



## Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School

### Forest School-Wild Woods

#### Intent

**“An inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning within a woodland or natural environment with trees and plants.” (Forest Schools Association)**

At Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary, our school vision is for all members of our school to be committed to “learning together to be the very best we can be”. As part of this vision, we have decided to expand and enhance the breadth of our curriculum by incorporating a designated Forest School curriculum as part of EYFS and Year 1’s weekly routine. It is our aim that this opportunity will uphold the high standards and expectations that our school sets for its pupils and serve as a cornerstone to increasing their life skills and experiences throughout their primary school education.

During Forest School at Hintlesham and Chattisham we wish for our children to develop a deep knowledge of and a sense of responsibility for our school environment and local habitat. We want them understand how to look after and nurture our Wild Woods, to name the flora and fauna growing in our woodland and for all of the children and adults in our school to fully embrace the physical and personal challenges that working outside can present. We will achieve this through the teaching and embedding of the 'Outdoor learning big ideas'...



#### **We also aim for our children to:**

- Learn and make choices and initiate their own learning
- Provide a safe and non-threatening environment in which children can take risks
- Help children understand, appreciate and care for the natural environment
- Develop practical life skills in an outdoor environment
- Promote self-esteem, confidence and a positive attitude to learning through small achievable tasks

- Develop social interactions and team working skills
- Enable participants to be independent, self-motivated and considerate
- Build self-esteem, confidence, independence and self-control

Forest School is based on the principle that children of all ages can benefit greatly from the learning opportunities inherently present in a woodland environment.

It provides opportunities, in an outdoor setting, for children to develop a variety of skills: particularly PSHE skills such as independence, self-discovery, communication, self-esteem and confidence building. Children learn to take risks, use their initiatives and co-operate. Beyond this, we believe teachers can use the outdoor environment as a vehicle for art activities, key science concepts, developing physical skills and a whole lot more! In a typical session there may be an adult-led activity, but the ethos of Forest Schools also allows time for children to follow their own learning pathways and interests and adults then support them in their learning.

The National Curriculum for Forest School states:

- ❖ Forest School is for all children and young people.
- ❖ Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.
- ❖ Forest School is organised and run by qualified Forest School Leaders.
- ❖ Forest School maximises the learning potential of local woodland through frequent and regular experiences throughout the year, not a one-off visit.
- ❖ Forest School helps children to understand, appreciate and care for the natural environment.

## **Implementation**

Forest school is a globally recognised teaching system that aims to meet the intent of this curriculum through holistic learning. It is through this method that we strive to provide our pupils with the widest range of skills and opportunities available to us. Due to its child-led nature and focus on social development, Forest School engages children in a manner that is hard to imitate in the classroom. This creates new opportunities for learning and development that might not be accessed during regular day-to-day schooling. As we know, every child is different, as are their learning habits, something that here at Hintlesham and Chattisham we recognise, encourage and utilise. At Hintlesham and Chattisham, we are blessed with a beautiful outdoor learning environment which we call the Wild Woods. Our EYFS and Year 1 children will participate in forest school on a Friday afternoon each week. During the school year, the other classes will experience 3 forest school sessions (across the seasons). Trained

teaching staff and directed non-teaching staff allows for all children to receive a quality session and all staff to understand the potential learning opportunities this resource has to offer. Forest school sessions happen whatever the weather – as the saying goes “there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing!” – the only exemptions being strong winds and heavy snow due to safety. Adult led tasks may involve the teaching and application of pure Forest School skills such as fire lighting, plant identification or whittling, or indeed the teaching of any area of the school curriculum which is enhanced by being in an outdoor learning environment such as a bespoke phonics session or the geography of a river system. Child led activities often support personal, social and emotional development or demonstrate the independent application of prior teaching and learning such as mini beast hunting or constructing a water tight den.

**If you were to walk into a Forest School lesson at Hintlesham and Chattisham, you would see:**

- All learners engaged in a variety of activities
- Learners being challenged in range of activities
- Opportunities for all children to apply a range of their learning powers in each session
- Collaborative learning
- Inclusive learning

### **Impact**

By the end of their schooling at Hintlesham and Chattisham C of E Primary School, all pupils will have been given the opportunity to experience and learn in Forest School. They will have acquired a range of pure Forest School skills, applied them and experienced an area of the school curriculum which is enhanced by being in an outdoor learning environment. They will also have developed a passion for the great outdoors and will celebrate their local, natural environment and will have developed a deeper knowledge and respect for their local habitat. Alongside this, they will have embraced the physical and personal challenges that learning outside presents.

As a result of attending high quality Forest School sessions in our school,

- ❖ Children have become more confident as well as more resilient learners. They have shown they can be more caring and supportive to their peers due to the heavy focus on understanding and generating empathy. This has allowed children to develop their ability to regulate their social, mental, emotional and spiritual health, meaning they can work more collaboratively in their learning and tasks set. Ultimately, this will develop their ability to transfer these skills when necessary to improve themselves in classroom and life in the wider world.
- ❖ Children have grown more confident in their abilities in the outdoor environment. They have begun to understand, assess and manage their own risks and safety. This has allowed children to become more independent and shown them that life comes with

not only risk but also rewards. Through using their perseverance skills, the children now understand that at times they may not get their desired result at first, therefore they need to try again in different ways. Forest School has encouraged them to use their problem solving and reflection skills to allow them to see mistakes aren't failures, they're part of learning.

- ❖ Forest School sessions have aimed to make children's learning more relevant to their lives in the community and wider world. We have encouraged the children to be responsible for and respect the local community and environment giving them a sense of belonging and ownership of the place in which they live. In different sessions, we have explored the use of the local area, integrating subjects so that meaningful activities can be planned and delivered effectively and regularly.