



• Children gained essential camping skills.

Photo credit: Olive Grove



• Small groups explored the ecology of the clifftops.

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to respond to the interests and energy of the pupils so the details of the day were discussed with the Gayhurst staff every morning.

Rockpooling was very popular and the children found different types of seaweed, limpets, oysters, whelks, shrimps and mating crabs – or as the children put it, “crabs getting married”. Small groups explored the ecology of the cliff tops, looking out towards France and learning how much action those cliff tops had seen during the Second World War. Back on the beach the children learnt

### Pupil comments

“Nature isn’t just to look at, it’s to appreciate and I’ve realised how much I can learn from nature.” **Pupil, aged 10**

“We’re so close to nature in London but we don’t appreciate it.” **Pupil, aged 10**

bouldering and even managed some seal spotting while others enjoyed watercolour work and making art.

There were some essential camping skills to be learnt too. Each group learnt to light a fire and brewed a Kelly Kettle for hot chocolate and the important business of preparing wood for the fire was investigated with everyone having a go on the bill hook.

Camp life was immersive with everyone taking responsibility for themselves and helping with chores such as food preparation, serving and washing up. Each day ended around the campfire with an opportunity for sharing things they were enjoying or things they were finding tough and a great, supportive community spirit prevailed.

As a pilot, the week’s camping, which was repeated with the parallel class the week after, was deemed a great success. The TGC team loved sharing the beautiful natural environment and their skills and knowledge with such a receptive and enthusiastic bunch of children.

Next summer they plan to return to Kingsdown for a longer period. Each group was around 30 children and four adults from the school, including one SEN assistant working with a statemented child, who accompanied the group and took part in various activities. ●

### Teacher comments

The class teacher said: “The experience that it gave some of the children in our group, such as our two children with special needs, was priceless.”

The teacher said that the memorable experience would be the basis for lots of literacy work, back at school, inspiring the most reluctant writers in class to record their experiences and feelings.

The Year 5 teacher said: “I loved the fact that the children had an opportunity to be outside

for four days, doing all kinds of exploratory activities and things that brought them together as a group and a community.

“This was helped by the campfire and the way that we all sat around it and listened to stories and reflected on our experiences. I think that the ‘pitch’ for the children was just right – they had an opportunity to learn about and explore the natural world, but the emphasis was on fun and community. They took away really positive memories from each stage of the trip.”