



## Art and poetic inspiration in an ancient woodland

### *Curriculum themes*

Literacy  
History  
Art

### *Resources required*

- Option 1 *Inspired to write:* 5 x laminated poems inspired by the countryside  
Paper/notebooks or Poe-Tree resource  
Pens/pencils
- Option 2 *Inspired to draw:* 5 x laminated pictures inspired by the countryside  
Paper/note books  
Coloured pencils  
Seasonal colour palettes
- Option 3 *Inspired to create:* 5 x laminated pictures of land art/sculpture inspired by the countryside
- Option 4 *Inspired to photograph:* 5 x laminated photographs inspired by the countryside  
Cameras – provided by the school

### *Background information*

#### **Best time of the year for the activity**

Anytime, but late Spring to early Autumn is best.

#### **Timing**

This activity will take approximately 2 hours.

#### **Location on the farm**

This activity is based on using the ancient woodland around Ashes Beck, but at certain times of the year in the hay meadow (Summer) or pasture (Spring) would also have lots to offer.

#### **Introducing the activity**

The aim of this activity is to present children with the opportunity to be inspired by the magical atmosphere created by a mix of nature, woodland art and words. There are 4 options presented: Inspired to write, Inspired to draw, Inspired to create or Inspired to photograph. The children could choose their own option or the class as a whole could do one or more of the options. The activities can be structured using the resources available or left more open with the children's imaginations leading the activities.

#### **Undertaking the activity**

##### **Magical place**

For all the options start the activity by encouraging the children to find their own magical place within the woodland. For safety reason this should be within an area defined by the teacher. If the group has already completed the activity 'Building a shelter from natural materials', this may be the focus of their magic space. Once they have found their magical place encourage them to sit down and get comfortable. Let the children remain quietly in their magical place for about 5 minutes – using an agreed sound, alert them to return to form a group. Discuss what they saw, heard, smelt and felt.

### Option 1

#### Inspired to write

Following the discussions from the magical place activity, introduce the idea that places like this woodland have inspired people to write poems, nature diaries or stories. Either the teacher or the children can read aloud one or more of the poems included in the resources.

The children will use their magic place again as focus for this work. In their magic place the children should be encouraged to think about the key words that describe what they hear, see, smell, feel and think within the setting that surrounds them. These thoughts can be transferred to paper, into a notebook or onto the 'Poe-Tree' resource where the branches and trunk of the tree gives a natural shape to their words. For those who are more confident lines or even verses of poetry may follow.

### Option 2

#### Inspired to draw

Following the discussions from the magical place activity, introduce the idea that places like this woodland have inspired people to draw and paint. Use the laminated pictures to illustrate how people have been inspired by the countryside.

The children will use their magic place again as focus for this work. In their magic place the children should be encouraged to sketch something they can see to reflect the mood of the wood. Coloured pencils are also available and a seasonal colour palette to help them use colour to emphasis the mood of the season.

### Option 3

#### Inspired to create

Following the discussions from the magical place activity, introduce the idea that places like this woodland have inspired people to create natural land art and sculptures. Use the laminated pictures of land art and sculptures to illustrate how people have been inspired by the countryside.

The children should be encouraged to use the natural resources around them to create a piece of 'art'. They should be able to find lots of materials such as twigs, flowers, leaves, stones, bark, grass and fallen seed heads.

**Option 4**

**Inspired to photograph**

Following the discussions from the magical place activity, introduce the idea that places like this woodland have inspired people to photograph them. Use the laminated photographs to illustrate this.

The children should be encouraged to use the woodland around to create art from photographs using comparisons – from the whole tree to the bark, from the insect to the sky, from light to shade.

**Follow-up ideas**

**Inspired to write** – The words can be ‘grown’ into poems, stories or diaries back in the class. The Poe-Tree could be enlarged and used to illustrate the thoughts and feelings of the whole class.

**Inspired to draw** – The sketches made in the woodland could be developed in greater detail or colours enhanced. Different media could be used.

**Inspired to create** – Create some land art or sculpture in the school grounds. Use living willow and make some permanent features.

**Inspired to photograph** – Use the photographs and any other work created on your visit to Carrs Farm to create a nature diary or a record of your visit.