

BBC School Report

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Working Dogs

Guide Dogs: Why are they so important?

Guide dogs are vital in modern day society. They can give blind or partially sighted people their lives back. It isn't always just Labradors they use to train as guide dogs: they use 50% Golden Retrievers, 32% Labradors, 10% Golden Retrievers, 5% German Shepherds and 3% other (like Poodles).

Between zero and six months, the puppy with its mother and siblings, before moving to the National Breeding Centre. They then go onto living with their puppy walkers. They will learn basic commands like "sit" and experience new things like traffic. At fourteen to seventeen months, they get used to a brown training harness and will learn new tricks like stopping at kerbs. To make sure the guide dog has a good life, the dog is taken to a blind person's home to make sure they are a good match. Finally at twenty to twenty-two months, they are fully trained. They are matched with an owner and will soon start to work together. Then finally at two years, they will have settled into their new home and will go onto changing their owner's lives. It is vital they are completely trained, do you agree they can change someone's life?

Some people wonder how the dog knows how to cross the road, the truth is they don't know. It is the owners choice when and where to cross the road. There is a beeping noise when it is safe to alert people it is okay to cross. In Germany there is a ticking noise. People also contemplate how the dog knows where to go. The dog learns certain routes so they can guide their owner. However it is vital the owner is in charge of navigation as if the dog is left it will choose its own routes. Guide dog experts were kind enough to answers these questions when we emailed them.

Sniffer Dogs: What do they do?

Sniffer dogs are a very common sight at airports and sometimes busy train stations. They are partnered with their handler and they are trained to sniffer out different and harmful substances. They are trained in a very strategic way – it is done by letting them play a game of tug of war with a towel. Over time they will get used this activity and will some start to recognises it as theirs. Over time, different substances of drugs are paced in the towel and the dog will understand this is what its toy smells like. Therefore once they start hiding the towel with different types of drugs in it, they dogs excellent sense of smell will be able to sniff it out. Finally once they are at an airport or a busy public place, they will smell out drugs or dangerous weapons, they will believe they will be finding their toy and if they find a harmful object, they will be awarded with their toy to reinforce their training.

Sniffer dogs include, Springer Spaniels, German Shepherds and Labradors.

Sniffer dogs are also being used to detect medical issues with their owners, these are called medical dogs. Do you believe sniffer dogs should be respected and supported more than they already are?

Interview – How do dogs affect your emotions?

Annabel (student from Charlton school) – Dogs make me happy! They're always there for you whenever you need them. They can't judge you and are very trustworthy.

Faye (student from Charlton school) – I love my dog and always will. I feel so calm and relaxed around him. I look forward to playing with him every day.

Student from Charlton school – Dogs slightly scare me, it's their bark that makes them sound so angry. I do however love puppies!

Alice (student from Charlton school) – Dogs are amazing animals, they're so smart and can cheer anyone up. They're not my favourite animal but I have found they are the most family friendly.

Alice (student from Charlton school) – Dogs make me happy!

Ayat (student from Charlton school) – Dogs are a great companion and when you're feeling sad they can always cheer you up.

Bethan (student from Charlton school) – Dogs are the ultimate pet. They can brighten up your day. By having my dog it has meant I'm no longer alone most days and have someone to play with.

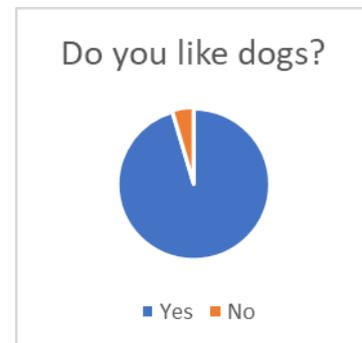
Eleanor (student from Charlton school) – I love dogs. They somehow know how you feel. They're so loyal and have a calm nature about them.

Courtney (student from Charlton school) – Dogs always make me feel happy. They're there for you always and are ONE of the best animals ever.

Hearing dogs:

A hearing dog is a dog that hears everything for their deaf owner. They give their owner a new life of independence, confidence and companionship. They can also give them a true friend for life. Without a hearing dog deaf people can lose all independence and confidence making them feel very alone.

However to become a hearing dog that could change people's lives for ever they must first go through a lot of training. A training puppy sees its training as a fun game rather than a chore. This means that they base their training around fun games, treats and lots of fuss, it's called reward based training. If a puppy does a 'wanted' behaviour (something right) they are given a tasty treat, praise, fuss and cuddles. This way you are encouraging good behaviour from the puppy. If the puppy did 'unwanted' behaviour however it is just simply ignored. That way the puppy does not get any treats or attention so is less likely to repeat it. The dogs they mainly use are cocker spaniels and poodles. The trainers find these are the easiest dogs to change.



Hearing dogs are very important and are there to improve lives of many deaf people across the country but to this they need your support so remember when you get chance to head online and check out how you can help