



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Thelwall kids dig in to plant school woodland

Almost 50 children from Thelwall Community Infant School kick-started the development of their own school woodland this week by planting over 100 trees in their school grounds.

The woodland is being developed alongside the infant school's sports field, where it will be used to host outdoor classes, also known as "Forest School" sessions.

Forest School sessions enable children to learn and play in a natural environment, getting involved with activities such as woodland arts and crafts and den-building.

The tree planting day was part of a project coordinated by The Mersey Forest and supported by the national Big Tree Plant Campaign and the Woodland Trust.

Local councillor Louise Fernyhough, who volunteers regularly with the school and is keen to encourage natural play, put the school in contact with The Mersey Forest Team. She said: "It's great to see kids mucking in to help plant their very own woodland.

"Not only will the woodland add colour and wildlife to the school grounds, but it will also be a great place to teach children about the local environment."

Alison Rostron, Headteacher at Thelwall Infant School, said: "We're all very excited by the prospect of nurturing our own school woodland. The benefits of natural play on children's health and wellbeing are well documented - we can't wait to get our Forest School sessions up and running."

Councillor Mike Biggin of the Thelwall and Grappenhall ward, who is deputy member of The Mersey Forest Steering Group and also attended the day, said: "It was a very enjoyable day. It's great to know that these children are planting trees that will be enjoyed by hundreds of other local children as the years go on."

**ENDS**

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## **Notes to editors:**

### **The Mersey Forest**

The Mersey Forest is a growing network of woodlands and green spaces spread across Cheshire and Merseyside, which has been creating 'woodlands on your doorstep' for 20 years.

The Forest is one of the leading environmental regeneration initiatives in the North West. Through community and partnership working, we have planted more than 8 million trees - equivalent to five new trees for every person living within the Forest area.

The Forest helps our towns and cities adapt to climate change and has won the Brian Redhead Award for Environmental Sustainability, creates woodlands that 20% of local people visit at least once a week, and by improving the image of our towns and cities sets the scene for growth within the region's £98 billion economy.

We achieve all of this and more through our partnership of local authorities, landowners, the Forestry Commission, Natural England and businesses including United Utilities.

[www.merseyforest.org.uk](http://www.merseyforest.org.uk)

### **Big Tree Plant**

The Big Tree Plant is a national campaign that helps people and communities across England to plant more trees where they live and work. Our target is to plant 1 million additional trees by April 2015.

Details of the campaign can be found at: [www.direct.gov.uk/thebigtreeplant](http://www.direct.gov.uk/thebigtreeplant)

The campaign has the support of major bodies including Defra and the Forestry Commission, environmental charities and other agencies including England's Community Forests and the Woodland Trust