

Activity: action plan

Summary of activity

Pupils collect data about their school grounds to create a permanent record of the habitats and species they include. Pupils can use this as a basis for discussing whether they would like to make any changes to encourage more wildlife.

Learning objectives

1. To collect and record information accurately.
2. To identify habitats within the school grounds.

Preparation

- Identify some simple outline maps of your school grounds.
- Add titles: Habitats, Plants, Animals and Trees to four separate flipchart sheets and display these posters in the classroom.

Resources

- Outline maps of school grounds
- Clipboards, paper and pencils
- Flipchart paper and pens
- Animal and plant identification books/posters
- Digital camera

Introduction

As a whole class, mind map what habitats, plants and animals are present in the school grounds – getting correct answers at this stage is not important! Ask pupils if they are confident that this is an accurate record and discuss the necessity of fieldwork.

Main activity

1. If learning support allows, split the class into two groups and explore the school grounds.
2. Create a map of the school grounds by asking older or more able pupils to start with a blank sheet of paper only showing the location of the school building, adding features as they walk around. Younger, or less able, pupils can be provided with a simple outline map of the grounds and asked to annotate the map as they explore, perhaps with symbols. Aim to mark on main features such as hedges, pond, field and car park.
3. Once pupils have a good base map, they can once again explore the grounds, demarcating different habitats and large trees on their map. Pupils should also be encouraged to look for plants and animals which live in their grounds. Using books, support pupils in identifying and listing the species present.
4. Back in the classroom, ask pupils to add the information they have collected to the relevant flipchart poster – avoid duplication. This creates a whole class record of the information collected.

5. Meanwhile, draw up a map of the school grounds on a flipchart, marking on the key features. With all of these posters displayed, facilitate a classroom discussion to gather ideas about the school grounds.
6. See the *Example action plan* PDF an example action plan and the sorts of things you may wish to discuss and include. Support pupils in creating an action plan for their school grounds. This part of the activity could involve independent research, ICT and art.

Plenary

Examine your completed action plan and identify your class's three next steps.

Health and safety considerations

- Refer to your risk assessment for your school grounds. Complete a risk assessment if you leave the school grounds.
- Consider pupil specific risks.
- Consider activity specific risks such as tripping and falling into bodies of water.



Follow-up ideas

Reflect on action plan periodically and update it with any new progress. Choose another aspect to work on as a class.

Circulate your action plan to rest of school. Perhaps consult the head teacher and school council and then present the action plan in assembly.

Send your results and photographs to a local paper or display them on a local community board to publicise the work you are doing. Invite parents and other members of the local community to join in with your work.

Conduct a survey among pupils to gather extra information about the school grounds, what plants and animals have been spotted, what they would like to see, what their interests are and whether they would like to help. Conduct a survey among parents to see if they could offer any tools, time, plants or expertise.

Create a poster to display in school which illustrates which jobs need doing in which months in your school grounds.

Invite an external organisation into school to help support you with one specific task in your school grounds. Please refer to the Contacts' section pdf.

Take photographs of your grounds in different seasons and begin a tradition of taking regular photographs over the years to document the changes which take place. Create an album including art, poetry and stories.

Learn more about real action plans in Norfolk by referring to www.norfolkbiodiversity.org

Create a display about the various animals which live in your school grounds. Pupils can independently research and create illustrations of animals.

Explore your grounds in more detail by conducting a census. Pupils could use quadrats to study abundance or distribution of plant species, observe and record the types of bird which visit your grounds or set pit-fall traps to study minibeast distribution and abundance. These results could be plotted on graphs and used to investigate seasonal changes.



Example action plan

Name of school:

Palm Tree Primary

Description of location:

Palm Tree Primary is in a suburban area of Norwich, in the East of England. Palm Tree Primary lies to the west of the city in an area called Inglewood. The grid reference of our school is TG 546 789.

Description of grounds:

Palm Tree Primary is lucky enough to have varied school grounds. In addition to two hard surfaced playgrounds, a playing field, a car park and an area of wooden play equipment, we have a small nature area.

Habitats present:

Pond, hedgerow, grassland and a newly planted copse of trees.

Trees present:

Sycamore, oak, hazel, horse chestnut, apple and flowering cherry.

Other plants present:

Cow parsley, nettle, bramble, buttercup, daisy, plantain, bluebell, primrose, flag iris, water lily, grass, aconite and honeysuckle.

Animals present:

Sparrow, blackbird, chaffinch, magpie, thrush, worm, beetle, grasshopper, earwig, woodlouse, shield bug and frog.

Threats to grounds:

- Extensions to the school building may destroy some habitats.
- Passing traffic may cause pollution.
- Litter can harm the appearance of the grounds and can harm our wildlife.
- Not enough people want to help look after the grounds and so some habitats are in poor condition.

Areas of grounds requiring restoration:

- The wildlife area is now so overgrown that we cannot access it.
- The boardwalk around the pond needs painting with anti-slip paint and needs to have a rail added for safety.
- Some of the newly planted trees need staking properly.
- One of the oak trees has a branch hanging off which could be cut off safely and used to create a log pile for mini-beasts. Consult County Council for tree advice.

Ideas for the future:

- We do not know what lives in the pond so do some pond dipping and add new creatures to this action plan.
- We would like to encourage more butterflies by planting buddleia.
- We want to encourage more animals so we could create a shallow part to the pond and create a marshy area.
- We like flowers so we would like to plant a wildflower meadow.

Maintenance:

In order to keep our school grounds good for us and good for nature we need to:

1. Inspect the trees regularly. Ensure all are safe and properly staked.
2. Mow the area of grass among the new trees once a year at the end of August.
3. Cut back the brambles around the wildlife area.

Who to involve:

People involved already: contractors from County Council and occasionally Mrs Best when she has time.

People we could ask to become involved: pupils; teachers (Mrs Best knows all about birds); parents (Nancy Nichols' Dad is manager at the garden centre and Stuart Glynn's Mum works for the country park); local residents; local businesses; St Phil's High School.

Targets – our next steps:

- Speak to the Head, Mrs Cannon, about what we found and what we would like to do.
- Ask the School Council to discuss this action plan at their next meeting.
- Fill up the bird feeders and make a bird table

Photos of grounds:



Action plan

Name of school:

Description of location:

Description of grounds:

Habitats present:

Trees present:

Other plants present:

Animals present:

Threats to grounds:**Areas of grounds requiring restoration:****Ideas for the future:****Maintenance:**

Who to involve:

Targets – our next steps:

Photos of grounds: