

Forest School Vision Statement

'Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.'

(Forest School Association, 2025)



At West Tytherley Primary School, we believe that all children should have regular access to Forest School sessions which allows them to explore, engage with and learn about our natural world. All the children in our school take part in sessions throughout the year providing them with regular opportunities to engage with nature while identifying and managing their own risks in a supportive environment. This positively impacts their confidence, self-esteem and respect for their surroundings.

Our school has an amazing outdoor learning area with several mature trees and a wide variety of shrubs. In this area, there are three established raised ponds supporting a wide range of invertebrates and amphibians including dragonflies, damselflies, newts and toads. The field and ground level are left to grow with a winding mown path to support access and sustainable use.

Outdoor learning is highly valued in our setting with all classes learning a variety of foundation subjects in the outdoors through-out the year. Our school strives for children to enjoy their learning through active experiences in stimulating indoor and outdoor environments, to grow spiritually and emotionally and to succeed as resilient learners through flexibility and adaptation to achieve their goals. Forest School sessions run alongside curriculum learning opportunities, endorsing the school's ethos and vision for all children to believe in themselves, feel an important sense of belonging and become confident, happy individuals.

While there are overlaps, the Forest School programme is different to outdoor learning. Forest School follows six principles which makes the experiences offered unique. The six key principles are:

1. Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.
2. Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
3. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
4. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
5. Forest School is run by qualified Practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional Practice.
6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

(Forest School Association, 2025)

During Forest School sessions at West Tytherley Primary School, children lead their own learning accessing many exciting opportunities to learn and play in the natural environment. Activities offered during each session varies with the changing seasons and the children's interests. Some favourites include:

- Den building
- Mud play
- Pond Dipping
- Fire Lighting
- Natural Craft Making
- Use of Tools e.g. palm drill and bow saw
- Bug Hunting
- Plant identification
- Trails and tracking



References

- Forest School Association (2025) What is Forest School?
<https://forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/> [accessed 27.09.2025]
- Forest School Association (2025) Full Principles and Criteria for Good Practice.
<https://forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/> [accessed 27.09.2025]
- Mrs Owena Archer will complete the Level 3 Forest School Leadership qualification in May 2026.