

Gold DofE 2020 – October Half Term – Back to Back Expedition with Ocean Rock Adventure

This year Gold DofE was a little different from what we had expected. Due to the current circumstances, the planned expeditions were cancelled. Fortunately, Ocean Rock, the company that organised our expeditions, offered us the chance to complete our practice and assessment expeditions together in the remote and harsh Dartmoor.

So, during the October half term, Mr Holloway and Mrs Cunningham kindly drove us to Dartmoor where we were met by drizzle and grey sky, which we would become very familiar with. The first two days of the experience acted as our practice expedition, in which we spent improving our navigation skills. To the delight of our group leaders, all of us already some experience with navigation thanks to some excellent DofE skills sessions with Mr Holloway. This allowed the group leaders to teach us some advanced navigation techniques, which would prove very helpful during our assessment expedition.



The restrictions at the time meant that we weren't able to share a tent. Therefore, we found that it would get very cold at night and many layers even inside the sleeping bag were needed to maintain some warmth. Thankfully we didn't have to carry our tents as they were kept at our base camp during the practice and were brought to us during the assessment.



Our assessment began on the third day. This involved us navigating from one campsite to another each day and proving to our group leaders that we met the Gold DofE standard. Despite the challenge of long distances and poor weather, we all showed how strong and capable we all are in our teams, and we all were able to pass with some very kind comments from our group leaders. The highlight of the expedition for many of us was the wild camp. Being completely isolated from society, pitching our tents on the moorland, and collecting our water from a nearby stream gave a sense of freedom and excitement we had never experienced before.

Overall we all really enjoyed our experience in Dartmoor. After being stuck inside for so long (with lockdown), being outside in such an amazing place was a huge breath of fresh air.

After completing our expedition, two of us have been able to complete our Gold DofE with the group being on track to have everyone complete the challenge soon. We would all like to thank Ocean Rock, Mr Holloway, Mrs Cunningham, and Mrs Wood for all the work they have done to ensure we have had the best experience possible for the circumstances.



The Gold DofE Team 2020 – Year 13