

## 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 most of their abilities and talents as they grow up” (EYFS 2012)*

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

#### **A Unique Child**

At the Forest Federation we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as achievement assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

#### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our schools.

In our schools we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

*"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."*

Learning activities in the EYFS at the Forest Federation are planned to meet the seven areas of learning and development which are:

Three Prime Areas (these areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive)

- *Communication and Language*
- *Physical Development*
- *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*

Four Specific Areas (through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied)

- *Literacy*
- *Mathematics*
- *Understanding the World*
- *Expressive Arts and Design*

Through planning, observation and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three 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 celebrating their achievements;
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

At the Forest Federation we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (2014). We understand that we are required to:

- follow the school safeguarding policy and procedures;
- promote the welfare of children;
- promote good health, encourage healthy eating and prevent the spread of infection by taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. Adults working with children are DBS checked;
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs. The Reception staff meet daily to discuss

observations of children and parents/carers are invited to contribute to learning journeys to help us plan effectively;

- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children;
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill. (In the case of illness during school time parents or carers will be notified. It is the schools policy that children remain at home for 48 hours after having an upset stomach or having been sick in order to prevent the spread of illness).

Staff work collaboratively to ensure we meet all these requirements.

## **Positive Relationships**

At the Forest Federation we recognise that children learn to be strong independent individuals from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We prepare children and parents for school in the following ways;

- an Open Evening is held before the children start school to give parents information and to enable them to talk to staff about their child;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher and teaching assistants before starting school during Transition afternoons;
- we offer parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents two times a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the academic year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: walk in mornings, where parents are encouraged to share their child's learning, Sports Day, a 'Wow' board celebrating school and home achievements, taking the class teddy home etc;
- we encourage parents to comment to our eyfs online learning journal through Tapestry

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, the EYFS teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children in their EYFS class, supported by one teaching assistant.

## **Enabling Environments**

At the Forest Federation we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing

their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Planning within the EYFS is organised around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. As the EYFS is part of a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 children, the children all take part in the same theme, but adapted to suit the needs of the children. At times, the children within the EYFS may take part in a 'mini-theme' if appropriate, for example when starting school.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded directly onto the children's online learning portfolios, using tapestry. Observations can take the form of comments, photographs or videos. The Class Teacher adds the relevant Development Matters or Early Learning Goal statements.

An on-entry baseline assessment based around observations is undertaken individually with the children during the first few weeks of September. A 'best fit' judgement assessments are completed at the end of Term 2, Term 4 and in June, when data is then submitted to the Local Authority.

For each of the ELGs, we make a 'Best-Fit' judgement as to whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception Year (Expected), exceeding this level (Exceeding), or not yet reaching this level (Emerging). We provide this information in a written report to parents and give parents an opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class teacher.

## **The Learning Environment**

The classrooms are organised to allow children in both the EYFS and Key Stage One (KS1) to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS and KS1 classrooms have access to an outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help them to develop in all seven areas of learning.

## **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy, under the guidance of the Class Teacher and Headteacher. The Headteacher and class teacher will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of whole school monitoring.

Date of Policy    September 2015

To be reviewed   September 2017