



# FOREST SCHOOL

nature  
connections  
developmental  
seasons  
summer  
experiences  
natural  
forest  
tree  
handson  
friends  
spring  
life  
rain  
leaf  
bugs  
environment  
freedom  
outdoors  
fall  
winter  
schools  
experience  
learning





## FOREST SCHOOL

At Russell Street School, we view the use of the outdoors as an important part of delivering our curriculum. In the summer of 2007 we began our involvement in the Milton Keynes Forest Schools Project. We are pleased to be able to offer your child sessions of Forest School in Year One and Year Two. They will have their Year Two sessions at a contrasting time of year to their Year One sessions.

Each class will be divided into two groups. Parents will be notified by ParentMail when their child is due to attend Forest School sessions

The site we are going to use this year is owned by the Park's Trust. It is part of the Ouse Valley Conservation Area on the other side of Queen Eleanor Street. Although it is not really 'forest,' the area provides a wonderful environment of trees, bushes, logs, moss and wild flowers for us to explore. We do not use an area near water.

We will walk to and from the site between 1pm and 3.00pm. We will have an adult child ratio of at least 1:4 as we will be supported by another member of staff and at least one volunteer. Once at the site the children are free to participate in structured activities as well as undertaking their own exploration and self-chosen activities. Through play, the children have the opportunity to learn about and care for the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others. Children learn boundaries of physical and social behaviour, grow in confidence and self-esteem and become self-motivated. They will have the opportunity to use tools under supervision.

Parents are requested to send their children to school on Forest School days with a bag containing the following named items:

- Wellington boots
- Waterproof jacket (with hood)
- Waterproof trousers
- in cold weather, hat, gloves, scarves
- in warm weather, a long sleeved T-shirt

If you do not have any of these items, the school will be able to provide them.

Children will wear their school uniform as usual and the protective clothing will be worn over the top.

## What is Forest School?

The philosophy of Forest School is to encourage and inspire through positive outdoor experiences.

Forest Schools are a unique way of building independence and self-esteem in young children. They originated in Scandinavia in the 1950s and focused on teaching children about the natural world. From there the idea was brought to Bridgwater College, Somerset in 1995 and has spread throughout the UK since. Many education authorities have been using Forest Schools for some time.

Forest School makes use of the outdoor environment to support children's learning across the whole curriculum, using learning and teaching strategies which foster confidence and self-esteem. The learning that occurs is observed and recorded in a similar way to classroom learning. However because of the high adult/child ratios, the children can safely experience types of activities that are so often avoided in school.

By taking part in Forest School children may help children display:

- Increased personal confidence and self esteem
- Improved social skills
- Greater motivation and concentration
- Enriched language and communication
- Improved physical skills
- Greater knowledge, awareness and respect for the natural environment

If you have further questions about forest schools please contact us.

We look forward to an exciting time together.

Sue Vinden and Gemma Devereaux

Forest School Leaders

