# Woodland Learning at Bawdeswell Primary School

## Intent: Why do we teach it?

At Bawdeswell Primary School, we believe that Woodland Learning has a positive impact on the wellbeing of our children. It supports holistic development and takes a learner led approach where children have the opportunity to develop and follow their own interests, often in a play-based setting. We believe that this builds confidence, improves real-life problem-solving skills, increases social and emotional literacy and provides many opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills. Within our Woodland Learning curriculum, our intention is that children will have constant opportunities to develop their understanding and practice in many of our core values, particularly teamwork, positivity, resilience, and self-awareness. Every session includes a space and time for reflection, meditation and gratitude so the children learn to appreciate and manage how they are feeling.

It is our intention that every child will make a connection with nature and the great outdoors. We hope to develop knowledge of the local plants and animals and how to nurture them. We foster a caring attitude towards each other, our space and our role in the wider world.

## Implementation: Why do we teach it the way we do?

Learning is play based and child centred. Every session has a focus where we inspire and activate learning through games, stories, practising mindfulness, giving gratitude and reflection at the end of the session.

Our children in Reception have a weekly afternoon session throughout the year. Each other year group has 3 x half term blocks of Woodland Learning over the course of the year. These are carried out over contrasting seasons allowing all children to experience the outdoors all year round. Where we have mixed age classes, our sessions are with the half of the class at a time, and we try to gain support from volunteers and parent helpers as well as staff so we have a high adult to child ratio. This means that sessions can be child led and facilitated by the adults so that the children can take part in higher risk activities if they want to.

Woodland Learning takes place in our wildlife area and woods, which includes a pond, muddy areas, wooded areas with a tree swing, slack line, zip line, hammock, mud kitchen and loose parts play equipment. We also have a log circle with a fire pit. We also have a large allotment area which the children tend to all year round.

Each session offers a wide variety of activities. These range from developing their nature ID skills, learning how to look after their environment, crafting with a focus on tool work, learning bush craft skills like shelter building and tying knots, developing their team work skills as well as experiencing the benefits of having a fire and doing some campfire cooking. More physical activities like digging, using the slack line, swings and hammocks, and play with loose parts are also on offer.

Children are taught how to risk assess activities and keep themselves safe. We entrust the children with responsibility and this helps to boost their self-esteem. Our ethos is to build a community that encourages acceptance, respect and support. This is modelled by the adults in the group and aims to develop relationships between the children and with the adults to develop their awareness of themselves and their place in the wider world.

There are many opportunities to make links to the National Curriculum and EYFS objectives to develop subject understanding. The Woodland Learning curriculum also makes links with the projects that are being covered in class that half term so there are lots of opportunities for over learning and real-life hands on experiences. The teachers are encouraged to use the area for their lessons to make links with their curriculum in a practical way as well.

**Impact: What will this look like?**

By the time children leave our school they will:

- Have enjoyed hands on experiences learning outdoors which will add to their understanding and learning of a wide variety of curriculum areas
- Have developed imagination and creativity through exploration of the outdoors
- Have developed resilience and positivity through challenging activities and working in all weathers
- Have developed co-operation skills through teamwork
- Have an understanding of nature and the world around us, growing plants and vegetables and by being able to identify plants and animals in their local habitat
- Have contributed to the development of our school grounds
- Be confident, self-assured and self-aware children who can make their own choices and are responsible for their own learning.