

Outdoor Learning

At Knights Enham Infants we are passionate about outdoor education. We believe that learning is at its most powerful when children have new and rich experiences, and we feel that being outside will often provide this.

We are lucky enough to have a school set in vast and varied environment. Within the school we have thriving forest area with a variety of plant and animal life, and just out of the school we have a beautiful lake that is rife with all sorts of living things. We utilise both these resources to make sure the children have a rich and exciting curriculum. We believe that using these resources provide experiences that will help to improve basic skills that children need, skills such as communication, confidence, persistence and managing their own risks.

When planning and delivering our core and foundation curriculum, the outdoor environment is used on a daily basis to make sessions more engaging for our children. This could be in small groups or as a whole class. Whether it's walking through the woods to collect adjectives in English, finding shapes in the trail for maths, or digging for mini-beasts in science, bringing the learning outside is a tool we use when possible. The children also have the opportunity to use the outdoor environment during their child initiated *Discovery Time*. Children can use the wooded area, the *Muddy Kitchen* and open field, but we also have the courtyard which is our building site role play. This provides opportunities to work on skills such as communication, maths and literacy but also gross and fine motor skills. Children can use equipment such as drills, saws, hammers and nails to build their designs.

We have worked closely with the *Learning Through Landscapes* team who specialise in outdoor education. They have helped us begin to shape our outdoor environment so it provides the best opportunities for our children to initiate their own progress and success. They have also come in to start projects with the children, one of which being our very own *Bee Hotel* that can be found at the front of the school.

Recently we have hosted a *Forest School* week where members of staff were trained to become Forest School leaders. This has provided further rich opportunities for children to learn more about the outdoor environment. So far we have collect fire wood, lit fires and then toasted marshmallows as a group. The children were really enthusiastic, enjoying the calming and community feel. We will go on to making shelters, learning knots and lashings amongst other projects.

Schools trips are a big part of our outdoor learning experiences. We feel that opportunities to visit places gives our children the hook that is needed to engage them in the curriculum. Whether we are visiting the local meadow or going to the local National Trust, we get out as much as possible.