The Forest School Curriculum

Forest School is predominantly child led and this remains the basis of every session, with children being able to choose and lead their activities. Teaching holistically is of paramount importance with the sessions facilitating play and individual learning, building on resilience, confidence and improving self-esteem as well as gaining a further knowledge and appreciation of our natural environment. Throughout their time at Forest School, children will also have many opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in woodcraft, fire lighting, food preparation and cooking. They will have the chance to create a range of artwork using a variety of media and techniques.

Years 1 and 2

In Key Stage 1 children will have opportunities to learn to safely use saws, loppers and secateurs. They will be taught to peel sticks safely using potato peelers. Pupils will learn our fire safety rules, will know the need for completely extinguishing a fire and will be able to collect appropriate dry sticks for the fire. They will learn to produce sparks with a fire steel and will help to prepare food to cook over the campfire. Pupils will learn to identify some of the flora, insects and pond creatures that they find on site. They will learn to respect nature and to 'do no harm'. During their sessions, the classes will observe frogspawn turning into tadpoles and will notice the changes as the tadpoles develop. KS1 children will learn to tie an overhand knot, a half hitch and a shoelace bow. They will have opportunities to thread a wood cookie and to wrap a stick.

Years 3 and 4

In Lower Key Stage 2 children will build on the knowledge and skills gained in Key Stage 1. They will have opportunities to learn to use a knife safely to point the end of a stick and to flatten one side. They will use a flexible natural material to make a ring/ hoop and will create other woodcrafts with full adult

support. The classes will learn to light cotton wool with a fire steel, collect, grade and safely add sticks to the fire and to use silver birch and other tinder extenders. Children will prepare and cook food over the fire with increasing independence. They will experience Forest School in the winter and early spring and will learn to identify a small number of trees by looking at their bare winter twigs. They will notice the changes on site as spring takes hold. Pupils will learn how to tie a timber hitch and a clove hitch and will work to use these independently in their den building and to create a rope bridge. Pupils will learn to square lash two sticks together and to coil a rope.

Years 5 and 6

Children in Upper Key Stage 2 will continue to develop their knowledge and skills in all areas. They will have the opportunity to learn and demonstrate a stop cut and to use a knife to carve simple objects such as a mallet or a wooden knife. They will use tools with increasing independence. Pupils will learn to build fires in different ways, including a tipi or upside down fire. They will have opportunities to lay and maintain a fire independently, create a tinder bundle and produce a char cloth, using these items to create fire. Children in Year 6 will have also the opportunity to try out using a bow drill to create a spark. Pupils will prepare and cook a variety of foods over the campfire independently. They will continue to build on their nature knowledge, learning to identify male and female smooth newts as well as a range of trees, insects and other pond creatures. Pupils will learn to tie a tipi lashing and to braid cord with a partner to create a friendship bracelet. They will have the opportunity to learn to tie a bowline knot and to erect a rope swing.