Archaeological Grid

When the children are confident of using the grid, create a larger scale one for group use.

Ideally use a big sand tray.

Before the group starts work, conceal some suitable items under the sand. Small reproduction Roman artefacts are very useful but there should be some other items as well to show that not everything found on a dig is that historic! It is helpful if some items are broken or damaged although not with sharp edges. Some areas should be left empty while some finds, perhaps a small collection of coins could be close together to suggest that they may have been lost by the same person at the same time. Quite common items such as shells can be used as they have been found in large quantities on Roman sites.

These do not need to be regularly placed as obviously finds do sometimes overlap grid areas.

Use string to divide up the grid. Preferably have the children to do this and to decide how they are going to label each square of the grid.

Have each child in the group in turn to excavate a square (being careful not to damage any finds).

When enough items have been discovered (they do not all need to be found by every group as the items found can be discussed later with the whole class), let the children handle them and discuss them.

• What are they made of?

• Why are some of then from a time after the Romans?

• What were they used for?

• Why have they survived?

• What sort of things wouldn't have survived?

• How can they help us learn about the people who were on that land in the past?

• Why are some things broken?

The activity can also be used as a springboard for imaginative writing – possibly looking at how the item ended up being lost or thrown away.