



Woodland School at St. Augustine's C.V.A



Intent

“An inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hand-on learning within a woodland or natural environment with trees and plants.” - Forest Schools Association

At St. Augustine's, our school vision is for all members of our school is to be committed to our school pledge, “Let all that you do be done in love”. As part of this vision, we have decided to expand and enhance the breadth of our curriculum by incorporating a designated Woodland School offer for all.

It is our aim that this new LOtC (Learning Outside the Classroom) will uphold the high standards and expectations that our school sets for its pupils and serve as a cornerstone to increasing their life skills and experiences throughout their primary school education.

During Woodland School at St. Augustine's we aim for all children to:

- Learn and make choices and initiate their own learning
- Provide a safe and non-threatening environment in which children can take risks
- Help children understand, appreciate and care for the natural environment
- Develop practical life skills in an outdoor environment
- Promote self-esteem, confidence and a positive attitude to learning through small achievable tasks
- Develop social interactions and team working skills
- Enable participants to be independent, self-motivated and considerate
- Build self-esteem, confidence, independence and self-control

Woodland School is based on the principle that children of all ages can benefit greatly from the learning opportunities inherently present in a woodland environment. Woodland Schools provides opportunities in an outdoor setting for children to develop a variety of skills: particularly PSHE skills such as independence, self-discovery, communication, self-esteem and confidence building. Children learn to take risks, use their initiatives and co-operate. Beyond this, we believe teachers can use the outdoor environment as a vehicle for art activities, key science concepts, developing physical skills and a whole lot more! In a typical session there may be an adult-led activity, but the ethos of Woodland Schools also allows time for children to follow their own learning pathways and interests and adults then support them in their learning.

The National Curriculum for Forest School aims to ensure that:

- Forest School is for all children and young people.
- Forest School Builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.
- Forest School maximises the learning potential of local woodland through frequent and regular experiences throughout the year, not a one off visit.
- Forest School helps children to understand, appreciate and care for the natural environment.

Implementation

Forest school is a globally recognised teaching system that aims to meet the intent of this curriculum through holistic learning. It is through this method that we strive to provide our pupils with the widest range of skills and opportunities available to us. Due to its child led nature and focus on social development, our Woodland School engages children in a manner that is hard to imitate in the classroom. This creates new opportunities for learning and development that might not be accessed during regular day-to-day schooling. As we know, every child is different, as are their learning habits, something that here at St. Augustine's we recognise, encourage and utilise.

Impact

- Children are becoming more confident as well as more resilient learners. They are showing that they can be more caring and supportive to their peers due to the heavy focus on understanding and generating empathy. This allows the children to develop their ability to regulate their social, mental, emotional and spiritual health, meaning they can work more collaboratively in their learning and tasks set. Ultimately, this will develop their ability to transfer these skills when necessary to improve themselves in classroom and life in the wider world.
- Children are growing more confident in their abilities in the outdoor environment. They are beginning to understand, assess and manage their own risks and safety. This allows children to become more independent and shows them that life comes with not only risk but also rewards. Through using their perseverance skills, the children are beginning to understand that at times they may not get their desired result at first, therefore they need to try again in different ways. Woodland School encourages them to use their problem solving and reflection skills to allow them to see mistakes aren't failures, they're part of learning.
- Woodland School sessions aim to make children's learning more relevant to their lives in the community and wider world. We encourage the children to be responsible for and respect the local community and environment giving them a sense of belonging and ownership of the place in which they live. In different sessions, we will explore the use of the local area, integrating subjects so that meaningful activities can be planned and delivered effectively and regularly.

If you were to walk into a Woodland School lesson at St. Augustine's you would see:

- All learners engaged in a variety of activities
- Learners being challenged in range of activities
- Opportunities for all children to apply a range of their learning powers in each session
- Collaborative learning
- Inclusive learning

Our children say:

Child 1: "I love being outdoors with my friends because I get lots of time to work as a team and use my problem solving skills at times, for example when we are making dens. I also like making our own fires because it makes me feel grown up."

Child 2: "Being outdoors allows me to grow my imagination much more."

Child 3: "I enjoy using different natural resources like wood and willow to make different objects with tools. I find it interesting learning how to use different tools in different ways as well as using them safely."



Our priorities:

- Develop the Woodland School curriculum and build links to other curriculum areas.
- Further training for Woodland School leaders
- Children have successfully embedded and shown confidence in progression of skills: This year there has been a noticeable different of confidence within the children when completing different activities.
- Develop skills progression and share with all staff.

