

Editorial

This month NIFSA will be finishing Forest School Leader Programmes with Morton Community Centre, Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, Holy Family Primary School and Currie Primary School. There will be no issues of NIFSA News over the summer months and we will be back again in September 2015. Thank you to all the teachers, leaders, children, funders, volunteers and individuals involved over the last academic year and for making it such a huge success.

Freckle Magazine

NIFSA was featured in the June edition of Freckle Magazine - <http://www.frecklenorthernireland.org/>

“If you go down to the woods today, you’re sure of a big surprise, for nestled in amidst the copse ... is a plethora of children. ‘Forest Children’, to be precise.

And what are these young folk doing, you may ask.
Making forest cookies, of course.

The Northern Ireland Forest School is an organisation focused on an innovative approach to outdoor play and learning. Today’s group of young people congregate at Morton Community Centre on Lorne Street, just off the Lisburn Road. There are kids from India, from Poland, from China, from Indonesia – children from all corners of the world.

“It snowed the first time I came to Forest School,” William, a little boy no older than six, tells me, his eyes full of wonder at the memory. “I loved it.”

Our group assembles at the gates of Morton Community Centre, ready for the short walk to Drumglass Park. I take up the rear, carrying supplies, falling into easy conversation with Yulia Ningshi, a volunteer. Yulia is from Indonesia and has lived in Northern Ireland for many years. She comes to Forest School with her daughter Maral, who is seven. Yulia tells me that the Forest School teaches Maral about nature, about mixing with people from different backgrounds, about community and knowing your neighbours.

“This is very important for us,” Yulia says.



‘Forest School is great,’ she continues. ‘The kids never complain of being bored. If they don’t want to carry on with a task they go off and play, or explore the woodland.’

Marzena has noticed a change in her girls. “Their self-confidence has grown. They are freer in their learning here. The idea of perfection, it is not important in Forest School. In the classroom there are rules and tasks, times to be quiet, times to stand up, times to sit down. Here, the children are free to learn as they please.”

Resources



<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/>

There is a huge database of activities that can be downloaded from the site.



Dancing bees survival game



Weather art



The Countryside Classroom also suggests ways of tackling controversial issues



Lots of great ideas for science experiments outside – greenhouse effect, leaf bashing etc.



