



Information Booklet



Introduction

My name is Kirsten Lythgoe and I am the founder of Wildlings Forest School. I have over 13 years teaching experience and a great love of the outdoors. As much as I love being in the classroom, it isn't always suited to all learners. Some children find it difficult to work at such a fast pace with a very teacher led curriculum. This is where forest school learning can support all learners and help them to develop their social, emotional and academic needs.

What is forest school?

At forest school we don't only learn about the types of flora and fauna of the woodland but we also learn how to protect it. Children learn a lot of scientific and geography based knowledge whether it is learning about tree types, building shelters and testing materials, creating fires, making bug hotels and learning about habitats. Forest school is much more than this, it teaches children how to manage their own basic needs and develop their personal, social and emotional skills. It is one of the most important areas of learning that an educational setting can teach to children but doesn't necessarily have much time dedicated to it as it isn't a main academic subject for teaching and learning.

Helping children to develop these skills allow them to create meaningful friendships and learn to respect their peers and adults. It provides opportunities for children to work in a team and develop their social and communication skills with one another. Children are free to express their emotions in a large outdoor space, we provide opportunities to share our thoughts and feelings and we connect with nature to give children a sense of calm and clarity. We provide create opportunities for the children to develop their art and drama skills, we develop physically through tool use, climbing and other elements of risky play. We teach children to cook and prepare food on an open fire. These activities also include teaching children about safety and how to manage risks.



What do we learn?

Here is our Wildlings Forest School yearly overview. This shows you the range of skills and areas of learning that we will use to hook the children's interests in. During these lessons we will give children the opportunity to apply these skills independently (apart from fire and tools).



How does it work?

Each of our sessions start contains a mixture of holistic learning, growth mind-set, curriculum based learning all with a language rich literacy text to hook the children in. We also create a balanced amount of free play time to allow the children to practise and apply their knew knowledge, be creative, develop their social and language skills and work on building a community together.

In order for forest school to work successfully we aim to have our leader working with a group of no more than 15 children. If the number of children increases between 16-30 children then we ask that a teaching assistant and/or the class teacher comes out to join the session so that the quality of teaching isn't diluted and adult to child ratio is safe. Forest school can be for children as young as pre-school nursery age right through to young adults. A baseline assessment is carried out in the first few weeks up (to 6 week depending on the size of the group). The lessons are kept simple whilst we introduce the children to the woodland area, set rules and expectations and allow the children to initially mix with their peers and explore their surroundings. Towards the end of the baseline assessment the leader with have a clear idea of next steps to focus on for each child and can then plan to target groups of children at a time within the sessions.

Why take part in Forest School?

At Forest school we do not plan our lessons in the same way that a primary school teacher would. We do pick out an objective to influence our main activity for the session but the opportunities we provide for the children create incidental and 'in the moment' learning. In the sessions the children are always learning something new but without them even realising it. The children's needs come first and from there opportunities are given, catalysts are created and the result is enquiry based learning.

To some it may look like the children are having a nice time in the forest but there are many learning opportunities that are being created and so much of the curriculum is being covered without the children having to sit down in a formal lesson. Children have behavioural, emotional, physical mental and sensory needs which are just as important as their intellectual needs.

Here are all of the EYFS and National curriculum objectives that forest school teaching can help pupils to achieve.

National Curriculum Objectives

Maths

- Compare, describe and solve practical problems for lengths and heights
- Interpret and construct simple pictograms, tally charts, block diagrams and simple tables

Science

- asking simple questions and recognising that they can be answered in different ways
- observing closely, using simple equipment
- identifying and classifying
- using their observations and ideas to suggest answers to questions
- gathering and recording data to help in answering questions.
- identify and name a variety of common wild and garden plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees
- identify and describe the basic structure of a variety of common flowering plants, including trees.
- identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals
- identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores
- observe changes across the four seasons
- observe and describe weather associated with the seasons and how day length varies.
- identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats
- provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other
- identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitats, including microhabitats
- describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food.
- observe and describe how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants
- find out and describe how plants need water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy.

Art and Design

- to use a range of materials creatively to design and make products
- to use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination
- to develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space
- about the work of a range of artists, craft makers and designers, describing the differences and similarities between different practices and disciplines, and making links to their own work

Design and Technology

- select from and use a range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks [for example, cutting, shaping, joining and finishing]
- build structures, exploring how they can be made stronger, stiffer and more stable

Geography

- use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of their school and its grounds and the key human and physical features of its surrounding environment.

Physical Education

- master basic movements including running, jumping, throwing and catching, as well as developing balance, agility and co-ordination, and begin to apply these in a range of activities

Maths

- describe positions on a 2-D grid as coordinates in the first quadrant

Science

- identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers
- explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil, and room to grow) and how they vary from plant to plant
- investigate the way in which water is transported within plants
- explore the part that flowers play in the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination, seed formation and seed dispersal
- recognise that soils are made from rocks and organic matter.
- recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways
- explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment
- recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.
- give reasons for classifying plants and animals based on specific characteristics.
- recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents

Art and Design

- to improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials [for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay]

Design and Technology

- select from and use a wider range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks [for example, cutting, shaping, joining and finishing], accurately
- apply their understanding of how to strengthen, stiffen and reinforce more complex structures
- prepare and cook a variety of predominantly savoury dishes using a range of cooking techniques

Physical Education

- take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team

Key Stage 1 and 2 spoken language requirements

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others ☒ select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

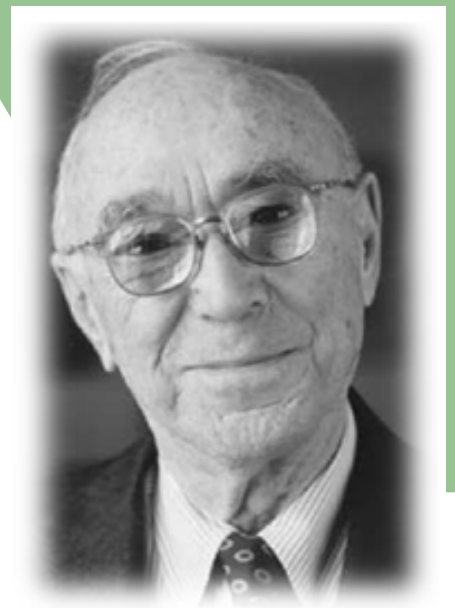
Who inspired me?

In my 12 years as a teacher you learn to discover what works for you in your role and what works for your school. It is very easy to stay safe and stick to ideas and routines that have been tried and tested time and time again. When I went on maternity leave with my second child I struggled to find a group which allowed me to bring along my first born, a little feisty two-year-old girl! I discovered a forest school group which I thought was a mum and baby group. When I was there I realised there were children ranging from 2-7 as some of the children were home schooled. When I asked the leader and the parents about the home schooling I couldn't believe how much of the national curriculum was covered through forest school.

Years later we had a forest school leader come into school to work with my class and from then I realised that it was something that I wanted to know more about. In my own time I have been reading up on child psychologists and looking back onto teaching and education theories to truly understand what children actually need. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs has helped me to realise what is important for children and that their own needs need to be met before they can access academic learning and perform well in this.



Being able to "go beyond the information" given to "figure things out" is one of the few untarnishable joys of life. One of the great triumphs of learning (and of teaching) is to get things organised in your head in a way that permits you to know more than you "ought" to.
Jerome Bruner



Jerome Bruner believed that enquiry based learning is the most effective method for ensuring that children make solid and secure learning. He believed that children should be given the opportunity to explore and investigate for themselves and that these discoveries will make learning long term.

Where does forest school take place?

Wildlings Forest School can come to work with pupils at your primary school if you have an outdoor space with trees or a woodland area. We bring all of our resources with us including a portable fire pit. All that we would ask for is that the children are suitably dressed waterproofs/wellies and that staffing/pupil ratio is suitable for the sessions. The forest school leader will come and visit your school prior to the sessions starting to create a phase 1 assessment where we observe and record the flora and fauna in your setting. We will share our own handbook with you, risk assessments will be amended to suit your woodland area and we will need to share policies together to ensure that they align.

When can I start?

Forest school can take place at any time of year! That is the beauty of it. As long as the children are dressed appropriately and the weather isn't extreme then the sessions can go ahead.

If you think that forest school might be something that you are interested in, then please email on the address below.



Wildlings Forest School

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