

Forest School

'Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better'
Albert Einstein

Intent

The ethos of Forest School is based on a respect for children and their capacity to initiate, investigate and maintain curiosity in the world around them. Forest schools offers our children opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in our woodland area. Our aim is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences where they will learn to care for our environment. Our activities are planned in such a way that they also support the core curriculum. They help the children develop problem solving skills, learn how to manage risks, co-operate with others and build confidence.

Implementation

Each class presently receives 6 x 1.5 hour sessions with a Forest School Practitioner and their class teacher. Hazel class attend the forest weekly for a 1.5 hour session most Friday mornings. Some of the PE grant is used to employ a Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioner to deliver weekly sessions to our children.

Children learn through experiences in the outdoors and sessions are planned around their interests and emerging needs. In addition, children learn about and appreciate the different species, flora and fauna, animals, insects and their habitats in the local area. They are encouraged to take responsibility for the environment and learn how to look after and care for the natural environment in order to sustain it for future custodians.

In addition to the planned Forest School Learning we use the woodland and our outdoor space to maximise classroom learning where relevant. When planning an English unit such as rewriting *Little Red Riding Hood*, teachers would ensure that real experiences in the woodland would enhance the writing journey. Equally, when looking at plants and habitats in Science, we would expect exploration and the setting up of investigations to use our outdoor spaces.

We are beginning to think about how our outdoor space and the spinney specifically can help us to develop spirituality and a sense of awe and wonder in our learners. Assemblies, planned to take place in the outdoors, encouraging children to appreciate and 'notice' the world around them are a developing feature of the school year.

Impact

Forest schools allows our children to be active learners who develop their self-esteem and self-confidence through a variety of independent tasks that they take ownership of. They will develop knowledge of sustainability, respect for their learning environment and the outdoors alongside fostering a sense of being a custodian of the natural world. Forest School sessions will allow them to develop their teamwork skills and increase their capability to work together to solve problems in a variety of ways, taking into account one another's ideas.