Outdoor lesson

primary

Shadow art

Follow the path of the sun with shadow drawings

Great for...

- **Art and design** recording and collecting information, then developing ideas based on this initial study
- **Science** how the position of the sun appears to change during the day, and how shadows change as a result

Activity

1. Plan the activity so that recordings can be made throughout the day – for example, before school, during break, within a morning lesson, at lunchtime and towards the end of the day. Working individually or in small groups pupils take a piece of chalk and trace around the shadow of their object at the different times of day. They may wish to use the same colour chalk throughout the day or different colours at different times. Where the shadow falls on to grass or other softer surface use string to mark the outline.
2. At the end of the day children should make an image (drawn or photographed) of the shape their shadows have created. They should also record some of the main dimensions in order to recreate the shadows in other forms – for example, using cardboard.
3. When returning to the classroom discuss why the images changed during the day – for example, in the middle of the day the shadows will be shorter because the sun is higher in the sky. You could recreate this effect using moveable lamps inside.
4. Develop this idea further by creating art works with the shadows you have 'collected' or by creating new shadows. Search for 'shadow art' on the internet for more inspiration.
5. You could undertake this activity at different times of the year to see how the height of the sun in the sky affects the shadows formed.

What you need

- **A sunny day!**
- **Chalk**
- **String**
- **Clipboard, paper and pencil or camera** to record the images
- **Tape measures or rulers** to measure the shadows

Preparation

- Check out the grounds before the day of recording to make sure there are a good selection of features – benches, bird table, sign posts etc – available to work on that are in the sun for as much of the day as possible.
- Collect a selection of shadow images from the internet to explore with the children.

Less challenging

- Select features where the shadows fall on to flat, horizontal surfaces.

More challenging

- Select features where the shadows fall not only on the ground but up walls etc.

Your notes

Use this space to evaluate the activity

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