

D of E Expedition July '18

I just wanted to let you know how incredibly proud I was of the D of E students who took part in this week's assessed expedition.

I did warn you that the weather was always hot and sunny for our expeditions, but the temperatures we have been enduring over the last few weeks far exceeded my expectations! Nevertheless, your sons and daughters soldiered on with good humour and positive attitudes throughout. Their teamwork and camaraderie impressed our assessor, along with their map reading and camping skills.

Each group walked between 10 and 13 km during the first day along the beautiful Duse Valley Park between Willen and Caldecotte lakes. As well as looking out for a variety of birds, wildlife and footpath furniture, the students were challenged to test drive the numerous play areas en route for their Special Study (big swings proved to be the favourite apparatus).

Having put up their tents, cooked their evening meal and gathered firewood so that we could all enjoy the obligatory marshmallows around the campfire, our intrepid explorers were very glad of the opportunity to try out their sleeping bags; not a peep was heard out of any of them until a very sociable hour in the morning!

Having cooked porridge and hot dogs before packing away tents and belongings, Day Two was another 10 - 13km hike back along a different stretch of the Duse Valley park. This time the route took in a section of the canal and the Community Orchard at Woughton on the Green, with more nature spotting and play park assessment along the way. Fittingly, the students' final destination was the Beacon in Campbell Park; the highest point in Milton Keynes. Despite being pretty much spent, several of the students ran the last section in their excitement at meeting up with the other groups! Their delight and pride at completing this mammoth challenge was palpable and for me, certainly makes all of the organisation and effort associated with running this Award, utterly worthwhile.

I am sure that you all share in our collective pride in our wonderful students and appreciate what an achievement it is for them to have successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

I have selected just a few pictures from the Expedition to give you a taste of what we got up to!

