

Class 1 Forest School

What is Forest School?

Forest School is an outdoor learning opportunity to inspire and encourage children and to promote social and emotional well-being. Learning happens in a fun and unconscious way by exploring, being creative and playing.

Children will learn about their local natural environment simply by being in it. They are encouraged to use their initiative to solve problems, co-operate with their friends and peers to achieve small tasks, and to manage risks in an informed and safe way.

Where did the idea of Forest School come from?

Forest School is an inspirational educational approach to learning that was founded in Denmark. Its success over the last 50 years in Scandinavian countries in promoting children's self-confidence and independence sparked interest here in the UK and led to the recent development of many Forest Schools all over the country.

What do children do at Forest School?

- Forest games
- Build dens and shelters
- Create environmental art
- Work with their group in team tasks
- Use tools safely
- Cook on an open fire
- Share stories

Learning objectives

- To provide freedom to explore an outdoor space where there is no right or wrong way of doing things. The exciting small achievable tasks will motivate and give children confidence.
- To learn individually and collectively by sharing ideas and tasks and so develop their communication skills, empathy and understanding of how to work together to get their desired results.
- To develop a feeling of ownership of their forest space; this will foster a sense of responsibility, independence and emotional maturity in their view of themselves in the wider world.
- To understand and appreciate the boundaries that are in place to keep children safe.
- To identify the challenges and risks in the outdoor space, and for children to grow in awareness of how to regulate those risks.
- To be able to reflect upon the events of the forest school sessions and for children to appreciate how this has made them feel and possibly how they can pursue this way of learning.

Achievements

- Getting exercise in the fresh air
- Creating art work
- Feeling safe and comfortable to explore the environment
- Working co-operatively with peers
- Greater understanding of the local environment and how the child fits in to the wider community

Site information

The site we shall use is part of the school grounds. The site is risk assessed before each session.

What happens if the weather is bad?

Forest School will run unless there are any obvious hazards that would affect the safety of the group e.g. high winds which could jeopardise the safety of trees. There is a shelter in the area for the occasions when there is a downpour! Always dress your child ready for Forest School and we will make a decision on the day.

Credentials

Our Forest School sessions will be led by myself, supported by Mrs Evans and Mrs Case who are our class Teaching Assistants. I am Level 3 Forest School trained and have successfully led Forest School groups in other schools and across a range of age groups. Mrs Evans and Mrs Case are both school First Aiders.

What do children need to bring?

Please bring your child to school dressed ready for Forest School but wearing school shoes please, as we have a lesson before we set off and wellies are not very comfortable for sitting in on the carpet. The clothes, including a coat, should be those you don't mind getting dirty and in some cases they may become snagged by bushes/twigs. Layers work best when it is cold as they can always be removed as your child plays and gets warm. Even if the weather is warm, please send your child in long sleeves and trousers to protect legs from nettles and scratches.

Other things to consider are:

- Sun hat and sun cream applied before school (if the weather is warm and sunny)
- Wellies (ideally you will have already sent in a named pair that we can keep in school for other activities such as puddle jumping and snow play)
- Spare socks
- Hat and gloves (if the weather is cold)
- All-in-Ones are not suitable as children struggle to get in and out of them independently

Uniform does NOT need to be brought into school to change into after the session. Your child will stay in their Forest School clothes all day.

Please make a note of the dates when Forest School will be taking place:-

Thursday 16th September

Thursday 23rd September

Thursday 30th September

Thursday 7th October

Thursday 14th October

Thursday 21st October

Kind regards

Miss Wilde