

St Anne Line Catholic Infant School

part of the wider Christus Trust, Multi Academy Trust

Forest School Policy



Love Learn Pray

Introduction

We are proud to offer our Reception and Key Stage 1 children the opportunity to engage in forest school on our school site. This child-led, nature-based approach to learning enables pupils to explore, discover, and grow holistically—developing skills and understanding that go far beyond the classroom.

Rooted in our Catholic mission, Forest School nurtures the whole child—mind, body, and spirit. As stewards of God's creation, our children are encouraged to wonder at the natural world, care for it, and learn from it. Through outdoor experiences, children grow in confidence, resilience, and faith, while deepening their respect for others and the environment.

Forest School sessions are delivered throughout the year and in most weather conditions. In cases of extreme weather (e.g. high winds), sessions are rescheduled to ensure safety.

Inclusion

Our Forest School programme is inclusive and accessible to all children, regardless of physical ability, additional needs, or background. We believe that every child is a unique gift from God, and we work to ensure that all pupils can access outdoor learning in a meaningful and joyful way.

In line with our Catholic ethos, we:

- Celebrate the dignity of each child
- Create an environment of kindness, empathy, and respect
- Encourage cooperative behaviour and care for one another
- Support children with SEND or emotional needs through differentiated approaches and thoughtful facilitation

Forest School promotes an inclusive community, where every child's voice is valued, and their spiritual, emotional and developmental needs are met.

Intent

The intent of Forest School is to nurture children's personal, spiritual, and academic growth through a rich variety of outdoor experiences. Forest School supports the Catholic values of stewardship, compassion, reflection, gratitude, and service, while also contributing to key areas of learning and development.

We aim to:

- * Foster awe, wonder, and appreciation for God's creation
- * Promote resilience, perseverance, and independence
- * Encourage empathy, teamwork, and kindness
- * Support physical and mental wellbeing through active outdoor play
- * Inspire a lifelong love of nature, rooted in responsibility and care

- * Deepen knowledge of the natural world through real-world exploration
- * Develop practical skills such as tool use and fire safety
- * Embed moral decision-making, reflection, and ethical awareness

Forest School aligns with the Catholic call to care for “our common home” (Laudato Si’), nurturing a sense of purpose, gratitude, and global responsibility in every child.

Implementation

Forest School sessions are delivered by trained staff in a safe, secure woodland environment on our school grounds. Sessions are child-led allowing children to explore and learn at their own pace while being guided by adults.

Key elements include:

- * Regular, ongoing access to outdoor sessions in all seasons
- * Activities rooted in discovery, creativity, and challenge
- * Safe use of tools and equipment such as rope ladders.
- * Opportunities to work with wood, soil, plants, and natural materials
- * Integration of faith-based reflection, prayer, and appreciation for creation
- * Encouragement of quiet moments of stillness and reflection in nature

Sessions link with our Religious Education programme and Catholic Social Teaching; children are encouraged to develop responsibility for their environment, make ethical choices, and care for all living things.

Impact

Forest School supports our mission to educate the whole child and to guide each pupil in becoming the person God calls them to be.

Through Forest School, children demonstrate:

- Deepened spiritual awareness and a sense of God’s presence in nature
- Increased self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence
- Improved social and emotional skills, rooted in Gospel values such as love, forgiveness, and humility
- Stronger relationships with peers, built on trust, compassion, and teamwork
- Enhanced vocabulary, communication, and reflective thinking
- Improved physical development, balance, and coordination
- A clear understanding of ethical responsibility and environmental stewardship
- Growth in resilience, problem-solving, and perseverance
- Love and respect for creation, inspired by Scripture and the teachings of the Church
- Increased engagement in learning, both outdoors and in the classroom

These outcomes support not only academic success but also the development of future citizens who are caring, curious, and guided by faith.