

# out&about

## School grounds focus:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we get there?
- Making the changes
- Using your grounds

## Curriculum focus:

- Science
- Geography

## Purpose of this activity:

- To explore the school grounds for signs of weathering.
- To start finding out about materials and their physical properties.

## Equipment and materials:

- Clipboards, paper and pencils
- Cameras
- Magazines

## Preparation:

- Get the pupils, in groups, to look at magazines and select pictures featuring outdoor environments. Using the pictures, get them to identify and list the different materials they recognise in the pictures – for example, wood for patio tables and chairs, brick for buildings, iron for gates, stone for steps, tarmac for roads, slate for roofs etc.
- Discuss why these different materials have been chosen by looking at their physical properties – waterproof, transparent, strong, flexible etc.
- Explore the durability of these different materials. Give the pupils an example to handle. Let them see if they can mark it – perhaps with a piece of sandpaper. What's easy to mark and what's not? What is there outdoors that might mark, damage or wear away these different materials?
- Explore the effect heavy rain can have in the school grounds by trying out the experiment over the page.

## What to do:

- Using their clipboards and/or cameras, get the pupils to tour their grounds and identify examples of each material on their list. They should look at windows, gates, fixed play equipment, surfaces etc.
- Get them to identify the material and record any signs of weathering. They may find paint fading, peeling or cracking; wood warping or splitting; areas where the ground is waterlogged or dry and cracked; mosses, algae and water stains in damp areas; worn steps, faded signs and rusty gates.
- Either in groups or as a whole class discuss the findings and talk about why this weathering might have taken place. Is it through over-use or misuse? Weather conditions – too much rain, too much sun? Aspect – north, south, east or west?

## Extensions:

- Using their research from the school grounds, get the pupils to identify health and safety hazards associated with the weathering.
- Are there more suitable materials that could be used, which would be less susceptible to erosion?

# And down came the rain...

Using a hose pipe to simulate heavy rain, let groups of children witness the effects this can have on the environment around them.

**Does it...**

- make pock marks on dried earth?
- change earth to mud?
- patter on the roof?
- batter a flat roof?
- overflow the drains?
- race down a slope?
- flood a low-lying part of the grounds?
- wash away twigs and dry leaves?
- form puddles on flat surfaces?
- leave debris and tide marks behind?

