

Lea Primary is lucky enough to own a large woodland area on the hillside behind the school and a small meadow area below it where a "camp fire" is often lit and where all the appropriate safety precautions are explained. Often marshmallows are roasted at the end of an exhausting couple of hours in the woodland.

The schools senior teacher, Mr Glyn Woodruff, takes Forest School lessons weekly and is so very knowledgeable about the trees, flora and fauna and explains it all in a very clear age appropriate manner. Mr Woodruff manages the woodland ensuring wild flowers are maintained or introduced and protected, that fungi are protected and the trees are managed properly, this is all imparted to the children.

The children are taught to look after their environment and themselves and how important woodland is and indeed the natural world about them, but there is a great element of play, particularly for the younger ones, with games in the woodland and den building as well as easy craft making with natural materials, mainly whittling whistles etc.

The school is lucky to have a badgers set in the midst of the woodland and a camera has been set up to monitor the badgers.

Forest school lessons usually take place whatever the weather, again teaching children how to dress appropriate to the prevailing conditions of the natural world.

It is a lovely time for the children and gets them away from the technical age we live in and introduces them the the delights of the outdoors, to take responsibility for their own safety and to look after and appreciate the world about them. The school is very lucky to have such an asset as its woodland and the children are better for it.

I am a parent of one of the pupils at the school and go and help in "Forest School" lessons whenever I can and see at first-hand how good it is, how well run it is and how important it is for the children and to see the pleasure they get from it and the education the derive from it.

Gerald G. Lidgett.