



Forest School – Intent, Implementation and Impact Statement

Forest School at Christ Church C of E Primary School is an opportunity for children to flourish and engage in the outdoor environment. The Forest School ethos promotes resilience, problem-solving and helps children to have hands-on learning, supporting their emotions, social and cognitive development.

Intent

At our school, the Forest School curriculum is an integral part of our whole-child approach to learning and development. It provides every child, from Nursery to Year 6, with opportunities to explore, discover, and learn within the natural environment through hands-on, practical experiences.

Our aims are to:

- Provide equitable access to high-quality outdoor learning for all pupils.
- Foster a lifelong connection with nature and a sense of environmental responsibility.
- Develop confidence, resilience, independence, and self-esteem through experiential learning.
- Encourage curiosity, problem-solving, teamwork, and creativity.
- Support emotional wellbeing and reflective thinking through nature-based experiences.
- Build year-on-year progression in outdoor and personal skills, ensuring continuity and development throughout each phase of schooling.

Implementation

Curriculum Structure

- Every pupil in **Nursery and Reception** participates in **weekly** sessions **all year** round.
- Every pupil from **Year 1 to Year 6** participates in a **six-week Forest School block each academic year**.
- Sessions are planned, delivered, and evaluated by qualified Forest School Leaders, supported by class staff to ensure safety, inclusion, and continuity.
- Each six-week block concludes with a fire and reflection session, providing an opportunity for celebration, sharing, and personal reflection.
- Children maintain a personal Forest School Scrapbook, which travels with them through school. This scrapbook captures their learning, reflections, and memories, providing a record of skill progression and personal development.



Teaching and Learning Approaches

- Sessions are a mixture of child-led and skills based allowing learners to explore, experiment, and take ownership of their learning within safe boundaries.
- Practitioners promote positive risk-taking, encouraging children to assess and manage challenges independently.
- The natural environment is used to promote cross-curricular links with science, geography, art, PSHE, and literacy.
- Reflection is embedded throughout, encouraging mindfulness, self-awareness, and goal setting.

Progression Overview

Early Years (Nursery & Reception)

- Exploration and sensory engagement with the natural environment.
- Learning to care for nature and living things.
- Developing independence and confidence in outdoor play.
- Introduction to simple tools and safety routines.
- Early teamwork, turn-taking, and sharing experiences.
- Recording experiences and feelings in the Forest Scrapbook through pictures

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)

- Building on curiosity through guided discovery and imaginative play.
- Developing fine and gross motor skills through natural material handling.
- Introduction to basic tool use (e.g., peelers, mallets) under supervision.
- Learning simple knots, shelters, and natural crafts.
- Understanding habitats and caring for the environment.
- Reflecting on learning and feelings through guided journaling in the scrapbook.

Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4)

- Greater independence in planning and leading small activities.
- Developing teamwork and problem-solving skills through group challenges.
- Using tools safely and responsibly (e.g., loppers, saws, and mallets).
- Building and maintaining small shelters and fires under supervision.
- Beginning to record reflections independently in the scrapbook.
- Introducing leadership roles within group tasks.



Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 & 6)

- Applying cumulative skills to plan and lead activities for younger peers.
- Taking greater responsibility for safety, organisation, and decision-making.
- Developing advanced outdoor skills – fire lighting, whittling, shelter building, knot tying, and environmental projects.
- Deepening ecological understanding, sustainability, and conservation awareness.
- Reflecting on personal growth, teamwork, and skill mastery in the scrapbook.
- Preparing to transfer Forest School skills – resilience, collaboration, and reflection – into wider life contexts.

Assessment and Monitoring

- Ongoing formative assessment through observation, discussion, and reflection.
- Evidence of learning and progression captured in individual Forest Scrapbooks.
- Practitioners maintain records of skill development, engagement, and wellbeing impact.
- Pupil voice and reflection inform future planning and curriculum development.

Impact

Our Forest School curriculum has a measurable and lasting impact on pupils' development:

Personal Development

- Pupils demonstrate increased self-confidence, independence, and resilience.
- Emotional regulation, wellbeing, and sense of belonging are strengthened.

Social Development

- Improved teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- Positive relationships and empathy developed through shared outdoor experiences.

Academic Enrichment

- Enhanced engagement and curiosity that transfer into classroom learning.
- Improved concentration, motivation, creativity and reflection.



Environmental Understanding

- A developing sense of care and respect for nature and sustainability.
- Awareness of ecological systems and human responsibility for the environment.

Progression and Legacy

- Forest Scrapbooks show clear skill development and reflective growth from Nursery to Year 6.
- Pupils leave Christ Church C of E Primary School with a strong sense of personal achievement and lifelong outdoor learning skills.

Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Forest School Leader and Senior Leadership Team to ensure it continues to meet the needs of all learners and reflects best practice in outdoor education.