

BURBAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

CONTACT WITH SCHOOLS IN THE PARISH

Introduction. Six schools were contacted with a view to finding out how schools exploited the educational potential that the Parish environment offers. First contact was made by phone in the week ending 26th June with a follow-up email giving details of the formulation process of the Neighbourhood Plan and how schools might make a contribution. Further calls took place and, in four cases, visits were arranged for me to interview headteachers and/or other appropriate staff. These visits took place from the 6th–10th of July. Notes relating to the findings are outlined in the following paragraphs. One school did not respond to my contacts and a second declined to take part.

The four participating schools were a High School (11-14), an Infants School (4-7), a Nursery School for children with special educational needs (2-5) and a Special School catering for youngsters with autistic spectrum disorders (8-16).

School 1 Regular local walks in the western part of the Parish with a view to encouraging independence. Science work including leaf hunts in woodland leading up to Burbage Common. Adapting and generalising street rules into a rural environment. Cycle trips including footpath routes. Geocaching. In addition, regular visits to features of the urban environment such as shops and restaurants, car surveys and road orienteering

School 2 Routine 'out & about' activities each week usually linked to learning themes. Photo trails are set up to alert children to specific features of the environment. The old village of Sketchley is regularly visited, with the children with the children especially enjoying the horses in the field at SP 424921. Vital sensory stimulation is gained from getting out into the environment, e.g. 'crunching through leaves in autumn'. Leaves are collected and used later in school for printing. Seasonal activity on blossom and flowers generally. Experience of the man-made environment through visits to St Catherine's Church, local shops and parks.

School 3 Walks around the village. Technology projects in the park. Visits to St Catherine's Church

School 4 Burbage Common and woods used as a site for photography in preparation for the demands of GCSE. The PE department also uses this area for orienteering. Same site used for sponsored walks given the space available in a well defined semi-enclosed situation. Horse riding club makes use of local bridle paths. Dressage also features, especially during the cross-curricular 'Enrichment Week'.

Potential for learning in the environment takes in the village war memorial as a starting point for historical research and St. Catherine's Church.

Schools' general comments

- i. The end of the school year was not a good time to gather such information from staff
- ii. The restrictions imposed by Health & Safety considerations inhibit environmental studies much more than in former days.
- iii. Schools with very young children and those with special needs find it more problematic to get out of school into the wider environment.
- iv. Learning in school benefits for the experience children have had of the local environment at weekends, in holidays and after school with family and friends.
- v. The lack of data from schools in the Junior age range affected the findings.