

DEWSBURY: YOUR HEALTH IN MIND!



This project is supported by the Dewsbury Councillors' Ward budgets



Diamond Wood Academy Sessions

- ⇒ 10 sessions delivered
- ⇒ 47 adults engaged
- ⇒ Raised vegetable beds cleared by the volunteers
- ⇒ Rubbish litter-picked by children and parents
- ⇒ Dozens of spring bulbs planted by children and parents
- ⇒ 100+ early spring - summer bulbs and perennials planted at the Greenwood Centre by the Eco-Council, staff, parents and S2R



Background:

S2R worked with Diamond Wood Academy School to reach parents, carers, and family members who might not otherwise engage in nature based outdoor wellbeing, and to promote a sense of wellness from spending time outdoors with their children. Diamond Wood were looking for ways to further engage their parents (many of whom have English as a second language or varying degrees of limited English), both in school life and to make better use of their great outdoor facilities. Working together was a great choice as Diamond Wood have a strong environmental ethos and wanted to involve themselves in the wider community. They also wanted to bring parents and children together to learn outdoor environmentally and economically sustainable skills, and to better aid their mental and physical wellbeing. It has not been at all easy this year as the school has frequently been affected by Covid -19 which delayed the start of the partnership and frequently interrupted continuity of sessions.



What We Do:

Every Wednesday, Hannah Tombling (a teacher and Eco-Council leader) and other school staff join facilitators from S2R for an outdoor wellbeing session. We work with both the parents and the children on projects, often relating to the school curriculum. Activities tend to be something eco-craft based, an outdoor skill, or perhaps something to give nature a little helping hand such as a making 'bug hotel'. After the children have completed their activity with their adult, they return to their classrooms.



“WE DON'T NEED TO PAY GYM FEES WHEN WE ARE DOING THIS GARDENING!”

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Then for the last 30 - 45 minutes of the session, we encourage the adults to stay on for some wellbeing time of their own. This can range from some outdoor planting, a campfire brew and snack, or helping to improve the school's grounds and planting areas for the benefit of all. This important time also provides the opportunity for connections to be made and we know that over activities, conversations can take place, and confidence and relationships are built. It also gives parents the opportunity to talk to those who might speak a different language or come from a different cultural background.

Who Engages With Us?

Parents of specific year groups are invited to our sessions and this is rotated over time to give everyone a chance to be involved. The pastoral team make sure that bookings are open to everyone, however they do encourage parents who they know to be socially isolated, or low in confidence and general mental wellbeing to join in. The session demographic is wide, attracting Eastern European, South Asian and white British parents, many with English as a second language. Some adults have specific commitments and responsibilities within their family homes, but the opportunity to engage with their children at the school provides some protected time that benefits their own wellbeing in a safe and trusted environment.

What Next?

By engaging with a wide variety of parents it is hoped that a 'Friends Of' group might come about from those who show most interest. These participants will also be encouraged to help out in the school garden outside of sessions. One parent has already shown a keen interest in progressing the growing area by clearing it and getting it ready for and planting. We hope that in time, the project will be able to contribute towards Ravensthorpe in Bloom and the Great Yorkshire Show Vegetable Box competition. We also hope that some parents will find that they take pleasure in the outdoors and in nature, and join in with our proposed walking groups and benefit from other local nature wellbeing opportunities.

"WE COULD GROW THINGS TO TAKE HOME."

**"I REALLY ENJOYED IT - THANK YOU.
CAN I COME BACK NEXT WEEK?"**