

St Mary's RC Primary School

St. Mary's children have been coming to Derwent Hill for as long as anyone can remember. Because of your bursary scheme, no child has ever been denied the experience. Certainly, the children in receipt of the bursary would never have had the opportunity to visit the lakes with their families or friends.

The Derwent Hill Bursary Scheme for disadvantaged children offers numerous benefits, encompassing social, emotional, and physical aspects through the Lake District experience. The scheme provides an opportunity for children from different backgrounds to come together and form new friendships. By participating in group activities such as hill walking and canoeing, children can develop teamwork skills, learn to cooperate, and foster a sense of camaraderie. The shared experiences and challenges can create lasting bonds among the participants.

The Lake District experience can have a positive impact on the emotional well-being of disadvantaged children. Being surrounded by the natural beauty of the area and engaging in outdoor activities can help reduce stress, boost self-esteem, and enhance overall mental well-being. The sense of accomplishment achieved by overcoming physical challenges can also increase their self-confidence and resilience.

Hill walking and canoeing are physically demanding activities that promote fitness and a healthy lifestyle. The hilly terrain of the Lake District provides an excellent opportunity for children to engage in cardiovascular exercise and develop strength and endurance. These activities contribute to improved physical fitness levels, helping children build healthy habits and an appreciation for an active lifestyle.

The Derwent Hill experience offers the children the opportunity to Connect with Nature: The Lake District offers a unique environment for children to connect with nature. Exploring the stunning landscapes, walking through forests, and navigating the lakes in canoes can foster a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world. This connection to nature has been shown to have numerous benefits, including reduced stress, improved mood, and increased concentration and creativity.

Staying in dormitories during their stay at Derwent Hill introduces children to communal living and helps develop important life skills. Sharing a living space with peers, fosters independence, encourages social interactions, and promotes a sense of responsibility.

Dormitory life also offers an opportunity for children to learn to adapt to new environments, respect others' personal space, and develop problem-solving and conflict resolution skills. In summary, the Derwent Hill Bursary Scheme provides disadvantaged children with a range of benefits, including social connections, emotional well-being, physical fitness, a connection to nature, and the development of important life skills. The Lake District experience, with its hill walking, canoeing, and dormitory life, offers a unique and transformative opportunity for these children, helping them grow and thrive in various aspects of their lives. We thank the friends of Derwent Hill for continuing to support our most vulnerable children.

Martin Clephane

Headteacher

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Grange Park Primary School

Grange Park Primary School are very grateful for the support they have received over the last two years. Without the funding support, many children will have missed out on the chance to experience a range of activities and exploration of the wider area. The children that accessed the bursary, still talk about the experience almost a year on. One child in particular, came to life during the residential and is very keen to study the outdoors and work somewhere like Derwent Hill in the future.

Thank you again for the support, it has impacted on our children and opened their eyes to what opportunities are out there.

Francesca Cowan

Headteacher

Grange Park Primary School

Hudson Road Primary School

A residential visit to Derwent Hill is not a “trip” or optional extra but has become a fundamental part of the curriculum that we offer at Hudson Road.

In this very disadvantaged community, one of the most limiting factors for pupils can be their poverty of experience- the limits placed on children because they have not experienced at first hand the world outside Sunderland, the landscape of the UK, their history and heritage or even for some to find a sense of belonging and community in a new country. A residential visit to Derwent Hill gives our pupils all of that and much more.

Pupils tell us they feel more confident and have a more positive attitude.

“It made me more determined to give things a try and to go out of my comfort zone.”

“I was able to do activities that I did not even think I could do and I learnt about myself.”

Many return with a love of the outdoors and a real interest in geography and the environment. Only two of the children we took this year had ever visited the Lake District before- all of them are now keen to return.

We are incredibly grateful for the support of the Friends of Derwent Hill to help us make this residential possible. We subsidise the visit as much as we can from our budget as we want it to be accessible for all of the pupils however, we rely on the extra help from the Friends of Derwent Hill for some of our most disadvantaged families (and they are often the children who benefit the most from the visit).

A visit to Derwent Hill: “memories that will last a lifetime” – Year 6 pupil



Cathy Westgate

Headteacher

Headteacher Hudson Road Primary School

Albany Village Primary School

Last year we were able to apply for and were granted a bursary for one of our Y6 pupils to attend Derwent Hill with his class. Without the bursary he would have been unable to attend.

The pupil moved to the North-East during the autumn term of Year 6 as a result of domestic abuse that his mother and his family had experienced. They had to move from their home area as there was a risk to their lives should they have stayed. This meant a massive change for him and his family - leaving friends, school, and extended family behind. Prior to joining us, because of the abuse at home his attendance was less than 20%. This was a new start for him, and we soon began to see him settle in and make new friends, however he was shy, reserved, and cautious around his peers and adults. Many in his class had already booked to attend a Derwent Hill residential week following their SATs in the summer term of Y6. He asked about being able to go but was fraught when told the cost, as he knew that because of having to set up a new home and his mum being on her own on benefits they would be unable to attend. We approached his mum and suggested we could apply for a bursary and would ensure that he could go - she was overwhelmed by this act of kindness towards her and the family, giving permission for us to apply.

When we were able to tell the pupil that he could go to Derwent Hill - the transformation was massive - from not making eye contact he now meet your gaze, he began to talk about the future and his friendships deepened with his peers and adults in school. During and following the visit his confidence exploded and we began to see him reach his potential not only academically but socially and emotionally.

Thank you to the Friends of Derwent Hill for making bursaries available to those in need, you cannot imagine the difference it makes to a young child's life both now and undoubtedly in the future.

Stephen Jones

Headteacher

Albany Village Primary School