

GUIDEPOSTS TRUST FOREST SCHOOL



Guideposts Trust is a UK-based charity working with people in local communities to help them access the support, opportunities and skills they need to overcome social inequalities, improve their wellbeing and change their lives. Guideposts received £8,000 from Well Together to support their forest school activities with St Joseph's school in Banbury



The Forest School approach allows children to access nature and direct their own learning experience within a range of age-based activities delivered by a qualified team. Linking the child's experience in mental wellbeing to a memorable experience in nature develops their resilience and coping skills, with the aim of creating a fun, impactful and lasting impression.

“It was fantastic to see how the children grew and developed over the weeks. They became much more confident and comfortable with the outdoors”



GETTING OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

Learning in a different environment, the children had the opportunity to get fully involved in the programme that incorporated the key elements of Forest School, including activities such as lighting a fire with a flint and steel, splitting wood with tools, and erecting a tarp.

The team were delighted at how quickly the children threw themselves into it, showing their willingness to engage in a new activity in a new environment.

DEVELOPING SOCIAL SKILLS AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE



The funding has meant that children, between 5 – 11 years old, have been able to access Forest School provision to support them with mild anxiety, enabling them to work on building social and emotional resilience in a setting other than the classroom. An informed approach supports the child to identify, discuss and manage their worries and anxieties.

Sessions, led by trained forest school leaders, are delivered across 30 weeks, during which the same 6 children attend for 10-weeks. The ‘light touch’ of Forest School is what enables the maximum benefits for the children.

A natural environment has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, while unstructured free play encourages creativity and resilience. Physical activity boosts well-being, and social skills develop during sessions enhancing communication. Ultimately, being away from the classroom provides a stress-free learning environment that is intrinsically motivated by the child.



“Despite the simplicity of the approach, the benefits are significant and impactful, a natural space, freedom to choose, tools, gathering wood, fire and erecting a tarp..... the rest seems to follow.”

