

The outdoor classroom

This area was once a pond and wildlife area but is now an ideal, natural, enclosed spot for outdoor exploration.

The beauty of an outdoor classroom is that it changes naturally, almost daily. One day the carpet is leaves, the next snow or mud. One day it is sheltered by leaves, the next, winter sun is streaming through.

Wildlife appears, sounds change as the wind blows and birds sing.

The wallpaper could be frost, a bird perched, the warm sun, blossom falling...

-We have 20 mature and varied trees

-A fire circle for camp fires, singing and stories.

-A mud kitchen with pots & pans, wooden blocks & crates

-A collection of logs and branches for natural dens

-A store of tarpaulin and rope for shelter making

Forest School is a long term process. It develops Emotional Intelligence by utilising a natural, familiar and safe environment. Sessions take place at the same time, same place and with same people. Sessions are predominantly child led. Leaders have an idea of how each session might evolve. However, they go to each session with a bank of ideas and experiences to model for the learners. The children can decide to opt in and get involved, to observe or to follow their own (or a friend's) ideas and play. Leaders observe each child taking part and find out how they learn, their play type and skills. Leaders may target specific children at certain times to support their development. Leaders are sensitive to and flexible with their approach at all times.

Our sessions take place alongside the following documents:

- *Risk assessment and Emergency plan
- *Equal opportunities policy, Child Protection
- *Behaviour, Fire, SEN

PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE SESSIONS AND LOTS OF PHOTOS

<http://www.kingedwin.notts.sch.uk/foundation/>

We also have a 21 page Forest school handbook if you would like a copy, please let us know.

Mrs Sophie Sharp is working towards her Level 3 Forest School qualification. She coordinates, plans and oversees all Forest School sessions at King Edwin Primary. She is due to qualify April 2017

We are excited that upon qualifying, our current "Muddy Monday" & "Wild Wednesday" sessions will be able to follow the Forest School ethos and that we will be able to experience campfires and use of tools such as bow saw, loppers, knives & billhook.

Forest School at King Edwin

Sessions take place at the bottom of the school field in our designated area.





“The more risks you allow children to take, the better they learn to take care of themselves”
Roald Dahl

“Imagination is more important than knowledge”
Albert Einstein

CLOTHING- As the seasons change, so will the requirements and session times

Waterproof clothing and wellies are provided for all children taking part in the sessions.

If your child would like to bring their own, they are welcome to do so.

In the summer, we may only wear wellies, but your child will need thin clothing to protect legs and arms from scratches and sunburn, sun cream, insect repellent, sun hat (and sunglasses if preferred) and a water bottle.

In the winter, please also provide thermals, hat, scarf and gloves. An old coat is preferable as it may be worn on top of the suits.

There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing. Children attend in all weathers, learning that getting wet can be fun, and getting too hot or too cold can be managed. The only concession to the elements is high winds, in case of falling branches.

En route

We always take; a snack, a drink, clean water to wash hands with, a towel, a rubbish bag to bring rubbish back with us, stories, gloves, tools.

Information for specific children re medication, contact details.

Happy bag

We take a happy bag to every session.

This contains everything we need in case of emergency.

Whistle, mobile phone, food, water, first aid kit, thermal/foil/survival blanket, bothy bag.

If having a fire we will take fire glove, burns kit, water.

Why Forest School?

Social, Physical, Intellectual, Communication, Emotional, Spiritual

Exercise

Fresh air which can promote sleep

Learning about boundaries

Learn about safety when given freedom and when using tools, handling sticks, climbing trees

Develop skills- physical (when walking on uneven ground, tree climbing, log balancing) tools (when working alongside a qualified Forest School practitioner), tying knots for shelters and when making items such as picture frames

Increased understanding of and contact with the natural world. Particularly regarding the seasons as we explore the 'classroom' each day throughout the year.

Sensory exploration of natural objects and the outdoors including the weather. Describing these experiences and what we see, hear, smell, feel and taste. Discussing changes each session.

Increased opportunity for imagination and creative development as we climb, build, create and explore.

Team building- songs, stories, collaborative activities such as den building, fire circle

Respect- for living things in the environment such as worms, trees, birds. Listening to each other and other people's ideas in games, activities

Cooperative play using mud kitchen, dens, hide and seek, obstacle courses. Using language to explain our ideas, thoughts and feelings.