

Hoo St Werburgh
Primary School



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Forest School - Term 2

Newsletter

Welcome to the first Forest School newsletter of 23-24. Forest School continues to be a popular part of our school curriculum. Not only does it allow our children to build key life skills such as fire safety, using tools and learning to look after the environment, it also gives our children opportunities to take part in practical curriculum linked tasks. Just this term alone at Forest School we have covered several areas of the DT & PHSE curriculum with Year 4, taught & practised some key geographical concepts with year 3 and year 5, enhanced the history curriculum for year 2, developed vocabulary and language in year 1, practised mark making and self care with Reception and created some wonderful art work using different mediums with year 6.



Forest School News



Music Wall

In Term 1 a new music area was created within Forest School with the help of year 4. This has allowed the children opportunities to create rhythms and beats using a range of musical instruments and natural materials.

It has been great watching the children sing, dance and create using the resources provided. Some of the children have experimented with different pitches and tones whilst others have worked collaboratively to create their own shows.

Learning update

Year 5 & 6



In term 1 Year 6 spent their Forest School sessions engaged in a series of Harry Potter themed activities which linked with their in class learning. They drew on their geographical knowledge and used 6 figure grid references to find objects needed to start at Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry. They also undertook scientific enquiries into what owls eat by dissecting owl pellets, they were amazed to find a range of evidence of small mammals in the pellets including fur and bones proving owls are carnivores. Term 2 saw Meerkats & Pandas undertake some Mayan themed task. They spent some time discussing the importance of skulls within the Mexican culture and used the knives to carve skulls from apples. They also used the medium of clay to make Mayan themed masks. They finished the term practicing their square lashings to make Mexican gods eyes (these were made in Christmassy colours so they could be used as decorations as well!)

Year 5 have been equally busy. They started term 1 extending their in class crime and punishment learning at Forest School. First they were set the challenge of trying to solve the mystery of who has been digging at Forest School. They became crime investigators looking for evidence which they found in the form of animal footprints, poo and fur. They reached the conclusion there had been a fox at Forest School. Another session saw the classes discussing branding as a punishment in years gone by. They then used the branding iron to brand leather keyrings, this led to lots more discussion about whether this was an ethical punishment and whether it should still be used. The classes really showed off their fire safety knowledge as well during this activity. Year 5 finished term 1 by drilling conkers and playing the traditional game which was great fun. In term 2 Year 5 had the opportunity to show off and extend their geographical knowledge of rivers by building river models. They labelled key features and poured water onto them to see how they flowed. This led to some great discussions about erosion and deposition. They also made water filters and Christmas decorations



Year 3 & 4

During term 1 & 2 Ocelots class have been having weekly Forest School sessions while wolves went swimming (wolves will have forest school later in the year). During Term 1 they focussed on creative tasks linked to the Art & DT curriculum. They used tools to make musical instruments for the music wall, tie-dyed bunting using blackberries and made friendship bracelets using the Nordic weaving method. Term 2 saw the children focus on fire. They were treated to sparklers and showed off their understanding of fire & firework safety which is a key part of the year 4 PSHE curriculum, they then practised using the flint and steels to make sparks before moving on to lighting their own mini fires and cooking popcorn on them. They finished their series of session with a big class fire and prepared pizzas to cook on it. Ocelots then finished the term using tools to make various Christmas decorations.

Meanwhile Year 3 spent Term 1 extending their historical understanding about the Stone Age period. They began by making Mesolithic style tripod shelters using lashings to secure the sticks. They were challenged to make them well enough to keep the group dry when 'Storm Watts' arrived (Mrs Watts with a bucket of water). The classes then moved on to making Stone Age style weapons such as spears and bow and arrows and finally they used mud and charcoal to create their own cave paintings. They also spent part of their Stone Age wow day at Forest School learning how to light fires. In Term 2 Polar Bears & Tigers became arctic explorers and practised various explorer skills. They began by using their geographical knowledge of compasses to locate arctic animals hiding around Forest School, then moved onto using their map reading skills to locate a range of explorer equipment using the 4 figure grid references given to them. The classes also had the opportunity to put up tents and emergency shelters, try dehydrated explorer food, pull training sledges and make emergency stretchers.



Year 1 & 2



Year 2 have been busy using their Forest School time to extend their historical understanding of life in castles. They used the large loose parts at Forest School to build castles and then used their newly learnt castle vocabulary to talk about the various features they had included. They then became knights of the realm and participated in knight school where they made bow and arrows and took part in target practise. Week 5 & 6 saw a dragon egg being found at base camp leading to an investigation of the whole site. 6 eggs were found, along with dragon scales, footprints, scorch marks and scratches. The children decided it would be best to make a nest and hope that the mummy dragon returned for her eggs. In Term 2 Owls and Robins made quills from feathers and jousted using long sticks and pretend horses. They also had the opportunity to peel and chop vegetable to cook a medieval potage (stew) on the fire. They finished the term making Christmas decorations.



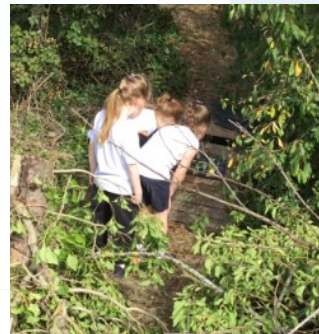
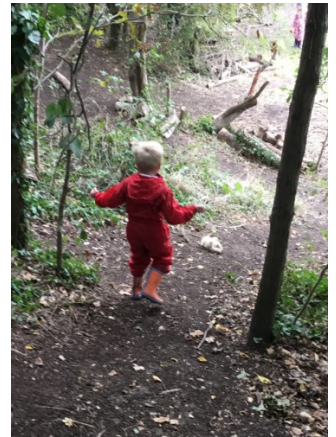
Meanwhile year 1 have been focussed on birds and seasons over the last few terms. They spent time making their own 'Owl babies' using pine cones and cotton wool. They also had the opportunity to look at the dissected owl pellets that year 6 had and found the small mammal bones contained within fascinating. Hedgehogs & Rabbits then moved on to discussing what birds were doing in the autumn and learnt all about migration. They spent some time in the bird hide looking for migratory birds with the binoculars and identifying many of our native species. They then decided it would be nice to help the birds living at Forest School so pine cone bird feeders were made. Term 2 saw Year 1 continue to develop their scientific awareness of the seasons. They looked at the changing leaves at Forest School and made some beautiful art work using all the different colours they could find, they also planted some daffodil bulbs ready to grow in the spring. However, the best forest school session came towards the end of term 2 when the year 1 classes had their very first campfires! The children were all SO excited and after learning how the fire was made and how to stay safe around it they loved cooking smores. They all showed fantastic respect for the safety instructions and kept themselves and their friends safe.



EYFS

Back in September, when our lovely new reception classes first started school, one of their first big challenges was learning how to get ready for Forest School. Remembering what your kit bag looks like, working out which welly boot goes on which foot and discovering that trousers have to go on before boots are all important steps for our little learners. Foxes and Badgers took on the challenge and are now beginning to undertake this part of the Forest School experience more quickly, confidently and independently.

Once at Forest School the children have spent term 1 and 2 getting to know every nook and cranny of the site. They have loved the freedom the additional space gives them and have surprised us all with their confidence to run, splash, climb and explore in the new space. With the help of Barney Bear they have learnt the safety rules for forest school and are really starting to show their understanding of how to stay safe in this different environment. As we entered term 2 Foxes and Badgers began thinking about how Forest School was changing as the seasons have progressed. They collected beautiful autumn leaves to make crowns and learnt all about hibernation and made their own clay hedgehogs.



And Finally



We would like to finish off with a big THANK YOU to all our families at home who have washed and dried off lots of kit this term as it has been an exceptionally wet and muddy November and December. Your support makes Forest School and all the wonderful learning opportunities it gives our children possible week in and week out. Please continue to ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the outdoors as it makes such a difference to their enjoyment of each session.