

Curriculum Progression for Forest School

Strand	EYFS	KS1	KS2
Cognitive Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to explore natural materials using curiosity and simple questioning (What's this? Why is it wet?) Attempts simple problem solving through play (moving sticks, balancing, building) Uses imagination freely in the woodland role play, stories, small world play Starts to persist with tasks such as digging, transporting or simple construction or mud kitchen play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies simple problems and tests solutions (How can we make the den waterproof?) Plans basic steps for tasks (collecting materials before building) Applies creativity to purposeful challenges (designing habitats, structures) Develops resilience through repeated attempts - recognises improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses critical thinking to evaluate different solutions Plans and sequences more complex activities (fire building, larger structures, woodland management tasks) Demonstrates creativity in practical projects (tools, crafts, knots) Shows strong perseverance, adapts when things go wrong, reflects confidently
Physical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops core gross motor skills running, rolling, climbing, balancing Handles natural objects safely (sticks, stones, leaves) Begins simple fine motor tasks (leaf threading, mud kitchen tools, using mallets with 1:1 support) Moves across uneven ground with growing confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves coordination through digging, lifting, carrying, dragging Uses tools with supervision : peelers small saws, small hammers, mallets Shows increased control in fine motor tasks (simple knots, whittling with guidance) Understands how to navigate terrain safely and follow boundaries Can use hammocks with support Learns about fire safety and with support can cook small items on skewers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates strength and stamina in longer or more technical tasks (creative planting, sawing, lopping with support) Uses a wider range of tools independently and safely (bow saw, peeler, loppers all with support) Performs skilled fine motor task (advanced whittling, knot systems, fire lighting with support) Manages personal physical safety with good awareness and understanding
Social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays alongside and begins to play cooperatively with others Shares resources with adult support Develops early turn taking and listening skills Begins to show empathy when others are upset or struggling Can independently manage emotions when unexpected setbacks occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works collaboratively on group tasks (den building, fire circle prep) Helps negotiate simple roles within a team Supports peers through encouragement and share problem solving Shows growing respect for others work and ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads small groups effectively and listens to others input Manages disagreements constructively during collaborative tasks Shows empathy and emotional support Identifies when peers need help Demonstrates mature teamwork during complex woodland projects
Emotional skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences joy and excitement in nature Begins to regulate emotions with adult help (forest calm-down spaces, sensory exploration) Gains confidence through achievable tasks Overcomes small challenges (mud, cold, insects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises emotions and can verbalise feeling in the woodland Uses nature to self-regulate (quiet spaces, sensory materials) Shows increasing independence and confidence Approaches challenges with a "have a go" attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses personal strategies for emotional regulation in outdoor settings Demonstrates resilience during difficult tasks or weather conditions Reflects on their own learning, behavior and progress Shows high self-esteem from taking responsibility and mastering skills
Environmental & nature skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to notice plants, insects, birds Shows curiosity about changes in weather and seasons Learns simple care routines (watering, gentle handling of creatures) Understands very simple environmental rules (don't pick living plants, step carefully) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies common plants, trees and minibeasts Recognises seasonal patterns and basic habitat needs Participates in simple conservation actions (litter picking, building bug hotels) Understands basic sustainability messages (reuse, respect wildlife) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a range of species and explains their roles in ecosystems Understands more complex environmental processes (lifecycles, pollination, food chains) Takes active responsibility for woodland stewardship (habitat creation, site maintenance, flora care) Demonstrates ecological thinking and ethical decision making
Forest School specific skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands what base camp is and to return if called back to base camp during a session Learns fire circle rules and safe distances Uses very simple tools with 1:1 support (peelers, mallets) Engages in simple shelter play using tarps or natural materials Understands personal boundaries and site safety Can understand how to use the mud kitchen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes part in fire lighting with adult support (tinder, flint and steel) Uses basic tools with growing independence (potato peeler, small saws, hand drills) Builds simple shelters using tarps, knots and natural materials Can complete simple, dynamic risk assessments with guidance Uses mud kitchen to create potions and science experiments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independently prepares and manages small fires under supervision Uses a full range of tools confidently and safely Designs and builds more complex structures (camp kitchens, dead hedges, assault courses) Performs independent dynamic risk assessments and takes ownership of safety
Key words	<p>tree, leaf, leaves, stick, log, stone, rock, soil, grass, mud, water, plants, flowers, woods, outdoors, nature, wind, sun, rain, snow, cloudy, warm, cold, weather, bugs, base camp, mud kitchen, worm, snail, slug, spider, ant, bee, butterfly, caterpillar, bird, bug, big / small, long / short, wet / dry, smooth / rough, hard / soft, heavy / light, warm / cold, noisy / quiet, safe, explore, look, touch, listen, dig, pick up, smell, build, climb, collect, discover, help, share, fire (adult only), den, shelter, trail, pond, bug hotel, mud kitchen, circle time, forest rules, careful hands, kind hands, safe, space, bucket, spade, trowel, rake, brush, rope, tarpaulin / tarp, magnifying glass, clipboard, gloves, sun</p>	<p>woodland, forest, habitat, micro-habitat, evergreen, deciduous, branch, trunk, canopy, undergrowth, roots, bark, twigs, logs, stones, pebbles, clay, soil, compost, mulch, insect, worm, beetle, spider, snail, slug, ant, butterfly, caterpillar, bird, nest, tracks, footprints, explore, observe, identify, classify, question, compare, investigate, natural resources, environment, biodiversity, teamwork, cooperation, fire circle (adult-led), campfire safety, shelter, den building, trail, rope walk, outdoor learning, tool safety, trowel, mallet, pegs, tarpaulin / tarp, magnifying glass, bug pot / bug viewer, clipboard, loppers (adult use only), temperature, cloudy, rainy, windy, sunny, frost, shade, shadows, seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter)</p>	<p>ecosystem, biodiversity, conservation, sustainability, habitat, microhabitat, environment, adaptation, food chain, food web, producer, consumer, predator, prey, decomposer, canopy, understory, forest floor, photosynthesis, chlorophyll, deciduous, evergreen, sapling, trunk, branches, roots, bark, fungi, spore, pollination, life cycle, metamorphosis, migration, hibernation, camouflage, classification, invertebrate, vertebrate, mammal, bird, insect, amphibian, reptile, whittling, lashing, knot tying (reef knot, clove hitch, square lashing), mallet, saw, fire, flint and steel, kindling, shelter building, tarp / tarpaulin, pegs, paracord, compass, fire triangle, ignition, ember, tinder, flame, smoke, fire safety rules, fire circle, controlled burn, extinguish, temperature, humidity, wind direction, rainfall, climate, shelter, seasonal, changes, forecast, shade, sunlight exposure, observe, identify, classify, record, measure, estimate, compare, evaluate, investigate, evidence, conclusion, prediction, willow, greenwood, carving, weaving, natural dyes, cordage, clay work, foraging, shelter</p>