

Highwood Primary School

Forest School

What is a Forest School?

"Forest School is an inspirational process that offers children and young people opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland environment." *National definition: by Forest School (England) Network*



At Highwood, Forest school takes place nearly every week for all children. The older children (years 4 to 6) use the local forest whilst our younger children use the wooded area in the school grounds.

How does our Forest School benefit our pupils?

Our Forest School supports your child's emotional wellbeing, as well as providing additional opportunities for learning new skills and links to our taught curriculum

Emotional well-being has been described as 'a holistic, subjective state which is present when a range of feelings, among them energy, confidence, openness, enjoyment, happiness, calm, and caring, are combined and balanced.'



Other words are used to describe the concept, such as

- emotional literacy,

- emotional intelligence and
- social and emotional competence.

Schools have a direct influence on the emotional health of their pupils and staff; and that this, in turn, has an impact on academic and other achievement.

Studies have shown, “children who participate in such programmes (as forest school) develop self-esteem, confidence and good social skills through positive experiences and self-directed learning.” Adam Dove, 2015

In Forest School, there are no specific rules to be followed, only safety elements that one should be aware of. Children learn to take calculated and supported risks appropriate to themselves and the environment, work together, help each other and create new adventures using their imagination.



Our Forest School is learner-centred, allowing us to respond to the needs and interests of our pupils. Some of the skills/activities we take part in include:

- using rope swing
- climbing trees
- building dens/shelters with various equipment
- digging
- mud kitchen
- building fires
- cooking over an open fire
- knot tying
- whittling using knives
- bug hunting

- tree identification
- outdoor art (using items found in the forest)
- bird and animal watching
- outdoor team challenges using items found in the forest (tallest tower, support a bag, etc)



Throughout our time in the forest, the staff build positive relationships with their pupils alongside the pupils develop positive relationships between themselves and the natural world. We also strive to develop pupils resilience as well as teamwork skills such as cooperation and empathy.