

Nun Monkton Foundation Primary School

"Be curious, be brave and believe"



FOREST SCHOOL STATEMENT OF INTENT

INTENT

At Nun Monkton Forest School we aim to help children develop their natural curiosity and to practise their skills in resilience, problem-solving, sharing and team-building. We want them to develop a real love of the outdoors. We enable them to foster a deep understanding of their local environment, the plants and animals that live and grow around us and to notice the ever-changing shifts of the seasons. We help the children to develop their skills in shelter-building, using tools to create woodland craft projects, physical play, using our creativity, identifying plants and animals and cooking on campfires. We recognise the importance of providing our children with the opportunity to play freely and imaginatively in the outdoors. Wherever possible we make links to the national curriculum and embrace opportunities to bring learning to life and have 'real' experiences in science, DT, and geography. We teach children to work safely and with responsibility for themselves, others and the equipment they use as well as taking care and responsibility for the environment in which they work.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Children from Nursery to Year 6 attend Forest school every week throughout the year for a half day session (N, YR and Y1 in the morning and Y2-6 in the afternoon).
- A skills progression document is followed that is broken down into individual year groups so that children build upon their skills and knowledge as they progress through school.
- Specific 'Forest' skills, such as using tools, building shelters and lighting/cooking on campfires are taught from Year 2 upwards
- At the end of each session children have the opportunity to reflect upon what they have learned, share the things they found tricky and how they might have overcome any problems they have encountered. They show the things that they are proud of and are genuinely delighted to share in each other's accomplishments.
- Children are taught basic first aid techniques (e.g. 'Stop, drop and roll') and understand the health and safety implications of working within a woodland environment (e.g. we don't eat anything we find growing in the forest).
- Children have the opportunity for physical play and activity which links in with our PE curriculum coverage.
- PSHE skills are used in abundance! Many opportunities to work together, show independence, be resilient, problem-solve, celebrate one another's successes,
- Children have regular opportunities to play freely and imaginatively following whatever interests
- We link our learning closely to the Science curriculum (esp. in EYFS/KS1) and use the many opportunities that working and playing in the outdoors presents to predict, observe, classify, experiment and draw conclusions from our findings in the world around us.
- Opportunities for maths – there are many! Children use practical and purposeful maths skills in meaningful situations, applying what they have learned in school in a 'real life' context.
- DT when doing tools and the understanding around how to use tools safely using the appropriate PPE.

- Art and creativity opportunities working with natural materials that we gather from our woodland environment.
- Open-ended learning that makes use of spontaneous moments to enrich our learning across the curriculum.
- Care for the world, and taking part in nature surveys (e.g. RSPB Big Bird Watch).

IMPACT

- At Nun Monkton Forest School we cultivate a learning environment where children develop an authentic connection to the outdoors, fostering curiosity, resilience, and a love for nature. Through our weekly Forest School sessions, children from Nursery to Year 6 gain invaluable hands-on experiences that promote key life skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, and independence.
- By engaging in a wide range of outdoor activities -including shelter-building, woodland crafts, tool usage, and cooking on campfires - children not only strengthen their practical abilities but also develop a deeper understanding of their local environment. Our curriculum intertwines the natural world with core subjects such as science, geography, and design technology, bringing learning to life in meaningful, real-world contexts. This approach not only supports academic achievement but also instils a strong sense of environmental stewardship, as children are encouraged to care for the world around them.
- The progressive skill development, starting from basic first aid and safety awareness to more advanced techniques like lighting fires and using tools, ensures that children build confidence and competence over time. Their ability to reflect on and share their experiences at the end of each session reinforces the values of self-awareness, growth, and community. Children celebrate each other's successes and learn to approach challenges with a resilient mindset.
- Furthermore, our Forest School activities align closely with the Physical Education and PSHE curriculums, offering children ample opportunities for physical activity, cooperative play, and emotional development. Through open-ended learning and the freedom to explore their own interests, children's creativity flourishes, leading to greater engagement and an enduring love for learning.
- In essence, Nun Monkton Forest School nurtures a generation of curious, confident, and responsible individuals who are equipped not only with practical skills but also with a lifelong appreciation for the natural world and the importance of working together as a community.

Our Forest teaching and learning supports the following school aims:

- Enable children to become **independent** and **confident** learners; **well-rounded** characters who are **self-aware**, **reflective** and **resilient** individuals.
- **Care for and about each other**, be **courteous** and **empathetic**, showing **respect** and **understanding** towards everyone.
- Create a **safe and stimulating** place where children are **happy** and **enthusiastic** learners, where they learn how to keep themselves **safe and healthy**, able to **communicate** & work in a **team**, developing **confidence** and **life skills** together.

- Encourage everyone to have **high expectations** of **themselves and others**, **supporting** and **challenging** everyone to **achieve** their best, developing a strong **work ethic**, **self-motivation** and taking **pride** in their achievements.
- Enable children to develop an **understanding of the wider world** through learning and exposure to a **variety of cultures**, **ideas** and **beliefs**, **respecting** and **recognising individuality** and **diversity**.
- Provide a **wide range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities** to **enthuse** everyone to be lifelong learners, through engagement in a curriculum that instils **values for life** and **prepares pupils** for wherever their journey takes them as adults.