

# Learning in the Leaves

## The Forest School Timeline



### Introduction:

In recent years we have seen the development of the Forest School Practice across the UK. However, the development of the programme is related to a love of outdoor that has been seen across the UK and the rest of Europe for hundreds of years. The ethos of the Forest School System developed from a early philosophers, naturalists and educators influences. The programme found its routes in the 1990s where research into 'alternative' educational models was popular, following the teacher/outcome approach encouraged by the release of the UK National Curriculum. Below you will find a timeline of events that led to the Forest School we love today. The information within the timeline was researched from the Forest School Associations website (<http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/history-of-forest-school>).

<b>1993</b>	Group of nursery nurses(from Bridgewater College, Somerset) went to visit pre-schools in Denmark. On their return they were influenced by the largely outdoor, child centered/play-based pedagogy. They started their own 'Forest School', inviting children from the college creche. The nurses learnt from observing the children's creativity and helped develop their practice even further.
<b>1995</b>	Forest School BTech developed and offered by Bridgewater College. This was seen as something that supported the UK's love for the outdoors, so the course started to spread throughout the UK.
<b>2000</b>	Forest School adopted by Wales and other authorities in the UK. Others soon followed suit. Alternative training was developed and offered.
<b>2000</b>	The main national networking support for Forest School practitioners comes from the Forestry Commission through the Forest Education Initiative(FEI).
<b>2002</b>	Network of practitioners first met for a National Conference. The conference created a definition of Forest School: 'An inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a local woodland environment.' The also started to identify the Key Features of a Forest School.
<b>2003</b>	Trainers from England and Wales with the support of the Forestry Commission in Wales, developed the Open College Network (OCN) qualification, which was first offered in 2003.
<b>2003</b>	Scottish Forestry Commission formed. Forest School training supported immediately. This lead to the commissioning and publication of a study into Forest Schooling.
<b>2005</b>	Wales Forestry Commission forms Forest School Trainers Network and hosts a number of conferences.
<b>2007</b>	Wales Training Network joined by more providers. They formed a set of criteria for joining the network. These criteria helped to ensure high standards were met.
<b>2008</b>	Wales Training Network joined by more providers. They formed a set of criteria for joining the network. These criteria helped to ensure high standards were met.
<b>2008</b>	Practitioners from England's Network and the institute of Learning (IOL) create a practitioners and the IOL Forest School Special Interest Group (FSSIG). The Quality Assurance scheme developed in Worcestershire was developed and piloted.

# Learning in the Leaves

## The Forest School Timeline



<b>2009</b>	Forest School Quality Improvement Tool was launched – an assessment tool for practitioners looking at the quality of their provision.
<b>2010</b>	IOL Forest School Special Interest Group Annual General Meeting positively vote on and consult on the creation of a Forest School National Governing Body. A steering group is created. They also run a conference at Worcester University, which raises the profile of Forest Schools even further.
<b>2010</b>	Wales Open College Network becomes independent and the GB Trainers Network was formed. Trainers networks meet in Wales and Scotland feeding into the GB network.
<b>2010</b>	In 2010 the Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning in Scotland saw Forest School as a 'good fit'. In 2011 FEI Scotland appointed a Forest School coordinator.
<b>2011</b>	IOL Forest School Special Interest Group appoint a member of staff (Erica Wellings) to conduct a more in depth consultation into what a National Governing Body may do and to produce a business plan. At their second conference they publish reviewed Forest School ethos, principles and criteria.
<b>2012</b>	Business plan released. Reveals at least 9000 people have been trained since 1995 and that many local authorities were taking on Forest School.
<b>2012</b>	Forest School Association launched. The New Professional Association for Forest School and the governing body for training.
<b>2013</b>	Government announces new National Curriculum for 2014. The New Curriculum will have higher level of outcome for the children, putting higher expectations in English and Maths onto schools. The FSA release a statement regarding the overly structured and large list of objectives not supporting a freedom in curriculum and the ethos of a Forest School.
<b>2013</b>	FSA successfully run their National conference on 12-13 <sup>th</sup> October.
<b>2014</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2014 the Forest School Commission achieved charitable status.
<b>2014</b>	FSA reaches 1,000 members.
<b>2014</b>	23-24 <sup>th</sup> September FSA run a National Conference in Danbury.
<b>2015</b>	23-25 <sup>th</sup> October FSA run a National Conference in Shrewsbury.
<b>2017</b>	7-9 <sup>th</sup> October FSA run a National Conference in Glyndwr University.
<b>2017</b>	List of recognised Forest School Providers launched on the FSA website.
<b>2017</b>	Forest School Trainers Quality Assurance Scheme launched by the FSA.