

Bridgwater College Forest School



BRIDGWATER
COLLEGE

**LEADING THE WAY IN
OUTDOOR LEARNING SINCE 1993**



- **Pioneer of the Forest School concept in the UK**
- **Beacon of innovative Forest School practice**
- **Quality assured**
- **Providing Forest School to groups**
- **Offering courses to become Forest School qualified**

www.bridgwaterforestschool.co.uk



WHAT IS FOREST SCHOOL?

Forest School is an inspirational concept providing learning opportunities through practical activities in an outdoor environment. Participants of all ages enjoy the freedom to explore and experience the natural world in all seasons and in all weathers. It can be personally and socially uplifting, so laying firm foundations for other learning. Unlike other forms of outdoor education, Forest School embraces an approach of nurturing, supporting and developing the self-esteem of participants. It is an ideal environment in which to develop innovation, problem solving, risk taking, creativity and teamwork.

BRIDGWATER COLLEGE IS THE PIONEER OF THE FOREST SCHOOL CONCEPT IN THE UK.

In 1993, students and staff from the College visited Denmark and were inspired by the encouragement the Danish education system gave to learning in the outdoor environment. From this, Bridgwater College Forest School was established – the first of its kind in the UK. The College's Forest School model has now become widely accepted across the country as a valuable method of learning for all ages and client groups.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT FOREST SCHOOL:

“Staff have truly embraced the idea of the outdoor classroom and this has been further stimulated by the development of the Forest School initiative. Children take enormous delight and satisfaction in building dens, rolling down banks and climbing trees, as well as lighting fires under very careful supervision.” – **Ofsted** reporting on Knightlow Children's Partnership, Warwickshire.

“Forest School has helped to build confidence, sense of exploration and adventure for my son. It's a wonderful resource and a great idea to make use of our natural resources.” - **Parent**

“Forest School is a fabulous opportunity for children to enjoy their surroundings. It provides so many learning opportunities and gives the children a sense of responsibility and independence in a secure, natural environment.” – **Parent**



HOW CAN I USE FOREST SCHOOL?

Bridgwater College is special in that we have several areas of woodland where we can deliver Forest School – all just a short drive from Bridgwater. These facilities are used by groups of children and adults who participate in Forest School, and are a valuable resource for our Forest School training courses.

Bridgwater College Forest School has a programme of training designed for those who wish to learn practical skills and gain confidence in leading groups outdoors, and for those who wish to learn how to set up and run Forest School in their own settings.

WHAT SORT OF TRAINING DO YOU OFFER?

Bridgwater College has developed a unique set of nationally accredited BTEC (EdExcel) Forest School qualifications from basic skills to advanced level. The team deliver a variety of part-time courses at Bridgwater College, and intensive outreach courses anywhere in the UK and even abroad.

Our courses will enable you to:

- Develop risk-taking, creativity, problem solving and team building within your group.
- Learn to use a variety of techniques for building self-esteem, behaviour management and independence skills.
- Gain a full appreciation of how any curriculum can be delivered through Forest School.
- Develop a wide range of practical skills, including the safe use of tools, basic construction of semi-permanent structures, knots and lashings, types and construction of fires, and woodland conservation.

For a full list of our courses visit: www.bridgwaterforestschool.co.uk

SOME COMMENTS FROM OUR PAST PARTICIPANTS:

“Want to feel confident when teaching outdoors? We did.

“Want to understand everything you need to know when setting up a Forest School? We did.

“Want to know about the philosophy and theories of child development that underpin the practice? We did.

“For the answers to these questions and many more, we turned to Bridgwater College. The training was excellent – practical, relevant, interesting and fun. Within a year we had established a successful and sustainable Forest School programme in our school where every child now has an entitlement to 10% of their curriculum time outdoors.

*“Could we have achieved that without their help? An emphatic – no.” – **Jim Cobbett**, Head Teacher, Great Torrington Junior School, Devon.*

*“The Forest School training offered by Bridgwater College has empowered the staff at Eastwood Nursery School Centre for Children and Families with an array of skills, knowledge and first-hand experiences. It has changed our perception, enhanced our practice and the provision we offer the children, families and community. We have installed confidence, skills and knowledge and experience to successfully operate a Forest School programme in Wandsworth and we have successfully encouraged other settings to set up Forest Schools across London.” – **Katherine Milchem**, Forest School Co-ordinator, Eastwood Nursery School Centre for Children and Families.*



WHY SHOULD I USE FOREST SCHOOL?

Forest School is easily linked to any education programme or curriculum and team building. It is most effective as an on-going experience, supporting participants to cultivate a lifelong appreciation and awareness of the natural environment, whilst at the same time enhancing their physical, social and emotional well-being and building confidence.

By becoming skilled in Forest School you can use the concept in a variety of ways to complement other learning and development pathways.

Forest School Leaders have witnessed such **transformation in children and adults in the outdoor environment**, that at times they have been amazed.

“Forest School has helped one of my pupils develop his self-esteem which he has then been able to take back to the classroom. In addition to this, the environment has helped him to form relationships with others, something that he has found particularly difficult. I have noticed a significant change in him over the last few weeks as he has become more confident and proud of his achievements in the Forest School.” – Traveller Support Teacher, Somerset County Council, speaking about a pupil with additional educational needs.

Bridgwater College Forest School team are all experienced Forest School leaders with nationally accredited qualifications. They have a variety of backgrounds and skills which equip them to meet the needs of a wide range of client groups, from pre-school children to adults, including clients with physical and/or learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural difficulties, mental distress or social crisis.

Bridgwater College received the Queen’s Anniversary Prize in 2000 for its Forest School provision; *“for its imaginative approach to the teaching of a range of pupils...its curriculum and training methodologies are innovative and highly successful, bringing significant benefits to participants.”*



Fiona McMillan OBE,
Principal of Bridgwater
College receives the
Queen's Anniversary Prize
at Buckingham Palace.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q Do I need a forest?

A No. Forest School is a concept for working outside with children and adults. Any outdoor space, regardless of size or natural resources can be adapted or developed successfully for Forest School, as proven in our urban Forest School programme.

Q I have family commitments and can't leave my home area to complete the qualification.

A Our professional training team run an outreach programme nationally and internationally. Please contact us for details of courses in your area or visit www.bridgwaterforestschool.co.uk

Q Do I need to have other qualifications before I enrol?

A For Level 1 Basic Skills, no previous training is needed. For Level 2 and above students must complete an application form and have some prior experience of working with their chosen client group. You will need access to a group of children or young people in order to complete your assessment.

Q I want to disseminate the ethos of Forest School to my staff. Do you do presentations and INSET days?

A Yes, we can provide practical low-level activities with a presentation at your venue or on day visits to Bridgwater College. These are tailor-made to suit your setting and audience e.g. Montessori, primary, secondary, pupil referral units, local authority teams, preparatory schools. We have delivered across a wide range of private, voluntary and public sector organisations.

Q Can I use Forest School for corporate activities?

A Yes. The Forest School concept can be applied to all groups, and is ideal for practical management training, team challenges and leadership, either at Bridgwater College or at a venue convenient to the workplace.

Q I work with children with additional educational needs, would Forest School suit my groups?

A Every session takes into account individual and group needs, knowledge and stage of development and are readily adapted to include all individual needs.

BRIDGWATER COLLEGE – PIONEERS OF FOREST SCHOOL IN THE UK!

An inspirational concept.

Learning through practical activities
in an outdoor environment.

Complements other learning and
development pathways.

For participants of all ages and
backgrounds.

Provides nationally accredited
qualifications.

Bridgwater College professional
training team.

Training programmes run nationally
and internationally.

Bridgwater College Forest School,
Leading the way in outdoor learning
since 1993.

www.bridgwaterforestschool.co.uk

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