

Forest School at Acton Primary

Introduction

At Acton Park Primary, we have worked hard to create a Forest School environment that will cater for all of our children's needs. We are also very fortunate that our school borders onto Acton Park which allows for additional visits and activities.

The ethos of Forest School stems from Denmark, when in 1993 a group of students from the UK visited and observed the positive impacts Forest School had on the children attending. Since then, the recognition of Forest Schools and the important contribution they can bring to a child's learning and development has rapidly grown.

Forest School provides regular opportunities for children to work within a woodland environment.

The sessions are carefully structured and support is provided by qualified leaders, but essentially they are led by the learners themselves, allowing them to explore and expand upon current interest. This approach allows a child to take forward their learning in a way that is suited to them.

Key aims

- ◆ To nurture self esteem.
- ◆ To feed children's imaginations.
- ◆ To enhance children's communication skills and ability to work as a team.
- ◆ To equip children with love and respect for the outdoors.
- ◆ To provide real life opportunities and create independent learners.
- ◆ To teach resilience and risk taking.
- ◆ To develop healthier bodies and minds.

A typical Forest School session

A session will last for approximately 2 hours.

We walk up to Forest School and begin the session at the camp circle. We may share news, exciting developments at Forest School, a story, or play a game. A theme for the session may be introduced to the children before they set off to explore.

The children are then free to explore Forest School and follow their current interests. Adults are there to support the children, observing their interests and scaffolding their learning.

We tidy up the site and wash our hands, before heading back to camp circle for a drink and a snack. If it is camp fire week, we can enjoy some tasty food. The children also share what they have been doing during the session and what they would like to do next, this helps us plan activities for the following week.

Risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed for all activities. Mrs Crewe closely monitors the weather and while we aim to go out in all seasons, if a weather warning is in place we may take activities indoors for the safety of the group.

Awards

We have recently been awarded the *Gold Green Tree Award* from the Woodland Trust. We carried out lots of fun activities to develop Forest School and our knowledge of nature, planting trees, building bug homes and learning about the wildlife that inhabits Forest School.

This year we will be working towards the RSPB Wild Challenge Award.