Let Nature Be Your Teacher

- William Wordsworth

Forest School

and Outdoor Learning

Journal

Welcome to Our Forest School News

3rd October 2025

We are thrilled to announce that our much-anticipated Forest School, led by the wonderfully passionate Miss Bush is set to begin development before half term. Some of the children recently had the chance to visit the site, and their excitement was infectious; they were amazed by the space and couldn't stop talking about the possibilities it holds. This initiative is about more than just outdoor learning, it is about giving children back a sense of freedom, adventure, and connection with nature. In a world that often feels fast-paced and screen-filled, Forest School offers a chance to slow down, explore, and rediscover the joy of childhood in the great outdoors.

Please look out for the information regarding a community day where we will be looking for parents and family members to help us further develop the site-we will provide food and cups of tea!

23rd October 2025

The Year Two children had a wonderful time at Forest School this week exploring the variety of plants and animals that are part of the habitat.

We took the time to gather this information and document the site as is now before work begins over half term.

We are very excited to begin developing the area by cutting back some of the plants, bushes and long grass that are currently limiting our access and clearing the area of rubble and debris. This will mean that our Forest School Site can be used by all the children across the school to access outdoor learning as part of their curriculum.









21st November 2025

This week all the children have been lucky enough to spend time in Forest School participating in outdoor learning activities. They have joined in with a variety of tasks and challenges from making bug houses and building bridges to creating environmental art.

The children have enjoyed being outside and used this time to develop their communication and social skills, working together in groups and as a class.







Teamwork Makes The Dream Work













19th December 2025

Over the past couple of weeks, we have seen some exciting developments on our Forest School Site!

We have been lucky enough to have local company Land and Water working on the site, creating some fantastic shelter building frames and a fire circle complete with benches.

In addition, the Grandad of one of our children has been busy creating bespoke hedgehog houses and mini beast hotels for the site.

During the Autumn Term, each class has visited the Forest School Site twice to take part in a variety of outdoor learning activities. Our outdoor learning sessions will continue in the Spring Term.

If we have any parents, family or friends who know, or have links to, a tree surgeon or landscaping company, please can you make the school office aware as we are looking for branches for shelter building and bark for our 'woodland floor'.







23rd January 2026

The children are very much looking forward to their next trip to our Forest School Site this half term where they will all participate in outdoor learning activities planned by their class teachers to support their learning across the curriculum, as well as developing their communication skills and teamwork!

We are currently awaiting a delivery of 100 saplings from the Woodland Trust which we will be using to screen the site and plant in our shelter building area.

13th February 2026

Despite the never-ending rain, each class has managed to visit the Forest School Site at least once this half term to take part in outdoor learning activities with their class.

Activities included storytelling, building pirate ships, creating minibeasts, learning about habitats and team games. All the children loved walking through the squishy mud!

I have received so much positive feedback from our children and parents regarding these Forest School sessions, and we are so pleased that the children are enjoying their time in the outdoors and coming together to work as a team.











13th March 2026

The teachers in our school look for opportunities to use our wonderful Forest School Site to support children's learning across the curriculum as well as for team-building and focused outdoor learning tasks; so, last week, the Year Two pupils were busy taking part in a story book hunt as part of their World Book Day activities. Their challenge was to find the twenty-five story books hiding on the site. We ended the session with a story time and singing around the fire circle. What a fantastic afternoon!















2nd April 2026

This week, we have conducted a pupil voice survey in Key Stage One to find out how children are feeling about their outdoor learning activities on our Forest School Site.

At Ilchester, we believe Forest School is very important. It benefits children by boosting their physical and emotional well-being, it improves their focus and behaviour and supports stronger social skills through teamwork and communication. We hope that being outdoors encourages creativity, imagination, and a positive connection to nature, helping children develop a sense of curiosity and responsibility for the world around them.

We were so pleased to see that these goals for our outdoor learning were clearly reflected in the children's responses and comments.

PUPIL VOICE 2026

'I like to be out in nature in the fresh air, it makes feel happy and relaxed and ready for the next thing'
(Hamish Year 2)

'We have been practising teamwork'
(Alex Year 2)

'It keeps my brain healthy because it makes me happy'
(Bjørn Year 2)

'Forest School makes me calm because it's beautiful'
(Darcie Year 1)

'I loved my group's pirate ship. We built it together. It's fun!'
(Marina Year R)

8th May 2026

This half term, each class has made the most of the sunshine when visiting our Forest School Site and we have had wonderful opportunities for the children to immerse themselves in a variety of learning activities. The children enthusiastically explored the natural environment, carefully completing observation drawings that captured the detail and beauty of plants, insects, and natural features of the site.

Our Key Stage Two children took part in plant identification activities, using simple guides to recognise different species growing around them. The children also carried out basic surveys, developing their skills in recording and comparing what they found. It has been fantastic to see their curiosity, teamwork, and growing confidence as young scientists while enjoying the fresh air and natural surroundings.















22nd May 2026

Spring has now well and truly sprung in Forest School, and the children have been carefully observing the seasonal changes. The new growth has meant that plenty of exciting areas to build dens have been created and the children have enjoyed playing games of hide and seek!

This week, the Key Stage One children took the opportunity of using the outdoor area to practise communication skills and took turns in giving and receiving instructions to locate hidden objects on the site. To do this successfully, they had to listen carefully to their partner as well as give clear verbal instructions.







A big thank you to a pupil's grandad who has very kindly made us a fabulous set of stools and a table for the site. This now has pride of position inside the children's favourite den!





19th June 2026

Our Key Stage One children have been making the most of our Forest School Site this week to support their learning about 'animals' in an exciting, hands-on way. Through carefully supervised mini-beast hunts, pupils have explored the natural environment, searching for and identifying a variety of insects that live in our Forest School habitat. They have learned to recognise features of common creatures such as beetles, spiders, and woodlice, while developing important observation skills. These outdoor sessions not only deepen their understanding of habitats and living things but also encourage curiosity, teamwork, and respect for the natural world.







10th July 2026

Year Three had a brilliant afternoon down at our Forest School Site this week, making nature crowns to celebrate the arrival of summer. The children explored the space, gathering fallen leaves, long grasses and bright petals, then carefully weaving and sticking them into their crown bases. It was a joyful, creative session that encouraged teamwork, imagination and a real connection with the outdoors. The field was full of proud smiles as the children wore their finished crowns, enjoying the sunshine and the sense of celebration that comes from creating something beautiful with their own hands.











25th September 2026

As autumn arrives, our Forest School Site is transformed by the changing season. The leaves begin to turn red, orange and brown before falling to the ground, creating a colourful carpet for children to explore. The air becomes cooler, the days grow shorter and signs of wildlife preparing for winter can be seen all around us. These seasonal changes provide a wonderful opportunity for children to develop their curiosity and deepen their understanding of the natural world.

In Key Stage One the children will be participating in some outdoor art, using the natural materials we collect to create, leaf rubbings and nature-inspired collages. These creative activities encourage imagination, creativity and collaboration while helping children to appreciate the beauty of the autumn season. Through these hands-on experiences, children will continue to develop confidence, curiosity and a deeper connection with the natural world.







16th October 2026

During their first visit to the Forest School site, our Reception children were full of excitement and curiosity as they explored the natural environment. They enjoyed searching for and collecting sticks, leaves and stones, carefully examining the different shapes, sizes and textures they discovered. Using their treasures, the children worked creatively to make patterns, pictures and natural artwork on the ground. It was wonderful to see them sharing ideas with friends, using their imaginations and developing a sense of wonder about the world around them. The visit was a fantastic introduction to our Forest School site and provided valuable opportunities for exploration, creativity and outdoor learning.