

Rationale, benefits and development of Forest School.

Our Forest School at Aycliffe Drive was developed almost twenty years ago. We have a fully trained Forest School Leader who works exclusively the forest. A few years after Forest School was embedded an expert worked with the children to build a full-sized round house which is used for story reading and history. Later still we had our own built and this enhances the children learning as well as awe and wonder.

A second member of staff works for several sessions each week alongside the forest school leader bringing her own unique enthusiasm and skill.

Our nursery, reception and key stage 1 pupils attend fortnightly. Some of the benefits that we have found are increased self-esteem, self-confidence and self-belief, the development of communication skills (some children who are reluctant to speak in class will flourish in the forest school setting) encourages exploration of social relationships. Team building skills, personal responsibility, independence and self-regulation skills, problem solving skills, evaluation of risk, improved relationships with the outdoors, respect and pride in the natural environment.

It also increased oxygen to the brain, increases vitamin D production, gross motor skills and physical exercise, reduces stress and improves behaviour.

USkills	Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Shelter Building	Learn to carry sticks safely Build with support a small house/ shelter for small animals/fairy house	Learn to carry sticks safely Build a small house/ shelter for a toy using natural objects	To build a shelter for birds with straw, clay and natural materials.	To be able to explain how to build hedgehog shelter using weaving skills with natural materials found in the woods.	Create a tarpaulin shelter with support. Work successfully as a group, having considered and evaluated each member's contribution	Design and build varying sizes shelters using tarpaulin and materials found in the woodland with support. Work successfully as a group having considered and evaluated each members' contribution. Compare and evaluate the	Create a tipi shelter with camouflage. Work successfully as a group having considered and evaluated each members' contribution. Compare and evaluate the shelters in relation to their sturdiness, durability,	Shelter building challenge working in teams the children plan, build and review their shelters (recap the different ways to build shelters) Work successfully as a group having considered and evaluated each

						shelters in relation to their sturdiness, durability, weatherproofing, and whether it is fit for purpose.	weatherproofing, and whether it is fit for purpose.	members' contribution. Compare and evaluate the shelters in relation to their sturdiness, durability, weatherproofing, and whether it is fit for purpose.
Geographical Skills and Navigation (Link with our PE curriculum)	Follow rules and boundaries particularly in fire circle. Promote free exploration	Follow rules and boundaries particularly in fire circle. Promote free exploration	Use simple compass directions (NSEW) Use directional language (Near, far, left right) Describe the location of features and routes on a map. Recognise landmarks and human and physical features. Devise a simple map	Use simple compass directions (NSEW) Use directional language (Near, far, left right) Describe the location of features and routes on a map. Recognise landmarks and human and physical features. Devise a simple map	Demonstrate understanding of the basic concept of a map. Navigate your way round a simple orienteering course. Understand the term orientate or setting a map. Complete a simple star orienteering activity in pairs/ group	Recognise features and symbols on a map. Understand how to orientate the map. Demonstrate an understanding of a line orienteering course (short loop) and star orienteering. Build trust with a partner and work together when orienteering. (Link with orienteering in	Use maps grid references. Develop expertise in the orienteering skills of orientating a map, following a course, and recognition of relevant map symbols. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between pacing and distance. Plan a short loop course for	Use maps grid references. Develop expertise in the orienteering skills of orientating a map, following a course, and recognition of relevant map symbols. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between pacing and distance. Plan a short loop course for

			and use basic symbols as a key (covered as part of geography but using the outside area).	and use basic symbols as a key (covered as part of geography but using the outside area	Record information accurately and neatly. Follow rules when completing a star orienteering activity. (Link with problem solving in PE curriculum but using outside areas)	PE curriculum but using outside areas)	another pair to follow. Improve confidence in map reading and the transfer of information from map to ground. Apply skills of orienteering including thumbing the map, route choice and symbol recognition. Plan the most efficient route so that the course is completed in the quickest time. Complete the orienteering course in the fastest time possible competing against others. Treasure hunt with clues	another pair to follow. Improve confidence in map reading and the transfer of information from map to ground. Apply skills of orienteering including thumbing the map, route choice and symbol recognition. Plan the most efficient route so that the course is completed in the quickest time. Complete the orienteering course in the fastest time possible competing against others. Treasure hunt with clues
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							linking prior knowledge linking habitats and trees and school knowledge.	linking prior knowledge linking habitats and trees and school knowledge.
Play/ Exploring	Introduction to rules and boundaries. Promotion of free exploration. Promotion of independent learning opportunities / skills Plant flowers, veg and herbs and watch them grow. Using the environment to act out the stories of, going on a bear hunt, Gruffolo and Goldilock and the three bears.	Introduction to rules and boundaries. Promotion of free exploration. Promotion of independent learning opportunities / skills Plant flowers, veg and herbs and watch them grow. Using the environment to act out the stories of, going on a bear hunt, Gruffolo and Goldilock and the three bears and stickman.	Reinforce rules and boundaries. Travel safely over the terrain in Forest School. Carry sticks safely. Work in a team to cooperate and communicate clearly. Discover what is in our pond by pond dipping and naming them. Hunt for mini beasts and teach classification of mini beasts. Build a den.	Reinforce rules and boundaries. Move logs safely with support first. Become a nature detective. Get soaking wet in the rain. Bird watching Learn the names of the trees and birds in forest school through the seasons, hunt for mini beast in the woods and pong area and independent classification encouraged.	Take part in outdoor challenges on own and in a team. Make something out of wood. Cook outdoors. Use trim trail, develop the identification of trees through the seasons. Discover what is in our pond by pond dipping and naming them. Hunt for mini beasts and encourage independent classification	Take part in outdoor challenges on own and in a team. Make something out of wood. Cook outdoors. Use trim trail, develop the identification of trees through the seasons. Discover what is in our pond by pond dipping and naming them. Hunt for mini beasts and encourage independent classification of mini beasts found.	Undirected time to create their own games, Create story scenario about one part of the wood using one object that had been found.	Undirected time to create their own games, Create story scenario about one part of the wood using one object that had been found. Walk to Gadebridge Park to river dip to observe the different mini beast in the river and pond habitats

			Learn the names of the trees in forest school. Using the environment to act out the stories of, going on a bear hunt, Gruffolo and Goldilock and the three bears and stickman.	Using the environment to act out the stories of, going on a bear hunt, Gruffolo and Goldilock and the three bears and stickman.	of mini beasts found.			
Using Tools	Introduction to tools, peelers, hammers, mallets, trowels, forks.	Introduction to tools, peelers, hammers, mallets, trowels, forks.	Continuation of the use of basic tools Cutting discs. Elder necklaces and wand making.	Continuation of the use of basic tools, larger ropes and independent cutting of string. Cutting discs. Elder necklaces and wand making	In KS2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages. Covered in DT junior hacksaws, clamps, hot	In KS2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages. Loppers, secateurs, knives for whittling. Covered in DT junior hacksaws, clamps, hot glue gun, hole punch.	In KS2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages. However by Year 5 children are using a variety of tools for DT e.g. Saws and whittling knives for whittling	In KS2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages. However by Year 5 children are using a variety of tools for DT e.g. Saws and whittling knives for whittling

					glue gun, hole punch	Teach the children skills of fastening wood together to make a structure.	sticks etc. (under supervision) Build successfully a floating raft, puppets promoting team building.	sticks etc. (under supervision) Build successfully a floating raft, puppets promoting team building. Make stinging nettle string.
Knots	Tying shoe laces in class	Tying shoe laces in class	Introduction to basic knots make a stick and lead dog	More sophisticated use of knots for attaching to structures for weaving.	More sophisticated use of knots Square lashing to make a frame	More sophisticated use of knots for attaching to structures and trees. Independent use of lashing techniques for weaving.	Shelter hitches and knots More complex knots and selecting the correct knot for a job.	Shelter hitches and knots More complex knots and selecting the correct knot for a job.
Using Fire For Cooking	Observe and talk about fire lighting. Safety procedures in the fire circle. Eat roasted marshmallows	Observe and talk about fire lighting. Safety procedures in the fire circle. Eat roasted marshmallows	Be safe around a fire. Gather fuel for the fire. Eat roast marshmallows. Burn Great Fire of London (alternate years) reversible and	Experience using fire strikers to spark a flame. Eat roast marshmallows Burn Great Fire of London, reversible	Tin foil tray fire, using kindling and materials found around forest school. Using flint and steel to ignite fire. Charcoal making for use in art.	Tin foil tray fire, using kindling and materials found around forest school. Using flint and steel to ignite fire. Charcoal making for use in art	Cook on a camp fire. Fire safety	Prepare and light a campfire with supervision. Fire safety

			irreversible changes when food is heated	and irreversible changes when food is heated (alternate years) Fire safety in the fire circle.				
Seasons	The outdoor classroom has many seasonal photos. Forest School teachers begin exposure to the seasons with a short lesson. Then children move into the Forest and observe over the year the changing seasons by looking at trees, plants, flowers , the pond, weather etc.	The outdoor classroom has many seasonal photos. Forest School teachers begin exposure to the seasons with a short lesson. Then children move into the Forest and observe over the year the changing seasons by looking at trees, plants, flowers , the pond, weather etc.	Children look at how the length of days change with the seasons. Look and discuss seasons. changes to the trees on the school grounds, looking at beds, leaves and flowers	Children look at how the length of days change with the seasons. Look and discuss seasons. changes to the trees on the school grounds, looking at beds, leaves and flowers				

	Make wind catchers	Make wind catchers.						
Art	Tree Sprits	Tree sprits	Outdoor art using natural materials found in the woods.	Outdoor art using natural materials found in the woods.	Observational drawings	Observational drawings	Observational drawings using charcoal and pencils	Observational drawings using charcoal and pencils

Key questions that will be used in every year group:

Which season are we in? How do you know?

What happens in spring/summer/ autumn/ winter?

What happens to the trees in different seasons?

What do the birds do in different seasons?

What is the weather like today?

How do you know what type of mini beast it is?

How do you know it is an insect?

Is a spider an insect?

How many types of mini beast can you name?

What do they need in their habitat?

Safety

Which plants are poisonous?

Which plants sting?

How should we behave around a fire?

How should I carry and use tools safely?