



The Forest CE Federation

'Small enough to care. Large enough to inspire

Valuing all God's children '

All things are possible for one who believes' Mark 9 v 23

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date Reviewed: October 2023



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Forest Federation Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Introduction

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the best of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

At the Forest Federation, we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is a vital and distinctive phase of education. We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Our ethos of 'All things are possible for one who believes' helps us design a curriculum and environment where children are supported to be the best that they can be.

Principles

Our EYFS policy is directly related to our values and ethos as well as the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. We have four overarching principles:

- Every child is **a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/or carers.
- We recognise the importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our Curriculum

Our Early Years teaching and provision follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2023 EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. The prime areas are seen as particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.



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The three prime areas are:

Communication and language

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

Physical Development

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word reading
- Writing

Mathematics

- Numbers
- Numerical patterns

Understanding the world

- Past and present
- People, culture and communities
- The natural world

Expressive arts and design

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We uphold the view that all learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. When planning children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and show these in our practice.



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The 3 characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';

Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their learning through play, encouraging their thinking. All of the three characteristics interlink throughout our curriculum. As adults, we also recognise the importance of observing and holding back to ensure that children think critically and solve a problem by trial and error.

In the Forest Federation, we understand that teaching can happen at any point in the day, not only through directed sessions but also through exploration of activities inside and outside of the classroom. We encourage all learning where possible.

Early Language, Reading and Mathematics

At the Forest Federation, we understand that the development of spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. The number of vocabulary rich conversations that the children have throughout the day is crucial. We believe that reading frequently to children and engaging them actively in stories, poems and rhymes as well as non-fiction, will help their vocabulary to thrive, particularly when given opportunities to use new words within contexts. Throughout our curriculum, we plan in opportunities for conversations, story-telling and role play where children can share their ideas and use vocabulary modelled by the teacher.

We encourage a life-long love of reading from an early age. Books can be found in all areas of Class One and EYFS Provision, as well as throughout the school. For phonics teaching, the federation follows the Sounds Write phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective when teaching children to become early readers. We send home decodable phonics books from the second week of school and hold open evenings to inform parents of strategies to support reading at home. Through the phonics books, we aim to consolidate learning and increase the children's reading fluency. To encourage sight recognition of the common exception words, five words a week are sent home with the children to be practiced at home. Teachers monitor the progress of phonics and reading very closely, and the children will be supported if gaps appear. This will lead to interventions aimed at bringing children back up to the level of their peers.



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Maths is taught by following the Maths No Problem scheme which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year. This consists of discreet teaching, both indoors and outdoors followed by a follow-up activity and provision. The scheme aims to develop a strong grounding in number to develop the necessary skills to excel mathematically. We understand that maths can take place in any environment and that we actively encourage the use of maths when children are exploring their learning in provision, modelling using real life contexts through role play. Teachers target specific questions at individuals in group sessions, extending their understanding and allowing key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the year.

Exploration and Play

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through exploration and play. Opportunities for learning both indoor and outdoors is fundamental for you children to learn. Through this exploration and play, children will be developing skills across all the prime area of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, the desired outcome for the end of the EYFS.

Planning

When planning for EYFS, teachers across the federation use the EYFS statutory Framework. Alongside this, we look closely at ongoing observations and on-going assessments. Areas of learning are planned through a series of topics, initiated through the pupils' interests, each of which offers experiences in all seven area of learning. These plans then inform short-term weekly planning, which remains flexible depending on learning outcomes and unplanned circumstances.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to explore their learning and accessing learning opportunities planned and supported by an adult. During exploration, we aim to interact with the children and question them to challenge them and push their learning on further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Assessment

Within the Forest Federation, we believe that assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and teachers to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe and listen to children's exploration to shape future planning. The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first four weeks of a child starting in Reception. We also use our own baseline assessment and both formative and summative assessments.



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At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting the expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging)

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions among teachers and adults working with the children. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority in the summer term. The Local Authority is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department. We formally report to parents three times a year. The final report in July is a detailed, written summary and contains information against each of the seven areas of learning.

Safety

In the Forest Federation, we believe that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. Children's safety and welfare is of paramount importance to us. We create a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children can explore, enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and are in place to encourage children to operate in safe ways and to keep them safe. We promote the good health of the children, including oral health, in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Inclusion

We value all of our children as unique individuals within the Forest Federation, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children meet the expected levels of development against the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. At times, it is necessary to work with children in a small group or on an individual basis outside of the learning environment to allow for specialist input however, whenever possible, support is provided within the classroom context.

Relationships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

We appreciate and understand the role that parents/carers play in their children's learning journey and we aim to involve them as much as possible