

BIODIVERSITY

Communications Toolkit

Fauldhouse Forest School

Lead and partner organisations

- The Forestry Commission Scotland
- Falla Hill Primary School

Aims and objectives

- To encourage children to learn about their environment and take ownership of their surroundings
- To encourage learning outwith the formalised school environment

Target audience

- Schoolchildren from Falla Hill Primary School
- Parents, teachers, businesses and other members of the surrounding community

Background

The head teacher of Falla Hill Primary School is strongly in favour of outdoor education. In 2004, she was approached by the Forestry Commission, which suggested setting up a Forest School. The school agreed it was a good idea and the project began.

Summary of activity

The Forest School has become part of the school curriculum and offers pupils a chance to learn important knowledge and skills through outdoor education. The programme is broken up into achievable activities, for example, setting up a base camp, using tools and lighting fires.

It was important to ensure parents and the wider community were supportive of the project and this was achieved through a number of methods, including:

• Information

New parents are given information about the Forest School in the form of first hand accounts from pupils who have completed the course and are offered face-to-face meetings with staff who will be looking after the children.

• Visits

Parents are encouraged to visit the Forest School to see how it works and to find out more about what their children are doing and learning.

• Events

Pupils have presented the project to Ministers at the Scottish Parliament, attended an outdoor conference in Dundee and have contributed to local community events displaying and explaining photographs of their forest school.

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Outcomes

The Forest School has had a real impact on the local community. For years, the forest was associated with fly tipping and burnt out cars, but the difference in the last few years has been nothing short of remarkable.

Children now look on it as their forest and parents look on it as the Forest School. As such, there is much greater respect for the area and a greater understanding of how vandalism can affect the learning experiences of pupils.

Falla Hill was highly recommended in the 2006 Forest Education Initiative (FEI) Scottish Finest Woods Schools Awards and the FEI chose the school as the location to launch its Woods For Learning Strategy.

Further information

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