

More detailed information is available in the Forest Schools' Handbook and details specific to Benthall Primary School will be sent in a letter closer to the dates. In the mean time I hope this provides a good introduction to this exciting aspect of work.



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Forest Schools

2018



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'Forest Schools' (FS), as a part of the provision in education has been going on since the mid 1990's. Hundreds of settings have been doing similar things in woods, forests, parks and other outdoor environments. This work is supported by the Forest School Association and a number of other local groups all offering advice, support and courses for Forest School practitioners.

What is Forest Schools?

'Forest School has been referred to as an "inspirational philosophy which aims to support all learners to achieve and develop confidence and self esteem." It started in Denmark and is used across Scandinavia as part of a broad curriculum on offer to children.

Forest Schools' Main Principles:

- Long-term, frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world
- The aim is for holistic development which fosters resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. The process of how things are done and not the activity is seen as key.
- Learners have a chance to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- A learner-centered approach aims to create a community for development and learning that is rooted in respect and equality, whereby mutual decision making and reflection time is a key aspect.
- Participants are viewed as equal, unique and valuable and competent to explore & discover.

A central idea of holistic development calls for the developing of all aspects of a child's learning - cognitive, moral, emotional, physical, psychological and even spiritual. Each aspect is seen as important in supporting overall learning and eventual success in areas such as language and communication, personal and social, problem solving and numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Research has shown that the following types of positive outcomes can be seen in children:

- showing more independence
- increased awareness of consequences
- language development being prompted by the sensory experience of being in the forest
- concentration increasing
- stamina as well as gross and fine motor skills improving
- interest and respect for the natural world improving

