

## A brief History of the Forest School concept



### *Where does Forest School come from?*

There has been a growing interest in Forest School in recent years, which may be linked to a concern that children's outdoor play is in decline for a number of reasons.

Although the roots of Forest School education can be seen as far back as the beginning of the 19th Century with a number of progressive educational theorists such as Pestalozzi, Rosseau and Frobel. The development of Forest School began in Britain in the mid-1990s, based on a Scandinavian idea that considers children's contact with nature to be extremely important from a very early age.

Forest Schools were developed in Scandinavia in the 1950s and focused on teaching children about the natural world. Nursery Nursing students from Bridgwater College in Somerset visited Denmark in 1993 to look at the pre- school system and open air culture 'friluftsliv', literally translated as open air living. They were so impressed with the ethos and approach that they decided to develop their own childcare provision in the college's Early Years Centre.

Since then Forest School has spread to many areas as educationalists have recognised the impact that it can have on children: supporting their development, improving their confidence and self-esteem.

*'Learning by head, hand and heart' Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827)*

