

# Teachers learn too at Petit Bot training course

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PRIMARY SCHOOL teachers have been learning how to introduce the curriculum into the outdoors.

Teaching staff at all levels from Elizabeth College Junior School were invited to take part in the two-day course, designed to show techniques to develop their pupils' confidence and creativity by teaching their standard in-school subjects whilst using practical outdoor skills.

The principles were taught by the UK-based Forest Schools Association, whose aim is to enable all children to have increased opportunities for high quality and varied educational experiences in the natural world.

Beechwood staff were at Petit Bot on Monday to take a lesson from training coordinator and founding chairman of the Forest Schools Association John Cree.

Mr Cree explained how they were looking at teaching the curriculum in a 'meaningful way'.

'Today we've done a lot on literacy, science, nature awareness, keying into the sea and the tides,' he said.

by Jake Wallace

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'This is all about experiencing things first hand.

'If we bring students somewhere like here, the things we are teaching them mean something.

'In the classroom it's very abstract, especially things like how the tides work, but here we can clearly see how they behave.

'It's very slow at the top and bottom, and in the middle it's really fast.

'With measurements they can see that clearly, so they have maths with meaning,' he said.

Head of learning support at Beechwood Michelle Brady said the reason for attending the course was to help them develop their outdoor learning.

'A lot of outdoor learning has been about going outdoors and doing outdoorsy things,' she said.

'What we are trying to do now is take our normal curriculum and put it into the outdoors.

'That's what we've been taught today, we've done literacy, numeracy, the ecosys-



Elizabeth College Junior School teachers on a training course at Petit Bot with tutor Jon Cree, left. Looking for buried treasure are left to right, Carry Wray, Michelle Brady and Pete Sargent. (Picture by Peter Frankland, 21635150)

tem, music.

'It's taking the whole curriculum outside, instead of just going kayaking.'

Mr Cree said the benefits of outside learning are 'huge', but it goes beyond

just the pupils.

'I find that working with both children and teachers, that their subject language development is far quicker learning in this way,' he said.

'Particularly with boys, as they have something to write about that they are passionate about, because it's first-hand learning.

'There's lots of problem solving that you can do out

here that you can't do in the classroom.

'There's lots of connection to the place, understanding how Guernsey works, it gives the lesson more value.'