

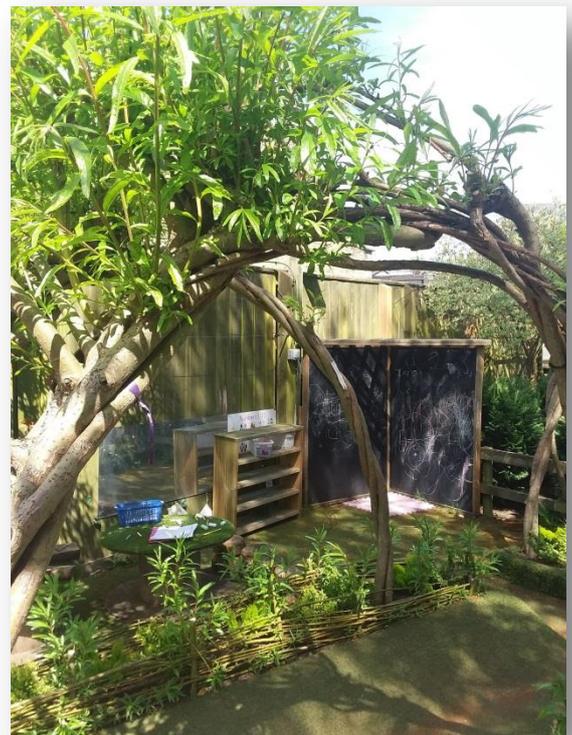
Wide Open Spaces

“Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.”



As a nursery we are always looking to enhance and optimise children’s levels of fun, play and learning. We love outdoor play and we love the Forest School ethos.....but we are an urban nursery situated right bang in the middle of Burnley town centre....so we can’t be a forest school can we? Well not technically because we don’t have enough trees, but that doesn’t mean we can’t use what we have and create exciting opportunities for our children to get outdoors all day if they wish! We have always had a brilliant garden to the front of our building with a majestic tree right in the middle to offer shade and to attract the birds. Our willow archway and vegetable patch makes the children inquisitive and provides lots of learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

This time last year, as amazing as our front garden was, each age group had to wait their turn to have their outdoor play time. This was never ideal as some children want to be outdoors all day, so what solution could we come up with? After many planning meetings and deliberations we created two brand new purpose-made outdoor areas meaning that each age group can have their own specific outdoor space for unlimited exploration and discovering of the nature all around us. So how did we do it? Well we had a gated car park to one side of the building that was used from time to time, but our main car park is within the grounds of St Peter’s so really, we didn’t need another one. The gate was covered with fencing panels, astro-turf was laid, a playhouse was erected, wooden benches were created and the solid wall into the Little Explorers room was



knocked through to create a door that can remain open for continuous free flow play for our two and three year olds.



So now pre-school had the front garden, Little Explorers had the side garden...but what about the babies? Et voila! Let the transformation of the back yard commence! Our previous outdoor area to the back of the nursery had a safety surface and a canopy for shade, but it wasn't very exciting....so cue the astro turf, flowers, tepee, ball pool and walled mirrors for the Little Discoverers to do what they do best – explore at their leisure!

As well as learning about nature and wildlife the outdoor spaces can also provide a platform for extra messy activities: Science, Maths, English and Geography all rolled into one!

“Not all classrooms have four walls”

