

A highlight of each visit is 'snack time', when children and adults enjoy a welcome drink of hot chocolate and a biscuit after their exertions. This is also a time to relax, to mull over the events of the session so far, and to listen to the sounds of the woodland. Usually, a robin comes to call, in the hope of a crumb. Then, there is time for a short play-time in base camp, before the next challenge.



Each week, the leader makes notes about what the group has learned, based on the curriculum aims for the session. There is a record of any significant achievement individual children have made, and of anything they may need more input on next time. Plans are modified according to the children's interests and needs, and are helpful for staff back in school. In the classroom, KWL sessions are followed up with displays, photographs, information books and other resources.



Children really enjoy sharing their experiences with their families and friends. Some have even taken family members to visit base camp at weekends and holidays. It is important to help them recall their work and play, to encourage them to describe what they did and what they learned, and how they felt about it. In this way, children consolidate their learning, and take pride in what they have made, done and discovered in the woodland.



## ***Kernow Woodland Learning***

Is the name we use to describe our local Cornish outdoor learning experience. Groups of children go by minibus to a special place in the woods, for one morning or afternoon a week, for up to ten weeks.

Activities, based on excellent early years educational principles, are designed to meet all aspects of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One and Two curriculum requirements.

Children tackle fun challenges, which encourage them to think creatively to solve problems, using and developing mathematical, scientific, language and physical skills.

They learn to follow the 'KWL code' of how to behave safely in the woodland. They gain knowledge, and understanding, confidence and self-esteem, as they take responsibility for themselves and each other, under the watchful eyes of the adults.

Everything they do relates to the woodland setting, which provides space, resources and inspiration for children and adults alike.

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Children enjoy anticipating what clothing will be appropriate for today's weather and temperature, and what fabrics are suitable for warm or cold conditions. They find out about the seasons, and how different the same place can look on wet, dry, windy, cloudy, sunny or dull days. They learn to walk safely on damp paths, and whether it is sensible to touch something they find.

KWL is for all children, and the leader takes care to include each child at his or her level of potential, to extend the more able, and to support hesitant, less confident children. Learning about, through and in the outdoor environment is an entitlement of all children. Sharing problem-solving and other challenges, they develop their observational, thinking, reasoning, and creative powers.



They use twigs, sticks, leaves and other woodland resources to make shelters, patterns, 'smell pots', weavings, sculpture and furniture. They collect beaters to make music, and listen to the different sounds. They hear rain beating on the tarpaulin shelter, and the wind in the leaves, and birdsong. They watch a fire being lit, and learn to distinguish between smoke and steam. Charcoal from the fire is used to make marks in the wood and back in school.



All adults working with the children undertake practical and theoretical training in first aid, health and safety, risk assessment, curriculum development and administration issues related to the project. They try out some of the activities for themselves, so they understand the children's delight and excitement. KWL is currently training more 'advanced leaders', so the project can expand to include more schools, playgroups, families, children centres and all practitioners working with children.



They have time to think, to play, to absorb the woodland's sights, smells and sounds, to discover some of its treasures. Over the weeks, they see changes in the natural world, fungi sprouting and dying back, leaves becoming brown and brittle and falling from the branches, ferns gradually unfolding and flowers coming into bloom.

Some activities involve strenuous effort and physical skill, such as tree climbing, mud sliding and rope swinging. Children operate within their personal limits, but they are encouraged to stretch those limits, to develop skills of judgement and balance, to be adventurous while taking responsibility for their own safety.

