



Woodlands Curriculum Progression

Progression from Nursery to Year 6 across four strands. Each year group sets out the knowledge and skills pupils develop, followed by the existing Forest School or timetable examples and curriculum links.

Environmental Understanding

Environmental Understanding	Nursery - Seasons change and affect the natural environment (weather, leaves, temperature) - Natural materials have different textures and properties (wet, dry, hard, soft) - explore natural materials through sensory play (mud, leaves, water) - observe simple changes in weather and environment over time - begin to describe what they see using basic vocabulary <i>Links to Forest School: exploration, sensory play, outdoor observation</i> <i>Framework links: EYFS – Understanding the World</i>
Environmental Understanding	Reception - Plants and animals have basic needs to survive (water, food, shelter) - The environment changes across the seasons - observe and describe changes in plants and weather during outdoor learning - talk about what they see, hear and feel in the natural environment - begin to explain simple cause and effect (e.g. plants grow when watered) <i>Links to Forest School: planting, seasonal observation, exploration days</i> <i>Framework links: ELG – Understanding the World</i>
Environmental Understanding	Year 1 - Plants need water, light and suitable conditions to grow - Seasonal changes affect plants and trees over time - observe plant growth through tree planting sessions (Tree planting unit) - identify and name basic features of plants and trees - describe changes in the natural environment using simple scientific vocabulary <i>Links to timetable: Tree planting – “What does a tree need to grow?”</i> <i>NC links: Science – plants, seasonal change</i>
Environmental Understanding	Year 2 - Habitats provide what living things need to survive - Different trees and plants can be identified by their features - Simple fieldwork can be used to understand an environment - identify trees and habitats through exploration (Tree detectives) - use mapping and route drawing to represent their environment (Geography mapping) - observe seasonal changes and describe patterns over time <i>Links to timetable: Tree detectives, route mapping</i> <i>NC links: Science – habitats; Geography – fieldwork</i>
Environmental Understanding	Year 3 - Materials change state when heat is applied (e.g. charcoal making, fire lighting) - Water can be filtered and separated using natural materials (filtration) - Different environments provide different conditions for survival - observe, predict and test how materials behave in real contexts (fire lighting, filtration) - record simple outcomes and begin to explain patterns - draw conclusions from investigations and begin to justify ideas <i>Links to timetable: Filtration, fire lighting, natural materials work</i> <i>NC links: Science – materials, working scientifically; Geography – environment</i>

Environmental Understanding	Year 4 • Ecosystems are made up of interconnected living and non-living elements • Materials change through processes such as burning, settling and mixing • Environmental conditions affect how organisms survive (e.g. rainforest) • explain processes such as charcoal making and sediment settling (Charcoal + sediment work) • describe how environments support life (Rainforest study) • identify cause-and-effect relationships in environmental change <i>Links to timetable: Charcoal making, rainforest work, sediment settling</i> <i>NC links: Science – states of matter; Geography – biomes</i>
Environmental Understanding	Year 5 • Life cycles describe how living things grow and reproduce • Forces and processes (e.g. air resistance, water cycle) affect the environment • Natural processes can be observed, tested and modelled • investigate life cycles through outdoor bug hunting (Life cycles) • test scientific ideas through experiments (e.g. parachutes – air resistance) • explain environmental processes such as filtration and water movement <i>Links to timetable: Bug hunting, parachutes, filtration, water cycle</i> <i>NC links: Science – life cycles, forces; Geography – water cycle</i>
Environmental Understanding	Year 6 • Human activity impacts environments and sustainability • Environments can be improved through planned action and intervention • Survival depends on understanding environmental conditions (e.g. shelter, resources) • analyse environmental issues and propose improvements (Environmental clearance) • apply knowledge to survival contexts (e.g. shelter building, hierarchy of needs) • evaluate the effectiveness of environmental decisions and solutions <i>Links to timetable: Environmental improvement, den building, survival tasks</i> <i>NC links: Geography – sustainability, human impact; Science – ecosystems</i>

Practical Skills & Tool Use

Practical Skills & Tool Use	Nursery • Tools must be handled carefully to stay safe • Different tools are used for different purposes (digging, scooping, carrying) • develop gross motor skills through digging, carrying and climbing • explore using simple tools (spades, scoops, containers) • begin to follow simple safety instructions <i>Forest School: tool exploration, movement, coordination</i> <i>NC links: EYFS Physical Development</i>
Practical Skills & Tool Use	Reception • Tools require control and safe handling • Materials can be manipulated by cutting, digging and shaping • use tools (e.g. peelers, cutters, digging tools) with increasing control • build simple structures (dens, shelters) using natural materials • follow safety routines when working outdoors <i>Forest School: den building, tool introduction</i> <i>NC links: EYFS PD + EAD</i>

Practical Skills & Tool Use	Year 1 • Tools can be used to complete specific tasks (planting, digging, carrying) • Materials can be collected and used safely • use tools safely during planting activities (Tree planting) • collect and transport natural materials appropriately • follow clear safety instructions in practical tasks <i>Forest School: planting, material collection</i> <i>NC links: DT – basic practical skills</i>
Practical Skills & Tool Use	Year 2 • Materials can be shaped, combined and tested for purpose • Structures must be stable and suitable for their function (e.g. shelter) • build simple shelters using natural materials (Den building) • test materials for waterproofing and strength • use tools with increasing independence and control <i>Forest School: shelter building, testing materials</i> <i>NC links: DT – structures, Science – materials</i>
Practical Skills & Tool Use	Year 3 • Tools have specific purposes and must be used safely and accurately • Fire requires fuel, oxygen and heat to be sustained • use tools (e.g. saws, peelers) safely with supervision • develop fire awareness through fire lighting activities (Fire lighting) • apply safety rules consistently in practical contexts <i>Forest School: tool skills, fire awareness</i> <i>NC links: DT + Science (forces/materials)</i>
Practical Skills & Tool Use	Year 4 • Different techniques improve accuracy and effectiveness when using tools • Processes such as cutting, shaping and heating change materials • select and use appropriate tools for specific purposes (Charcoal making, cooking) • refine techniques to improve outcomes (cutting, shaping, preparing materials) • apply safety knowledge independently in practical tasks <i>Forest School: charcoal making, safe tool use</i> <i>NC links: DT – techniques, Science – states of matter</i>
Practical Skills & Tool Use	Year 5 • Tools allow more complex tasks to be completed efficiently • Safe working practices are essential when using equipment • independently use a range of tools for investigations (Parachutes, filtration) • manage resources and equipment effectively • maintain safe working practices throughout extended tasks <i>Forest School: extended tasks, independent tool use</i> <i>NC links: DT – refining skills, Science – forces</i>
Practical Skills & Tool Use	Year 6 • Advanced tools require precision, control and risk management • Shelter and fire use must be planned and managed safely • use advanced tools (e.g. pyrography, fire) safely (Fire & cooking, pyrography) • construct complex shelters for specific purposes (Survival/den building) • independently assess and manage risk in practical environments <i>Forest School: advanced tool use, survival skills</i> <i>NC links: DT – independent design & application</i>

Creativity & Problem Solving

Creativity & Problem Solving	Nursery • Materials can be combined to create structures • explore building using loose parts (sticks, logs, mud) • experiment through trial and error • begin to solve simple problems (balancing, stacking) <i>Forest School: loose parts play</i> <i>NC links: EYFS EAD</i>
Creativity & Problem Solving	Reception • Materials can be used to represent ideas and create structures • create simple dens and imaginative structures • begin to plan actions before building • adapt ideas during play <i>Forest School: den building, role play</i> <i>NC links: EYFS EAD</i>
Creativity & Problem Solving	Year 1 • Different materials are suited to different purposes • create simple natural artwork (Natural art) • explore properties of materials (wet/dry, strong/weak) • begin selecting materials based on purpose <i>Forest School: natural art activities</i> <i>NC links: Art + DT</i>
Creativity & Problem Solving	Year 2 • Design involves creating, testing and improving ideas • design and build shelters and routes (Mapping + shelter tasks) • test designs and adapt based on effectiveness • begin to make simple predictions <i>Forest School: design + test</i> <i>NC links: DT design process</i>
Creativity & Problem Solving	Year 3 • Designs can be improved through testing and evaluation • design and create products (Photo frames) • test structures and improve stability • justify choices using simple reasoning <i>Forest School: DT builds</i> <i>NC links: DT – evaluate & improve</i>
Creativity & Problem Solving	Year 4 • Creative work can combine knowledge from multiple subjects • create art using natural materials (Cave art) • adapt designs for purpose • refine work based on success criteria <i>Forest School: cave art, DT projects</i> <i>NC links: Art + DT</i>
Creativity & Problem Solving	Year 5 • Evidence supports improvement in design and outcomes • design and test investigations (Parachutes, filtration) • refine solutions using evidence • solve real-world problems using scientific understanding <i>Forest School: investigation-based learning</i> <i>NC links: Science + DT</i>

Creativity & Problem Solving	Year 6 • Effective solutions require planning, testing and evaluation • plan and complete independent projects (Environmental projects) • apply cross-curricular knowledge • evaluate effectiveness and suggest improvements <i>Forest School: independent projects</i> <i>NC links: DT – full design cycle</i>
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PSED & Oracy

PSED & Oracy	Nursery • Working with others supports learning • play alongside peers • communicate basic needs and ideas • begin to take supported risks <i>Forest School: shared play</i> <i>NC links: EYFS PSED</i>
PSED & Oracy	Reception • Collaboration helps complete tasks • work cooperatively during outdoor play • talk about actions and experiences • begin to show resilience <i>Forest School: group tasks</i> <i>NC links: ELG PSED</i>
PSED & Oracy	Year 1 • Ideas can be shared through talk • work in pairs/groups (Planting tasks) • describe what they are doing • follow expectations outdoors <i>Forest School: structured talk</i> <i>NC links: Oracy + PSHE</i>
PSED & Oracy	Year 2 • Explaining thinking improves outcomes • explain shelter-building decisions • collaborate to solve problems • begin assessing simple risks <i>Forest School: decision-making</i> <i>NC links: PSHE</i>
PSED & Oracy	Year 3 • Reflection helps improve performance • explain processes step-by-step (Filtration/fire) • reflect on what worked and didn't • show resilience when tasks fail <i>Forest School: reflection and resilience</i> <i>NC links: PSHE</i>
PSED & Oracy	Year 4 • Decisions can be justified using reasoning • justify design choices (Charcoal / DT tasks) • take responsibility within groups • communicate ideas clearly <i>Forest School: group roles</i> <i>NC links: PSHE + oracy</i>

PSED & Oracy	Year 5 • Leadership supports successful collaboration • lead discussions in investigations • explain reasoning using key vocabulary • support peers in tasks <i>Forest School: leadership development</i> <i>NC links: PSHE</i>
PSED & Oracy	Year 6 • Risk can be identified, assessed and managed safely • lead tasks and support others (Survival activities) • independently assess and manage risk • reflect critically on outcomes and decisions <i>Forest School: independence + leadership</i> <i>NC links: PSHE</i>