



by Naomi Bartholomew
Prep Headmistress, St Catherine's Prep

A move to the country

The situation we have all found ourselves in over the last year due to the global pandemic has meant that we have all had to take stock and consider what is important. For many, access to the great outdoors and more space for children to play and grow has been top of the list. Many families are therefore considering a move to the country to enjoy all of the benefits for family life that this brings.

Families are looking to relocate out of London - they are seeking a better quality of family

life in the idyllic Surrey Hills where there is plenty of fresh air, and lots of space for children

to play and grow. Meanwhile parents have excellent transport links into London and for those

who are often working abroad, easy access to Gatwick and Heathrow. Once travel resumes

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safely this means Surrey has the best of both worlds.

Many schools are keen to get their pupils playing and learning outdoors and it is my view that it is never the 'wrong weather', only ever the 'wrong clothes'. At our school, we encourage the children to wrap up warm, get their wellies on and be outside playing and learning whenever possible.

Playtimes should be fun and the great outdoors offers the freedom to be truly creative in play. I have spent many an idyllic hour outdoors watching children exchanging leaves for conkers at one of their 'nature shops' or discovering freely within the outdoor space.

At our school, we are also able to take learning outside for activities such as exploring the journey 'from seed to plate' - this is where the children grow vegetables and then use them in cookery. Gardening clubs can also provide opportunities for those who are keen and green fingered - planting, weeding and looking after our raised beds and pots. Many schools now have outdoor classrooms or an eco-cabin, to host science lessons and drop-in-to-play board game sessions at break times.

Others may hold Forest School or encourage children to spend much of their free family time at weekends outdoors in forests or public gardens, exploring beautiful local areas such as Winkworth Arboretum or Wisley.

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What we don't have at the moment is wasted time spent in the car or on buses ferrying children between school and after-school activities, adding to pollution and stress. Life in the Surrey Hills provides an exceptional quality of life for children growing up.

Is this all too idyllic? I think not. What is important is that children have a childhood and a school life that is happy and fulsome. It is crucial that children have the opportunity to look outwards beyond their immediate surroundings to local, national and global concerns. A rich curriculum and supporting charitable works that are important to them, ensure that this is the case. I cannot think of a better start for children than this.

St Catherine's Prep extend a warm welcome to parents who would like to see what this actually looks like here at St Catherine's, Bramley with regular Open Mornings. www.stcatherines.info



Open Mornings

prepadmissions@stcatherines.info

Thursday 11th March 2021
Wednesday 28th April 2021
Friday 11th June 2021*
*geared to Reception entry 4+

Baby Cats (0-4 years)

po-junior@stcatherines.info

Friday 19th March 2021
Friday 14th May 2021
Friday 11th June 2021
Friday 18th June 2021



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Prepare to be compassionate



OPEN MORNING
Friday 18th
June

Tours from 9:30am

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY



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