

All pupils at Silsden Primary School receive Climbing Wall sessions at least once every two weeks with qualified members of staff. Our Climbing Wall curriculum links heavily with personal development and is of a bespoke design that is progressive and cumulative through each age phase. At Silsden Primary School, Climbing Wall curriculum forms an integral part of our curriculum offer, building character..

Climbing Wall

Curriculum Overview

Year Group Focus	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	Introduction to climbing with basic skills in a safe, exploratory environment.	Basic climbing techniques and introduction to equipment handling.	Improve movement on the wall and develop basic safety awareness.	Introduce basic climbing skills for stability and safety fundamentals.	Strengthen climbing techniques and begin introductory self-safety checks.	Develop a more complete climbing routine, introducing personal responsibility.	Achieve independence in climbing and safety, and introduce route creation.

Intent

At Silsden Primary School, our Climbing Wall curriculum is designed to inspire, challenge, and nurture every child, providing them with the opportunity to develop both their physical and personal skills. Rooted in our Silsden 7 threads of personal development – Communication, Resilience, Independence, Responsibility, Imagination, Challenge, and Enjoyment – the curriculum offers a progressive and enriching experience that fosters confidence, collaboration, and, hopefully, a lifelong love of climbing and exploration.

Our carefully structured climbing curriculum begins in Reception with the exploration of movement, balance, and the basic principles of climbing, progressing year-on-year to build the technical skills required for sport climbing. By the end of Year 6, pupils will have mastered key skills, including climbing, belaying, route reading, tying appropriate knots, and using safety equipment independently. Additionally, pupils will apply their creativity by designing and climbing their own routes, reinforcing problem-solving and imaginative thinking.

Through climbing, we aim to develop pupils' communication, teaching them to use clear, effective cues and engage in meaningful dialogue with climbing partners. They will build resilience by embracing challenges, overcoming setbacks, and pushing themselves to achieve personal goals. Independence is cultivated as pupils learn to manage their equipment, perform safety checks, and climb or belay with confidence. The curriculum promotes responsibility, instilling an understanding of safety, self-care, and care for others. Imagination is woven into every stage, encouraging pupils to visualise creative routes and solve climbing challenges with innovative approaches.

Through challenge, pupils are motivated to set and accomplish personal targets, continuously striving for improvement. Most importantly, enjoyment is central to every lesson, fostering a sense of achievement, teamwork, and excitement as pupils climb to new heights – both literally and figuratively.

At Silsden Primary School, our Climbing Wall curriculum not only equips pupils with essential physical skills but also prepares them with the personal qualities they need to thrive as resilient, responsible, and imaginative individuals. Together, we help every child reach their full potential, scaling the walls of opportunity and success.





Climbing Technique

Curriculum Overview: Skills Progression

EYFS

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

Year 6

Explore and become familiar with the climbing wall.

Practice foot placement and hand grips.

Introduce climbing techniques, such as using legs to push up.

Focus on stable body positioning, using legs to support body weight (three points of contact).

Focus on more advanced footwork (foot swap) and hand placement.

Practice more complex movements and body positioning.

Execute complex moves and learn how to recover from challenging positions.

Focus on body movement and balance.

Start to recognise holds that are comfortable to grasp.

Practice matching hands and feet on holds.

Learn how to rest while on the wall.

Begin to learn about reaching and movement efficiency (hips to the wall, pivoting and momentum).

Learn to "plan ahead" while on the wall.

Practice climbing with minimal rest stops.

Climb and traverse on low sections with hands-on support (feet on the ground).

Begin to climb vertically whilst traversing to the red line.

Show an understanding of how to hold specific holds.

Rappel from the top of the wall with feet flat against the wall, walking down.

Begin to practice what to do in case of a 'fall'

Effectively recover from a 'fall' from the wall

Place feet correctly on the wall using toes.

Name holds on the wall.

Climb vertically up the wall using a rainbow route.

Rappel from the top of the wall with feet flat against the wall.

Have a basic understanding of indoor climbing grades.

Rappel from the top of the wall without holding the rope.

Rappel from the top of the wall confidently.

Work towards increasingly difficult routes.

Challenge themselves to achieve routes that are difficult to them.

Spot another climber whilst traversing

Traverse across the wall without crossing hands and feet.

Rappel, holding the rope, sitting in the harness with feet up.

Learn how to 'flag' as a counter weight.

Use a range of climbing techniques to climb.

Equipment Safety

Curriculum Overview: Skills Progression

EYFS

Introduce the climbing helmet and why it is used.

Practice putting on a helmet with guidance.

Year 1

Practice putting on and adjusting helmets with help.

Introduce harnesses and practice putting them on with support.

Year 2

Begin identifying parts of the harness and helmet.

Independently put on a helmet that is then checked by an adult.

Independently put on a harness that is then checked by an adult.

Year 3

Independently put on a helmet and harness (checked by teacher).

Introduce the importance of equipment inspection.

Know the uses of a carabiner and how to open, close and lock carabiners.

Year 4

Learn and perform safe harness adjustments and the importance of helmet fit.

Identify incorrectly fitted harnesses and helmets and give appropriate solutions.

Inspect another person's harness and helmet.

Set up a belay device on own harness

Year 5

Perform a full equipment check with supervision.

Understand explain why each piece of equipment is essential.

Explain why a properly adjusted helmet and harness is critical to safety.

Set up a belay device on own harness and check another's belay device.

Year 6

Independently conduct pre-climb equipment checks of self and others, reporting any issues.

Confidently set up for climbing as a climbing, safely tying into the harness.

Confidently set up for belaying a climber, safely setting up the belay device and system.



Ropes and Knots

Curriculum Overview: Skills Progression

EYFS

Introduce basic knot concepts by using ropes in imaginative play.

Develop proficiency with rope handling through games.

Year 1

Introduce the concept of ropes being used as a climbing safety aid.

Learn to tie a basic overhand knot.

Year 2

Independently tie an overhand knot.

Year 3

Practice a basic climbing knot, such as the figure-eight knot, with guidance.

Practise the stopper knot on a rethreaded figure 8 (completed by teacher).

Year 4

Practice tying the figure-eight knot independently, with checks.

Rethread the figure 8 knot

Tie a stopper knot to a rethreaded figure 8 knot.

Year 5

Tie and rethread a figure-eight knot independently with stopper on own harness and check it for safety.

Check rethreaded figure 8 knots, stopper knots and belay set ups for errors.

Year 6

Confidently tie and inspect climbing knots, including figure-eight and stopper knots.

Belaying

Curriculum Overview: Skills Progression

EYFS

Not Applicable in
EYFS.

Year 1

Observe an adult
belaying an
object to
understand the
process.

Year 2

Practice "fake"
belaying with an
object.

Pass the rope
through hands,
avoiding friction.

Year 3

Begin to
understand belay
equipment by
practicing with an
adult.

Begin to belay
using the
bellringing belay
method

Work
collaboratively to
tail and pull
through with the
bellringing method
of belaying.

Independently
belay an object
using independent
belay technique.

Year 4

Effectively belay
using the
bellringing belay
technique.

Set up a belay
device on own
harness

Independently
belay an object
using standard
technique.

Year 5

Belaying with
supervision; focus
on timing and
communication

Confidently set
up a belay device
and know when it
is incorrectly set
up.

Year 6

Independently
belay with close
supervision,
focusing on
consistent
technique and
climber safety.

Catch a controlled
fall with the
proper belaying
technique

Confidently
inspect a
correctly tied in
belay device.

Route Reading

Curriculum Overview: Skills Progression

EYFS

Begin understanding "start" and "finish" holds through simple games.

Year 1

Introduce coloured holds and basic routes (i.e., climb all red holds).

Year 2

Recognise different colours and create simple routes with teacher guidance.

Year 3

Start identifying the easiest path, understanding sequences of holds.

Year 4

Work on identifying and following a set route independently.

Year 5

Begin to strategise a route before climbing, choosing holds in advance.

Year 6

Read routes fully before climbing, predicting possible challenging sections.

Design their own simple route on the wall, considering difficulty, hand placements, and progression.

Climbing Wall

Curriculum Overview: Personal Development

EYFS

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

Year 6



Practice asking for help from teachers and expressing needs on the wall.

Learn to take turns and share the climbing wall with classmates.

Use basic verbal cues to communicate with peers and adults during climbs.

Work together to help set up climbing gear and take turns on the wall.

Develop clarity in asking for help or advice while attempting new climbs.

Collaborate with a partner to navigate and encourage each other on simple routes.

Practice clear and respectful communication with a partner during climbs.

Support a climbing partner by observing their climb and providing encouragement.

Use climbing cues like "ready" or "climbing" to ensure clear communication with a belay partner.

Begin assisting classmates in belaying exercises with guidance, learning the importance of working together for safety.

Engage in consistent and reliable communication with a belay partner, ensuring mutual understanding.

Practice working with a partner to prepare for climbs, with one student climbing and the other assisting in pre-climb checks.

Develop precise, clear, and consistent communication with climbing and belaying partners, practicing leadership in safety.

Collaborate with a climbing partner to independently set up, check, and complete climbs together.



Begin to understand the importance of following safety rules.

Show care for equipment by following instructions on helmet and harness use.

Take care of personal equipment and start learning the importance of keeping it ready.

Independently manage helmet and harness adjustments with minimal help.

Perform basic self-checks on equipment and begin to recognize the importance of thoroughness.

Take responsibility for self-checking equipment and report any issues to the instructor.

Take full ownership of all equipment checks and ensure readiness for both self and partner.



Try climbing movements repeatedly to improve balance and coordination.

Keep trying if a climb is difficult, with support and encouragement.

Attempt routes repeatedly to improve, even when the climb is initially challenging.

Push through challenging climbs by resting on the wall and trying again.

Overcome frustration when encountering difficult holds, learning to assess and try alternate approaches.

Keep trying if a route or movement is difficult, focusing on problem-solving without giving up.

Tackle difficult climbs by adapting strategies and focusing on incremental improvement, even after setbacks.



Begin putting on helmets with help, developing basic self-care skills.

Start adjusting helmets and harnesses with support, fostering a sense of self-sufficiency.

Begin tying the overhand knot with help, fostering early independence in climbing preparation.

Work toward independently tying the figure-eight knot with guidance.

Independently tie the figure-eight knot, developing confidence in personal readiness.

Tie figure-eight knots independently, manage personal equipment, and check it with limited supervision.

Independently complete the climbing setup, belaying, and route execution, achieving full readiness for climbing with minimal guidance.



Attempt to reach new heights or try unfamiliar holds with encouragement.

Set small goals, such as reaching a specific hold or section of the wall.

Set a goal for completing a specific route and work towards it over several lessons.

Complete a route without assistance, striving for accuracy in hand and foot placements.

Aim to complete routes with minimal rest stops, testing climbing endurance.

Set personal goals, such as improving route times or completing more complex climbs.

Design a challenging route and test it, aiming to complete it efficiently and reflect on any adjustments.



Explore creative ways to move on the wall, imagining different paths and pretending to "travel" to fun destinations (e.g., mountains or castles) while climbing.

Visualize climbing routes as adventures (e.g., climbing a tree to reach a fruit) and experiment with different ways to use hands and feet to "reach the goal."

Picture the climbing wall as a puzzle to solve, imagining each hold as a stepping stone to a treasure, and invent unique ways to reach the "prize."

Begin creating short, simple sequences on the wall, imagining holds as part of a story (e.g., stepping stones over lava or climbing a mountain to rescue a friend).

Experiment with combining different climbing moves to develop fluid, creative sequences, imagining the wall as part of a bigger journey.

Use route reading to creatively plan a climb, visualizing challenges and imagining how to overcome them through specific movements.

Design and test a unique climbing route, incorporating imaginative elements, and reflect on how creative thinking can make climbing more engaging.



Climbing Wall

Introductory Sessions



All year groups from EYFS to Year 6 began their climbing sessions from 18th November 2024. The timetable allows for climbing two times every three weeks, as part of their PE timetable.

The sessions focused on 'traversing' the wall, the rules of being in the climbing wall area, safety equipment, keeping yourself and others safe, and most importantly... having FUN!

The reactions and feedback from the children have been superb.

The Silsden 7 threads of personal development have been made explicit throughout each session and children and adults are actively using these in their conversations within these lessons.