

ENHANCEMENT Forest School



Welcome to Forest School

Your child's Forest School is an environment that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired hands on experiences in a natural setting. Our children love to know more about our Wonderful World. As part of the Brighter Learning Approach, Forest School is the perfect place to use resources and sessions dedicated to becoming Nature Explorers and Planet Protectors.

What will my child learn in Forest School?

The children will be provided with opportunities to develop their health and fitness by being active learners in an outdoor environment. Rather than using classroom resources and equipment, children can use natural materials found in the woodland and enjoy activities such as collecting sticks and leaves, tying knots, making dens, handling tools, using twigs to write in the mud, jumping across stones and much more. In Forest School your child's social skills will flourish whilst they work alongside others to build dens, search for minibeasts and build friendships.



Dressing for Forest School

We ask for your child to be dressed in warm clothing and wellies. We will provide the children with puddle suits to wear outdoors.



Forest School Promise

We attend Forest School once or twice a week



The benefits of Forest School

Forest School provides an appreciation and understanding of the natural world, promoting outdoor activities and well-being:

- Multi-sensory experiences in the outdoors stimulate sensory development
- Early education about ecological systems and sustainable practices
- Opportunities for active play and exploration, promoting overall physical fitness.

What is the Forest School Approach?

Seen by some as an 'alternative' education model, the Forest School approach dates back to the 1990s, becoming apparent in the national curriculum during the 1970s. Taking inspiration from the Scandinavian practices in early education it was child-centred and based on outdoor play. The first applications in the UK sought after a holistic learning strategy in children that used their natural inquisitiveness to support development in a natural environment.

Forest School in Action

The approach of Forest School encourages freedom for children to explore using their imagination. A child could have read a story about magic and then this idea is being enhanced through foraging and finding the perfect wand in the form of a stick. The child then decorates their wand using leaves and twine, all positively contributing to their own learning. Other children get involved encouraging conversations and experiences to be shared amongst the group. This also allows the nursery team the opportunity to interact as required, such as linking the twine to knots for the group to learn.

Nature itself is a teacher, offering us seasons to plan sessions. This can include an awareness of the mammals we share the land with, such as rabbits, moles, deer, kites and other native birds - providing daily water for hedgehogs or creating fat balls to hang, bringing the birds into focus for the children to see. Being conscious of the environment and those we share it with is important for children and encourages making mindful choices which affect our world.

A fundamental attitude within the Forest School approach is risk taking whilst being closely observed and supported by adults. Fallen tree branches provide mini ecosystems for fungi and mini beasts, but also climbing frames. The free flow style in the woodland is hugely helpful in allowing the children to understand and experience their own capabilities. We look to provide an environment for children to feel comfortable to take risks. In some cases, the outcome results in a fall, this process contributes to learning how to tackle the risk next time and an understanding of how far they can push themselves in order to succeed.

How to support this approach at home

If you have a love for being outdoors, include your child/ren in the experience. Through a simple walk collecting leaves to building a bug hotel or using what you have foraged to create a family portrait; all enable quality time interacting with nature.

If food is a love in your household, take up gardening. The process of building and tending to a vegetable patch together is hugely beneficial in allowing some one-to-one time. It will encourage time spent outdoors, getting your hands dirty, and growing food to then prepare and share for supper. This is an entire cycle where children can see where food comes from and appreciate the time and effort in the process of tending to plants.

At the heart of our **Brighter Learning Approach** is our commitment to fortifying the foundations of lifelong learning. Your nursery offers focus on Forest School as part of an overall engaging curriculum instilling curiosity, creativity and well-being.