



Intent – We aim to move children on from Chirton..



Having learned a set of life long, practical skills from pre-school to Year 6



Environmentally aware through weekly sessions



All learners have the opportunity for child-led learning with small achievable tasks



Resilient, resourceful, responsible, respectful, reflective and with excellent relationship skills



Taking with them practical knowledge of the curriculum



Implementation – How do we achieve our aims?

Planning

Weekly sessions throughout the whole year are carefully planned for each pupil and these sessions are closely linked to the curriculum learning that is taking place in the classroom. Teachers lead the sessions ensuring that there is a feedback/feed forward approach to the learning ensuring depth, breadth and richness of the curriculum learning and links between what is being delivered in the classroom and the more practical elements in the outdoors. Forest School planning is flexible to take account of children's interests and learning opportunities which arise from unforeseen circumstances. Many sessions have child-led elements to the learning.

High Ratio

We offer a high ratio of adults to pupils allowing opportunities for learning new skills such as sawing, rope tying and fire lighting in a safe and constructive environment with adults to support when necessary. Adults are, however, trained in a "hands off" approach to allow children the freedom to explore independently in a safe, secure setting.

Communication

The sensory experiences provided by Forest School activities helps promote language development. Improving communication skills has a positive effect on a child's self-esteem and is a crucial part of their development. Forest school sessions are also a good opportunities for staff and pupils to get to know each other better through casual conversations as they walk and work together.

The 6Rs

The 6Rs (Relationships, Resilience, Resourcefulness, Respect, Responsibility and Reflectiveness) underpin our forest school pedagogy when pupils are challenged to solve problems, develop their creativity and interests. Activities such as sharing tools and participating in play help teach the children to work together as a group which strengthens their bonds and social ties. It is also vital that pupils learn when it important to work alone too. Reflection is an integral part of Forest School learning. Going out in all weathers develops resilience as does the perseverance of working through a practical task such as den building where failure may occur. Use of materials gathered in the woods encourages resourcefulness. Respect and responsibility are taught from the earliest age where children learn about looking after the environment, others, themselves and their belongings.

Access for all

Pupils are given freedom, time and space to achieve their learning in their own way. Tasks given are small and achievable but with elements of challenge to stretch the more confident. These small achievable tasks mean that all can access an aspect of the learning and good self-esteem is quickly established. This gives pupils who do not always find class-based learning the opportunity to access the curriculum in a more practical, independent way, feeling good about their achievements. This often has a positive effect on behaviour which transfers back into the classroom setting too.



Implementation (continued)

Motivation and concentration

Forest School sessions are fun! It is educational whilst also allowing children to play, explore and discover. High levels of interest lead to high levels of attention. Spending time in the woodland is exciting for a child and our planning is varied and child-centred to encourage high levels of participation. Many children who do not engage in the classroom have greater motivation and concentration in an outdoor setting. Resourcing is key to ensure children are warm and dry.

Physical skills

The stamina of our children is amazing as a result of regular exposure to the outdoors and walking to the woods once a week. From the youngest pre-school child at 2 years old, there is an expectation that they will be able to walk the 1km to the woods and they do! Pupils climb trees, balance on logs, move heavy objects such as pallets and as a result improve their gross and fine motor skills in the process.

Knowledge and Understanding

Pupils develop an interest in the great outdoors and a variety of reference materials are available to them. Because Forest School sessions take place throughout the year for every pupil, they become familiar with the changing seasons, changes to the environment and the cycle of life. Pupils are encouraged to develop a relationship with the natural world and observations are celebrated and explored further. There are regular lessons looking at specific aspects of the environment planned in but it is often the spontaneous appearance of a fungi or a fallen tree that engages the children's interest most and deepens their understanding further.

Progression

A detailed progression document from pre-school to Year 6 is used by all teachers and this informs their planning. This document outlines the areas of Outdoor Learning pupils will be exposed to by end of pre-school, end of KS1 and end of KS2. This document is progressive and covers the following areas:

Rules, safety awareness, tools, fire lighting, food, knots, flora and fauna knowledge, DT/Art

Health & Well-Being

Outdoor learning has huge health benefits from stamina to exposure to fresh air and Chirton pupils are encouraged to embrace the outdoors whenever possible. There are various places in the school grounds where children can access quiet, reflective, contemplative and spiritual areas to help them with their well-being. Worship is held outdoors in our Classroom of Wonder and the singing that takes place there is inspirational. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their own needs and start to take charge of their own well-being, seeking time out in these areas when life becomes too stressful.

The wider community

Forest school isn't just beneficial to the children. It is beneficial to the adults too. Observing pupils in a different setting allows staff to gain a new perspective and understanding of their class dynamics better. When children fully engage with Forest School learning they will take their experiences home to share with family and friends. This will often encourage families to volunteer, join us for our outdoor events and visit their own local woodlands more frequently, thus developing pupils who become outdoor learners for life.



Impact: How will we know we have achieved our aims?



Planning is linked to the curriculum, offering pupils opportunities to reinforce concepts in a practical way.



Forest school leaders are flexible in their planning to take into account pupils' interests and spontaneous learning.



Pupils are knowledgeable about their local environment and the wider implications of climate change



Pupils' health and well-being is good as a result of the outdoor learning opportunities



Pupils' confidence, resilience, relationships and independence is good as a result of meeting challenges in Forest School sessions