

Forest School Strategic Overview at Brownlow Fold



Contents Page

Purpose of Study

Aims

Curriculum Design, Methodology, Pedagogy and Teaching Approaches

Strategic Focus

Adaptive Teaching

Explicit teaching of Vocabulary

Retrieval Practice

Oracy

Intent Implementation Impact

Curriculum Content

High quality Texts Underpinning our Curriculum

National Curriculum Subject Links

Teaching Sequence

Retrieval Practice

Subject Leader

Research and Best Practice

Purpose of Study

The purpose of Forest School is to establish a strong foundation for lifelong learning by providing rich, developmentally appropriate outdoor experiences that support resilience, curiosity, and holistic growth. Through regular access to natural environments, children build the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional skills required to thrive within the Early Years Foundation Stage and beyond.

Forest School enhances early education by:

1. Strengthening Core Learning Behaviours

Forest School nurtures key skills for learning—independence, perseverance, collaboration, and problem-solving—aligning with EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning. The open-ended, sensory-rich environment enables children to take risks, think creatively, and develop intrinsic motivation.

2. Embedding Physical and Emotional Wellbeing

Outdoor learning supports whole-child development by promoting physical literacy, emotional regulation, and mental wellbeing. Regular exposure to nature improves self-esteem, reduces anxiety, and builds children's confidence in managing challenges.

3. Developing Communication and Language

Purposeful interaction with peers and adults in a dynamic environment accelerates language development. Forest School creates authentic contexts for speaking, listening, storytelling, questioning, and vocabulary growth—strengthening foundational communication skills critical for future academic success.

4. Enhancing Environmental Understanding and Stewardship

Engagement with the natural world builds an early understanding of ecological relationships, seasonal change, and environmental responsibility. Forest School builds the foundational knowledge and attitudes required for sustainability education throughout the curriculum.

5. Aligning with Whole-School Priorities

Forest School supports school-wide aims by:

- supporting inclusive practice through accessible, differentiated learning experiences
- improving outcomes in personal development and behaviour
- providing high-quality experiential learning that enriches the curriculum
- strengthening community engagement and parental partnership through shared outdoor learning initiatives

6. Laying the Foundations for Future Curriculum Mastery

The skills and attitudes developed in Forest School directly support readiness for Key Stage 1 by improving attention, executive function, fine and gross motor control, and the ability to follow routines, collaborate, and reflect—key precursors to successful literacy, numeracy, and scientific learning.

Curriculum Design, Methodology, Pedagogy and Teaching Approaches

Curriculum Design

Our Forest School curriculum is designed to be **holistic, child-centred and experiential**, aligning with the EYFS framework while maximising the unique learning potential of the natural environment. The curriculum is intentionally broad and developmental, focusing on:

- **Whole-child growth:** physical, emotional, social, cognitive and communication development.
- **Characteristics of Effective Learning:** playing and exploring, active learning, and thinking critically.
- **Progressive skill-building:** resilience, collaboration, problem-solving, fine/gross motor skills, and ecological understanding.
- **Seasonal learning rhythms:** planning responds to environmental cycles, weather, nature changes and emergent interests.
- **Inclusivity by design:** accessible experiences that remove barriers and stretch children who show advanced curiosity or capability.

While linked to the wider EYFS curriculum, Forest School maintains its core principle of **child agency**, enabling children to lead exploration within a carefully structured, safe and purposeful outdoor environment.

Methodology

Forest School is delivered through a **sustained, long-term approach** in which children attend regular weekly sessions across the year. The methodology is grounded in:

1. Experiential and Sensory Learning

Children learn through direct interaction with natural materials, outdoor environments and practical experiences, supporting deeper understanding and stronger memory formation.

2. Repetition and Overlearning

Skills and routines are embedded through consistent re-visiting of activities, enabling children to internalise behaviours such as risk management, collaboration and problem-solving.

3. Emergent Curriculum

Session content is responsive to children's interests, seasonal phenomena and observed developmental needs. Adults observe, tune in, and respond by shaping opportunities that extend children's learning paths.

4. Safe, Supported Risk-Taking

Children are guided to assess risks, use tools safely, and make decisions that develop confidence, independence and self-regulation.

5. Scaffolded Independence

The methodology gradually increases children's responsibility—carrying equipment, organising resources, managing clothing and evaluating their own actions.

Pedagogy

Forest School pedagogy in Reception is rooted in **nature-based, child-led inquiry** supported by skilled adult facilitation. Key elements include:

1. Child-Led Exploration

Children choose activities, set their own goals and follow lines of inquiry. Adults create provocations but do not dictate outcomes.

2. Adult as Co-Researcher

Practitioners observe closely, ask open-ended questions, model vocabulary, and join play sensitively. They guide learning without interrupting agency.

3. Play as the Central Mode of Learning

Exploratory, imaginative and collaborative play is prioritised. Play contexts are used to extend language, numeracy, science thinking and social understanding.

4. Holistic, Integrated Learning

Learning does not sit in isolated subject boxes. Instead, activities interweave physical development, communication, social skills, creativity and early scientific knowledge.

5. Reflective Practice

Adults employ reflective conversations and group reviews to support metacognition—helping children think about their decisions, effort, emotions and next steps.

Teaching Approach

The teaching approach in Forest School is grounded in **attentive, responsive and relational practice** that values children's autonomy. This includes:

1. Flexible Grouping

Children work individually, in pairs or small groups depending on interest and activity. Adults ensure participation and inclusion for all learners.

2. High-Quality Interactions

Practitioners use language modelling, sustained shared thinking, narrative building, and vocabulary introduction in meaningful contexts.

3. Embedded Routine and Structure

Circle times, safety briefings, equipment checks and reflection moments build security, predictability and responsibility.

4. Inclusive Adaptations

Use of visual supports, pre-teaching vocabulary, sensory pathways, differentiated challenges and additional adult scaffolding ensures equitable access.

5. Environment as Teacher

The outdoor space is intentionally organised to invite exploration—loose parts, natural materials, den-building areas, digging zones, and spaces for imaginative and physical play.

Strategic Focus:

At Brownlow Fold, Forest School is implemented during the reception year to enhance whole-child development, strengthen wellbeing, and developing the learning behaviours that underpin academic success. By providing regular, meaningful outdoor experiences, Forest School develops resilience, confidence, communication and emotional regulation—key priorities for improving behaviour, engagement and readiness to learn. It also enriches the curriculum by offering real-world contexts that deepen understanding in science, geography, literacy and mathematics, while building environmental awareness and a sense of responsibility for the natural world.

Forest school promotes inclusion by providing multisensory provision that particularly benefits pupils with SEND, SEMH needs and those who thrive through hands-on learning. At the same time, it provides challenge, risk, problem solving opportunities and collaborative learning. Through consistent routines, child-led inquiry and progressive skill-building, Forest School supports a coherent pathway from Reception to Year 1, ensuring continuity, challenge and progression for all learners.

Forest school aligns with whole school priorities around wellbeing, curriculum breadth, sustainability and high-quality pedagogy, making it an important contributor to Brownlow Fold's curriculum offer.

Addressing the Needs of the Bottom 20% in Reading

At Brownlow Fold, forest school is a powerful opportunity for supporting the bottom 20% of learners, particularly those with early communication delays, limited school readiness, low confidence, SEND needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds. The outdoor environment naturally reduces barriers to learning by offering movement-rich, sensory, practical and low-pressure experiences that help children access the curriculum in ways that feel safe, motivating and achievable. Regular Forest School sessions build attention, self-regulation, social interaction and resilience—core skills that this group often needs most at the start of school.

Key strategies include high-quality adult interaction, targeted vocabulary modelling, pre-teaching key concepts, and providing visual supports to reduce cognitive load. Small-group or 1:1 scaffolding enables adults to support communication, emotional regulation and social skills within meaningful contexts such as turn-taking, problem-solving, or negotiating shared resources. The natural environment also supports SEND learners through sensory regulation—helping reduce anxiety and increase engagement—while offering opportunities for success that may not be available in the classroom.

Forest School provides structured yet flexible opportunities to embed core developmental foundations for the bottom 20%, such as gross and fine motor development, listening skills, following instructions, and building independence. Carefully designed routines—such as putting on outdoor clothing, managing equipment, or participating in group reflection—support executive functioning and independence. By planning accessible entry points for each activity, offering differentiated challenge, and celebrating small successes, Forest School ensures that the bottom 20% make strong progress from their starting points and develop the confidence, communication and readiness required for successful transition into Year 1.

Adaptive teaching In Forest School

Cognition and Learning

Visuals on lanyards are used to support play.
Using now and next boards.
Visual timetables referred to throughout the day.
Revisiting, reviewing and retrieving knowledge and skills happens regularly in EYFS.
Positive praise for the smallest achievements.
Promoting a growth mind-set.
We use a range of teaching and learning styles.
We have levelled provision which is inclusive and accessible for all.
Following the children's interests to gain their full potential when learning new skills.
Creating a nurturing environment where the children feel safe and happy.
All staff continuously developing their own awareness and understanding of SEND through CPD.
Motivate and challenge learners – so they can independently excel and achieve.
Building relationships with families and sharing good practise with families to support SEND at home.
Focus on children's wellbeing.
The voice of the child is present in assessments.
Staff complete detailed observations to gain a full understanding of the children.

Communication and Interaction

Gestures, visuals and objects are used to support children with communication skills.
Programmes such as Wellcomm, ELKLAN, Nursery/Reception narrative and Language through listening are all programmes which are used throughout EYFS to support children with SEND.
Visuals on lanyards are used to support play.
Vocabulary displayed in the learning environment to support staff with supporting children's language development (specific to each child).
Positive praise for the smallest achievements.
High quality interactions between adults and children.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Using now and next boards.
Visual timetables referred to throughout the day.
Positive praise for the smallest achievements.
Creating a nurturing environment where the children feel safe and happy.

Sensory and/or Physical Needs

We have levelled provision which is inclusive and accessible for all.
Quiet spaces available.
Sensory toys available.
Creating a nurturing environment where the children feel safe and happy.

Explicit Teaching of Vocabulary

The teaching of vocabulary in Forest school, occurs often as there are vast opportunities for language development. Forest school leaders and staff intentionally introduce and model key vocabulary linked to natural materials, actions, weather, tools and emotions within real contexts, helping children acquire and apply new words with purpose.

Staff use strategies such as **modelling, repetition, narration, questioning and expansion** to develop both every day and ambitious vocabulary. High-quality interactions—including sustained shared thinking, descriptive talk and narrative building—support children to hear and practise new language in context. Visual supports, gesture, and sensory objects reinforce understanding, ensuring accessibility for EAL, SEND and bottom 20% learners.

Vocabulary learning is embedded within routines and activities such as exploring textures, observing seasonal changes, building dens, using tools, and reflecting in group discussions. By weaving explicit vocabulary teaching through child-led exploration, Forest School strengthens children's communication, expressive language and early literacy skills, laying strong foundations for future learning across the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

- **Tier 1 words** are acquired naturally through play and exploration.
- **Tier 2 words** should be *explicitly modelled, repeated, and used in context* during activities.
- **Tier 3 words** should be introduced carefully, often with objects, gestures, pictures or demonstrations.
- Revisit vocabulary during circle time, reflections, and in follow-up classroom learning.

Tier	Category	Vocabulary Examples
Tier 1 – Everyday	Nature & Environment	tree, leaf, stick, stone, mud, water, wind, sun, rain, grass, flower, bug, bird
	Actions	run, jump, dig, pick, hold, carry, climb, sit, splash, pour
	Describing Words	wet, dry, hot, cold, big, small, soft, hard
Tier 2 – High-Utility / Descriptive	Describing Nature	smooth, rough, bumpy, shiny, dull, damp, crumbly, hollow, sturdy, delicate
	Actions & Processes	balance, explore, collect, discover, sort, compare, observe, notice, create, build
	Thinking & feeling	careful, calm, excited, brave, curious, patient, responsible
	Weather & Seasons	breezy, cloudy, frosty, misty, shady
Tier 3 – Technical / Domain-Specific	Forest School Tools & Processes	flint, whittle, sheath, mallet, loppers, tarp, peg, boundary, fire circle
	Nature & Environment	habitat, evergreen, deciduous, roots, trunk, branches, spores, fungus, hibernate, camouflage, predator, prey
	Scientific Concepts	absorb / absorbent, evaporate, property, life cycle

Oracy

The need for high-quality oracy provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is more important than ever. An explicit and deliberate focus on developing children's oracy skills, including teaching and modelling language, vocabulary, and social communication skills and creating thoughtful opportunities for collaborative talk can set children up for success through the rest of their schooling.

While all children benefit from opportunities to learn *to* and *through* talk, listening and communication in the Early Years, some studies suggest these opportunities are particularly beneficial to children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Make every conversation count

The forest school is full of opportunities for meaningful talk — from spontaneous conversations during continuous provision to more structured moments like circle time and story time. These interactions play a vital role in children's language development and understanding of the world around them.

One approach which makes the most of these moments is Sustained Shared Thinking. This strategy involves adults and children working together in conversation to explore ideas, solve problems, and make connections. Through thoughtful questioning, encouragement, and speculative talk, practitioners help children develop their thinking.

Oracy EYFS Outcomes

Early Learning Goals

- **Communication and Language: Listening and Attention-** Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
- **Communication and Language: Understanding-** Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.
- **Communication and Language: Speaking-** Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Oracy Progression

Progression of skills – EYFS	
Physical • I can speak clearly and be understood • I can speak clear and be heard • I can look at who is talking and who I am talking to • I can use gestures to support meaning in play	Linguistic • I can use talk in play to practice new vocabulary • I can join phrases with words such as 'if', 'because' 'so' 'could' 'but'
Cognitive • I can use talk in play to practice new vocabulary • I can join phrases with words such as 'if', 'because' 'so' 'could' 'but'	Social and Emotional • I can look at someone who is speaking to them • I can take turns to speak when working in a group

Teaching Ideas

- Provide pupils with opportunities to take on different roles, ensuring they are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and vocabulary to do this successfully.
- E.g. A shopkeeper, doctor, vet through continuous provision area
- Support pupils' understanding of turn-taking in talk by using a physical object such as a toy to signify whose turn it is to speak.
- Support pupils' understanding of listening through partner conversations. Break down what it means to listen and frequently return to this through praise. E.g. 'Perfect partners sit calmly and face each other when they are listening'.
- Introduce new language and sentence stems through call and repeat, 'my turn, your turn'.
- Support pupils to develop an awareness of the volume of their voice through modelling and chances for them to practice speaking at different levels. E.g. 'tell your partner what you had for breakfast in a whisper ... now tell me your favourite colour in a

- playground voice!’
- Build pupils’ confidence to speak in class by getting them talking about silly subjects, e.g. would you rather be a chicken or a cow?

Experiences

- To speak to a partner during whole class teaching
- Provide pupils with opportunities to speak for an extended period about something they are interested in, for example a favourite toy or what they did at the weekend
- Ask a question to a visitor in school

ShREC Approach

Sh: Share attention

This involves being at the child’s level, paying close attention to what they are focused on and being present in the moment together.

In doing this, you show the child that you have a genuine interest in what they are doing, and it is a great way to build a relationship with them. Being on their level allows you to focus clearly on what they look at, do and say, whilst also allowing the most organic situation for conversation to take place.

R: Respond

This includes following the child’s lead and also responding to their non-verbal and verbal communication. You could comment on what they can see, hear or feel, modelling language or new vocabulary. It could also involve you narrating their activity or making links between the current situation and a previous one.

E: Expand

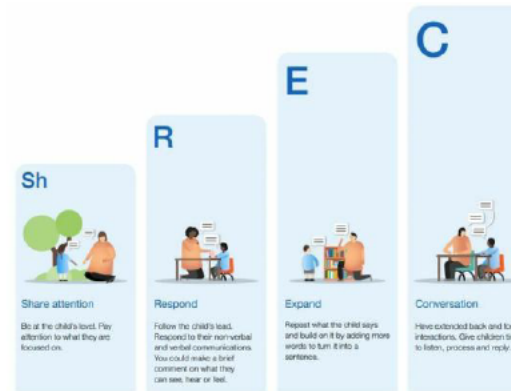
This might include repeating what the child says and building on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence, being aware that you are following the pupil’s lead and not forcing them to repeat you.

Additional guidance from the EEF details how educators can support progress by pitching their responses just above where the pupil is currently working, for example, ‘if a child gives a one-word response such as ‘dog’, the adult should expand on what they say by repeating and building on this utterance by adding a few more words: ‘Yes, it’s a dog. A big/small/friendly/brown dog!’.

C: Conversation

This includes having extended back-and-forth interactions where you give children time to listen, process and reply. Modelling and scaffolding conversation skills involve giving pupils ample opportunities to talk, receive feedback, ask questions, lead discussions and share ideas.

The EEF encourages educators to use open questions to invite pupils to expand on their ideas.



Sustained shared thinking

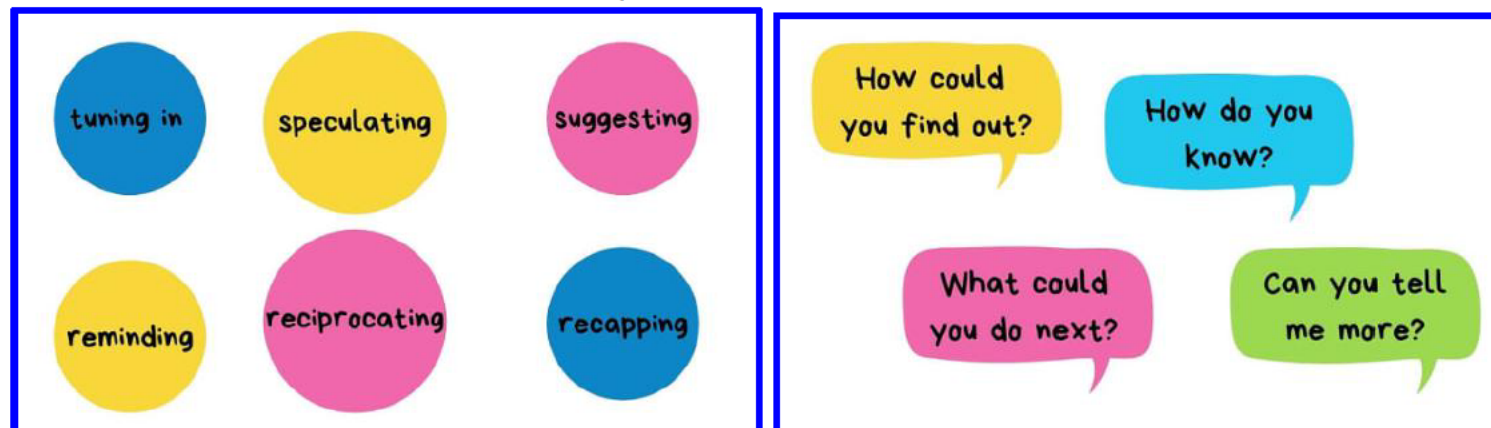
Sustained Shared Thinking helps children to develop their thinking skills as they are encouraged to be curious, think critically and problem solve. This positively impacts their overall learning and development as children engage in deeper thinking in all areas of learning. Sustained shared thinking is when two or more individuals 'work together' in an intellectual way. It can happen between a child and a practitioner or between two children.

There are many ways to support sustained shared thinking in settings and these can include an adult:

- showing genuine interest
- respecting children's own decisions and choices and inviting them to elaborate
- using encouragement to further thinking
- offering an alternative viewpoint

It can be useful to use questioning to help encourage children's reflection and extend their thinking.

Questions could include:



EYFS Communication Champions

Here we have our EYFS champions.

These children have been selected to be Communication Champions because:

- *They model good use of language to their peers.
- *They help their peers to communicate their needs.
- *They model good turn-taking.
- *They model good listening.

Throughout this year, the champions will work with Miss Morris to support our development of communication across EYFS.

Intent Implementation Impact

Intent

Our Forest School curriculum aims to build confident, resilient and curious learners through meaningful outdoor experiences. We use the natural environment to strengthen children's communication, wellbeing, physical development and early learning behaviours. Forest School promotes inclusion, nurtures independence and fosters early environmental understanding, ensuring children are well prepared for the transition into Year 1.

Implementation

Reception children take part in regular, year-round Forest School sessions led by trained practitioners. Learning is child-led, supported by skilled adult scaffolding, and aligned with EYFS development goals. Activities are sequenced to build language, problem-solving, teamwork and physical skills. Inclusive strategies ensure all learners can access and benefit from outdoor learning, with safety routines and clear expectations embedded throughout.

Impact

Children demonstrate improved resilience, communication, collaboration and self-regulation. They develop stronger physical skills, richer vocabulary and positive attitudes to learning. Forest School enhances engagement for all groups of pupils and supports early scientific understanding and environmental responsibility. By the end of Reception, children are more independent, confident, and ready for the demands of Key Stage 1.

Curriculum Content – Reception

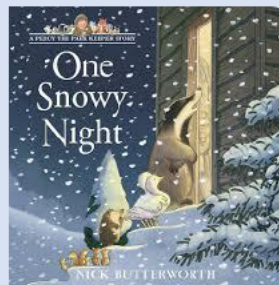
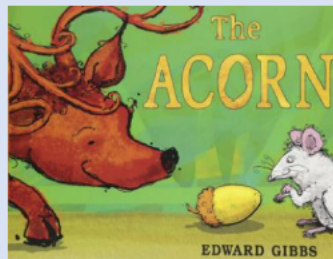
Area of Learning		ELG	Forest School
Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding	Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to. Children will ask questions to clarify their understanding. They will hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teachers and peers.	During activities the children will listen to the ideas of others, one to one or as a small group. At other times two-channelled attention will be used as the children will be engaged in activities whilst also participating in conversations. Throughout a session there can be various instructions given that will require concentration and attentive listening. Stories will be read that the children will be encouraged to join in with. Participation in songs and rhymes is welcomed. During the relaxation time and listening games the children sit quietly, focused on identifying the noises they can hear in the world around them. The team games, environmental bingo and I-spy the children will show an understanding of positional language.
	Speaking	Children will participate in discussions, offering their own ideas and using recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems. These will be in small groups, one-to-one or whole class situations. They will offer explanations for why things might happen, expressing ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences. These will include the use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from teachers.	There will be many opportunities for the children to ask questions, express their ideas and expand their range of vocabulary with terms relating to the natural world and the activities they complete. This provides meaning to the new terms introduced. Once familiar with a task or routine the children will be given the opportunity to deliver the instructions to their peers. There will also be chances for children to develop explanations by connecting their ideas and the events they have experienced. The adult will use 'how' or 'why' questions to extend response. Children are encouraged to create stories incorporating their surroundings and use talk to pretend a stick is something else. During reflection the children will use past tense to describe their experiences.
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Building Relationships	Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.	Teamwork activities involve the children initiating and attending to conversations. They may also need to take steps to resolve conflicts or compromise with other children. There will be plenty of opportunities provided for the children to share their ideas and knowledge with their peers. Sometimes, due to the environment or activities, accidents can happen and the children are encouraged to support and comfort each other. Questions about all aspects of Forest School and the environment are welcomed.
	Managing Self	Children are confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge. They can explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly. The children can their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices	Children will be faced with new or unfamiliar experiences throughout the year. We will encourage the children to try new things and take risks to build their self-confidence, with support where necessary. The rules are shared at the beginning of each session and the children are asked to consider reasons for these. The expectations relating to behaviour are clear and consistent throughout the sessions. Being given tasks to complete for the benefit of Forest School or others instils a sense of responsibility and pride. During snack time and cooking on the fire, good hygiene is explained and discussions are held regarding healthy diets. As there are no toileting facilities in Forest School, the children demonstrate remaining dry and clean during the session. After the session the children will change their clothing and we actively encourage the children to complete this without support. children are encouraged to undress and dress themselves independently after the session.
	Self-Regulation	Children will show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly. They can set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate. Children can give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to	Children will be made aware of the boundaries in which they are able to explore and the behavioural expectations for the tasks set. The children understand that their behaviour will have a consequence of a positive or negative step, just like in school. Some activities are designed so that the children are required to negotiate and solve problems with their peers. The qualities of patience and determination are supported. Taking turns and sharing resources is modelled and praised. Due to the changeable

		follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.	conditions outdoors routines and activities may need to change and the children will learn to understand this and adapt accordingly.
Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	Children will negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others. They will demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when both playing and moving energetically.	Gross motor skills will be used through the trim trail, den building and plant printing. Objects and construction equipment will be used safely and with increasing control to form bird feeders and build animal homes. Throughout the activities and when using tools, the children will be required to show an understanding of the need for safety. They will be supported to consider the risks and suggest ways of managing them. Carrying and storing the tools safely is taught, including the use of wheelbarrows. Different terrains and obstacles will also need to be negotiated. Opportunities will be given for running, jumping, hopping, dancing and climbing. The children will experience the effects of exercise on their body.
	Fine Motor Skills	Children will hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases. They will use a range of small tools and begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.	Using malleable and natural materials to form art work will allow them to practise and strengthen their dexterity. Picking up mini- beasts, planting seeds, whittling, knot tying, threading and taking rubbings will exercise children's fine motor skills and motor control. Every session there will be opportunities for free drawing or painting. When completing a task on paper, the children will always be asked to write their name independently or by copying. will exercise the children's fine motor skills and movement control. Using one and two-handed tools will require a range of movements and co- ordination.
Mathematics	Number	Children will have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number. They will be able to recognise quantities up to 5 without counting. Children will automatically recall number bonds up to 5 and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.	Using the number discs the children will find and order the digits found, recognising which numbers are missing. During mini-beast hunts the children will collect, estimate then count the creatures found. Then they can total two different species gathered. In a mixture of action games the children realise that not only objects, but anything can be counted, including steps, claps or jumps. Children will be asked to sort sets of natural objects into groups whilst recognising the total does not change.
	Mathematical Patterns	Children can verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system. They will compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity. Children will explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally. Children will manipulate shapes to develop spatial awareness skills and compare length, weight and capacity.	Scavenger hunts will require the children to recognise numbers on the crib sheet and then accurately count those objects up to 10 or beyond. The children are encouraged to record their findings throughout treasure hunts. Once completed the children can compare the data collected using the language of 'more' and 'fewer' to describe two different categories. By making nature necklaces children are able to form and describe their own patterns. Shapes, weights and sizes within the natural world are explored frequently with mathematical terms encouraged.
Literacy	Word Reading	Children will be able to say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs. They will read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound- blending and also read aloud simple sentences and books, including some common exception words	Some games will require the children to match the initial sound of an item or picture card to the letter on the wooden alphabet. Using the ID cards/books whilst bug hunting the children will see how information can be retrieved from a text. Rhyming strings will be created and continued by the children about a natural item found.
	Comprehension	Children will demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary. They will anticipate, where appropriate, key events in stories.	Children use their phonic knowledge to identify the initial sounds in words to play I-spy. Whilst orienteering or during scavenger hunts, the children will sound out the word cards found and match these to the picture crib sheet or identify these within the environment. The children can then share this information with their peers. Stories will be read during sessions with participation encouraged with the repeated phrases and through questioning.
	Writing	Children will write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. They will spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters. Children will write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.	Children will be asked to write their names on any piece of artwork or design. All children are encouraged to copy word cards or apply their phonics to write labels, captions or simple sentences. The children will be encouraged to read these back to ensure they make sense. Later in the year the children will write about their experiences in the class log book.
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials	Children will safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. They will share their creations, explaining the process they have used. Children will make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.	Sounds of nature activities involve the children using materials from within their environment to create art or products with a purpose, for themselves or others. A range of natural objects are used in art projects will introduce opportunities for the children to describe the texture of the items they use. Opportunities will be provided to build upon and develop their ideas in subsequent sessions. A range of tools and techniques will be taught for the children to then apply competently and appropriately in

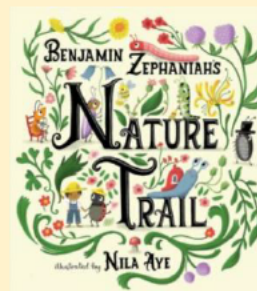
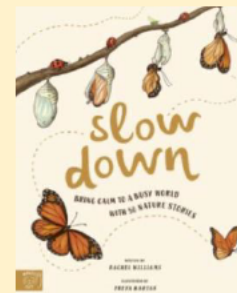
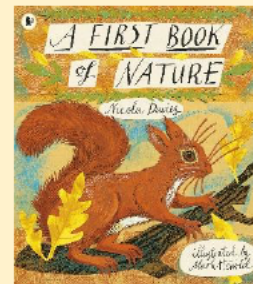
			their own tasks. They are given time to discuss and explain their creations with others.
	Being Imaginative and Expressive	Children will invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher. They will sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; performing these, rhymes, poems and stories with others. When appropriate they will try to move in time with music.	Every session will engage the children in periods of work and play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme. Many songs and rhymes are used in Forest School and the children quickly learn these, joining in. Children are frequently encouraged to express their ideas and build stories around their experiences. Role play opportunities are facilitated and the children are encouraged to use the available resources to support this, create props or use their instruments to add sound effects.
Understanding the World	People, Culture and Communities	Children will describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps. They will know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, and between life in this country and life in other countries. The children will draw upon their own experiences and what has been read to them in class.	With such a vast range of activities, the children will recognise that not all children like the same things. A respectful understanding is modelled and embedded. Using various stories, different cultures and family trees will be explored. By building shelters and using a fire to cook meals, the children experience what life can be like for people in other cultures. Discussions are encouraged to draw comparisons and explore the differences in lifestyle and share their own previous experiences. The use of maps and aerial photographs of the local area will draw attention to their immediate environment.
	The Natural World	Children will explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures. They will know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class. Children will understand some important processes and changes in the natural world, including the seasons and changing states of matter.	Through all activities within Forest School we aim to inspire the children to develop a care and concern for living things and the environment. Spending time in the great outdoors, throughout the year, the children will experience the impacts of the weather and seasonal change on the environment and upon themselves. Examining the flora and fauna within Forest School the children will be able to describe similarities and differences. They will also witness first-hand the life cycle process of plants and animals, along with natural processes such as shadows, ice melting and sound vibrations. The children will often talk about the things they have observed such as plants, animals, objects found and items created. This will continue for a long time after the day too.
	Past and Present	Children will talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society. They will know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class. Children will understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.	For many, the opportunities that take place in Forest School will be a significant event that they will remember and talk about. Time is offered to recall prior learning and gathering contributions for future sessions. Photographs and film clips will be taken during every session as a record and to share with the children during times of reflection. At various points throughout the year the children will use the I-pads to record items of interest, their own achievements and those of others.
<i>The activities set will vary depending on the season and interests of the children. These will be differentiated to meet the stages of development and capabilities of each child, with specialist equipment or additional support being used if necessary.</i>			

High Quality Texts Underpinning Our Forest School Curriculum

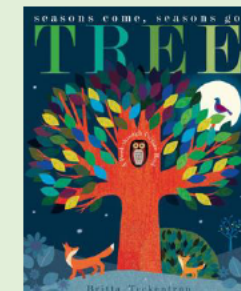
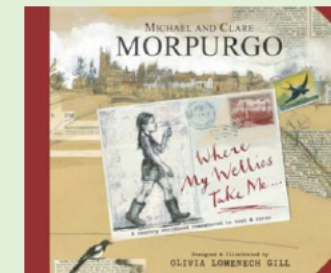
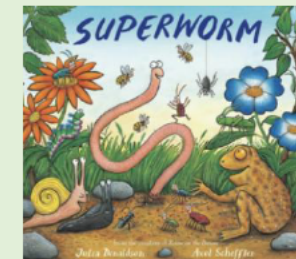
Autumn



Spring



Summer



Reception Forest School Overview

Area of Learning	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT	Kit allocation (Wellies/waterproofs) Tree hugging	Rake the leaves Leaf fireworks – crunching leaves	Tidy the forest school space ready for new growth	Composting – make a compost heap	Build a bug hotel	Collecting dry wood for autumn fires
CARE FOR PLANTS AND ANIMALS	Harvesting Make bird feeders Autumn plant survey	Making pumpkin soup Build a hedgehog shelter	RSPB Spring bird watch Spring tree study Spring plant survey	Frog investigation – lifecycle Planting - Grow your own potatoes	Butterfly investigation- lifecycle Summer plant survey	Revisit habitats – pond, trees, woodland and make comparisons to other seasons
POSITIVE ATTITUDES FOR OUTDOOR LEARNING	RSPB Wild Challenge We're going on a bear hunt The Gruffalo and The Gruffalo's Child- safety in the woods Room on a Broom – woodland potions	RSPB Wild Challenge Mad about mini beasts Leaf man story and pictures Pumpkin soup story Stickman story – journey stick	RSPB Wild Challenge Animal homes – match the tracks Owl babies – make a bird nest Stanley's Stick	RSPB Wild Challenge What the ladybird heard. Tadpole's Promise Create a nature bookmark	RSPB Wild Challenge The Very Hungry Caterpillar The Very Busy Spider The Bad tempered Ladybird	RSPB Wild Challenge Snail Trail (Ruth Brown) – snail race Stone Crazy (Tracy Gallup) Make cardboard tube flowers
COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION	Scavenger hunt Den building Painting landscapes Weather watch	Mud kitchen Autumn mini beast/ fungi hunt Autumn tree study	The duplication Game Den building Bark and leaf rubbings	Spring mini beast hunt Make landscape art Easter egg hunt	Den building Pond dipping Writing/telling woodland stories	Construct a labyrinth/ maze Teddy bears picnic Hunt for different textures
PLANTS	Fungi trump cards Season diary Harvest the vegetables	Deciduous and evergreen trees investigation Autumn seed hunt Harvest the vegetables	Spring tree blossoms and catkins hunt Season diary	Planting seeds for vegetable garden Planting herb planters	Potting on the sunflowers Planting out the vegetables Season diary	Season diary Make and float twig rafts

MAKING LEARNING CONNECTIONS	Mini beast hunt Learn forest landmarks Make twig wind chimes Signs of Autumn	Make a birdfeeder Autumn landscape art Clay play – making hedgehogs	Signs of Spring Things you can do with a stick. Move like mini beasts Ice art	Insect safari Woodland dragons with chalk on bark	Signs of Summer Flower crowns – role play Flower pressing	Tree identification Create a cairn Potato peeler whittling – make a wand
USING TOOLS, EQUIPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT EFFECTIVELY	Toast on the campfire Den building – mallets/sticks/tarps	Rakes Toast marshmallows on the campfire Clay Making willow Christmas trees	Fishing rods Den building – mallets/sticks/tarps	Chunky chalk Compost Hand trowel/fork Plant pots Seeds Wood/ bricks	Den building – mallets/sticks/tarps Hand trowel/fork	Potato peelers
MANAGING RISKS	Forest school rules Forest school call Recognising boundaries	Understanding how weather affects the forest (wind and trees falling)	Care and attention/ rules around the pond	Understand how to use hand trowel/rake safely	Understand how to use hand trowel/rake safely	Using potato peelers for whittling safely
CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT	Kit allocation (Wellies/waterproofs) Tree hugging	Rake the leaves Leaf fireworks – crunching leaves		Composting – make a compost heap	Build a bug hotel	Collecting dry wood for autumn fires

*See Reception planning sequence for each foundation subject

Retrieval Practice in the Forest School

Cognitive overload can be a barrier to learning and can subsequently halt a child from achieving their potential. In the EYFS, this is even more fundamental because if children cannot retain the building blocks for future learning, they may struggle throughout their schooling.

Learning must be broken down into manageable steps. This means children process just a few 'chunks' and then build on this in the next lesson.

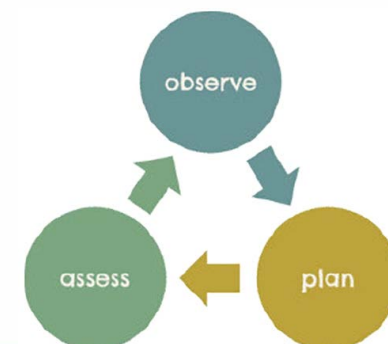
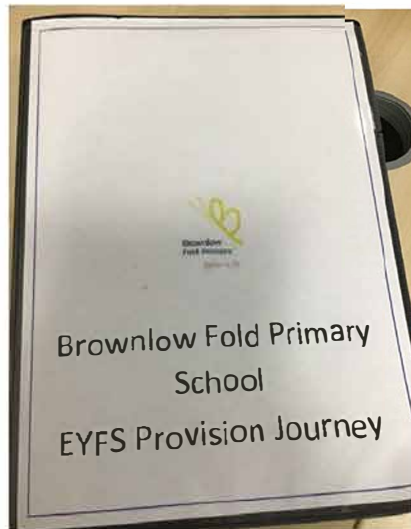
Reviewing, revisiting and **reactivating** prior learning is a powerful tool to build fluency. The method of frequent reviews allows children to build on what they know, especially when new concepts are introduced.

Teachers provide simple but clear models of the skills and content they are teaching enabling better outcomes. Using the power of talk to show simple thought processes and things that could go wrong will support speech. Scaffolding for more complex tasks will also help children.

Staff can use questioning in many ways. They can clarify a child's understanding or understanding of the child's learning process, rather than just seeking an answer.

Independent practice is essential to give learners time to process and practice tasks using the new concept and make sure children are not making too many mistakes. Learners need this time to rehearse. Rehearsal enables knowledge to become automated and a part of long term memory.

The cycle of planning, observing and assessing is key as part of retrieval practise.



Our Learning Journey is added to a classroom display each week, at the end of each half term this is moved into a floor book. The floor book is kept in the classroom for the children to freely look back on. This allows for natural reflective times within our provision. Adults are able to effectively question the children during these times as part of our retrieval practice.

References

EYFS Statutory Framework 2021 Development Matters 2021 Birth to Five Matters 2021 ELKLAN The reading framework: Teaching the foundations of literacy 2021 Bolton



Physical Development

The desire to run, jump, crawl, climb, balance and swing is natural and if the opportunity is there, these activities will form part of their play. Research shows that physical activities and movement can improve coordination, increase bone density and muscle growth, and develop strength, agility and endurance. All of these things are essential for the child's development, but also for their physical health in adulthood.

Social Development

Children need to play with others to understand tolerance, sharing, respect and empathy. Co-operation in play is key in helping humans form connections with each other. Play encourages trust and vulnerability.

Cognitive Development

Through play, children discover, explore and understand the world they live in. They will begin to understand the relationship between cause and effect and how their own behaviour impacts their environment. Play increases resilience by supporting us to memorise new skills, increase our attention span and solve problems – even as adults!

Emotional Development

Play reduces stress and helps regulate strong emotions. It brings joy, providing a safe space for children to role play and, in turn, experience a range of different feelings. Play can trigger the release of natural, 'feel-good' hormones such as dopamine, oxytocin and endorphins.

Nature-based play is all about...

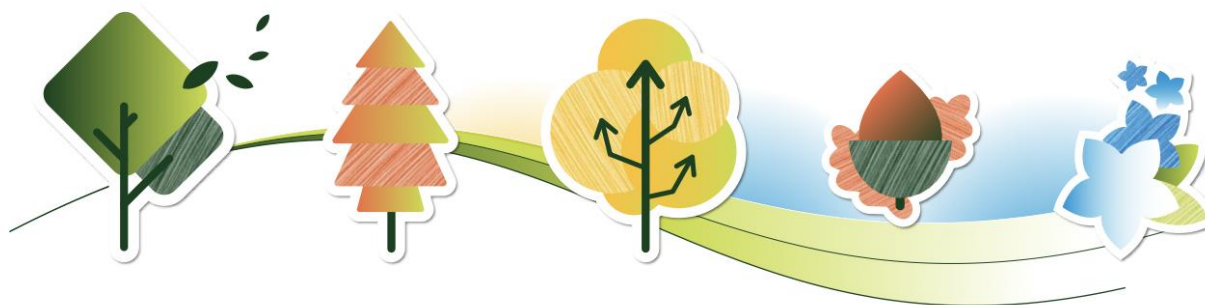
A sense of freedom

Adventure and challenge

Exploring and respecting nature

Taking responsibility

Being creative



“Research shows that noticing nature is more important than simply spending time in green places”

Instead of policing play, the role of the adult changes to a facilitator who:

- provides an environment that has lots of play possibility
- selects what materials/spaces will be available for a particular play session
- creates an environment where children feel empowered to take control and direct play
- involves children in the development of a minimum set of basic rules of conduct, especially relating to safety and mutual respect
- stands back, allowing children to lead their play
- resists the temptation to suggest activities or mediate in disputes
- observes closely, gaining an understanding of what is happening – not just what children are physically doing but what is going on in their minds and relationships as they do it – and what the impact of this is on children
- understands what is happening, informing future decisions about resources, materials and boundaries etc.
- encourages children to take responsibility for managing materials – including tidying up and storage
- intervenes – but only when absolutely necessary for children's welfare.

Nature-based play can...



SIX C'S FOR CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH NATURE

The Six C's framework—**Contact, Contemplation, Care, Celebration, Creativity, and Culture**—synthesises our recommendations, offering teachers actionable, research-informed practices to embed nature connection into school life, enhancing student wellbeing and environmental stewardship.



Contact (Sensory & Hands-On)

Connect Through the Senses:

Invite students to engage their senses—sight, sound, touch, smell—to forge deep connections with nature. Activities like listening to birdsong, feeling tree bark, or smelling wildflowers create vivid, personal experiences that foster a lasting bond.

Create Through Doing:

Encourage hands-on interaction with natural materials. Planting seeds, building with sticks, or observing insects builds tactile connections, making students feel involved in the natural world.



Contemplation (Reflection & Awareness)

Consider and Reflect:

Guide students to pause, notice, and reflect on their surroundings or emotions in nature. Journaling about a tree or discussing feelings during a walk cultivates mindfulness, deepening their environmental connection.

Craft Stories and Ideas:

Use storytelling to process nature experiences. Crafting tales about animals or plants helps students find personal meaning, making nature a significant part of their lives.



Care (Care & Empathy)

Care for the Living World:

Provide opportunities to nurture nature, such as planting trees, tending gardens, or feeding birds. These compassionate acts foster responsibility and stewardship, strengthening ties to the natural world.

Connect Emotionally:

Help students relate to nature by naming plants or imagining their perspectives, avoiding harmful anthropomorphizing (e.g., assuming worms need houses). Discussing a tree's "feelings" when cared for builds empathy.



Celebration (Meaning)

Celebrate Nature's Rhythms:

Mark ecological events like the first swallows or solstices with school activities, such as outdoor assemblies or nature-themed bells, to foster awareness and emotional bonds.

Honour Personal Connections:

Encourage students to share stories or reflections about nature's significance, reinforcing a sense of meaning and shared appreciation for the environment.



Creativity (Beauty & Expression)

Create Art from Nature:

Inspire students to craft art inspired by nature's beauty, like sketching landscapes or arranging leaves into patterns. These activities highlight aesthetic qualities, deepening emotional bonds.

Express Through Imagination:

Use music, drawing, or photography to capture nature's essence, allowing students to process experiences creatively and strengthen their connection.



Culture (Nature-Positive Culture)

Embed Nature in School Values:

Integrate nature connection into mission statements, routines, and events, fostering a shared identity rooted in care for the Earth.

Showcase Nature's Presence:

Use classroom displays with natural materials, biophilic colours (e.g., green, blue), and organic shapes to evoke nature, creating a culture of environmental stewardship.