

An African adventure



■ **GIVING:** PE teacher Johny Richards and students from d'Overbroeck's College

Picture: OX50033 Jon Lewis

TRIP: Students fundraise to help needy schoolchildren

MOST children get a week abroad in Europe for their school trips.

Not so for a group of pupils at an Oxford college, who will be travelling to Africa to help revamp a deprived school.

A group of 20 sixth form and Year 11 pupils from d'Overbroeck's College, in Banbury Road, will spend two weeks in Namibia in July, including a week refurbishing classrooms and a playground.

It is the kind of activity usually associated with pre-university gap years, but trip leader Johny Richards said there had been no shortage of interest.

Mr Richards said: "The primary focus is a school in a deprived area of Namibia.

"We want our students to get more cultural awareness, find out a bit about themselves and find out what it's like for children in other parts of the world – and hopefully give something back."

The pupils at the fee-paying independent school have paid about £2,500 each to go on the trip, and are fundraising to collect about £5,000 between them to pay for building materials for the work.

In Africa, they will spend the first day

■ Fran Bardsley

sourcing materials, before moving to the school they are helping for a week.

Mr Richards said: "It will be all hands to the pump to try and get as much as we possibly can done in a week.

"While we are there, we will be cooking for ourselves every night and camping all the time. They will be roughing it 24/7.

"It will be hard work both physically and mentally."

The youngsters have been split into different fundraising teams. One is approaching organisations to seek sponsorship and items which can be auctioned off in aid of the cause.

Another will organise supermarket bagpacking, and other fundraising events in the pipeline including a school safari dress-up day and a bake sale.

Mr Richards said: "This is about giving back to a less fortunate community, and that is why most of them wanted to go."

The school organised a similar trip to Zambia in 2009.

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