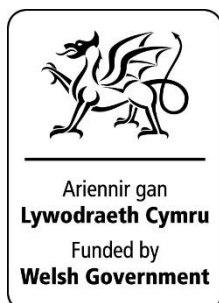


A photograph of several footprints in sand, arranged in a path that leads from the bottom left towards the top right. The footprints are of varying sizes and are clearly imprinted in the light-colored sand.

Topic based resource

Wellbeing

Foundation Phase



cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
daclus tidy

Background information

Everyone knows that fresh air and being outdoors is good for our health, but they do not always consider all the different ways it is good for us. Spending time in nature releases natural hormones such as Serotonin which helps with mood, self-esteem, and motivation. It also helps prevent short sightedness in children, promotes a connection to nature, prevents vitamin D deficiency, and increases physical activity which helps to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes. Time in a natural environment helps to develop a connection to nature and a feeling of 'cynefin'. This activity helps children to feel grounded in nature while using their sense of touch. Walking barefoot on uneven surfaces also develops balance and strengthens core muscles.



Climate perspective

Feeling connected to nature promotes healthy lifelong behaviours. If children have a connection to nature and all the positive benefits it brings, they will grow up with a desire to protect the planet. Feeling the earth beneath their bare feet

will allow them to see and feel the Earth they need to protect. In other topics they will discover ways they can help to protect our world but first they need to love it , and a connection to nature is the first step.

Barefoot Walking

Foundation Phase

Get those shoes and socks off!

Spending time without shoes and socks on is felt to be important from a wellbeing perspective. It is a very sensory experience giving children the opportunity to feel textures and temperature in a different way to just feeling with their hands. This activity gives the opportunity for this sensory experience and then allows self-expression through painting with their feet. Using their legs and feet in this different way is also good for physical development and health.

In young children it is also important for their physical development as walking without shoes on uneven surfaces improves balance and strengthens muscles.

Materials needed:

- Either use an area of the school grounds that has been checked carefully for sharp objects and prickly plants or if there is nowhere suitable construct your own using collected materials laid out in a path for children to follow.
- If constructing one you could use materials such as leaves (dried and fresh), moss, mossy bark, logs, sand, turf, mud.



Step 1

If using a natural space

Check the area carefully or ask the children to check the area themselves, getting down low to look carefully at the area and rubbing their fingers lightly over the surface to check for anything sharp or prickly.

Step 2



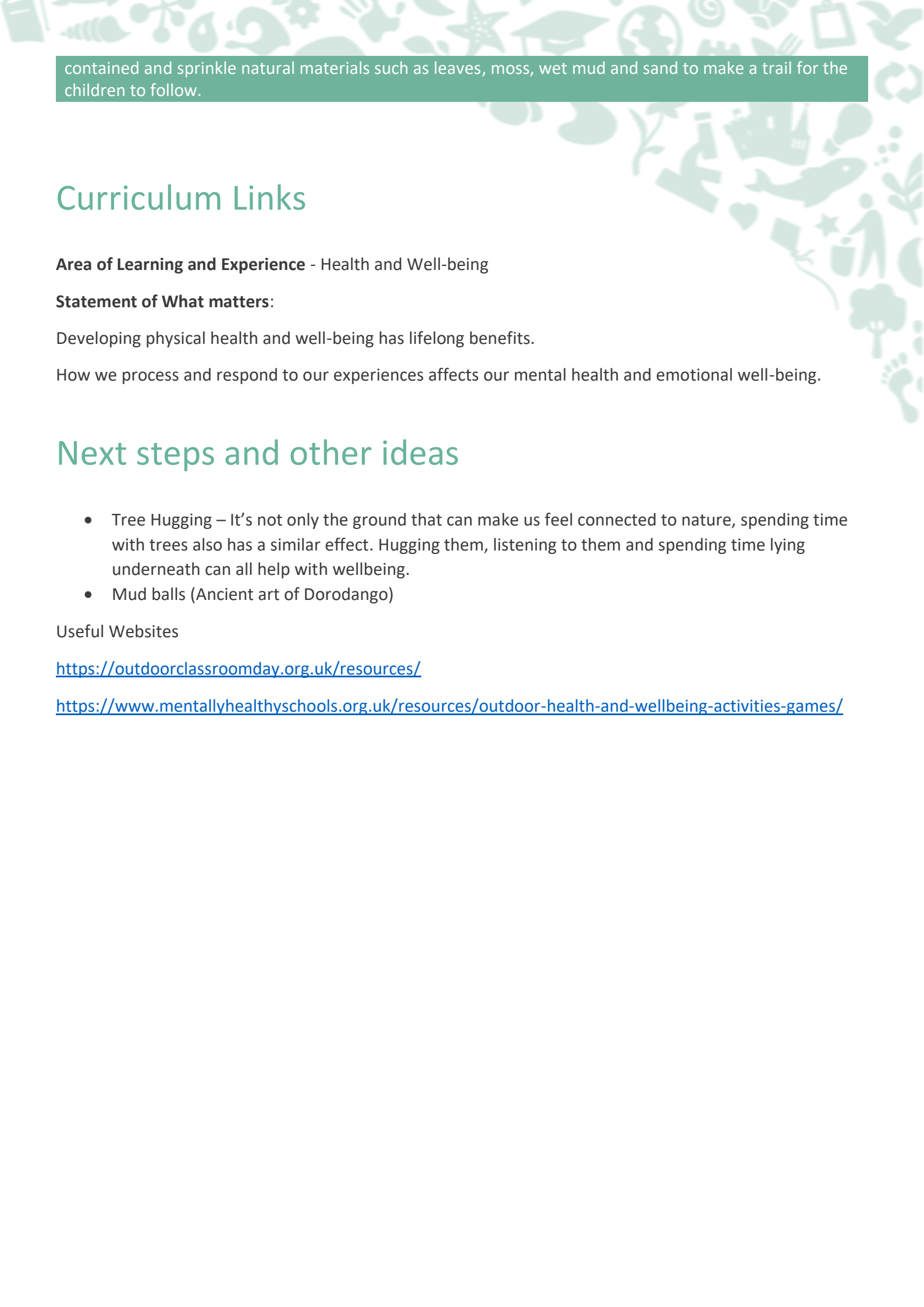
Ask the children to take off their shoes and socks and explore the area with bare feet. What does it feel like on their skin? Can they describe the different textures?

Step 3



If using a made trail

Consider what space you have available. Can you incorporate some natural areas or does it all need to be constructed? You could place natural materials in areas on the school field and allow the children to explore the different areas in turn. If using a paved area you could lay out a tarpaulin to keep it



contained and sprinkle natural materials such as leaves, moss, wet mud and sand to make a trail for the children to follow.

Curriculum Links

Area of Learning and Experience - Health and Well-being

Statement of What matters:

Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits.

How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being.

Next steps and other ideas

- Tree Hugging – It's not only the ground that can make us feel connected to nature, spending time with trees also has a similar effect. Hugging them, listening to them and spending time lying underneath can all help with wellbeing.
- Mud balls (Ancient art of Dorodango)

Useful Websites

<https://outdoorclassroomday.org.uk/resources/>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/outdoor-health-and-wellbeing-activities-games/>

