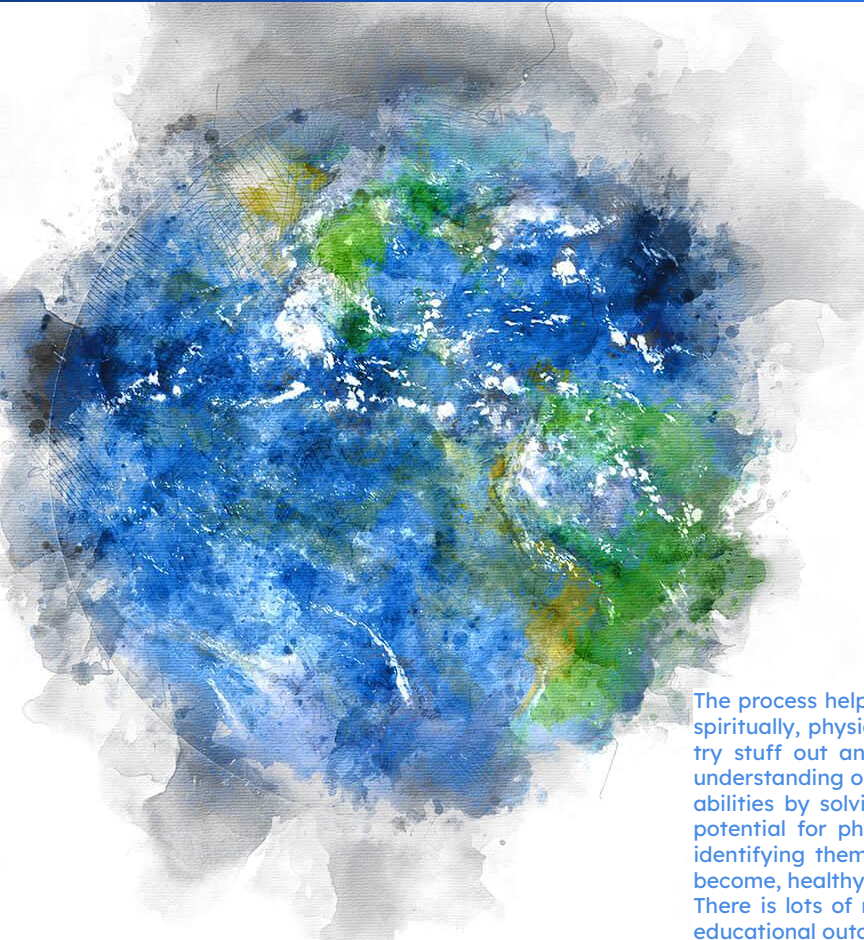




Forest School

at Burford Primary & Nursery School



What is Forest School?



Scan this QR code to watch a helpful explanatory video produced by The Forest School Association (FSA).

Forest School is a child-centred, inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth. 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. Children overcome challenges, build self-regulation skills and become resilient.

Forest School has a developmental ethos. Its roots reach back to the open-air culture, *friluftsliv*, or 'free air life', seen as a way of life in Scandinavia where Forest School began. It arrived in the UK in 1993 and has grown from strength to strength since then.

The process helps and facilitates more than knowledge-gathering: it helps learners develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually. It creates a safe, non-judgemental nurturing environment for learners to try stuff out and take risks. Forest School inspires a deep and meaningful connection to the world and an understanding of how a learner fits within it. Our approach to risk means that learners constantly expand on their abilities by solving real-world issues, building self-belief and resilience. We believe that risk is more than just potential for physical harm, but a more holistic thing: there are risks in everything we do, and we grow by identifying them, managing them safely, and overcoming them! Forest School therefore, helps participants to become, healthy, resilient, creative and independent learners.

There is lots of research out there to support the outcomes of Forest School, but we know that it isn't just the educational outcomes and research that matter, our learners and leaders love it too!

Burford's vision for Forest School

If children lose contact with nature they won't fight for it

George Monbiot



At Burford Primary & Nursery School, our Forest School curriculum is a vital element of our curriculum. We believe what George Monbiot argued in [his Guardian article](#) which is now over 10 years old. We know that younger generations are more motivated to enact environmental change, and we know that the mission to inform, motivate and inspire change-making begins at Primary School.

At Burford, children develop their **identities** as people who care about the natural world, appreciate the green spaces when **looking locally** and engage in environmental projects when **looking after our connected world**.

We also know that being outdoors and in nature is good for our mental health, so **Forest School also forms a vital part of our mental health education provision**.

When working in our Forest School setting, children **build their characters and develop habits and skills** which will stand them in good stead in future. This approach to outdoor learning encourages children to become **independent**, to use their **imagination**, to **role play** and to **rehearse vocabulary** in a low-stakes environment, to **be assertive and take appropriate risks** within boundaries which builds their self-confidence, and to initiate learning for themselves. Adults provide support and enable activities to take place safely.

It can cover many areas of learning - including the **emotional and spiritual** aspects of learning where **self-esteem and self-confidence** can grow and **positive relationships** with peers can be formed. Children collaborate and communicate. They **verbally-plan, organise resources, and learn how to interact with the natural world responsibly**.

Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. They learn to look after this habitat and the creatures within it. They develop an **awareness of seasonality, and of cause and consequence**. They **develop a deep respect for the natural world, which motivates them to be responsible environmentalists who are motivated to share this ethos with others**.

Burford's implementation

We visit Forest School in **all weathers**. We want our children to experience seasonal change first hand, to notice changes to weather and wildlife, and to know how to dress appropriately. This is a key part of their learning to conduct their own risk assessment and to act responsibly.

Therefore, we ask parents and carers to support children by having a conversation which scaffolds these choices at home.

We recommend:

Autumn/Winter	Waterproof trousers Wellies Warm layers Thick socks (some spares!) Gloves Hats Scarves Warm, waterproof coats Clothes to get muddy in!   
Spring/Summer	Closed toed-shoes (wellies are still a good idea!) Clothes to get muddy in Shorts T-Shirts Sun cream Sun hats Water bottles Sunglasses   