

John Brooksbank – Reference

We have had the pleasure of working with John Brooksbank – Lead Instructor of The Great Out-tours, at our two federation schools, over the 2020-21 & 2021-2022 academic years.

During engagement of The Great Out-tours diverse 'Four Seasons Outdoor Learning Programme', our teaching team observed such pleasure on pupils' faces, as they learnt their curricular subject, through well planned and illuminating practical activities. Seeing their learning blossom through this programme, was very, very special!

- Under John's expert tutelage, our pupils worked both individually & together, supporting one other on creative wild wood & natural resource craft projects. These themes tied in perfectly to our school curricular teaching topics. *Example: School learning theme: 'Anglo-Saxons' / Subject: How Anglo-Saxons built houses. Pupils learnt the 'wattle and daub' technique and built a life-size Anglo-Saxon wall out of wild Hazel branches.*
Moreover, his craft-based activities enhanced our pupils' fine / gross motor skills and social, mental and physical wellbeing.
- John's ecological expertise was a key factor in the pupils' learning, bringing in (through his animal rescue specialist colleague Laura Stevens-Smith) various wild rescue animals, that had relevance to the corresponding school learning topic. *Example: School learning theme: 'Ancient Egyptians' / Subject: Horus – The Ancient God of the 'Sky' who had the head of hawk/falcon. Activity: To bring alive this learning subject, a native UK wild rescue Common Buzzard was brought into the schools' grounds.*
- All activities John delivered, were specifically themed and focused to support our staff teaching topics. His comprehensive knowledge of the countryside coupled with curricular subject specialism, enables him to seamlessly weave real life contexts to the activity subjects, ensuring a richer learning journey for our pupils.
- John's teaching experience was key to our pupils vibrant 'post-session' learning journey. He designed/provided illuminating age-appropriate curricular supporting classroom resources. *Example: Multiple choice quizzes (KS1 & 2), themed word searches (KS2) and fun dot-to-dot / maze & colouring challenges (KS1).*
- John is Health and Safety Officer of The Great Out-tours, and at all times during our programme sessions, he applied The Great Out-tours Risk Assessment framework 'to the letter'. This ensured the children were never in danger to themselves or one another.

I would recommend John without reservation, for your forthcoming outdoor learning initiative.

Matt - Executive Headteacher, Two school federation.