



**Bierton CE Combined School**  
**Curriculum Map**  
**Forest School Progression Map**



**Intent**

Bierton CofE Combined School aims to use the natural outdoor woodland area to offer the children an insight into the Forest School ethos. This approach to outdoor learning encourages children to become independent, use their imagination, take appropriate risks within boundaries and initiate learning for themselves. Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating children's individuality and develops their skills for lifelong learning. It can cover many areas of learning, including the emotional and spiritual aspects of learning where self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed. Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. The children are encouraged to work as a team and work collaboratively on the various tasks set. It develops peer learning with the adults providing support and enabling activities to take place. The child's interest will be at the heart of any activity. Forest School is an important platform for allowing children's lights to shine outside of the classroom.

**Implementation (Pedagogy)**

We aim to give all children an insight into the ethos of Forest School. Forest School builds on a child's positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves. The Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety. Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through play. The child can access the forest at their own level, be it age-related to ability. The recapping of previous skills and knowledge allows access for all. The child-initiated approach gives a greater level of understanding and engagement. The children are actively choosing appropriate equipment or tools that they need.

**Impact**

Children will grow in confidence as a result of the freedom, time and space they are given in their learning. This allows them to demonstrate independence at each individual child's rate. The children will begin to understand, assess and manage their own risk and safety. This will allow the children to become more independent and show them that life comes with not only risk but also rewards. It also teaches them what their own limits are and that they can push through them. They will see that sometimes we don't always get the desired result the first time but that doesn't make us a failure, it helps us to grow, forcing us to try again in a different way. Forest schools encourages problem solving, logical thinking and self-reflection and evaluation.



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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 skills. Children develop an interest in the great outdoors and respect for the natural world around them. The changing seasons and weather offer a wealth of interest and opportunities.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the images and videos of the children's practical learning and talking to the children about their learning during reflection (pupil voice). These are included on the school website so parents and other adults can see the images.

### Evidence-based Research

Forest Schools offer a unique educational experience using the outdoor environment of the forest as a classroom. The New Economics Foundation (NEF) evaluated two schools to highlight how they can provide learning opportunities for children who typically do not do as well in the classroom. NEF also created a self-appraisal methodology for leaders and teachers from other Forest Schools to assess their performance.

#### **Key findings**

The evaluation suggests Forest Schools make a difference in the following ways:

**Confidence:** children had the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence

**Social skills:** children gained increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play

**Communication:** language development was prompted by the children's sensory experiences

**Motivation:** the woodland tended to fascinate the children and they developed a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time

**Physical skills:** these improvements were characterised by the development of physical stamina and gross and fine motor skills

**Knowledge and understanding:** the children developed an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for the environment

We have also based our approach on these research enquiries too <https://www.cambridgeforestschoools.co.uk/schools/forest-school-and-outdoor-learning-research/>



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## Curriculum Map



### Progression of knowledge & skills

Nursery	Reception	Year 1	Year 2
<b>Shelter Building</b>			
Mini den building for small animals and toys (with adult support)	Mini den building for small animals and toys (independently)	Supported construction of tripod structures  Erect a lean-to shelter with support	Independent use of tripod structures  Introduction to lashing and frapping to make frame  Make a lean-to shelter with limited support
<b>Geographical Skills and navigation</b>			
Follow rules and boundaries  Promote free exploration and investigation	Follow rules and boundaries  Promote free exploration and investigation  Use positional language	Use simple directional language (near and far, left and right)  Describe the location of features of forest school and routes on a map	Use simple compass directions (North, South, East and West)  Use simple directional language (near and far, left and right)  Describe the location of features of forest school and routes on a map  Devise a simple map and use basic symbols on a key
<b>Exploration and Play</b>			
Introduction to rules and boundaries; promotion of free exploration  Promotion of independent learning opportunities/ skills	Introduction to rules and boundaries; promotion of free exploration  Promotion of independent learning opportunities/ skills  Carry sticks safely	Re-inforce rules and boundaries  Carry sticks safely  Work in a team to co-operate and communicate clearly	Re-inforce rules and boundaries  Move logs safely  Work in a team to co-operate and communicate clearly



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<b>Using Tools</b>			
Introduction to tools – hammers, mallets, trowels, forks and spades	Introduction to tools – hammers, mallets, trowels, forks and spades	Continuation of the use of basic tools: cutting of string, peelers (with gloves) for whittling, bow saws to cut discs (supported)	Continuation of the use of basic tools: cutting of string independently, peelers (with gloves) for whittling, bow saws to cut discs
<b>Knots</b>			
Use pipe cleaners to secure lashings	Introduction to basic knots	Introduction to basic knots	More sophisticated use of knots for attaching structures to trees and structures
<b>Fire</b>			
Observe and talk about fire lighting procedures	Observe and talk about fire lighting procedures	Safety procedures – fire safety	Safety procedures – fire safety
Preparing vegetables for soup	Preparing vegetables for soup	Contribute to fire lighting by gathering fuel	Experience using flint and steels to spark a flame; light a piece of cotton wool
Toast marshmallows with full support	Toast marshmallows with full support	Toasting marshmallows with little support	Independent toasting of marshmallows and bread
Observe popcorn popping	Observe popcorn popping	Support with cooking popcorn	Support with cooking popcorn
<b>General safety</b>			
Basic safety	Basic safety	Basic safety	Basic safety
Stick safety	Stick safety	Stick safety	Stick safety
Boundaries	Boundaries	Boundaries	Boundaries
Show awareness of brambles/ nettles/ plants	Show awareness of brambles/ nettles/ plants	Show awareness of brambles/ nettles/ plants	Show awareness of brambles/ nettles/ plants



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		Risk assess site – looking and thinking about the area around them	Discuss ways to reduce risk – report dangers
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