSPB Birdwatch. We achieved a silver award in the Young Wildlife Awards. We also note seasonal changes during play outdoors in our 'natural woodland' play area or while walking through the Folly or in Peatlands Park. We maintain our raised beds by planting bulbs and annual flowers, having brought on the seedlings in our 'green house' made from recycled plastic bottles.

We were highly commended in the Best Kept School's Award and plan to participate in local environmental projects when Covid restrictions are more relaxed.

The children greatly enjoy all our outside space, especially our new secret 'sensory' garden area, which we plan to develop as and when finance becomes available. The staff plan our curriculum outdoors with as much care and consideration as that indoors, for as one early years' educator stated 'The biggest classroom is roofed only by the sky.' We exploit all learning opportunities.

Relevant visits and visitors enhance the planned topics and learning of the children throughout the year e.g. farm animals, pets, woodland animals, feeding the reindeers at Gosford, Armagh Planetarium, RSPB, visits to Streamvale Farm and W5 and other professionals who talk about their occupations and demonstrate their skills - all of which help to foster a greater understanding on the world in which we live.

The staff are very proactive in providing the children with opportunities to freely 'explore' and 'investigate' materials and equipment, sometimes initiated by the children's own interests. We set up tables and areas for the children to have first hand experiences to use and handle objects, which previously may have been considered not appropriate or too 'precious' for such young children. However, we believe by curtailing what we provide, children are being denied valuable learning opportunities. Staff seek to develop such curiosity and independence in learning.