**Brandon Marsh Nature Centre**

In this pack you will find a brief description of each one of our centres, classrooms and activities, below each description you will find a brief sensory audit, for sound, visual, touch and smell. We’ve not included taste in our audit as none of activities include any taste elements.

 These audits are to the best of our ability but surroundings and circumstances are subject to change.

Most of our activities can be adapted, so if needed please make us aware of any changes that would benefit you and your visiting group. Alongside this we can cover displays in our classrooms to make them less visually stimulating (for a picture of our classrooms, please see our social stories). If you have any queries please get in touch at **education@wkwt.org.uk**

**Sensory Guide to Education Activities**

Brandon Marsh Nature Centre is the ideal place for your school visit as there are excellent opportunities for learning about wildlife, nature, and the environment. We have ponds, bird hides, meadows and woodlands all set within a 200 acre nature reserve. As you enter the centre, from the car park, you will pass through the shop and by the café, before heading back outside towards the classroom. As you arrive outside you will be met by a member of the education team in a black uniform, who will escort you straight through the building. **If you would like to enter through a side gate and therefore bypass the shop and restaurant, please make us aware.**

* Cars/Traffic
* People talking, laughing as they arrive or eat in the café.
* Drinks being made in the café.
* Noises of lorries moving, rubble falling or sirens from the site next door.
* People arriving at the centre, browsing the shop or eating in the café.
* Minibuses, coaches or cars bringing people to the centre.
* A giant metal dragonfly.
* The shop and café, full of items to buy and tills to buy them at.
* Lots of different textures underfoot, from gravel outside to laminate in the shop and carpet in the hallway.
* Food smells from the café.
* Coach and car fumes.
* Flower and plant smells, from plants outside.

High

Medium

Low

Medium

**Brandon Marsh Classroom**The classroom in Brandon Marsh is a separate building to the visitor centre, down a wheelchair accessible ramp from the building, the toilets are located a 20 second walk away. Inside the classroom there are various visual displays including but not inclusive of, a nature table, containing bones, birds’ nests, taxidermy pieces around the room as well as equipment in boxes and on display.

* Occasional noise can be heard from lorries next door
* People talking in the adjoining barn building
* Displays around the room are quite bright and visually stimulating
* Around the room are various items to touch, such as bones, birds’ nests, toys etc.
* The floor is a thin pile carpet.
* General room smells

Low

Low

Medium

High

**The Parkridge Centre**

The Parkridge Centre is in a great location in the heart of Brueton Park, Solihull. It is ideal for all children young and old to explore the area and experience wonderful nature and wildlife across the enclosed 5 acre nature reserve. There is a classroom and courtyard for the children as well as a well-marked path through the park. PLEASE NOTE; THERE IS A FIVE MINUTE WALK FROM THE CAR PARK TO THE CENTRE THROUGH A PUBLIC PARK, WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND DOGS.

* Car noises
* People talking, laughing as they arrive or eat in the café.
* Drinks being made in the café.
* Duck and other bird noises
* People arriving at the centre, browsing the shop or eating in the café.
* Minibuses, coaches or cars bringing people to the centre.
* The shop and café, full of items to buy and tills to buy them at.
* Dog walkers in the park, people out running, walking or riding bikes.
* Ducks and other birds
* Lots of different textures underfoot, from tarmac path outside to laminate inside
* Food smells from the café.
* Coach and car fumes.
* Flower and plant smells, from plants outside.

High

Medium

Low

Medium

**The Parkridge Centre Classroom**

The classroom in The Parkridge Centre, is attached to the café and is situated right next to the toilets. Inside the classroom there are several displays including but not inclusive to hanging ceiling materials, bean bags and cushions and a nature table containing bones, birds’ nests and feathers.

* Occasional noises from the café that is adjoining
* People talking in the adjoining cafe
* Displays around the room are quite bright and visually stimulating
* Around the room are various items to touch, such as bones, birds’ nests, toys etc.
* The floor is a hard laminate
* General room smells and wafting café smells

Low

Low

Medium

High

**Hams Hall Environmental Studies Centre**

Hams Hall Environmental Studies Centre is a hidden oasis of nature in an industrial world. Set within our historic walled garden there are many opportunities to explore and learn about wildlife. With a pond, arboretum, woodland, meadow and classroom. Hams Hall is a fantastic place to discover nature. We also have viewing access to the neighbouring River Tame, ideal for learning about rivers and wetlands. Please note there is no café or shop at Hams Hall.

* Car noises
* Low level talking from our end office room.
* Occasional noise from nearby factories, such as sawing, drills, lorry reversing, but this is a distant low level noise.
* Minibuses, coaches or cars bringing people to the centre.
* Inside the centre you are greeted with a plain hall and toilets
* Lots of different textures underfoot, from gravel outside to laminate inside.
* Coach and car fumes.
* Flower and plant smells, from plants outside.

Medium

Medium

Low

Medium

**Hams Hall Classroom**

The classroom in Hams Hall is just within the centre itself, situated next to the gender-neutral toilets, the classroom itself is laminate floored, with equipment in cupboards or shelves around the room. There will be stacked chairs, as well as tables laid around the edges, windows have blinds, with a desk at the front containing writing implements and some files.

* People talking in the nearby office room, situated at the opposite end of the centre to the classroom.
* Displays around the room are sparse.
* The floor is laminate.
* Equipment around the room is generally in cupboards or on shelves
* General room smells

Low

Low

Low

Low

**Prickly Friends (Recommended for EYFS / KS1)**

An introduction to hedgehogs and their night time lives, listen to a few hedgehog facts before making a house out of sticks and other natural materials found on the floor for a soft toy hedgehog, thinking about their hibernating needs. Make a mud hedgehog, by digging for your own mud, moulding it and decorating it to look just like a hedgehog. If we have time we’ll play a few additional hedgehog games.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Hedgehog toys.
* Lots of different textures when handling materials to make hedgehog home.
* Mud texture if using hands to mould mud hedgehog.
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

High

Low

**Magical Forest (Recommended for EYFS / KS1)**

Make a wish on a magic bean and hide it in the woods, before helping to rebuild the fairies houses that have blown away using what we can find on the woodland floor. Before making a mud troll, by digging for your own mud, moulding it and decorating it to look just like a scary troll face.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Lots of different textures when handling materials to make fairy home.
* Mud texture if using hands to mould mud troll.
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

High

Low

**Sensory Explorer (Recommended for EYFS / KS1)**

We’ll explore the reserve using our senses, by finding six different textures ranging from soft to bumpy etc. Before making some smelly potions, for our noses, by collecting plants and releasing their smells and mixing them all together. We’ll look for different items during a special game and spend a few seconds listening to what we can hear around us, we’ll do our tasting at lunch!

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Lorry noise and sirens (Brandon Marsh only)
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Lots of different textures when handling materials discover textures.
* Flower and plant smells, whilst making smelly potions.

Low (At Parkridge) High (At Brandon)

High

High

Low

**Nuts About Nature (Recommended for EYFS / KS1)**

We’ll become nature explorers as we head off on a walk with a spotter sheet to see what we can find, before making a quick piece of art out of sticks or making something for you to take back to school, by collect natural items from around us.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Binoculars may be used during this activity
* Lots of different textures when handling materials to make stick art
* Art to take back to school involves handling double sided sticky tape.
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

High

Medium

**Duck Tales (Recommended for EYFS / KS1)**

First we will listen to the story of The Ugly Duckling before trying to spot ducks of our own out on the nature reserve, using binoculars. If we have time we’ll make birds nest for our soft toy birds using all the things real life birds would use.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Lorry and siren noise (Brandon Marsh only)
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Binoculars used during activity
* Lots of different textures when handling materials to make birds nest
* Flower and plant smells

Low (At Parkridge) High (At Brandon)

Low

Medium

Medium

**Bugs and Bees (Recommended for EYFS / KS1)**

Join us on a bug hunt, using our special pots to catch them in and a paintbrush to brush them into it, before emptying them into large tubs so we can all have a look at the end. After we’ve all had a look at the bugs we’ll play a game all about bees collecting nectar and taking it back to their hive, using sponges and water.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Magnifying properties on pots used.
* Moving logs and sticks to find bugs
* Use of sponges and water during game
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

High

High

**Minibeast Mission (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

Join us on a bug hunt, using our special pots to catch them in and a paintbrush to brush them into it, before emptying them into large tubs so we can all have a look at the end. Before the hunt we’ll have a chat about bug features and at the end we’ll talk about why they might have these adaptions.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Magnifying properties on pots used
* Moving logs and sticks to find bugs
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

High

**Brilliant Birds (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

We’ll visit The Wright Hide (at Brandon Marsh) or one of our busy wetland pools (both sites) to see what birds we can find. Using binoculars we’ll have a close look at their features and try and identify them, as well as learning about their adaptions before walking back.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Lorry noise and sirens on walk, no such noise once at bird hide (Brandon only)
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Binoculars may be used during this activity
* Bird hide is low light (Brandon Marsh Only)
* Lots of different textures when handling materials to make birds nest.
* Flower and plant smells

High (Brandon Marsh) Low (Parkridge Centre)

Low

Medium

Medium (Parkridge Centre) High (Brandon Marsh)

**Woodland Adventure (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

Head to the woods to hide a nut (pretend nut) just like a squirrel, before using mirrors held under your nose to see the tops of trees as you are guided around the wood. Use paper and wax crayons to create a bark rubbing and if we have time play a game, using blindfolds. Where you are led to tree to hug it, before being led away and having to guess which tree you hugged.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Use of mirrors to see tree canopy, can be disorientating
* Blindfolds used
* Lots of different textures when hugging tree during game and pressing to create a bark rubbing.
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

High

**Mammal Discovery (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

Start learning about mammals by listening to a few facts about them, before building a mammal home for soft toys, thinking about what they would need. Before making your very own badger scent using smelly plants and mixing them together in a cup.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Animal toys
* Lots of different textures when handling materials to make mammal homes
* Flower and plant smells
* Encouraged to smell plants whilst making badger scents

Low

High

Medium

Low

**Flowers and Bees (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

You will learn the four main parts of the plant, which will have a special action to learn to help you remember what they do, before completing our plant puzzles. We’ll then take a special look at the flower, building a flower using people in the group and talking about all the different parts. Finally we’ll play our game about bees collecting nectar and taking it back to their hive, using sponges and water.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* When doing plant actions children are encouraged to call out at raised volume
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* During game sponges and water are handled by the children
* Flower and plant smells

Medium

Low

Medium

Low

**Underwater Habitats (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

Using nets you will get a chance to discover what is in the pond, magnifying glasses will be on hand to have a closer look and use our id charts to figure out what you have found. At the end we will have a talk about what you may have found, before returning the creatures to the pond.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Water splashing
* Lorry noises and sirens (Brandon Marsh only)
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Magnifying glasses may be used during this activity
* Children must kneel to pond dip, knees may get wet
* Hands may get wet and clothing may be splashed by water
* Flower and plant smells
* Water smell

High (Brandon Marsh) Low (Parkridge Centre)

Low

Medium

Medium

**Art in the Wild (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

Using just what we can find on the woodland floor we’ll make massive pieces of art, before walking around and admiring each other’s work. Then we’ll use special sticky caterpillar’s pictures and collect natural materials to stick to it, so you can take a piece of art back to school with you.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Lots of different textures when handling materials to make stick art
* Art to take back to school involves handling double sided sticky tape.
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

Low

**Hedgehogs and Hibernators (Recommended for KS1 / KS2)**

Starting with a quick talk about hedgehogs and their fascinating lives, learning about their spikes, what they eat and so much more. Before making a mud hedgehog, by digging for your own mud, moulding it and decorating it to look just like a hedgehog. Finally we’ll play a game about hibernating, where we’ll run around before pretending to curl up and sleep, one person will be covered with a blanket and the rest of us will, stand up a try and guess who is under the blanket.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Hedgehog toys
* May be covered during hibernating game
* Mud texture if using hand to mould mud hedgehog
* Crouching on floor during hibernating game.
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

High

Medium

**Den Building (Recommended for KS2)**

Working together using the trees and surrounding sticks, logs and leaves build a den in the woods, big enough for you to fit in. At the end of the session we will go around and listen to each other talk about their dens and when and if appropriate take the dens down.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Picking up heavy sticks and logs to move to make dens
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

Low

**River Studies (Recommended for KS2 at Hams Hall only)**

Learn about rivers by exploring the river Tame, starting in our classroom with a presentation, with a flashcard quiz, a hands-on experiment using trays of sand and water, the head outside. Once outside a minutes’ walk will take you to our river site where we’ll throw apples to measure flow rate and draw a field sketch of the river site.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader giving out instructions
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling when outside
* Lights will be turned off so presentation can be seen when inside.
* May throw apple in the river.
* Need to hold a clipboard and pencil when outside
* No need to touch sand but it will be present
* Will be sat on floor, which is laminate.
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

Low

**Aquatic Ecology (Recommended for KS3 / KS4 / KS5)**

You will sample aquatic invertebrates, investigating which are common and what their adaptions are, before takin abiotic readings to see how different factors influence the pond and the species that live there. You may be comparing two pond sites, allowing groups to take away data to compare species richness, diversity, evenness and use Simpson’s index of diversity if needed.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling out instructions to pupils
* Water splashing
* Lorry noises and sirens (Brandon Marsh only)
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Magnifying glasses may be used during this activity
* Pupils must kneel to pond dip, knees may get wet
* Hands may get wet and clothing may be splashed by water
* Flower and plant smells
* Water smell

High (Brandon Marsh) Low (Parkridge Centre)

Low

High

Medium

**Invertebrate Sampling and Comparison (Recommended for KS3 / KS4 / KS5)**

Identify different invertebrate orders and species and learning the different techniques used to sample them, comparing samples collected on our meadow and in the woodland. Alongside this they will also take abiotic readings to draw conclusions from their data set.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling children back to them
* Occasional people walking past, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Magnifying properties on pots used
* Moving logs and sticks to find bugs
* Use of nets to sample grassy areas
* Feel of tall grass on legs
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

Medium

**Vegetation Sampling (Recommended for KS3 / KS4 / KS5)**

Your group will sample vegetation out on our meadow to identify common species found in certain habitats, using our keys and identification guides. Using a quadrat they will look for a particular species abundance, distribution and will estimate species cover for the area, using both random and semi-random sampling techniques.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling students back to them
* Occasional people, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Quadrats being thrown
* Lots of different textures on the ground as being close to the floor aids identifying species
* Throwing quadrats for semi-random samples
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

High

**Belt Transect (Recommended for KS3 / KS4 / KS5)**

Your group will learn how to lay a belt transect and how to use a quadrat, before using the method to evaluate changes in vegetation from an area of open grassland to woodland. We will also look at abiotic data for both areas to make links between biotic and abiotic data gathered. This session allows groups to look at species richness, diversity, evenness and use Simpson’s index of diversity back at their place of learning if needed.

* Wind in the trees
* Occasional bird calls
* Leader calling students back to them
* Occasional people, trees moving in the wind, birds flying or insects crawling
* Lots of different textures on the ground as being close to the floor aids identifying species
* Flower and plant smells

Low

Low

Medium

Medium