

Potters Gate CE Primary School and St. Andrew's Infant School

Review Period:	3 Years
Next Review Due:	May 24
LGC Lead	
Staff Lead	Catherine Floyd

Intent

"Forest School is an inspirational process, which offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education." (Forest School Website)

We are very lucky at Potters Gate and St Andrew's to be able to offer all our KS1 and KS2 children the opportunity to experience the benefits of Forest School. These take place in our school grounds and two locally privately owned woods. During half-termly blocks, the children develop skills in a wide range of activities including fire lighting, cooking, tool work, den building, games and craft. This block of Forest School allows children to become confident learners in a familiar setting. The familiarity of routines, for example boundaries, expected responsibilities and resources for activities, enables children to feel safe, to take appropriate risks, try new activities, learn new skills and reflect and plan for the following week.

The sessions aim to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. It offers the children the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves. It also supports our Christian values and our school learning skills. The children are inspired to explore their environment, love the outdoors and develop invaluable skills to prepare them for their lives ahead which have a positive impact on our pupils.

Aims and objectives

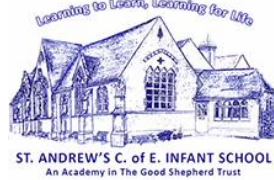
Our Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to:

- Develop self-esteem
- Develop self-confidence
- Form positive relationships with others
- Develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others
- Learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults
- Develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety.
- Learn specific skills which link into the curriculum
- Develop knowledge and appreciation of the natural world and a forest environment
- Develop learning skills to support their learning across all other areas of the curriculum
- Embed the school's Christian values to support enhance their holistic development

Implementation

The learner-centred approach of our Forest School interweaves with the ever-changing moods and marvels, potential and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School session and programme with discovery and difference. Yet each programme does also share a common set of principles, aimed at ensuring that all learners experience the cumulative and lasting benefits that quality Forest School offers.

At Forest School all participants are viewed as:



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In the name of Jesus, The Good Shepherd.

- equal, unique and valuable
- competent to explore & discover
- entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge
- entitled to choose, and to initiate and drive their own learning and development
- entitled to experience regular success
- entitled to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people
- entitled to develop a strong, positive relationship with their natural world

Both staff and volunteers act as facilitators supporting children to follow their own interests, learn new skills, take risks and participates in activities appropriate to the individuals needs either physical, emotional or social. They develop their life skills and Forest School specific skills e.g. tool skills in a progressive way.

Inclusiveness when doing Forest School

We believe that all pupils should be able to have equal access to Forest School. This enables children to develop a sense of worth and well-being. Each child's individual needs will need to be assessed when planning activities and individual risk assessments will be submitted when necessary.

Monitoring and review

During the session both children and staff reflect on their learning this is then used to inform the next steps for the following session. Observations are fed back to each class teacher. Pupil evaluations are carried out after every Forest School block and this informs following planning and SEF.

Trips and Risk Assessments

Risk assessments have been created for travelling to and from all Forest School sites alongside site specific risk assessments. All tool work has been risk assessed and is carried out strictly following these guidelines. These are available in the Forest School handbook and the school's computer system. All staff and volunteers should read these before participating. All sessions are run by a qualified Level 3 Forest School leader with additional staff and volunteer support to match appropriate age and activity related ratio.

Dynamic risk assessments are made during sessions due to changes such as weather and environment changes. These are done using the Risk Benefit Analysis.