



Outdoor Learning Overview and Sequencing of Learning

Through the curriculum area of **Outdoor Learning**, we aim for children to have regular opportunities to undertake learning and play in an outdoor environment. It is complementary, not separate to learning in a traditional classroom environment and is closely linked to the school's multitiered creative curriculum model.

Through **Outdoor Learning** at Pictor children are able to develop a lifelong love and understanding of the natural environment, whilst development of self-esteem, confidence and social skills.

Key elements of the **Forest School** philosophy are adopted, this aim is to encourage and inspire learners, through mastery of small, achievable tasks in a woodland environment, to grow in confidence and independence so that they are able to develop a sense of self-worth. Children will acquire new skills as they are ready for them so that activities can maintain a degree of challenge and excitement, whilst remaining safe and controlled. We look to increase each child's capacity to instigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them. Sessions allow pupils the right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world; and the right to experience a healthy range of emotions, through all the challenges of social interaction, to build a resilience that will enable continued and creative engagement with their peers.

The **Outdoor Learning** curriculum has been carefully designed and sequenced to develop the following key skills and knowledge:

- **Resilience:** This relates to the ability to recover quickly from disappointment, failure, difficulties, toughness, etc. **Skill based** activities in particular require resilience. Resilience develops as children try new skills and don't achieve the required result initially. Working with groups of people can also require resilience as children learn to cope with other people's ideas and differences.
- **Confidence:** This is the ability of the children to have faith in themselves and others. Confidence is again built through the practice and perfection of skills. You can often see shy children grow in confidence as they master a new skill, especially if they achieve it before others and can help teach the skill. The nature of the freedom to explore and investigate with activities allows individuals to tackle them in a way that suits them, often leading to positive results and a growth in confidence.

- **Independence:** Is the ability of the children to work on their own. A group can also work independently.
- **Creativity:** This is the ability of the children to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc. The ability to choose their own activities, allowing them to creatively use the woodland. Targeted open-ended activities that encourage creativity, e.g. make your own woodland seat, build a house for the fairies, create some artwork using the nature around you.
- **Physical Development:** Moving activities – moving through the woods, climbing trees, balancing on logs, moving items between locations.
- **Fine Motor Skills:** building shelters, woodland craft, learning knots, building fires, using hand tools, cooking
- **Emotional Development:** Setting tasks that require perseverance and resilience through having another go. A prime example for this is lighting fires.
- **Social Development:** Working as part of a group. Many woodland activities incorporate working as a group: shelter building, collecting firewood, building woodland crafts.
- **Cognition & Learning and Communication & Interaction:** Again, working in groups: shelter building, collecting firewood, building woodland crafts. Introduce an element of discussion to allow clients to talk about the task and the best way to complete it.
- **Creative activities:** making art using the natural materials around them.
- **Spiritual, Moral and Cultural Development:** Playing different games and then allowing children to develop their own.

Outdoor learning provides opportunities to link to the content of other subject areas and to develop a cross-contextual understanding of concepts. The Outdoor Learning curriculum is carefully planned to ensure concepts are taught at an appropriate developmental level to support children's understanding. Plans are tailored to the needs of each class, adapting the learning areas and opportunities to the interests, needs and level of learning of the individual and class. They consist of basic mapping of concepts, resources, activities, this is actioned at a pupil level through the use of highly personalised planning to set very small stepped targets across a range of areas (including communication, interaction, emotional development and social skills) so that pupils make

consistent progress towards their aspirational targets outlined in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

At the earliest stages, the sequence of learning begins with simply being outside and experiencing the outdoors from a sensory perspective and beginning to undertake learning outside. As Outdoor Learning becomes more developed it incorporates early phonological understanding through an experience and understanding of environmental sounds. It builds towards working in groups: shelter building, collecting firewood, building woodland crafts. Eventually it introduces teamwork and discussion about the task and the best way to complete it. Over time Outdoor Learning incorporates creative activities such as making art using the natural materials around them. Finally, it creates an environment for critical reflection following an activity, discussing what has been achieved and learned.

Outdoor Learning prepares pupils for future learning and transition to Key Stage 3 by developing resilience and independence. It also supports the development of independent risk assessment and understanding how to safely undertake activities that may contain elements of danger. Outdoor Learning is used to support the learning in a number of other curriculum areas including Maths, Science, Expressive Arts and Literacy.