



Forest School

Regis Manor Primary School



Intent

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a nature-based outdoor learning environment that is made safe for all pupils but otherwise left for nature to take its course. This provides children with plenty of learning opportunities. Forest School is different from simple 'outdoor learning' because sessions are taught as part of a block of at least six weeks and are taught by trained Forest School practitioners. Depending on the age and ability of the pupils, activities may include identifying and recording wildlife, climbing trees, cooking, crafting, gardening, making shelters and birdhouses, collecting rainwater, tracking the weather, using tools and building fires.

Collaboration - Empathy - Independence - Creativity - Perseverance



Intent

At Regis Manor Primary School we value collaboration, empathy, independence, creativity and perseverance.

During Forest School we utilise the natural outdoor environment to provide learning experiences and endless opportunities for children to help them engage with our values. We encourage a child led experience where they build an aware of risk and trust in engaging safely.

We will explore these in every session through interactions with the environment and each other. We thrive on new experiences alongside practising existing skills.

At Forest School we will interact socially, build confidence, learn new skills, gain emotional understanding and explore new environments.

We learn holistically and ensure inclusivity is at the heart of every learning opportunity. Everyone at Forest School works hard, enjoys challenges, loves to learn and celebrates success at every level.

Collaboration - Empathy - Independence - Creativity - Perseverance



Forest School Principles

These principles were first created by the Forest School Community in 2002.

- Forest School is a long-term 6 week 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 in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice

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Implementation

Forest School is taught over a period of six weeks. Classes are split into small groups and have regular opportunities to access our Forest School provision.

During a session, we have a holistic and child lead approach to their learning. A variety of activities are presented to children, however sessions have a large degree of flexibility to them. Children are encouraged to be creative during a session with the resources that our Forest site provides us with; wood, leaves, water, bugs or even the weather.



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Implementation

Year Group	Independence and Boundaries	Interaction with Nature	Group work and Interaction	Adult Support
Reception	Children in these year groups would be expected to work typically staying within adult sight, or even closer, perhaps holding hands if less confident. Children would typically be curious about the world around them, but require adult mediation to explore and understand, or adult questioning or planning to ensure they get the best outcomes. Most sessions would be led by a story to intrigue imagination.		Sessions would be run as a whole group and sometimes splitting into smaller which would be adult led groups. Groups would be split amongst adults to give close interaction with an adult through questioning, ideas and imaginative play.	
Years 1 & 2	Children in these year groups would be expected to work typically staying within adult sight, or even closer, perhaps holding hands if less confident. Children would typically be curious about the world around them, but require adult mediation to explore and understand, or adult questioning or planning to ensure they get the best outcomes. Most sessions would be led by a story to intrigue imagination.		Sessions would be mainly run as a whole group and sometimes splitting into smaller with adult supervision over groups. Children could be encouraged to split in pairs or groups of 3 with close adult support.	

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Implementation

Year Group	Independence and Boundaries	Interaction with Nature	Group work and Interaction	Adult Support
Years 3 & 4	Children could start becoming more independent, choosing the appropriate distances to be from adults whilst being aware of what the boundaries are. Adults would still monitor and discuss to ensure boundaries are appropriate.	Children could start developing some knowledge of the animals and plants around them, identifying the more common ones by sight and making comments and predictions about where they may be and why.	Children should be able to work together and discuss and negotiate together to achieve tasks; they may be more independent in doing so, but require adult support and intervention to achieve positive outcomes.	Adult support should be more low key, with activities being more child led, and adults using questioning, or advice to support the children and guide their ideas from what they observe.
Years 5 & 6	Children should be confident and able to make choices and plan activities for themselves – they should effectively choose their own boundaries, choosing the appropriate distances to be from the adults dependent on terrain and activities. Children would also be expected to have more control and choice over their actions. Ensuring they are aware of all risks within their environment.	Children should be confidently able to identify common woodland species and talk about the relationships between them and their habitats. They should be conscious of their actions on nature and how they have a footprint which can be long standing.	Children should be able to collaborate and work together, negotiating with each other and responding positively to others ideas. Groups should be more fluid and alter according to the activities undertaken.	Activities should, ideally, be entirely child led, with adults providing low key, minimal support as needed. Children should be confident in seeking advice and support when needed. Adults would support and observe through the use of tools and specific equipment.

Inclusive Practice

Regis Manor Primary School is committed to the idea that there should be equal opportunity for all as per the Equality Act 2010. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We undertake that all children:

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued.
- Appreciate and value the differences they see in others.
- Are able to participate safely in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs.
- Are taught in groupings that allow them to experience success.
- Use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds.
- Are set challenging targets that allow them to succeed.
- Participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.



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Enrichment Activities

Once invited to Forest School, all children are encouraged to feel ownership of our site and to engage with its continual development.

Children are taught to use a variety of tools and to feel aware of how our presence affects the natural order. Children would participate in planting new plants or cutting back and reorganising certain areas.

The activities that children could participate in during their sessions could include; knots and lashings, wood carving, fire building, cooking, loppers and secateurs, bivouac building, trim trails, bug catching, researching and many more

Children are also encouraged to be aware and mature with the risks around them. They are taught, with supervision, how to handle a variety of gardening tools such as loppers, pen knives, spades and forks.

They will also have opportunities to possibly use flint and steel to assist in starting fires intended to cook things like potatoes, popcorn or smores.

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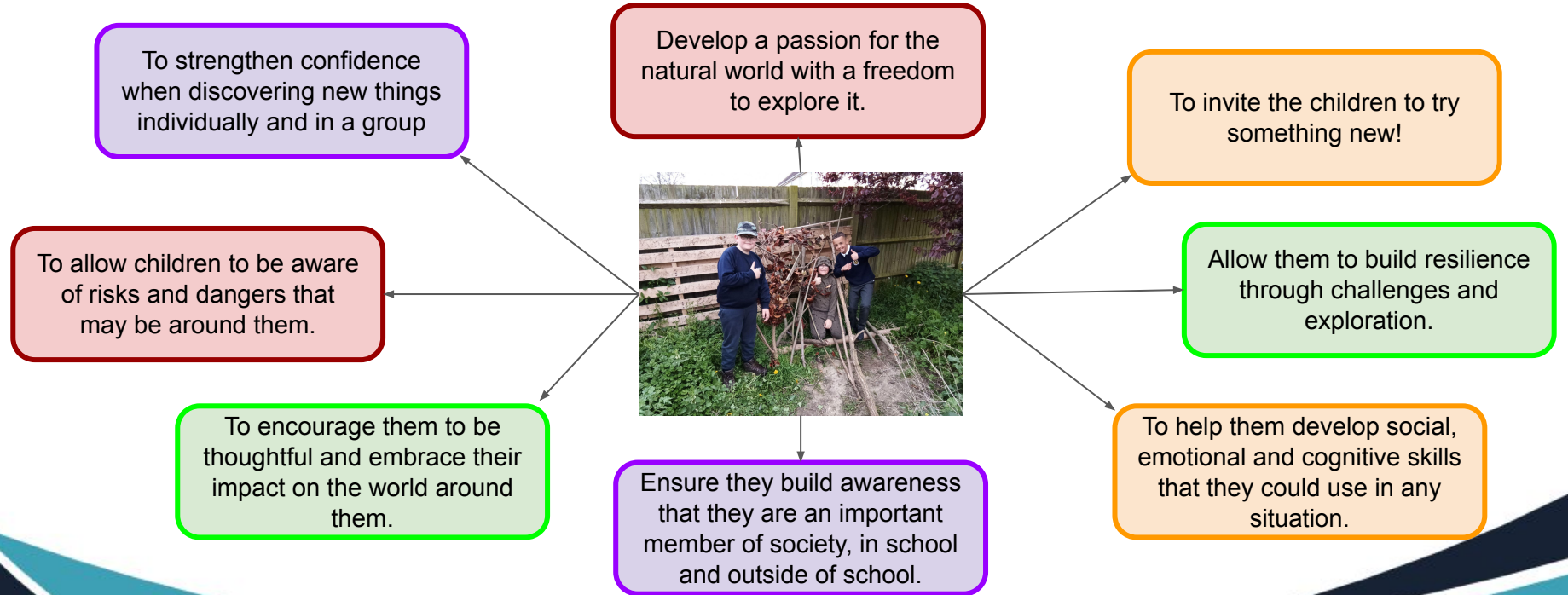
Enrichment - Possible Activities

Age Group	Onsite activities
	Throughout the year, First School Practitioners would engage with local wildlife foundations/experts to bring them into sessions and interactions with the groups. They could then explain the fauna and flora in the local area and suggest extra activities children could engage with outside the Forest School site.
Years 1, 2 and 3	Adult-led and supported campfire building Using simple tools such as potato peelers to create toasting sticks and cooking simple foods Making natural crafts Assisting adults with splitting and cutting of firewood Using flint and steel to help start a communal fire Basic knot tying Exploration of woodlands Viewing and feeding of animals Tracking and searching for wildlife Scavenger hunts Assisting adults in building rope swings Building simple dens Tree climbing Assisting leader to make hot chocolate with Kelly Kettle Gathering natural materials (e.g. firewood, resources for art) Map reading
Years 4, 5 and 6	<p><i>Older pupils would typically do all of the above activities, but with changes in the level of independence and responsibility – e.g. lighting the Kelly Kettle for hot chocolate without help, rather than assisting or making a slackline with the adult supervising to ensure it is safe, rather than leading the building. In addition, some more technical activities, listed below, will be reserved for older children.</i></p> <p>Building more complex objects – e.g. making wooden mallets or animals, shelter building with tarpaulins on site, building fires, or building and controlling individual fires, cooking more complex items, or using a cooking stove, use of more complex tools, independent/ chosen tool use, more specialised work with wildlife – e.g. twig traps to track animals, or photography, creation of more complex and advanced shelters, or group shelters, creation of activities for younger children – eg making a treasure hunt trail, using tools in sessions.</p>

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Impact



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National Curriculum

While Forest School is not a mandatory part of the National Curriculum, the activities we do in Forest School link to National Curriculum subjects in a number of ways:-

Literacy: children are constantly using speaking and listening skills; using descriptive language when discussing/writing about what they have experienced; using non-fiction books to help identify species.

Science: learning about different animal habitats; grouping animals; insect life cycles; types of tree; the growth of plants; types of weather; carrying out experiments (eg. measuring rain); materials and their properties (eg. when creating shelters).

Maths: measuring various items; considering properties of shapes when making constructions; making tables/charts to record findings.

Art and DT: safely cutting and shaping wood and other materials; designing and creating shelters, bird houses, etc; safely using tools; making artwork from natural materials; observational drawings/paintings of natural items.

PSHE: creating a deep bond with nature and how it positively impacts emotions; considering other children's needs when working as teams; creating multi-sensory areas; giving and receiving feedback and making improvements on our projects.

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