

Duke of Edinburgh award expedition 2024!

Monday 10th June saw the inaugural Duke of Edinburgh expedition get off to a fantastic start. It began with an early morning for the team involving having a hearty cooked (Trangia style!) breakfast, preparing their lunch and packing their rucksacks for their hike to Hurst Castle. Young people used their map of landmarks to ensure they were heading in the right direction, laughing and chatting along the way. The scenery was amazing, the sun shone upon everyone and by staying and working together we all made it in good time.

The team tucked into their well-earned lunches and had a little time for rest and regrouping before extensive exploration of the castle. They travelled through history from the stronghold of Henry VIII to re-living the weapons and artefacts of the second world war. Bastions were climbed, gunpowder stores crept through, every nook, cranny, item and staircase were explored and explained.

The team bravely faced a boat trip across a stretch of the Solent back to the start point. Being the first time on a boat for some young people and staff alike there was encouragement and support bandied about in all directions. The team helped each other on and off the vessel, no one was required to walk the plank or ended up over board! A weary bunch of young people continued on dry land with their walk back to the vehicles, all happy with their achievements.

Back at Hill House it was time to put up tents. There was a systematic approach to the poles and pegs; with some collaboration the large blue shelter was up and overhead. The team were in and out, zipping and unzipping, lying down, standing up, crawling about, all the great things one should do in a tent. Once that activity was exhausted the Trangia went back on for hot dogs all round. Eventually, once tummies were full and the clearing up complete, the team retreated for a good night's sleep before expedition Day 2!

The team were up bright and early and ready for the off for day 2 on Tuesday 11th. On arrival at Fairthorne Manor activity centre the young people took charge of navigating the group around the site to take part in their activities. First up there was some archery. The team were able to hone their physical ability, aim and accuracy and resilience skills at using their bow and arrows. One young person even struck gold!

Raft building was a great team effort by staff and young people alike. Once the raft was securely assembled, the team paddled about on the lake for quite some time, with plenty of whooping and laughing to be heard from the bank. The vessel stayed together which meant there were no water casualties!

The incredible jumping pillow kept everyone busy as and when there was a free moment. The entire team bounced and bounced. Some of our young people leapt incredibly high

whilst others bounced on their tummies. The jumping pillow was absolutely joyous – the shrieking and screaming could be heard from the woods!

The final activity of the very long day was the obstacle challenge course. The DofE group were amazing with the way they tackled each of the obstacles. They all required balance, concentration, co-ordination and courage and each young person gave it their very best shot. The group were great at encouraging each other and celebrating each success, it was a great activity to end the expedition with, the comradery and team work shone through.

This was the first group from HHS to work towards the DofE award. They have worked really hard across the weeks, learning new skills, taking part in many challenges and making a contribution to the local community by taking on some volunteering work. A special presentation event has been arranged for the group and we are hoping to have the Bronze certificates ready to be awarded during our celebration day at the end of term









