



# Forest School Curriculum at Barrow CE Primary School



## Forest School Intent

**Forest School ethos:** 'Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term programme that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.'

(ForestSchoolassociation.org)

Forest School at Barrow CE Primary aims to provide learners with a holistic and nurturing experience. All sessions are led by the learner's needs - developing the 'whole learner' in line with the changing seasons. Each experience provides new opportunities that allow the learner to discover and explore in a natural setting.

The time and space given to the learner to explore and engage with the natural environment will support them to develop socially, emotional, physically, and spiritually whilst providing opportunities to develop new practical skills. Working alongside nature provides children with a love, respect, and deeper understanding of the natural environment as they explore the meaning of ecology, sustainability, forest management and conservation. This in turn, will arm them with a strong sense of self and well-being as they embark on their journey into adulthood

## Forest School Implementation

The Forest School ethos is to develop the 'whole learner or child,' to do this the Forest School approach focuses on holistically developing five main areas of an individual:

empathy social skills

self-awareness,

ability to self- motivate

ability to regulate emotions

Each session is led by needs of the learners which are observed by the Forest Leader. Subsequent lessons will be planned (taking a holistic or practical approach) based on these needs to best support the children to develop their skills accordingly. Learners are given time and space to achieve their objectives in a natural setting allowing them to accomplish and make progress in their own time which is unique to the individual.

As learners work with and amongst nature, part of the Forest School approach is to develop their understanding of nature itself. Where opportunities arise, the Forest School leader will develop the learner's understanding of the environment and will focus on topics such as ecology, sustainability, conservation and forest management to build on their understanding of the environment in which they are learning.

Practical skills also play a fundamental role in the Forest School approach, such as den building, tying knots, constructing shelters, making fires and tools use. These tasks allow the learner new and exciting opportunities to build their confidence and achieve. As these activities involve risk, it helps an individual to grow by teaching them how to manage the risk allowing the learner to self-regulate and consequently grow in confidence.

An important approach in Forest Schools is to encourage the learner to review and reflect on their experiences. This reflection engages the learner in metacognition - 'thinking about thinking.' By developing reflection strategies for children, we allow them to understand a process. Understanding the 'why' helps the learner to develop their knowledge and skills which acts as a platform for future development by gaining an awareness and understanding. Helping the learner to connect to their thought process allows the individual to develop their self-awareness, confidence and communication skills.

Overall, Forest School sessions aim to be fun, engaging and offer new experiences to the learner, enabling them to achieve and develop the 'whole self' under the five areas that help to holistically develop an individual.

The six principles (in brief) of Forest School are:

1. Long term, regular sessions
2. Woodland setting
3. Holistic development
4. Supported risk taking
5. Qualified practitioner led
6. Learner-centred

Whilst we acknowledge the importance of a 'pure' Forest School approach based on the above six principles, we are also keen to integrate and enhance the classroom curriculum into the

outdoor environment. We therefore look to use Forest School methodology as part of a blended outdoor learning process, providing all learners with the opportunity to develop their learning and skills.

## Forest School Impact

Forest School sessions will make a positive impact on the learners 'whole self.' The Forest School leader should see individuals grow in confidence, self-regulate their emotions and be able to reflect and recognise their achievements. The learner should develop their empathy skills by responding appropriately to the needs of their group and people's emotions. Learners should also develop their social skills and confidence showing an ability to interact with their group within different situations.

The learners will also be able to use a variety of tools and tie knots to make a variety of products (age/learner appropriate). The learner should be able to use tools appropriately, accurately, and safely to produce a product. The learner will be able to tie and select knots that are appropriate for use within a given task.

The learner will develop their understanding of fire safety and carrying out fire safety procedures to eventually lighting a campfire themselves with supervision.

They will be given opportunities to develop their physical abilities through play and risk and develop their fine motor skills through various Forest School activities. The unpredictable nature of a natural setting will allow children to assess the risks and solve problems immediately for them to confidently play and explore in the Forest School area.

The 'learner' in the Forest Schools approach refers to all and with the belief that everyone is entitled to achieve and develop. The approach is designed for all ages and abilities. The sessions aim to provide equal opportunities for all within a safe and nurturing environment. The Forest School Sessions carried out at Barrow CE Primary aim to provide a unique learning experience and give learners new and exciting opportunities to achieve in a natural setting that differ from their mainstream education.

# Forest School Curriculum and Skills Progression

Note – Although this is split into year group, the Forest School ethos is about stage not age progress, about children making independent activity choices and does not necessarily tie in with a strict year group progress template. This should therefore be seen as a possible progression of skills and of introduction to different tools, ideas and resources rather than an expected and measured skill set.

Rules of Forest School – Look after: 1. yourself; 2. each other; 3. the forest.

Skills	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
<b>Safety &amp; Risk assessment</b>	This skill area is threaded throughout the whole Forest School curriculum as per Forest School principle 4 – "Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves."						
	Know what clothes to wear for Forest School. Get self changed and wellies on with support at start of year and independently at end of year. Follow instructions re activities and safety  Begin to remember the Forest School Rules	Know Forest School Rules  Begin to use tools safely (cf tool use) with supervision and support  Begin to make own assessments of risk, make decisions about where to play based on own tolerance of (e.g.) mud, minibeasts and scratches.	Begin to lead small groups in activities, choosing who best to work with.  Know the boundaries of safe play	Know how to use tools safely – following tool talks  Develop leadership skills ensuring members of group follow safety rules and identifying potential risks in activities.			

<p><b>Shelter Building</b></p>	<p>Introduction of basic shelter building with support (some indoor and outdoor equipment)</p> <p>Mini-den building for small animals</p>	<p>Supported construction of tripod structures (mini-den building)</p> <p>Erect a lean to shelter, with support</p>	<p>Independent use of tripod structures (animal den building)</p> <p>Introduction to lashing and frapping techniques to make frames</p> <p>Create a lean to shelter, independently or with limited support</p>	<p>Create a tarpaulin shelter in a woodland</p> <p>Work successfully as a group, having considered and evaluated each members' contributions</p> <p>Compare and evaluate the shelters in relation to their sturdiness, durability, weatherproofing and whether it is fit for purpose</p>	<p>Design and build varying sized shelters using tarpaulin and materials found in a woodland</p> <p>Work successfully as a group, having considered and evaluated each members' contributions</p> <p>Compare and evaluate the shelters in relation to their sturdiness, durability, weatherproofing and whether it is fit for purpose</p>	<p>Create a tipi shelter with camouflage</p> <p>Work successfully as a group, having considered and evaluated each members' contributions</p> <p>Compare and evaluate the shelters in relation to their sturdiness, durability, weatherproofing and whether it is fit for purpose</p>	<p>Shelter building challenge – working in teams the children plan, build and review their shelters (recap the different ways to build shelters)</p> <p>Work successfully as a group, having considered and evaluated each members' contributions</p> <p>Compare and evaluate the shelters in relation to their sturdiness, durability, weatherproofing and whether it is fit for purpose</p> <p>Set up a tent in preparation for going on a residential visit</p>
<p><b>Geographical Skills and Navigation</b></p>	<p>Follow rules and boundaries</p> <p>Promote free exploration</p>	<p>Use simple compass directions (North, South, East and West)</p> <p>Use directional language (near and far; left and right)</p> <p>Describe the location of features and routes on a map</p> <p>Recognise landmarks and human and physical features</p> <p>Devise a simple map and use basic symbols in a key</p>	<p>Use simple compass directions (North, South, East and West)</p> <p>Use directional language (near and far; left and right)</p> <p>Describe the location of features and routes on a map</p> <p>Recognise landmarks and human and physical features</p> <p>Devise a simple map and use basic symbols in a key</p>	<p>Demonstrate understanding of the concept of a basic map</p> <p>Navigate your way around a simple orienteering course</p> <p>Understand the term 'orientate' or 'setting' a map</p> <p>Complete a simple 'star' orienteering activity in pairs / groups</p> <p>Record information accurately and neatly</p> <p>Follow rules when completing a star orienteering activity</p>	<p>Recognise features and symbols on the map</p> <p>Understand how to orientate the map</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of a line orienteering course (short loop) and star orienteering</p> <p>Build trust with a partner and work together when orienteering</p>	<p>Use the eight points of a compass and four figure grid references</p> <p>Develop expertise in the orienteering skills of orientating a map, following a course, and recognition of relevant map symbols</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between pacing and distance</p> <p>Plan a short loop course for another pair to follow</p> <p>Improve confidence in map reading and the transfer of information from map to ground</p> <p>Apply skills of orienteering including thumbing the map, route choice and symbol recognition</p> <p>Plan the most efficient route so that the course is completed in the quickest time</p>	<p>Use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey Maps)</p> <p>Further develop navigational skills by planning ahead, identifying problems and making decisions</p> <p>Learn to balance speed and accuracy</p> <p>Set, read and follow a bearing</p> <p>Practice and develop pacing skills</p> <p>Be able to take a bearing from a map and use that bearing to find a control point</p> <p>Combine map reading and compass skills</p> <p>Measure the distance between control points and, using the map scale, estimate the number of paces required to reach each control</p> <p>Successfully undertake an orienteering competition</p>

						Complete the orienteering course in the fastest time possible competing against others	using an unfamiliar map in a new location  Demonstrate effective use of orientating a map, using a compass, setting, reading and following bearings, and scale to navigate around a score (scatter) orienteering course
<b>Play / Exploring</b>	<p>Introduction to rules and boundaries</p> <p>Promotion of free exploration</p> <p>Promotion of independent learning opportunities/skills</p> <p><i>Plant bulbs and watch them grow</i></p> <p><i>Autumn walk</i></p> <p><i>Search for butterflies</i></p>	<p>Re-enforce rules and boundaries</p> <p>Travel safely over the terrain in Forest School</p> <p>Carry sticks safely</p> <p>Work in a team to co-operate and communicate clearly</p> <p><i>Discover what's in a pond</i></p> <p><i>Hunt for insects</i></p> <p><i>Roll down a hill</i></p> <p><i>Build a den</i></p>	<p>Re-enforce rules and boundaries of forest schools</p> <p>Move logs safely with support first</p> <p><i>Build a bridge</i></p> <p><i>Become a nature detective</i></p> <p><i>Get soaking wet in the rain</i></p> <p><i>Bird watching</i></p> <p><i>Make a daisy chain</i></p>	<p>Take part in outdoor challenges on own and in a team</p> <p><i>Climb a tree</i></p> <p><i>Make something out of wood</i></p> <p><i>Cook outdoors</i></p>	<p>Play woodland versions of games</p> <p>I can work in a team during wide games and scavenger hunts</p> <p><i>Make a sculpture</i></p> <p><i>Treasure hunt</i></p>	<i>Orienteering with an OS map</i>	<i>Create a time capsule</i>
<b>Using Tools</b>	Introduction to tools (peelers for whittling, hammers, mallets, trowels and forks)	Continuation of the use of basic tools (cutting of string, peeler for whittling, bow saw to cut discs (1:1))	Continuation of the use of basic tools, larger ropes and independent cutting of string  Use of bow saw 1-1 to cut discs and peelers for whittling	In Key Stage 2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Tools will only be used when the children are physically, mentally and socially ready to do so. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages	In Key Stage 2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Tools will only be used when the children are physically, mentally and socially ready to do so. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages	In Key Stage 2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Tools will only be used when the children are physically, mentally and socially ready to do so. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages	In Key Stage 2 children will develop their skills when using a range of tools. Tools will only be used when the children are physically, mentally and socially ready to do so. Children's ability to use tools will develop at different ages
Additional tools introduced may include	Palm drills Bow Saw	Peeler(1:1) Hammers	Secateurs		Loppers  Knives for whittling	Brace & bits  pliers	
<b>Knots</b>	Able to tie 'a knot' in string.	Introduction to basic knots – overhand, figure 8, cow hitch	<p>More sophisticated use of knots for attaching to structures and trees</p> <p>Example - Overhand knot and half hitch</p> <p>Lashing and frapping techniques to make frames – using elastic bands</p>	<p>More sophisticated use of knots for attaching to structures and trees</p> <p>Lashing and frapping frames and 3D structures. Beginning to use string (instead of elastic bands)</p> <p>Reef knot</p>	<p>More sophisticated knots for attaching to structures and trees</p> <p>Independent use of lashing and frapping techniques</p>	<p>Shelter hitches and knots</p> <p>More complex knots and selecting the correct knot for a job</p> <p>Marlin spike hitch Introduce different knots depending on interests and ability e.g. bowline, prusik climbing knot.</p>	<p>Shelter hitches and knots</p> <p>More complex knots and selecting the correct knot for a job</p> <p>Marlin spike hitch Introduce different knots depending on interests and ability e.g. bowline, prusik climbing knot.</p>

<b>Fire</b>	Observe and talk about fire lighting procedures, begin to contribute by selecting fuel  Safety procedures – fire safety	Be safe around a fire  Contribute to fire lighting by gathering fuel	Experience using fire strikers to spark a flame  Light a piece of cotton wool (fairy pillow)  Fire safety and the fire triangle	Light a fairy fire and keep it going	Roast food on a fire with support	Cooking on a camp fire (roast food)  Make and tend a fire safely  Prepare and light a campfire with supervision	Cooking on a camp fire (roast food)  Make and tend a fire safely  Prepare and light a campfire with supervision
<b>Forest, Flora &amp; Fauna Knowledge</b>	Evergreen/Deciduous Find minibeasts and name some with adult support. Name some common plants Seasonal changes	Best places for hiding Identify some common minibeasts. Know where to find some common minibeasts Differentiate between common trees by leaf.	Know how trees spread seeds and identify different types of seed. Start to use ID charts to identify flora and fauna with adult support.	Best trees for climbing Identify some trees in school grounds  Begin to understand terms flora and fauna  Know where to find different plants in our forest.	Best places for den building Use ID charts/apps to identify unknown flora and fauna with less adult support  Use apps to identify e.g. plants, invertebrates & birdsong.	Best trees/plants for resources  select own resources  Identify most trees in school grounds  Use ID charts independently with some success  Know how to help wildlife appropriately and sustainably	Foraging – know some uses of plants and which are unsafe  Know what flora and fauna mean  Know what maintenance our plants need and be able to help with that maintenance
<b>Tree climbing</b>	balance on stump	balance on a log while walking	knowledge of rules of tree climbing  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only climb yourself. Do not help anyone else up or down a tree.</li> <li>2. Do not use ropes or external aids to climbing.</li> <li>3. Always maintain three points of contact with the tree.</li> <li>4. Climb to a maximum height of 4 metres. (This is an insurance limit)</li> <li>5. Only use branches which are thicker than your wrist.</li> <li>6. Stay near the main tree trunk.</li> <li>7. Avoid climbing when trees are very wet.</li> </ol>	identify safe branches - Alive, thick enough	plan route up and down a tree	Climb and descend without help select safe tree for climbing	Plan a route up and down from the ground
<b>Games</b>	Follow simple game rules	Make game suggestions based on prior knowledge	Make suggestions of games learnt elsewhere	Adapt games learnt elsewhere to fit Forest School	Initiate game playing as part of free time in Forest School	Suggest amendments to taught games  Able to categorise a game according to its rules (e.g. bulldog style, cumulative tagging)	Devise own games for Forest School

<b>Art / Creative</b>	Follow simple instructions to make Forest crafts		Begin to develop pre-learnt skills to plan and create own ideas		Select from examples to decide on own desired product	Modify example ideas into own outcomes	Use tools etc safely to complete own creative activities.
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**Other Curriculum Links**

At Barrow CE Primary we strive to consolidate other areas of the curriculum through the holistic philosophy of Forest School learning. Examples of cross curricular links include:

English – story telling,

Maths – arrays, counting, general maths in the environment, shape

Science – KS1 plants, seasonal changes; KS2 forces, light, sound, changing state.

Geography – mapping, field study

History – Vikings, Stone Age, Ancient Greeks

Music – singing songs, making musical instruments

PE – team games

Computing – video,

Art – natural ephemeral art

DT – tool skills