

Pigney's Wood Eastern Lifelong Forest School Summer Report



ELFSchool has been running two free Forest School groups this year in Pigney's wood supported by the Big Lottery Fund; Big ELFS and Little ELFS. What is a Forest School I hear you shout! Ahh, well, it is, 'An inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees, fostering; resilient, confident, independent and

creative learners'.

Here at ELFSchool, just like other FSA supporting forest schools, we facilitate self discovered learning, scaffolding the learner with just the right amount of support to challenge, as it is well documented that, the most valuable learning happens just outside the comfort zone.



The big ELFS group has met regularly on Saturdays. We have enjoyed activities like, walking, nature observations, whittling, campfire cooking and bush crafting as well as mindfulness and meditation. One of our group suffers from an ALS type disease. He had not been out in nature for some time, he struggled to get to our camp, but once there he could enjoy the day's activities. Coffee and lunch around the fire, a bit of whittling and a lot of chat every time we are there, we always leave the woods smiling. Staff and service users alike.

Our little ELFS group included children from across Norfolk.

We have observed the beautiful flora and fauna onsite, the frogs and toads and lizards. (see photos) and several deer have crept through our camp while I sat quietly and the children were busy with their playing and making.

((This section with input from the children and a couple of quotes.)))

We played games like Eagle Eye and Sneaking Academy and climbed trees with bare feet, made wooden name medals all by ourselves with bow saws, hand drills and permanent markers



' The frogs and toads were my favourite creature in Pigney's Wood. Rainbow and Obie showed us how to use tools safely. We had cocoa and biscuits and on the last summer school we toasted some marshmallows on sticks. '- Shelby aged 8 Great Yarmouth.

One day it poured down. We put up a big tarpaulin and we sheltered under it and dried off round the fire. The rain gushed through our camp and the mud was thick. The children dug little channels like rivers and diverted the rain from our fire pit area and round our seats.

'I liked the mud, mud pies, mud monsters and carving'

'what did you learn about knives Elisha?'

'I learned not to wave them around and if it gets stuck you should never yank it as it may fly out of your hand and in some ones face.' Elisha and the other children were inducted in the tools use and carved some artefacts. *'I carved a tent peg and a wooden spoon.'*



– Elisha Aged 8 Belton



We shared our procedures on how to safely manage our fire pit area and have been trusted to light our fire with steel strikers, cotton wool and Petroleum Jelly. The children have remembered and modelled to others in our group the correct forest school way.

The little ELFS cooked sausages mash and beans for all the group, peeling the potatoes, frying the sausages and heating the beans all on the campfire.

One little girl age 7 from Great Yarmouth particularly enjoyed the cooking. She was very nervous of leaving her mummy. She has been very anxious at home and in school and really didn't like to leave her for long. After the second week, she was happy leaving Mummy at the fire pit and joined the forest school games and activities with staff and children. A big improvement and a big smile which I will never forget. Even her mummy got the whittling bug and carved herself a wooden butter knife.



We had so many adventures walking and climbing playing and exploring. The children enjoyed making their own dens. One of the children read the adults, 'Eco Wolf and the Three Pigs' story book inside of one. The very last session included a walk around the site, we picked some bright red apples and had them as a snack back at camp. A wonderful summer in the wild wood.

Thank you Pigney's wood committee for allowing our group's access. Rainbow Rowan, Obie Octopus and the big and Little ELFS. Any one interested in joining our ELFS groups, children or adults. Please contact Rainbow Rowan on 01493 302682 or email elfschool@hotmail.com