



## Curriculum – Outdoor Learning

Intent ♦ Implementation ♦ Impact

**Courage**

**Resilience**

**Honesty**

**Kindness**

Matthew 7:24 - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock"

## Intent

At St. Nicholas-at-Wade Primary School, we believe that all pupils deserve a fully rounded curriculum to become confident, independent, lifelong learners. Our curriculum intent is centred around the following drivers, which are fully embedded across all subjects:

- Every child a reader
- Every child a learner
- Every child a citizen
- Every child happy and healthy
- Every child creative and curious.

This policy, having considered the schools context and safeguarding, sets out the school's aims, principles and strategies in relation to the teaching of outdoor learning.

***'The wise builder, builds their house on the rock.'***

### Forest School Ethos -

Forest school is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It believes in the right for children to play, explore and take risks. Forest school helps and facilitates more knowledge-gathering, developing socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually. Being in the Forest School environment, inspires a deep and meaningful connection with the outside world and encourages children to solve real-world issues, building self-belief and resilience. (Forest School Association, 2023).

At St Nicholas at Wade, our school vision is for all members of our school "to be the very best we can be". As part of this vision, we have decided to expand and enhance the breadth of our curriculum by incorporating a designated outdoor learning and Forest School curriculum that will become part of our weekly/termly routine. It is our aim that Outdoor Learning and Forest School 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.

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The primary aims of this curriculum will be based upon the 6 key principles of the Forest School ethos and our key school values of honesty, courage, resilience and kindness.

Our aims are:

- To build self-esteem and confidence in children.
- To build healthy, creative, resilient independent learners.
- To develop children's personal, social and emotional development.
- To encourage and develop creativity and problem-solving skills.
- To encourage collaboration.
- To develop and build the ideas of risk management and risk benefit.
- To improve children's life skills and experiences, impacting upon their well-being and growth mindset.
- To enable children to gain a respect for the natural environment and wildlife.
- To let children develop their own learning paths and broaden their own skill sets and interests.

These aims will be covered with a variety of Forest School and Outdoor Learning teachings and strategies that will be provided in a positive, enjoyable, creative and inspiring manner. Our Forest School and Outdoor Learning will provide our children with the opportunity to learn life skills and apply them to other aspects of their learning, understand the role they play in our world, the importance of their actions on our environment and participate in achievable tasks to enable personal achievement and success. The skills and knowledge obtained through our Forest School and Outdoor Learning ethos and approach will equip children to shape their futures and the futures of those around them.

*Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics:*

***'Our actions our habits, our habits become our character, our character is who we are.'***

Courage, Resilience, Honesty, Kindness, Be the best you can be...It's who we are! St Nicholas at Wade CEP School.

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## Implementation

To ensure that Our Forest School and Outdoor Curriculum reaches the high standards of teaching and learning that we pride ourselves on at St Nicholas at Wade, we have implemented a progressive curriculum that begins in Reception and continues and grows until its culmination, when children leave in Year 6. Discrete Forest School sessions and outdoor learning lessons will be timetabled each term to link with the wider curriculum.

Children in our Reception and Year 1 classes will engage in weekly 'Forest Friday' sessions. These sessions will occur continuously throughout the academic year and the children will be able to experience and engage in the natural world during all 4 seasons and will experience a range of weather conditions and environments. Children in Years 2-6 will engage in regular termly planned sessions that reflect and enhance their classroom learning.

Outdoor Learning and Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for children and young people and for their capacity to **instigate, test and maintain curiosity** in the world around them. It believes in the child's right to play; the right to access the outdoors (and in particular a woodland environment); the right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world and the right to experience a healthy range of emotions through all the challenges of social interaction, in order to build a **resilience** that will enable continued and creative engagement with their peers and their potential. It is an approach to education that makes use of the outdoor environment to create a unique learning vehicle. (Forest School Association, 2023)

Outdoor Learning and Forest School sessions provide increasingly diverse opportunities for children to benefit from a supportive curriculum that can help children build positive values and attitudes about themselves, about learning and the environment in which they live. Children are given appropriately challenging and achievable tasks that build their confidence, skills and independence and are given the time to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships. This time and reflective practice develop inter- and intra-personal skills, which are well-documented as being directly linked to learning skills.

We will provide children with a learner-centred approach that interweaves with the ever-changing moods and marvels, potential and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School session and programme with discovery and difference. Making each session and every experience a valuable one. Forest School and Outdoor Learning builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning. This will in turn have positive impacts on the learning that occurs within the classroom and the mindsets displayed.

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## Impact

After the implementation of this robust Forest School and outdoor learning curriculum, children at St Nicholas at Wade will become more well-rounded and prepared learners and individuals. They will not only be more confident and resilient learners; they will become more caring and supportive peers due to the heavy focus the curriculum places on understanding and generating empathy. This will allow children to become more able to regulate their social, mental, emotional and spiritual health meaning the children will further thrive in collaborative learning, arming them with the skills necessary to improve themselves in their schooling career and life in the wider world. As children grow in confidence in their abilities in the outdoor environment, they will begin to understand, assess and manage their own risk and safety. This will allow the children to become more independent and show them that life comes with not only risk but also rewards. It also teaches them what their own limits are and that they can push beyond them. They will see that sometimes we don't always get the desired result the first time but view this as a positive and not a negative as it helps us to grow, expanding our mindset to try again and explore different approaches and methods. It encourages problem solving, logical thinking, self-reflection and evaluation but most of all the pupils will see that mistakes aren't failures; they are an important and key part of our learning journey which in turn can be celebrated just as much as instant successes and achievements.

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