LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE FOR FOREST SCHOOL LEADERS

PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE

THE HIVE

AMAZING *OUTDOOR* MISSIONS

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[redacted]

1st Submission date: 06.03.23
2nd Submission date: 05.06.23

"I confirm that this portfolio was written by me and in my own words, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources which are clearly indicated and acknowledged as such. I am conscious that the incorporation of material from other works or a paraphrase of such material without acknowledgement will be treated as plagiarism, subject to the custom and usage of the subject, according to the OCNWM Regulations on Conduct of Examinations. The source of any picture, map or other illustration is also indicated, as is the source, published or unpublished, of any material not resulting from my own experimentation, observation or specimen-collecting."

Photo disclaimer

All photos of children are used with the permission of parent/carers and Selborne Primary School. Any children who did not give full photo permission have had their faces covered.

UNIT 1 - FOREST SCHOOL PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Q1. Document the planning and delivery of your 6 Forest School sessions

To answer this question, you need to show the logbook evidence of your delivery of 6 Forest School sessions. Your logbook will also need to include evidence of:

1. *Your planning process*
2. *Your ability to reflect participants' interests and needs and be flexible*
3. *Your ability to include progression from one session to the next*

⇒ **Please see separate document**

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Q2. Assess the impact of your Forest School sessions on 3 participants' learning and development

To answer this question, you need to fill in the template provided for each of the 3 participants (see details below). The template includes the following:

1. *Baseline assessment for each of the 3 participants at the start of the 6 sessions*
2. *Evidence of observations of the participants during each session*
3. *Evaluation of observations to assess the impact of the sessions on the 3 participants*
4. *Recommendations for extending their learning and development in future sessions*

⇒ Please see separate document.

Q3. Conduct an evaluation of your 6 Forest School sessions

To answer this question, you need to evaluate each of your 6 FS sessions, using the table provided below. Please bear in mind the following in your answers:

- *Participant experience*
- *Communication of the ethos of FS*
- *Effectiveness of your session planning*
- *Resourcing*
- *Site management*

Summary evaluation at the end of the 6 sessions

Evaluate your overall experience of running a Forest School programme. Consider what you have learned and how this will change what you do next time. Your evaluation needs to include:

- *The adult experience (your own and other supporting adults)*
- *The children's experience*
- *The communication of the Forest School ethos*
- *The effectiveness of your handbook in supporting the delivery*
- *The effectiveness of your session planning*
- *Your equipment and resources*
- *Site management*

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UNIT 2 - FOREST SCHOOL PROGRAMME LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Q1. Summarise how the Forest School principles apply to your own setting

Describe the Forest School principles for good practice, as agreed by the UK Forest School community. To answer this question, you should consult the Forest School Association's website, which lists the principles.

These are the six Forest School principles agreed by the Forest School Association: *(Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).*

- FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.
- FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.

In this answer, I will take each of these principles and discuss them in more detail, referring back to my own setting of Selborne Primary School.

FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.

Forest School takes place regularly, ideally at least every other week, with the same group of learners, over an extended period of time, if practicable encompassing the seasons. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

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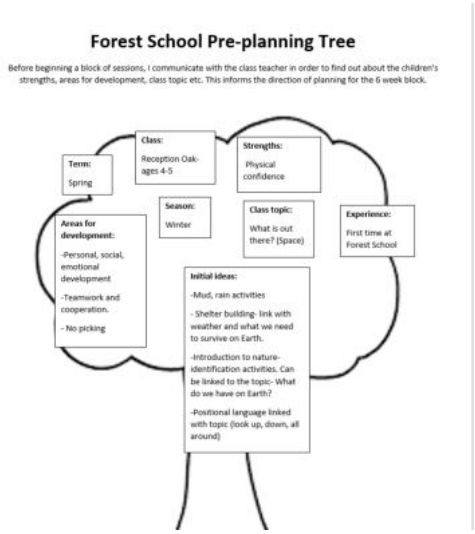
Selborne Primary School is in the process of setting up regular Forest School sessions. It has been agreed that we will start off with Reception age children. Each class is split into two groups of 15 and will be getting at least 6 consecutive weeks of sessions, lasting for two hours each. This sits within the first Forest School principle. The ARP (Additional Resource Provision) has strongly expressed their interest in having their own Forest School block, which I will be able to accommodate within the Summer term.

A Forest School programme has a structure which is based on the observations and collaborative work between learners and practitioners. This structure should clearly demonstrate progression of learning. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Each session is evaluated by me. I look at: children's interests, areas of play, areas for development, any questions asked etc. This then helps to inform the next weeks planning. This circle of evaluation and planning continues throughout the 6 week block.

As each group of children, I take to Forest School will be different, I have developed a pre-planning template, in order to gain information, such as children's strengths, areas for development, class topic, prior Forest School experience etc.



This will help inform my initial planning for the group. During the first session, I will be able to observe how the children respond and interact with the environment. This will then help inform the next weeks planning. This will continue throughout the block, so

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that, initial planning ideas may be totally scrapped and adapted to support the children's individual Forest School journeys. During my 6 weeks focus sessions, I never planned more than one week in advance. I used my lesson evaluations to guide the planning. In consequence, the 6 sessions turned out very differently from any initial ideas I might have had. For example, after the first couple of weeks, I observed that many of the children, whilst playing happily in the environment, were not interacting with, or observing it. I reflected that many of these children were playing in this kind of environment for the first time and this could be quite overwhelming. I had to think very hard of a means to bridge the gap between children and nature. I was able to think of creating the characters of Forest Babies, using old Beat Babies (phonics toys) I had in my garage at home. This worked wonderfully with Reception aged children, however, I never would have thought to use them, had I not been reflecting on my observations. Likewise, just because they worked well this this set of children, I would not necessarily use them with a different group of Reception aged children.

The initial sessions of any programme establish physical and behavioural boundaries as well as making initial observations on which to base future programme development. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

I take the time during the beginning of every session to go through the ethos and safety agreements of Forest School. Before starting their 6 week block of FS sessions, I took the groups for a "walk around" the site, to familiarize them with it and agree expectations for behaviour and safety. To help cement these rules, I got the children to explore the site practising how to be a "wise owl", demonstrating their looking, listening and thinking skills. I got children to pretend to be hiding bunnies, coming out of their hiding places when they hear the "123 Where are you?". I also got a different child each week to demonstrate to the group how to hold and transport sticks safely. This gave me a good opportunity to observe individual and group understanding of these rules.

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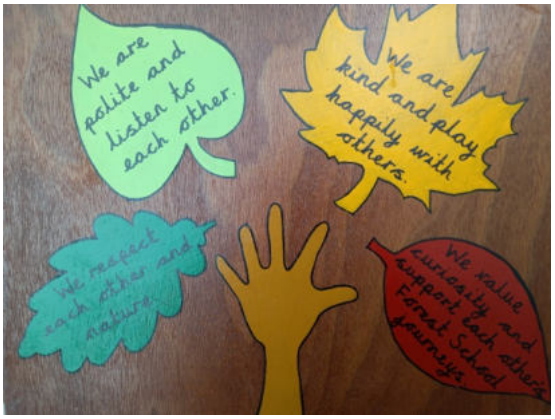
Ethos and safety agreements are permanently displayed in the FS site and I use handheld picture cards to reinforce these during basecamp.



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FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Whilst woodland is the ideal environment for Forest School, many other sites, some with only a few trees, are able to support good Forest School practice.
The woodland is ideally suited to match the needs of the programme and the learners, providing them with the space and environment in which to explore and discover. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

I have worked very hard to design and create an environment at Selborne Primary School, which fits within this Forest School principle. Before planning the area, I went to visit some other Forest School sites around Ealing. I observed that each one was different, in accordance with space, already established flora etc. Litten nature reserve, for example is very large and has several ponds; Viking Primary school has large areas of concreted ground, due to the fact that the site lies on an old WW2 air- aid shelter; and, Gifford Primary School has many structures, such as a large shelter and man-made pathways. It was invaluable to speak to practitioners who use these sites about the pros and cons and highlighting the most important elements. The main message I received was that when creating my own Forest School site, I did not need to pay for permanent features to be included, such as seating or large shelters. This fits exactly with the FS principle that the area should be 'natural'.

Looking at my own school, it became obvious where our Forest School should be located, as we had an overgrown area to the side of the school field with many well-established trees. I created a rough plan which was given to contractors, who were very flexible. I was able to be on site during the summer holiday while the site was being created and project manage. It was very important to me, that although much of the area did need clearing, we kept large areas of bramble and all trees, including self-established saplings. The only man-made structures added to the site were a storage shed, a very small shelter (for keeping resources under), and the addition of a pond, pallet made mud kitchen, compost storage and small wooden picket fence around the site. An area of turf was also laid at the entrance and this grass will be allowed to grow long. Base-camp is made up of logs, which are all transferable. During the process of creating the site all fallen logs were piled up to create a natural minibeast habitat or used to create boundaries along the pathways. No natural waste was taken off the site. All the bramble etc, cleared was used to create a meadow mound.

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The ideal natural area to create our Forest School.

It was so overgrown, so as to be inaccessible.

On completion of the Forest School: Still very natural.

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All natural waste was used on site. The creation of a mound can also be found in our local area: Northala Fields was made from the waste of the old Wembley stadium.

A pile of logs has been left to create a habitat for minibeasts.

A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

I have created an ecological impact report and woodland management plan, as part of my Forest School Handbook. I have already taken steps to increase biodiversity in the site, by the planting of 13 new trees: An apple, pear, Fir, 5 Rowans and 5 Crab-apples. This planting was done with the children.

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As mentioned in the previous section, all care was taken during the planning and creation of the Forest School site, to minimize ecological impact.

Forest School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices in staff, learners and the wider community. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

This is a particularly important principle to me. Selborne Primary is a London school and many of our children live in flats, without gardens. Children are spending less time outside and particularly less time developing a relationship with the natural world. Although, at the moment FS is limited to Reception children, I have been taking steps to include the whole school, by creating the role of Forest School ambassadors. These children from KS2, applied for the role by writing an application essay, describing environmental issues affecting us and their interest in nature. Their role as school ambassadors involves promoting environmental issues within the school. They have supported me in the planting of new trees and creating ecological surveys of the FS site. I also signed the school up for the Great Schools Birdwatch 2023. Children across the school helped survey our bird numbers and breeds.

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Children are developing a personal relationship with nature, through their regular FS sessions.

Forest School uses natural resources for inspiration, to enable ideas and to encourage intrinsic motivation. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

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The Forest School offers an endless supply of natural resources that children can use to inspire and learn from. In my planning of Forest School, we used leaves, sticks and mud on a weekly basis. We also foraged for other natural resources, such as acorns, conkers and Hawthorn berries. Here are some examples of children using natural resources to enable their play.

Using natural objects for weighing.

Collecting natural objects for Nature crowns.

Mud painting and mud kitchen.

Collecting sticks to make wands.

A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

As part of my Handbook, I have created a survey of the flora and fauna in the Forest School site. I have also created an ecological impact report and site management plan. In the planning of the site, a large area to the side was left un-cleared, in order to limit our

ecological impact. This area contains fox dens and dense ground-level flora to support small mammals, birds and insects. I also tried to leave nature corridors in the site itself, to allow small mammals to travel safely from one end to the other.

FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Where appropriate, the Forest School leader will aim to link experiences at Forest School to home, work and /or school education. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Before beginning my 6-week block of lessons, I speak to the class teacher in order to gain information regarding the class topic and other aspects linked to the children's classroom learning. This goes on my pre-planning sheet and helps to inform directions that may be taken during the course of the block. For example, during my focus 6-week block, the children were learning about *Changes* during topic time in class. This fit very well with the natural changes that were happening in the Forest School at the time, with regards to the seasons. The real-life experiences they were having during Forest School helped to cement the more formal learning they were doing inside the classroom.

Forest School programmes aim to develop, where appropriate, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and spiritual aspects of the learner. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

It is always important to think about the whole child, in a holistic sense. Selborne Primary School, is on the whole a very formal educational establishment, which values high academic achievement. This makes Forest School even more important, as not all children will fit into these expectations. Forest School is about the individuals own journey. Everyone has different skills, interests, strengths and weaknesses. Although a lot of 'learning' takes place in Forest School, my main aim for the sessions is to see that children are happy, inspired by their surroundings and gaining new experiences they would not get from the classroom. Mental health has become a very important consideration in schools and in the wider community over the last few years. This is why I like to start each session by asking the children to share how they are feeling.

FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

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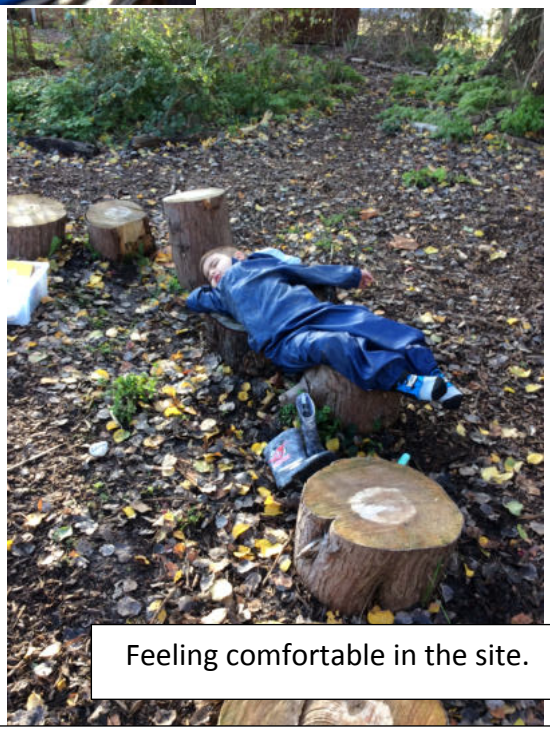
Here are some examples of children at Selborne Primary FS taking their own supported risks, in a way that follows their own motivations and interests.

Children having new experiences, such as lying in a hammock.

Learning to get messy!



Feeling comfortable in the site.

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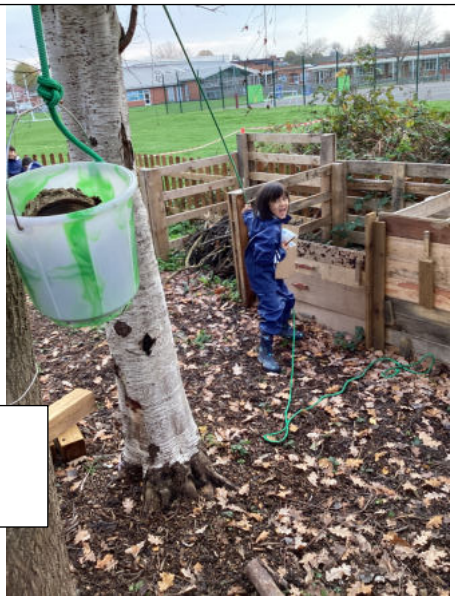

Testing their own strengths.

Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

As part of the FS handbook, a full risk assessment has been made for tool use and fire safety. If a specific skill is being taught during a session, I will make sure that I and all relevant adults are fully aware of safety procedures. Skills and tool use will only be taught to children who demonstrate their listening skills, are able to follow instructions carefully and that have the right level of physical development.

Using mallets.

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Learning new skills and using tools safely.

Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner that is tailored to the developmental stage of the learner. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

As part of my FS Handbook, I have created a Risk Benefit Analysis for all activities at Forest School. This includes: tools; fires; rope; shelters; sticks; mud kitchen; foraging and using natural resources; cooking etc. This outlines the clear benefits to children in taking part in activities which may carry risk to health. For example, the use of tools, such as Sheath knife or Bow saw can cause significant injury if not taught and managed correctly. As FS leader, I would only allow children to take part in certain risky play, when they are deemed ready. This means that they are at an appropriate age, responsibility level and show good levels of listen skills and the ability to follow safety instructions. During the Forest School sessions, sometimes the practitioner has to perform a dynamic risk assessment, as the children take play in their own direction. During one of my Forest School sessions, children wanted to move some of the seating logs, to create a dining area. This involved me doing a dynamic risk assessment and teaching the children how to safely roll logs rather than carrying.

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FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Forest School is led by qualified Forest School practitioners, who are required to hold a minimum of an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification. Find more information on Forest School qualifications. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

I will be the only colleague at Selborne Primary School to hold the Level 3 Forest School qualification to begin with. As teaching of Forest School expands, I will be making recommendations to allow other members of staff to gain at least Level 2.

There is a high ratio of practitioner/adults to learners. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Groups of 15 children will be taken to Forest School with an adult child ration of 2:15. This will include a level 3 Forest School leader and one other adult. The number of adults during a session may increase with SEND children who are allocated 1:1 support or any other children are identified as needed extra supervision. It must be made clear that these other adults are there to support their individual children and not the group as a whole.

Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School are subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with children, young people and vulnerable people. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

All staff and helpers at Selborne Primary School are required to have DBS clearance. Below is a link to the schools safer recruitment and selection policy: https://www.selborne.ealing.sch.uk/docs/POLICIES/Safer_Recruitment_and_Selection_Policy_-_July_2020.pdf

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Visitor protocol

All visitors to the school have to sign in electronically at the school office. Visitors are not usually permitted, without prior arrangement. Their photo is taken, as well as personal details collected. Any visitors are escorted around the school and are not left to wander by themselves.

Any visitors to the Forest School will be greeted at the main office by Ms Bowen, FS Lead, who will make sure they have been correctly sign in before escorting them to the Forest School. They will be supervised around the site and escorted back to the office after their visit.

Below is a link to the schools Behaviour or Parents, carers and visitors policy:
https://www.selborne.ealing.sch.uk/docs/POLICIES/Behaviour_of_Parents_Carers_and_Visitors_on_School_Site_Policy_-_January_2021.pdf

Practitioners need to hold an up-to-date first aid qualification, which includes paediatric (if appropriate) and outdoor elements. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Forest School allows children to take risks in a natural environment and offers experiences with tools and activities that may include fire. For this reason, it is vital that the FS leader holds the relevant first-aid qualifications. From a personal perspective, I felt it was vital to gain these qualifications before starting any Forest School teaching, as the person with ultimate responsibility for the children's safety.


ITC First

This is to certify that

Karina Bowen

has successfully passed

ITC Level 3 Award in Paediatric First Aid

Qualification Accreditation Number: 601/3327/2 Qualification Credit Value: 2

The learner has been awarded credit(s) for the following unit(s):

Unit Title	Code	Level	Credits
Emergency Paediatric First Aid	Y/617/3908	3	1
Managing Paediatric Illness, Injuries and Emergencies	R/617/3910	3	1

This certificate is valid for 3 years from the date of issue

Centre Details: React First Ltd
Venue: Shadwell Basin Activity Centre, London
Certificate Number: WBJZV563
Date of issue: 10/07/2022
Expires: 10/07/2025


ITC First

This is to certify that

Karina Bowen

has successfully passed

ITC Forest School First Aid

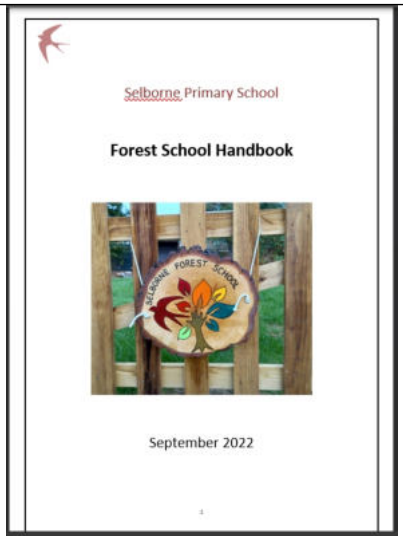
Forest School First Aid - 2 Days

This certificate is valid for 3 years from the date of issue

Centre Details: React First Ltd
Venue: Shadwell Basin Activity Centre, London
Certificate Number: WBQX1U17
Date of issue: 10/07/2022
Expires: 10/07/2025

Forest School is backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Before beginning any Forest School sessions, the Handbook was completed, which includes all policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities.



All concerned adults were made clear of their roles before sessions began.

The role of adults at Forest School:

-Provide a positive role model for all children at all times.
-Allow children time to discuss issues or concerns and engage them in setting rules.
-Set small achievable tasks which do not set children up to fail.
- Give verbal praise for good behaviour, team work and cooperation.
- Take into account children's different learning styles.
- Be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times
- Be consistent with behaviour management.

Forest School leaders' roles and responsibilities:

- To plan and lead all Forest School sessions.
- To ensure the safety of all children and other adults within the site, including completing risk assessments for all planned activities, as well as dynamic risk assessments on the day and during the sessions.
- To ensure that other adults know and understand their responsibilities.
- To provide all staff with an updated and complete handbook.
- To review the handbook and policies on an annual basis.
- To have an up-to-date first aid certificate (every 3 years).
- To take into account the personal needs and abilities of all children participating.
- To ensure effective communication with staff in regard to any changes that may be needed to be made during each session.
- To provide appropriate resources for each session.
- To make sure equipment and tools are stored appropriately and kept in good condition.

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The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner and sees themselves, therefore, as a learner too. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

In the process of setting up the Forest School at Selborne Primary School, I visited other sites and created links with other Forest School practitioners in my local area. This network helps support each other's practice. Colleagues often post question, suggestions, share good ideas etc. on the WhatsApp group chat. This helps us all to be constantly reflecting on our own practice and learning from each other's experiences.

FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.

A learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

The Practitioner models the pedagogy, which they promote during their programmes through careful planning, appropriate dialogue and relationship building. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Learner led play is at the heart of FS, therefore all my Forest School sessions are play based. Observations help me to understand where the children's needs and interests lie and this helps inform the planning. The children also need to feel safe; having the same routines and patterns in each session helps to develop this. Each child is given a stone with their name on, and at the beginning of each session, asked to place it by the emotion that represents how they are feeling. It is made clear to the children that all emotions are valid but can also be changed. This helps me build a strong foundation of trust and open dialogue with the children.

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Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process, and play is recognised as vital to learning and development at Forest School. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

As an experienced Early Years teacher, I have worked with a play- based curriculum for many years. As such, I fully understand the importance of play to children's learning and development. My job, as FS leader is to support this play- based system. Providing children with open ended ideas and equipment helps support this. For example, during my 6 sessions, the ribbons got used for many different uses. I originally used them to demonstrate knots, however, leaving them out for the children to play with, resulted in the children not just learning knots, but also watching them catch in the wind, using them for decoration, and even for a game of limbo.

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Forest School allows for spontaneous and child lead play to take place, like this game of *limbo*.

Forest School provides a stimulus for all learning preferences and dispositions. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Through careful observations, planning and preparation of activities, this enables all learning preferences to be covered. The four main learning styles are: visual, auditory, read/write and kinaesthetic. While it is easy for kinaesthetic learners to thrive during Forest School, it is always important for me to make sure that I provide things like books, clipboards, mark-making experiences for the read/write learners; binoculars, magnifying glasses etc. for the visual learners and to provide quiet/listening opportunities and music making for the auditory learners.

I always put nature books out; fiction and non-fiction.

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Children are allowed to chalk on the back wall of the shelter.

Binoculars, magnifying glasses and clipboards are provided weekly.

Reflective practice is a feature of each session to ensure learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

I have found that, often leaving the final base-camp session open for reflection is a good way to allow children to share their experiences/learning/achievements from the session. In turn, this becomes a good opportunity for me, as a practitioner to assess where the planning for the next session might go.

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Reflection time at the end of each session is a very useful way to gain understanding of children's learning and interests, which in turn help inform future planning.

Practitioner observation is an important element of Forest School pedagogy. Observations feed into 'scaffolding' and tailoring experiences to learning and development at Forest School. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

During my focus 6 weeks sessions, taking observations and photo evidence became an invaluable way of helping me reflect on the children's experience and learning during the two hours. I also found, having a debriefing chat with the LSA very useful, as she often got to observe different things to myself. In doing this, I was able to see what skills I needed to work on with the children, particular vocabulary that needed extra support and most importantly, where their interests lay. It is important to continue doing this for all sessions, as each group is different and deserves to get their own unique and tailor-made Forest School experience.

Describe the challenges of implementing the principles in your setting, with your proposed approach to overcoming them. To answer this question, you can draw on your experience during your 6 Forest School sessions.

In this answer I will take each FS principle and describe the challenges I have encountered in implementing them at Selborne Primary School. I will then talk about some ideas for overcoming them.

FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.

As with most mainstream Primary schools, one of the biggest challenges to overcome when implementing Forest School, is how to fit 2-hour sessions of no less than 6 weeks into an already busy timetable. Selborne is traditionally a very academic school, who are proud to get high SATs results and wish to maintain them. This is often gained through extra phonics sessions throughout the week and many interventions for children. Although teachers have been very positive about the idea of bringing FS learning to Selborne, they have been reluctant to give over a full two-hour session out of their day. Comments such as, "it must not disrupt the children's learning", have been made. As Forest School is still new at Selborne and I am the only person leading it, it has been very important for me to establish links to other Ealing schools who also provide FS. I have been able to get timetables from these schools, which I have been sharing with the Senior Leadership Team. This demonstrates to them, that it is possible to include long-term, regular sessions into the school day. I have also been able to deliver an inset to all teaching colleagues, explaining what FS is about and communicating the 6 principles.

An observation I made from my six-week Forest School session was that ideally, children would be taken for more than six weeks. I felt that after these six weeks, some children were only just starting to show real confidence within the setting and beginning to take more physical risks etc.

FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Our Forest School site at Selborne is brand new. It was created by myself and a team of contractors during August 2022. Before creating the site, I visited several local Forest Schools in order to get a good idea of what we needed. Although we have a large field at Selborne, only one area to the side of the field was deemed appropriate for our FS site. This already had many mature trees, including saplings, but was otherwise very overgrown with bramble. Part of the area I wanted to include in the site already had an established fox den and it was decided to leave this for them. During the planning process for the site, I encountered challenges from other staff involved, who did not understand the principles of FS. Suggestions were made, such as, getting rid of all bramble and putting down a ground membrane, in order to prevent its regrowth and that of "other weeds". In order to overcome these challenges, I had to stay firm in my convictions and spent much time explaining the principles of FS to these colleagues, who were simply concerned about site maintenance. The site given over to Forest School also became smaller than I would have liked, as I was not allowed to take up any of the school playing field.
As the site is still very new, it has not had time to completely establish. A good example of this, is the pond area, which needs more planting in and around it, in order to encourage greater biodiversity into the FS site. The meadow has also not, yet had time to establish. However, ground areas which were cleared very soon started to regrow, and as large

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areas of bramble are no longer choking smaller flora, such as, Cleaver, Dead Nettle, Cow Parsley and other common woodland plants, they are now able to spread more successfully. I am confident that after a couple of years the site will mature well. Despite a few set-backs and compromises made during the process of creating FS at Selborne, I feel confident that what was achieved offers children the natural environment, containing much flora and fauna which is such an integral aspect of FS learning. It certainly stands out compared to the rest of the school as a place where children can explore and develop a strong relationship with the natural world. For future development of the site, I plan to plant more trees.

Ongoing work to the pond area.

FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.

Some of the children initially found self-directed learning in the Forest School tricky, as they were not used to being in a natural environment. I had to plan some activities that helped facilitating exploration, such as sensory games, treasure hunts etc. These games remained open-ended, so that if children wanted to take it in their own direction they could. I found the use of these games would often lead into child's own learner led play. Getting the balance right between gentle leader facilitation in play, means growth and development can be maximised. Getting the balance right, as a teacher, during learner led play can be hard; knowing when to step in and when to stand back and let the children 'get on with it'. My years of experience as an Early Years teacher was definitely useful for this, however I sometimes found it hard, as I am still getting used to working in a different environment too. I found my instinct was leading me to step in more than I would normally do, due to my own anxieties over the children having accidents.

FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

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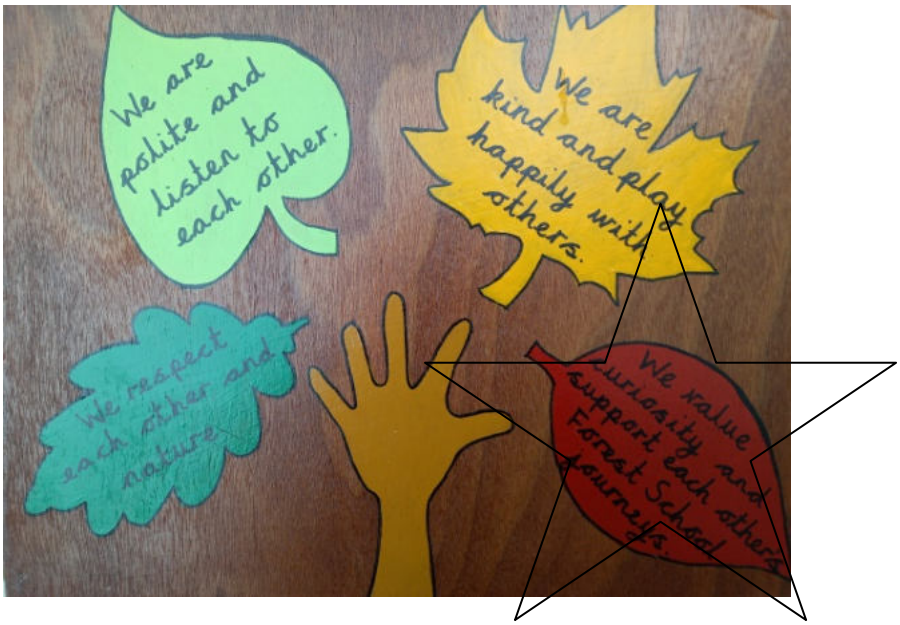
Constantly keeping in mind, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and spiritual aspects of the learner can feel like a challenge. Each child is unique and therefore working on a different aspect of their development. Keeping this is mind, and understanding that each child will have their own Forest School journey is vital. I have put this as one of my Forest School values and it is just as important for me to remind myself of this as it is to communicate to the children.



FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

One of the big personal challenges I have to overcome is my fear that, in taking risks, the children will constantly be having accidents. I have had to reflect that my understanding of taking risks at FS, ran only along the lines of physical risk, such as tool use and gross motor activities. This is, of course part of the risk taking that might take place during Forest School. Having my Handbook in place, with risk assessments and risk/benefit analysis in place is very important, but I also need to make sure that I refresh myself on them before teaching skills and to sometimes allow for well controlled spontaneity. Getting the right balance feels tricky and being able to judge when children are ready to learn certain skills and take certain risks, must come with practitioner experience.

Because I have been so focused on thinking about the physical risks that children might take, I have sometimes forgotten that risk comes in many different forms. For some children, taking risks at Forest School might be about overcoming a fear of minibeasts, or allowing themselves to get dirty.

FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

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Forest School is in its infancy at Selborne Primary School. I am the only colleague who is currently taking the FS qualification. I have been attempting to establish FS at Selborne, with the support of the school governors, SLT, enthusiastic teachers and support staff. There has been some interest from other teaching staff with regards to training and I hope in the future we will be able to gain more qualified FS staff at Selborne.

Q2. Give 2 examples of how Forest School encourages the physical development and well-being of participants

To answer this question, you can draw on your experience during your 6 Forest School sessions. If you use research to make your argument, remember to quote the source.

Forest School helps to encourage both fine and gross motor skills. Many of the children I took to Forest School had no previous experience of wearing wellington boots and it was clear from my observations that initially, some of the children were unsure, walking on uneven ground. As a London school, Selborne Primary does not have many natural woodland in the surrounding area and children's playgrounds tend to be safety surfaced. For these reasons, many of the children were having new physical experiences.

One of my focus children was initially very physically tentative around the site. This particular child has good fine motor skills but does not choose to take part in any large physical activities. For example, this child very rarely plays outside in the Reception playground and has never been observed on any climbing apparatus. For the first couple of weeks, the child remained very stationary during the sessions. She did not wander around and remained at one or two chosen activities, which were within her comfort zone. Despite this, it was still good to have her doing these things in an outdoor setting, and sometimes on a larger scale than would be done inside. For example, one week, she spent much of her time engaged in a large mud painting. Even though painting falls within her comfort zone and area of interest, she would not usually be able to do it on such a large scale.

As the weeks progressed, it was clear that she was gaining in confidence physically, using much more of the site. Being given opportunities to follow her creative interests with activities such as: tree rubbing; small world/imaginative play; clay faces, but in a different way from how those activities would feel in a more controlled, physically predictable environment, allowed her to increase gross motor confidence. Having the hammock out for a few weeks in a row meant that she could come back to a physical challenge, that she was initially scared of. She went from only rocking others, to sitting on it tentatively to eventually lying back in it.

In contrast to this focus child, there were other children within the group who love gross motor activities. These children, are often described as physically confident but lacking refinement or control. They tended to be the kinds of children who will get told off in the Reception playground for 'racing around', 'not being careful' or accidently hurting their friends. These children were given much more freedom to explore their physicality at Forest School. Many children relished the idea that they could use large spades for digging, pick up and transport large sticks, climb in and out of tents, balance on logs, try their strength with pullies etc. I found that, on the whole, these children enjoyed taking physical risks, but were doing so in a much more thoughtful way. I observed children who would sometimes be described as 'a bull in a China shop' showing more physical awareness of their surroundings and of those around them.

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Digging using real spades.

Climbing up the log-pile.

In addition, I observed these children taking part in more fine motor activities, which they would not normally choose to do within the confines of the classroom. For example, going on a nature hunt with a clipboard and magnifying glass or binoculars allowed the children to do activities which combined both gross and fine motor skills.

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Minibeast hunting combined gross and fine-motor skills.

Q3. Give 2 examples of how Forest School supports the emotional and social development and well-being of participants

To answer this question, you can draw on your experience during your 6 Forest School sessions. If you use research to make your argument, remember to quote the source. Focus on self-esteem, confidence, emotional intelligence, resilience and spiritual development.

Forest School is a holistic approach. At Forest school we care about the development of the whole child, including emotionally and socially. Many of the activities at Forest School help to encourage group cooperation, a sense of community and self-confidence.

At the beginning of each FS session, time is spent talking about our emotions. At Selborne Primary school we use The Zones of Regulation to aid this. Each classroom has signs up to support children's understanding of which zone they may be in. I decided that it was important to continue this at Forest School. I created faces to represent different emotions and painted them red, blue, yellow and green to represent the different zones. Children were asked at the beginning of each session to place their name next to the face, representing how they felt. We then spent time talking about this and discussing different techniques we could employ to regulate these emotions. It is very important to let children know that all emotions are valid. I found that Forest School was an excellent time to reflect on emotions, as, time is more flexible than in the classroom. Base-camp time can be open ended and given over to discussion about how we are feeling, celebrate what we have done/learned during the session and asking questions. The idea of spiritual development becomes much easier to assess in a natural environment. I feel children

were more reflective about nature and understanding of our place within it, whilst in the Forest School. Children seemed to very quickly understand the idea that we were coming to visit a very special place, which is a home for many flora and fauna. Communicating the idea that we were visitors to this special place, made children understand the importance of taking care of it and being gentle with all living creatures. This is such an important part of our spiritual development and evolving those feelings of connection to the Earth and something larger than ourselves becomes so much easier at Forest School. A good example of this from my own sessions was observing how, at the beginning of the 6 weeks, the children were very un-observant about the world around them and when they did come across a minibeast such as a spider or a worm, the reaction was often repulsion or fear. Through our Forest School sessions, I observed that the children seemed much more connected to nature and often expressed concern for the welfare of small creatures we came across. They were learning to respect, take in interest in, and ultimately feel more connected to nature. This shows promising not only spiritual development, but emotional intelligence and empathy.

Going to Forest School in smaller groups, allows for more social development opportunities. When creating my FS groups, I thought carefully about the children I put together. I wanted children to experience playing and cooperating with children they might not usually choose to spend time with in the classroom. One of the things I loved observing about my FS sessions was that all the children played and mixed together. Usual friendship groups or cliques did not exist and many children played with others with whom they had never even spoken to before. Forest School provides many opportunities for group activities and collaborative play, for example den building, planting a tree together, creating a group collage etc. I really felt that were fewer social issues amongst the children than there is ordinarily in a classroom setting. A good example of how Forest School helps with social development could be observed in one of my focus children. This child came to FS at the beginning of the 6 weeks, very introverted, engaging in mainly solitary play. I watched her confidence blossom as the weeks went by. At the end of the 6 weeks, she was seeking out other children to share experiences, demonstrate her skills and share her understanding.

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At FS, children play cooperatively alongside each other.

Children who have never played together were observed making new friendships.

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Children helped each other in and out of the hammock and gently rocked it.

Group activities, such as planting a tree, created a sense of shared experience and achievement.

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Shy children building connections and growing in confidence.

Q4. Give 2 examples of how Forest School supports the intellectual development of participants

To answer this question, you can draw on your experience during your 6 Forest School sessions. If you use research to make your argument, remember to quote the source. Focus on creativity and independent learning.

As Forest School is largely play based, the children are often taking charge of their own learning and the direction of their intellectual development, including problem solving and critical thinking. This is usually related to individual interests and motivations. It is also a holistic approach and benefits all kinds of learners, whether they are visual, auditory, kinaesthetic or reader/writer. The job of the FS leader is to facilitate learning. During my FS sessions, one of the main areas for new learning was about the natural world. The children had been learning about the seasons in class, however, being given the opportunity to see these changes happening first hand, not only cemented their learning but also sparked a deeper interest and level of questioning. Children started noticing differences between different leaf shapes and colours. They found differences in shape particularly hard at the beginning, however, as the weeks went on and their exposure continued, they began noticing more and more detail.

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Instead of being taught about seasons and flora identification in the classroom, where the learning is not relevant, they were exposed to them in a meaningful and real-life context. This learning then becomes more fixed and life-long connections are made in their brain.

At FS, children are encouraged to think and problem solve for themselves. This means that if children encounter a difficulty, the FS leader does not automatically give them a solution, but allows children to explore, make mistakes and problem solve. For example, when my Forest School Ambassadors wanted to put up a shelter during a wet session, I provided them with the correct resources, but then took a back-seat, allowing the children to think of how they would do this themselves. It was a windy day and the group struggled, as it was their first time doing this. At times I would offer a question, which might support their problem solving, but otherwise, the children worked together to solve any issues that arose. Once the shelter was erected, we discussed what the main difficulties had been and what we might do differently next time. Critical thinking on behalf on the children, as well as good communication and teamwork was critical to the success of the shelter.

Q5. Summarise the key characteristics of play and its role at Forest School, giving 3 examples of how you integrate play and choice into your Forest School sessions

List the widely recognised principles of play.

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Perry Else created a list of 10 characteristics of play in his book Making Sense of Play (2014).
These are:

- *Play is a process, not a specific action.*
- *Play is self-chosen, with a willingness to participate.*
- *Active engagement, attentive response to feedback.*
- *Sufficiently safe, physically and psychologically.*
- *A whole body/mind experience.*
- *Play has a timeless, lost-in-the-moment quality.*
- *Play is curiosity- it attracts us to newness or new experiences.*
- *Play is pleasurable.*
- *Play is different to each person.*
- *Satisfaction is self-defined, with no extrinsic goals.*
-

(taken from p. 116-117 The Essential Guide to Forest School and Nature Pedagogy).

There are many recognized principles of play and play types, explored by psychologists. Perre Else also listed different types of play, in his book, Making Sense of Play. These are:

Communicative play
Creative play
Deep play
Dramatic play
Exploratory play
Fantasy play
Imaginative play
Locomotor play
Mastery play
Object play
Recapitulative play
Role-play
Rough and tumble play
Social play
Socio-dramatic play
Symbolic play
(taken from The Hive, pg.27-28 Trainee Handbook)

One of the 6 principles of Forest School refers to risky play:

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FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
(Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

All these types of risky play may happen at Forest School, but it is important to get the right balance between the fear and exhilaration it brings.

Sandseter highlighted the areas of Risky play, in 2007. These are:

Play with great heights
Play with high speed
Play with harmful tools
Play near dangerous elements
Rough-and-tumble play
Play where the children can 'disappear' or get lost

(taken from pg. 29, The Hive, Trainee Handbook)

Describe how the principles of play – and risky play – translate into play policy.

Play is an integral part of Forest School. The largest chunk of a FS session is taken up by free play, allowing the child to explore, learn, interact with others and their environment in a fun, self-driven and ultimately satisfying way. It is widely accepted that play is the way in which children learn. Play researcher Peter Gray believes that it is *in our DNA to play in the natural world*. (p. 115- The Essential Guide to Forest School and Nature Pedagogy). Play was also recognised at the 1898 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31 states that:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
(taken from Article 31: The necessity of play in children's lives - Humanium)

Wales, has recognised the vital importance of play, with the creation of *The Playwork Principles.* These provide a *professional* and *ethical* framework.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and wellbeing of children.

(taken from Play Wales | Chwarae Cymru)

The role of FS leader is to help facilitate play. To do this, we have to understand the value of it. Observing children's interests and play styles allows us to provide appropriate resources and opportunities for play.

The natural environment of Forest School provides the perfect place for play, as it is so flexible and provides many open- ended opportunities. Natural objects, such as stones,

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leaves, sticks, mud are also transportable. The Forest School leader can also encourage play through resourcing. For example, providing tools and equipment to support mastery play. It is very important for the FS lead to allow free choice during sessions. The largest chunk of the session should be given over to self-chosen play. This will allow children to get into a state of 'flow'. It is not always the FS leader's job to step in and direct play. Often the FS lead must simply stand back, observe and allow children to problem solve, practise communication with others and work out group dynamics independently etc.

Give 3 examples of how you integrate play into your Forest School sessions.

Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process, and play is recognised as vital to learning and development at Forest School. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

The largest part of the Forest School session is child-initiated play. During my Forest School sessions at Selborne I was able to observe several different types of play:

Examples of Fantasy play at Forest School

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Example of social play

Example of Socio-dramatic play

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Example of Mastery play

Example of explorative play

The main ways I helped facilitate this play was through;

- Having the right environment (e.g., natural outdoor environment with natural resources e.g. leaves, trees, mud, berries, seeds).
- Resourcing- providing a variety of open-ended resources and allowing children to explore these independently e.g., ribbons, buckets etc.

- Providing enough time during the session for free-play (around 1 hour 15 minutes), in order for children to enter "flow".
- Observing interests during each session and using this to inform next week's planning.
- Having certain areas and resources available every week, so that children could continue previous play, practise and perfect skills. For example, mud kitchen, digging area, buckets, wheel barrows, mark making materials were out every week.

Q6. Summarise the recognised theories of learning and development relating to a Forest School Programme

To answer this question, you need to:

1. *Summarise 2 learning theories*
2. *Explain why you chose these theories*
3. *Explain their relevance to Forest School, using 2 examples from your own sessions*

Flow theory

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi was a Hungarian psychologist, who came up with a learning theory, which explains the ideal state of mind we can achieve, while participating in a variety of activities. This state of mind is one of mental focus and complete happiness.

I have chosen to focus on this learning theory in relation to Forest School, as it is a desirable state, which should be achievable for all children during their sessions, if provided with the correct opportunities. As the FS leader, it is our job to facilitate this, so it is important to understand how a state of "Flow" can be achieved.

According to his studies Csikszentmihalyi, listed the following things, as a way to achieve this state of mind:

- The task must feel achievable.
- We are able to concentrate.
- The task has clear goals.
- Immediate feedback is given after completion.
- We are able to immerse ourselves in the activity, so to become removed from external and internal worries.
- We have control over our actions.

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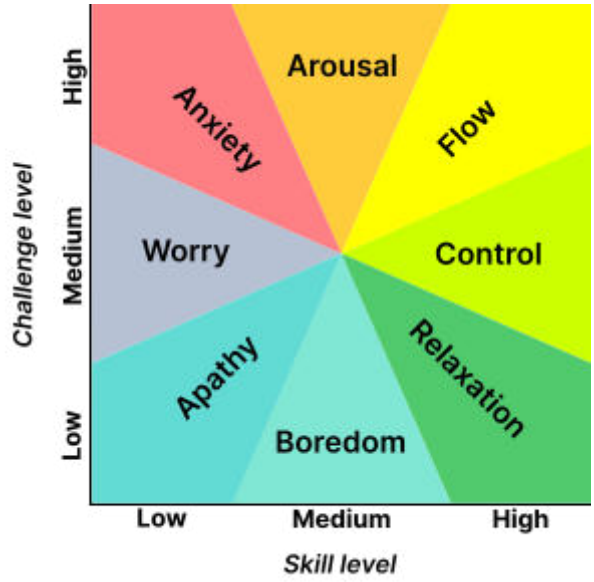
- The activity gives a sense of self-strength.



(photo taken from **https://www.bing.com/images/**)

As a FS leader, who might be introducing new skills to children, it is important to understand that the right balance must be gained between challenge and skill level. For example, if the task is too easy, then the children may experience apathy or boredom. If the task is too difficult, then the children will experience anxiety or frustration. "Flow", can only be achieved if the task provides the right level of challenge to match the child's skills.

During my Forest School sessions, I was able to witness some occasions where a state of "Flow" was achieved by the participants.

For example, in week 4, Reception children were provided with clay, in order to create faces on the trunks of trees. As a Reception teacher, I know that children regularly play with playdough, however, had not yet experiences the slightly different texture and qualities of clay. As a result, the activity became stimulating and provided the children with just the right level of challenge, in order to allow "Flow". The children were given as much time as they liked to explore the texture of the clay and understand how best to manipulate it. Many children spent the whole session, not just making one face, but creating multiple faces. I was able to observe these children in a complete state of concentration, in which they were not distracted by what was going on around them. They were demonstrating joy in what they did through their facial expressions and verbal language. The task was clear to them and I was able to provide immediate feedback on their finished faces.

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Another example of “Flow” I observed during my Forest School sessions, was with a group of children using the digging area. Children have access to a large sand-pit in the Reception playground, however, they had never been given the opportunity to dig using real spades and under real-life conditions. This meant that, the activity provided enough challenge to engage the children for long periods of time, but using their previous skills of the sand-pit area, the activity felt somewhat familiar and achievable. I observed children spend over an hour practising their digging skills, gaining confidence and achieving a goal at the end. This goal was to “dig a really big hole”. The children expressed great pride and satisfaction at what they had done, by the end of the session and shared this with the rest of the group during fruit time.

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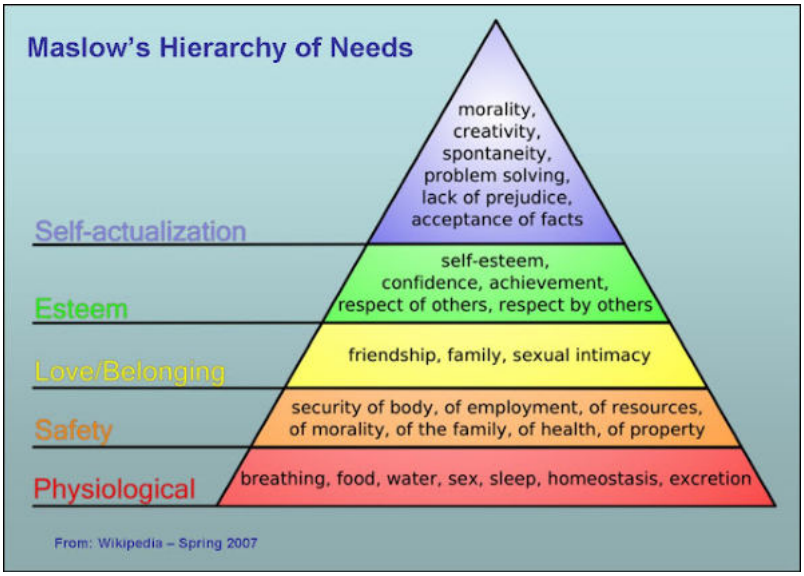
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist that came up with the Hierarchy of needs. At the bottom of the pyramid are the basic needs we require in order to survive, such as food, water, sleep etc. Self- actualization, at the top of the pyramid is a state where one can achieve their full potential. By fulfilling the needs at each different level of the pyramid, you become more able to reach self-actualization.



(taken from https://www.bing.com/images/)

I chose this learning theory, as I believe Self-actualization shares many similar aims to that of Forest School: morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice and acceptance of facts, can all be found within the Forest School ethos and principles.

Maslow believed that certain behaviours can help us work our way through all the needs. These are:

- Experience providing full absorption and concentration.
- Trying new things.
- Listening to your own feelings.
- Being honest and avoiding pretence.
- Being prepared to be unpopular.
- Working hard and taking personal responsibility.
- Self-evaluation of personal defences and allowing yourself to give them up.

(taken from pg. 39, The Hive, Trainee Handbook)

It is important, as a Forest School leader to be mindful of where each child might be on the pyramid. This can be achieved through observation and creating an open and non-judgmental environment.

Maslow believed that we can only move up the pyramid once the lower levels have been met. The aims of FS cannot be met if children are too focused on the lower levels. This will also affect behaviour. For example, if a child comes to school hungry, they will find it harder to concentrate; if a child does not feel safe, they might act withdrawn; if they are struggling with friendship issues, they may get upset; if they are suffering from low self - esteem, they may act out against others.

For these reasons, it was important for me, at the beginning of every Forest School session to access where the children might be sitting on the pyramid and address any issues. Children were given time to express their emotions and needs. We then covered safety issues, so that children felt Forest School was a safe environment in which to play. The Forest School ethos and our agreed behaviour rules, allowed children to move up the pyramid and develop a sense of care and belonging. Respect for others and celebrating achievements was maintained throughout the session, but particular time was given for children at fruit time to share and celebrate what they had done. Having smaller groups at Forest School allows children to create a sense of unity and a shared experience.

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I was able to observe some evidence of self-actualization within the children at Forest School. This came in the form of creativity, morality and spontaneity.

Example 1: Spontaneity

Children created a spontaneous game of Limbo, using a long piece of ribbon.

Example 2: Morality

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Children demonstrated a genuine understanding and concern for the natural environment.

Example 3: Creativity
Children collected food and set up a dinner table for our Forest Babies.

Q7. Summarise the key influences that affect participant behaviour at Forest School

Describe the factors both in Forest School and in the lives of participants that can affect their behaviour at Forest School (social, biological, environmental, etc.)

There are many factors that can affect the behaviour of children both in the classroom and during FS sessions. These may be internal or external (environmental). Internal influences include:

- Not having had the opportunity before
- Not feeling well/being tired/hungry/metal health
- Personality
- Beliefs/culture
- Emotions
- Family

External influences may be:

- Weather/clothing
- A positive/negative home/family environment
- Family poverty/living condition
- Expectations not being met

It is important to remember that children are coming to Forest School with many different experiences socially, biologically and environmentally. Some children may have very limited experiences of the outside world. They may not have a garden or go out much, for example to the park. If children are anxious to be in a new and intimidating environment, this can affect their behaviour.

Explain how these behaviours then impact on the learning and development of participants at Forest School.

As stated in the precious question, Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist that came up with the Hierarchy of needs. At the bottom of the pyramid are the basic needs we require in order to survive, such as food, water, sleep etc. Maslow believed that we can only move up the pyramid once the lower levels have been met. The aims of FS cannot be met if children are too focused on the lower levels. This will also affect behaviour. For example, if a child comes to school hungry, they will find it harder to concentrate; if a child does not feel safe, they might act withdrawn; if they are struggling with friendship issues, they may get upset; if they are suffering from low self -esteem, they may act out against others. In week 5 of my Forest School sessions, the behaviour of some children was affected by the cold weather. Feeling cold, made these children physically uncomfortable, which resulted in feelings of frustration, lack of energy and no enthusiasm for play and engagement with others.

Self- actualization, at the top of the pyramid shares many similar aims to that of Forest School. It is important, as a Forest School leader to be mindful of where each child might be on the pyramid. This can be achieved through observation and creating an open and non-judgmental environment.

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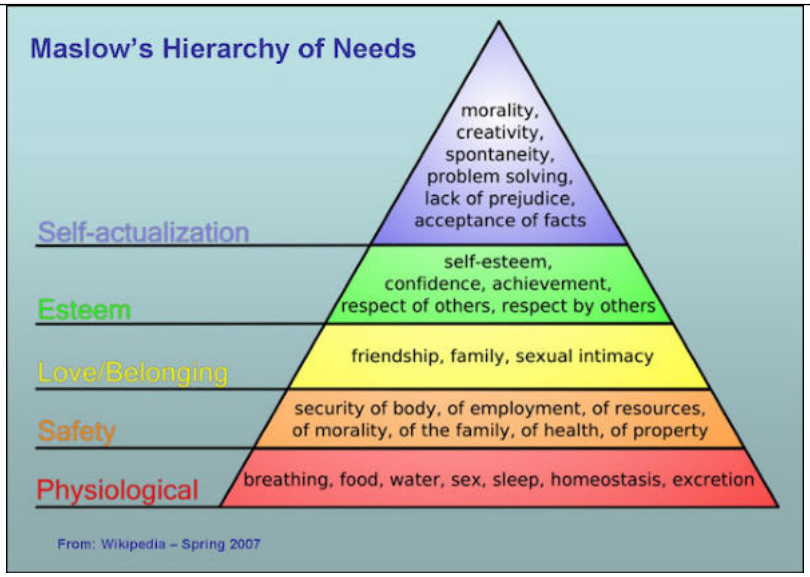

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Explain how an effective approach to behaviour considers how needs (met and unmet) impact on behaviours.

It is important for the FS leader to mindful of the background/ possible home/family issues that may affect the behaviour of a child. The FS leader, should make time to speak to class teachers or parents to obtain any information before beginning their block of sessions. Knowing that, for example, a child might be coming into school hungry or not have appropriate footwear with them, can then be addressed before even entering the site.

As stated before, I begin all my FS sessions by asking children to identify how they are feeling. If a child describes being sad, angry, unwell etc. we might see if this can be addressed straight away. The main priority of the Forest School leader is to try to be sympathetic to the behaviours expressed and to know that some behaviours cannot always be regulated. Being in the habit of identifying and communicating our emotions openly help in the process of self-regulation. I also discuss strategies we can employ when we are in the yellow, blue or red zone, for example; drink some water, count backwards from ten, have some out/quiet time, breathing exercises etc.

It is important to have some set behaviour expectations, agreed by everyone, at the start of the initial session so that participants are aware of their own boundaries in this regard.

and it is important to understand that negative behaviour may be an underlying cause of a bigger issue. Low level disruption can be caused by negative behaviour in the Forest School such as unwillingness to follow routines. The impact of this would likely cause disruption to other children which can cause an interference in their enjoyment of the time spent in the Forest School. High level disruption is more concerning as this could cause physical harm to the child causing the disruption or it could cause physical harm to the Forest School leader or another child. When low level disruption happens, the impact could be minor, however high-level disruption may mean stopping certain activities or cancelling sessions, if the risk is too high.

A FS leader should always be a positive role-model. This involves being a good communicator and considering your own well-being, as well as that of everyone at Forest School. The wheel of Wellbeing was created by The Mental Health Promotion Team at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation. It highlights 6 areas that effect our mental, physical health and well-being. These are:

- Body
- Mind
- Spirit
- People
- Place
- Planet

Scotland developed their own Wheel of wellbeing in their Children and Young People Act 2014. It includes wellbeing indicators for being: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors and Responsible Citizens.
An effective practitioner should keep these wellbeing needs in mind at Forest School.

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(taken from https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/IntroducingWellbeingLeaflet.pdf)

Q8. Describe how meeting the needs of all participants develops a community of learning.

During your training – how were your needs/needs of others/the group met? How did this create a community of learning?

Each training session started and ended at "Base camp", often with a game or an opportunity to talk about how we were feeling. Much time was taken during our first session to ensure we knew each other's names and had an opportunity to speak about our backgrounds and reasons for doing the training. This created a sense of group togetherness; understanding that we might be coming from different start-points, however, creating an appreciation that we were there to achieve similar goals.
During the duration of our training week, the course leader took time to "touch base" and often asked us to self- evaluate how we were feeling with regard to our learning. The asking of questions was actively encouraged and any of us who started with an apology for this were quickly told that "no question is stupid" and "never be sorry for asking ". We were also encouraged to show, with the use of a hand signal if we agreed with anything else one of our fellow learners communicated. This could be with regard to how we were feeling or how we felt an activity had gone. It was nice to feel that others shared the same

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anxieties, concerns or enjoyments as me.

Group work and peer teaching was also encouraged. We were often asked to work in pairs or groups to achieve a task, such as starting a fire or putting up a shelter. If someone was struggling with a knot, or needed some support in any way, we were encouraged to help them. This technique, not only created a supportive and creative environment for learning, but it helped remind us all that we have personal strengths and weaknesses. As I found remembering knots relatively easy, it was a good opportunity to reinforce my own learning, by teaching some of them to my peers. Some of those peers were then able to remind me of safety rules when using tools, which I found more difficult to remember. At the end of our 5 days training, I feel a strong community of learning was achieved where the needs of individuals and the group as a whole were met. I felt comfortable making mistakes in front of others, knowing that no one would be judging me. On a personal level, this was a very important point for me, as I have a strong fear of failure. We have also created a group WhatsApp, where we share photos from each session, ideas etc.

During your 6 Forest School sessions – how did you meet the needs of yourself/the participants/other adults? How did this create a community of learning?

Before beginning my 6 Forest School sessions, I ran a training session for the Reception Team. During this training, I took them on a tour around the site, highlighted the 6 Forest School Principles and went through the timetable for the sessions. Many of the staff had never even heard of Forest School before and I felt it was important to clearly

communicate the ethos and answer any questions before getting started. I also made sure that myself, children and other adults would be equipped with appropriate clothing, as this can have a significant impact of the FS experience. A letter was sent home to parents to inform them of the sessions and I took children to visit the site a week prior to starting the sessions. This was to familiarize them with the setting and mentally prepare them. I gained the medical records of the children and brought relevant medication with me to each session. It is also important to gain any medical considerations of adults coming to the sessions and accommodate these.

Initial “base-camp” sessions were spent giving everyone the opportunity to express their emotions on coming into the Forest School. We also spent time during each fruit time, talking and listening to each other share their experiences and celebrate their successes from the session. This time at the beginning and end of each session helped develop a sense of community.

During the duration of the 6-week sessions, the weather became increasingly cold. During week 5 some children expressed their feelings of discomfort, due to the weather. It was important for me to listen to these needs and try to act on them. Although I was not allowed to provide them with a fire the week after, I made sure to bring blankets, provide shelter and a hot drink. As a result, no one expressed feeling cold during that week and children enjoyed snuggling together in the tent and beneath the blankets.

Q9. Summarise your own personal development & learning journey through the Forest School training process

To answer this question, you can also describe your personal reflective practice and how your training may inform your practice outside of Forest School.

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I have been a mainstream Early Years teacher for 18 years. I have always enjoyed the creative and outdoor elements to the Early Years curriculum. However, having seen the decline in these areas over the years, I reflected that there must be a "better way". I heard about Forest School some years back and felt like this would perfectly suit my own interests, as well as my beliefs on the learning and development of children.

Before beginning the course, I did some research into exactly what creating a Forest School in my own setting would look like. I learned a lot by visiting local Forest School sites and speaking to practitioners. This helped me to communicate my initial vision to my school and set up an appropriate site. This was all done before beginning my training.

During the training sessions I acquired a great many practical skills. For example, rope knotting, shelter building, tool and fire skills and safety. Some of these skills were entirely new to me, like knots and shelter building. Other skills, such as fires and tools were not new to me. I have built fires and used tools in my personal life for years, and as an adult, you make your own, often unconscious risk assessments. Learning how to teach these skills to children in a Forest School setting is different and I have had to work very hard to implement and remember risk assessments and safety steps.

Because I did some research about Forest School prior to starting the course, I thought I already had a fairly good understanding of it. However, there has been a great deal of reflection and new understanding gained during the course. Fully understanding and implementing the FS ethos requires me to change my old classroom teacher mindset. Although being an Early Years teacher gives me a good grounding in terms of understanding a play- based curriculum, in reality, many mainstream Early Years settings have moved away from this. I have had to work hard on becoming more reflective, particularly with regards to children's motivations. While doing my PGCE, I learned about learning styles, child development stages, what affects behaviour and other educational research, but recovering this information during the FS course has helped re-centre my thinking. Understanding that the Forest School leader's role is that of "facilitator", rather than "teacher" was sometimes hard to put into practice. It is sometimes hard to remember that we are providing open ended ideas, which do not always require a completion.

"It's not the destination, it's the journey"- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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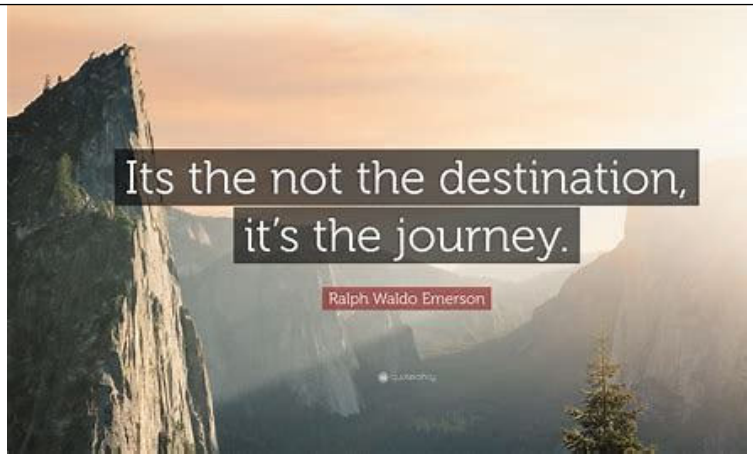

(taken fromhttps://www.bing.com/images/)

This is an important message to remember for myself, as well as the children. I have learned that you can show emotion and vulnerability as a FS leader, because Forest School is a community, not a classroom!

I have learned about the huge impact our language can have on behaviour and motivations. One of the main differences I will make in my general teaching practice, will be how I frame my language.

For example, the use of invitation rather than command:

How about…?
I'm offering…
Would you like to…?
How would it be if…?

The use of observational language to deal with difficult behaviours or instead of shallow praise:

I admire…
I notice….
I heard….
I observed…
I'm wondering

Language to help with problem solving:

What's your plan?
What can you use?
How will you…?

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LEVEL 3 PORTFOLIO
UNIT 3 - FOREST SCHOOL PROGRAMME PLANNING & PREPARATION

Q1. Describe the history of Forest School, summarising the key influences that have informed the current principles

Nature education has its roots in Scandinavia; however, the term Forest School was developed in the UK in 1993. In order to understand the principles of Forest School, it is important to know the history of outdoor, environmental/nature education.

The first principle of Forest School is that is takes place in a natural environment and develops a relationship between the learner and natural world.

Outdoor learning has always had an important role in Early Years education, in Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Particularly in Denmark, children started being taken to local woodlands, to help them become more independent and socialized. In the 1990's a group of practitioners from Bridgewater college visited Denmark to observe these outdoor learning settings. They took what they learned back to the UK and set up the first British Forest Schools. This movement became increasingly popular, as teachers became disillusioned with the more formal UK education system and various Forest School networks were set up. The Forest School Association was created in 2012 and the 6 principles, as we know them now were agreed.

Looking further back, Forest School philosophy is influenced by the ancient Greek idea of "animism". This believes that all nature is "alive" and connections are felt between all living things. Many cultures, throughout the world have had similar outlooks, for example the Aboriginal people of Australia feel a strong connection to the land and all its creatures.

Froebel was a German educator in the 19th century and the founder of the "Kindergarten" movement. He believed in developing all areas of the child, including emotionally, spiritually and physically, as well as academically. As part of the kindergarten system, Froebel also believed that playing in nature was important for creative development. His ideas on learning through play and the importance of nature, has been a huge influence on the development of Forest School. These educational ideas were taken on and developed in the 20th century by others, such as Montessori, the Macmillan sisters and Susan Isaacs. They all believed in the importance of learning through real life experiences. Other influences on Forest School have been the Scouting and Girl Guide movements.

In more recent years, people have started to think about human impact on the natural world and think more deeply about our place within it. Children are spending more and

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more time inside and our society is becoming more and more reliant on technology. Forest School is an attempt to counteract some of these things, by helping children develop a connection with the world and their environment.

Two of the main principles of Forest School is that of promoting holistic development, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners through learner centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning. This understanding of learning can be seen in the teachings of philosopher's, Socrates and Aristotle. They believed that leaners should be questioners and that a teacher's role is to take their lead and support their own discoveries of "wisdom". Aristotle also believed that developing self-respect and self-esteem in the leaner is vitally important.

Bringing this thinking right up to the present day, Professor Robin Alexander did some research looking at schools in Yorkshire in 2017. He found the unfortunately the UK schooling system had gone away from Socrates and Aristotle's understandings about child centred learning. The success of the Forest School movement is a push to bring this back to the forefront educational thinking.

Q2. Identify and list a few local Forest School practitioners and networks that you could rely on for support (The FSA website is helpful for this)

Many other Ealing Schools are offering Forest School learning, whether on their own school sites or at local nature reserves. Before starting my training, I started to network with these schools and their Forest School Practitioners. I visited three local schools with their own on-site Forest Schools. These are: Viking Primary, Gifford Primary and Featherstone Primary. I was able to spend time speaking with their Forest School leaders Bryony Fox (Viking and Gifford) and Natatja Bauer(Featherstone). I also visited Littern Nature Reserve and observed a 2-hour session with a group of SEND children from a local school, taken by Forest School leader Rebecca Cargill (Blue Fox Forest School).

Other Ealing Forest Schools:

-Lammas Enclosure Forest School, London W5 5HZ

I am part of a local Forest School network WhatsApp group, which is used regularly by members to: support; offer suggestions for good ideas and practice; share useful websites

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and links to games/ resources; ask questions and more. Our Forest School training team has also set up a WhatsApp group, where we have been sharing photos, resources and experiences from our training sessions.

Q3. Evaluate one piece of research on Forest School practice

To answer this question, you need to find one short piece of Forest School research (just typing "Forest School Research" into Google will bring up many articles).

You then need to evaluate it against your own opinions and experience of Forest School. Some of the questions you may want to consider include: do you agree with the research? What do you think of the methodology chosen? What are the outcomes for participants?

(All information for this question was taken from *Full article: The Hare and the Tortoise go to Forest School: taking the scenic route to academic attainment via emotional wellbeing outdoors (tandfonline.com)*)

The Hare and the Tortoise go to Forest School: taking the scenic route to academic attainment via emotional wellbeing outdoors

Published online: 09 Mar 2018 by Mel McCree, Roger Cutting and Dean Sherwin

Participants

The study tracked 11, 5–7-year-old children, described as disadvantaged, either socially, behaviourally or economically. These children attended a small county-town school, situated in a rural county in south-west England. The Headteacher selected the children as those who were 'struggling and likely to underachieve'. Their home lives were also deemed to include some levels of 'stress, trauma or complex family relationships'.

Project context

The project was developed by the Wildlife Trust Youth Wellbeing team. The children attended Forest School sessions in a local woodland, every week, all year round, including holidays. Activities were all play based and child centred.

Aims of the Research:

The study wanted to investigate whether attending Forest School over an extended period of time would have an impact on their academic attainment, wellbeing and connection to nature.

Rationale

The researched was inspired by the fable of "The Hare and the Tortoise". In the story, even though the hare is faster, the tortoise ends up winning the race. This is achieved by going at his own slow and steady pace. The hare, in contrast, rushes too fast, becoming distracted and losing momentum. The rationale of the study is that the hare is a representation of the mainstream schooling system, whereas the tortoise is that of a Forest School ethos. Would the children given more time to learn at their own pace, being given the opportunities to learn in a slower, creative, self-driven way do better than those only offered a mainstream education?

Some of the background research for this project came from *Claxton Citation 1997*, who wrote about the 'hare-brain and the tortoise mind'. This research focused on the idea that slower, creative learning has more depth of meaning and that it is important to explore different forms of learning and not just that of 'hare-like', fast learning which the government encourages in schools. Because this research was looking into the possible benefits of a slower form of learning, it was therefore important for the study to take place over a long period of time (three years).

The study also wanted to explore the impact of long-term outdoor learning on the academic achievements of these children.

These were the study questions:

1. *Do changes relating to wellbeing and academic development occur?*
2. *Can factors that influence the relationship between outdoor experience and academic performance be identified and associated with the project?*
3. *Are changes in wellbeing & academic development recognizable by the school?*
4. *What are the significant changes over the longitudinal span of the project?*

(quoted directly from *Full article: The Hare and the Tortoise go to Forest School: taking the scenic route to academic attainment via emotional wellbeing outdoors (tandfonline.com)*)

Data collection methods

The children were interviewed every year and took part in regular session evaluations. Twice yearly, two children were also selected at random to take part in a more in-depth interview. These interviews took place in a specially prepared 'den' and they were asked

to review their own experiences, such as memorable times, personal highs and lows etc. The children were also observed during sessions. The researchers tried involving parents in the evaluation process, particularly on entry, half-way and at the end of the study. They found parent engagement hard. Staff focus groups were held termly, with teachers and support staff, in order to glean their observations regarding the children's development.

Findings

Focus areas for observation were: wellbeing; involvement and engagement; nature connection and academic achievement.

All participating children showed an increase in these areas, during and at the end of the study. With regard to academic achievement, the children could be compared to their class peers.

Writing attainment progressed and improved by 18% (compared to 6% in the total year groups and 7% PPG peers). Reading attainment showed improvements of 27% (compared to 13% in the total year groups and 22% PPG peers). Maths attainment both showed improvements of 27% (compared 15% in the total year groups and 11% PPG peers).

(quoted directly from *Full article: The Hare and the Tortoise go to Forest School: taking the scenic route to academic attainment via emotional wellbeing outdoors (tandfonline.com)*)

Outcomes

The outcomes of this study seem to support the idea that Forest School can, not just improve emotional, social wellbeing, but also help support academic achievements over long periods of time.

My reflections on this study

I was drawn to this piece of research, initially because of the title. Looking further into it, I was very intrigued by the fact that it follows a group of children over three years. As I have only just embarked on my own Forest School journey, it is interesting to discover the potential long-term benefits. At the present time, I am only taking Reception children to Forest School and they receive a total of 6 weeks sessions. Presenting a piece of research like this to SLT, may help convince them that, our own programme needs to be extended. What benefits could we have to our children (particularly those deemed more disadvantaged), if they were to receive Forest School sessions throughout the whole of their Primary School education?

The fact that this study focused on children who were deemed disadvantaged in some way, whether that was educationally, economically or emotionally, interested me too. Many if these children in my own school are simply taken out for more academic interventions. I have long wondered whether this actually has any positive impact on them? The outcome of this study showed that, not only did the children improve academically, but also in terms of emotionally, socially, overall wellbeing and building a

connection to nature. I am interested in the evidence, that taking the pressure off these children, rather than piling more on can have deeper benefits. This comes back to the idea of being the tortoise, rather than the hare. I have long believed that the education system in the UK does not work for all of our children. I certainly see myself and my own educational journey through Primary and Secondary school as that of a tortoise, rather than a hare. I personally observed some of my peers, who seemed to race ahead academically in Primary school, only to then 'crash and burn' during Secondary school.

Reflecting on the way this research was conducted, I liked the fact that all parties were involved in collection of data; children, teachers, support staff and parents. It made me reflect back to data collected during my own 6 Forest School sessions. I did not gain feedback from parents, which in hindsight, would have been interesting to hear. I also reflected on the way I got feedback from the children at the exit of our sessions. I got children to complete the feedback sheets with me in the classroom, with all its distractions and offered them no support, in the way of prompts. During this research study, children were taken to a specially made 'den', away from other distractions. Prompts were also used, to support children's remembrances, such as activities and documentation. Although some people might argue that this could cause biases in the children's response, it is a technique I would employ, as I observed my children found it difficult to recall everything we had done after the event.

In conclusion, I think this was an interesting and useful piece of Forest School research to look at. I found it relevant to my own interests, regarding my setting and the long term plans I have there.

Q4. Write an ecological impact assessment of running a Forest School programme on your own site

To answer this question, you need to fill in the Ecological Impact Assessment template provided (see details below). The template includes the following information:

1. *History of the site*
2. *Key stakeholders*
3. *Ecological survey (flora, fauna, abiotic elements, etc.)*
4. *Type and level of impact expected from Forest School*
5. *Key mitigations put in place against the above*

Selborne Environmental Policy

Ecological impact

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Description of Forest School site		
Name of wood/site	**Location**	**OS Grid reference**
Selborne Primary School, Forest School	Selborne Primary School, Conway Crescent, Greenford, UB6 8JG	Grid reference: TQ 15487 83455 
Owner (Including full contact details)		
The site falls within the London Borough of Ealing and is owned by the local authority. 14 Uxbridge Road, London, W5 2HL 020 8825 5000		
Other identifying stakeholders		
Headteacher: Mrs K Shilling School governing body Teaching staff Children, Parents		
General description: Landscape context/topography (geological location and features e.g. alongside river, steep slopes etc.)		
The Forest School is set in the grounds of Selborne Primary School. It sits to one side of the playing field and is a separate, fenced off area. Along the back of the site is a fenced off alley-way belonging to private housing. Before it was created, this part of the school was overgrown with bramble. When creating the Forest school, all healthy trees, including saplings were kept. Much of the bramble was taken out, although areas have been left in order to minimize ecological impact and maintain nature corridors. One side of the overgrown area has been left untouched, as this contains a fox den. This is not part of the Forest School. When creating the Forest School site, a pond and grass area were added. The natural waste created in the creation of the site was used to create a mound and spread with wild meadow seeds. There was already an established log pile within the site for, small creatures. For longer term impact, we hope to add more trees and other planting.		

Woodland description

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Woodland description		
Flora	**Trees**	Ash Silver Poplar Elm Oak Silver Birch Horse Chestnut Hawthorn Blackthorn Apple Pear Fir
	Plants	Bramble (blackberry) Agapanthus Stinking iris Nettle Cow parsley Galium aparine (cleavers) Bristly Ox-tongue Hedge Mustard Milk Thistle Broad leaved Dock Purple Dead-nettle Doves-foot crane's- bill Meadow flowers
	Funji	As yet, unidentified varieties
	Mosses	Springy turf moss
Fauna	**Birds**	Wood pigeon Magpie Parakeet Robin Pied Wagtail Starling Hedge sparrow Crow
	Mammals	Grey squirrel Foxes local cats
	Insects	Dragonflies Mosquitoes and lave Worms Woodlice Bees

		Wasps Ants A variety of butterfly species

Abiotic elements

Abiotic elements	
Water	The site has a 2m/2m pond in a separate fenced off area.
Soil	The site lies on London clay soil
Bedrock/surface rock	Chalk and London clay, sands, gravels

Archaelogial considerations (If present)
Selborne Primary School sits in the middle of a residential Crescent. It makes up part of a larger residential estate, called The Medway. This was created in the 1930's. Before that the area consisted of woodland and field, used for farming. It is not in a conservation area and there are no known archaeological considerations.
Management history (e.g. when was the wood established, previous uses etc.)
The Forest school site was created in August 2022. It was previously an overgrown section of the school playing field. It had no previous use, as was unsafe to be used by the children. The area was left for nature.
Long term Plans
The school would like to use the site for regular Forest School sessions with the students at the school. The site has room for expansion onto the playing field. This will include planting new trees along the existing boundary fence and once these have established, bringing the fence out to include them into the Forest School site.

When using the site, children will be taught to minimise their ecological impact. Children will learn to respect the flora and fauna around the site and activities during sessions planned carefully with possible impact in mind. The overarching message is *to leave the woodland as you found it*. Children will be allowed to pick small amounts of leaves, fruits etc. when given permission by the teacher, but will mainly be collecting what has already fallen to the ground. When picking living flora the rule is: *Only pick what you need and what is in abundance.*

Q5. Use the ecological impact assessment to create a 3-year management plan for the sustainable use of your own Forest School site and to enhance biodiversity

To answer this question, you need to fill in the 3-year Management Plan template provided (see details below). The template includes the following information:

1. *Your vision for the site*

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2. *Your plans to enhance biodiversity*
3. *Your anticipated use of the site*
4. *Your approach to mitigating impact*
5. *How you will involve your client group with the management processes*
6. *Your evidence of ongoing monitoring*
7. *Your approach to biosecurity (e.g., how you will manage, report & monitor invasive species and diseases.)*

Woodland Management

Long term vision:

- Increase use of, and engage with site, whilst minimising environmental impact.
- Enlarge site and enhance habitat, in order to increase biodiversity.

The Forest School site will be jointly maintained by the Forest School lead and site team. Regular tree health checks will take place and any work will be carried out by trained tree surgeons.

3 Year Sustainable Woodland Management Plan

FACTOR	LOCATION	CURRENT SITUATION	TARGET SITUATION	MEASURES TAKEN	MONITORING	METHOD OF MANAGEMTENT	TIMESCALE
Pathways	Pathways around the inside of site.	Pathways are cleared to 1m wide and woodbarked.	Maintain to 1m and keep clear of overhanging branches, bramble etc.	Re-apply layer of woodbark annually.	Use daily and termly site assessment.	Forest School ambassadors can help with monitoring and spreading of bark.	Ongoing maintenance.
Dead wood	Wooded area around trees	The trees on site produce some amount of deadwood, but not enough to supply needs of children's activities. We have a current supply of deadwood, collected from the creation of	Maintain supply of small deadwood, such as sticks for activities. Source other wood, such as willow and hazel for more specialized crafts.	Ensure reputable sourcing of deadwood so no pathogens are brought on site.	Replenish wood-pile store when needed.	Children can help collect and sort deadwood by size.	Year 1- Find a source for material donation. Ongoing

		the site.					
Habitat creation	Throughout the site	There is an established, large log pile habitat for minibeasts. A wild meadow mound has been seeded to help encourage more pollinating insects.	More habitat created for fauna. An increase of fauna living in and visiting the site. Nesting boxes for birds, bats, hedgehogs.	Minimize habitat disturbance by children during use of the site.	Support children identify and monitor fauna on site.	FS lead to plan in habitat creation activities and teach children how to monitor fauna safely, will limited impact.	Year 1- New deadwood habitat created Year 2- Source and install bird boxes. Year 3- Look into other types of habitat for bats, hedgehogs etc.
Pond	Fenced off section of the site.	The small pond is new and therefore does not have a developed ecosystem.	The pond to sustain its own small ecosystem, e.g. frogs and other water insects. Increased planting in and around pond.	Minimise any pond dipping activities until pond is more established.	Get children to help monitor any pond fauna.	Monitor throughout the seasons.	Year 1- Planting around pond and addition of pond plants, including oxygenating plants.

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Planting Trees	Along alleyway fence and on school field, to the side of the current site.	The current site has 10 varieties of tree, however, the site is small and would benefit from expansion. The back fence into residential alleyway does not offer enough screening.	15 saplings planted, both inside the site and along the edge of the current boundary fence.	New saplings will have to be protected from damage e.g. footballs, trampling, feet, animals, etc. Little fences will be built up around them.	New saplings will need extra attention in their first year. Forest School ambassadors can check weekly and water.	Keep records of growth.	Year 1- Planting in Winter 2022 Year 3- Extend fence boundary to include new area with saplings.
Fire circle	In the centre of the log seating area.	The site owns a firepit, which sits in the centre of the base camp area.	Log seating is at least 1.5 m distance from the firepit. Children and other adults are well briefed on safety rules regarding fires.	Fire pit is covered during winter months to prevent rusting. No running, or jumping on the logs around the fire circle is allowed, even when no fire is lit.	FS leader is in charge of fires and fire safety, including equipment.	Fires are only lit when FS leader is fully qualified.	Year 1- FS leader to gain Level 3 training.

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Shelters	Shelter 1: tarp extension to the current shelter. Shelter 2: Amongst the tree clearing.	There is a small shelter space, only large enough for approx. 4 children or for housing some resources.	Outdoor shelters that are easy to set-up and flexible to adapt to different weather conditions.	Source 2 large tarps, ropes and tent pegs.	Forest School Leader to check and maintain tarps structure the shelters during sessions. Shelters to be taken down when not needed.	FS Lead	Year 1: Ordering resources. Ongoing.
Harmful plants	Bramble and nettle growing to the side of pathways.	Bramble grows quickly and begins to obstruct the pathways. Bramble roots left in ground from clearing of site starts to grow again.	Bramble is maintained through regular cutting back along the pathways, whilst ensuring habitat is not disproportionately affected. Bramble roots in main areas of the site are dug out.	Regular checks and maintenance. Children are taught about harmful plants and not to touch.	Use daily and termly site assessment.	FS Lead to take on daily maintenance and liaise with school site manager regarding annual trimming of bramble.	Ongoing
Minibeast hunting	There is a large deadwood pile, particularly suitable for	As this is the only area for minibeast hunting, there is a risk of disturbing the	Another area to be created, so that there is opportunity for rotation and smaller impact on	Do not allow children to constantly disturb the same area. Encourage	Children and leaders can do regular monitoring of minibeasts found.	Minibeast identification sheets. Any new minibeast found	Year 1- One new minibeast habitat created

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	minibeast hunting.	habitat, as use of the site increases.	wildlife.	children to look in other places for minibeasts, e.g. the underside of leaves. Select new deadwood habitat carefully to make ensure minimal disturbance to current wildlife.		to be added to Woodland description sheet.	Ongoing monitoring of species.
Seating	In central area and scattered around other parts of the site.	There are 20 seating logs in the centre of the FS site, used as basecamp. There are a few other logs that can be used for seating placed in the tree clearing. These logs are large	More movable seating, to accommodate a larger group and allow for flexibility.	Smaller seating logs to be brought into the site, which can be moved around by children or in a wheelbarrow.	FS leader	Children can help to store these logs back under the wooden shelter after each session.	Year 1- source free logs Year 3- enough small logs to allow for flexible use around the site.

		and too big to be transported.					
Tool area	No tool area has yet been designated.	Tool use will not happen until FS leader has passed the Level 3 training.	Safe tool area, away from any thoroughfares will be established. Children and adults will know where this area is and the rules connected to it.	FS leader to assess site and select appropriate tool area.	FS leader, other adults	A boundary line to be created around the tool area. Other adults to be briefed on safety rules before tool area begins to be used.	Year 1- FS lead to achieve Level 3 training. Year 3- Tool are used safely in designated area.
Biosecurity	The whole site	There are no current known pests, pathogens or invasive species on site.	The site to remain free of pests, pathogens and invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed, rhododendron, floating pennywort, etc. Not including the Grey Squirrel	Ongoing monitoring. Clean equipment between each use. Only use on-site equipment and as much as possible use on-site materials. Source any outside materials responsibly.	FS leader to monitor quarterly.	Involve children in cleaning of equipment and teach them about biosecurity.	Ongoing

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Q6. Create your own Forest School Handbook

1. Write your own FS Handbook, which should include ***all*** the following documents (with reference to appropriate legislation):
    - Table of contents
    - Declaration of review date
    - Declaration the Handbook has been read by all supporting adults with a regular role
    - Vision statement for own Forest School reflecting the FS Ethos and Principles
    - Policies and procedures:
        - Forest School Behaviour Policy (or Forest School Behaviour statement with link/reference to establishment behaviour policy)
        - Staff, ratios, roles and responsibilities statement
        - Visitor Protocol Policy (or FS statement with link/reference to establishment policy)
        - Environmental Policy Statement and
            - Landowner's Agreement
            - Environmental Impact Assessment (template provided in training manual)
            - Woodland Management (template provided in training manual)
        - Health & Safety Policy (or FS statement with link/reference to establishment policy)
            - Insurance statement
            - Accident & Emergency
            - First Aid statement and procedures (and link to establishment policy)
            - Welfare incl. clothing, PPE, toileting, food & drink
            - Extreme Weather statement
            - Risk Benefit Analysis & Management statement (template provided in training manual)
            - Risk Assessment statement (example provided in training manual)
            - Fire use statement
            - Fire risk assessment
            - Cooking and Food Hygiene statement
            - Tool/Rope use and maintenance statement
            - Tool/Rope risk assessment
            - Activity risk assessment
            - Site risk assessment template
            - Daily risk assessment template
            - Transport policy

- Manual handling policy
- COSHH policy

- Covid-19 Policy (or FS statement and link/reference to establishment policy)
- Other Safeguarding Policies (or FS statements and link/reference to establishment policy)
  - Child/vulnerable adults protection Policy
  - Anti-bullying Policy
  - Equality and Diversity Policy (Including Prevent if appropriate)
  - Disclosure/accusation Policy
  - Confidentiality Policy
  - Data Protection and handling/ ICO Policy/GDPR Policy
  - Lost or missing child Policy
  - DBS Policy
  - Social Media Policy
  - Complaints policy

Q7. Explain the role of the Forest School programme leader

Describe the role of the Forest School Leader, making sure that you refer to the Forest Schools Ethos and Principles.

In the Forest School principles it states that:

FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

In terms of the legal and practical aspects of being a FS leader, they must hold, at least a level 3 Forest School qualification. They must also hold an up-to-date Outdoor First Aid certificate and must make sure that all relevant paperwork is in place. For example, the Handbook, risk assessments, Woodland management plan etc. Keeping children's safety (physical and mental), in mind at all times is vital. The FS leader will be doing dynamic risk assessments all throughout the sessions, to maintain safety. Doing this is one of the important steps, which will allow children and practitioner alike, feel safe in taking their own measured risks at Forest School.

It is important that the Forest School leader is dedicated to following the Forest School ethos. The FS leader needs to keep the ethos and principles at the centre of their thinking at all times. If we hope to communicate these to the children, it is important to lead by example.

We are all individuals and each FS leader, will have their own strengths and weaknesses, areas of expertise and areas for development. A FS leader can be open about these and must remain open to new learning. It is important for children to understand that the FS leader is not someone who knows it all, but the facilitator, who will help guide everyone along their own journey. In doing this, the FS will be able to create the community of learning, which is also mentioned as part of the principles.

The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner and sees themselves, therefore, as a learner too. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

Being reflective is very important. In a practical sense, the FS leader observes and reflects on each session and individual children. This helps inform the following weeks planning. How can I extent them? What are their needs/ interests? etc. But it is also important to be reflective at all times, during the session and encourage the children to become reflective too. The FS leader must get to know each child well and aspire to develop a positive relationship with them, showing humility, openness and playfulness. Knowing the children well, means the FS leader will understand their background, strengths, weaknesses, motivations and preferred learning and communication styles.

As mentioned before, the role of Forest School leader is that of facilitator, not teacher. This means that we are there to support and guide. The FS leader must know, when not to step in, and allow children to make mistakes and fail. This can feel difficult and go against the grain for someone who is a classroom teacher, but it is an important part of the role at Forest School. It helps build resilience, peer learning and team building skills; all important at Forest School.

The use of language is very important at Forest School and the FS leader must be mindful of how they communicate to participants. As mentioned in previous questions, the FS leader must think carefully about the types of language they use.

For example, the use of invitation rather than command:

How about…?
I'm offering…
Would you like to…?
How would it be if…?

The use of observational language to deal with difficult behaviours or instead of shallow praise:

I admire…
I notice….
I heard….

I observed…
I'm wondering

Language to help with problem solving:

What's your plan?
What can you use?
How will you…?

As mentioned before, the role of FS leader is to create a Woodland management plan and be aware of the natural environment within which we are learning. It is the FS leader's responsibility to understand our connection to the environment, our possible impacts and to try to mitigate these. It is also the role of the FS leader to support the learner to develop their own relationship to the natural world. This can be done through including children in woodland management, for example, planting and keeping ecological surveys, habitat creation.

Finally, the FS leader needs to make sure that sessions are properly resourced. Obviously, much of the resources used for Forest School, comes from the natural environment itself, however, additional resourcing plays an important role too. Having the appropriate Forest School 'kit' can enhance children's learning and experiences. For example, ropes, tarps, tools, fire pit, buckets, books etc. Good planning will make sure that the FS leader is prepared with the right resources to support children's experiences at Forest School.

Q8. Explain the rationale for your own Forest School programme

Describe the rationale and learning objectives for your own Forest School programme. You should link your description to your participants' learning and development needs

Selborne Primary School is a large 3 form entry school, within the London Borough of Ealing. The children's ethnicity and backgrounds, reflect multicultural London. The school's motto is 'Inspire and Achieve' and follows a 'You can do it' programme, which has 5 main keys: resilience, confidence, getting along, organisation and persistence. Selborne Primary School was judged an Outstanding school during their last OFSTED visit in 2017. The school prides itself on high academic achievements, but is working to develop a wider curriculum, including instrumental lessons, yoga and Forest School.
It has been decided that Forest School will be introduced to Reception aged children first, however, it is my hope that over the next few years, this will increase to include other year groups.
My aim for Forest School at Selborne is to give the children a contrasting experience to that which they receive inside the classroom setting. Lessons tend to be formally

structured at the school and academic expectations are very high. Many children spend time in intervention or booster groups to make sure attainment remains high. This can become incredibly stressful for children, especially those who are not traditionally academic. This level of pressure begins as early as Reception. My hope during Forest School, is to allow all children to feel that they can excel on their own terms, and in a play based and child led environment. Selborne Primary School also has an ARP (Additional Resource Provision). This contains a KS1 and a KS2 class, made up of children, mainly on the Autistic spectrum. It is my aim to offer regular Forest School session to these children.

Another main part of my FS rational is that of connecting our pupils more to nature and environmental issues. This is a wider issue we are experiencing in the world and I would like to help the children and the school develop a stronger connection to our natural world. Our school is not unique in having increasing levels of obesity and disconnect with the natural world. Many of our children do not get taken to the park or for outings on the weekends and with our formal curriculum, children are becoming less and less connected with the outside world. I want to bring an understanding of the importance of outdoor learning and strive to enhance opportunities for children to learn in a more natural outdoor setting. I endeavour to offer children, throughout their Selborne journey, the opportunity to learn about nature, through nature directly. I hope children at Selborne will develop a deep and lifelong love and respect for the natural environment.

LEVEL 3 PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE
UNIT 4 - FOREST SCHOOL PROGRAMME: PRACTICAL SKILLS

Q1. Describe the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing needed for a range of Forest School activities

Describe the clothing and PPE that participants in Forest School should wear in each season, highlighting differences. For each season, explain how you would introduce PPE and clothing in your facilitation with a client group.

Spring	Weather dependant: Long sleeved top, jumper/fleece Long trousers Water proof jacket and trousers Wellington boots or sturdy footwear

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Summer	Long sleeved t-shirt Long trousers Good footwear
Autumn	Weather dependant: Long sleeved top, jumper/fleece Long trousers Water proof jacket and trousers Wellington boots or sturdy footwear
Winter	Fleece or thick jumper, thick socks or two pairs of thin ones. Water proof over trousers, water proof jacket, hat, scarfs, wellington boots, work gloves.
Digging area	Work gloves, waterproof trousers, wellington boots.
Mud kitchen	Waterproof jacket and trousers, wellington boots.
Camp fire cooking	Non-flammable clothing preferable. Any flammable clothing should be kept well clear of fire. Long hair tied up and dangling, loose clothing secured. Fire gloves to be worn by anyone tending to the fire.
Tool use	Work gloves to be worn according to individual risk assessment. Sturdy footwear.
Collecting natural materials	Work gloves, long sleeved top and trousers to protect arms and legs. Sturdy footwear.

*Describe the clothing and PPE that participants in Forest School should wear for different activities**. For each activity, explain how you would introduce PPE and clothing with a client group.***

	What should participants wear?	How would you introduce it to the group?

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Whittling wood	Long sleeved top and trousers to protect arms and legs. Sturdy footwear. Work glove on helping hand.	Children will only be introduced to tools when they are deemed ready by the FS lead. Children need to know which is their tool hand e.g. dominant hand, pencil hand. Get all children to put gloves on a the same time. Gloves can be worn on both hands, then taken off the 'helping hand' when child is ready to use the tool. Tool talk for the Sheath knife: 2 arms and a tools length What is it called? What are the different parts? Now you hold it/pass it/use it? How do you store it when you are not using it? 
Making a fire	Non-flammable clothing preferable. Any flammable clothing should be kept well clear of fire. Long hair tied up and dangling, loose clothing secured. Fire gloves to be worn by anyone tending to the fire.	Children will only be introduced to fires when they are deemed ready by the FS lead. Children may take part in preparation games before they are deemed ready for a real fire e.g. *Duck, Duck, Goose* or *I am the Wind!* Brief children on fire safety rules before starting and make sure that appropriate clothing is worn.

		Explain how loose clothing or hair could dangle into the fire and catch alight. Get children to tuck in scarfs and tigh up hair. Set up safety equipment to the side of the fire circle: Bucket of water, fire gloves, fire blancket and first aid box.  Children need to understand that not only are flames hot, but they make everything else around them hot too. For this reason it is important to wear a glove when tending or cooking on the fire.
Foraging for natural materials	Work gloves, long sleeved top and trousers to protect arms and legs. Sturdy footwear.	Children need to understand that some plants can sting, have thorns, course itching etc. Some plant identification activities before foraging will help children to identify common plants to avoid e.g., nettles, brambles etc. Children understand the 'No pick, no lick' rule.

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Q2. Describe the basic tool maintenance for 2 tools and 1 rope, as well as the process of facilitating tool and rope maintenance with your client group (taking into consideration age & developmental stage, ratios and your competence and confidence in maintaining bladed tools).

To answer the question, you need to take into consideration the following:

1. *Checking tool/ rope condition prior to use*
2. *Cleaning tool / rope*
3. *Sharpening blades*
4. *Changing blades*
5. *Storing tool / rope safely*
6. *Identifying when tools need to be taken out of circulation*
7. *Filling in a tool maintenance log*

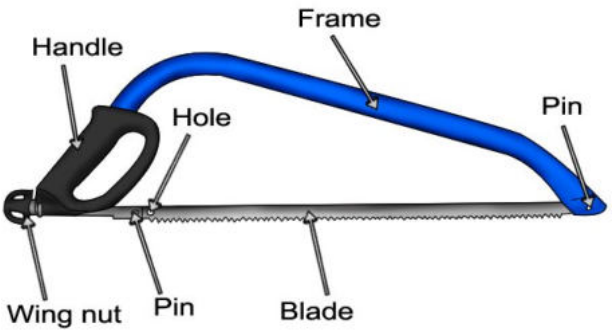
Tool name	Maintenance process	Facilitating maintenance with client group
Sheath knife	**Checking tool prior to use:** Start with a visual check of blade, handle and sheath. Check the blade is securely attached to the handle and that there are no cracks in the sheath. Check that the knife is sharp: Carefully run your thumb across the edge to test if it is sharp. Look down the edge for any bright spots indicating blunt areas. A sharp edge will reflect very little light. Slice the edge off a sheet of paper to make sure that it is sharp. **Cleaning, drying and oiling:** Blades should be clean and dry before putting away. Wipe down with a clean cloth. High carbon steel blades should be lightly oiled before storing. **Sharpening blades:** Whetstone sharpening.  https://www.google.com/search?q=wetstone The more damaged the blade, the coarser a whetstone you need to start with- 220 grit for very dull with burrs, 600 grit for dull blade and 1,000 grit	Make sure children always replace sheath securely after use. Children can help count knives back in at the end of the session.  Teach the children to name each part of the knife e.g. blade, cutting edge, handle, sheath and allow children to do their own visual check over each part. Older or more experienced children can help to check blades by looking along the edge for bright

	for fine polishing. 1. Spread a light oil or water across the whetstone and let it sit to penetrate the stone's porous surface. 2. Place the knife flat on the stone then tilt the knife towards the cutting edge until the bevel is flush with the stone. 3. Move the knife away from you along the stone, applying pressure with your fingers. Continue to move the knife across the stone maintaining full contact with the bevel. 4. Turn the knife over and repeat on the other side, drawing it towards you this time. Make sure to do the same number of strokes on each side. 5. If starting with a coarse grit, repeat the process using a finer one. Stropping  https://paulkirtley.co.uk/2013/how-to-sharpen-bushcraft-knife/ This process smooths off the edge of the knife and gets rid of any remaining burr. 1. Wrap the belt around the trunk of a tree. 2. Grip the knife in one hand and belt in the other. Hold the knife with sharp edge towards you and run it away from you, along the inside of the belt. Move the knife along it so as to cover the whole length of the blade. 3. Alternate the stropping strokes back and forth. 50-100 strokes is usually enough. **Storing:** Knives to be numbered and kept in a locked box, making sure that sheath is securely on. **Identifying when tools need taken out of circulation:** Knives should be taken out of circulation if there is irreparable damage to the blade or handle.	spots, indicating blunt areas. They can also test the blade by slicing a sheet of paper. The FS leader might demonstrate the use of whetstone sharpening to advanced learners with lots of prior knife experience. They may then have a go. The FS leader should ALWAYS re-check the blades afterwards. It is the responsibility of the FS leader to know their learners. When giving children any responsibility with tool maintenance, the children must have prior experience, be able to follow instructions and have demonstrated they have a strong understanding of health and safety, for themselves and others. Remind children never to touch the edge to check for sharpness.

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If a sheath knife has been identified as needed maintenance e.g. sharpening, loose parts, then this tool should be taken out of circulation until repairs have been done and the tool fully re-checked. This means, it should remain safely stored, separately from the tools still in use.

Completion of tool maintenance log:
A full maintenance check will be completed on all tools at the end of every half term and this will be recorded in tool maintenance log. (see Handbook, appendix). This is important for participant safety and insurance reasons.

Selborne Primary School Equipment Maintenance Record
At the end of every half term it is important to undertake a maintenance check of all equipment.

<table>
<tr><td>Name of Forest School Lead:</td><td>Date:</td><td>Signature:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Checklist</td><td>Checked and maintained</td><td>Comments</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bow saws</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Sheath Knives</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Secateurs</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Loppers</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Palm drills</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Mallets</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Hammers</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Peelers</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Spades</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Other gardening tools</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Rope</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>
</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow saw</td>
<td>Checking tool prior to use:
 

(photo taken from https://www.wonkeedonkeetools.co.uk/handsaws/how-to-change-a-bow-saw-blade)

Start with a visual check over all parts. Check the integrity of each section of the saw (as shown in the photo). Check that there is no debris left in the blade from previous use, no notches missing and</td>
<td>Make sure children replace blade cover after use.

Teach children to name each part of the bow saw e.g. handle, frame, pin, blade, cover etc and allow children to do their own visual check, over each part. Children can work in pairs to do this.

Older children could be taught how to change the blade, under supervision.</td>
</tr>
</table>

	that the frame and blade are firm. Make sure there are no loose parts. Check that the blade is tightened enough so that it does not move about on the pins, but can still flex very slightly in the middle. Also check blade for rust. Try out on a piece of wood before using with the children. The saw should cut smoothly. **Methods of tool maintenance** **Cleaning, drying and oiling:** Check blade regularly to see if it needs sharpening. Clean and dry blades before putting away. This can be done by wiping down with clean water and a cloth. Oiling: lubricate the blade after each use with oil or wax paste to prevent rust and maintain the sharpness. Wipe any oil off after applying. The handle may also need periodic oiling. This lubrication does not need to be cleaned off, as it acts as a protective layer against dust and moisture. Removing rust: you can use a razor blade, sandpaper or steel wool. Remove blade from the handle and lay on a flat surface to do this. **Sharpening blades:**  Cutting teeth Raker teeth *(taken from https://www.google.com/search?q=bow+saw+teeth)* Wear gloves when sharpening. **Filing:** Place the saw in a vice, blade up. The cutting teeth and raker teeth need to be filed differently. Use a slim taper file or any three-sided file to sharpen the cutting teeth. Try maintaining an angle of 75 degrees and do not exert unnecessary pressure. Each tooth should get no more than 3-4 strokes of the file.	It is the responsibility of the FS leader to know their learners. When giving children any responsibility with tool maintenance, the children must have prior experience, be able to follow instructions and have demonstrated they have a strong understanding of health and safety, for themselves and others.

	The fishtail rakers should be sharpened into chisel tips. Keep a 90-degree angle while sharpening the raker teeth. Do not put too much force on the file, and the bow saw should remain in the vice. *(information taken from https://homesthetics.net/how-to-sharpen-a-bow-saw-bow-saw-maintenance/)* **Changing blades:** Replace blade when necessary. Step 1: Turn the wingnut anticlockwise. This releases the tension on the blade. Step 2: Unhook the blade. Step 3: Ensure the wingnut is loosened before hooking the new blade in place. Hook it onto the pins, furthest side from the handle first. Step 4: Tighten the wingnut back up by turning clockwise. Old blades should be broken in half and disposed of safely. **Identifying when tools need taken out of circulation:** If a bow saw has been identified as needed maintenance e.g. sharpening, changing of a blade, rust, loose parts, then this tool should be taken out of circulation until repairs have been done and the tool fully re-checked. This means, it should remain safely stored, separately from the tools still in circulation. **Storing:** Store in locked shed. Keep in a cool, dry, dark place. The saw can be hung or placed in a tool box. Hang with the tension released. **Completion of tool maintenance log:** A full maintenance check will be completed on all tools at the end of every half term and this will be recorded in tool maintenance log. (see Handbook, appendix). This is important for safety and insurance reasons.	

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	Selborne Primary School Equipment Maintenance Record At the end of every half term it is important to undertake a maintenance check of all equipment. **Name of Forest School Lead:** / **Date:** / **Signature:** **Checklist** / **Checked and maintained** / **Comments** Bow saws Sheath Knives Secateurs Loppers Palm drills Mallets Hammers Peelers Spades Other gardening tools Rope	
Rope	**Rope/cord maintenance and storage:** Know the breaking strain of the rope (this is dependent on the diameter of the rope, the material and the weave). Be clear about what type of rope you have and which activities it can be used for. Different types of rope: Hawser laid rope- twisted with strands. Float rope- braded- no core, fibres are braded together. Kernmantle- has a core, which is made up of lots of tiny fibres and a sheath over to protect it. Very strong and has some elasticity. (good for rope swings). Dynamic rope- some elasticity Pre-stretched rope- not much give or elasticity (less bounce) which means it is better for swings and other weight bearing activities. **Cleaning and drying:** Use regular soap and water for cleaning. This can be done by soaking them in a bucket. Avoid dirt getting inside the fibres. After washing make sure to dry them out properly. Drying: Make a daisy chain with the rope, which can be hung up to drip dry.	Children can be shown how to Hank ropes, after use. Children can look out for signs of wear and tear and inform FS leader of these are spotted. Teach children the correct terminology for the different parts of the rope e.g. line, working end, standing part, dead end. This will help, when teaching children to check different parts of the rope. Teach children to understand different types of rope and what they might be used for, which effect

(taken from https://www.bing.com/images)

Checking rope/cord prior to use:
Check for fraying, uncoiling of fibres and general wear and tear. When ropes are newly bought, the ends may need to be sealed off to prevent fraying.
When checking rope prior to use, start at one end and use hands to feel and look, while going along the rope bit by bit. Feel for bumps, lumps, tufts, or scratchy patches. Look for discolouration, shiny patches, fraying. Then go along the rope again, bending each section to see that it is working as it should do. Check both ends to make sure they are still sealed.
With natural fibre rope, also give the rope a pull to see how the fibres are behaving.

Identifying when rope/cord need to be taken out of circulation:
If a problem is found in the rope, that section can be cut away, as long as the rest of the rope is sound. If there are any concerns about the integrity of the rope, never use it for weight bearing e.g. swings.

Safe storage:
Ropes should be cleaned and dried before storing.
Give the rope another check for damage e.g. kinks, fraying etc. before putting away. Do not store them near anything sharp, e.g. knives or where any animals might be able to chew them. Also make sure they are protected from any chemicals e.g. battery acid.

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	For more long-term storage ropes should be stored in a bag. This can either be coiled or simply fed into the bag. This will hopefully avoid the rope getting kinks and twists. Before storing, ensure it is dry and clean and stored coiled up using a hank knot. Ropes should be securely stored so that they cannot be tampered with.	

Q3. Describe the safe step-by-step use of 2 different hand tools of your choosing in the context of Forest School

To answer the question, you need to take into consideration the following:

1. *Differentiation, age & developmental stage of participants*
2. *Previous experience of participants*
3. *Ratios*
4. *Insurance*
5. *Appropriate safe techniques*
6. *Safe working areas and distances*

Tool name	Step-by-step process
Sheath knife	Sheath Knife ratio 1:1 with children who are deemed ready by FS lead and have gone through extensive safety and tool talk. The use of a sheath knife must be relevant to the children's interests and skill level. All risk assessments and appropriate insurance must be in place before introducing any tools. The tools will be checked before and after use by FS leader. Younger children may practise using vegetable peelers before moving on to a Sheath knife. You can also use the Sheath knife on vegetables or a dry bar of soap, before moving onto wood, as these are easier to work. **Setting up tool area:** Set out a designated tool area, which everybody knows (whether they are taking part in the activity or not). The area should be away from paths and thoroughfares, so that other children will not accidently enter the tool area. You can use rope to cordon off the area, so that no one enters unless invited.

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The ground should be relatively flat and cleared of any obstructions or trip hazards. Any benches or logs being used to work tools on should be stable. Have a first aid kit near to hand.

Number all knives and know who is using which knife. Store in a locked box when not in use.

Introduce the 'Blood bubble' idea to children and demonstrate how the space we need around ourselves is two arms and a tools width. This can be done before any tools are introduced by practising, putting arms out.

Go through the tool talk with children, so that they understand what all the parts are, how use, pick up, carry and pass to others.

This is a sheath knife.
This is the handle.
This is the sheath.
I open by pressing here.
This is the blade.
This is the cutting edge.
I always use on the outside of my body with the blade facing away from me.
I keep two arms and a tools length distance.
When not using it I put it back in the sheath like this. I can hear a click when the sheath is on properly.
I hold it like this I carry it like this I pass it like this
I use a sheath knife for cutting string/whittling.
I always cut down onto a hard surface or sitting with body to the side and cutting away.

Uses for a Sheath knife

Whittling:

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Whittling can be done in the context of shaping wood or making shavings for fire kindling. The best woods for whittling are softwoods, such as Silver Birch, Willow, Sycamore, Alder and Lime.

Some whittling activities:

- Marshmallow skewer
- Wand
- Animal carvings
- Shaping the handle of a mallet
- Tent peg
- Arrow
- Spoon

(Photo taken from: https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=whittling+activities)

Before starting, children need to know which is their tool hand e.g. dominant hand, pencil hand.
Get all children to put gloves on at the same time. Gloves can be worn on both hands, then taken off the 'helping hand' when child is ready to use the tool.

The FS leader should always demonstrate how to use the tool, before children have a go.

Sit either on a sturdy surface, cutting to the side and away from your body, or use knife on a hard surface, such as log and sit on knees or in respect position. Cut down and away from the body.

	Use a push stroke, cutting away from your body, or the hand holding the piece of wood. Just slice off a tiny bit at a time. If you press too hard, you may lose control of the knife or get it stuck. Keep legs closed and never hold the wood in your lap as the knife will be too close to the large blood vessels in your thighs (the triangle of death). Hold it past your knees or to the side. **Splitting:** This needs to be done with Sheath knife and mallet. Splitting is an activity mainly done to create different sizes of fire-wood. No gloves are be worn for this activity, as both hands are holding a tool. Get into a safe kneeling position, behind a steady surface e.g. log. Place the wood into the surface and then rest the knife on top of the wood. Hit with a mallet to split in half. Do not hold the wood, this will get held up by the tension of the knife. **Safety first!** Remind children that when they are not using the knife, the sheath must always be put back on. Get children in the good habit of doing this in between any change of wood. The sheath knife is to be placed on the ground, by the side of the body, sheath (with a click) on. 
Bow saw	Bow saw ratio 1:1 with children who are deemed ready by FS lead and gone through extensive safety and tool talk. The use of a bow saw must be relevant to the children's interests and skill level. All risk assessments and appropriate insurance must be in place before introducing any tools. The tools will be checked before and after use by FS leader.

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Setting up tool area:
Set out a designated tool area, which everybody knows (whether they are taking part in the activity or not). The area should be away from paths and thoroughfares, so that other children will not accidently enter the tool area. You can use rope to cordon off the area, so that no one enters unless invited. A waiting area could be created just outside the perimeter of the tool area for children who are waiting for a turn. This could consist of some seating logs. The ground should be relatively flat and cleared of any obstructions or trip hazards. Any benches or logs being used to work tools on should be stable. Have a first aid kit near to hand.

Store in a locked shed when not in use.

Introduce the 'Blood bubble' idea to children and demonstrate how the space we need around ourselves is two arms and a tools width. This can be done before any tools are introduced by practising, putting arms out.

Go through the tool talk with children, so that they understand what all the parts are, how use, pick up, carry and pass to others. The FS leader should always demonstrate how to use the tool, before children have a go.

This is the handle, blade, finger guard, blade cover, cutting edge.
I take the blade cover off like this.
When I have finished sawing, I put the blade cover back on like this.
I hold the bow saw like this.
I walk with the bow saw like this.
I pass the bow saw like this.
When I am not using the bow saw I put it down with the blade facing in and the handle facing out like this.
I keep two arms and a tools distance.

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I use the bow saw to cut anything bigger than a 2 pence piece.
When I use the bow saw I use it two arms and a tool away from anyone like this.
When I have finished using the bow saw I put it in the designated place.
No gloves on tool - glove on non-sawing hand.

Uses for a Bow Saw:
The Bow saw is used for cutting wood that is larger than a 2p coin.

- Wood cookies
- Wooden Mallet
- Log dog
- Sawing logs for fire, swings, ladders
- Sawing tree branches

Different woods can be used depending on what the purpose is. Wood can be cut wet or dry, but if the wood is too wet, it can be hard for inexperienced users of a bow saw. Soft woods such as Poplar, Cedar and Birch are easier to cut through, so are good for practising the skill of sawing. Maple and Ash wood are excellent hardwoods for making wooden mallets and wood cookies but hard to work with if you're still a beginner.

Safety first!
Get children to practise how to hold, pass, carry, replace cover on the Bow saw.

How to use:
The Bow saw can be used in different ways: one person on their own; two people, (either two children or adult and child); or in a group. If the wood is very long, it may be better to have a group, so that the wood can be held firm and prevent movement. It will depend on the age and experience level as to whether two children can work together, or if it done with an adult. The Forest School leader should supervise at all times.

(For groups) Participants assisting to wear gloves on both hands. They can knee down or up to put more pressure on holding down log.

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Leader and child sit opposite each other. Do the bow saw "shuffle" before beginning, to ensure positioning is correct.

Gentle back and forth movement. Child keeps helping hand behind their back. Child holds the finger guard. As the saw is pulled backwards and forwards, you can use an agreed-upon phrase such as "push" "pull".

Safety First!
Remind the child not to pick up the wood piece until the bow saw is made safe.

Q4. Describe 4 different types of knots based on their use and explain the process of facilitating knots with participants

Use	Knot name and process	How it can be introduced to different groups with regard to Forest School ethos
Joining two ropes together e.g., reef knot, overhand knot	**Reef knot**  (taken from https://www.bing.com/images/) Only one end is going to be the working end e.g., left crosses right (working end is now on the right), right crosses left.	**Facilitation, regarding FS ethos:** It is a good first knot to teach to younger children, as it is quite simple and can be taken apart easily. It is not for weight bearing, but is a very useful knot for joining rope, in many different contexts. Leaving loose rope out for children at Forest School, allows them to create and use their imagination for anything. Learning the skill of joining two ropes together, can then lead to endless possibilities. Activities using a reef knot: Securing bundles of sticks.

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	This knot is easily undone.	 (taken from https://www.bing.com/images/) Changing wool colours in craft activities, such as God's Eye.  **Rope/cord context and teaching ideas:** Use different coloured rope to help teach this knot. Ask children to pick which colour will be working the knot. Children can also test they have done the knot correctly by holding both ends and tightening and loosening easily.
Attaching a rope to an object e.g. taut tarp, clove hitch, Siberian/evenk hitch, timber hitch	**Timber hitch**  1. Wrap the rope around a tree. 2. Cross the shorter, working end over the long end. 3. Bring working end under and back toward you. 4. Bring the working end through the middle of the loop created around the tree.	**Facilitation, regarding FS ethos:** Timber hitch is an important companion to 2 half hitches, when attaching a rope to two trees. This can then be used for hanging many things, such as crafts, water can etc. It is also important when making shelters. **Rope/cord choice:** Various thicknesses of rope can be used for this knot. Start children off with thicker, to support motor skills as they practise. Braided synthetic ropes are also easier and softer on hands, compared to twisted rough natural fibres. **Teaching ideas:** Children need to start by understanding what a turn is (when the rope is cast over something). Younger children can simply practise making turns around a stick.

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	5. Loop the shorter, working end 3 times.	 (photo taken from https://www.forestschooltraining.co.uk/) This knot can be made easier to remember by creating a story, for example, Sami the snake goes over his own tail but has forgotten something so has to go back. He then wraps himself around his tail 3 times. You can make a snake face on the working end by adding eyes and a tongue.  (photo taken from https://www.bing.com/images/, then added to) Children can pair up and support each other to create the knot. They can test the strength of each other's knots by pulling on it to check tension. 

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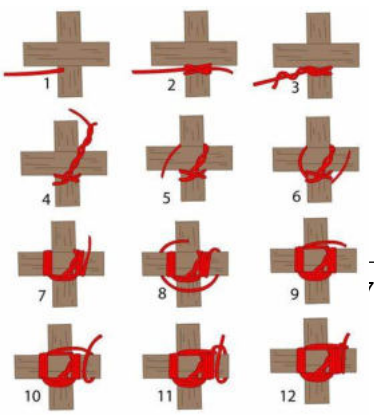
Attaching 2 objects together e.g. square lashing, shear lashing	**Square lashing** Start by attaching string to one stick using a Clove hitch.  (taken from https://www.bing.com/images) Place another stick over the top, horizontally and bring the rope over. Continue working the rope around both sticks; over the horizonal and under the vertical. Once you have done this the required amount of times, end by frapping in between the sticks to keep them secure. Tie ends together using a reef knot. 	**Facilitation, regarding FS ethos:** This is a more advance knot. Make sure the children are confident with clove hitch before teaching square lashing. Give younger children time to experiment with simply wrapping rope/string around a stick first. Demonstrate to the children how to hold and rotate the sticks in helping hand. Some children may need support to hold sticks in place when completing the first turn. Activities using Square lashing: Stick frame  God's Eye  Hanging bird feeder

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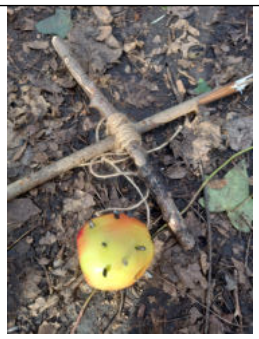
	(taken from https://www.bing.com/images) 	 **Choice of rope/cord and teaching ideas:** Square lashing can be particularly challenging, as the activities it is used for are often done with twine or string. You could practise this knot, first on a big scale. This could be done on the ground, using larger tree branches and rope. You could create one big God's eye for the Forest, or a large spider web. For younger children, this will particularly help them practise the skill of looping rope around a stick. Older children or advanced learners might appreciate having pictures or set of cards as visual prompts. This will also enable children to self-check their own knots.
Tensioning a rope e.g. taut line, prusik	**Taut line** Make a half hitch, then wrap working end again. Make another half hitch.  (taken from https://www.bing.com/images)	**Facilitation, regarding FS ethos:** This is a good knot to use in shelter building, to attach guy lines, as they can be tightened and loosened. Only teach children who are ready and interested in learning. Allow children to experiment with using knots they might already know first. The advantage of this knot is that it can be tightened and loosened. Is this something that the children will come to realise in the course of their shelter building experimentation? **Cord/Rope choice and teaching ideas:** 3mm parachord is the typical choice for guy lines. Knots can be practised using larger rope first. Teach children how to complete a half hitch first. Make sure children can identify the

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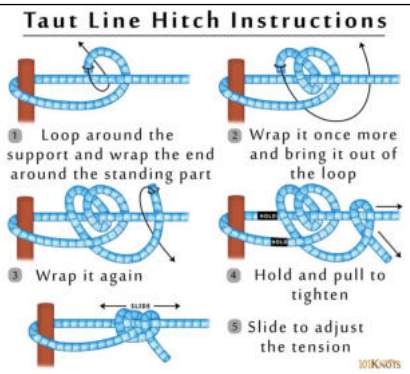


(taken from https://www.bing.com/images)

Make a turn around a post or other object several feet from the free end.

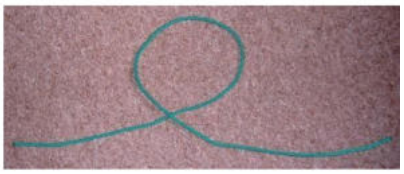
Coil the free end twice around the standing line working back toward the post.

Make one additional coil around the standing line on the outside of the coils just made.

Tighten the knot and slide it on the standing line to adjust tension.

working end, standing end and standing part. You can use the idea of Sami snake again. For younger children, who can even create a snake head on one end of the rope by adding eyes and a tongue.

For very beginners, get children to simply practise making loops on the ground, using large rope.



(Photo taken from https://www.forestschooltraining.co.uk/)

Children can practise this knot around a tree before doing in context. Children can be paried up to support each other and check their knots are done correctly by sliding them up and down.

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Q5. Explain how to make 4 craft items using a range of techniques (at least 2 items should be made using woodworking hand tools) and describe the process of facilitating craft making with client group

To answer the question, you need to consider your choice of materials, as well as tools appropriate to the age and development stage of the participants. You also need to consider the following techniques:

1. *Woven*
2. *Joined*
3. *Shaped*
4. *Carved*
5. *Split*

Craft 1

Craft name	**Stick frame and leaf print picture**
Step-by-step making process	Kit: 4 sticks per person Secateurs or loppers String/ twine/ wool Scissors Large needles Mallet Cotton fabric Fresh leaves This activity can be split into three separate sections: 1)Leaf print picture 2)Stick frame 3)Attaching picture to frame This craft activity might take place over several weeks of Forest School. **<u>Leaf Print Picture</u>** Step 1: **Make sure you have an appropriate work space:**

When using tools, you should make sure that there is two arms and a tool length space around you. The area can be cordoned off or specially selected because it is away from other areas, not part of a thoroughfare etc.

Step 2: **Tool talk:**
Introduce the mallet. What is it called? What is it for? Name its parts; How you use it (including body position); How you transport it; Space (two arms and a tools length).

Step 3: **Collecting the leaves (juicy leaves work best)**
Give children time to collect fresh leaves/ berries from the site. Explain that this is one of the special times they are allowed to pick from the trees/bushes, but remind them to only pick what they need and what is in abundance.

Step 4: **Leaf printing**
Find a hard, flat surface, such as a log to work on. Show children how to place their leaves inside the fabric cloth (Calico) and use small taps to bring out the juice, which will stain the cloth and produce the picture. Suggest thinking about how they want their leaves arranged before they begin. Are they going to make a pattern? When the colour has come through the top of the fabric it should be ready. Open up and peel away the leaves to show the print.

Stick Frame

Step 1: **Make sure you have an appropriate work space:**
When using tools you should make sure that there is two arms and a tool length space around you. The area can be cordoned off or specially selected because it is away from other areas, not part of a thoroughfare etc.

Step 2: **Tool talk:**
Introduce secateurs and/or loppers. Secateurs are used for sticks no larger than a 1p diameter. Loppers are used for sticks no larger than a 2p diameter. What is it called? What is it for? Name its parts; How you use it (including body position); How you transport it; Space (two arms and a tools length).

Step 3: **Cut 4 sticks**
The adult holds the stick at the top (with gloved hands) and child cuts the correct length, making sure to wear a glove on their *Helping hand.* It may help to first measure and mark where the cut needs to be made.

Step 4: **Knots**

	Children will need to know how to tie a **Clove hitch** and a **Square lash**. Cut 4 arm's length pieces of string (natural twine works well), using scissors. Use a clove hitch to attach the string to one stick. Lay the end of another stick on top, at a 90 degree angle. Square lash the two sticks together. Repeat this process to attach the four sticks together. Cut any excess string off. **<u>Attaching the picture to the frame</u>** Step 1: **Make sure you have an appropriate work space:** When using tools, you should make sure that there is two arms and a tool length space around you. The area can be cordoned off or specially selected because it is away from other areas, not part of a thoroughfare etc. Step 2: **Tool talk:** Introduce sewing needle. What is it for? Name its parts; How you use it (including body position); How you transport it; Space (two arms and a tools length). Step 3: **Sewing picture to frame** Allow children to choose which type and colour of wool or string they would like to use to sew their leaf picture to the stick frame. Step 4: **Hanging** Attach a length of string to the top of the picture frame so that it can be hung. Several different knots can be used to do this, including: overhand, clove hitch, granny.
How it can be introduced to different groups with regard to the Forest School ethos	Areas covered in this activity: Ecology, creativity, imagination, focus, confidence, independence, self-esteem, maths, connecting with nature. This activity can be split into stages and simplified according to age and experience. For example, younger children may just do the leaf printing, without making the frame. This is an activity where the "No pick" rule is discarded. Explain to children that this is one of the occasions where they are allowed to pick leaves from the plants. Make sure that they only pick what they need and that it is from a plant with an abundance. The FS leader can allow children to select their own leaves, without offering guidance regarding which will work best (younger, juicier). This can then become a learning opportunity and point for discussion: Which leaves worked best? Why?

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Photo(s)	 Leaf printing  Square latch 

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Craft 2

Craft name	**Wood cookie necklace**
Step-by-step making process	**Kit:** -Dry, rot free fallen branch/log (approx. 5-6 cm diameter and roughly the length of an adults arm). Hazel wood works particularly well. -Gloves for each child and adult (metal mesh if possible) -Bow saw -Palm drill -String -Scissors -Decorative art materials such as: permanent markers, charcoal, oil based pastels etc. Step 1: **Make sure you have an appropriate work space:** When using tools you should make sure that there is two arms and a tool length space around you. The area can be cordoned off or specially selected because it is away from other areas, not part of a thoroughfare etc. Step 2: **Tool talk:** Introduce Bow saw.. What is it called? What is it for? Name its parts; How you use it (including body position); How you transport it; Space (two arms and a tools length). Step 3: **Demonstrate how to cut the wood cookie:**

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	Use tree stumps to prop the branch up on (see photo). Kneel in front the branch on both knees or using *Respect position.* Make sure you are wearing a glove on your *Helping hand* (non-tool hand). Step 4: **Sawing the cookie:** You can do this with one adult and one child or with a small group. If doing this activity with a group of children, get one child to be "Safety officer" and watch to make sure everyone is being safe. Split spare children into pairs, kneeling opposite each other to hold down the log. There should be an extra supervising adult to each pair of children. These children wear gloves on both hands. Adult sits opposite child sawing the cookie. Make sure your bodies are inside the cutting line. Check you know which hand child uses to hold the saw and practise back and forth sawing movement with them holding your thumb. Ask child to place *Helping hand* behind their back for extra safety and remind them not to pick up their cookie until the adult as indicated it is safe. After sawing the cookie, place the bow saw back on the ground with blade facing in. Step 5: **Drilling the hole** Tool talk and demonstration needs to be repeated before using the hand drill. Place cookie on a flat surface; a log can use used. Hold the cookie steady using a gloved hand (with younger children the adult should hold). Get child to bore the hole near the top of the cookie. Step 6: **Thread the wool/string through the hole:** Measure a length of string that will be long enough to go around the child's head and worn as a pendant and cut using scissors. Thread through the hole and knot at the end. Different knots can be used such as overhand or granny knot. Step 7: **Decorate** You might allow children to decorate their necklace with any design or their choosing or you may have a theme you would like them to stick to, such as animals, trees, emotions etc.

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How it can be introduced to different groups with regard to the Forest School ethos	Areas covered in this activity: Focus, persistence, patience, creativity, fine motor skills, risk assessment (using tools responsibly), using senses, confidence, tree identification. Younger children may not cut their own cookie piece. These may be pre-cut by FS lead, depending on children's age and tool experience. Children may decorate their cookie with different designs according to topics of learning. For example: different leaves; trees; animals; insects etc. They may be asked to choose a Forest School name and this necklace can be used to identify them during sessions. Cookie cutting may take place with different sized groups, according to age and experience. Younger children may do this on a 1:1 basis. Older children can work in larger groups, choosing one to be at the head and act as "safety officer".
Photo(s)	 

	

Craft 3

Craft name	**Wooden Mallet**
Step-by-step making process	Kit: -Bow saw -Dry, rot free fallen branch/log (approx. 5-6 cm diameter and roughly the length of an adults arm). Hazel wood works particularly well. -Gloves for each child and adult (metal mesh if possible) -Billhook -Mallet Step 1: **Make sure you have an appropriate work space:** When using tools you should make sure that there is two arms and a tool length space around you. The area can be cordoned off or specially selected because it is away from other areas, not part of a thoroughfare etc. Step 2: **Bow saw tool talk:** Introduce Bow saw.. What is it called? What is it for? Name its parts; How you use it (including body position); How you transport it; Space (two arms and a tools length). Step 3: **Demonstrate how to do a stop cut:** Use tree stumps to prop the branch up on (see photo). Kneel in front the branch on both knees or using *Respect position.* Make sure you are wearing a glove on your *Helping hand* (non-tool hand). Child holds the handle, leader holes the other end. Cut until the blade goes under the wood, then roll saw until it just pops out. Repeat. Step 4: **Billhook tool talk:**

	Introduce Billhook. What is it called? What is it for? Name its parts; How you use it (including body position); How you transport it; Space (two arms and a tools length). Step 5: **Mallet tool talk:** Introduce Billhook. What is it called? What is it for? Name its parts; How you use it (including body position); How you transport it; Space (two arms and a tools length). Step 6: **Use mallet and billhook to split away wood.** Demonstrate how to do this first. During this step you are using the mallet and billhook to split away the excess wood, which create the rough handle of your mallet. Sit is respect position with your mallet wood resting on a hard, secure surface, such as log. No gloves are needed, as you have a tool in each hand. Place the billhook on top of your wood at the distance into where your stop-cut went. Hit the top of the billhook using a mallet to split the wood. Repeat this action all the way around, in order to create a rough handle. Step 7: **Carving the handle** Use a sheath knife to whittle away and excess wood from the handle and create a smooth, rounded edge.
How it can be introduced to different groups with regard to the Forest School ethos	Areas covered in this activity: Focus, persistence, patience, creativity, fine motor skills, risk assessment (using tools responsibly), using senses, confidence, tree identification. Once children have used a mallet for various purposes e.g. shelter building, leaf bashing, they could make their own one. As this activity involves three tools: bow saw, sheath knife and billhook; this is a craft you would do only with experienced children. Children should already have used these tools individually during other crafts, so that they are not being introduced to three new tools at the same time.

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Photo(s)	 Step 1: Bow saw tool talk and demonstration.  Step 2: Stop-cut

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Step 3 and 4: Tool talk and demonstration of billhook.

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Step 5: Use Billhook and mallet to split wood for the handle.

Step 6: Use a sheath knife to whittle handle down.

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Craft 4

Craft name	**Gods Eye**
Step-by-step making process	Kit: Two sticks Wool of different colours Scissors **Step 1**: select two sticks of roughly the same length and diameter. **Step 2**: Connect the two sticks together using square lashing. Use a clove hitch to attach the string to one stick. Lay the end of another stick on top, at a 90 degree angle. Square lash the two sticks together. **Step 3**: Wrap the wool over and around one stick, then over and around the other. Repeat this going around as many times as you like. **Step 4**: Change colour of the wool, to create interest. Cut the wool of the colour you are working with, tie old colour to new, using a reef knot. **Step 5**: When finished, cut the wool, leaving a small length to secure with a knot around one stick. Any loose ends can be tucked away.
How it can be introduced to different groups with regard to the Forest School ethos	Areas covered in this activity: Patience, persistence, creativity, awe and wonder. This craft can allow for individual “flow” to occur and personal expression to take place. Some children will find this activity easy to grasp and satisfying, whereas, for others it, may be a challenge and become frustrating. The FS leader needs to offer individual support where needed. These make a great decoration when hung from trees and can be used as a discussion point: Why do you think they are called Gods eyes? Are they simply decoration or do you think they are serving a purpose?

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Photo(s)	

Q6. Describe the process of erecting group shelters using tarp or natural woodland materials and explain the facilitation process with participants

To answer the question, you need to explain the process of erecting a shelter by describing the following:

Purpose	Before erecting a shelter, you must be clear as to its purpose. Some shelters are used for groups to stay out of the rain, storing equipment, some are simply used for imaginative play or as a team building exercise.
Site conditions	Clear the area of trip hazards e.g. holes, lumps, roots. Is there a clearing of trees that can be used?
Weather conditions	It is more difficult to erect a tarp shelter in windy conditions. Consider the direction of the wind, you do not want it pointing into the wind. Branches are also more likely to come down in high winds. You may often be putting up a shelter in the rain. This means that the ground around may be muddy and slippery, with wet leaves. Take extra care in these weather conditions. You may want to put a ground sheet down. Do not erect a tarp shelter in a thunder storm, as there is an increased risk of lighting strikes.
Materials available	Available materials will determine which kind of shelter you can erect: Tarps Shelter or Natural Shelter.

	If erecting a natural shelter, using sticks, make sure that these resources are transported safely. Make sure to go over stick rules (stick pointing down, longer than your arm must be dragged, if it's bigger than you, it takes two). Natural shelters can be made somewhat water tight with the use of bracken or hummus. Know what natural resources you have in your own setting and be aware of any plants that may cause skin reactions. Here are some resources you might buy to make shelters: Tarps Rope Pegs Here are some natural resources you might have available in your Forest School site: Sticks Poles V Shape poles Debris, such as leaf litter
Rationale and design	Things that might affect your design: - Space (Size; Do you have trees to support the structure of a shelter or will you rely on poles?) - Available materials- Tarps or Natural - Shelter use (What is it for?) - Participants (Experience level)  *In my Forest School I have a clearing of trees that can be used to create an elevated shelter. I can also use the small wooden shelter to create a Lean to or Windshield Wedge shelter.*

	
Construction techniques	**Techniques for building a Tarp Shelter**  Kit: Tarp Tent pegs Mallet Paracord (preferably bright coloured) Types of knots needed: Timber hitch, about turn, two half hitches Prusik Taut tarp 1. Choose two trees, well distanced apart to form Ridgeline. 2. Tie a Timber hitch to the first tree and an About turn, two half hitches to the second. The timber hitch can be shimmied up the trunk to create the correct height. 3. Drape the tarps over the ridgeline to create A frame. 4. Secure the tarps to the ridgeline, using a prusik at both ends. 5. Tie rope to the four corners of the tarps.

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	6. Using taut tarp knot, peg the four ropes into the ground, making sure to keep rope coming out at the correct angle to avoid sagging and pooling of water. 7. Tauten the lines as needed.
Dismantling process	When dismantling, make sure that tarps are cleaned, dried and stored away in the bag the came in. Participants can help to roll the tarps up, so that it is small enough to fit. Make sure all pegs are taken from the ground and cleaned of mud. Use a Hank knot to keep rope and paracord neat and prevent unwanted knots and tangles.  (photo taken from Coil Unattached Rope | How to tie a Coil Unattached Rope using Step-by-Step Animations | Animated Knots by Grog)
Group interaction	Children can work on individual knots, on their own, in pairs (one knotting, the other checking), or as a group. Children can be given different roles e.g. knots, tarps, mallet.
Ecological impact	Before any shelter building make sure you have created an Environmental Impact Report for this activity. Make sure all equipment is packed away after use. Check the ground for pegs. Make sure the location of your shelter is not disturbing any habitat or animal runs. If erecting a natural shelter, consider where the resources are coming from. Try to gather what is already on the ground, rather than sawing branches from trees. If using leaves/bracken/moss to cover the shelter, consider how abundant it is. Only pick what is in abundance!

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	When erecting shelters using rope, natural fibres will eventually biodegrade if lost in the environment, however synthetic cord will not. If using synthetic cordage try to make sure it is colourful, so that is easily seen and will not get lost. Remove all ropes after use. Ropes should not be left indefinitely attached to living trees as they can damage the bark and tissues over time. Protect trees from rope friction with felt.

How would you teach this process to participants? How would you introduce this to different groups with regard to the Forest School ethos?

Shelter building at Forest School develops physical, creative, emotional, communication, perseverance, and team building skills. Teach shelter building within context, for example, it is a rainy day, how can we keep dry?

Younger children can be introduced to the idea of shelter building on a smaller scale e.g., using sticks to create an animal/fairy shelters. Allowing children to explore rope and tarps on their own, might lead to some kind explorative shelter building play. Provide these loose parts, not as a once off, but for extended periods of time. This will allow children to practise and develop their skills. Younger children can find knot tying very challenging, so it may be a good idea to allow them simply to experiment with different ways of using rope. Only teach children who show an interest in knot tying and when it is relevant to what they are doing.

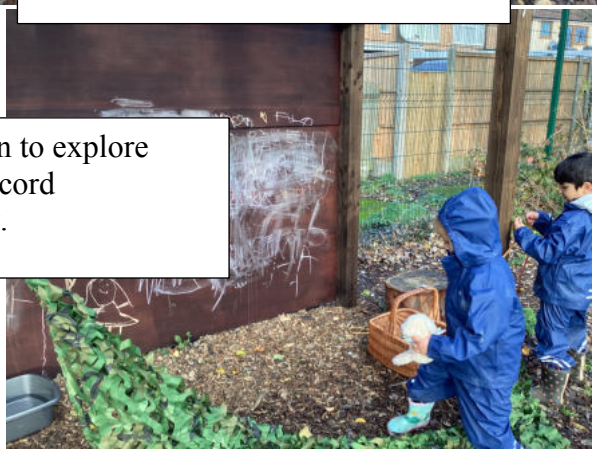
When using sticks to build shelters, children should be reminded of stick safety. Talk about how to transport the sticks. How big/heavy are they? Anything longer than your arms needs to be dragged; If it is bigger than you, it takes two. It is highly likely that, larger sticks will be used in the process of natural shelter building. Children can work in pairs to transport, lift and place these onto the shelter. If erecting a natural shelter, consider where the resources are coming from. Try to gather what is already on the ground, rather than sawing branches from trees. If using leaves/bracken/moss to cover the shelter, consider how abundant it is. Only pick what is in abundance! Know what natural resources you have in your own setting and be aware of any plants that may cause skin reactions.

Safety talks need to be done before erecting a shelter, using pegs and mallets. The FS leader needs to demonstrate the safe use of a mallet using the tool talk. As resources may be moved around a lot in the process of shelter building, children need to be reminded about how to transport equipment carefully and to be mindful of others around them. Children should never run with equipment. At my Forest School, I remind children to be

like Owls: Look; Listen; Think.

Try to use colourful rope, to increase visibility and prevent trip accidents. Always tie any loose rope ends up, so they are not dangling.

Shelter building on a smaller scale.



Allow children to explore tarps and paracord independently.

Older children might be taught and practise individual knots before erecting a shelter (if they show an interest). Shelter building can be a great group activity and offer different roles for participants e.g. knots, tarps, mallet. This allows children to choose which part of shelter building interests them most and learn group cooperation skills. Allow children time, after the shelter has been built to play in it (this may mean keeping it up for the next session). Give children the opportunity to evaluate the success of their shelter. How well does it work? Would they change anything about it? What would they do differently next time?

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Get children into the good habit of taking down their tarp shelter at the end of the session. Do a sweep of the area afterwards to make sure no pegs are left in the ground and that the area has not been too much disturbed: Leave the Woodland as you found it!

Q7. Describe the process of building, lighting and managing a camp fire safely and explain the facilitation process with participants

*To answer the question, you first need to explain the process of **siting a fire** by describing the following:*

Site conditions & safe positioning	Consider weather, including wind direction. Site fire away from overhanging branches. Remove any trip hazards, including plants, bramble, logs, sticks, holes, lumps and roots.
Site permissions	Make sure you have the landowner's permission before having any fires.
Fire legislation	Make sure permissions and insurance are in place. Make sure you have Fire Policy within the FS Handbook.
Escape routes	Create a map of area, with escape routes. Make sure all participants are aware of them and how to evacuate safely. Have a clear entrance and exit.
Soil Type	Understand which soil type you have on your site: Clay: non-flammable Stony/soil: non-flammable Brown muddy soil: non-flammable Peaty: flammable Light, fluffy woody: flammable

	Leaf litter: flammable (taken from *pg. 90 The Hive, Participants Handbook)*
Site preparation	Make sure to do daily site risk assessment checks. Check for new growth or any overhanging branches that might need cutting back. Remove leaves and sticks from fire circle area. If the ground is very dry, dose in water.
Safety equipment	 Fire blanket  Water bucket  Fire gloves  Burns kit

Managing the surrounding area	Think about wind direction and the affect a fire may have on surrounding flora and fauna. Site fire as far away as possible from other flora, buildings, tarps or tents. Have a clear entry and exit to the site and a one-way system around the fire.

Seating distances away from fire pit	Seating 1.5 m distance away 
Minimising ecological impact	Consider smoke and how this will affect surrounding flora and fauna. Keep the fire a distance away from any surrounding trees. Allow the fuel to burn down as much as possible. You can use a stick to break down larger pieces. Once the ash is completely cooled, it can be carefully scattered into undergrowth or buried, in order to minimize ecological impact. Follow the 'Leave no trace' guidelines.

*You then need to explain the process of **building a fire** by describing the following:*

Building the fire pit base and surround	You can use a ready-made metal fire pit, such as a fire bowl, fire box or Kelly kettle base, or, you can build the fire directly on the ground or on stone. You can also make a dug pit for the fire, which protects it from the wind. Create a square of logs or stones around the fire area to mark out safe zone and fire boundary.
Types of fire Lays for different purposes	**Waffle/Pyramid** This type of fire burns down slowly and does not need much tending. Good for cooking on.

You need a different selection of size kindling and firewood.
Start with the largest pieces of wood. Make sure you lay with down with gaps in between.
Add another layer of wood on top with pieces going in the opposite direction.
Keep adding layers, using smaller pieces each time.
For the last layer use fine kindling e.g. wood shavings.

Tepee

This is an easy fire lay to make and light. This type of fire will burn quickly.

(Photo taken from tipi-fire-lay.jpg (500×601) (momgoescamping.com)

Place tinder in the middle of the fire. Start will smaller sticks and arrange around the kindling in a tepee shape. Leave a gap so that you can light the kindling.
Use larger wood pieces for the final layer of the tepee.

Star

This is a slow burning fire, which does not use much wood and is good for cooking.

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	 (photo taken from https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=star+fire+lay&form=HDRSC2&first=1) Start by making a small tepee fire in the middle, then place larger wood in a star formation around the edge. As the fire burns, push the larger pieces into the centre. **Lean-to** This has a roof to protect from wind and rain.  **(Photo taken from https://momgoescamping.com/fire-lays/)** Use a large log as the main wall. Start with smaller wood pieces and lean these up against the wall. Continue to do this, with pieces getting larger. Build a small tepee fire under the roof and use this to start the fire.
Non-toxic types of wood to burn	Avoid greenwood as it is hard to burn and create lots of smoke. Yew and Rhododendron release toxic fumes when burned, so avoid. Kiln dried hardwoods are best.

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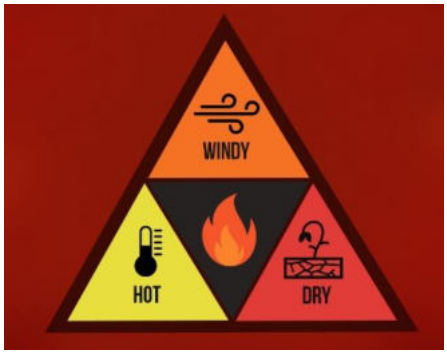
	Good firewood's include: Oak, Maple, Cherry, Birch, Beech and Ash.
Weather considerations	Think about wind direction. Stay upwind to avoid smoke inhalation. Do not have fires in very dry conditions. 

*You then need to explain the process of **lighting a fire** by describing the following:*

Range of fire lighting methods including fire strikers	In order to start a fire, you will need to create ignition. **Dragons Sneeze (Flint and steel)**  Use a scallop shell and cotton wool. Separate the cotton wool fibres, then strike the flint and steel onto the cotton wool. Once the cotton wool is aflame, this can be transfers onto the main fire safely.  **Matches**

(Taken from: https://www.bing.com/images)

Strike the match stick against the side of the box to create spark and flame.

Bow Drill Fire Starter

Taken from: https://www.bing.com/images)
Spin the drill onto the board. This creates friction and ignites a spark. Catch the flame onto the tinder and transfer onto the fire.

Fire Piston

Taken from: https://www.bing.com/images)
Place tinder (charcloth) into the piston chamber. Strike the piston into the barrel, then transfer charcloth onto fire.

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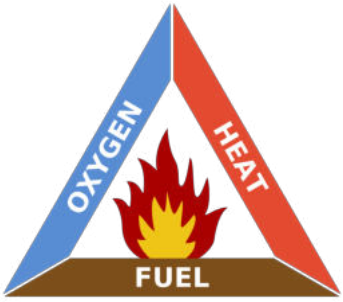
Types of tinder, kindling and fuels	**Tinder:** Cotton wool, wood shavings or dried leaves can be used. **Kindling:** Use blade and mallet to split wood into matchstick size, pencil size and thumb size pieces. Dried twigs can also be used.  **Fuels:** Dry hardwood logs or dead limbs can be used as the main fuel source. 

*Finally you need to explain the process of **managing a fire** by describing the following:*

The fire triangle	In order to light a fire you need: Oxygen Heat Fuel  (taken from: https://www.bing.com/images)

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	In order to light the fire, you need fuel and oxygen will help the fuel ignite the flame. As the flame grows, the heat intensifies.
Size and types of fires	Fires can serve different purposes e.g., for cooking, keeping warm, heating water. The size and type of fire you create will depend on what its purpose is.  Kelly kettle is a small, contained fire, for boiling water or small cooking activities, such as popcorn or marshmallows.  Let large flames die down before cooking. Embers give off a steady heat, so there is less chance of burning the food.

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	 Larger fires are good for creating warmth.
Management of resources	Thought needs to go into the placement of resources. Fire equipment should be close to hand at all times, but not directly next to the fire. Prepare all relevant resources beforehand, e.g. fuel, cooking utensils etc.

Describe the process of facilitating the safe use of fire with participants, making sure you take the following into consideration:

1. *Differentiation, age & developmental stage*
2. *Previous experience of participants*
3. *Ratios*
4. *Insurance*
5. *Group and behaviour management*

Fires should only be lit by a level 3 trained Forest School leader, when it is deemed that the children are ready and can follow safety rules. They should be taught how to change seats by standing and stepping backwards and walking around the outside of the logs. Several games and fake fire, practise sessions should take place before a real fire is lit.

The setting should have full insurance, policies and permission in place for fires. All supporting adults need to be briefed regarding safety procedures. One person should be in charge of the fire at all times.

Only trained adults should light the fire, unless children are under direct supervision of the Forest School leader. Children would not begin learning fire lighting skills before they have previous experience of fires and can demonstrate their ability to follow safety instructions.

<u>The rules:</u>

DO NOT step into the fire circle without invitation.

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Use Respect position when inside the fire circle.
DO NOT throw anything into the fire (fuel is placed, not thrown in).
Hands never go over the fire.
Walk around the outside of the fire circle.
Face you head and body away from smoke.

Q8. Describe the process of cooking with fire, using 2 cooking methods of your choice and taking food hygiene and safety into consideration

Describe the process of cooking with fire, using cooking method 1

Cooking activities can be a very important part of Forest School. Linking back to the FS principles; fire and cooking allow children to take supported risks. It teaches them about elements and changes, helps foster relience amd confidence. It can also be a great way to create a sense of community amongst the group.
Before doing any cooking activities with children at Forest School, they should have some prior experience of fire e.g. camp fires around basecamp. For very young children, they need to understand what a fire is. Children should be aware of all fire safety rules, having played safety games, 'stop, drop and roll', and demonstrated that they can follow instructions, that they know how to move around it, body position etc. Some children may be very ancious of any fire activities at Forest School. It is important to remember that all activities are an offer and if a child does not want to particiate, this is fine.

Before doing any cooking activities, the FS leader needs to make sure all risk benefits have been completed, that you have permission from the land owner, that the area has been prepared and all safety equipment is in place. Also check for allergies and try to maintain high levels of hygiene throughout. At my Forest School, I have made the decision to only cook vegetarian food. This is because many of our children only eat Halal meat, but it also limits the possibilities of food contamination or food poisoning.

Have all equipment prepared before beginning any cooking activity:

- Site preparation
- Risk assessments and permissions
- Fire equipment prepared, including first aid, burns kit and fire blanket
- Hand washing station prepared
- All cooking equipment on hand
- Allergy lists

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Kelly Kettle

The Kelly kettle is versatile and can be used for boiling water, as well as cooking small items such as pop-corn and marshmallows.

1. Prepare your area. Think about where to site the Kelly kettle; in an area where you can see all around you, away from main pathways, no access from behind. Think about wind direction. Prepare fire safety equipment. For extra safety, create a fire surround using logs to create a square around the Kelly kettle. Make sure children are clear about entrance and exit to the fire circle and manning position.
2. Make sure the kettle spout is away from you and the hole of the base towards you. The cork remains out when kettle is on the flames.

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3 Prepare fuel and kindling.

This can be done with more experience children. Children can be shown how to split wood using a mallet and billhook. They could create some of their own kindling by whittling or splitting smaller pieces of wood with sheath knife and mallet. For less experienced children, they could simply be given the task of separating out the different sizes of fuel, as seen in this photo. Good woods for cooking include, Oak, Hawthorn and Ash, as they burn hot and slowly.

4. Create a waffle fire by placing larger pieces at the bottom, getting smaller as you work your way up.

5. Place small shaving on top and light using cotton wool, scallop shell and dragons sneeze.

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Fire lighting can be done as a separate activity with the children. It may be a good idea to practise this skill before doing any cooking activities. Children can be shown and given time to practise how to light a piece of cotton wool onto the scallop shell first and then how to safely transfer it onto the kindling.

6. Feed the fire by placing wood into the top of the kettle. Demonstrate how to feed wood safety into the Kelly Kettle by tilting and dropping it into the top.

Fill water up to a thumb's width from the top. This is to prevent boiling water spilling out. When water is boiling, remove from the heat. Children will need to know what boiling water looks and sounds like. Allow children to observe the bubbles and notice the steam coming out of the top. Squeeze the handles inwards as you lift. It is a good idea to allow children to practise lifting and pouring the Kelly Kettle when cold. To pour use the chain. The kettle can be placed to the side with the cork left on.

Wait for the fire to burn down to hot embers before cooking on it.

Marshmallow and popcorn can be cooked on the base. Marshmallow and popcorn are a good way to introduce cooking to a group, as they do not take long and can be done at a distance from the fire. Make sure all children have washed their hands before any handling of food. Check that children are not wearing gloves on their hands or that there are any loose items of clothing that can dangle into the fire e.g. scarfs.

Toasting Marshmallows:

- Make sure anyone coming forward to roast their marshmallows is positioned down-wind and maintains 3 points of contact (one knee up, one knee down). Children may only enter the fire circle when invited to do so.
- You can use bought skewers or you could have prepared your own sticks to toast the marshmallows on the end of (consider hygiene).
- Carefully poke the marshmallow onto the stick. Make sure it does not go all the way through, otherwise the stick will burn.
- Get children to hold the stick at the end hold at arms- length over the fire, but not too close or the marshmallow will burn.
- When the marshmallow is golden and gooey it is done.
- DO NOT allow children to eat the marshmallow immediately, as it will be hot.
- Children can make a Smore, by sandwiching two biscuits with the marshmallow. This also prevents the children from touching the marshmallow, as they can simply hold the biscuits and slide the marshmallow off the stick in between them.

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(photo taken from https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=smores)

Popcorn:

Can be done on in a pan but when cooking using a Kelly Kettle, it is best to do this activity using two sieves tied together and a pole attached to the end of it for extra safety.

- Place a small amount of popcorn cornels in between the sieves. No oil necessary.
- Make sure anyone coming forward to cook their popcorn is positioned down-wind and maintains 3 points of contact (one knee up, one knee down). Children may only enter the fire circle when invited to do so.
- Get children to hold the pole at the end and place into the fire. Popcorn takes longer to cook that marshmallows but gets quicker once the sieves are hot.
- Keep the sieves moving, otherwise the popcorn may burn.
- Remind children NOT to touch the hot sieves once they have been in the fire. Put on fire gloves to open and tip the popcorn into a bowl.
- You can add salt, sugar or cinnamon to taste.

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Describe the process of cooking with fire, using cooking method 2

Fire-pit

A waffle fire works well for cooking, as it burns down slowly. Good woods for cooking include, Oak, Hawthorn and Ash, as they burn hot and slowly. Always add twigs from the side, using fire gloves, never over the top of the fire.

Have all equipment prepared before beginning any cooking activity:

- Site preparation
- Risk assessments and permissions
- Fire equipment prepared, including first aid, burns kit and fire blanket
- Hand washing station prepared
- All cooking equipment on hand
- Allergy lists

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Wait for the fire to burn down. At this point it will be hot and smoldering.

Pans can now be placed directly on the fire or on a grill. This type of cooking is more advanced and requires getting closer to the fire. Before doing activities that involve cooking directly on the fire, it is a good idea for children to have experience of marshmallows or popcorn, which can be held at a distance.

When cooking with children, jobs can be shared out e.g. some children can be preparing the food, while others tend the fire.

Recipe for Damper Bread:

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-2 tbsp olive oil
- 2.5 cups flour
- 1 cup warm water
-1 tsp sugar
1 tsp salt

Mix the ingredients into a dough. Cover and prove for 30 minutes.
Make into small pancake shapes or snake shapes and wrap around a stick.

Wear fire gloves when handling anything on the fire!

The fire must be constantly monitored and food cooked thoroughly on both sides.

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Remove all food waste and packaging from the site.

Always make sure that the fire is properly extinguished before leaving the site. This can be done with the children and makes a good ending activity for the session. Make a soup, by getting each child to add a cup of water into the fire bowl. Make sure this is done around the edge of the bowl and not directly into the middle, as it will create extra steam and smoke. As the children add their cup of water into the fire bowl, they can say one thing that they are thankful for, or one thing they enjoyed at Forest School that day. Once everyone has had a turn to add water and the bowl is full, the soup can be stirred.

Describe the process of facilitating safe camp fire cooking with participants, making sure you take the following into consideration:

1. *Differentiation, age & developmental stage*
2. *Previous experience of participants*
3. *Ratios*
4. *Insurance*
5. *Food hygiene procedures and policy*
6. *Group and behaviour management*

Staff will apply the following food hygiene controls (taken from Selborne Primary School Forest School Handbook):

- Food will be only be eaten after children have washed their hands using fresh water and soap. Antibacterial gel will also be available. Children will be reminded about the importance of not putting their hands in their mouths and of hand washing.

- All medical records must be checked to ensure that no food item or ingredient is given to any child or adult with an allergy to it.

- Any food/ingredients for cooking will be stored at correct temperatures prior to the session and checked to make sure they are still in date and not subject to contamination by pests, mould etc. A cool box will be used to transport and store foods requiring refrigeration.

- No meat/fish products will be consumed or taken into the Forest School site.

- All cooking utensils, crockery will be checked before use. They will be washed, dried and stored away properly after using.

- Waste fruit will be composted. Other foods will be disposed of promptly, off site.

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- Cooked food will not be re-heated.
- Food will be served at a temperature and consistency which is safe for children.
- Children and adults taking part in any cooking must have their hair tied back and loose clothing secured
- A designated food preparation area will be used to prevent contamination and for safe tool use.

Cooking on a fire will only be done when led by the FS leader, with children who are deemed ready. Children should have previous knowledge of fires at Forest School and fire safety rules will be recapped before the cooking activity takes place. There will be a minimum of two adults between 15 children. The FS lead will stay with the fire at all times.

Children will only approach the fire when invited to do so.

Q9. Describe the process of extinguishing fires safely and leaving the site safe

*To answer the question, you need to explain the process of **extinguishing a fire,** making sure you take the following into consideration:*

1. *The site geography*
2. *The need to minimize ecological impact on soils and woodland ecology*
3. *The need to follow Leave No Trace principles*
4. *Cross referencing to management plan and ecological impact assessment*

Before doing any fire activities, make sure you have landowner's permissions, relevant insurance in place and risk assessments. Have all fire safety equipment to hand.

Keep fires small and manageable and when finished, spread the fire out and allow it to die down. Always make sure that the fire is properly extinguished before leaving the site.

It is important to know the soil type and woodland ecology of the site. Refer back to your woodland management plan and ecological impact assessment.

Abiotic elements of Selborne Forest School site

Abiotic elements	
Water	The site has a 2m/2m pond in a separate fenced off area.
Soil	The site lies on London clay soil

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Bedrock/surface rock	Chalk and London clay, sands, gravels

Other considerations, are that the school sits in the middle of a residential Crescent and the back of the site makes up the fencing to a back alleyway. This makes proper fire extinguishing of vital importance.

This extract is taken from my Environmental Policy; Ecological impact report:

When using the site, children will be taught to minimise their ecological impact. Children will learn to respect the flora and fauna around the site and activities during sessions planned carefully with possible impact in mind. The overarching message is to leave the woodland as you found it.

This extract is taken from my Woodland management plan:

Fire circle	In the centre of the log seating area.	The site owns a firepit, which sits in the centre of the base camp area.	Log seating is at least 1.5 m distance from the firepit. Children and other adults are well briefed on safety rules regarding fires. **All fires are properly extinguished and the Leave No Trace principle is maintained.**	Fire pit is covered during winter months to prevent rusting. No running, or jumping on the logs around the fire circle is allowed, even when no fire is lit.	FS leader is in charge of fires and fire safety, including equipment.	Fires are only lit when FS leader is fully qualified. **All fires are properly extinguished before leaving the site.**	Year 1- FS leader to gain Level 3 training.

When having a fire, it is a good idea to monitor the amount of fuel you are adding. Think about how much fuel you need in relation to the activity and finishing time. This means you should not have too much excess fuel to put out or dispose of.

Fire Extinguishing

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of the session.
- Whenever possible, fuels should be burnt off to ash. This is achieved through not over feeding the fire. Break up any left- over coals and embers so that they can burn away to ash.
- The fire must be doused with water and stirred until all smoke and steam have ceased. **Water is poured at the side of the pit to minimize spitting and excess smoke.**
- Once embers start to cool, pour more water into the fire and mix with a stick.
- Forest School leader will check that all heat is gone from the fire.
- All traces of the fire should be removed.

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Leave no Trace

Once the fire has been extinguished, you need to make sure that ashes and any remaining wood are disposed of responsibly. Thinly scatter the ashes into undergrowth in order to minimize ecological impact. Any larger pieces of wood, which have not burned down completely can be dried, kept and used again or taken away from the site for disposal. Check the ground around the fire site for damage. If you had a fire on the ground, it is important to return the ground to the state it was in before the fire by replacing forest floor covering. The fire should be fully dismantled and log seating returned to where is was. If cooking has been done on the fire, all food items are to be removed and taken away, in order to prevent vermin. This should be done in accordance with your Food hygiene Policy.

I have created this poster, which has been laminated and added to fire equipment, to remind myself and participants of how to safely extinguish a fire:

After the Fire

All fires must be extinguished 	Burn off as much as possible 	Douse with water 
Stir until all smoke and steam has 	Scan area for embers 	Leave no trace 

(images taken from: https://www.bing.com/images)

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Describe the process of facilitating safe extinguishing of fires with participants, making sure you take the following into consideration:

1. *Differentiation, age & developmental stage*
2. *Previous experience of participants*
3. *Ratios*
4. *Insurance*
5. *Food hygiene procedures and policy*
6. *Group and behaviour management*

Before doing any fire activities, make sure you have landowner's permissions, relevant insurance in place and risk assessments. Have all fire safety equipment to hand.

Children will only take part in fire activities at Forest School, once they are deemed ready. They will have shown a good understanding of fire and personal safety, through playing pre fire games and be able to listen and follow instructions.

Before allowing children to do fire extinguishing, they should have some prior experience of fire e.g. camp fires around basecamp. For very young children, they need to understand what a fire is. Children should be aware of all fire safety rules, having played safety games, 'stop, drop and roll', and demonstrated that they can follow instructions, that they know how to move around it, body position etc. Some children may be very ancious of any fire activities at Forest School. It is important to remember that all activities are an offer and if a child does not want to particiate, this is fine.

Children can be involved in the extinguishing of fires, if well supervised. There are, however, particular considerations to be understood when allowing children to take part in fire extinguishing. Extinguishing fires can create a lot of smoke, steam and spitting. It is therefore vitally important that good behaviour management is maintained and the correct ratios adhered to. Fires, including fire extinguishing, should always be led by a qualified Stage 3 FS leader. There should be at least one other adult supervising the group. It is a good idea for children to have experience of putting out small, contained fires, such as a Kelly Kettle, before this is done with a larger one.

Fire extinguishing should be first modelled by the FS leader, so children understand rules and safety considerations.

Fire extinguishing, at the end of a session can be turned into a group ritual. Each child can take it in turns to douse the fire with a cup of water. They might be given the opportunity to say something to the rest of the group while they do this, for example, name something they are grateful for, or a word to describe their time at Forest School. Remind children to tip water to the side of the fire bowl. The children will not enter the fire circle, without being invited and this will be done one at a time.

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All food items to be removed and taken away, in order to prevent vermin.

LEVEL 3 PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE
UNIT 5 – THE WOODLAND ENVIRONMENT

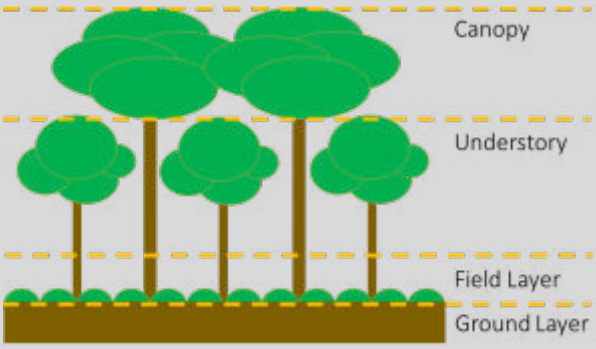
Q1. Define and compare the structure and biodiversity of native broadleaf and coniferous woodland ecosystems.

To answer the question, you need to describe the vertical and horizontal ecological structure of ***British broadleaf woodlands.***

Broadleaved Woodlands:

Broadleaf: Broadleaved woodland are made up of trees that do not have needles. Their leaves are broad and vary in shape. Most of these trees are deciduous. This means that they shed their leaves annually. Broadleaved woodlands are most common to the UK as they have adapted to the conditions of the environment over time. As the trees lose their leaves, the leaves fall to the ground which has an impact on the woodland floor. This creates changes in the woodland both at the canopy and the understory.

Vertical layers



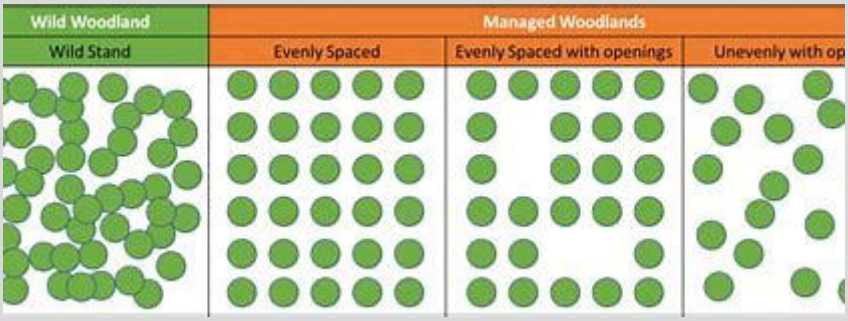
(photo taken from https://www.bing.com/images/)

Below ground	Roots, soil, fungi, bacteria, earthworms. In more ancient Broadleaf woodlands, there will be particularly complex underground networks of fungi and bacteria. These will

	be linking the whole woodland ecology together. Fungi provide nutrients to the trees, in exchange for carbon. The biggest, oldest trees also share carbon and nutrients with saplings growing in particularly shady areas where there is not enough sunlight for good photosynthesis.
Ground	Usually cool, shady and damp. Moss, fallen leaves and decaying matter, fallen seeds such as acorns, conkers, lichen and ivy. Fallen trees and dead wood decompose and create ideal habitat and food for beetles, fungi, lichen, and moss. Fungi: Common types include Chantarelle, Morel and Oyster catcher. Fauna: Insects and invertebrates, such as woodlice, slugs, snails, spiders, beetles.
Field	This tends to flourish better in early Spring, when the canopy is not so dense. It also depends on the type of trees. Flora: Grasses, bracken, wildflowers such as bluebells, primroses, anemones, Bilberry, Wild orchids, Wood sorrel, Cow parsley, Nettles, Dock, Thistles, Bramble, Fox gloves Fauna: Mammals such as dormice, field vole, hedgehogs, badgers, foxes, who make use of the undergrowth to hide. Pollinating Insects, such as butterflies and solitary bees take advantage of Spring and Summer flowers.
Shrub	Bushes such as bramble. Early Summer flora include dog rose and honeysuckle. In some woodlands rhododendron has become the dominant shrub layer. Non native Rhododendrons can have detrimental effects on biodiversity by killing off other species and preventing them from growing. Fauna: Similar to those found in Field layer. Badgers make well-trodden paths through the undergrowth.

Understorey	Saplings Tops of smaller trees, such as Blackthorn, Dwarf Birch, Hazel, Field Maple, Hawthorn. Trees that need less light, such as Hazel, Holly, Hawthorn and Rowan. The understory can be affected by grazing animals, such as deer, cattle and ponies. Types of deer include red, roe and muntjac. There are also 17 species of UK bat.
Canopy	Tops of the tallest broadleaf trees, such as Oak, Ash, Beech. This can become very dense in Summer, due to interlinking branches and leaves. The canopy is home to birds, owls and other tree dwelling fauna, such as squirrels.

Horizontal layers



(photo taken from https://www.bing.com/images/)

Rides: Area between forest and open ground often described as tracks or corridors of open space.	Most Broadleaf woodlands are wild and therefore, can have unevenly spaced rides and glades occurring throughout. Some woodlands are managed e.g. by the Woodland Trust, who may create rides, in order to mimic what would have originally be done by larger mammals, such as bison. This prevents the woodland becoming too overgrown and allows sunlight in, which helps biodiversity. Flora and fauna: grass, flowering plants, insects e.g. butterflies, reptiles.

	Rides can also make up very important movement corridors for larger mammals.
Banks	Often a sign of an ancient woodland. They were created by woodland owners to section off their part of the woodland or to protect it from larger animals. These are mostly in straight lines and often topped with hornbeams.
Hedges	Bramble can be found throughout. Hedges are often found along banks and edges. Fauna: Hedge sparrows
Edges	Broadleaf woodland edges are often made up of younger saplings. Snakes and lizards favour open woodland areas with shelter nearby. Lizards and slow worms can also be found around Forest fringes.
Glades & water	Rivers often run through the middle. This running water is host to its own ecosystem. Glades can open up throughout and are often grassy meadows or scrub. As they are more open areas, they receive more sunlight and warmth than in the dense sections of the woodland . Many species with live in woodland glades, such as small mammals, insects, birds and reptiles. Butterflies and moths are attracted to wildflowers growing in the glades. Fauna: Kingfishers, water voles, newts, frogs, toads, newts, dragonflies. Adders often bask in open glades. Beavers are being re-introduced to many parts of the UK. They effect the waterways by building dams.
Aspect & topography Aspect- The compass direction, which a terrain surface faces. Topography-	Different types of Broadleaf woodland, develop according to aspect and topography. For example, Alder and Willow thrive in wet woodlands, with the waterlogged soil of wetlands or marshes. Oak and Birch trees can live in both high and lowlands.

The shape of the land- natural features, such as slopes, hills, rivers etc.	The UK has very special examples of oak woodlands along the western coast, not found in many other places in the world. These are known as Temperate Rainforests. UK Beech woods grow in the chalky soils of southern England and Wales e.g., the Chilterns and the Cotswolds. Ash trees thrive in areas of limestone and other base-rich soils.

To answer the question, you need to describe the vertical and horizontal ecological structure of ***British coniferous woodlands.***

Coniferous Woodlands: Coniferous woodlands are generally found in cooler climates and are particularly prevalent in Scotland. These trees are also called Evergreen. Evergreen means that they are green and are able to photosynthesise all year round. Because the trees generally grow close together, the light cannot penetrate the canopy. Smaller or younger plants therefore find it harder to grow and this effects the animals and plants that grow on the forest floor. **Vertical layers**	
Below ground	Light coloured soil, Hummus and iron and aluminium compounds. Natural Pinewoods are often found on acid, sandy soil. Coniferous Plantations were generally planted either on the poor soils of heathland and bog or within existing, less profitable woodlands. If it is a plantation woodland, there will be fewer fungal networks underground. This has a knock-on impact on the whole woodland ecology.
Ground	Acid litter, pine needles, fallen seeds, such as pine cones There may be less rotting vegetation and fungi than in a Broadleaf woodland. The Caledonian Pinewoods are home to the rare Tooth Fungi. They have teeth, instead of gills on their underside. Flora: ferns, mosses, acid-tolerant wild flowers. In Caledonian Pinewoods ground flora include:

	Bell heather, blaeberry, crowberry, twinflower, one-flowered flower, intermediate wintergreen, creeping lady's tresses and lesser twayblade. Non-managed coniferous woodlands will have fallen deadwood, which provide food and home for beetles, fungi, lichen, and moss. The hoverfly Callicera rufa lays its eggs only in the rot holes of pine trees. Fauna: Ground nesting raptors, such as Short-Eared Owls and hen harriers.
Field	If the woods are fairly open, they will often have a heathy field layer of Heather, Bilberry and Bracken due to warmth and sunlight. Fauna: Birds such as black grouse, capercaillie, and crested tits flourish in this habitat. Lynx, shrews, voles and wolves can also be found. Insects: mosquitoes and flies. Flora: This depends of the amount of light that can make it through. A mature coniferous woodland may actually have a better development of field and ground layers than a heavily shaded broadleaf woodland such as Beech. Heather, Wintergreens, Twinflower and Lesser Twayblade.
Understorey	Coniferous woodlands are also generally purpose-planted for timber production. Competing plants are therefore removed or discouraged from growing. Dense, relatively young stands of conifers will also have very low light conditions underneath. This prevents the development of much field and ground layer. Some native pine forests also have more varied canopies and birch, rowan, willow and aspen also feature. Flora: Beaked hazel, Mountain Maple, honeysuckle and dogwood can sometimes be found, due to tolerance of acid soils. Fauna: Pine martins, Red Squirrels

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Canopy	Flora: Evergreen, softwoods, sort after in construction and furniture making. Tops of taller trees, such as Pine, conifer, Yew, Juniper. Fauna: Goshawk and osprey both nest in tall pines.

Horizontal layers	
Rides	Often evenly spaced due to being farmed. Modern, managed coniferous plantations are sometimes designed to take conservation considerations into account. For example, wide rides may be provided to link areas of natural vegetation, such as heathland, which occur within the plantation. Flora: Scrub, bracken. Fauna: Reptiles (including sand lizard and smooth snake within their range) can be found along open ride edges. Rides can become vital areas for woodland mammals, such as deer and wolves.
Edges	Areas where sunlight and warmth can get in, mean more wildlife. Flora: Heathland, meadow Fauna: Butterflies, such as Pearl-Bordered Fritillary.
Glades & water	Lakes, ponds and bogs. Areas where sunlight and warmth can get in, mean more wildlife. Fauna: Frogs and snakes thrive in cooler climates. Ancient Caledonian forests grew alongside lochs and glens. Woodland management: Stream banks and gullies in upland conifer forests are now cleared of conifers to allow natural regeneration of native flora. This also reduces the effects of acid rain.

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	Many beavers have been reintroduced into areas of Scotland, (where the majority of UK coniferous woodlands are). This is being done through the Scottish Beaver Management framework, with techniques to protect trees and woodland, whilst befitting from positive affects on the wider ecosystem.
Aspect & topography Aspect- The compass direction, which a terrain surface faces. Topography- The shape of the land- natural features, such as slopes, hills, rivers etc.	Coniferous Forests make up the largest land biome in the World. They are often found in colder climates, with snowy winters and with moderate to high amounts of rainfall. They can grow at different elevations, from sea level to 15,000 feet above sea level. Temperate coniferous forests are common in the coastal areas. Naturally occurring Pine woods are usually found on acid, sandy soils. Native Scots pine woodlands are sited in the cold, dry east of Scotland. Purpose planted coniferous woodlands are usually sited on land which is considered too poor for agriculture. Often sloped or hillside. UK Yew woods are found on the chalk of the North and South Downs, and Chilterns.

Define the following ecological terms

Biodiversity	The number and variety of living organisms in a habitat. There are three levels of diversity: Genetic (the gene pool) Species (how many different types of flora/fauna there are) Community (different habitats have different types of vegetation and animals e.g., woodland, heathland, sand dunes, rock pool etc.)

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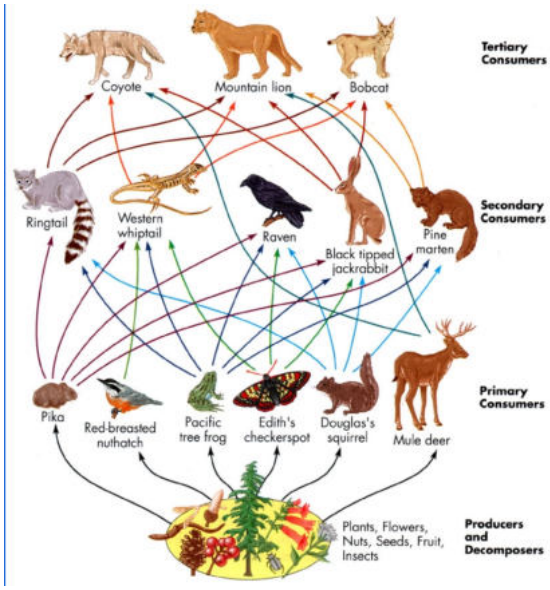
Abiotic elements e.g soil and water	These are non-living features of an ecosystem e.g., soil, water, rocks, minerals, heat, light etc. They influence the biotic elements (living elements).
Natural succession	How ecosystems change over time. This is usually a very slow process.
Ecosystems	*A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.* (https://www.bing.com/search?q=ecosystems+definition&form)
Habitats (including standing dead wood)	A place where flora and fauna live, e.g. pine forest, meadow, standing deadwood etc.)
Life cycles	The series of changes that happen during the life of an organism. There are different stages of a plant lifecycles Stage 1: Germination (seed) Stage 2: Shoots and Roots (plant emerges) Stage 3: Flowering and reproduction Stage 4: Fruiting (producing new seeds) Stage 5: Death
Seasonality	The fact that things change with the seasons; Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring. Examples of this are: the dropping of leaves, animals developing a winter coat etc.
Food chains/webs	The way nutrients and energy pass from one organism to another by way of being eaten.

	Primary producers e.g. plants, algae ⇩ Primary Consumers e.g. Herbivores ⇩ Secondary Consumers e.g. Carnivores ⇩ Tertiary Consumers e.g. Carnivores of carnivores Quaternary Consumers e.g. Eat tertiary carnivores  (Photo taken from https://www.bing.com/images/)
The effect of light and photosynthesis	Photosynthesis is the process of using energy from light to produce glucose, using water and carbon dioxide. This is a process that plants and some bacteria do, to produce their own food. During photosynthesis oxygen in created, which is why plants are so vital to maintaining a healthy environment.
Wildlife corridors in relation to ecosystems	Wildlife corridors are links between two different wildlife habitats. These habitats are usually made up of native vegetation and are important for ecosystems. This is because they allow animals to move between habitats and helps the continuation of

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	different animal and plant populations.

Q2. Explain why flora and fauna identification is important for Forest School leaders

To answer this question, you need to write a short explanation, which should include some of the points listed below:

1. *Identifying protected species*
2. *Feeding into woodland management plans*
3. *Sharing knowledge with participants*
4. *Following Health & Safety*
5. *Using plants for firewood, crafts or foraging*
6. *Showing consideration for the site's sustainability*
7. *Showing consideration for lifecycles and seasons*

It is important for the Forest School leader to have good knowledge of all the flora and fauna on their site. The FS leader needs to create a woodland management plan and show that they are thinking of the ecological impact (what affects, Forest School sessions might have to the flora and fauna of a particular area). It is our job to maintain the biodiversity of our sites. Some species may, for example, be endangered or protected, whereas, others may become invasive, if left unchecked. It is he FS leader's responsibility to protect certain animal species, such as bats, hazel dormice, great crested newts and otters, etc. If we have such endangered animals on our site, it is important to contact the Wild Life Trust and work with them to help monitor and preserve the species. This might even mean finding a new site for Forest School, or simply giving their nesting sites/dens a wide berth. There are also many floras, which are protected, for example; bluebells, certain moss, orchids, ferns etc. The government have published a document listing all UK protected flora, which can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/426873/Protected_plants.pdf

Some tree species are prone to diseases, which can then spread rapidly to neighbouring trees. For example, in my Forest School at Selborne Primary, we have many young Elm trees, which suffer from Dutch Elm disease. It is important for me as FS leader to maintain

a watchful eye on our Elm trees, to make sure that any signs of disease are caught early.

It is also important from a health and safety perspective, that the FS leader knows which types of flora may be of concern. Some plants, if touched can cause a sting or a rash to appear on the body. This can come from different parts of the plant, for example, the leaves, the stem, thorns, the sap. Other plants are poisonous when consumed, such as: Deadly nightshade, Foxglove, Lords-and-ladies, Monkshood, Poison hemlock. These plants are common to our native woodlands. By identifying them in our sites, we will be able to add them to our risk assessments and put proper precautions in place to prevent them causing any harm to children. Like-wise, many varieties of flora have beneficial qualities for healing or simply for food. For example, it is good to know that juice squeezed from the common dock can be used to relief the symptoms of a stinging nettle. Dock plants tend to grow naturally alongside stinging nettles.

In the Forest School at Selborne, we have various plant varieties which can be consumed.

Hawthorn berries
Cleavers
Stinging Nettle
Bramble blackberries
Dead nettle
Blackthorn sloes

Knowing which plants can be consumed means that I can safely teach the children which plants we may harvest and use for activities such as boiling tea, making edible leather etc.

Some plants, work particularly well for different crafting activities at Forest School. For example, Elder has a spongy middle, which when pushed out, leaves a hollow tube, which can be used for beads or pencil making. Willow can be bent to create shelters/dens or wreaths, amongst other things.

At Selborne Forest School we have a variety of natural resources, which can be used in crafting activities, such as:

Acorns
Conkers
Ash wood for cookie slices and other wood craft, such as whittling

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Children and other participants who come to Forest School will most likely begin to take an interest in the flora and fauna around them. As the FS lead, it is our job to encourage this curiosity and help aid more knowledge. This does not necessarily mean we should always be able to identify all flora and fauna we come across, but we need to be able to guide the children in their knowledge acquisition. This may mean providing the children with identification aids and books.

Q3. Create a useful Flora and Fauna ID learning resource for yourself and/or your own client group and site

Create a flora and fauna learning resource that is useful for your Forest School sessions. Make it relevant to your site and to the natural resources you will use for activities. It can be to support you and/or support your client group in developing knowledge and understanding.

Your resource needs to:

- *Cover 20 species across a range of flora and fauna.*
- *Include some species from each of these groups: Trees, Plants, Insects, Mammals, Birds, Funghi.*
- *Be at a suitable level of information needed for you and/or your learners*
- *Contain accurate and relevant information for your Forest School. For example*
    - *How to identify it (colour, size, smell, features etc)*
    - *Its habitat*
    - *Lifecycle*
    - *Health and safety considerations*
    - *Its uses*
    - *Interesting facts*
    - *Folklore*
    - *Photo*

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Selborne Forest School: Flora

Trees

Ash tree

Mostly deciduous, these tall trees can reach up to 40 metres in height.

Leaves:

The leaf has 9-13 leaflets with long tips. Each leaflet is toothed and sits opposite another, with one leaflet at the end.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Bark:

The young tree has greyish bark, which is smooth. Older trees have grey/brown, creased bark.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flower:

Flowers only develop once the tree is over 30 years old. They are deep purple in colour.

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Fruit/Seeds:

The fruits ripen through September and begin to fall in October when they turn from green to brown.

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White Poplar

White poplar is a deciduous broadleaf tree which can grow to 20m.

Leaves:
Dark green-grey and whitish on the underside, thanks to a bright white coating of woolly hair. Most leaves have five lobes and have irregular teeth around the edge.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Bark:
The bark is pale grey with lines of black diamond-shaped pores.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flower:
Male and female flowers are found on separate trees. Flowers are catkins (male catkins are red and female catkins are yellow-green).

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Fruit:
Once fertilised, female catkins develop into fluffy, cotton-like seeds, which fall in late summer.

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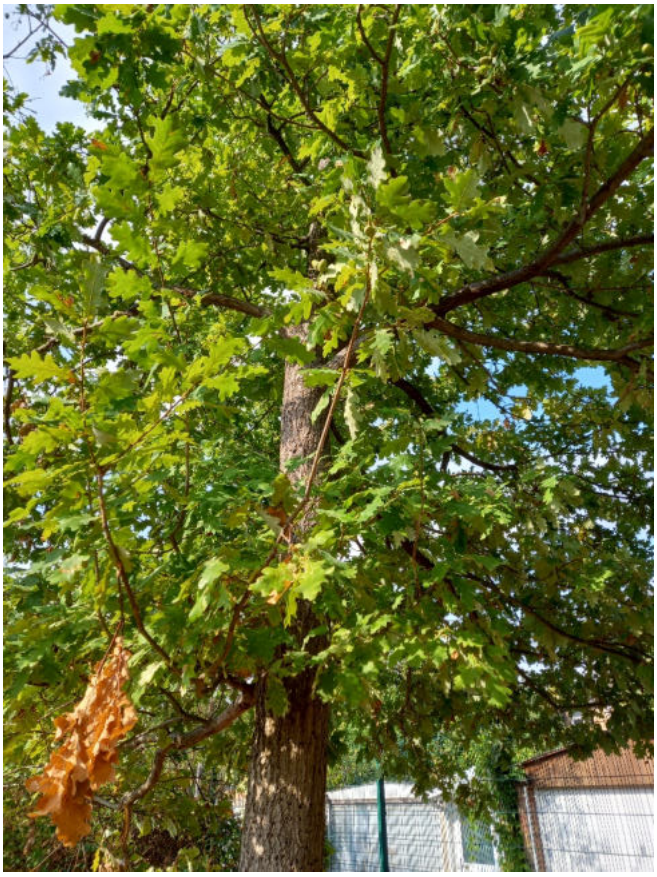
English Oak



A large, deciduous tree growing up to 20–40m tall.

Leaves:

The leaves are dark green. They have distinctive round-lobed leaves with short leaf stalks.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Bark:

Young plants have a smooth, shiny, grey/brown bark. It turns much darker with age. The creases in the bark provide shelter and home for insects.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flowers:

Male flowers (catkins) appear together with the leaves in late April and early May. They are yellow-green in colour. After this, the new shoots appear carrying the female flowers, which are very small and inconspicuous.

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Fruit:

Acorns ripen during late October. They are mostly in pairs, each in a 'cup' and are borne on a stalk.

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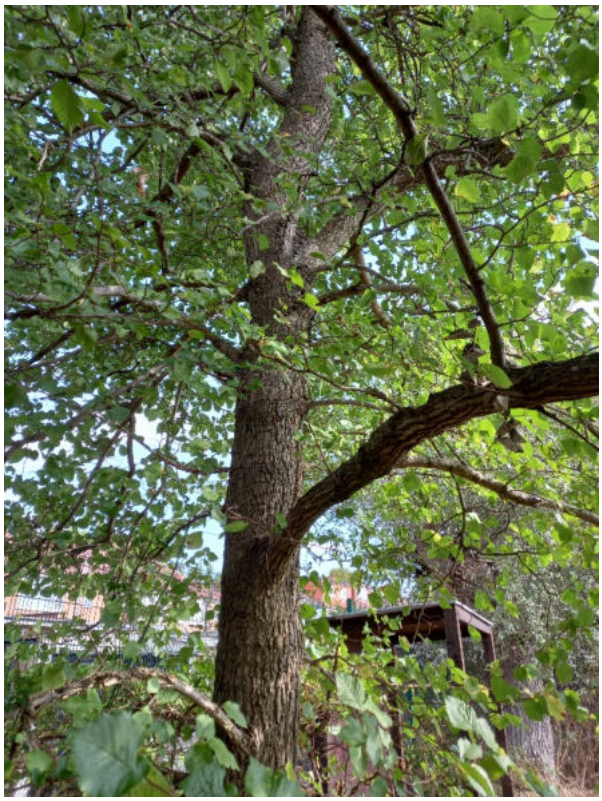
Wych Elm



Mature trees grow to 30m and can live for more than 100 years.

Leaves:

Distinctive asymmetric leaf bases common to all elms. Leaves are rough to the touch on the top surface.

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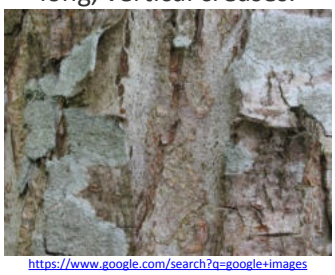
Bark:

The bark varies from grey to dark brown with long, vertical creases.



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Flower:

Purplish-red and are held in bunches of 10 to 20.

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Fruit:

Seeds ripen in Spring. They turn from green to brown at the end of May.

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Silver Birch

Silver birch is a striking, medium-sized deciduous tree. When mature they can reach 30m in height, forming a light canopy with elegant, drooping branches.

Leaves:
The silver birch has pointed, triangular leaves.


https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Bark:
The bark is white with scattered black cracks.


https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flower:
Female catkin in Spring and male in Autumn, remaining on the tree all Winter.


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Fruit/seeds:
They are tiny nutlets (only 2-3mm across) with two wings.


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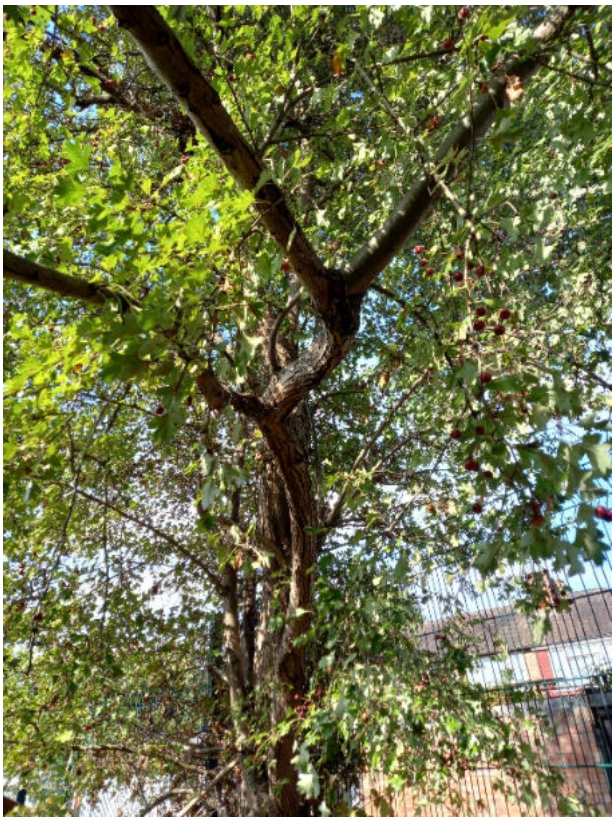
Hawthorn



A large shrub that can sometimes grow into a small tree reaching up to 8m in height, but can be taller. It provides a dense, thorny cover.

Leaves:
Small, lobed leaves that are dark green on the upper side and pale green on the underside.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Bark:
Greyish brown and has a lot of small scales.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flowers:
Flowers bloom in May. They are white with 5 petals.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Fruit:
The fruit, or haw, is dark red with one seed. They remain on the branches until the following spring.

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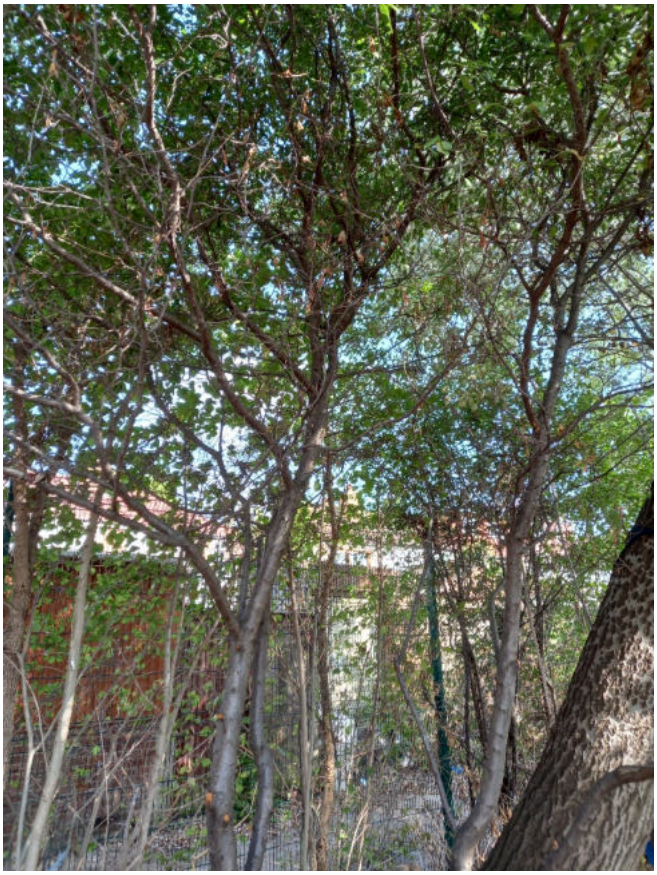
Blackthorn



Spiny and densely branched, mature trees can grow to a height of around 6–7m and live for up to 100 years.

Leaves:
Small and slender and oval in shape. They are a dull, dark in colour.

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Bark:
The twigs are black with very long, sharp spikes.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flowers:
White, with 5 petals. They appear early – between March and May – before the leaves.

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Fruits:
Sloes, are bluish-black and can be eaten. They are round, between 1 and 1.5cm long, and contains one large stone and, normally, not much flesh.

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Plants

Urtica urens
Stinging nettle

Herbaceous perennial
Height: up to 1 meter
Cause, stinging, itchy rash when touched but are edible and can be boiled to make tea.

Leaves:

Oval, toothed leaves that sting.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flowers:

Drooping, catkin like

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Lamium purpureum
Purple Dead Nettle

Near evergreen plant, member of the mint family. Low growing with a spreading habitat.
Height: 6-12 inches tall

Leaves:

Resemble stinging nettle but do not sting.

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Flowers:

Purple
Appear late Spring or Summer

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Geranium rotundifolium
Round-leaf Crane's-bill

Annual herb, found in hedgerows and scrub.
Height: up to 20cm tall

Leaves:

Round, broad leaves, with 5 or seven lobes, attached to long, thin stems.

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Flowers:

Appear June-July. 5 small petals.

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Cow Parsley

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A tall perennial, found in woodland and hedgerows.
It is a good early pollinator for insects.

Leaves:

Strongly divided in shape, with an alternate leaf arrangement.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flowers:

Clusters of white flowers with stalks which come from a common centre, appear April to June.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

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Bramble

Grows almost anywhere in the UK. It is common in woodland, hedges and scrub.
Bramble has long, thorny stems and can grow more than 2 meters high.

Leaves:

Each leaf is divided into three or five serrated, short-stalked, oval leaflets. Leaves are dark green on top and pale beneath. Leaf stalks and mid-ribs are prickly.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flower:

Clusters of white or pink flowers appear from late spring to early summer. They are 2–3cm in diameter with five petals and many stamens.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Fruit:

Blackberries, produced in summer.

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Common Milk Sow-Thistle

Annual to 140 cm tall. Usually classified as a weed, growing in scrub and gardens.

Leaves:

The edges of the leaf are irregularly toothed but not spiky.

Flower:

Long yellow petals, 5-6 mm, usually only open during the mornings of each day.

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Cleaver (Sticky plant)

Common woodland annual, belonging to the coffee family.
Height: 1.5 m
Hairs and prickles cover most parts of it, which make it cling to clothing and fur.
It is edible and produces a lot of juice when squeezed.

Leaves:

Stems, leaves and seed have stiff hooked hairs.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

Flowers:

Tiny greenish-white flowers, in clusters of 2-5, from May to August. They develop into round, green or purple fruits 3-5mm in diameter.

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Broad-leaved Dock

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

A common plant that grows on scrub, hedgerows, gardens and roadside verges, and next to water all over the UK. It is used as a remedy for stinging nettles.

Leaves

Large, wavy-edged, leaves that have red stems on their undersides

Flowers

Flower spikes have numerous clusters of reddish-brown flowers.

https://www.google.com/search?q=google+images

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Common Inkcap

Identification:

A grey to fawn cap that is at first egg-shaped and then later bell shaped. The surface is smooth and splits into a few tiny scales from the apex, the edges are often wavy and split. Stem is white and hollow. Cap is around 4-8 cm across and stem is 5-15 cm tall.

Where to find:

Very common – wherever there is buried wood.

Jelly Ear

Identification:

Initially cup-shaped and smoothed, the fruiting body develops lobes in the shape of a wrinkled human ear. Soft, gelatinous and a date-brown colour, but when it dries it is much smaller, darker and harder. Upper surface is velvety, and is attached laterally by a small stalk. Up to 8cm across.

Where to find:

Commonly found on living or dead wood of elder, but also recorded on many other woody species.

https://www.bing.com/search?q=mushroom+identification

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Selborne Forest School: Fauna

Mammals	
Name	**I.D and facts**
 https://www.bing.com/images/ **Feral Fox**	**Identification:** They have reddish-brown fur, a white chest and bushy tail. The fox's nose and ears are pointed. **Facts:** They are scavengers, eating almost anything they can find, including insects, earthworms, fruit, berries, birds, small mammals and human food waste.
 https://www.bing.com/images/ **Grey Squirrel**	**Identification:** They have grey fur and large bushy tails, arched over their back. **Facts:** Grey squirrels are originally from North America, but were released in the UK in the 19th century. They are now very common and widespread.
Birds	

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https://www.bing.com/images/

Robin

Identification:

14cm

Very easy to identify, grey and brown bird, with a bright red chest.

Facts:

Young Robins do not have red breasts, not are instead spotted with golden brown.

https://www.bing.com/images/

Blackbird

Identification:

24-25cm

Males are black, with yellow beaks and a yellow circle around their eyes. Females are dark brown.

Facts:

Common British garden bird. It has a beautiful, mellow song.

https://www.bing.com/images/

Starling

Identification:

21cm

They look black from a distance but seen up closer, they are glossy, with purple and greens.

Facts:

Common garden birds, seen in flocks. They are very noisy.

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https://www.bing.com/images/

Wood pigeon

Identification:

40-42cm

Mostly grey with a white neck patch. White wing patches can be seen during flight.

Facts:

It has a distinct cooing call.
It eats buds, shoots, seeds, nuts, berries, grain, sprouts and cabbages.

https://www.bing.com/images/

Magpie

Identification:

44-46cm

Members of the crow family, they are black and white with long tails. Up close their wings have a blue-purple colour and their tails a green gloss.

Facts:

They are omnivores. They scavenge and will eat almost any food they can find.

https://www.bing.com/images/

Ring-necked Parakeet

Identification:

38-42cm

Green parrot with long tail feathers. It has a red beak and pink and black ring around the face and neck.

Facts:

They are not native birds, but can be found in the South of Britain. They are very noisy and mostly found in flocks.

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https://www.bing.com/images/

Carrion Crow

Identification:

45-47cm
All black

Facts:

This is a very clever bird.
They are often found alone or in pairs.

https://www.bing.com/images/

House sparrow

Identification:

14-15cm
They have a black bib and grey crown, the feathers on its back are streaky brown.

Facts:

They are very noisy birds, who often live near people.

https://www.bing.com/images/

Black headed Gull

Identification:

34-37cm
They do not really have a black head. Most of the year it is white, but also chocolate brown.

Facts:

They are not sea gulls. They live inland, and are usual part of noisy flocks of other Black headed gulls.

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https://www.bing.com/images/

Jay

Identification:

34-35cm
One of the most colourful members of the crow family. They have pinkish, brown feathers, with a distinctive blue patch.

Facts:

They are shy woodland birds.
They love acorns and often bury them in Autumn.

Minibeasts


https://www.bing.com/images/

Common Rough Woodlouse

Identification:

They are flat, oval and grey with a thick, bumpy exoskeleton (skeleton on the outside). Their bodies are made up of seven segments, each with a pair of legs.

Facts:

They live under logs, rocks and pieces of wood.
They are related to shrimps and crabs.


https://www.bing.com/images/

Garden snail

Identification:

They have brownish, soft, slimy bodies. The shell is usually cream coloured with brown spiral stripes. They have eyes on the tip of long tentacles.

Facts:

The average garden snail has 14,000 teeth, but can have up to 20,000.
They have no legs, but one foot.

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https://www.bing.com/images/

Common garden slug

Identification:

Can grow up to 3cm long. They are black with an orange underside.

Facts:

Slugs can be a pest in the garden, as they are very greedy. They eat seedlings, flowers, fruit and vegetables. They are, however, eaten by many animals, such as hedgehogs, foxes, badgers, and birds.

https://www.bing.com/images/

Earthworm

Identification:

Earthworms are soft-bodied, invertebrates (no skeleton). Their body is made up of many sections. They are usually pink, brown or red in colour. They are slimy to touch.

Facts:

They are one of the most important creatures on Earth!
They help produce nutrient rich soil, which helps plants grow. They also oxygenate the soil.

https://www.bing.com/images/

Garden Spider

Identification:

One of the largest spiders in Britain.
It has a white cross mark on its abdomen.
Colour can vary from sandy brown, red and black.

Facts:

A web spinning spider. Their webs can be found strung across paths, between shrubs and even in front of doors.

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https://www.bing.com/images/

Money Spider

Identification:

Very common in Britain. Money very small, under 5mm long, with shiny black bodies.

Facts:

They are web spinning spiders. It can also appear to fly. The Money spider lets out a strand of silk into the air and the wind currents lift it into the air.

Q4. Describe 3 sustainable woodland management methods to maintain and improve the long-term health of a woodland

To answer this question, you need to write a short summary for each of the 3 methods you choose. Methods can be selected from the list below:

1. *Planting*
2. *Regular timber crops*
3. *Monitoring species*
4. *Rotating sites used*
5. *Managing dead wood*
6. *Habitat creation e.g boxes and habitat piles*
7. *Management of invasive species*
8. *Improving biodiversity*
9. *Techniques such as: coppicing, pollarding, thinning, managed grazing, scalloping and ride management*
10. *Managing and reporting Biosecurity*

Sustainable woodland management method 1

Planting

One of the woodland management methods I have been implementing at Selborne Primary School is planting. I am using this method to increase the overall Forest School area and increase its biodiversity. I have now introduced 5 new tree species and planted 13 trees in total. These are: Apple, Pear, Crab-apple, Rowan, and Fir. Each tree variety brings its own

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unique benefits to the overall biodiversity of the site, for example the fruit trees will encourage birds and mammals, such as blackbirds and hedgehogs, which like to eat the rotten fruit in late Autumn. Rowan berries are particularly enjoyed by songbirds, such as Thrush and Waxwing. These are birds which we do not, at the present time have visiting our site. The planting of new trees is particularly recognised and encouraged at the present time, to aid in the fight again climate change. They are able to take in carbon dioxide and other pollutant gases, from the air and in return give out oxygen. Not only do they purify the air but they can also lower the air temperature, help prevent flooding and improve soil quality.

I find this method of woodland management works particularly well with regards to child involvement. I have been able to involve children from ages 4-11 in the planting of these trees at Selborne Primary School. Not only does this planting have the positive impacts listed above, but it also helps teach the children about the importance of trees, about life-cycles, how to use tools and gives them a sense of connection to nature and the FS site itself.

KS2 children planting trees.

Reception children planting trees.

Sustainable woodland management method 2

Monitoring species

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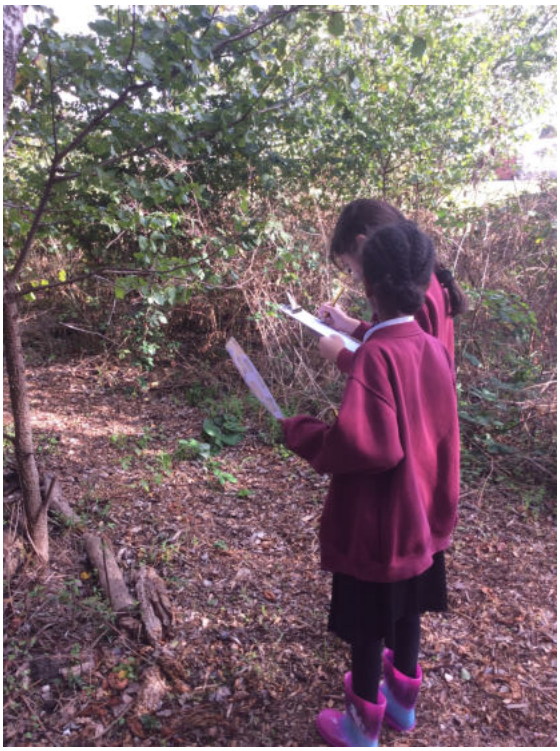
Another woodland management method I have started implementing at Selborne Primary School is that of monitoring flora and fauna species. By keeping regular records of our species, I will be able to track potential impacts of Forest School to the site. I will also be able to see if our efforts to increase biodiversity are successful and what overall impact, for example, planting trees is having on different species. It is important to continue monitoring annually and seasonally, in order to get a wider understanding of different flora and fauna throughout the seasons, as well as general increases or declines over time.

Species monitoring is a woodland management method that can be successfully implemented with the children. When I created the role of Forest School Ambassadors at Selborne, one of their first jobs was to help me create a detailed list of flora.



We also participated in the RSPBs Big Schools Birdwatch 2023. Not only does this data feed into a wider database of UK birds, but gives us a useful means of annually tracking our own bird population.

Sustainable woodland management method 3

Habitat creation

As the Forest School site was newly created during Summer 2022, it gave me the opportunity to create new habitats, which were not previously there. For example, we had no pond area. By putting one in, I am hoping to see a variety of different fauna, make the pond their home. There is a whole list of aquatic species, which may now be seen on site, such invertebrates, dragonflies and damselflies, and amphibians. Not only do these

species act as a food source to other fauna, but birds will also use the water for bathing and drinking.

In the creation of the site, there was a lot of deadwoods, which I kept to create a huge log pile habitat. This deadwood is very useful to insects, fungi, mosses and lichens. Insects such as woodlice, beetles, larvae and termites often live in them, but also other species will use it to hibernate, such as butterflies, ladybirds and lacewings. A log pile can also offer refuge to amphibians and small mammals, such as mice and hedgehogs.

Another major habitat created on the Forest School site was a meadow mound. This mound of Earth was sprinkled with a mix of wild meadow plant seeds. As this begins to establish, I hope to attract many pollinating species to the Forest School, such as bees and butterflies.

Creating a compost area, also provides a habitat for fauna. Not only for the worms that break down the material, but also to reptiles, slow-worms, slugs, ants and even hibernating amphibians.

The creation of new habitats is vital to the ecosystem. By encouraging new and more varied varieties of species into an area, you are also providing a food source to larger creatures, such as birds and mammals. This is turn will help increase the overall biodiversity of an area.

Habitats created at Selborne Forest School

Pond habitat

Log pile habitat

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Meadow habitat

Compost habitat

Q5. Describe at least 3 ways of involving participants in sustainable woodland management on a Forest School site

To answer this question, you need to explain the role of the Forest School Leader as a steward of the woodland and describe 3 ways in which participants could be involved depending on age and ability.

One of the 6 principles for FS is:

FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

One of the subheadings for this principle is:

A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners. (Taken from Full principles and criteria for good practice | Forest School Association).

This highlights the important role the FS leader has in monitoring, sustaining and improving the ecosystem within our own Forest School sites. It is important to involve the children in this as much as possible, as this allows them to develop a real and personal

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connection, not only to the FS site, but to our environment as a whole.

1. Planting

I find this method of woodland management works particularly well with children. I have been able to involve children from ages 4-11 in the planting of trees at Selborne Primary School. The process of planting helps teach the children learn about the importance of trees, about life-cycles, how to use tools and gives them a sense of connection to nature and the FS site itself.

With KS2 children I was able to communicate the importance of what we were doing, in terms of increasing biodiversity. They were able to understand the larger impact that the planting of trees and other types of flora would have on the overall ecosystem of the site. They were also much more conscious of the environmental benefits to planting more trees. With my KS2 Forest School Ambassadors, we are working towards the Woodland Trust Green Tree Schools Award, to show Selborne's commitment to the environment.

Planting trees with younger children, such as Reception age, gives them the opportunity to watch the trees grow over a longer period of time, as they will remain in school for another 6 years. Doing other, shorter-term planting, such as annual seeds, gives younger children a real sense of achievement and joy. They also learn about life cycles through this process.

Planting with KS2 children

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Planting with Reception children

2. Monitoring Species

Species monitoring is a woodland management method that can be successfully implemented with the children. When I created the role of Forest School Ambassadors at Selborne, one of their first jobs was to help me create a detailed list of flora.

We also participated in the RSPBs Big Schools Birdwatch 2023. Not only does this data give us a useful means of annually tracking our own bird population, but also gives the children an understanding of connection to something larger. When taking part in the bird survey, I invited the Forest School Ambassadors to team up with Reception children to help them identify which birds they could see. This gave the older children a sense that they were, not only supporting, but also passing on knowledge to the younger ones. The Reception children enjoyed spending time with children older than themselves and gained new experiences and understandings.

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A Forest School Ambassador helping a Reception child to identify bird species.

Habitat creations can be a fun and engaging method of involving children in woodland management at Forest School. Creating a habitat can be a practical and creative process, with a clear end result. This can work particularly well with younger children. It is a good way of teaching children about different types of species, as well as helping to increase biodiversity. Creating their own habitats allows children to develop a personal connection with the fauna on the site.

Activities, such as bird boxes can be easily differentiated according to age and ability. For example, younger children may simply paint a pre-made box, whereas, older children can learn woodworking skills by making their own.

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Bird boxes

(photo taken from https://www.bing.com/images)

Creating habitats, such as Hedgehog homes and minibeast hotels allow children the opportunity to forage for natural resources on the site before constructing their structure. Younger children can make smaller habitats, whereas, older children can work together to design larger structures, using materials such as wooden pallets and tools to construct

Hedgehog house

Minibeast hotel

(photos taken from https://www.bing.com/images)

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https://www.bing.com/images

Solitary bee hotel

Q6. Research and summarise 2 articles on the benefits of a connection with woodland and natural environments, referencing physical and emotional well- being and illustrating with your own FS experiences

Article 1

(Article taken from Mental health benefits of visiting UK Woodland's estimated at £185 million - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk))

Mental health benefits of visiting UK Woodland's estimated at £185 million

From:
Forest Research

Published
4 December 2021

This article was published by the UK government in 2021. It was based on a report done by Forest Research and funded by the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry and the Welsh government.

The article states that that the findings of this research show strong evidence that visiting and spending time in woodlands boosts mental health. The article links this boost in mental health to the equivalent of saving £185 million in treatments for mental health in the UK annually. For England, alone, it has been estimated that woodlands have saved the

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NHS £141 million. This cost includes GP visits, drugs, impatient care, social services and sick days taken due to mental health issues. Longer term, they estimate that this saving, to add up to £11 billion, over a 100-year time period.

The article mentions the increase in mental illness during the Covid pandemic and speaks of the need for everyone to have access to green spaces, including trees and woodland environments. The article even states the importance of just having street trees planted in urban areas, suggesting that these can, in themselves, save the NHS up to £16 million.

Covid has had a huge impact on children, many of whom spent almost two years at home, missing out on outdoor activities, as well as formal education. As a teacher, this is of great importance to me. I have observed that younger children, coming into education are less experienced in many areas, including physically, socially and emotionally. On asking children how they are feeling at the beginning of each Forest School session, I often get children saying they are sad, sleepy or ill. I have observed that children coming away from the sessions seem calmer and happier, often with lots to say about what they have seen, done and discovered. It is too early on in our Forest School journey to tell whether regular visits to our Forest School will have a lasting impact on the children's mental health, but it will be something I continue to monitor.

The article states that more people are spending time in woodlands and agree that it has a positive impact on their well-being. From my personal experience, I also believe this renewed drive to spend time in woodlands is also having a positive impact on the number of schools taking an interest in Forest School and other outdoor, nature-based learning. It is only recently that my own school has decided to take advantage of our large school playing field, in order to create a Forest School.

In addition, any adult who has visited the Forest School, whether that be for a simple walk around or to support with a session, has given me very positive feedback regarding the effects on their state of mind. They have fed back to me, how relaxed they feel in the surroundings and how they would like to spend more time there.

Article 2

Woods for Health and Wellbeing - Woodland Trust

WHY WOODS ARE GOOD FOR OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Article published by The Woodland Trust

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This article lists all the ways in which being out in nature and amongst trees helps support mental and physical wellbeing.

Some of the benefits stated in this article include: alleviating stress, stabilising blood pressure, treating anxiety and depression, increasing anti-cancer cells, support recovery after surgery and reducing the incidence of underweight child births.

In the article we are reminded that 1 in 4 people will suffer from some kind of mental health issue during their life-time and that there has been an increase in this since Covid. We are also reminded that a quarter of UK adults are overweight, costing the NHS millions. The Woodland Trust are suggesting that walking in woodlands offers a free and more pleasurable alternative to going to the gym.

Childhood obesity is also a big issue we face in schools. Many of our children are very sedentary. Our education system, on the whole, expects children to sit at desks, inside, all day long. Apart from Physical Education lessons, Forest School offers children a much more practical, physical and hands-on approach to learning. Many children do not actually enjoy formal PE lessons, whereas, in my experience, Forest School has something on offer to everyone. I have observed children, in Reception, who do not choose to play outside or do physical activities, immersing their whole bodies into the Forest School. They are usually always physically active during the sessions, but this is experienced in a self-directed, engaging way and often unconscious.

Although children are very rarely able to express the state of their mental health verbally, I have had so much positive feedback from children about Forest School. Even children who were very reticent about coming initially, because it might be cold or dirty, often ask when we will be going to Forest School. They have verbally expressed a joy about coming to Forest School. This may, also be down to pure luck, but I have not yet experienced one behavioural “meltdown” during any of my sessions. This may also be evidence of the calming, stress relieving effects of the woodlands. Certainly, the children are developing a connection to nature through their sessions, which will hopefully be of benefit. If children can develop a joy in woodlands and nature at a young age, this could have huge impacts on their continued mental and physical wellbeing, into adulthood.

Q7. Explain how Forest School nurtures a connection between participants and the woodland environment, using examples from your own practice

The second principle of Forest school is:

FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

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Developing a connection between children and nature has never been more important. We are living in times where human impacts on the environment are becoming increasingly apparent, yet we are feeling less and less connected to the nature around us. Children are spending more time living their lives on-line, rather than going out to play. The vast majority of school learning happens inside the classroom and parents are anxious to allow children to take physical risks and play in nature.

For these reasons, Forest School is a very important way to help children build a connection to the woodland environment and nature in general. Some of the children I took to Forest School where initially very anxious about being in such a 'wild' environment. They had been told by parents that things outside where dangerous, dirty and not to be played with. During the course of my 6 weeks sessions, these feelings were changed into that of familiarity, curiosity and connection. For example, children were happy playing with mud, sticks, collecting fallen leaves etc.

At the beginning of each session, we talked about the Forest School ethos and reminded ourselves that we are share this very special nature place with all the flora and fauna that live there. This was reinforced through our Forest School song:

Welcome to the Forest, to the plants and trees.

Welcome to the birds, to the beetles and the bees.

Welcome you and welcome me, to our special nature space.

All are welcome, have a home, in our special nature place.

This aims to inspire children's understanding, that we live in a beautiful world, full of nature and that, instead of being separate from it, we are in fact all connected. This is something that is easy to forget, when we are inside our man-made buildings, but equally easy to remember in the Forest School.

During my 6-week block of session, I made a conscious decision not to focus on teaching children specific flora or fauna identification. Identification sheets and information were always available to those who were interested and we looked at different features, but I did not feel that it was important to teach children, for example, the specific names plants. My main focus was to allow the children to explore and build a personal connection to what they found around them. To enable this, I provided resources, such as binoculars, magnifying glasses, bug containers etc. I encouraged children to use their senses to explore. For example, when we made *Tree Friends*, children were encouraged to smell, touch, listen and look closely at their chosen tree. Children were observed going back to their tree friend in following weeks, demonstrating a personal connection they had made to that individual

tree.

Developing a connection to the woodland during Forest School sessions was easy because we were emersed in the environment, however, what was particularly gratifying was the number of children who developed a general interest in nature, outside of it. Many children started coming in from the Reception or main playground with leaves, sticks and stones. They would show them proudly to me or their friends and talk about where they were found, what they liked about them etc.

Through our Forest School sessions, I observed that the children seemed much more connected to nature and often expressed concern for the welfare of small creatures we came across. They were learning to respect, take an interest in, and ultimately feel more connected to nature. This shows promising spiritual development, emotional intelligence and empathy.

Noticing mushrooms

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Making Tree Friends

Looking up close at minibeasts, before putting them back carefully where they were found.

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