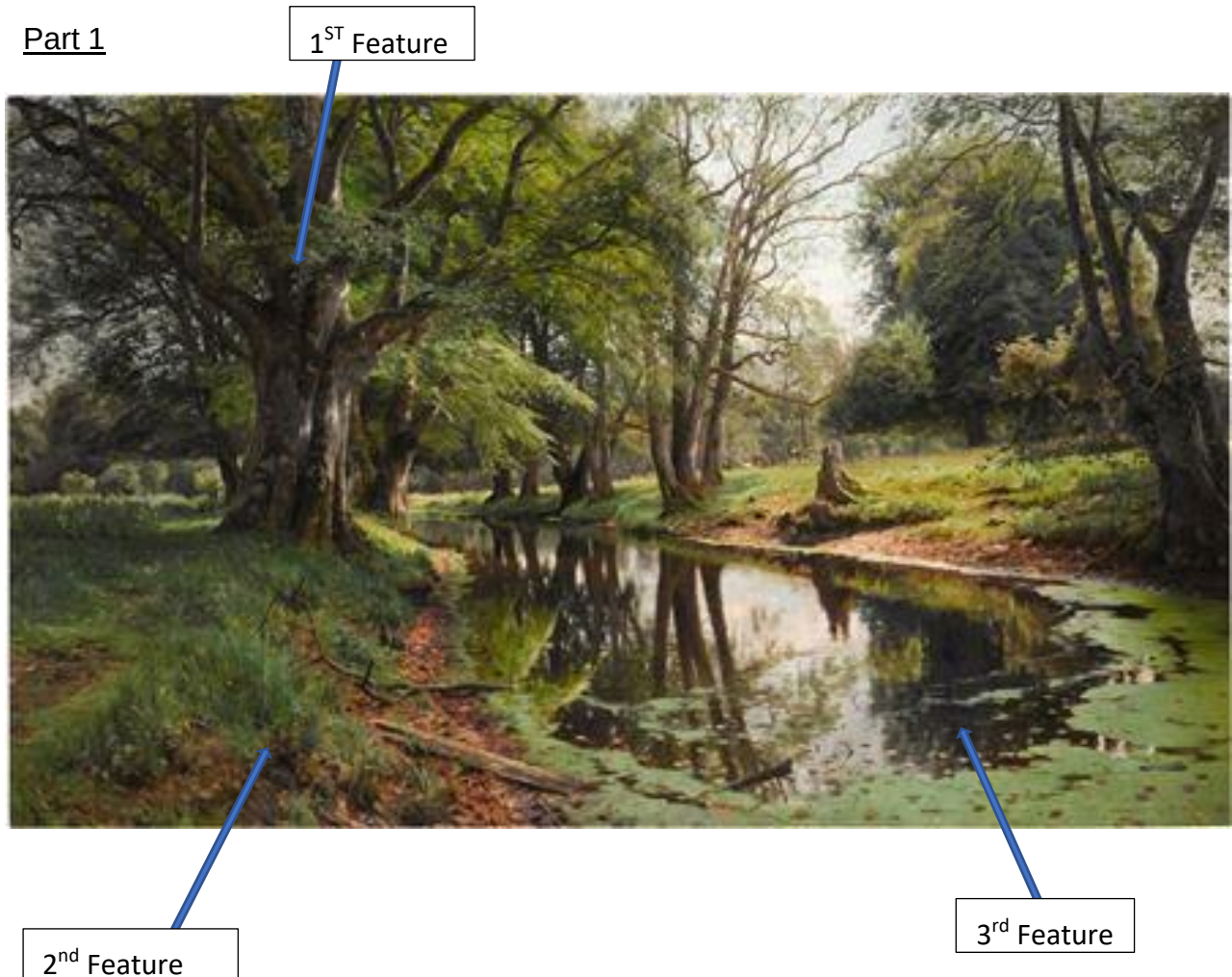


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Portfolio

Part 1



Part 2

1st Feature

Climbing trees provides children with the opportunity to exercise and have fun while overcoming challenges of height and balancing skills developing mathematical knowledge, as they are beginning to learn and use mathematical concepts and language, for example, balancing, as pointed out by the Welsh Government (2019a). Feature 1 offers children the opportunity to have close contact with nature and the world around them developing their science and maths, as stated by the Welsh Government (2019ab) children can begin to develop their understanding about the

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environment when making observations and asking questions. For example, children may ask 'How does the plant grow?' or 'What makes the plant grow?'. Children can learn to build their self-confidence through climbing trees as they will begin to show curiosity in exploring the environment (Welsh Government, 2019a) like taking risks, for example, seeing how far they can climb the tree. Hand eye-coordination, concentration skills and learning about senses can all be developed by children in the outdoor environment especially when climbing trees, for example, children will hear different sounds, smell different leaves and plants, see further out into the environment the higher they climb and feel different textures like flowers, leaves and the tree itself. Through feature 1 children will learn to develop gross motor skills ensuring they move safely listening to instructions if needed (Welsh Government, 2019c), as pointed out by Stevens-Smith and Murdock (no date) children will gain more muscle and strength in both their hands and legs through the movements needed to climb the tree. Children can learn to build a resilient attitude as they can make decisions by themselves based on their own thoughts on what they know (Welsh Government, 2019c) for example, being aware that they could fall or loose grip when climbing a tree.

If doing this activity with children a variation of resources should be brought, for example, ropes, nets, magnifying glasses, colouring pens/ pencils, and paper, as this provides children with different opportunities to play. Children could decide to build a den with the materials provided or could draw a picture of the leave they found at the top of the tree.

2nd Feature

Feature 2 promotes children's creativity, imagination, and discovery skills, as they can explore and experiment within the environment, as stated by the Welsh Government (2019d) children can experiment independently deciding the materials and techniques they will use, for example, children could use different size balls and roll them down the slope to see which one is the fastest, developing children's mathematical skills as they are using different size balls with different weights (the Welsh Government, 2019a) as well as their science skills as children may begin to question the speed and force of each ball (the Welsh Government, 2019b). Having an area that big allows

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children to run around freely reducing stress and fatigue allowing them to build positive emotions and feelings especially about the outside world and its nature. Allowing children to show an understanding on how to express and communicate own feelings and thoughts (the Welsh Government, 2019c). Feature 2 offers children open ended learning where they can choose their own learning and materials (Hannafin et al,1994 pg: 48) experimenting with natural resources allowing them to learn with real objects. If children have the opportunity to play in a big outside space like the one in feature 2 they can play different games and build different tasks and risks for themselves where they can learn to problem solve effectively developing their science skills, as pointed out by the Welsh Government (2019b) children will have an understanding on how certain decisions can have an impact on themselves and the environment around them.

If using this space with children a variety of different resources should be provided, for example, magnifying glasses, ropes, balls of different sizes and weight, a variety of loose parts, pencil/ pens, and paper. With these resources children can use them for different types of games to play, for example, children may use the magnifying glasses to find small insects and try to draw them on a piece of paper afterwards. Questions should be asked to the child throughout the activity. Questions that can be asked can be, 'What insect is that?', 'Do you know how many legs it has?' or 'Does it fly?'.

3rd Feature

Water play promotes well-being for children as it provides them with sensory stimulation that can be calming and relaxing for the child (Homan, no date). Feature 3 allows children to laugh and play through splashing the water, showing an awareness of how there feeling can be communicated to others (the Welsh Government, 2019c) for example, through laughter and smiling they are showing happy emotions. Children can develop both there fine and gross motor skills and core strength through water play especially when playing a game that involves them carrying buckets of water, when playing a game like this children can develop their mathematical skills as they will begin to recognise that some buckets may be heavier or lighter than other (The curriculum of Wales, 2019a). Water provides children with many play activities for

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example, sink or float challenge or other activities like mixing different dyes into the water, or making bubbles with soap and water expanding children's view on how to recognise the properties of different materials and how they can be used with water (the Welsh Government, 2019b). Feature 3 also allows children to learn to cooperate and communicate with each other developing their social and sharing skills, whilst showing curiosity about the activity and working together to answer their questions and queries (the Welsh Government, 2019b).

If using this space, a variation of different materials should be provided to the children, for example, objects that both sink and float, a ball, magnifying glass, some soap to create bubbles and a variety of loose parts. Children can use these materials for different play ideas, for example, deciding which object will sink or float, this is developing their mathematical skills where they learn to estimate and compare which objects have sunk or floated (the Welsh Government, 2019a) while asking questions and discussing it with one another. 'Why do you think that's happened?' or 'Which one do you think is heavier?' 'Will it sink or float?' can be questions asked.

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Part 3

RISK BENEFIT ASSESSMENT

Location / Activity:	Woodlands	Date:	26/03/2022
Assessor:	Ana Martins	Review date:	25/03/2022

The boxes in the table below will expand as you type into them; pre-entered text is simply for illustration. You should delete irrelevant items and replace with text relevant to your circumstances.

Your overall risk rating – Low, medium or high – is based on your judgement about whether the BENEFITS of the activity or opportunity outweigh the RISKS.

ACTIVITY	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Hazards and risks	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk RATING: L/M/H
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Exploring	Flower picking - Children can develop their knowledge on the different flowers that they pick. - Recognizing different textures with each plant will also be learnt by the child. Mud play - Children learn about the features and textures through	- Poisonous plants - Exposure to germs - Brambles - Rocks - Slopes - Uneven ground - Trips and falls - Litter - Public/ Dog walker	Child	Beforehand discuss with children the different types of flowers. Provide children with a checklist of the types of flowers they should try and find. Discuss with the children on the precautions of mud play ensuring they understand not to place their hands in their mouths or face at any point.	High risk but if precautions are followed will become low risk.
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	interacting with mud. - Mud play is also hands on play benefits children's learning of the outside world. Collecting natural resources - By collecting natural resources			Before beginning the activity have a conversation with the children on how we should treat the environment around us including all living things. Pre warn children of what they shouldn't touch for example, litter misplaced	
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	children learn to become environmentally aware of their environment. • Through the exploration of collecting these natural resources children will learn to care and look after living things in our environment. Through exploring children are able to develop their understanding and knowledge of the world around them.			around the woodlands. Discuss about stranger danger including what the children should do if they see someone they do not recognize around the woodlands. Ensuring first aid kit is present in case children need any bandages from falling over or creams if they've come into contact with a specific plant. Close observations at all times.	
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	When given the opportunity to explore children build confidence as they are able to use the environment as they would like, teaching them responsibility. Exploring promotes children to think developing their creativity and imagination.				
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Running	Children develop their physical growth and movement. A development of their gross motor skills will also be shown. Children are able to build endurance. Running strengthens children's bones and muscles. Through running children are able to learn movement control, for example, when to stop and start running.	• Uneven ground • Slips and trips • Falls that may cause breakage or damage to bones • Bruises	Children	Earlier in the day inform the children of the boundaries they have when running around the woods, for example, the perimeter in which they are allowed to run around freely. Ensure first aid kit is present in case of any trips or falls. Ensuring the staff ratio is correct and maybe adding a few extra members of staff to ensure no children get lost or leave the area in	High risk but if precautions are followed will become low risk.
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				which they should be in. Close observations at all times.	
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Pond	Playing football in the water • Helps children to improve their muscles and bone strength. • Playing football supports children to build stamina and speed as they are running after a ball. • Through football children improve both their concentration and coordination skills. Playing catch while being in the water • By playing catch children learn to make decisions quickly and beforehand, for example, when to catch the ball.	• Drowning • Falling into the pond • Uneven ground • Brambles in the water • Rocks in the water • Germs and bacteria in the water • Living things in the water	Children and all	Discuss with children all safety measures when they are playing around or in the water. Ensuring all children wear wet weather gear, for example, wellies and waterproof garments. Ensuring the staff ratio is correct and even adding extra staff around the pond to effectively keep an eye on the children, to avoid any child from drowning. Discuss with children about the living things that they may come across when	High risk but if precautions are followed will become low risk.
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	Children improve their timing and coordination skills by playing catch. Children can learn about mini beasts and other animals that habitat in the pond by going on a mini beast hunt.			looking or playing in the pond. Close observations at all times.	
Climbing trees	Children develop their motor skills through body movements when climbing up the tree. Children also learn to be more flexible as they have to be aware on which part of the tree they are stepping on. Children will show a development in their balancing, agility and hand and feet coordination skills.	- Falls that may cause damage or breakage to the bones or muscles. - Cuts and bruises	Children	Earlier in the day ensure that children are aware of the risk of climbing trees describing all safety measures that need to be considered. Ensure first aid kit is present in case of any cuts or falls. Creams for allergies in case children react to a certain plant or leave they may have touched when climbing the tree. Close observations at all times.	High risk but if precautions are followed will become low risk.

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Part 4

'Learning outside the classroom is best seen not as a subject in its own right, but as a tool for teaching and learning' (Waite, 2017, pg: xvii). Waite (2017) states that, doing this offers children of all ages an opportunity to actively engage in their learning by ensuring that children understand, teaching can be applied in the real world through outdoor activities, and it effectively supports children to develop their knowledge on different cultural and environmental awareness's (Waite, 2017 and White, 2011). The DfEE (1996) indicates that there has been a rise in the gratitude of outdoor play and its importance for children's development. White (2011) points out that, children will learn to interact, behave, develop, and learn by playing outdoors, for example, the different kinds of play available outdoors will play a big role in children's influences and roles within the environment as well as their approaches to life (White, 2011 pg: 19 and White, 2014 pg: 11).

Henniger (2012) states that, through play in the outdoors children are able to learn about science and maths, for example, when collecting and using natural materials in which they can measure and count, as indicated by the Foundation Phase (2015) children need the opportunity to play in which they will be encouraged to problem solving, exploration and experimentation to find out the answers to the questions they may have, when supporting their mathematical and science development. Curriculum for Wales (2019a) indicates that, science is essential for children's development as children will learn to become ethical adults making knowledgeable decisions about their future while learning about the ecosystem that teaches them to care and appreciate the world around them and all its habitants. Through science children can participate, embrace, and understand the society in which they live in and the variations of cultures and customs surrounding it (The Welsh Government, 2019a). The Welsh Government (2019b) also states that, outdoor play is critical in children's mathematical development as it allows children to problem solve, explore different ideas and thoughts, for example, learning to weigh objects to discover which one is heavier. Through maths children can become creative in there play through experimentation and risk taking (The Welsh Government, 2019b).

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According to Play Scotland (no date) loose parts are materials that are given to children so they can expand their creativity and imagination in constructing things out of these materials, for example, a rocket. Through the experience of loose parts children are allowed to use the materials freely without any directives in the way they should be used (Play Scotland, no date, pg: 2). Gull et al (2019) and Nicholson (1971) both indicate that, loose parts allow children to express their imagination, creativity and ideas through the use of materials that can be changed, renovated and selfdirected developing cognitive, social and emotional skills during play. Gull et al (2019) points out, that providing children with a natural environment is essential for their development and allows children to self-direct there play independently both in the indoors and outdoors environment. As pointed out by Gull et al (2019) natural loose parts provide children with a variety of different resources due to the changes in seasons, for example, during autumn children will have unlimited number of leaves to use. Loose parts also encourage children to become open-minded and creative on how materials in their immediate environment can be used during their play supporting children in making relations amongst learning and fun (Gull et al, 2019 and Sutton 2011, pg: 48). Gull et al (2019) states that all loose parts provided for children's play should be age appropriate and adaptable for children to use how they would like. Loose parts can be different sizes, shapes and objects ensuring they allow children to use them for a new purpose. Gull et al (2019) and Sutton (2011) both state that, loose parts should motivate children to be open-minded during the interaction with the environment they are in as this allows children to develop the concept of learning and fun.

Gull et al (2019) shows that Maxwell et al (2008) indicates that children will have a broader variety of play ideas when being offered different types of loose parts to play with. However, Kiewra and Veselack (2016) suggest that, if children are provided with close-ended materials that have only one specific use, it does not allow them to be imaginative and creative to their full potential. Kingston-Hughes (2020) points out that, practitioners and other adults have the role to be interactive and positive during children's play as showing these emotions will allow children to begin to do the same and feel confident to join in making decisions about their play independently. On the

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other hand, if a practitioner shows a disinterest or limits the child's play environment not offering activities for children to explore and experiment then children can become uninterested in the environment (Kingston-Hughes, 2020).

Campbell and Speldewinde (2020) indicate that, the affordance theory shows that, environments have properties for learning offering different resources in various environments for children and adults. Campbell and Speldewinde (2020) and MA Education (2016) both state that, the more a child interacts and moves within different environments the more affordances will become visible. MA Education (2016) indicates that the affordance theory was first indicated by a theorist called Gibson where he discovered that children showed certain attachments and curiosity to visual objects and information. MA Education (2016) points out that Gibson argued that the use of an object or feature within an environment could be comprehensible by the individual person's sensory input, for example, when we see a chair, we realise that it can 'afford' us sitting on it.

According to MA Education (2016) an affordance is something in the environment with a function that contains different designs and interaction ideas, for example, a ball, individuals will realise it can either be kicked with your feet or thrown with your hands. The outdoor environment provides direct involvement with the environment and the affordances it offers as stated by Greenwood and Hougham (2015). As indicated by Campbell and Speldewinde (2020) when children play outdoors the role of a practitioner is different as children will have the opportunity to use different natural resources which can become a health and safety risk. By playing outdoors it enriches children's inclusivity skills. Campbell and Speldewinde (2020) point out that, through the outdoors children will enhance their scientific and mathematical learning, for example, children may describe and ask questions about a certain tree or plants features. MA Education (2016) suggests that all adults need to provide children with a 'sensory-rich environment while minimising overload' (MA Education, 2016) by approaching an environment with unbiased colours and a friendly space that's big enough for them to play and run around in. Malaguzzi introduced the Reggio Emilia Approach for adults to encourage children to think creatively in exploring both their social and physical environment defining their social constructivism (Timothy, 2013, pg: 6) where they can

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learn to create their own ideas and thoughts in exploring through play and the resources and materials offered by their environment.

Child-led play is prompted and led by the child rather than the adult, this way children can control the direction in which they decide to take the narrative of their play (Drew, 2021). Semling (2018) states that open-ended play lets children to be freely creative while having fun, allowing them to develop their intellectual growth through learning to play independently. This type of play provides children with the opportunity of endless play opportunities as there are no directives or rules that children need to follow (Semling, 2018). Semling (2018) suggests that when children are offered the opportunity to lead their play, they will build confidence when experimenting with different resources and ideas during play becoming aware there is no right way to engage in these activities. Drew (2021) points out that, for a child-led environment to be effective adults need to ensure that the setting is full of valuable resources and materials that children can use for their learning, ensuring they are age appropriate and can challenge children's knowledge. Drew (2021) indicates that children will learn to have a greater sense of ownership over their own learning as they are able to decide what they want to do without any rules. Maria Montessori's approach looks at the importance of hands-on learning and she supported the benefit of children playing independently without any adult interference (Drew, 2021). Maria Montessori believed that through child-directed play children would be more engaging encouraging responsibility and strengthening motivation to learn and be curious and creative (American Montessori Society, no date).

Wasik and Jacobi-Vessels (2017) point out the importance of child directed play and how it helps to build children's confidence and independent learning, however, they also suggest the importance of adults helping and supporting children to scaffold all areas of their development especially their language growth, by asking questions where children can independently extend their answers by new questions and findings (Wasik and Jacobi-Vessels, 2017). This is different to closed-ended play where children must complete activities and games in a specific way following the instructions given (Semling, 2018). It is important for adults to ensure they do not direct or try to help the child to correct a mistake during child-led play as it is important that children

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are able to learn from their mistakes independently (Drew, 2021), as stated by American Montessori Society (no date) the Montessori approach supports this. The Te Whariki Curriculum in New Zealand is similar to Maria Montessori approach to hand-on learning. The Te Whariki Curriculum provides children with holistic primary childhood educational experiences, including four main areas, wellbeing, belonging, contribution, and exploration, they interlink with one another throughout the child's holistic development and growth (Drew, 2022). The Curriculum emphasise the importance of learning to be receptive and corresponding with the environment and people children are in contact with (Lee et al, 2013). The Te Whariki Curriculum isn't a curriculum set on the developmental milestones of children it does however, like to focus on the development of knowledge, skills, and attitude of children as learners (Educa, 2022). It focuses on the child as being in the middle of the curriculum where the awareness of the child's engagement with their environment including home life, family, community, and setting is shown through their play, thoughts, and development (Educa, 2022).

According to Brodie (2014) sustained shared thinking supports most activities and tasks adults do with children as it supports children from all ages, parents and helps to support the home environment. Sustained shared thinking is linked to how adults and practitioners talk with children and ensuring that we are actively listening to what they have to say (Brodie, 2014). Community Connection Solution Australia Inc (no date) points out that, sustained shares thinking is when two or more people work together to solve a problem effectively working together ensuring everyone contributes to the process showing an effective development to the problem. Sustained shared thinking does not require training as it should come naturally to practitioners who work with children. Community Connection Solution Australia Inc (no date) clearly states that, sustain shared thinking was first introduced in the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study. Sustained shared thinking will most likely happen between a child and practitioner, however, it can sometimes occur between children allowing them to creatively talk and engage with one another without it being a oneto-one conversation (Brodie, 2018). The thought process of sustained shared thinking is given by the type of progression that the child may have during a practical difficulty they may

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encounter. It is important for practitioners to ensure that their explanations to the questions asked are thorough and clear to ensure that children effectively understand the explanation given (Brodie, 2018). Sustained shared thinking links to

Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal' theory as children learn to cooperatively work with others supporting their development including their language and problem-solving skills. Vygotsky believed that children could show cognitive growth learning independently but could also accomplish great findings and ideas from the help of an adult or other child (Doolittle, 1995).

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