

Case Study: Langley Hall Primary Academy

Carrot Wood, our Rock UK site based in Kent, has welcomed groups from Langley Hall School for over 25 years. They bring schoolchildren from Year One for an overnight stay up to Year Six for a week-long residential. So what keeps them coming back year after year?

Rock UK spoke to Stella Kalamaj, Lower School Vice Principal, to learn more about their school's experience of outdoor residential adventures with Rock UK.

What keeps Langley School coming back to Carrot Wood for their outdoor adventures?

The ethos of Carrot Wood is really aligned with the ethos of our school. There are obviously Christian values, but also outdoor learning, the environment and being outside. We very much believe in outdoor education to support the personal development of the children.

What do you see as the benefit of returning to the same site for your groups each year?

Creating familiarity is absolutely key. Once the children are familiar with the site, where we are staying, and how it all works, then their focus can be on their personal development. They don't have to spend time reorientating themselves because they have been here before. This also helps to reduce anxiety for some children. When somewhere becomes a home-from-home, they can spend more time benefiting from their time there, developing their skills and enjoying their whole experience.



How do outdoor residential adventures help the children from your school to develop?

Firstly, these adventures are a great opportunity for them to play, run, and enjoy themselves. But it's also about the bigger picture and seeing them build practical life skills. They get to experience things that they haven't done before. That could be buying things from the tuck shop, working out the cost and the change to making their own meals. It could simply be about spending a night without their parent. These experiences help their personal development and help them to become a whole person.



What do you see as the benefit of bringing groups as young as Year One?

We know there aren't many other schools that take this approach, but we really feel that it benefits the children. The Year One groups come for just one night to get them used to the site and being away from home. Even in Year One, they are learning new skills and learning how to be more independent.

We recently showed some prospective parents around the school, and they asked a Year 2 student what her favourite part of school was. She immediately replied, 'the night I stayed at Carrot Wood in Year One'.



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What are some of the goals that you set for the children before coming to Carrotty Wood?

While we might not set specific targets, there are things that we would like the children to achieve while they are attending their residential. While we are always there to support them, we want them to use this experience to become more self-sufficient.

We want them to build relationships. From friendships with their peers to better relationships with the staff. This is a great opportunity for everyone to get to know each other better and build teams.

Finally, we also want them to experience things they wouldn't usually be able to experience, from abseiling to raft building. The activities really help them to build teamwork, communication, mental agility and reasoning.

Most importantly, we want them to build memories.



What is one of your stand-out memories from your residential experiences?

Last year, we had one child who would not settle. Her parents had warned us that she wasn't a good sleeper. She wanted to go home, but we stayed with her, read her a story, and we were with her until around 2 am when she finally fell asleep. In the morning, she knocked on our door and proudly said, "I made it!". She was so excited and couldn't wait to tell her parents.

I also love seeing the resilience of the children grow. Watching them have another go at activities and keep persisting is amazing. We have some beautiful videos of the children working together as a team. These memories stand out for me because we can see where are making a difference.



What would you say to someone looking to book a residential adventure with Rock UK?

Just throw yourself into it. Enjoy the children enjoying themselves because it's the best.

If you think the children will just play in the woods, that's not what they do. They play, they collaborate, they learn, they become independent, they become resilient.

The rewards that you get are much bigger than you could ever imagine.



Activities:

Archery | Low Ropes | Swimming | Team Development Tasks

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