

Hagg Farm 2015

Monday

For once we actually managed to set off on time and so began our journey. The first port of call was Tesco in Chesterfield. Here we needed to buy all the food for the week. The students were given the lists and off they went to find everything they needed. After lunch we continued on to Hagg Farm. Upon arrival we were greeted by Gareth. He was to be our contact and instructor during the visit. After a chat about safety, site rules and fire procedures it was time for the first activity.

The incentive of an ice cream at the end of a walk always proves to be a good motivator and this time was no exception. Off the students went, marching up the hills of the peak district discussing how many scoops they were going to have and what sauce they were putting on top. After 2 or 3 miles we arrived at the Fairholmes visitors centre and sat enjoying our ice creams in the sunshine. Gareth kindly came to pick us up in the bus and we returned to Hagg.

After tea it was time to blindfold the students and set them off walking in the woods. This activity is known as 'The Nightline' and involves trusting your other senses and feeling your way around a roped course. I am pleased to say that all the students got into the spirit of the activity and did not remove their blindfold. With no broken bones we returned to base in time for a nice cup of hot chocolate before bed.

Tuesday

After breakfast it was time to put on our neoprene vests, ghyll scrambling suits and water boots and head out to climb one of the local spots. Fair Brook was our destination and is a stream that runs from the top of the Kinder plateau down to the river Ashop. The activity involved squeezing under branches just a few inches above the water, travelling through fast moving water and finished with climbing up a 10ft waterfall. Once again all the children (and staff) managed to complete this activity and some even had a smile on their face ☺

After a warming shower and some lunch it was time to tackle the climbing tower. This is a 30ft artificial climbing wall located in the woods. The students not only have to climb the tower but they are responsible for the safety of their friends and must belay whilst they climb. All the students had a really good go at this and some even managed the more difficult challenge of climbing up and over the overhang on the more difficult wall.

The next activity proved to be the most popular of the week. The Zip wire involves travelling along a wire which is suspended high above the ground whilst in a harness. At the end of the wire there is a tree and the challenge is to see if you can reach a leaf and bring it back. Each student got two attempts although they all pleaded for more!!!

That evening we went for a swim at the local outdoor pool in Hathersage. This was a whole new experience for the students and one they really enjoyed. They were all brilliantly behaved and were a true credit to the school whilst we were there.

Wednesday

The day started with a selection of team building games which involved different challenges. The first game involved transporting a golf ball from one hoop to another. The only catch was that they were not allowed to use their hands and could only use the selection of drainpipes they had available to them. There was plenty of discussion, a few stropmy moments, but I am pleased to say that both teams managed it in a respectable time.

The challenges then got harder! The next one involved moving a bucket of ping pong balls from one hoop to another. Easy I hear you cry! However, the bucket was very shallow and you could only hold it using the wires that were attached. A few more strops, some calming words of encouragement and once again both teams managed to successfully complete the challenge! Well done!

After lunch it was time for some orienteering. This activity involves using a map to find predetermined points of interest and then marking them on the sheet. This took place in a beautiful valley known as Tideswell Dale. The weather was brilliant and we could not have asked for a better afternoon. The students were left to their own devices and monitored from a distance. Out of 20 the lowest score was 15 which was a real achievement as some of the points were really hard to find.

Thursday

Today was the day of 'The Walk'. The students had heard about the horrors of previous years and were preparing themselves both physically and mentally. The walk would start from a car park south east of the Mam Tor summit, continue up a footpath to Hollins Cross and then traverse west to the summit of Mam Tor before descending back down to the ruined road and back to the minibus. The weather was once again absolutely brilliant and the students were fantastic. They walked with enthusiasm, looked out over the views and commented on what a brilliant time they had. As a treat for their excellent efforts all week we stopped in Castleton to have an ice cream!

Friday

All that was left to do was pack up, tidy the base and head home! A brief stop off at McDonald's for lunch and it was time to get back to school. ☺

All in all it was a brilliant week and the students were fantastic! Well done and hopefully you'll remember what a good time you had for a very long time!