



Little Hadham Primary School

'Believing and Achieving'

Our Forest School is an inclusive part of every child's year. We are incredibly proud of all that we have achieved through Forest School.



Little Hadham Primary School Case Study

Forest School Name: 'Canopy'
Location: Little Hadham, Hertfordshire
Number of Pupils: 137
Forest School Leaders: 4
School site: for KS1 and Millennium Wood for KS2

Forest School Setting

We have a small forest area on site which is used by EYFS, KS1 pupils and lower KS2. From Y4 upwards, each year group is allocated a 6-week block of extended afternoon sessions at Millennium Wood, approximately a kilometre walk across the fields/footpaths/byways.

Tips for other schools

"Don't hesitate- go for it! Maximise use of your Sports Premium! Believe in the impact of Forest School on children and adults alike."

*-Helen Nicklin
Early Years Team Leader,
Little Hadham, Primary School
Forest School Leader*

Your Forest School Story

Our Forest School is an inclusive part of every child's year. We are incredibly proud of all that we have achieved through Forest School. Every outing into the forest is a new adventure. The children enjoy and anticipate their sessions, both in the school wood and up in Millennium. Their abilities and attitudes have noticeably changed since we have introduced forest school in our school and our lives. Cont.

Little Hadham Primary School	Hertfordshire	137	3-11	4	Jan-15
		Number of Pupils	Age group	Forest School Leaders	Forest School Started

Describe your forest school

The children speak about the outdoors and about things they have done, places they have been and things they have seen. Their knowledge and understanding of the world around them is deepening from their, very real, experiences. As a Forest school practitioner, forest school has become a great big and wonderful part of my week. Even if I have not been with the children they share their experiences, and hopes, with me, at any opportune moment. Parents also speak to me of their pride at Little Hadham being a Forest School. Parents who are new to our school are often delighted when they hear that we are a Forest School.

FOREST SCHOOL ETHOS



Impact on learning after attending forest school

We have seen an impact on learning, physical development and self-esteem in the Early Years, which we do accredit to Forest School. These are the children that have a weekly session in the wood all year. With the older children, it is more difficult to say that 'this is down to Forest School' as they only attend for six weekly sessions twice a year. However, the children's behaviour during, attitude towards and excitement about Forest School is incredibly palpable and positive. We have an observation sheet that can be completed as an ongoing document on up to three children in a session. These have shown a great difference in attitude, behaviour, self-confidence and well-being over the six weeks that they were completed.

There has been an impact on the development of Millennium Wood itself since the children started using it for their forest sessions a couple of years ago. A local nature expert has worked with the local community and the children to develop Millennium Wood further by, for example, lopping and coppicing trees, cutting pathways, making brush hedges, planting wildflowers, installing new bird boxes, refurbishing the pond, identification points as well as holding events in the wood – moth nights, bio-blitz days, birthday parties, and events at Christmas and Easter This has encouraged school families to visit at weekends and evenings. In May 2017, we held a Family Forest Evening in Millennium Wood where Forest practitioners, children, parents and friends could come along to the forest, participate in forest activities and cook their own supper on the fire. It was really well supported and no-one wanted to leave! The feedback from parents was very positive.

Individual success stories Pupils/site

The creative and imaginative believers, and there are many of them, are so wonderful to see in the forest. Our 'Whitting King' is a great Forest success story. The successful, and safe, firefighters are a success story. Many of the children who have become leaders/true examples of all that Forest School is and can be, never ceases to surprise. The statement "I have never climbed a tree before" from a Reception pupil who joined us halfway through the year as she scampered up a tree was incredible. The knowledge that her family are now out and about so much is fantastic.

"We have many individual children over our year groups who really have benefitted so much socially and emotionally from Forest and they are all success stories".

The development and use of Millennium Wood has been an amazing success for school and the community. The wood itself has changed beyond recognition. The children's 'ownership' of it is a delight to see. The fact that we now have four qualified Forest Practitioners is AMAZING and hopefully, ensures the continuation of forest sessions at Little Hadham for years to come.

Benefits to adults and children who attend forest school?

The children ALL enjoy Forest School and feedback very positively on it. They use words such as freedom, fun, just being. They really enjoy the fires and whittling but den building is a firm favourite and the games are always enjoyed. The 'trust' that is involved is MASSIVE and I do believe that the children really FEEL this.

There is a strong bond between our actual Forest leaders which has further developed socially too. Other staff who have all taken part in, and sometimes led, forest sessions, have often been surprised at how good it has felt. All have commented on how beneficial it is to their personal well-being. Even staff who are not so enamoured of being outdoors have become more and more willing to take sessions as they can see the positive impact that it is having on the children. It has also encouraged different adults working with different classes, which is always a positive move and great for transition. We encourage every person that leads a forest session to write in a reflective forest journal. It's a wonderful, and emotional, read.

How does your forest school complement the curriculum?

It is built into the curriculum and planned for well in advance? To us, it supports, from a very different and real perspective, many curriculum areas such as PSHE, physical development, Science, Geography, creativity, and most of all Well-being for everyone!

"The children ALL enjoy Forest School and feedback very positively on it. They use words such as freedom, fun, just being."

*- Helen Nicklin
Forest School Day Leader*

Any barriers in getting forest school up and running?

The initial step into getting somebody trained is a massive one and did involve courage, and belief, from the school. Our first Level 3 person actually gave up two weeks over school holidays to complete the training - what a commitment! Some members of staff were more on board than others in the early days but now everyone is involved, especially when we have Outdoor Theme Weeks!

Insurance became a little bit of a barrier at one point as we were working off-site. Comprehensive risk assessments covering all activities have ensured peace of mind in this area. Other barriers really lie in time and organisation of resources from staffing, to ensuring all resources are in the right place at the right time and that everyone is able to feel, and be, safe! A big responsibility because the wood is off-site and because of the sheer adventurousness of Forest School

How would you convince someone who doesn't know about forest school that it works!

Give us a call! Our Forest Lead is so animated, she would come and lead a staff meeting to inspire them! OR come to see us, and it, in action! OR come and speak to our children about Forest School – they are our best ambassadors after all.

Funny stories?

The thunderstorm (only funny when we look back on it!) All our nursery and reception children had walked to Millennium Wood as a special treat in May 2017. It was raining. Then came the thunder. Cheerfully, I told them that thunder would not hurt us it was lightning that we should worry about. And then .. came the lightning!! I have never seen staff and children run so fast back to school. We were soaked! I can't believe the number of primary school children who are now asking for fire strikers and fairy pillows for their birthdays. Several stories involving people up trees, forgotten car keys, an amazing one about the fire, and one involving a herd of cows – just not sure where this case study is going!!

Connect Share Celebrate

How will you celebrate 25 years of UK forest school?

Connect

We are the lead school for the Catalyst Teaching Alliance Forest School Network and hold termly twilight gatherings to share best practice. We have presented about Forest School to the local community at their Annual General meeting as well as reports in the monthly Parish magazine. Also, our local nature expert has a strong link with the school and has developed Millennium Wood because the schoolchildren started to use it. There is even a support group who are raising money to purchase the Wood to ensure its future for the children of Little Hadham and the community.

Share

It would be great if we could get the local paper, The Independent, to do a Forest Day Supplement, inviting all local participating schools to get involved. One of our Governors knows the editor very well - so it could actually happen!

Celebrate

Through the Green Tree Award, we are receiving 30 saplings in the Autumn to plant in our school grounds and we hope to achieve at least the Gold Award for the Green Tree Award. Millennium Wood will feature strongly in our October celebrations and we may well recreate our Family Forest Event which was such a success last time!

Share your forest school story

We invite you to inspire others by sharing your story. Get in touch 123@forestschoolday.org
Go on, it's a small achievable task!



Forest School Day

Connecting, sharing and celebrating 25 years of UK Forest School
www.forestschoolday.org

