



Forest School at
Northowram Primary School
Inspiring Success Beyond Expectation



Intent

Northowram's Forest School aims to give pupils the opportunity to connect with nature and the outdoor environment, giving them a unique hands-on learning experience. Forest School encourages pupils to work collaboratively and intends to help pupils develop a respect for the outdoor environment. Northowram's Forest School values the importance of play. Play is an innate impulse, the process of play is freely chosen, directed by the learner and intrinsically motivated. Our Forest School sessions encourage pupils to follow their own interests, grow their own ideas and develop their own instincts. Northowram's Forest School sessions give pupils the opportunity to take risks. Allowing pupils to take supported risks helps to develop their confidence, self-esteem and strength of character. Forest School sessions, where appropriate, make links to the curriculum to enhance and deepen pupils' knowledge.

Implementation

Northowram's Forest School takes place in the Forest School area within the school grounds. Forest School is offered to our Reception, Year 1, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils as well as some pupils with various additional needs. It is a regular occurrence that pupils access over an extended period of time, usually for 18 sessions over the school year allowing pupils to experience first-hand the changing seasons and the different weather and environment this brings. Each session lasts for two hours and is led by a qualified Forest School Leader with the support of a teaching assistant. The sessions have a high ratio of practitioners to pupils which allows children to participate in higher risk activities and gives opportunities for quality interactions and higher levels of support. Forest School sessions run in all weathers which allows the pupils to test and maintain their curiosity for nature and the outdoor environment. Opportunities are provided to make choices, find new ways of learning, problem solve, initiate learning, develop practical skills and become confident, resilient and capable learners who can also reflect on their own learning and progress. Forest School nurtures a culture based on collaboration and the embracing of challenges in an outdoor environment so that over time pupils develop our school values of courage, honesty, endeavour, kindness, forgiveness and gratitude.

Impact

Pupils who take part in Northowram's Forest School have built resilience, developed practical life skills, are able to think for themselves and solve real life problems. Forest School sessions have encouraged pupils to develop a positive attitude to learning and helped build team working skills, enabling them to share responsibility within our Forest School community. Northowram's Forest School has promoted young people's holistic development. The sessions encourage pupils to develop their physical (fine and gross motor), social, emotional, intellectual and communication skills. The Forest School sessions help pupils to increase their self-worth and aims to promote their eudaemonic wellbeing (a sense that one's life has meaning and is worthwhile.) Time in nature is proven to improve a sense of happiness and positively impact emotional well-being and mental health. Northowram's Forest school hopes to impact pupils' futures, children who play and learn outdoors regularly are far more likely to grow into active, outdoor loving adults. Spending time outside has recognised health benefits such as reducing stress and anxiety, improving your mood, supporting physical health, lowering the risk of depression, boosting your immune system, increasing life expectancy and giving you time to mentally rest and recharge for life's challenges.