

# GROWING OUR FUTURE

WEST MIDLANDS  
FORESTRY FRAMEWORK



## West Midlands Region Forest School Woodland Improvement Grant



### Introduction

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults, regular opportunities to achieve, and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland environment

### Objectives:

The grant was introduced, as a 3-year, Pilot project, designed to meet the obvious need for provision of Forest School sites within our region. Our objectives were to facilitate training to a nationally accepted level of Forest School Leader 3, to establish and equip a variety of settings across the West Midlands and to encourage them towards a sustainable future

### Actions:

The project was launched in 2007 and offered grant aid, towards settings that were judged deserving and sustainable, by a panel of educationalists and foresters, all of whom had a deep interest in outdoor education. The money was distributed for specific items and was grossly oversubscribed in every year of the scheme

### Achievements:

- Over the 3 years of this project, we have been able to support a total of 78 settings across the West Midlands
- A little under £260,000 has been distributed in grant aid
- The scheme has enabled in excess of 12,000 children to enjoy Forest School sessions within a safe and sustainable environment

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## Background:

Forest School provides an excellent opportunity to bring learning to life, allowing children, young people and adults to explore and learn in a constructive way. This inspirational process increases self-confidence, self-esteem, improves individuals' ability to work co-operatively and counters a lack of motivation and negative attitude towards learning, while offering the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

## Quotes:

“Forest Schools have a wide range of proven benefits which include gains in terms of health because of the physical activity involved, new skills and a better understanding of the natural environment. We therefore want to ensure that as many people as possible can take advantage of the opportunities they offer”

Bill Heselgrave, Forestry Commission Regional Director, in support of the scheme.

## Partners:

- FEI Cluster Groups within the West Midlands
- FC England Programme Group
- FEI England
- Initial support from East England Region FS Pilot

## WMRFF Objectives:

### Main Theme & Others

- Recreation & tourism
- Health & wellbeing
- Climate Change
- Fostering Social Inclusion – the Forest School experience had led to raised awareness between both children and adults presenting the Forest as a place for learning, recreation and enjoyment which has bridged some cultural divides, particularly within the more urban areas of the region

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