

The Summerbank Approach to Forest School & Outdoor Education

Intent

Forest School & Outdoor Education are delivered in tandem, in our woodland and wild meadow area, to maximise the positive contributions both give.

Whilst being in our woodland setting, Forest School allows the children to be the drivers of their own decisions and to gain in self-confidence in an outdoor setting. The sessions are planned and run to allow the children to be decision makers, adventurers, creators and explorers. They also allow the children to take risks but whilst doing so to be risk assessors of their own decisions. The children are asked to work in teams, small groups or as individuals. Sometimes the activities may be creative, sometimes challenging, sometimes physical and sometimes using tools. They may not always be thoroughly achievable by all, but this is fine, as with this comes the ability to learn to carry on, or not achieve and creates more resilience within the child.

Thus, resilience, self-confidence, achievement, creativity and risk assessing/taking are all positive attributes Forest School endorses.

Outdoor Education, is delivered alongside Forest School in our woodland and wild meadow. Through this, the children are given opportunity to gain further understanding, by observations or engagement, of the seasons, the flora & the fauna of the area and how they are inter-linked. Through this gaining of knowledge, comes questioning, challenges of thought and inquiry of aspects of biodiversity.

Implement

An academic year has been given to each year group who have Forest School & Outdoor Education. This allows the children to gain confidence as the year progresses and they settle into the environment, the activities, the equipment and themselves as creators, explorers and risk takers. The children take part in sessions every other week thus ensuring each class witnesses the visual signs of the seasons changing.

Sessions are designed both for the class and individuals and are sometimes dynamically changed during sessions to ensure children/classes are given the maximum potential to attain self-confidence, creativity and exploration. Risk assessments are carried out prior to sessions but also dynamic risk assessments take place during sessions by both staff members.

Impact

The positive attributes which Forest School endorses - resilience, self-confidence, achievement, creativity and risk assessing/taking - are all attributes which are then transferable to the child in the classroom setting and to the child's holistic development.

Outdoor Education creates a more hands-on engagement with nature. Hopefully this leads to a desire for further knowledge and a respect of nature at this small scale, which thus leads to a respect of our natural world at a larger scale and a desire for further involvement.