

**TABLE 1-1 Summary of Key Features and benefits of Forest School relating to Scotland**

| Key Feature  | Benefit/significance   | Implications for Fauldhouse Forest School   | Implications for Clunes Forest School  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Character of Forest School</b><br>(size, group type, leaders)   |  | 25+/-, mainstream P6 and P7 with ADHD pupils, class teacher and parents, 2 FCS leaders  | 6, additional support needs, P6 selected from cluster, S4/5, learning support and children's welfare worker, 1 FCS leader  |
| <b>Use of a local woodland (therefore 'wild') setting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible</li> <li>• Strict safety regime</li> <li>• Established boundaries</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flexibility and freedom for child-initiated learning</li> <li>• more greenery and cover - opportunities for mystery, adventure and play</li> <li>• important for those from areas without contact with natural environment/ woodland habitat</li> </ul> | Transit to and from site will be less disruptive to school routine, especially if in walking distance - more time for Forest School activity<br><br>At Fauldhouse this is easy, both Primary Schools are within 15-20 minutes walking along a forest path - time used to let off steam, make observations, notice seasonal differences etc. Teachers/leaders can prepare site in advance. The current site is not robust enough at present for a full day session every week.                       | At Clunes, this requires a half hour journey to and from Fort William by minibus - wasted time for Forest School activities. Other sites have been used, closer to FW, but no permanent shelter. Leader is free to set up/reflect. Mature conifer forest - robust. |
| <b>Organised and run by qualified leaders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers, rangers, educators - employed/ freelance</li> <li>• training managed by Bridgwater College, Somerset</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience important - balance of freedom while making limits clear</li> <li>• quality assurance should be achievable</li> </ul>  | Requires sufficient trainers and follow up support - in Scotland there are no trained trainers and the follow up support is currently insufficient. Training is time intensive (and expensive for those self-employed or working for NGOs) and requires commitment.<br><br>At Fauldhouse the two leaders have been FS trained FCS rangers. One class teacher would be confident to undertake FS training, but lacks time. Feel the male role model of leaders is important factor. FEI involvement. | At Clunes the leader is an FS trained FCS ranger. The female role model is felt important - providing new perspective on job opportunities. Local FEI (Inverness-centred) not involved.  |

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|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Regular, frequent contact in the same setting over significant period of time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• half/ whole day per week/ fortnight for a year or more</li> <li>• children know site is 'safe'</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allows time to develop confidence and explore - feeling of 'home'</li> <li>• allows build up of trust between all participants over time</li> <li>• get to know individual child profiles over time - notice changes</li> </ul>   | <p>By revisiting and getting to know the same site over time, can see the changes over time - seasons, weather, group dynamics; gradually extend their boundaries of exploration; allows adaptation to the outdoors and learning at their own pace.</p> <p>At Fauldhouse the edge of the red alders within conifers clearly defines the boundaries. Paths into the area are not obvious from the outside - yet! The area is checked for potential hazards, by the leaders before each session. Another site may need to be made if pilot takes off - environmental impact. Pupils bring their family to visit out of school time.</p> | <p>At Clunes the current site has no clear boundaries, these are established each visit with the young people, depending on activity - possible due to high adult:pupil ratio. Pupils amazed they could come to the forest on their own, out of school time.</p>   |
| <p><b>Provides freedom to explore using multiple senses/intelligences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meets individual learning styles - helps right brain thinkers</li> <li>• 'free' from pressure to succeed academically</li> <li>• provides direct experience of nature</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emphasis on experiential learning and freedom (from watching adults) encourages higher level thinking - creative, diverse and imaginative</li> <li>• allows young people to demonstrate their strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• all tasks are achievable at child's own level</li> <li>• learning is fun and enjoyable - good for motivation</li> </ul> | <p>The focus is child centred and achievement, but not in the academic sense. The young people develop their own learning styles through the variety of experiences offered, and are 'free' to exhibit characteristics not visible in a school/classroom setting.</p> <p>At Fauldhouse the activities are presented within a familiar structure/ routine - Circle time, lighting fire, snack, lunch, circle time - helps discipline, safe practice and confidence. Demonstrates that FS is not free play in the woods, and allows different achievements of session to be reflected on.</p>   | <p>At Clunes a familiar routine has also been established - setting objectives with a snack on arrival, getting equipment, task, return of equipment, circle time and completing RESPECT self evaluation forms - helps discipline, safe practice and confidence. Ethos that each individual matters and small steps forward are celebrated within a safe circle of 'friends'</p> |

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| <p><b>Learning can be linked to the curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sets learning in a different context</li> <li>• allows innovative approaches</li> <li>• allows links to other initiatives e.g. Eco Schools, John Muir Award</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develops innate curiosity and motivation to learn</li> <li>• can present difficult concepts in concrete, practical ways</li> <li>• achievable tasks and creative activities deliver tangible and presentable outputs to take pride in</li> <li>• benefits all learners differently</li> <li>• easy subject based links - language, maths, expressive arts and environmental studies</li> <li>• easy X curricular links - PSD, enterprise, citizenship, health</li> </ul> | <p>Must be made clear that Forest School activities can assist teachers in delivering key parts of the curriculum, time is more likely to be made available for planning and reflection. Good communication is required between the Forest School leaders and the class teachers - clarity of what FS can deliver for the teachers; clarity of what the curriculum links might be made for the leaders. This is obviously easier when a teacher is also the leader.</p> <p>At Fauldhouse, after a few sessions, the teacher's have tended to go with the flow, and to use the experiences within the classroom as another 'resource'. There is no time provision for meeting with the FS leaders before/after sessions to discuss curriculum linkages. Such an opportunity was seen as a positive suggestion. Greater potential here.</p> | <p>At Clunes the S4/5 group benefit from the social/emotional and physical benefits, there is little linkage with literacy and numeracy skills. Learning Support teacher does complete curriculum planning sheets. The P6 group informal attempts have been made by the helpers to make the links e.g. numeracy and shelter building. Not all class teachers have visited the site. Difficult to establish how much has been built on at school/in class. Greater potential here.</p> |

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| <p><b>Provides low pupil: adult ratio</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourages parents/ carers to become more involved</li> <li>opportunity as a way into the wider community, or to strengthen links</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allows objective risk taking in 'safe' environment</li> <li>allows adults to quickly get to know the individual learning styles, abilities and characters of the children</li> </ul>   | <p>Allows leaders to concentrate on safety and individuals requiring additional support, and for building up trust. Allows children the freedom to undertake hands-on tasks and play that challenges them (physical, mental &amp; attitudinal), independently as a group/individually, without being at risk, or obviously under adult 'eyes'.</p> <p>At Fauldhouse, one school has several parent helpers as well as leaders and teacher; the other school only has the teacher, but no particular behavioural problems. Demands better group and activity organisational skills from the leaders.</p>  | <p>At Clunes, the ratio is never greater than 1:2. Because behaviour is the major issue, the learning support teacher and Children's welfare worker manage discipline and safety; the leader can concentrate on facilitating the activities. Small number is ideal for these learners with additional support needs, but can be socially disruptive when they return to school and the classroom.</p> |
| <p><b>Helps children appreciate, understand, and care for the forest, and their local environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extension beyond the school grounds into wider countryside</li> <li>offers lifelong learning</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>helps develop a sense of place and belonging - take pride in their local woodland</li> <li>helps awareness of lifestyle choices - hobbies in, working with trees/ wildlife</li> <li>can give simple pleasure and influence normal values/ attitudes</li> </ul> | <p>For many children Forest School provides a safe entry into the outside world beyond, home, school and the pavement - only contact with the natural world. Landscapes and 'nature' experiences often inspire young people. At FS can encourage exploration of the more immediate detail of nature - a droplet of water on a spider's web, light.</p> <p>Fauldhouse has provided some children the opportunity to explore a woodland that previously they couldn't. They have increased their powers of observation and notice more, have tasted wild blackberries, and enjoy the peace and quiet of the forest. Vandalism has decreased in the forest generally.</p> | <p>At Clunes, several of the S4/5 group do not always join in, but appreciate just being at FS, in the outdoors. One of the P6 boys knows all the names of the trees and was highly motivated to collect, plant and nurture tree seeds.</p>   |

