

Contents Page

- AI Guidance
- Script 1 parts 1 and 2 Business pitch and presentation
- Plan B Research
- Reference list
-

AI Cover Sheet

I acknowledge the use of Copilot and ChatGPT to search for references and research in relation to this module, including creating a logo and images on my PowerPoint

I used the prompts:

Please find me references for the last 10 years in relation to forest school provisions, including the Welsh Government and Legislation

Please find me images that show teaching methods within a forest school provision.

Please find me research within the last 10 years that shows a proven impact on forest school provision

Please create a logo for a forest school provision in High Cross Primary. Please include the name of the school and make it Welsh relatable, include a dragon and make it neutral colours to represent the Froebelian approach.

Please create a logo using the previous logo Coedwig Cwtch include the 4 purposes of the Welsh curriculum and the areas of learning.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before and after the use of AI tools, which I may be asked to provide as evidence.

SCRIPT PART 1

Introduction

Good evening, my name is Helen Wright. Thank you for the opportunity to present my proposal. This evening, I will outline the need for the current forest school provision to be reinstated and utilised, transforming it into a provision that provides high-quality interventions which will be embedded across High Cross, giving a whole school approach to help every child. The proposal I have today provides evidence-based practice with proven impacts on well-being, academic engagement, and social development. The Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (DfE, 2022) highlights the importance of outdoor learning from an early age. It enables children to build resilience, aids in environmental awareness, and gives them the skills and independence for the future.

On this slide, you can see that I've rebranded our provision as Coedwig Cwtch Forest School, which translates to 'Forest Hug'. I chose this name because it reflects the nurturing, inclusive ethos we want our outdoor learning space to embody. I have also included a selection of images to illustrate the rich, hands-on experiences that Forest School can offer and the kind of enrichment we aim to provide for our children.

I gained my Forest School Practitioner status in 2019, and through my experience delivering PPA cover across the school, I've had the opportunity to work closely with pupils of all ages. This combination of training and whole-school experience places me in a strong position to lead and develop our Forest School provision. I'm genuinely passionate about outdoor learning and committed to creating an integrated,

child-centered approach that supports wellbeing, confidence, and engagement. Coedwig Cwtch represents an exciting opportunity to bring this vision to life for our school.

Here at High Cross, we have exceptional school grounds that can be used to their full potential during all seasons. The current slide shows images of the existing forest school provision; as you can see, it has enormous potential. I have spoken to Mr Levi, the caretaker, who has checked the provision and ensured that the repairs are minimal, and he would be happy to complete these. I have also contacted Woodland Trust, who can provide free trees for schools; this would provide an enclosure for the provision to help during bad weather. They have approved the school to have 70 saplings (Woodland Trust, n.d). I would just like to recap again on why forest schools' interventions should be an essential part of a child's school journey.

Forest schools were implemented in UK schools from the 1990s, emphasising the importance of outdoor learning that nurtures resilience, confidence, exploration, and social skills (Forest School Association, 2024). Evidence has shown that regular engagement in forest school interventions enhances a child's experiences in nature with a core focus on child-led activities and exploration (Armitt et al, 2021). One survey conducted in England by the national statistics office, called the Children and Nature Survey, states that 85% of children agreed that they feel happy when they are outdoors and in nature (GOV.UK, 2021).

Williams – Siegfriedsen, (2017) states that the Scandinavian approach to using the outdoors as part of teaching has its roots in the work of Froebel who inspired Danish teachers to start an early year's system that included natural environments and opportunities for children to develop and learn outdoors by embedding this into early

years it promotes understanding from an early age aiding schools to create forest schools as a whole school approach.

The forest school provision has links within Welsh education. The Curriculum for Wales, (2022) is built around four purposes to develop young people as ambitious, capable learners, enterprising, creative contributors, ethical, informed citizens, and healthy, confident individuals (Welsh Government, 2022). Forest school provision directly supports each of these purposes. It also links to The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires schools to promote sustainable development and well-being. Forest school contributes to this by fostering both environmental awareness and gaining an understanding of nature and its processes, along with aiding in children's well-being (Welsh Government, 2015). Additionally, forest school supports learners with diverse needs this falls in line with Additional learning needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (Welsh Government 2018).

What are the benefits of delivering a consistent forest school provision within High Cross As previously discussed, the benefits that forest schools will provide to the children. Enabling them to build confidence, resilience, and independence while also allowing children the freedom to explore their environment (Harris 2017). However, this provision will not only help the children at High Cross but also aid the teachers in improving behaviour. Merchant et al (2019) states that there are many advantages of outdoor learning for both the teacher and the child, as well as for enhancing education, engagement, and health. A study showed that outdoor learning may motivate, involve, and aid children of all learning levels in achieving academic goals while also promoting better health and wellness. For a school considering embedding Forest School, the evidence suggests that, when implemented consistently and supported by trained staff and appropriate resources, it can deliver measurable benefits for pupils, teachers and the wider school community. Forest school teaching methods centre on child-led

learning in natural environments. Forest School teaching methods are grounded in experiential learning, where practitioners use observation, open-ended questioning, hands-on exploration, and reflective dialogue to support holistic development. Sensitive scaffolding encourages children to think critically, solve problems, and take appropriate risks, fostering independence and resilience (Leather, 2018).

I previously carried out my forest school practitioner training through The Welsh Government's Outdoor Learning Grant, which has previously funded schools to develop natural learning spaces, buy equipment and upskill staff through accredited Forest School training (Welsh Government, 2022). As previously stated, there are minimal repairs needed for the existing provision; however, there is new equipment and the possibility of training staff members. As a practitioner, I can deliver that training, but feel it would be beneficial to visit another school that is currently implementing forest school interventions. This will help gain an insight into the resources needed while seeking advice from practitioners on best practice.

A successful Forest School provision at High Cross would benefit from securing the Welsh Government Outdoor Learning Grant, with additional funding generated through community-based initiatives. As a community-focused school, organising fundraising events would not only raise money but also strengthen partnerships with local families and organisations, enriching pupils' learning experiences (Welsh Government, 2022). To recognise achievements of learners and highlight the importance of outdoor learning, family engagement sessions could be implemented and shared on social media sites like Class Dojo and the school's Instagram page. The Forest School location may now be used all year round, thanks to early discussions with a local builder merchant who has already created opportunities for donated supplies to build a weatherproof shelter for the provision. I have applied for additional funding through Learning through Landscapes, which is a program that offers £500 for outdoor equipment. This is a local

school nature grant, and I am happy to confirm that we have also been approved for this (Learning through Landscapes, 2023).

However, it must be noted that risk assessments are crucial for ensuring safe and sustainable practice. This must be started as soon as the provision is ready to carry out interventions (Knight, 2017). Together, these actions will contribute to a community-supported, well-resourced Forest School program that is consistent with the school's long-term goals and values. In conclusion, high-quality outdoor learning is an integral part of a modern primary school. I hope this presentation has highlighted the significant benefits that reinstating Forest School provision could bring to High Cross, and that you can share my enthusiasm for the positive impact it can have on our children and wider community. Thank you for your time and engagement today; I hope you are leaving with valuable insight into how Forest School can enrich our curriculum and support the aims of the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022). Together, we can create an inspiring, sustainable outdoor learning environment that will help our children for years to come.

Part B

The current forest school provision exists but is not fully utilised, which leads to lost chances for cross-curricular enrichment, well-being support, and experiential learning. Restoring outdoor learning will strengthen alignment with the Curriculum for Wales and improve children's holistic development (Curriculum for Wales, 2022). Forest schools are strongly supported by established theorists. Piaget's constructivist theory emphasises the importance of hands-on, sensory exploration for cognitive development (Piaget, 1952). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory further reinforces the value of collaborative learning. One example of this is the Zone of Proximal Development. Highlighting how adults can scaffold children's learning. (Vygotsky, 1978). The teaching of Forest Schools is focused on play-based, child-centered learning, which is in line with

current concepts of early childhood development. Additionally, Frobel's beliefs in the educational value of nature and play link strongly with forest school, which similarly views the outdoor environment as a catalyst for holistic development (Frobel, 1887). McCree (2018) states the importance of learner-led play and giving the child the opportunity to choose from an array of nature-based activities with a focus on free, open-ended play. Whitebread (2019) also agrees that natural settings provide unique opportunities for investigation and problem-solving. Waite and Goodenough (2018) also state that natural environments promote collaboration, empathy, and emotional resilience, with children often demonstrating improved communication and conflict-resolution skills during outdoor activities. One longitudinal study that was carried out by McCree *et al* (2018) examined how 11 kids who were "struggling to thrive" fared in Forest Schools. The research claims that children had a range of specified concerns, such as economic, emotional, and special educational needs. The study, which used a mixed methodology, shows that the Forest School initiative increased the participants' relationship with nature and was associated with higher-than-expected increases in academic accomplishment. The findings found that self-regulation and resilience through emotional space resulted in a stronger bond with nature. However, the study relied on qualitative data and teacher observations, which is extremely valuable information but may be classed as biased. The social and emotional benefits of Forest School are often recognised, whilst the standard of studies varies. Outdoor activities can strengthen children's communication and conflict resolution skills, fostering collaboration, empathy, and emotional resilience. Largo-Wight *et al*, (2018) also observed that access to outdoor classrooms increased children's wellbeing and executive functioning assessments. However, their sample was small and context-specific, which emphasises the necessity for careful interpretation. The evidence base has both strengths and weaknesses, as demonstrated by a careful comparison of recent systematic reviews.

In a comprehensive study of Forest School for preschoolers, Sella *et al*, (2023) found that involvement is linked to gains in areas of cognitive functioning and welfare.

However, they pointed out that the strength of claims was limited by the fact that many studies were small-scale, lacked controlled groups, or depended on subjective measurements. Similarly, in an evaluation of forest school literature in England, Garden and Downes, (2023) claimed that a significant amount of study is qualitative, context-specific, and poorly theorised, often providing overly exuberant analysis. They also highlight a lack of longitudinal, comparative studies, which limits the value of results.

It must be noted that when the focus is widened to early learning, the evidence becomes stronger. A literature review by the Scottish Government (2021) found consistent associations between outdoor environments and improvements in physical activity, motor skills, and aspects of social and emotional development. However, the review stated that outcomes are dependent on the quality of teaching, staff training, and the frequency of access to the provision. This further reinforces the argument that by Reinstating Forest School at High Cross Primary must involve not only physical improvements to the site but also investments in staff development and strategic planning. This is further strengthened by its alignment with the Curriculum for Wales (2022), which emphasises four core purposes: developing ambitious, capable learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy, confident individuals. Forest School supports each of these purposes by providing authentic contexts for inquiry, creativity, collaboration, and well-being. Outdoor learning also offers rich opportunities across all six Areas of Learning and Experience, Estyn, (2023) highlights that schools that have a strong outdoor learning provision have demonstrated improved engagement and behaviour.

Forest School at High Cross Primary would therefore strengthen the school's provision in line with national expectations and enhance its capacity to deliver high-quality, experiential learning. However, several barriers and challenges may contribute to the current provision. One being the confidence of staff, teachers may feel underprepared and uncertain in relation to risk assessments and how to integrate outdoor learning into their planning.

A critical interpretation of the current situation at High Cross Primary suggests that the insufficiently used forest school provision may cause a combination of problems without a clear vision or designated leadership, and outdoor learning may become fragmented and inconsistent. Staff may feel unsupported, leading to reliance on indoor, teacher-led activities. Also, demanding priorities, such as numeracy and literacy interventions for certain children, may cause experiential learning to be sidelined. Planning the lessons is also another factor that will determine whether forest schools become optional or integral. Inclusion is another factor to consider, as some children with additional learning needs may require adaptations to fully participate. However, research shows that forest schools are highly inclusive when designed with universal design principles (O'Brien and Murray, 2020). Research suggests that without adequate training and the correct resources, staff may avoid outdoor learning due to safety concerns (Harris, 2017). Another barrier that forest schools could pose is misconceptions that staff and parents may have, despite evidence that risk-taking is necessary for resilience and self-regulation (Gill, 2018). Having support from parents is vital in the success of the provision; parents may influence participation with some families expressing concerns about weather, clothing, or safety. These challenges highlight the need for a whole school approach to fully utilise the provision involving leadership, professional learning, and community engagement.

In conclusion, reinstating the current forest school provision at High Cross presents a compelling opportunity to strengthen experiential child-led practice.

The developmental, teaching, and well-being benefits which are associated with forest schools are supported by improvements in confidence, social interaction with peers, and emotional regulation within a natural environment.

With regards to future expectations and opportunities for further development at High Cross. One key priority is strengthening professional learning. Research highlights that

high - quality outdoor teaching is dependent on confident, well-trained staff who can scaffold learning effectively while also linking outdoor experiences to progression within the Areas of Learning and Experience in line with (Curriculum for Wales, 2022).

Developing a whole school approach provides a vision for outdoor learning to thrive while ensuring consistency, sustainability, and shared ownership. While forming partnerships with our cluster, schools and feeder schools can enhance professional learning, enabling best practice. By providing links within the local community through community groups and businesses, it could enhance resources and enrich learning experiences. There is also potential to expand the forest school into other areas within the school, such as pupil voice, eco- literacy, and climate education. This is in line with supporting the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by fostering ethically informed citizens.

It must be noted that further research into the implementation and continual progression of forest schools would strengthen the school's ability to evaluate and refine its provisions. Finally, forest schools would provide a powerful, resourceful provision that supports the Curriculum for Wales, making it a valuable long-term investment in a child's holistic development (Estyn, 2023).

Reference list

Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) (2018)
GOV.WALES. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act> (Accessed: 25 February 2026).

Armitt, H., Passmore, S., Biddle, M., Bingham, D., Bird, E., Bryant, A., Cumming, S., Davies, A., Edwards, R., Evans, R., Evans, S., Griffiths, L., Jones, A., Jones, H., Jones, R., Lewis, K., Lloyd, K., Morgan, K., Morris, S., Owen, J., Parry, L., Rees, S., Roberts, A., Smith, J., Thomas, G., Thomas, R., Williams, C. and Williams, J. (2025) 'Forest School

interventions for children's health: A feasibility cluster randomised controlled trial to compare Forest School versus usual indoor classroom-based curriculum activity with KS2 children: The FINCH protocol', NIHR Open Research, 5, p. 82.
doi:10.3310/nihropenres.14053.1.

Community Focused Schools (2022) GOV.WALES. Available at:
<https://www.gov.wales/community-focused-schools-html> [Accessed: 25 February 2026].

Curriculum for Wales (2022) Introduction to Curriculum for Wales Guidance. Hwb.
Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/introduction-to-curriculum-for-wales-guidance> [Accessed: 22 February 2026].

Froebel, F. (1887) The Education of Man. New York: D. Appleton & Company. (Original work published 1826.)

Gill, T. (2018) Playing it Safe?. Available at: https://vanleerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/White-paper_Playing-it-safe_Tim-Gill_May-2018.pdf
[Accessed: 28 February 2026].

Harris, F. (2017b) 'Outdoor learning spaces: The case of Forest School', Area, 50(2), pp. 222–231. doi:10.1111/area.12360.

High Quality Outdoor Learning and Experiences (2023) Estyn. Available at:
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/improvement-resources/high-quality-outdoor-learning-and-experiences> [Accessed: 28 February 2026].

Kiviranta, L., Kallio, J., Kumpulainen, K., Lerkkanen, M., Salminen, J. and Poikkeus, A. (2023) 'Outdoor learning in early childhood education: Exploring benefits and challenges', Educational Research, 66(1), pp. 102–119.
doi:10.1080/00131881.2023.2285762.

Knight, S. (2017) *Forest School in Practice: For All Ages*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Largo-Wight, E., Guardino, C., Wludyka, P., Hall, P., Wright, J. and Merten, J. (2018) 'Nature contact at school: The impact of an outdoor classroom on children's well-being', *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, 28(6), pp. 653–666.
doi:10.1080/09603123.2018.1502415.

Leather, M. (2018) 'A critique of "Forest School" or something lost in translation', *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 21(1), pp. 5–18. doi:10.1007/s42322-017-0006-1.

Marchant, E., Todd, C., Cooksey, R., Dredge, S., Jones, H., Reynolds, D., Stratton, G. and Brophy, S. (2019) 'Curriculum-based outdoor learning for children aged 9–11: A qualitative analysis of pupils' and teachers' views', *PLOS ONE*, 14(5).
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0212242.

McCree, M., Cutting, R. and Sherwin, D. (2018) 'The hare and the tortoise go to Forest School: Taking the scenic route to academic attainment via emotional wellbeing outdoors', *Early Child Development and Care*, 188(7), pp. 980–996.
doi:10.1080/03004430.2018.1446430.

Natural Resources Wales (no date) Natural Resources Wales. Available at:
<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/?lang=en> [Accessed: 25 February 2026].

O'Brien, L. and Murray, R. (2007) *Forest School and its Impacts on Young Children: Case Studies in Britain*. Farnham: Forest Research.

Piaget, J. (1952) *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*. New York: International Universities Press.

Sella, E., Bolognesi, M., Bergamini, E., Mason, L. and Pazzaglia, F. (2023) 'Psychological benefits of attending Forest School for preschool children: A systematic review', *Educational Psychology Review*, 35, article 29. doi:10.1007/s10648-023-09750-4.

Sustainability and Climate Change: A Strategy for the Education and Children's Services Systems (2022) GOV.UK. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems> [Accessed: 25 February 2026].

The Children's People and Nature Survey for England: Summer Holidays 2021 (2021) GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-childrens-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-summer-holidays-2021-official-statistics/the-childrens-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-summer-holidays-2021-official-statistics> [Accessed: 21 February 2026].

Waite, S. and Goodenough, A. (2018) 'What is different about Forest School? Creating a space for an alternative pedagogy in England', *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 21(1), pp. 25–44. doi:10.1007/s42322-017-0005-2.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: The Essentials (no date) GOV.WALES. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html> [Accessed: 22 February 2026].

Welsh Government (2020) *Outdoor Learning Guidance for Schools*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Welsh Government (2024) *Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) (Wales) Scheme 2024*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-government-learning-grant-further-education-wales-scheme-2024> [Accessed: 25 February 2026].

Whitebread, D. (2019) *The Importance of Play*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams-Sieghfredsen, J. (2017) *Understanding the Danish Forest School Approach: Early Years Education in Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

