

Welcome to our Forest School



Love • Respect • Ambition

www.thorntonprimary.lancs.sch.uk



During the spring of 2018, Thornton Primary School embarked on a journey to establish a Forest School area within the school grounds in order to deliver these specialist sessions to all the children.

This dream has now become a reality. Every child spends half a day, weekly or fortnightly, in the Forest School exploring, learning about and caring for the natural world.

What are Forest Schools?

Forest Schools were established in Scandinavia around 1950 and this type of education is now growing within the UK. The philosophy of the Forest Schools *“is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive outdoor experiences”* (FSA).

Our Forest School aims to develop the whole child increasing their confidence, independence, resilience, social and communications skills. As these grow their self-esteem will equally blossom. The children will take part in frequent and regular sessions. Through the direct practical activities and the environment provided, their natural curiosity of the world around them will be explored through child-led play and safe risk taking. At the same time, this style of learning will foster a respect for flora and fauna everywhere.

The Forest School sessions are delivered by one of our teachers, Mrs Brocklehurst who is a fully qualified Forest School Leader. Additional members of school staff attend and support the sessions too. Mrs Brocklehurst teaches skills such as tool use and knot tying so the children can then create objects from natural resources. Further activities such as the cultivation of crops, fire lighting, campfire cooking and den building are also taught. Observations will be made and the group reflect on their experiences so future activities can be planned to facilitate further exploration, based on the individual's interests.

Forest school sessions at Thornton Primary School are developed to support and enrich the wider curriculum delivered in the classroom, whilst promoting the school values of - Love, Respect and Ambition.

What activities take place and why?

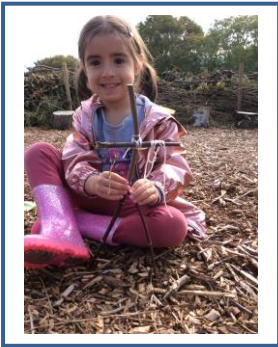
The Forest School philosophy strongly believes in the holistic development of a child, as does Thornton Primary School. A range of activities are provided in our Forest School sessions to facilitate progression in each of the 6 aspects.

- Social-** Games initiate teamwork to be explored with groups often being different to those within the classroom. Children also appreciate the skill sets other children may have and learn from each other. Free choice prompts children to take the lead in and develop activities with others.
- Physical-** Planting requires both gross and fine motor skills through digging and sowing seeds. Using tools also offers similar opportunities whilst improving their hand-eye coordination. Negotiating the terrain develops a range of physical skills through running, balancing, rolling. Building shelters allows children to lift, carry and position branches.
- Intellectual-** Open ended tasks encourage the children to engage their problem solving skills and use their prior knowledge in order to succeed. Teaching new skills expands a child's understanding of the world. Repurposing resources within the Forest School inspires children to think differently about the possible uses for an item and recycling.
- Communication-** Re-enacting stories increases a child's confidence to communicate with others, verbally or non-verbally. Around the fire circle and before tool use children have to listen carefully to the rules and instructions. These opportunities encourage the children to expand their range of technical vocabulary.
- Emotional-** Completing woodland crafts and using tools can provide learners with a sense of achievement and a boost to their self-esteem. Relaxation time encourages mindfulness, providing children the opportunity to regulate their own emotions.
- Spiritual-** Learning about flora and fauna inspires children to be compassionate, caring for and respecting their environment. Reflection time encourages the children to respect the thoughts and opinions of others.

This is not a comprehensive list, as the opportunities available are extensive and will vary depending upon the season or the interests of the children.

What will you see?

The children at Thornton Primary School are eager and excited to attend their Forest School sessions, regardless of the weather. Lots of the children enjoy digging or splashing in the mud and sometimes can leave the Forest School muddy. This means they have learnt something new, made memories and had a great amount of fun too! The children like to talk about their experiences and share the knowledge they have acquired. They relish the chance to educate their grown-ups when they get home.



Throughout the year the children will make many different things in Forest School from natural art, to animal feeders and even Christmas decorations. Where ever possible, the children will be able to take these creations home. They will undoubtedly be very proud of their designs and eager to discuss how they accomplished it, especially if they had to use tools.

During the Forest School sessions, the children develop a natural curiosity, respect and compassion for the natural world. Beyond Forest School this continues as they apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in their wider community. The children happily explore and enjoy spending more time in the great outdoors.



For further information about our Forest School please contact the school office and arrange a meeting with the Forest School Leader, Mrs Brocklehurst, or Mr Ashcroft.

For general information about Forest Schools visit-www.forestschoollassociation.org