

News from Forest School | February 2024

Campfire Cookery:

This half term, the children have tucked into some tasty treats in the form of campfire “donuts” and campfire “pizzas”! By making these over several weeks, children have had the chance to practice and adapt recipes e.g. with the pizzas “what would I do differently next time? More tomato? Fewer herbs? More paprika?!”



While cooking, children follow the fire safety guidelines. Some of the children have also practiced their fire-making skills using the flint and steel.

Physical Activity & Wellbeing

In addition to the walk to and from the forest, the children have a great opportunity to develop their physical fitness and agility as they play. The swing and climbing tree are always popular activities and, this half-term, we provided a “slack line” which tested balance, core strength and perseverance!

Time in the forest also supports the children’s mental wellbeing, through physical activity, through interactions with nature, and through play and communication with friends. We often start our Forest School sessions with a “Mindful Moment”

which gives children a chance to connect with the sounds of the forest and to notice changes, week to week, in the weather or smells or sounds.



Practising resilience in the face of winter weather:

Forest School brings an awareness and appreciation of the changing seasons. This half-term the children have been able to experience all that winter offers, from catching falling snowflakes on the tongue, to observing the effects of the weather – playing with ice in the tuff tray/buckets; and noticing the hard frozen ground underfoot one week, to the squishy wet mud another week!

Unfortunately, we have also experienced some strong winds this half-term which have prevented us from going up to the forest. On these occasions we have offered adapted activities in school such as kite-making; origami; a challenge to build the tallest tower with bamboo canes; measuring the height of a tree; and making placemats using paper weaving.

Connecting with nature:

We are starting to develop an area specifically dedicated to attracting and observing wildlife. Children have started to think about designs for bug hotels; dug beetle banks; and some of the children have made bird feeders by pressing seeds into apples to hang in the forest or to take home for garden birds.

Over the past week the children have loved seeing the snowdrops coming into bloom and it's been fun to see them getting excited when they spot new clusters at different points along the path to the forest!



Links to the curriculum:

The children have been thinking about the wildlife that live in the frozen habitats of the Arctic and Antarctic. We have taken ice up to the forest and the children balance bears or penguins on the "icebergs" at the start of their session. These are revisited before returning to school. The children have observed how difficult it is for all the animals to find a place on the melting ice by the end of the session. This has led to conversations about climate change.

And so much more...



Besides all this, the children's play and exploration this half-term have led to den-building, water play, mud kitchen cafes, and honing woodcraft skills from splitting wood for the fire to whittling (including some impressive wooden knives!).



Finally, a word of thanks to parents for making sure children come dressed for the forest and the weather (we hope our guide to dressing for Forest School was helpful). Thank you also to those who donated items for us to use as spares when required. During the Spring term, some days can be quite mild and rainy, other days clear blue skies and icy cold. It's great that when appropriately dressed, the

children are able to fully, and comfortably, experience all the forest has to offer. If the children do get cold, they learn the best way to warm up is to stay active, but we do also have a supply of e.g. extra hats, gloves, socks, and we provide warm squash and hand-warmers when necessary.

