



At Great Missenden Church of England School and Pre-School, our Forest School provision is rooted in our Christian vision to *“walk together in hope”*, guided by our values of Faith and Community, Love and Respect, Truth and Courage.

We believe every child is uniquely created and valued by God. Forest School provides an inclusive, nurturing environment where all pupils can flourish, regardless of their starting points. Through regular, high-quality outdoor learning, children develop confidence, resilience and independence while deepening their respect for God’s creation.

Inspired by Matthew 7:7–8 — *“Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you.”* — we encourage pupils to explore, question and reflect. Forest School supports the development of the whole child — spiritually, morally, socially and culturally — alongside their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Through Forest School, children use their “educational keys” in practical and creative ways — solving problems, managing risk and unlocking their personal potential beyond the classroom walls.

Forest School provides opportunities for children to look through “windows” into the wider world of nature, ecosystems and community responsibility, while also offering space for reflection, helping them consider the “big questions” of life and develop self-awareness by metaphorically looking in the mirror.

We aim to:

- Foster curiosity, awe and wonder in the natural world as part of God’s creation
- Develop pupils’ personal, social and emotional skills within a strong sense of community
- Build resilience and perseverance through managed risk-taking, demonstrating courage
- Promote independence and self-regulation so that every child can unlock their potential
- Strengthen communication and collaborative skills rooted in love and respect
- Encourage responsibility, stewardship and care for the environment as global citizens

Through hands-on, experiential learning, pupils build perseverance, manage risk safely and strengthen collaboration and communication skills. They learn responsibility, stewardship and care for the environment, developing as thoughtful global citizens prepared for the wider world.

In Early Years and Pre-School, Forest School strongly supports the Characteristics of Effective Learning, enabling children to play and explore, actively engage and think critically in a rich outdoor setting.

Implementation

Forest School at Great Missenden C of E School and Pre-School is carefully planned, progressive and inclusive. It follows a whole-school long-term plan to ensure that knowledge, vocabulary and practical skills build sequentially from Pre-School through to Key Stage 2.

Sessions are delivered regularly by a trained Forest School Leader and are embedded within our curriculum, reflecting the value we place on outdoor learning. Planning is responsive to children's interests while ensuring clear progression in skills such as tool use, problem-solving, teamwork and environmental understanding.

Teaching is underpinned by high expectations, clear routines and strong safeguarding procedures. Before each session, a thorough site risk assessment is completed. Pupils are explicitly taught how to assess and manage risk safely, supporting the development of independence and responsible decision-making.

Activities may include:

- Shelter building and den construction
- Fire lighting and outdoor cooking (age-appropriate)
- Safe tool use
- Woodland crafts and environmental art
- Wildlife observation and seasonal studies
- Rope work and knot tying
- Team-building and problem-solving challenges
- Storytelling, reflection and spiritual exploration

Appropriate clothing is required to ensure pupils can safely access the outdoors in all weather conditions. We promote the ethos that *"There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."*

Forest School provides meaningful cross-curricular links, particularly within science, geography, art, physical development and personal development, while retaining its core child-led and experiential approach.

Impact

The impact of Forest School is evident in pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Children demonstrate:

- Increased confidence and independence
- Improved resilience and perseverance
- Stronger collaboration and communication skills
- Greater willingness to take appropriate risks
- Enhanced concentration and engagement
- Improved physical coordination and stamina

In Early Years and Pre-School, children show sustained levels of involvement, curiosity and purposeful play, supporting strong foundations for future learning.

Forest School also strengthens pupils' understanding of stewardship and care for the environment, deepening their appreciation of the natural world as part of God's creation.

We evaluate impact through:

- Pupil voice and reflective discussion
- Observational assessment and progression of skills
- Photographic and video evidence
- Monitoring of engagement, wellbeing and behaviour
- Links to wider curriculum outcomes

Over time, pupils at Great Missenden C of E School and Pre-School develop the confidence, resilience and sense of responsibility needed to flourish both academically and personally, living out our Christian values in school and beyond.