



# **Forest Oak School**

## **Teaching and Learning Policy**

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## **Aims:**

At Forest Oak School, we are committed to high quality teaching and learning to raise the standards of achievement for all children.

We believe that children with additional needs must be given every opportunity to achieve their full potential, academically, socially and emotionally, and the quality of teaching and learning is crucial in supporting this.

This policy aims to explain the school's rationale for its approach to Teaching and Learning.



## **Principles of Teaching and Learning:**

At Forest Oak School, we are committed to best practice arrangements for promoting the learning and well-being of children and young people with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD). All our pupils, regardless of their strengths and challenges, race, cultural background, gender and sexual orientation, religious belief or disability, have an entitlement to the highest quality of education we can provide. We have a responsibility to adapt our teaching to ensure that all pupils are engaged in their learning, motivated and enabled to succeed.

We firmly believe that Teaching and Learning extend beyond the classroom, and subsequently recognise the many forms Teaching and Learning can take, along with the many different environments, both inside and outside the classroom in which they take place.

In order to maximise learning, three key areas need to be in place and effective: the curriculum and planning, the quality of teaching and the behaviour and attitudes of our children.

This ethos will be upheld by;

1. Providing a supportive, positive, healthy, caring and safe environment, which has high expectations and where all members of the school community feel valued;
2. Recognising the needs and aspirations of all individuals and provide opportunities for all children to make the best possible progress and attain the highest personal achievements;
3. Providing a nurturing space for children to grow emotionally, morally and socially, promoting their self-esteem, mental health and emotional well-being
4. Ensuring children can develop as literate, numerate and technologically competent individuals, within a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum;
5. Providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom, which promotes high aspirations for all.
6. Preparing our children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; providing them with the keys which will open the doors to their future



## **Curriculum:**

### **Acorn Class**

Forest Oak provides a specialised nurture provision for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils with significant nurture or sensory needs outside the scope of the current Forest Oak school's provision. It is predominantly for those children who are not effectively able to access the main school classroom environment and curriculum. It is designed to create a highly tailored, holistic, and sensory-friendly environment for those children who are undergoing/awaiting assessments.

### **Objective:**

Forest Oak's Acorns class is based on the six principles from Nurture UK; underpinned by Quality First Teaching and an understanding that a nurturing approach promotes healthy outcomes for pupils by responding to their emotional needs.

- Safety
- Wellbeing
- Language
- Behaviour
- Learning
- Transitions

The Acorns class is personalised to the needs of the pupils, and teaching methods are specific and bespoke to the pupils' individual style of learning. This nurture provision provides a sensory-focused learning environment. This class fosters holistic development, sensory integration, and individualised care for each pupil on a 1:1 basis.

### **Key Features:**

- Dedicated spaces designed to accommodate various sensory needs, including sensory space, calming zones, and adaptable learning spaces.
- Personalised learning plans that address specific nurture and sensory needs for each pupil, developed in collaboration with parents/carers, educational psychologists, and relevant specialists.



- One-on-one, small group support to ensure individual attention and tailored learning experiences.
- A bespoke curriculum tailored to nurture play skills, emotional, social, and cognitive development, emphasising self-regulation and total communication.
- Integration of sensory-rich activities into the curriculum to engage different senses and enhance learning experiences.
- Pupil progress will be reviewed frequently against individual bespoke targets
- Specific time dedicated to social and emotional learning where staff model good social and emotional skills when interacting with staff and other pupils.
- Continuous professional development and training for all staff to ensure a comprehensive understanding of nurturing approaches and sensory interventions.
- Collaboration with external agencies, therapists, and healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive support and holistic care for pupils.
- Smooth transition processes between the Acorns class and primary classes will occur, ensuring continuity of support and adaptation of strategies to facilitate reintegration into primary class or alternative education provision if appropriate.

### **Outcomes:**

- Improved Well-being: Enhanced emotional regulation, reduced anxiety, and increased confidence among pupils due to the nurturing environment.
- Enhanced Learning: Increased engagement, improved attention, and better social progress through tailored and sensory-rich learning experiences.
- Empowerment and Inclusion: Encouragement of independence and life skills appropriate to age, promoting a sense of belonging and inclusion within the wider school community where appropriate.

### **Evaluation and Review:**

- Regular evaluations and reviews involving key stakeholders (pupils, parents/carers, teachers, and specialists) will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the provision and the children's progress within it. Adjustments and improvements will be made based on feedback and outcomes observed.
- By creating a specialised nurture provision tailored to the unique needs of these Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, the aim is to provide a supportive and inclusive educational environment that fosters their holistic development and sets a foundation for future success within Forest Oak school or other suitable educational settings



## **Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form:**

Forest Oak School offers a learning environment at the heart of its wider community. We promote the care of our students - setting, respecting and expecting high standards in all aspects of school life. We aim to meet the needs of our students, preparing them for adult life in the 21st century. The vision for our school's curriculum is to provide a fully inclusive curriculum that gives learners the opportunity to achieve their full potential by engineering a curriculum that best meets each learner's diverse needs. Students access a broad and balanced education, based on the realities of modern life and delivered in a personalised learning environment.

Our whole school curriculum vision is to create a holistic learning platform through which all of our pupils begin to acquire, develop, consolidate and generalise meaningful skills and understanding at home, in school and in the community. We want to ensure that every child has the best possible start to their education and our curriculum strives to be responsive to and build on, their individual strengths and interests. At the same time our curriculum recognises our pupils' barriers to learning. It is designed to proactively teach skills and strategies to limit, reduce or overcome the impact of these barriers as they move through the key stages. Throughout the holistic curriculum we endeavour to meet the needs of each child in EYFS and our overarching aim is to meet outcomes that are identified as priority learning areas as specified in the EHCP. To support this, there are themes throughout each phase to ensure that each child's EHCP targets are embedded.

As a school we aim to ensure that pupils

- Have a calm, purposeful and stimulating learning atmosphere
- Are supported in regulating their behaviour through positive and pro-active strategies
- Are motivated and engaged in their learning
- Have a consistent learning routine in all lessons
- Access a broad, balanced and curriculum learning skills, knowledge and understanding which best prepares them for their future

Subjects offered at Forest Oak include:

- Phonics and English
- Maths
- Science
- PSHE
- Life Skills
- Computing
- P.E.,



- Design and Technology
- Religious Education
- Humanities (History & Geography)
- Music,
- Art
- Communication for Life, (which may include Modern Foreign Languages)



## **Curriculum and Learning at Forest Oak**

All children joining Forest Oak will have an EHCP identifying specific moderate learning needs, suggested strategies and essential provision; staff will review the records available in preparation. On entry, baseline assessments take place in Reading, Writing and Maths to enable staff to provide the most effective style of groupings and teaching.

Many children may have gaps in their learning and intensive support will be provided as and where necessary.

Work is carefully differentiated in order to meet the individual needs of children and regular assessment ensures continuity and progression. Each child has individually tailored positive expectations for achievement, ensuring that they are challenged appropriately and frequently experience success.



## Learning and Learning Styles:

At Forest Oak, we recognise that children learn in a wide variety of different ways, and respond most effectively to a huge array of stimuli.

In order to ensure that the needs of each pupil are addressed and that everyone has the best opportunity to succeed, it is our expectation that teachers use a variety of materials, activities and locations to facilitate learning.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Investigation and problem solving;
- Research and finding out;
- Group work and or pair work;
- Independent work;
- Whole-class work;
- Asking and answering both open and closed questions
- Use of ICT,
- Visual and or Auditory Learning, (television, film and audio clips,)
- Repetition and or chorsing
- Songs and or dance/movement routines,
- Fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- The use of guest speakers and parents talking about current events, cultural or religious celebrations and their careers or interests
- Debates, role-plays, hot-seating and oral presentations
- Learning through real life situations/everyday life
- Practical activities
- Experimenting
- Creative thinking
- Links to the local environment



## Children Learn Best When . . .

We believe that all children thrive when pedagogy is age and understanding appropriate. Staff offer them personalised support with consistency and high expectations. We ensure that the children feel valued and cared for, safe and secure.

We believe that children learn best when:

- They are safe, happy, and alert
- They are curious, interested and involved, and their learning is enjoyable
- They clearly understand the purpose of a task/the learning content
- They are actively involved, making choices and taking responsibility in their learning
- Staff empower them to work with independence to make meaningful and informed choices about their learning
- They receive praise for both effort and achievements
- Their learning environment is well-organised, and resources are easily accessed
- Their tasks are differentiated and personalised
- Their learning is built on existing knowledge and experience – clearly defined sequential, small steps
- They have clearly defined and accessible targets
- They are given an opportunity to flourish and be their best selves
- Staff take a child-centred and holistic approach to each individual, nurturing their talents and believing in their ability to succeed,



## Learning Environment

We take pride in all areas of the learning environment at Forest Oak, both indoors and outdoors. We ensure that effective planning and organisation takes place to maximise opportunities.

Classrooms are resourced, providing stimulation and purpose, with a consistent approach to displays presented in both classrooms and corridors across the school.

In addition:

- Resources are easily accessible
- Reading areas are comfortable and inviting;
- Areas for therapy and play are suitably resourced.
- Excellence is celebrated in displays around the school. These include all curriculum areas, pupil voice and behaviour and expectations.
- Key displays around the school include British Values, Total Communication, safeguarding, a love of reading and Life Long Learning
- Allocated spaces for age – appropriate restorative conversations and processes are well-resourced, calm and welcoming spaces.



## Teaching:

All staff, irrespective of position in the school, are expected to display creativity, flexibility and patience in their approach.

Strategies take account of and include:

- Individual needs, including physical and sensory
- Small group and whole class teaching
- Prior knowledge and learning
- Continuity and progression
- Effective use of support staff
- Opportunities to process, digest and reflect
- A variety of questioning techniques
- Differentiation
- Modelling
- Assessment of and for learning

We acknowledge that effective teaching offers opportunities for effective learning, and subsequently would cater for a variety of learning styles and encompass a diverse range of activities.



## **Therapeutic Interventions:**

To support the more formal learning and curriculum, some pupils at Forest Oak are offered a range of therapeutic interventions, each according to need. Some of these are in house and on-site, by staff who have received specialist training. Others involve the support of other professionals and may take place off-site.

At Forest Oak, we are currently able to offer:

- Music therapy
- Pet therapy
- Lego therapy
- Play therapy
- Creative Arts Therapy
- Mindfulness
- Circle of Friends Club
- Learning Mentor support
- Weekly SMILE well-being time



## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Forest Oak believes in a collaborative approach: teachers, trusted adults, therapists, and other professionals are all involved in monitoring progress. Ongoing formative assessment is used to guide the progress of individual child through each lesson by identifying what each child has learned, supporting them to correct and improve and identifying the next stage in their learning.

Half termly teacher assessments are made in Reading, Writing, Maths and Science in order to establish the level of attainment and to inform future planning. Assessments are made at the end of each topic in the other subjects.

Assessments may take the form of:

- Individual questioning, answers and discussions
- Feedback through checking of written work and marking
- Group discussions
- Observations
- Specific tasks for individual children;
- Self and peer assessment



## Target Setting

Based on formative, summative and regular teacher assessments, teachers set individual targets on a termly basis.

These are normally 3 or 4 in number and will include a target for English, one for maths and one for PSHE. Targets should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time specific.

They should be shared with the child and parents to promote a collaborative approach to learning and a close working relationship between home and school.



## **Recording:**

SOLAR is used to keep an electronic record of progress and support personalised target setting, along with a child's EHCP which will record progress of long and short term desired outcomes.

Records are kept securely at Forest Oak during the child's time here with us, and shared with future colleges as necessary when child leave.



## **Reporting**

Written reports are provided for parents at the end of each academic year. Parents are invited to attend their child's annual review as part of their EHCP once a year, along with two face to face parents' evenings.

As classes are small, class staff are in regular contact with parents throughout the year, and as necessary, additional meetings can be arranged with the class teacher or Key Stage Manager.



## **Educational Visits**

The use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is important as a means of enhancing teaching and learning. These occur throughout the school to widen children's experiences and support learning across a range of subject areas.



## Parents and Children

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly,
- Ensuring that their child arrives on time and brings the necessary equipment;
- Providing support for their child in consultation with school staff
- Participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainment;
- Ensuring early contact with school to discuss any issues that may arise

Children are encouraged to support the school's aims by:

- Attending school each day and be punctual;
- Coming to school with a positive attitude and a readiness to learn
- Conducting themselves thoughtfully and communicating any worries or concerns
- Taking increased responsibility for their own learning, at age appropriate stages



## **Continual Professional Development**

Although Forest Oak is a small school, we are in the privileged position of being on site with Merstone school; we are subsequently able to work collaboratively as a much bigger team to further develop our knowledge, skills and understanding, and in turn enhance the provision for the children in both our schools.

Staff within Forest Oak and across both schools, work together collaboratively to develop policies and improve schemes of work, assessment processes, teaching and learning and resources. All staff support each other as part of continuing professional development in order to enhance the provision for children.

Peer observations, learning walks, class drop in's, performance management and formal monitoring are used to develop individual staff performance. Senior staff coordinate CPD programmes across the school, as well as working closely with partner special schools, the Local Authority and external providers.

Staff are encouraged to be pro-active and take ownership of their own professional development, and are supported to further their knowledge and understanding in areas of specific interest or need within their class. This in turn improves the quality and learning provision at Forest Oak school.



## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Formal and informal monitoring takes place at least once a term. This may take the form of peer observations, learning walks, class drop in's, book scrutinises, child interviews/discussions.

Key Stage progress and moderation meetings are held termly with class teachers and LSA's. Our Assistant Headteacher, with responsibility for assessment evaluates and reports on the children's progress, using these findings to further inform future teaching, learning and planning.

Our Assistant Headteacher also provides a report for the governing body.



## **Linked Policies and Documents:**

- Curriculum overview
- EYFS statutory framework
- Assessment policy
- CPD policy
- Educational Visits policy
- Marking policy
- Homework policy
- Attendance policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DFE Teachers' Professional Standards