

# Atelier — 21 —

a revolutionary response to school



**An Inside Look  
2021**



Dear Parents,

We are thrilled to share some of our work with you in this newsletter. After a successful opening in September 2020 and a positive remote learning experience since January 2021, we are incredibly excited to welcome our pupils, and many new faces, back into school from next week. Our vision has always been to put our values and principles at the heart of our school. We believe we have already created a dynamic and learner focused environment for Primary and Secondary school children which offers education fit for children's futures and readiness for 21st century life; and after even a short period of time we are growing in strength, conviction and pupil numbers. Never has there been a better time to think about new options for educating our children. We thought you might like to see a glimpse of what life is like at our new school. Do get in touch by emailing [hayley@atelier21schools.co.uk](mailto:hayley@atelier21schools.co.uk) if you'd like to know more.

Warmest wishes

***Hayley Peacock***

**Head of School**

**March 2021**





# Flying Start

Early Years enjoying Wild Fridays



EXPLORE

WONDER

QUESTION

CREATE

Our Reception children have made excellent progress with their learning and have enjoyed spending time researching, collaborating, creating, wondering, practising being mindful and connecting with our community since we opened. Class 1 (6-9 year olds) took part in floor based maths in the piazza and designed and made their own skateboards. Linking our Big Study about Nature and the Natural World on Wild Fridays, the children also produced Nature Art in the forest, mapped Broadfield park, took part in a beach clear up and found a small breed of shark on the beach! Cross curricular learning in the fresh air surrounded by the beauty and phenomenon of nature.



## Teacher Viewpoint—Jo Cole

### What makes learning at Atelier 21 so effective?

Atelier 21 is utterly unique in so many ways and it is a privilege to be a small part of it. I teach Maths to Class 2 and each week I am excited to walk through the doors and discover what magic is happening that day.

During my 22-year teaching career I have worked in Independent, state and international schools. Atelier hand picks the best of all these schools and weaves these bits together with its own unique approach to produce a rich tapestry which is constantly evolving and always creating something new to discover and enjoy. The pupils are relaxed, reflective and respectful. Sessions are calm and pupils offer genuine thanks at the end of their lessons. Very quickly, due to the small class sizes, you get to know the individuals and their personalities. Most importantly, you have time to talk to the pupils and really understand them. There is no school bell, pressure to complete an activity with 30 pupils or an urgency to get to break time. We all learn best when we are enjoying learning and at Atelier this is very much the case.

## Myth Busters



**TRADITIONAL LEARNING** - Atelier 21 is an academic school which covers the National Curriculum. The children learn National Curriculum content and how to sit exams. The difference is that our learner centred approach is more engaging and achieves more successful outcomes all round. The pupils also learn 21st Century skills and develop their own interests and passions through self-directed and project-based learning.



**A SPORTY SCHOOL** - The children at Atelier 21 are both active and sporty. We have a dedicated sports teacher, Mig Adams, previously Head of Sport at Windlesham Prep. The pupils will also take part in plenty of fixtures (post-COVID-19 restrictions).



**NOT A HIPPIY SCHOOL** - Atelier 21 is a progressive school fit for children's futures. We are intentionally different as we know the Reggio Emilia inspired enquiry based learning enhances children's overall performance at school - as does the strong pastoral care and nurturing of deeply curious social and motivated individuals. We also support our children's well-being through teaching mindfulness, creativity and encouraging individual expression.



# Reception Class



Pupils who join in Reception have no concept of time – that is the magic of being 4! They will often choose the most inappropriate moment to share with you their thoughts, feelings or experience. Sadly, as a teacher in a large school, it is often just not possible to sit with that child and delve deeper, despite really wanting to. At Atelier, it is. With two teaching partners in every class and a flexible timetable it is possible to capture these moments and give every child the time they deserve.

Time is available to sit with individuals and explore books, provide reinforcement work, or extend those who are able. The Early Learning Goals and National Curriculum is covered, just as in any other school. In the EYFS pupils are given time to explore and learn through play. Often this stops as pupils enter Year 1 but at Atelier this is not the case.

“My favourite thing about Atelier 21 is making the Amazon rainforest.”  
*Giacomo from Little Barn Owls, Horsham*

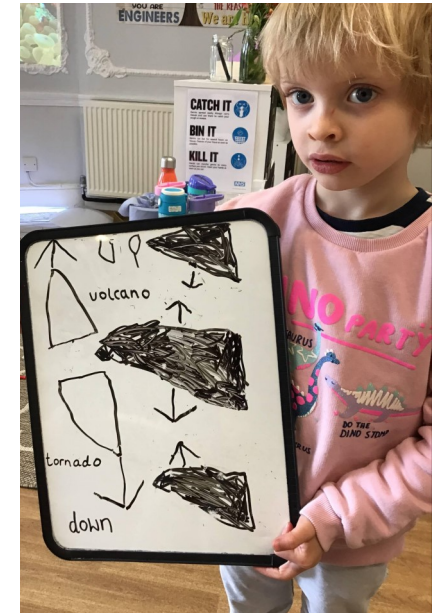
“I love free playing outside in the Forest.”  
*Matilda, aged 5 years*

“I like building things.”  
*Eddie from Little Barn Owls, Southwater*

Expert teaching partners, several of whom worked in Little Barn Owl Nurseries, ensure that this approach continues throughout the school. Over the past few years, the term ‘mastery’ is used in many ways and the general concept of enabling pupils to gain skills with support rather than rote learning is considered better. This is often accompanied by a conversation about the challenges this presents. Many school teachers would love their pupils to learn more independently, but the school or the system doesn’t allow for it. At Atelier it is easy. The learning is planned around the pupils’ interests and time is set aside for the teachers to reflect on individual needs, research and think creatively about how to propose real world problems children will relate to. We build the academic skills in through interest areas children already connect with - like the photo below right - Reception pupils writing signs to remind the school of its agreements we made as a community at the start of term (rules, if you like). There is a strong collaborative approach and planning is not repeated from previous years, it is fresh and tailored to the needs of pupils and today’s society around what is going on in the world. What we want is for children to



hold on to that love for learning they have in abundance in their early years - throughout their school life. We think 16 years olds should build their momentum for learning through school, and leave wanting to know more; not leave education the least motivated they have ever been!





# Passion Pays



“Passion Pays” is a series of talks where people who have careers born from interests and passions are invited into school to demonstrate that there are lots of ways to follow careers doing what you love in life. Professional UK skateboarder and four-time UK champion, Lucy Adams, gave an inspirational talk (and showed us a few tricks) about her work around the world as a sponsored skateboarder. Lucy was invited in to inspire the children’s skateboard self-directed project. The budding entrepreneurs in Class 1 also raised money from baking and selling cookies to buy the parts for the skateboards they were keen to build.

The children have since enjoyed LIVE zoom call workshops with video game designer, Hannah Curran from Creative Assembly, Lee Maggot - movie special effects artist and top Equine trainer and international competitor, Sarah-Sjholm Patience.

To develop financial literacy and an entrepreneurial spirit the children also take part in a whole school business. This term they kick started it by launching their own tuck shop for Monday break times. Lots of quick mental maths to work out the change and very popular too!



## Teacher / parent viewpoint—Cansu Beagle

*“I feel very fortunate to experience life at Atelier 21 from a parent and teacher perspective. Working as a teaching partner, this role has been a dream and an extremely rewarding experience. I was able to bring all of my passions around creativity, play, child development and mental well-being into a space that holds those things in the highest regard. From a parent perspective I couldn’t ask for more; my daughter has an enriching, beautiful and carefully curated space that allows for a breadth of creativity and play opportunities. Her wonderful teachers (both from LBO) bring their Reggio Emilia approach into the classroom and with it they facilitate and explore all of my child’s interests and ideas, weaving and guiding it into learning opportunities. I have a more confident, creative and resilient daughter who loves her school. I drop her off knowing that she will have a joyful day which is the most reassuring feeling for me.*

*We have a strong emphasis on mastering learning powers such as resilience, imagination, reflection and more, alongside gaining knowledge and new academic skills,. We recognise learning powers during our weekly award ceremonies, it’s such a beautiful way to start our Fridays. I love the family and community feel our school has, it feels like another home to me. The classrooms don’t look like traditional classrooms at all, they have building areas, loose parts play, ateliers, props and tactile learning resources.”*



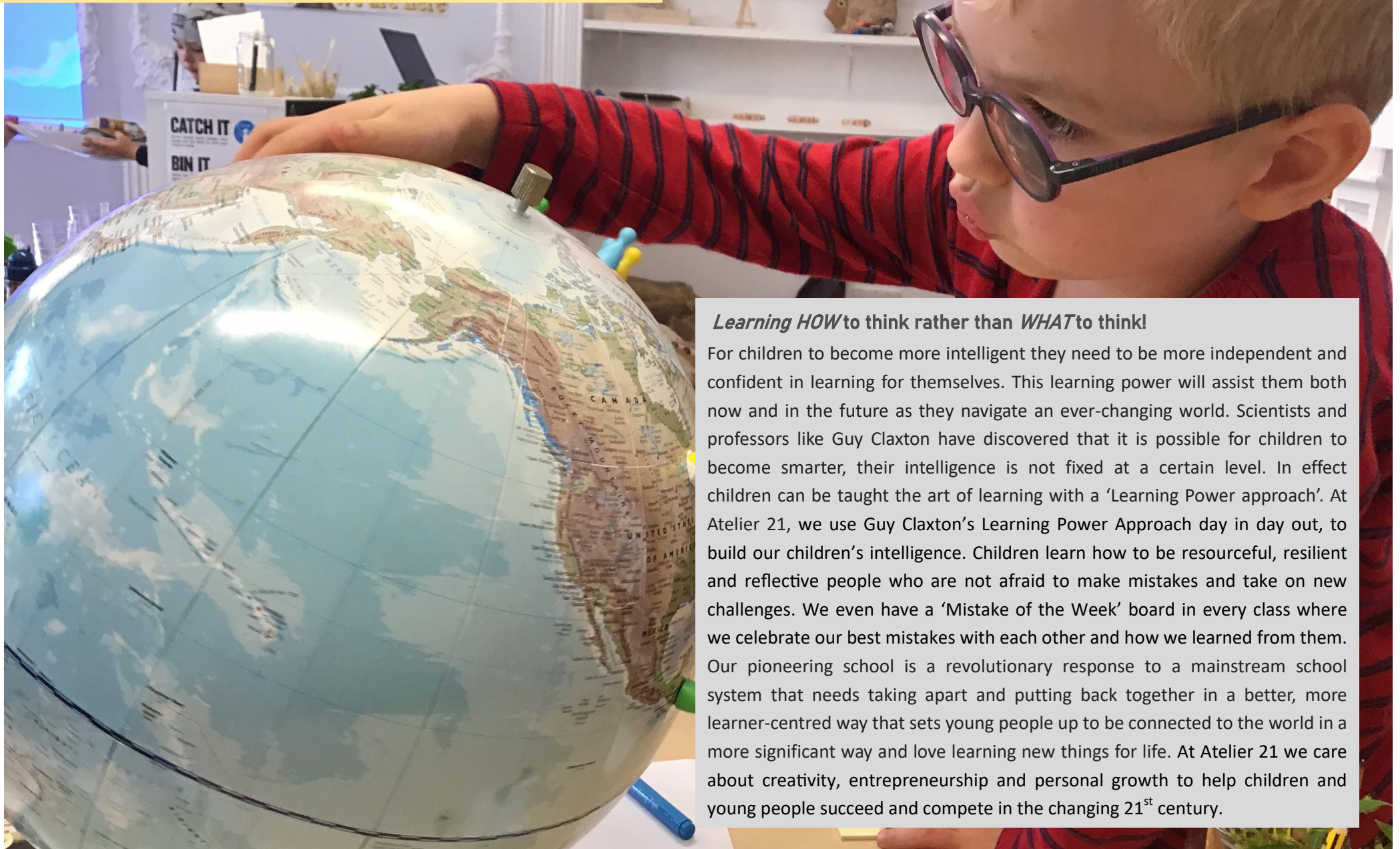
**I firmly believe that children should see learning and playing as the same thing and this school gives space for that.**

**Parent & Teacher—Cansu**





# The Learning Power Approach



## *Learning HOW to think rather than WHAT to think!*

For children to become more intelligent they need to be more independent and confident in learning for themselves. This learning power will assist them both now and in the future as they navigate an ever-changing world. Scientists and professors like Guy Claxton have discovered that it is possible for children to become smarter, their intelligence is not fixed at a certain level. In effect children can be taught the art of learning with a 'Learning Power approach'. At Atelier 21, we use Guy Claxton's Learning Power Approach day in day out, to build our children's intelligence. Children learn how to be resourceful, resilient and reflective people who are not afraid to make mistakes and take on new challenges. We even have a 'Mistake of the Week' board in every class where we celebrate our best mistakes with each other and how we learned from them. Our pioneering school is a revolutionary response to a mainstream school system that needs taking apart and putting back together in a better, more learner-centred way that sets young people up to be connected to the world in a more significant way and love learning new things for life. At Atelier 21 we care about creativity, entrepreneurship and personal growth to help children and young people succeed and compete in the changing 21<sup>st</sup> century.





**Our whole school enjoys Wild Fridays every week to explore forests, beaches and wild spaces!**



# Our planet our choice



ECO-FRIENDLY

SUSTAINABLE

RECYCLING

AWARENESS

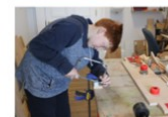
As part of their learning about the planet our Class 2 have been developing artworks and products that are eco-friendly. They have been focusing on new techniques and different ways to create sustainable pieces. They have researched contemporary creatives that are raising awareness of the state of our world, whilst gaining inspiration to produce their own work from a range of materials such as recycled HDPE plastic and recycled paper and leaves. Here are some examples of the children's journey and thought processes in the development of their projects to produce some impressive final pieces.

## Mini Stories

### Arthur



Arthur created two HDPE rings. While producing his rings Arthur learnt how to colourise the plastic, how to create a circle and how to drill his finger size into the plastic.



**Ring 1.** Firstly Arthur created a wooden mould and pressed recycled HDPE plastic into it to create a solid block of plastic. He then cut off a section of the block using a coping saw. Arthur measured her finger width and chose the corresponding drill bit. He then tried drilling this section. **"Oh, It's broken. I'm going to try drilling the block of plastic to see if that works."**



This method worked. He then cut off a section of the block with the hole drilled through the middle. Once he had his ring prepared he began sawing off the corners to create a rounded shape. To finish the ring he sanded the edges.



**"Look it's finished and I can wear it."** Arthur then discussed with me painting the plastic and after some tests, he decided to make a new ring instead. **"I'm going to use red bottle tops so the ring is white and red."**



**Ring 2.** This time Arthur heated the plastic using a sandwich toaster. When the plastic was flat he clamped two flat pieces of wood with his plastic in-between to stop it curling as it cooled. He then drilled his finger width into the plastic and cut out the circle using a coping saw. Afterwards, he noticed the ring was rough so used a tile to rub the plastic onto it, which caused it to go shiny. **"This one's better. It looks good."**





## Naomi



Naomi created two HDPE dessert spoons before completing her final version. While persevering Naomi continually assessed her work, process and skill.



**Spoon 1.** Firstly Naomi created a wooden mould and pressed recycled HDPE plastic into it to create a solid block of plastic. She then carved this block into a spoon shape using a coping saw and a whittling knife. However, during this process, the spoon became too weak at the base of the handle. **"It doesn't really look like a spoon and I think it's going to break."**



**Spoon 2.** Naomi decided that the block of plastic was too timeconsuming and wanted to try a different method, which we had explored differently. **"This way took so long."** She used the sandwich toaster and created a sheet of HDPE plastic, drew a spoon onto it and then cut out her shape. However, while she was using the coping saw she cut off the handle. **"I'm so bad at sawing!"**



**Final spoon.** Naomi created another sheet of HDPE plastic but this time clamped the plastic between two metal dessert spoons. While the plastic was still warm she cut off the excess plastic using scissors. When the plastic had cooled Naomi refined the shape using a whittling knife. Once she was happy with the spoon she drilled a hole at the end of the handle to thread a section of rope to attach a clip onto the end. This completed her design as she wanted to create a camping spoon. **"This one is the best spoon."**

## Nic



Nic created an HDPE bowl using milk bottles and two metal bowls as a mould. Nic demonstrated his knowledge gained throughout the project to produce this piece on his own.



**HDPE bowl.** Nic washed and prepared all of the recycled plastic cutting up enough to create a large sheet of plastic. **"I've cut up loads of plastic, this will definitely be enough."**



He warmed the plastic in the sandwich toaster until it formed a flat sheet. **"It's not quite big enough I need to stretch it."**



Nic placed the sheet over the top of his metal mould and placed the other metal bowl on top to squash in the vice. **"I don't think I can tighten it any further."**



When the plastic had cooled he removed the bowl from the mould and studied he cast. **"Hey, it worked!"**



He removed excess plastic using a coping saw and a sander.

Nic then created a photoshoot to document his product. **"It's the brain bowl. I'm going to put sweets in it."**



# artworks and products



Plastic wave by Hannah



Climbing hold by Hannah



HDPE climbing hold by Nic



HDPE climbing holds by Henry



HDPE bowls by Graci



eco paper decorations by Aleena



HDPE plastic owl by Leo



HDPE dessert spoon by Naomi



HDPE ring by Millie



HDPE climbing hold by Elena



Teaspoon by Issy



HDPE bowl by Hannah



HDPE bowl by Nic



eco Christmas card by Florence

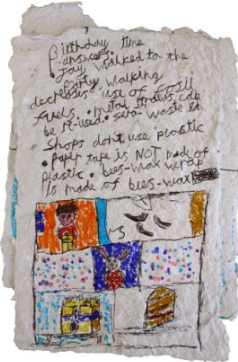
HDPE ring by Arthur



Recycled planters by Lottie



eco comic by Noah



Recycled stingray by Archie



# Big Studies



Big Studies are cross-curricular projects carried out in class groups linking to an overarching theme for the whole school to respond to for half a term. This is the way our students learn about history, geography, religious studies, politics and current affairs (and other things) through relevant contexts that are meaningful to them as they are about worldwide challenges affecting our earth and society past, present and future.

Project based learning allows for students to develop agency and autonomy and to build a body of research which has links and connections to lots of other types of learning about the world around them. We also hold mastery workshops, a blend of direct teaching of new concepts, with time set aside for self-selection of carefully prepared resources and challenges for pupils to self-manage their progress in the fields of learning.

At the end of each half term through the 'Big Share' pupils present their learning in various forms to the whole school community (this is in place of traditional end of topic tests and the like). Last half term our study was 'Our Planet, Our Choice', by using the project based approach our learners were able to deep dive into the topic and learn in a connected way.



## Parent/Children's testimonials

"Can we come to school on weekends and please can the holidays be shorter?"

*Class 1 girl, aged 8 years*

"It feels like home and is so cosy and a happy place to be. It is a comforting place to learn."

*Kitty, 8 years*

"Both of our children are loving Atelier 21, we really want to thank all the staff,... we think you've done a great job..."

*Parent to boys aged 7 and 9.*

"Thank you for creating such an amazing school. I love it so much...Atelier 21 makes me feel so secure, like I can finally make mistakes."

*Graci, aged 9 Years*

**"School is my happy place"**

**Ivy, aged 5**

"I love Atelier 21 because we have lots of choices for learning and Wild Fridays are made better than any other day."

*Bea, aged 8 Years*

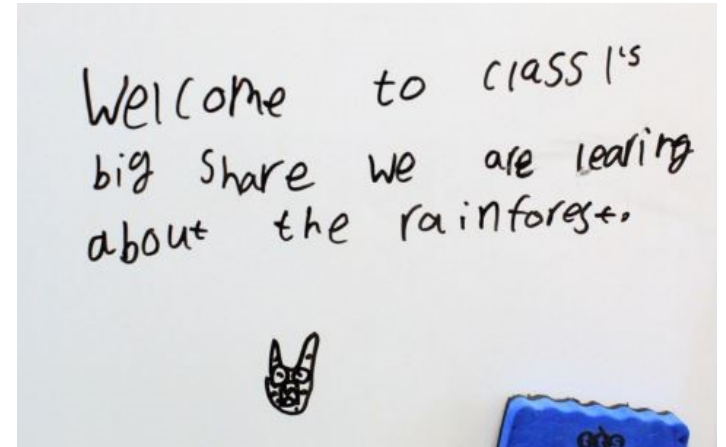
"I feel so happy with life right now - thank you for moving me to Atelier 21."

*Lottie, 9 Years, to their parents*





# The Big Share





# Wild Fridays!



The most popular of the school days at Atelier 21 is WILD Friday! The one day a week where the whole learning community of children and adults go out into wild spaces for outdoor learning and exploration. We climb trees together, build dens and explore rock pools alongside planned learning activities which cover core subjects like maths and English. We are often inspired by the children's inquisitive nature and the many 'wonderings' during Wild Fridays usually lead to a change in lesson plans for the week ahead...part of the beauty of having an emergent curriculum.

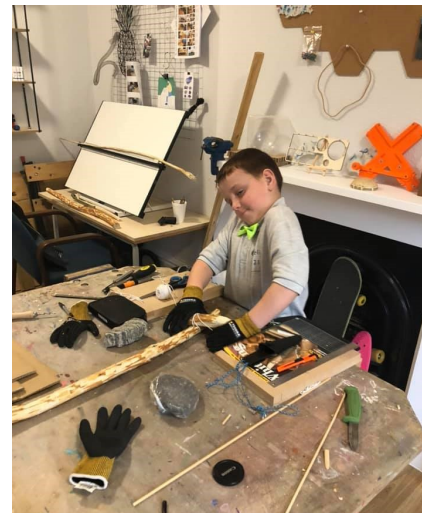
As well as contextualising maths, English, geography, history, drama, music and science in the forest or on the beach, we also have purposeful 'Adventure Days' - from rock climbing to Forest School, crabbing to wild swimming, raft building, kayaking, surfing and lots more. These days are about pushing ourselves, working as a team and having exhilarating new experiences together.

Another motivator for WILD Fridays is the need to ensure the next generation cares enough about the natural world to protect it. We must ensure children develop an on going fascination with the natural world to ensure this happens.

Greta Thunberg can only do so much!







# Re-imagining the school day



*"We are too young to realise that certain things are impossible... So we will do them anyway."*

*William Wilberforce*



# Home Learning



Most recently Atelier 21 was challenged with setting up an online learning programme and key worker school provision in just four days, as a result of the third nationwide school lockdown.

We rose to the challenge in producing extensive home learning packs (including Ukuleles and hockey sticks to use at home), covering every subject including Art, PE, Mindfulness and Music. We also set up fun online workshops and organised live streamed lessons including story-telling, PE, yoga, kitchen Science, cooking and stable management.

Recently we decided to inject some serious fun into our young learners lives with a very welcome 'PJ Movie Day'. We had noticed that our parents and children were struggling with balancing work and school life and we see it as our duty of care to provide a relaxed and supportive attitude for the mental health of all of our community at this difficult time.



## Teacher/parent viewpoint-Georgie Adams

*"Disillusioned with my children's independent school education which was highly pressured and clearly having a negative impact on both of my daughters confidence and well-being, my husband and I spent a long time researching a school where our children's imaginations could run wild and where they could develop a life-long love of learning. When I discovered Atelier 21 Future School, I had a really good feeling about it.*

*Since joining last year - what a transformation we have seen! One of the key differences is the small community feel of the school, the teachers know the girls really well and have ample time to produce tailor-made programmes, listen to what the children have to say and encourage them to put their own stamp on things and apply their own ideas. Unsurprisingly 'Wild Fridays' are the girls favourite day by far! They also take part in yoga, meditation and mindfulness lessons which I am now delighted to be running, with chocolate meditation being a firm favourite!*



*Above all I love that the school is so supportive of the culture of childhood – the children spend a lot of time outdoors, experience lots of fun, cook and don't have to dress up like miniature adults in school uniforms. Whilst studying they can choose to listen to music seated on bean bags, or go to a quiet space or the sensory room to work if they prefer - whatever makes them comfortable in their learning. I have been pleasantly surprised in how well-behaved the children are with this revolutionary approach to schooling. There is a mutual respect between the teachers and the children, born out of trust, and an open and honest environment.*

*I have been massively impressed with the results that the self-directed approach brings. I feel my daughters have achieved more in 5 weeks than 5 years at their previous school! The girls are so much happier, they are freer to express themselves, feel valued and above all enjoy their school experience. It has really boosted their confidence and self-esteem and their academic performance has soared. To fully appreciate the school is a 'feel' rather than a 'see', to experience the depth of feeling and passion for learning that the teachers instil in the children. I have been quite taken with its authentic community where the children's absolute best interests and well-being are at its heart. It really is a phenomenal school!"*





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