Field Book

A field book or nature diary is a useful tool for keeping track of pupil's progress during outdoor sessions, as well as giving them something to refer to and be proud of.

1. The Book

Any notepad or exercise book can be used as a field book, and a first activity could be decorating the cover. Alternatively, hole punched worksheets held together with treasury tags work well, and enables the constant addition of new templates for children that find blank pages intimidating.

2. Uses

The most basic use of a field book is for making observations about what can be found outdoors. This can take the form of drawing, writing, taking leaf and bark rubbings, and sticking in bits and pieces like flowers and twigs. Also, tailored worksheets and activity sheets are available online, such as on our website and nature detectives.

3. Curriculum Links

As well as environmental and science topics, field books are a particularly good example of a cross-curricular tool in outdoor education. Some of the more staple ideas include counting, geometry and sums for maths, creative writing for English, and keeping a sketchbook for art.

Example Science Curriculum Links:

KS1

- observing closely, gather and recording data
- identify and describe the basic structure of a variety of common flowering plants, including trees (Year 1)
- observe changes across the 4 seasons (Year 1)
- identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other (Year 2)
- identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitats, including microhabitats (Year 2)
- observe and describe how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants (Year 2)
- find out and describe how plants need water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy (Year 2)

KS2

- making careful observations, recording findings using drawings and labelled diagrams, taking measurements
- identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers (Year 3)
- explore the part that flowers play in the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination, seed formation and seed dispersal (Year 3)
- explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment (Year 4)
- describe how living things are classified into broad groups according to common observable characteristics and based on similarities and differences, including micro-organisms, plants and animals (Year 6)
- identify how animals and plants are adapted to suit their environment in different ways and that adaptation may lead to evolution (Year 6)

KS4

- some abiotic and biotic factors which affect communities; the importance of interactions between organisms in a community
- the importance of biodiversity
- positive and negative human interactions within ecosystems