



Coningsby St Micheals Primary School

Forest school

Where every child is given: The courage to try, the resilience to keep on trying, the freedom to explore and the compassion to care.



Welcome to our Forest school area.

The Mystical Garden



The woodland area

The Mystical Garden is home to a charming little woodland area, perfect for sparking imagination and adventure. Children love using this natural space for den building, hide-and-seek, and exploring the magic of the outdoors. The woodland is made up of Elderflower, Apple, and Holly trees, each carefully monitored by our Forest School Leader. In addition to ongoing checks, the site undergoes a full professional survey every three years to ensure tree health, remove dead wood, and maintain the highest safety standards for all who take part in our Forest School sessions.

The outdoor classroom

The Outdoor Classroom is arranged so that it feels like a welcoming starting point rather than a contained space. Its open sides, natural materials, and thoughtful layout encourage children to step out, follow their curiosity, and explore the wider environment. Resources are placed in ways that spark interest — a basket of field guides near the edge, sketchbooks ready to be taken on a wander, small collections of natural objects that hint at what might be found beyond the shelter.



Instead of holding children in place, the space gently nudges them outward, inviting them to look, listen, and discover what the rest of the outdoor world has to offer.

The Fire Pit

Our fire pit area is a warm and welcoming space where children can gather, share stories, and enjoy simple outdoor cooking. Marshmallows, toast, and hot chocolate are always favourites, adding a sense of comfort and excitement to our time outside. The space has been carefully designed to ensure everyone's safety, with clear boundaries and thoughtful layout.

As part of our forest school approach, children are taught how to be around fire safely and respectfully. They learn to understand the fire circle rules, move with awareness, and use the space responsibly. This not only keeps everyone safe but also helps children develop confidence, independence, and a deep respect for the natural elements.

The Cave.

Our cave is a much-loved feature of our outdoor space, offering children a sheltered nook that feels both magical and secure. Its natural, enclosed shape creates the perfect spot for imaginative play - a place to hide away, become explorers, share whispered stories, or simply enjoy a moment of calm. The cave encourages children to experiment with role play, storytelling, and social interaction, giving them a space that feels like their own little world within the wider environment.



The dry river-bed.

Within the boundaries of the mystical garden lies our dry riverbed, a feature that adds texture and a sense of movement to the landscape. We've begun experimenting with planting in soft blue hues along its edges, creating a new visual dimension and giving the gentle illusion of water flowing through the space. This thoughtful planting invites children to imagine how a river might look, sound, and feel, enriching their play and deepening their connection to the natural world.



The Orchard.

The orchard is the newest addition to our Forest School site, and it's already becoming a much-loved space. Home to **apple, pear, plum, and apricot trees**, it brings a fresh sense of growth and possibility to the mystical garden. We are incredibly excited about this area and can't wait for the moment our trees begin producing fruit — a milestone the children are eagerly looking forward to as well.

The orchard offers a wealth of learning experiences. As the seasons change, children will be able to observe the full life cycle of fruit trees — from buds and blossoms to ripening fruit. This hands-on connection with nature helps deepen their understanding of plant growth, pollination, seasonal change, and sustainability. It also encourages responsibility, patience, and care as they help tend to the trees throughout the year.





The Sensory Vegetable, Flower and Herb Garden

Our sensory vegetable, flower, and herb garden is a vibrant space designed to spark curiosity and awaken the senses. Filled with colourful flowers, fragrant herbs, and seasonal vegetables, it invites children to touch, smell, observe, taste and explore nature up close.

As they help care for the plants, children learn about lifecycles, growth, and where food comes from, while also developing responsibility and teamwork. It's a calming, hands-on area that encourages discovery and supports learning across the curriculum.

And of course, Jammie and Dodger are always eager to “quality-check” the produce — purely to make sure everything meets their high standards.



Meet the residents of the Mystical garden.

Within the mystical garden, you'll find some very special residents who bring joy, curiosity, and a touch of mischief to our outdoor space.

We are home to **two school chickens**, all of whom roam freely and are named after flowers — **Marigold, and Buttercup**. They are wonderfully friendly and love nothing more than a cuddle or a handful of treats. In return, they gift us the yummiest eggs. They can often be spotted wandering around the site, keeping a close eye on everything (although they are politely kept away during snack time... they have been known to help themselves).



We also share our garden with **two pygmy goats**, affectionately named **Jammie and Dodger**. They are cared for by a dedicated team of staff and children who ensure they are well fed, content, and loved — not just during the school day but throughout the holidays too. Jammie and Dodger adore basking in the sunshine and watching the hustle and bustle of a Forest School session unfold around them. They are also enthusiastic supporters of the growing season in our vegetable garden. Always keen to “quality-check” the produce, they’re more than happy to sample the children’s hard work - purely for research purposes, of course.

Their gentle curiosity and playful personalities make them much-loved members of our mystical garden community.



Children's Kit List

There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.

Our forest school sessions are designed to be interactive, hands-on, and full of fun. We actively encourage muddy play, wet play, and everything in between — embracing the elements is all part of the adventure. Sessions go ahead in most weather conditions, so appropriate clothing is essential.

On your child's forest school day, they can come to school dressed in their outdoor PE kit. We ask that they still bring a change of shoes and a waterproof coat or puddle suit to ensure they stay warm and comfortable throughout the session.

We are incredibly fortunate to have been chosen to receive forest school kits from **The Outdoor Guide Foundation**. This means that if a child forgets their kit, they can borrow one of these fantastic waterproof sets, ensuring that no one misses out on the experience

Autumn/Winter term	Spring/summer term
<u>Outdoor PE kit</u> • Jogging bottoms or leggings • White or red t-shirt • Red jumper or cardigan <u>Essential items</u> • Welly boots/or waterproof walking boots • Warm waterproof coat with a hood • Waterproof trousers/puddle suits • Spare pair of warm socks <u>Optional items</u> • Warm Gloves, hats and scarves	<u>Outdoor PE kit</u> • Jogging bottoms or leggings • White or red t-shirt • Red jumper or cardigan <u>Essential items</u> • Welly boots/or waterproof walking boots • Waterproof coat with a hood • Waterproof trousers/puddle suits • Spare socks <u>Optional items</u> • Sun cream • Sun hat. Please note that due to the nature of forest shorts are not advisable.

About forest school

Forest school is a child led outdoor education which allows children to visit and explore natural spaces to help build and develop social and technical skills that they need to succeed within the classroom.

The forest school approach to learning follows the follows 6 principles:

- 1) It should be long term, regular and continuous.
- 2) Learning should always take place in the open air ideally in a safe woodland or natural environment and should never be dependent on weather.
- 3) Good forest school session will take a holistic approach, building on self-confidence, self-esteem, wellbeing, social and physical development and should always allow every child a voice (even those that find communication tricky).
- 4) There should be ample opportunities for the child to take 'calculated risks' so should have a high adult to child ratio.
- 5) Each session should always be run by a qualified practitioner. Learning should always be child led with the practitioner only stepping in when necessary.
- 6) Learning should be personalised to each child where they are given opportunities to evolve their play from session to session. Any activities that are offered should not be made compulsory and only seen as a recommendation.



Our Forest School Sessions

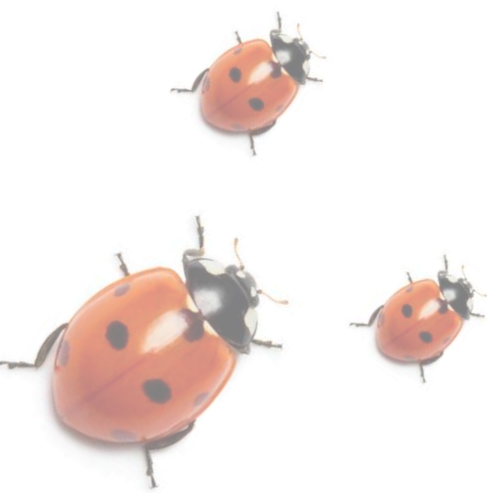
Our aims during a forest school session at Coningsby St Michaels

- To give every child the opportunity to take ownership of their learning.
- To develop practical skills through hands-on, meaningful experiences.
- To build self-esteem, confidence, and a positive mind-set by offering achievable yet appropriately challenging tasks.
- To deliver sessions that are bespoke and responsive, ensuring every child's individual learning style is recognised and supported.
- To develop social and team-building skills, enabling children to work more confidently and collaboratively within group activities both outdoors and back in the classroom.
- To provide a secure, happy, and welcoming environment where children feel challenged, relaxed, and inspired.
- To provoke curiosity that encourages deeper thinking and further exploration of the natural world.

All children learn best through exploration and purposeful play. At Coningsby St Michael's, every child will have the opportunity to take part in several Forest School sessions during their time with us — from EYFS right through to Year 6.

We believe that outdoor experiences offer some of the richest opportunities for children to grow as whole individuals while developing a deeper understanding of the world around them. Individualism is always respected, encouraged, and valued; every child is supported to learn in a way that feels right for them.

To ensure full inclusivity, we work closely with parents to create detailed risk assessments where needed, making sure that all children can participate safely and confidently. This collaborative approach helps everyone feel comfortable, reassured, and fully supported, allowing each child to enjoy the full Forest School experience.





Forest School is not a curriculum subject, yet so much rich learning is naturally instilled during our sessions. By giving children knowledge, experiences, and practical skills they can take back into the classroom, we strengthen their learning in meaningful and memorable ways. We don't simply tell children what to do — instead, we provide the tools, space, and opportunities for them to discover, explore, and problem-solve for themselves.

During our Forest School sessions, children will have the opportunity to explore the **Wild Passport programme** — a fantastic resource that supports skill development from beginner level all the way through to expert. Each child receives their own passport, allowing them to track, evidence, and celebrate every new skill they learn and how their confidence grows over time.

The Wild Passport is a structured outdoor learning curriculum that helps us clearly show learner progression. Where appropriate, the skills and experiences gained outdoors can also be linked back to classroom learning, creating a rich, joined-up approach that supports the whole child.

We have carefully selected the skills for each level using the Wild Passport as our foundation. The final targets were shaped through **pupil voice** and by identifying the skills that best enhance our Science, Art and Design, and PE curriculum. This ensures that children can transfer their learning beyond the Forest School environment and into their wider school experience.

By creating **mini projects**, we enable children to revisit, reinforce, and consolidate their learning throughout the programme. This approach supports deeper understanding, encourages independence, and allows every child to flourish in their own way.



Our wild passport levels and curriculum links

Apple tree

To learn to tie a clove hitch knot. Success criteria: Learners can work with partner to design and create a friendship bracelet.
Curriculum links: Art and design: experimentation with different colours to create varying contrasts and opposites using the colour wheel.
To make mini shelters for bugs or woodland creatures. Success criteria: - Learners understand the importance of shelters for living creatures. - Learners can demonstrate their understanding and explain their decisions to build where, why and how they have.
Curriculum links Science: experimenting with different materials and deciding on the most appropriate. Art and Design: structural and use of tools to gauge and measure sizes
To identify mini beasts. Success criteria: - Learners can suggest several places to find certain mini beasts. - Learners can successfully identify mini beasts and support this with evidence
Curriculum links Science: animals, habitats. Living things, food chains and identification Ict: technology for identification Reading: using non- fiction books to identify
To identify the trees within the mystical garden. Success criteria: Learners can successfully identify one tree in any season and support this with evidence they have found i.e., books, ground computers.
Curriculum links Science: plants, seasonal changes, habitats, life cycles Ict: technology for identification Reading: using non- fiction books to identify
To identify the season, we are in and list at least 3 signs off. Success criteria: - Learners can successfully identify three differences between seasons. - Learners can identify the season we are in and support this with evidence.
Curriculum links Science: seasonal changes and how they affect the landscape Geography: landscapes
To be able to use tools safely. Success criteria: - Learners can understand the importance of safe tool use. - Learners can talk about the parts of a tool and how to safely use it
Curriculum links Design and technology:
To demonstrate fire circle etiquette and help cook on the fire. Success criteria: - Learners understand the importance of following the fire circle rules and can explain why we have these guidelines. - Learners can show understanding by sitting and moving around the fire pit area. - Learners can adopt the correct Kneeling posture for being close to the fire.

Learners can identify what is needed in the fire pit area i.e., water
Curriculum links Science: states of matter, properties and changes of materials. Fire triangle

Hazel tree

To learn to make friendship bracelets. Success criteria: Learners can work with a partner/group
Curriculum links: Design and Technology: Math: measurements
To build a shelter suitable for themselves and a friend Success criteria: - Learners can incorporate a simple shelter into den building. - Learners can select appropriate materials and construction techniques. - Learners can work with a partner.
Curriculum links Science: experimenting with different materials and deciding on the most appropriate. Art and Design: structural and use of tools to gauge and measure sizes. PE: lifting and moving
To identify different habitats Success criteria: - Learners can identify different animal habitats. - Learners can explain the benefits of a creature living in their specific habitat
Curriculum links Science: animals, habitats. Living things, food chains and identification Ict: technology for identification and research Reading: using non- fiction books to identify
To observe and capture an animal on a wildlife camera or view from hide. Success criteria: - Learners can identify a suitable place to build a hide or place a wildlife camera. - Learners can capture an image of an animal on a camera or iPad. - Learners can use a hide to watch animals
Curriculum links Science: animals, habitats and living things Geography: landscapes ICT: using a camera and technologies
To be able to use tools safely. Success criteria: - Learners can understand the importance of safe tool use. - Can talk about the parts of a tool and how to safely use it.
Curriculum links Design and technology: design, create and make.
To produce fire sparks from a fire steel, help create a fire and cook on a stick. Success criteria: - Learners can follow the fire circle rules and can demonstrate why we have these guidelines. - Learners can consistently create sparks with a fire steel. - Learners can successfully build a fire lay as part of a group.
Curriculum links Science: states of matter, properties and changes of materials. Fire triangle and forces. Design and Technology: Cooking, ingredients, and nutrition

Silver birch

To learn to tie a Tipi lashing. Success criteria: • Learners can successfully tie a Tipi lashing. • Learner can make different height tripods
Curriculum links: Design and Technology: designing and planning. Math: measurements English: following and reading instructions
To build a tipi frame Success criteria: • Learners can understand and explain the benefits of using a Tipi shelter. • Learners can successfully build a Tipi
Curriculum links Science: experimenting with different materials and deciding on the most appropriate. Art and Design: structural and use of tools Math: gauge and measure sizes
To build a bird feeder Success criteria: • Learners can make and build bird feeders. • Learners can decide on an appropriate place for the bird feeder to go
Curriculum links Science: animals, habitats. Living things, food chains and identification Design and Technology: designing and making. Materials.
To identify and spot at least 3 types of birds. Success criteria: • Learners can take appropriate steps to aid in the observations of a bird. • Learners can note specific details about observed species. • Learners can accurately identify three different species of bird and support this with evidence.
Curriculum links Science: plants, seasonal changes, habitats, life cycles Ict: technology for identification Reading: using non-fiction books to identify
To create a fire lay in the firepit and cook as part of a small group. Success criteria: • Learners understand the importance of following the fire circle rules and can explain why we have these guidelines. • Learners can show understanding by sitting and moving around the fire pit area safely. • Learners can adopt the correct kneeling posture for being close to the fire. • Learners can identify what is needed in the fire pit area i.e., water, fire gloves, fire blanket and dry wood.
Curriculum links Science: states of matter, properties and changes of materials. Fire triangle and forces.

Sycamore tree

To learn to tie a Timber Hitch to put up a hammock. Success criteria: • Learners can successfully tie a Timber Hitch. • Learners can work with a partner/group.
Curriculum links: PE: lifting and moving Design and Technology: Math: measurements Science: everyday materials
To use different lashing techniques to join two sticks together. Success criteria: • Learners can tie two or more pieces of string together and create a frame
Curriculum links:

Design and technology Math: measurements
To be able to cook a simple dish on the fire and follow the "leave no trace" principles. Success criteria: - Learners can select and gather appropriate fire making materials. - Learners can successfully build a Tipi, Waffle or Log house fire lay.
Curriculum links Science: States of matter, properties, and changes of material.
To be able to identify parts of a tree. Success criteria: - Learners can identify parts of a tree. - Learners can name several trees. - Learners can notice and compare tree parts in different species.
Curriculum links Science: Plants Math: Number recognition and shapes.
To create a god's eye weave or use the weaving looms independently. Success criteria: - To use wool to weave patterns. - To be able to change the colour of the wool on their weave.
Curriculum links Art and design: Design technology:

Oak tree

To create and demonstrate a range of knots with names. Success criteria: - Learners can successfully tie a range of different knots (Timber, Clove, Reef, figure of 8) - Learners can name the knots they know. - Learners can explain the best use for different knots
Curriculum links: Design and Technology Math
To be able to clean, check and coil rope and store safely. Success criteria Leaners can coil the rope and identify flaws in its structure.
Curriculum links: Science: material decomposition
To plan as part of a group, a meal to cook on fire. Listing ingredients, equipment and methods needed. Success criteria: - Learners can successfully cook a simple dish on a fire. - Learners can use fire etiquette. - Learners can demonstrate the "No trace" procedure.
Curriculum links Science: States of matter, properties and changes of materials Cooking and nutrition. Math: measurements
To be able to identify three edible wild plants that are safe to eat. Success criteria:

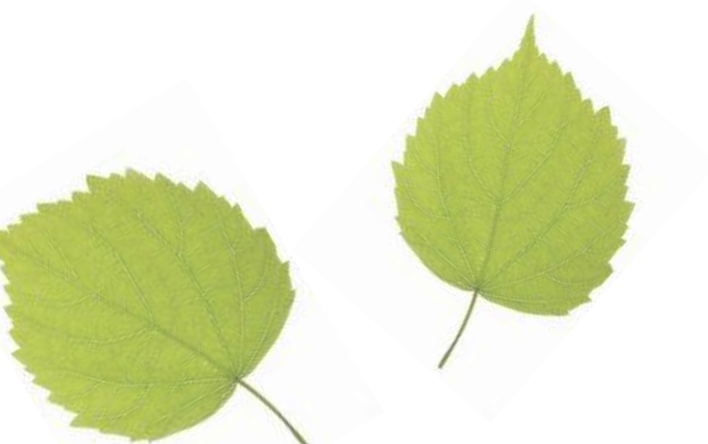
- Learners can identify three different wild edibles.
- Learners can responsibly harvest wild edibles.

Curriculum links

Science: Plants and season changes.

Art and DT levels

To create using clay
Throughout the children's time at forest school, they will learn a range of different clay making skills.
To use Hapazome to create prints
Year 1 and 2: by the end of year 2 the children should be able to get the leaves natural dye to produce a print and be able tell which leaves work best and why. Year 3 and 4: by the end of year 4 the children should be able to create a full print with clear outlines, be able to identify the leaf they have used and talk about what season was more successful. Year 5: to plan and design a picture natural dyes and prints.
To whittle wood
Year 1 and 2: by the end of year two the children will be able to use a peeler to peel and cut vegetables for the chicken and goats. They will also be able to peel bark from willow branches using a peeler and then decorate them to make wands. Year 3 and 4: by the end of year 4 the children will be able to use a sheaf knife and other whittling tools to make woodland gnome out of a stick. They will be able to experiment with how tools make different cuts. Year 5: to attempt to whittle a basic mouse using a variation of tools and cuts.
To sketch from life
throughout their time in forest school all year groups will look at sketching from life they will experiment with different thickness in drawing; use different grades of pencils and charcoal; explore creating tones and textures to create moods and feelings.
To make wooden objects using tools
Year 1 and 2: by the end of year 2 the children should be able to sand glue and hammer and joining different materials together. Year 3 and 4: by the end of year 4 the children should be able to sand a completely smooth wooden surface, hammer, saw and attach wood at different angles. Year 5: to use all the above skills and add a movement element in their creation.
To explore the seasonal colour wheel.
Throughout their forest school time the children will work with seasonal wheel charts using seasonal flora and fauna to create a variety of different crafts



Pastoral Forest School

Our Pastoral Mindfulness Forest School sessions provide a gentle, grounding space for children who may benefit from a little extra emotional or behavioural support. These weekly sessions are designed for children experiencing a wide range of challenges—such as a family deployment, bereavement, friendship worries, emotional overwhelm, or difficulties managing behaviour in the classroom.

Set within a calm, natural environment, these sessions offer a safe haven where nature and nurture come together. Through mindful activities, sensory exploration, reflective conversations, and time spent connecting with the outdoors, children are supported to:

- Build emotional resilience
- Strengthen overall wellbeing
- Develop self-regulation strategies
- Improve behavioural awareness and control
- Rebuild confidence and self-esteem
- Restore a sense of calm and safety
- Rediscover joy through nature-based play and exploration

For some children, the outdoor setting itself provides the space they need to pause, reset, and practise managing their emotions and behaviours at a comfortable pace. Staff gently guide children in understanding their feelings, building coping strategies, and transferring these skills back into the classroom.

These sessions ensure every child feels seen, supported, and valued—reminding them that they are never alone in their journey.



Send hub forest school sessions

Our KS1/EYFS SEND Hub Forest School sessions offer a calm, supportive space where our youngest learners can explore, grow, and feel safe. These sessions are designed especially for children who need additional emotional, sensory, or behavioural support, providing a gentle environment that meets them exactly where they are.

Each week, children are welcomed into a peaceful outdoor setting where **nature becomes an extension of the classroom**. Through hands-on exploration, sensory play, and mindful moments, the sessions help children to:

- Develop self-regulation skills
- Build confidence in a low-pressure environment
- Strengthen communication and interaction
- Support positive behaviour through structure and calm routines
- Explore sensory experiences in a safe and supported way
- Enhance wellbeing through movement, fresh air, and connection with nature

Activities may include:

- Sensory trails
- Nature-based calming exercises
- Simple mindfulness tasks (listening walks, breathing with nature sounds)
- Gentle team games
- Mud kitchen play and exploratory learning
- Small-group problem-solving tasks
- Quiet spaces for children who need time to reset

The slower pace and predictable routines of Forest School help children feel secure, while the natural environment provides endless opportunities for curiosity, joy, and discovery. Staff support children in managing emotions, practising positive behaviours, and developing the confidence to transfer these skills back into the classroom.

These sessions ensure every child—regardless of need, communication style, or starting point—feels valued, understood, and able to flourish.

