

Woodland for...

WOODLAND FOR LIFE The Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England

...education



Case Study 2: Bringing learning to life

Forest Schools East

Enhancing and increasing learning opportunities



Achievements

As a result of the Regional Woodland Strategy's priority action 36 Forest School schemes have been established across the region through the Forestry Commission's Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) funding.

As just one of many examples – a Hertfordshire Primary School with a neglected wood in its grounds illustrates this initiative's value. The WIG funding enabled this school to:

- ◆ Train two teachers to Forest School Level 3 and two Nursery Nurses to Level 1
- ◆ Erect a perimeter fence, improve access and undertake safety work to trees
- ◆ Purchase equipment

Background

A Forest School is a secure area of woodland that acts as an outdoor classroom. Such classrooms are proven effective in bringing learning to life and thereby allowing children, as well as young people and adults, to explore and learn in a more constructive way. Additionally they have been shown to deliver health-gain and contribute to social inclusion and are especially enabling for those with behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties.

Initiative description

In the East of England the Forestry Commission has offered a WIG Challenge Fund (an initial 3-year facility) to provide capital to private woodland owners, educational professionals, local authorities and charities to set up and train for forest schools. The Green Light Trust is a key project partner.

Lessons learned

Woodland can change lives! The key to its success has been the project's broad-based action programme, ensuring there are no barriers to exploiting this resource's potential. Training creates more and more practitioners. The necessary equipment is readily provided, while financial and networking support helps kick-start newly qualified practitioners' progress.

Future developments

WIG funding is now allowing a high-quality model for child-centred outdoor learning to be developed for children with Special Educational Needs.

Further information: www.forest-schools-east.org

www.woodlandforlife.net