

Forest School at The Cavendish



Mrs Henson

- Level 3 Forest School Practitioner



FORGE LEARNING

- Certificate in The Therapeutic Forest



- Relax Kids coach

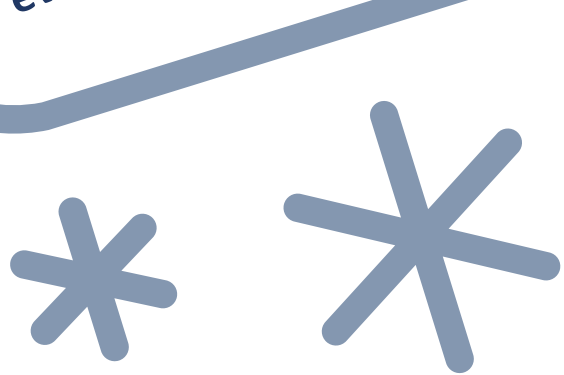


- Certificate in Advanced Wilderness Therapeutic Interventions





**“Look deep into nature, and
then you will understand
everything better.”
Albert Einstein**





Aims and Expectations

- **Be safe**

- **Be kind**

- **Have fun**

- Building trust in adults

- Developing connections with their environment

- Finding joy in the simplest of things

- Validating their experiences- and choices thus living the values of enabling the self

- Flourish and thrive



What is Forest School?

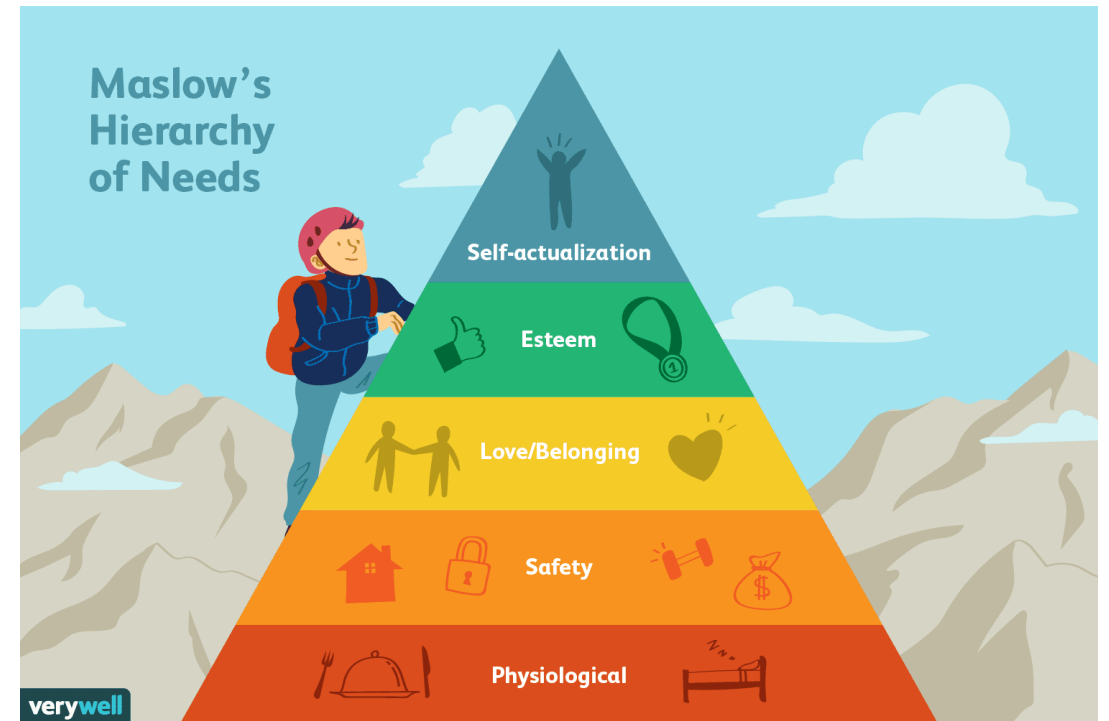
“Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland education. The ethos is shared by thousands of trained practitioners across the UK and beyond. Its roots reach back to early years pioneers in outdoor learning and across the sea to Scandinavia.”


Forest School Association


My Approach and Philosophy

Lesson planned using Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and the Forest School principles.

Learners should have fun and have the freedom to make their own Decisions.



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- FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
 - FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
 - FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
 - FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
 - FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.



Forest School has an ethos of building relationships and communication by using the natural world/outdoor activities and nature to develop personal, social and emotional skills.



Benefits of Forest School

Giving young people ownership of their learning helps to make the experience relevant to them and is intrinsically linked to their motivation causing them to be more emotionally involved in the learning process enhancing their learning and enjoyment.



Benefits of Forest School and Autism

The Forest School ethos lends itself well to those with ASD as it facilitates healthy physical, social and emotional development and encourages communication, confidence building and strengthening their emotional control, which improves self-awareness and well being.

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- Provides a rich sensory experience
 - Helps build a student's resilience and self-esteem
 - It has a person-centred approach
 - It encourages an interest in nature
 - Students can choose level of social interaction they want - can participate in individual or team activities

Michael James- Forest School and Autism



A person centred approach doesn't only take into account any differences or difficulties someone may have. Special interests are welcome in the woods and are a great way to engage people.



Forest School recognises that autism brings strengths.




Forest School encourages an interest in nature. When this comes together with the passion and focus which autism brings, great things can happen.



Forest school works in partnership with the participant and their supporters to meet their sensory needs. There is a rich sensory environment that can be explored or, if there is a need to reduce stimuli, quiet spaces can be created.



Social interaction can happen at the participant's own pace. The approach allows space for people who are becoming overloaded, and people can join in with a group activity or seek their own solitary activity.



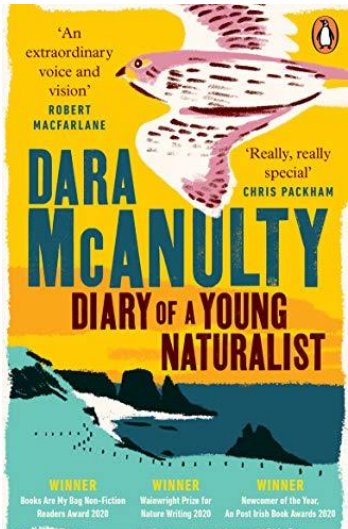
Time at Forest School allows them to focus on themselves, to explore at their own pace and to focus on their wants and needs.

By being outdoors on a regular basis, the world around them changes at a pace that is gentle and forgiving.

Nature offers safety and reliability which allows them to feel secure and enables them to take risks and to find joy in an unpressured environment.

“The ebb and flow of time punctuated by the familiar brings a cycle of wonder and discovery every year, just as if it is the first time. That rippling excitement never fades”

Dara McAnulty-Youth environmental activist





Forest School at The Cavendish

Curriculum links and Forest School Activities




Forest School is an important part of life at The Cavendish School. We aim to facilitate positive outdoor experiences and give lifelong memories for all.

Upholding the six key principles of the Forest School ethos, we offer a programme of both practical and therapeutic skills where learners will develop the whole self in a safe and nurturing way.

It offers all learners the chance to play, create, master practical bush craft skills and to gain a wider knowledge of the natural world.

Our school's mission statement is 'Enabling the Self'. As an International Baccalaureate School, our school has a variety of values that we feel are essential to our students' development and journey with us. These are:





The Forest School curriculum is designed to incorporate all aspects of our IB learning statements in order to create well rounded students. At the end of their school journey, our students will be:

- **Knowledgeable** about nature, sustainability and how they can make a difference to not only their local community but the wider world.
- **Reflective** on their own individual learning styles and know how to create a learning environment to suit their needs
- **Moral** when managing conflict and a difference of opinion. These are natural parts of Forest School and it offers learners opportunities to develop their wellbeing and conflict resolution
- Able to **celebrate the difference** when learning about the needs of themselves, their peers and their wider community
- Applying the practice of learner-led **thinking** to enable independence and questioning skills
- **Caring** towards themselves, each other, and allowing themselves to forge a sense of belonging to their local community
- Able to **communicate** their ideas with growing confidence and understanding.
- **Balanced** in themselves and make links between good mental wellbeing and connecting with the outdoors
- Confident in **inquiring** about nature, the environment and learning new skills
- **Courageous** and brave when learning new skills, playing, managing conflict and stepping out of their comfort zone.



Activities and Why We do Them

Mud Kitchen Play

A highly beneficial form of play for all ages

- Encourages independence
- Uses creativity and imagination
- Fosters a respectful interest in nature
- Provides versatile opportunities for movement
- Develops communication and social skills
- Opportunities for maths and English
- Making sense of the world
- Expressive arts



Digging and Mud Play

- Increases serotonin levels due to mud containing *Mycobacterium vaccae*
- Fosters a connection with nature
- Mud, particularly wet mud, contains healthy organisms which boosts immunity
- Improves cognitive development- this is linked to serotonin levels
- Sensory development
- Communication and social skills
- Solitary mud play is equally beneficial
- Opportunities for creative thinking
- Great art medium



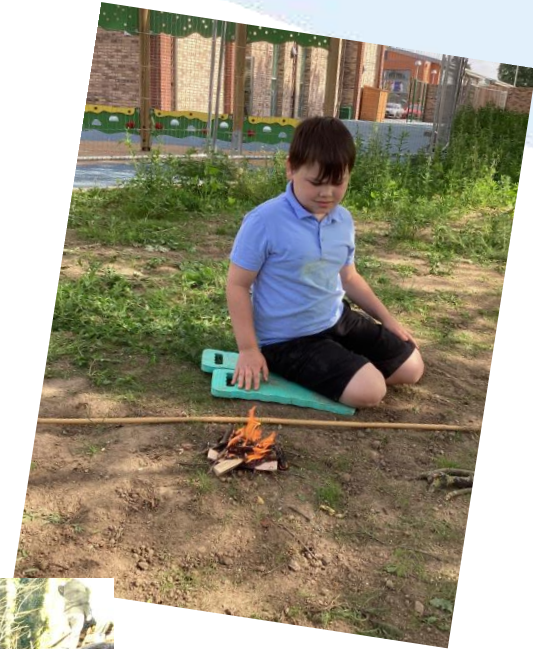
Den Building

- Assessing risk-the outdoors cannot be controlled like a classroom or room at home
- Problem solving and planning
- Creativity
- Communication and language development
- Social development
- Applying mathematical knowledge
- Problem solving
- Team work
- Physical development
- Self esteem
- Perseverance and determination



Fire Skills and Campfire

- Risk management
- Curriculum links- science; fire triangle, theory of combustion
- Social skills
- Managing expectations
- Personal safety
- Communication and language development
- Organisational skills
- Sensory development
- Problem solving
- Independence



Tool use

- Physical development
- Risk management
- Cognitive development
- Communication and language skills
- Curriculum links- DT, art and Design
- Creativity
- Skill acquisition
- Self esteem
- Coordination





Wellbeing Research



Forest School is shown to have gains in the following areas of development:

Confidence

Social skills

Language and Communication

Motivation and concentration

Self-esteem

Physical skills

Knowledge and understanding

Behaviour

(Maynard, 2003; Murray and O'Brien, 2005; O'Brien and Murray, 2007; Davis et al. 2006)



These may seem like amazing factors to be claimed. Yet there is something significant about being in the natural environment, where pupils can reconnect, and where cortisol levels immediately reduce blood pressure and increase calmness.

Learning is led and initiated, where possible, by the young people involved, and are able to meet a variety of learning styles. Adults learn and play alongside pupils and the process of learning is as significant as the product.

Play is a significant part of the journey and the style of delivery is well suited particularly for boys. Time and space is a significant element of Forest School and a “flow state” is ideally sought, where learners become so engrossed in their play or activities that they lose all sense of time.



**Barton and Pretty (2010)
state that:**

**“Contact with nature has
been shown to improve
mental wellbeing, even
after as little as five
minutes of contact with
nature”.**



95% 
of children feel outdoor learning is more enjoyable

90% 
of children feel happier and healthier

85% 
of settings see a positive impact on behaviour

70% 
of teachers report higher job satisfaction

Infograph created by Mindstretchers

Research conducted by the England Natural Connections Project 2016

EVERY CHILD WILD

over the last

40 years, children have become increasingly separated from nature. It's a natural disaster in the making.

16% of girls exercise an hour or more

21% of boys exercise an hour or more



Fewer than 10% of children play in natural areas. When today's adults were children the figure was 40%



WALKING TO SCHOOL⁵

7 and 8 year-olds



Nature, we miss you

October 2015 YouGov poll of parents and children, commissioned by The Wildlife Trusts

37% OF CHILDREN have not played outside by themselves in the past six months

60% have never seen a peacock butterfly

71% have never seen a lizard in the wild

Over **50%** have never found frogspawn in a pond in the wild

37% have never seen a hedgehog

Only 50% of children say their school has an outdoor nature area

Less than **50%** have been to a wild place with school to learn about wildlife in the past year

78% OF PARENTS are concerned that children don't spend enough time interacting with nature and wildlife

Only 10% think their child spends more time outside than they did

92% think access to nature and wildlife is important for children in general



Figures from YouGov Plc. Online survey, 16-20th Oct 2015. Sample size 1,082 children and 4,204 adults, of which 1,070 were parents of children aged 10 or less. Figures are weighted and representative of all GB children aged 9-15, and all GB adults aged 16+



Certificate in Advanced Wilderness Therapeutic Approaches

“Awaken the human potential”-Robin Sheenan



As a practitioner in this unique therapeutic approach, the sessions apply specific interventions to manage many areas of difficulties



Communication
and Interaction



Trauma



Behaviour



Sensory
Difficulties



Cognition and
Learning




Attachment



Confidence
and Self
esteem



Physical
Difficulties

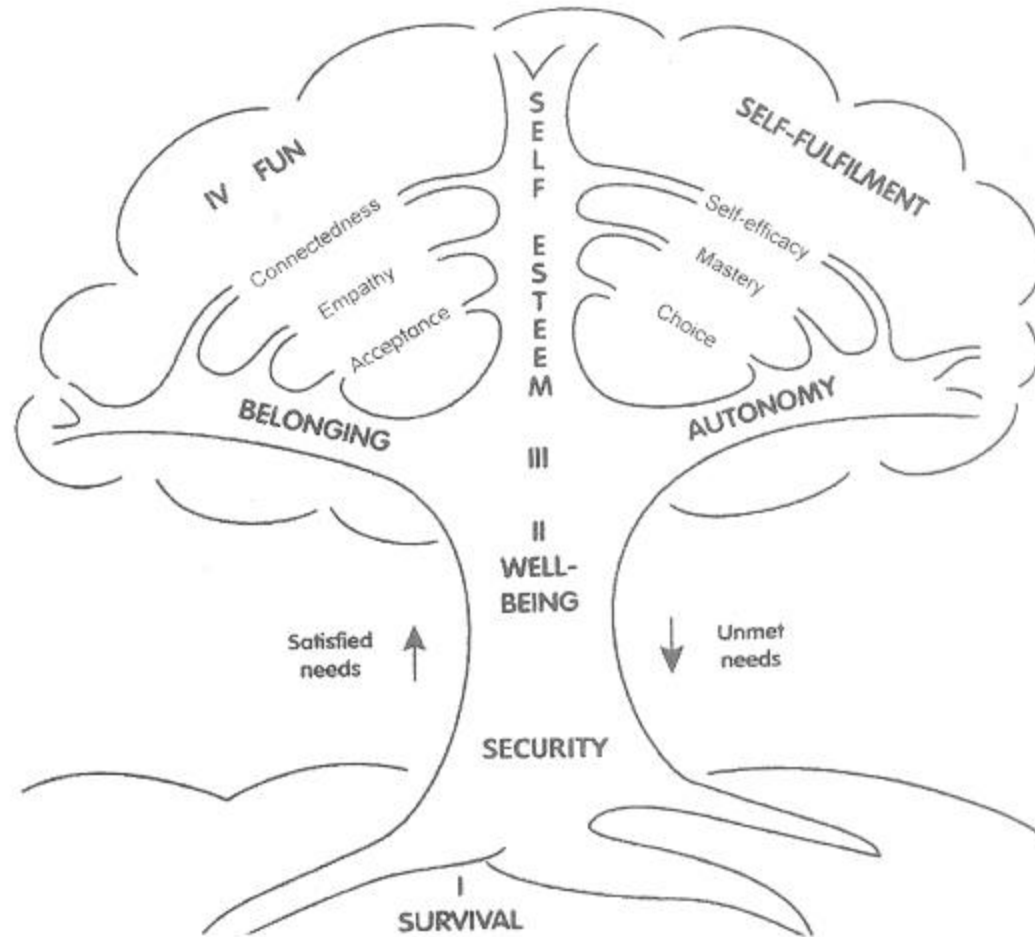


Interventions are planned using specific assessment tools and sessions follow a therapeutic path of hard and soft activities designed to enable participants to live life to the full and to strive to be all that they can be.

In conjunction with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Porter's Tree of Need's, the intervention programme consists of Behaviour Schemas and "The Six Pillars of Self Esteem".

At the end of the intervention, impact assessment reports are done to show progress using information from the initial assessments and observations from sessions.

Porter's Tree of Needs





What our pupils say....

"I am happy and calm in Forest School"-Year 6 pupil

"I can play games using things that interest me"-Year 3 pupil

"I like being free and eating food from the campfire"-Year 5 pupil

"It's interesting and I like being able to use tools."- Year 5 pupil

I like using the story stones, we have made up a great story about an 'Ancient Tree of No Importance! "- Year 7 pupil



Forest School in the Future

As we expand:

Acquire woodland behind the school

*Training of staff and additional Level 3 Forest
School Leaders*

*Duke of Edinburgh Award for year 10 and
above*

NATURE'S MUSIC

by Lenore Hetrick

I love Nature's music,
And summer time songs.
In the forest her great singers
Gather in throngs.

The wind plays the harp,
And the birds take the tune.
The bass part is sung
By the man in the moon!

Each one knows their part
To the very last letter!
And even our radio
Doesn't sound any better!



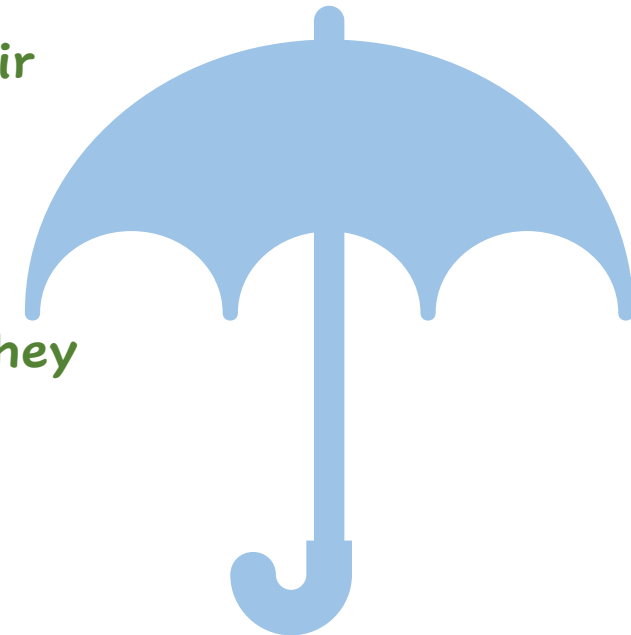
Suggested Outerwear

Pupils may have sensory issues around changing their clothing and this may be a challenge. Although it is important pupils are dressed as well as possible to ensure that they are comfortable, it is important that they are safe.

Pupils are educated as to why certain items of clothing are putting their safety at risk.

This also applies to safety gloves when using tools.

We will always work together to find an appropriate solution so that they can participate safely.



"There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."

Autumn/Winter:

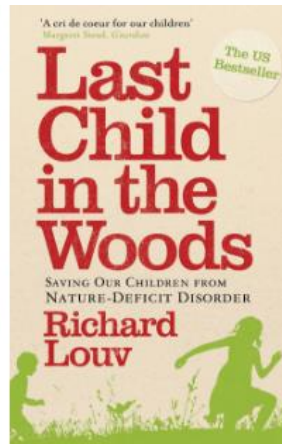
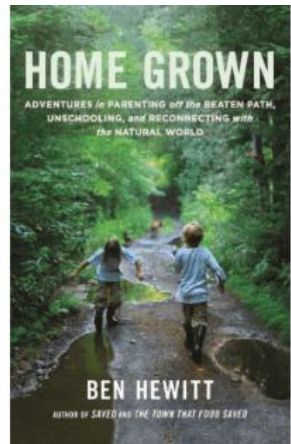
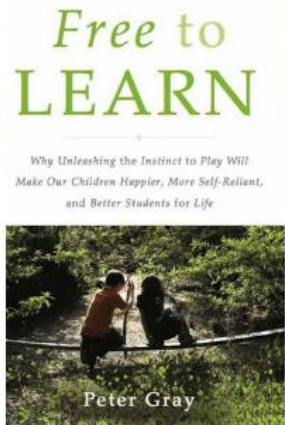
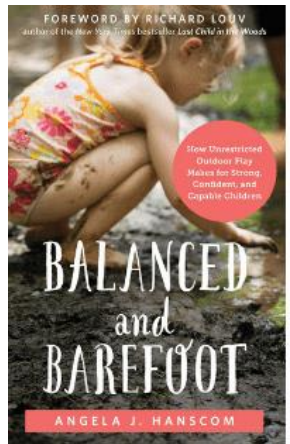
- Vest or T-shirt, long sleeved top, fleece or thick jumper
- Thick socks or 2 pairs of thin ones
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof over trousers
- Wellington boots or walking boots
- Gloves and a hat.

Spring/Summer:

- Long sleeved T-shirt
- light cotton trousers (arms and legs to be covered in the woodland)
- Socks
- Sturdy footwear preferably walking boots but wellies if not
- Sun hat.
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof over trousers.

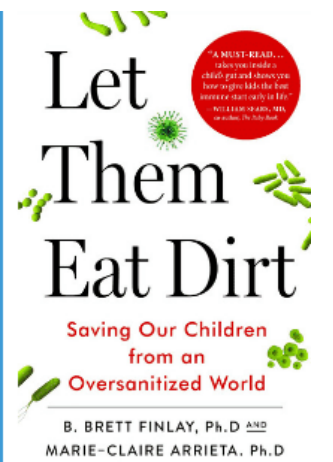
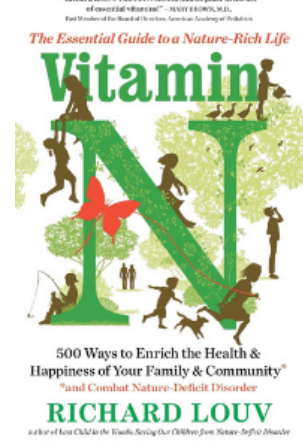
Recommended Reads

Importance of Outdoor Play



1. **Balanced and Barefoot – Angela Hanscom**
2. **Home Grown– Ben Hewitt**
3. **Free to Learn– Peter Gray**
4. **Last Child in the Woods– Richard Louv**

How Nature Makes Children happy and Healthy



1. **Vitamin N– Richard Louv**
2. **How TO Raise a Wild Child– Scott Sampson**
3. **There's No Such Thing as Bad Weather– Linda Akeson McGurk**
4. **Let Then Eat Dirt– Dr Marie-Claire Arrieta & Dr B Brett Finaly**



Research Articles

England's Natural Connections Project

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/englands-largest-outdoor-learning-project-reveals-children-more-motivated-to-learn-when-outside>

Every Child Wild- The Wildlife Trust

https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/ecw_web_spreads_1_0.pdf

What is the Best Dose of Nature and Green Exercise for Improving Mental Health? A Multi-Study Analysis Jo Barton and Jules Pretty

<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/es903183r>





Thank you for
listening

