



UNIQUE
CARE GROUP

Welcome to

Westbury School

Woodland School

Westbury School Woodland Schools

The use of a natural outdoor environment.

Allows every child to have a voice, especially those who find it difficult to communicate in a more conventional learning environment.

Child-led approach to children's learning which is fun and unhurried.

A high adult to child ratio allows children to undertake new experiences and challenges whilst taking appropriate risks.

Long term programme that allows repetition where children come into contact with nature using all their senses.

Supports personalised learning.

Builds children's confidence and self esteem as they are responsible for making their own decisions and are carefully supported to achieve.

Trained adults and facilitators and observers rather than leaders and directors.

Woodland School

Woodland Schools is a unique child-led responsive programme. It is inspiring, motivating, and spiritual process that offers all learners regular opportunities to develop personal and social skills, confidence, and self-esteem through hands-on learning opportunities in a woodland area. This specialised learning approach sits within and compliments the broader context of outdoor and woodland education. It sets learning in a different context, where learners can undertake a range of practical activities and carry out small achievable tasks.

Woodland Schools does not follow a structured, progressive system in the same ways as a traditional curriculum subject. Moreover, it would be counterproductive to impose a conventional structure as it is an experience akin to a therapeutic intervention rather than a subject area. The progress of a session or series of sessions will depend on the learners' engagement, maturity, and interest. Thus learners should not be expected or forced to participate in a given activity or given a level of expectation they would not achieve. Learners develop a range of skills, including personal and social skills, teamwork, independence, and woodland skills. In this way, Woodland School supports SMSC and engendering a sense of awe, wonder and enjoyment of the natural world. Those unfamiliar with woodlands gain experience and confidence in this environment, which helps develop a life-long relationship and enjoyment of natural spaces.

In practical terms, this would mean that learner achievement is not predefined but is led by choice and, more powerfully, the valuable experience. That said, the types of experiences made available to learners' the general expectations of how they may engage and behave in sessions and the amount of independence and responsibility given to the children by staff will alter and develop in line with individual learners. For example, a year seven learner with severe learning needs will engage with Woodland School sessions differently to a year ten learner with moderate learning needs, albeit sharing a similar fundamental experience. This overview seeks to establish a broad framework for the delivery of Woodland Schools and ensure that the learners gain full benefit from the sessions.

The 'wild' and yet controlled safe environment of Woodland School ensures that learners taking part naturally learn how to assess. They are encouraged to make sensible, informed decisions about dealing with unfamiliar and predictable situations through the Westbury School, 'Thinking and Problem Solving' framework. Much of the learning is because of opportunities for testing their abilities in a real-life context.

Principles of Woodland School

The Woodland School Community first articulated these principles in 2002. They were reviewed in 2011 and sent out for a 5-month consultation to Woodland School networks and practitioners in all UK nations. They were published on the Institute for Outdoor Learning Woodland School SIG page in Feb 2012 and the GB trainers' network minutes.

Woodland Schools:

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

Implementing Woodland School at Westbury School

As a specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties, Westbury has several challenges and considerations in delivering Woodland Schools, especially when considering more inherently risky activities such as fire-lighting or the use of tools. Provision for pupils whose learning needs and behaviour make it unsafe for them to be offsite is made to ensure all pupils have some natural world experience. This may include project work around wildlife, creative/art activities, looking for wildlife on the school site or growing plants. Each class will experience one afternoon of Woodland School sessions each week. Woodland School takes place in all seasons, regardless of weather, which will have a natural impact on the experiences and activities. Whilst also allowing them to experience the natural world in different seasons and climates. The following tables break the sessions down into groupings. Expectations, tools, and skills are cumulative and are within the context of individual learner experience. The following gives an overview of the aims of Woodland School and how it could be implemented.

Group work and interaction	Fire and cooking	Tools	Shelter building	Knots	Nature	Navigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing at base camp. • Listen to a sensory story at base camp. • Create a story at base camp. • Woodland games e.g., pick up sticks, quoits. • Team working, collaborate, discuss, and negotiate together to achieve tasks, respond positively to each other's ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire safety, the importance of water, and never leave a fire unattended. • Know how to stay safe around fire. • Gather fuel for the fire. • Make toast on the fire. • Toasting marshmallows • Make popcorn. • Different types of fire: tepee, log cabin, upside down, star. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe handling and use of tools. • Fork and trowel • Peeler • make a magic wand. • Hammer and nails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe handling and use of tools. • Construct a bird's nest. • House for a mouse • Make a seating area. • Bug House • Den • Make a lean-to with a tarp. • Shelters with camouflage • Shelter building with materials found in the woodland. • Discuss structures. • Shelter building challenge in teams, plan, build and evaluate consider sturdiness, durability, waterproofing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoelaces • Half hitch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns in nature • Nature walk intro to flora and fauna. • Develop knowledge of flora and fauna, make predications where they are found. • Tree identification keys • Leaf and bark rubbing • Measuring the diameter of a tree • Flower identification keys • Min's beast hunt • Create a sensory face using natural materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacing skills • Positional vocabulary • Basic directions • Boundaries of site • Navigate to places on photos. • Navigate using directions. • Scavenger Hunt • Treasure hunt • Orienteering • Follow directions from a peer. • Left and right

