

Forest or Beach School / Kindergarten Award 2020

The winners were...

AWARD CATEGORY
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The Secret Garden Outdoor Nursery

Q: *How do you create an authentic forest experience for the children?*

A: Our practitioners develop a strong stable presence in the natural environment to ensure that children are offered excellent child care and educational development. Through complete immersion in the natural world with 'Nature as teacher' we encourage resilience and resourcefulness in the children whilst practitioners provide a calm, safe space for exploration and learning. With a focus on free play we encourage and support the children to follow their own curiosity. Like tracking footprints in the snow, we journey alongside inquisitive minds to a place of discovery and deep learning. This approach allows children to extend their curiosity, enabling them to learn about the world and about themselves through play in the woods. Our loose parts are all open-ended resources such as ropes, baskets, tarps, blocks and chalk plus all of the seasonal riches Nature has to offer. Nature being fully recognised as the most pivotal and fundamental aspect of our lives. Without Nature, the elements, the cycles and rhythms of the year we could not exist on this planet. As the seasons change in the woods our children are exposed to the changes in weather as well as the transformations in flora and fauna that surround them. Children (and adults) need to fully experience the weather, to feel the power of the elements and how they shape the environment, how they move and shape us. It is through all of these experiences that we see our children grow in such resilience over their time with us.

Developing a sense of belonging in the woods, with one another and of inner strength and incredible wellbeing. We are wild in our hearts and souls. Let the children feel the wildness of their days in the woods as a call and response to their own wonderful wildness, the vitality that we never want to tame.

The judges' view

Secret Outdoor Garden Nursery provides an authentic Forest School experience. It provides a timeless experience using nature as the curriculum. All play styles are catered for to create capable, compassionate, resilient beings.



**The Secret Garden
Outdoor Nursery**