

Learning can be linked to the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage areas of learning.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Build self-esteem, independence, co-operation, team work and self-confidence, Respect for living things. Sharing experiences with peers and adults. Health and Safety.

Communication, Language & Literacy

Listening to instructions. New vocabulary, story telling, songs and rhymes. Sharing ideas, discussing findings. Mark making in the mud. Keeping a diary.

Mathematical Development

Counting natural objects, pattern making, sorting shapes, colour & sizes. Measuring, problem solving and calculating.

Knowledge & Understanding of the World

Investigating the natural flora & fauna in the woodland. Predicting and experimenting. Growing things. Investigating the weather. Using senses to learn about natural materials and textures.

Creative Development

Music making, picture making with natural materials. Mud painting. Role play & imaginative play. Dancing.

Physical Development

Using tools. negotiating natural objects. Spatial awareness. Balancing. Games & exercise outside.

Anne Simpson Forest School Leader.



Stannington Infant School Forest School



Learning & Fun in a Safe Natural Environment

What are Forest Schools?

Forest Schools are becoming widespread across Britain as teachers and practitioners see for themselves the impact it is having on children who have been involved in Forest School settings. Evidence has been compiled demonstrating positive outcomes on children relating to an increase in self-esteem, an ability to work with others, learning about the outdoors, developing a sense of ownership of the environment, providing motivation to learn and increasing knowledge and skills.

At Stannington Infant School as part of our development of Forest School each class will visit our safe outdoor site regularly (in blocks of six weeks). The children will be supervised by qualified Forest School leaders and staff. The children will learn through hands on experiences, exploration and play. Our activities are linked to the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage six areas of learning. Research has found that Forest School has a positive effect on many of the children's learning, personal development, behaviour and self-confidence.

Other important Forest School practices are :-

The regular use of a woodland setting.

A high ratio of adults to children.

Learning linked to the National Curriculum.

The freedom to explore using multiple senses.

Regular contact for the children with Forest School over a significant period.

Forest school gives learners the opportunity to use their preferred learning style. Different children need different experiences if they are to learn efficiently.

Forest Schools flexible approach to learning accommodates a range of learning styles such as:-

Visual - learn through seeing.

Auditory - learn by listening.

Kinaesthetic - learn through moving, doing, and touching.

Schemas.

Something else that comes out of the research is that Forest School can contribute to four of the five outcomes that are part of the Every Child Matters Framework (DfES 2004.) identified by children as key to well-being, these are :-

- 1 Be healthy.
- 2 Stay safe.
- 3 Enjoy and achieve.
- 4 Make a positive contribution.

From all the research I have read they all come to the same conclusions. The Forest School woodland setting is unique and important. It gives children freedom and flexibility to follow child-led learning and other innovative approaches to learning taking place in a low-risk environment.

Children are so enthused about their Forest School experiences they take it back home with them and in many cases take their parents back to the woods at weekends to show them what they have been doing.

All of these benefits have an effect on children's learning, self-esteem, independence, self-confidence and health, setting them up for life long learning.

All children should have the opportunity to experience Forest School! (and adults.)