



Bayonne Nursery Forest School

Since 2008, TSF has funded the Forest School project at Bayonne Nursery in Fulham, providing programmes for children at the nursery to become actively involved with nature. The sessions enable the children, in small groups of up to 12, to explore nature around Wimbledon Common for a day, led by trained staff.

Many of the children at the nursery live in highly built-up areas, and have little other access to this kind of opportunity. But this is about more than just exploring nature. The Forest School ethos is focused on child-led learning – building confidence, self-esteem and nurturing independent learning skills. Children are encouraged to question and investigate, with the adults playing a supporting role.

Since 2008, more than 85 children have taken part and the project has won awards including Creative Setting of the Year Award from Early Years Educator magazine.

But it's the feedback from children, staff and parents that really confirms its success. One child with motor neurone disease and language delay has been inspired to become more active and talkative, abandoning his wheelchair and enthusiastically describing his experiences. Many families have reported that children eat and sleep better after the sessions, while staff have noticed numerous improvements to observation, communication and physical coordination skills. As one mother commented: *"Whoever knew you could get so much out of playing with sticks?"*