

*Forest School*  
*at*  
*Loxwood Primary School*



*Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a natural environment with trees.*

(Forest Schools Association)

## Forest School at Loxwood

Loxwood Primary School is very fortunate to have really fantastic school grounds. Some schools (not too far away) have only tarmac however, at Loxwood, we have a large playground, field, Nature Garden including a pond, hedgerows, vegetables patches, trees and the infamous Humpty.

This environment lends itself perfectly to a Forest School programme and all children will have the opportunity to experience Forest Schools from Reception to Year 6.

The philosophy behind Forest School is for all children to be viewed as:

- equal, unique and valuable
- competent to explore and discover
- entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge
- entitled to choose and to initiate and drive their own learning and development
- entitled to experience regular success
- entitled to develop self –awareness- understanding how they, their peers and the environment impacts on themselves and others.
- entitled to develop self-motivation-understanding how to channel emotions to achieve set goals
- entitled to develop social skills- understanding how to be inspirational, passionate, caring, interested and kind.
- entitled to develop empathy- understanding how to view the world from another’s perspective

These areas of learning are vital and all compliment the values and skills that we celebrate at Loxwood.



## Links to Other Learning

When the children are in Forest School the variety of activities will include;

- Developing a deep and lifelong respect that occurs when children are exposed to the awe and wonder of the natural world.
- Learning about the British seasons and native flora and fauna.
- Learning about different British habitats, bio diversity and the importance of balance.
- Understanding the impact that we can have on our environment, locally and globally.

Some of the activities the children may participate in are 'higher-risk activities' (such as campfire cooking or tool use). However, these activities are not available to the children until certain behaviours and boundaries are established. Children are encouraged and supported in recognising and managing risk for themselves, through real life situations and experiences.



Activities may include;

Using simple tools for different purposes, e.g. bow saws, palm drills, knives and nets

Pond dipping

Fire building and starting

Shelter building

Natural art activities ( sculpture, weaving and painting)

Exploring, nature watching and bug hunting

Practical woodland skills (eg. Willow weaving, net making)

Time to be quiet, reflect or talk

Growing, tending and eating vegetables and cooking



All these develop key personal skills including collaboration, team work, patience, resilience, respect, independence and investigation. These values and skills feed back into every aspect of the children's life and learning at the school and assist them in fulfilling their potential.

In Forest School, the child is the teacher and learner, the adults are the observers and facilitators and the environment is the cohesive whole that offers the fabric of the learning and teaching to all involved.

### Links to the National Curriculum

Although Forest School is a programme of enrichment there are many opportunities to link the learning with subjects within the National Curriculum including Science, PSHE and Design Technology.

During Forest School Sessions there are unique opportunities for teachers to learn more about the whole child; to observe the children outside and to extend the learning experience back in the classroom in Reading, Writing and Maths.



### Extensions to Forest School

To continue the children's learning and understanding of different environments the Year 5 and 6

children will be able to extend their Forest School learning by visiting the local woodland in the summer term.

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The Forestry Commission Completed evaluations on Forest School and found the following

### Key findings

The evaluation suggests Forest Schools make a difference in the following ways:

- **Confidence:** children had the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence
- **Social skills:** children gained increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play
- **Communication:** language development was prompted by the children's sensory experiences
- **Motivation:** the woodland tended to fascinate the children and they developed a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time
- **Physical skills:** these improvements were characterised by the development of physical stamina and gross and fine motor skills
- **Knowledge and understanding:** the children developed an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for the environment

([www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk))