



Children's Forest

Planting Project Report:

Lanercost Primary School at The Heugh,
Autumn, 2020

The First Children's Forest





Children: 32

Aged 8-12

Lanercost Primary School



Trees: 120+

15 Hawthorn

28+ Goat Willow

40 Oak

6 Birch

7 Alder

7 Dogwood

7 Field Maple

10 Blackthorn



Facilitators:

Anna Richardson & Ellie Fuller

Tree Planting Advisor:


Mark Shipperlee

Land Provider:

Lucinda Guinness

A group of children in winter clothing are running and playing in a grassy forest clearing. The background shows bare trees and a misty atmosphere.

The Children's Forest approach: a four step journey that enables a meaningful connection to tree planting


An adult wearing a patterned sweater and a child are in a forest. The adult is leaning over, possibly showing something to the child.

1: Experiencing

By engaging in embodied experience in woodlands through Forest School, we support Children to develop genuine care and personal relationship with the natural world.

A group of children are sitting on the forest floor, which is covered with dry leaves. They are looking towards the left side of the frame.

2: Imagining

A group of children are sitting on the forest floor, surrounded by art supplies like paint pots and brushes. They are focused on painting or drawing on pieces of paper or cardboard.

Their time in the woods enables the children to look out over the land and imagine future forests. Through the creative arts, they engage, with the vision of woodland that they will plant.



3. Planting

As they plant the trees, the children plant their wishes for the future generations: *'that these woods will never be cut down' 'that all animals will have a home,' 'that we will all have clean water to drink'*

The native trees were carefully chosen to best suit the land. Some were saplings from the adjacent woodland, most were sourced locally by Mark Shipperlee.



4 :Tending: We planted our woodland around a central Children's Fire. There the children will continue to gather in years to come to tend the forest, supported by their families and communities.



We See a Forest

*Where the long spikey trees are
dropping apples down onto the wet grass.*

*As we walk into the woods,
we see squirrels, deer, many animals.
Deeper in, a stag wanders amongst the trees.*

*A beautiful orchard is blossoming
with multi-coloured flowers.*

Streams flowing, trees growing.

*The leaping of deer
over the shimmering water, swiftly flowing,
reflecting the lush trees.*

*Oozing mud, squelching under our feet,
as the iridescent kingfisher glides
along the calm river.*

*The glistening water lies like mirrors, frozen on the
ground.*

*The cheeky red squirrel hops
amongst plump, red berries.*

*We listen to the water dripping
into a massive puddle.*

And the trees stand around us, tall as giants.





In our closing circle, the children shared their 'golden' moments in one word. Words that appeared, often repeatedly were: "nature, togetherness, peace, dens, fire, best day ever', golden, brilliant, love, painting, epic."

Children of Lanercost Primary

"Children's Forest allows children to find out more about the natural world they live in and to understand the intricate balance between themselves and nature in a purposeful and enjoyable way. It enables them to become part of something that is far reaching and meaningful and links to their understanding of how we can all make small steps to help reverse climate change.

At a time when everything is so difficult, children need hope for the future, what more could you want than to see children free and happy within the wonderful environment of woodland, having fun but also learning about how to become custodians of their own forest. Tending, caring and watching the trees grow, magical and meaningful.

Thank you for a wonderful three days. I am really looking forward to meeting you all again in Spring and also to a long and meaningful relationship with the forest as it grows and progresses."

Alison Clarricoats, Head Teacher



"I really love this land.

As a land-owner I'm lucky enough to have an opportunity here. An invitation to care, to help restore balance, to give something back and to give to the future.

Finding the Children's Forest means so much to me, the breadth of their vision matches the future I would like to see. It's very exciting and fills me with hope"

Lucinda Guinness, Land Provider



The saplings and whips were planted 2m apart around a central 10m diameter fire circle. Tree guards and stakes were used as deer and vole protection, with a deer fence for the whole area planned in the future to allow natural regeneration to take place.

All trees were native and local. They were inoculated with local forest soil and mulched with local sheep's wool.

The planting plan included a double circle, surrounded by swathes of trees sweeping outwards from the centre with space between each swathe. This design allows for maximum edge habitat in order to support the greatest biodiversity.

As well as this, a grove of willows was planted on a boggy bank adjacent to the central area.

This is just the start, we plan to return in Spring 2021, and to continue planting over the next 5-10 years



*Each child donated
£1 to Treesisters*



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