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Low Hall Nursery School SEF 2022-23

Our visions and values:

1. Protecting children's right to play learn and have a voice
2. Keeping parents involved in children's development
3. Governors and staff leading the way on quality
4. Working partnership with health professionals and schools
5. Being ethical, respectful and tolerant

Working together for all our children

Self-Evaluation (SEF) Report Low Hall Nursery School

At Low Hall Nursery School, we have created a simpler version of our SEF for our staff, governors and families to see easily how we accurately assess our strengths and weaknesses. In this document we set out how well we think we are doing, and how we plan to improve to make ourselves even better including actions that relate to our School Development Plan (SDP). In the SEF we use the same criteria and grades to describe our achievements as Ofsted use.

* = a heading that Ofsted will award a grade to

Context

Low Hall Nursery School provides an inclusive education for 2-4 year olds. Our 2 year olds receive the FEEE (Free Early Education Entitlement) of 15 hours. Our 3-4 provision is mixed, with some children receiving flexible day care from 8am-6pm for 48 weeks of the year, others receiving 30 hours FEEE term time, and part time children with the universal 15 hours FEEE. We also offer afterschool care for children from ages 3-9 years old and holiday clubs at our Federated Nursery School, Church Hill, for the same age group. We currently have 65 children on roll including 11 two year olds (capacity 24), after our recent restructure we have the capacity to provide 80 places or 40 full-time-equivalent places, reducing from 60 full time places. In June 2023 we have 8 morning and 3 afternoon FEEE two year olds as many of our intake have now turned three. Universal 3 year old FEEE 15 hours 22 morning and 14 afternoon, 16 FEEE 30 hour places, 2 day care and 17 EYPP children.

We hope that this will support the school's finances. Unfortunately, Waltham Forest maintained nursery schools get the lowest MNS top up in London, so we have received support from Waltham Forest as a School Facing Financial Challenge (SFFC). Our intake changes regularly due to the number of families living in temporary accommodation who are moved out of borough with very little notice. Our day care provision has been greatly affected by other local nurseries offering the 30 hour FEEE. In 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic we were closed for a period of time, operating our provision from a local primary school. We reopened in June 2020 and ran a provision for our most vulnerable children and leavers. This pandemic has dramatically affected our numbers on returning to full provision in September 2020. From September 2020 we then opened or all children and remained open throughout the rest of the academic year to all children, even when other schools were only offering key worker provision in January 2021.

Low Hall Nursery sits in a highly-populated, highly-deprived ward with high levels of unemployment. The number of households where no one speaks English as their first language is high in comparison to the LBWF and National averages. During the pandemic we regularly delivered food to 17 families through a partnership with a local primary school, using our school voluntary funds to pay for the food. We also regularly refer a number of families to food bank and Early Help to support them when they are experiencing the effects of poverty. Housing is highly priced, resulting in the majority of our families living privately-rented or council-owned accommodation. In our current cohort, most children on roll at the Nursery School live in the Markhouse, High Street and Lea Bridge wards of Waltham Forest, which are densely populated with people from diversely-mixed socio-economic backgrounds. Our families come from a diverse mix of backgrounds.

Families attending Low Hall Nursery speak 1 or more of 17 different languages. The most widely-spoken language in our family's homes is English, followed by Urdu. We have 17 of our total cohort (or 26% of our 3 and 4 year olds) who qualify for EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium) in our 2022-23 cohort, however we have a high proportion of low income families who earn less than £16k per household but more than £7.5k that would qualify them for FSM. We also have a number of families who are just earning 16k and qualify for the 30 hours who need regular support. We have worked with Early Help to support this



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group with food referrals and further support where needed. This reflects the impact that the pandemic has had on this community, and the number of children living in poverty. This year we are developing low cost cooking sessions with our lower income families using our EYPP money to fund the sessions, linking the recipes to our curricular goals.

Progress since last Ofsted inspection

Progress since last Ofsted inspection

During our last short, section 8 inspection we received a 'Good' rating with the recommendation to be inspected again with a section 5, two-day inspection to see if we are an outstanding setting. Since this inspection in March 2019 we have continued to ensure that:

Strong practice is disseminated beyond the school through our development of the FANS training package with LBWF, which this year we are running remotely. We are also sitting on LBWF strategic boards including: Schools Forum, SENIF panel, Early Years Task and Finish Group, The Leyton Partnership, The Children and Family Centre Strategic Board, The Learning Partnership and the SEND funding Task and Finish group. We are also part of a local school's soft federation, West Walthamstow Partnership, working with two secondary and three primary schools. Our Executive Head has created a partnership between Tales Toolkit, Sheringham Teaching and Research School, Groundswell Arts and LBWF training lead to ensure that training offers our partners in other early years settings a wide range of expertise throughout this challenging period. Our EHT also sits on the North East London Teaching School's Early Years Hub, on the advisory board. FANS have created online content for the Early Years Sector in WF around the topics of recovery curriculum and writing curricular goals. Parents of children with SEND are equal partners in the development of support plan. We are celebrating the SEND practice at our schools by applying for the inclusion Quality Mark this academic year, we will work in partnership with Sheringham MNS and Rowland Hill MNS who are both also making the application to share our practice more widely. We are also running a stay and play session for children, who are not attending a FEEE nursery funded place, who are on the SACC pathway to support families to find nursery provision and feed observations of their play into the SACC diagnosis process. This is funded by Waltham Forest.

We continue to improve the attendance of children who do not attend regularly, working with families to ensure that children come to nursery every day, particularly our afternoon two year olds, although this has been challenging to monitor during COVID closures and through periods of high COVID rates in Waltham Forest, chickenpox, Strep A and hand foot and mouth.

***Overall effectiveness – we judge this as outstanding**

Through our ongoing rigorous monitoring we view our practice as highly effective. Teaching is carefully monitored throughout the year through Governor and externally commissioned Learning Walks, the WF MUST audit, Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) and Shared Sustained Thinking & Emotional wellbeing (SSTEWS) scale, Professional Development Records, informal observation, mentoring and peer observation. We very swiftly establish children's strengths and areas for development through our Curricular Goals assessment system, which feeds into our daily planning which encompasses a broad and balanced curriculum. We work in partnership with LBWF Early Years Team and have provided training for the borough to share our practice more widely. Due to COVID we are found ways to share our training and teaching remotely with our local colleagues and our families. We have shared the development of our Curricular Goals more widely through a Waltham Forest (WF) Early Years course to support other settings to reflect upon their own curriculum. WF have requested that we run this course again due to the success of last year's delivery. Waltham Forest have approached the three local MNS to offer provision placements for children with SEND known to Specialist and Tertiary Health Services as they recognise that the offer for SEND at both FANS schools is extemporary. We look forward to working with them this year to develop this offer.



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***Quality of education - We judge this to be outstanding**

Previously our curriculum intent was that a majority of children leaving Low Hall are operating at 30-50m or beyond so that they are ready for their next step in education and their future. From entry a considerable number of our children made rapid progress in the time that they are here. In the academic year 21-22 we developed our Curricular Goals in line with the Development Matters 2021 document, <https://www.fans.waltham.sch.uk/pedagogy>. This has been developed by the FANS teams across both our schools. We have created a simple assessment system alongside this to reduce staff work load. We have a very experienced highly reflective staff team who constantly strive to enhance and adapt planning and teaching methods. We champion story and a love for books through a thorough reading curriculum which partners early phonics, shared stories and Tales Toolkit, a TSA storytelling initiative, embedding storytelling into our curriculum. Teaching is highly effective; staff work well as a team, sharing their expertise and reflecting on their own practice. We have developed a clear program for the teaching of reading using Tales Toolkit and name cards. All staff have developed their use of Tales Toolkit over the previous 4 years and it is embedded into practice. Our name systems offer opportunity for children to read their own names and the names of their friends leading to recognition, their name being their first 'high frequency word', and they will also form the basis of our Phase One Phonics teaching during story time sessions. These are defined clearly in our curricular goals. We build very good relationships with parents and carers to ensure all children make progress from their starting points and continue to learn and develop at home. All staff have high expectations of all children in all areas of learning and use every opportunity to encourage learning, for instance snack times where children have the opportunity to build personal and mathematical skills. We provide a rich and varied curriculum in nursery and through experiences beyond our setting to enhance our children's experiences of the world.

Low Hall Nursery School welcomes all children. As a result of this our provision for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is highly thought of by parents and agencies that work with us in partnership to ensure that children get the very best start in life. Many of our two year old children come with undiagnosed special educational needs and disabilities. We work hard with families and agencies to support these children. Our 2021-22 intake 11 children (18%) received SEND support (6 children, with complex needs) whether it is for complex learning difficulties, complex medical needs or delayed speech. We have seen a rapid rise in children who need support this year. We are currently receiving funding for 12 children through EHC or SENIF funding, we have applied for 11 EHC plans this academic year, many of which we are waiting for decisions on in time for their Primary school transition. We currently receive funding for 3 EHC plans and 9 children receive SENIF funding. This would be a total of 18 % of our current cohort needing further support due to complex needs. We work in partnership with many agencies to support these families including SLT, school nursing team, the Early Help team and Waltham Forest SEND team to support these children as much as we can. Our SENDco is an experienced teacher who has been developing her SENDco practice with the support of our Church Hill SENDco. This year she has completed the National SENDco Award. Waltham Forest have recognised our SEND practice is very successful and have approached us to deliver SEND stay and play sessions and offer Provision places, which we have been running since January. We are currently working with Waltham Forest to develop the delivery of this offer.

SDP: 1. To embed curricular goals across FANS 2. To share our SEND practice more widely

Equality objectives: Connect -Connect families with free learning opportunities in Waltham Forest

Learn- Connect families with free learning opportunities in Waltham Forest



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***The behaviour and attitudes: - We judge this to be outstanding**

Our two and three year old groups have opportunities to play together during the school day. Our two year olds settle very quickly with the support of their key person and develop very good dispositions for learning and behaviour through our team of experienced practitioners, and the excellent model that our 3 and 4 year olds provide for them. This intake of children from low income families need support to narrow the gap to ensure they leave at a national average for their age group. The majority of these children make very good progress and do so. With expert support our children become calm, confident, co-operative and very engaged with learning. Our children feel safe, secure and make very good progress in the Prime Areas. Families report to us that a main strength of our practice is their children's wellbeing, emphasised through parents' and carers' exit statements and surveys. They praise our staff for their caring attitude and relationships with children. The safeguarding of children is our greatest priority and we ensure that our practice is up to date through training. We respond quickly to complaints or issues that arise, learning from them and adapting our practice where necessary. We have developed our Curricular Goals to ensure that behaviour, resilience and conflict resolution are a core value in our curriculum intent. We have created a project up with Leyton Children and Family Centre called 'We Play' to provide toys into low income households and support family wellbeing. This project started in the Autumn term of 21, and we have used our EYPP money and Ward Funding to pay for it. As this project was so successful Waltham Forest applied for COVID funding to extend this offer to Early Years settings, based on our practice. Our Executive Headteacher mentors settings as they set up and deliver this project and provides surveys and videos of excellent practice for nurseries to use as part of this project. We are now developing a 'Bucket' We Play resource for children with SEND through WF COVID funding.

Our Recovery Curriculum was planned by the team as we returned to school in September 2020, after many children had had a long gap in their early education. We planned this curriculum around the Prime Areas and the gaps that we would expect in children's Communication and Language. Our Curricular Goals which we developed in the academic year of 21-22 have a strong focus on resilience and communication to help our children most effected by COVID restrictions to make very good progress in these areas in their time with us.

SDP: 3. Develop creative practices across FANS and in Waltham Forest 4. To develop Forest School across FANS

Equality objectives: Take note - Mindfulness sessions for families,

Personal development: - We judge this to be outstanding

We create a rich environment which stimulates a sense of wonder. Our leaning environment incorporates a variety of multicultural resources, fabrics and objects to help children explore their own culture and that of their peers. We celebrate our identities and cultures during our International Day and with other events throughout the year. Children are proud of their cultural backgrounds and spiritual beliefs, and are accepting of others. This helps to build greater understanding of what we have in common with each other. Children develop the nursery rules where we support children to voice their issues and resolve them, building a sense of justice and democracy. Staff model language to help our youngest children understand that they can say if they don't like something, ensuring that all children are gentle.

Tales Toolkit has impacted on the children's own conflict resolution: they know that if there is a problem, there can also be a resolution! Children are kind and learn through their time here how to talk to one another respectfully and listen to what the other person is saying. Our Key Person system creates a warm, welcoming start to their time at Low Hall. Parents tell us that the Key Person relationship is vital to their child's emotional development, describing Low Hall as more than a nursery, as a family.

Our Equality Objectives help us to support all families, based on the 5 pillars of wellbeing, a clear focus on children's personal development celebrating the rich diversity of our local community and widening children's experiences beyond their local environment. Our garden and school pets teach children how to be caring on a daily basis and regular bird watching, building a relationship with the natural world every day. We invite artists from a range of genres to work with our children at nursery to ensure all children access the arts, this year working with a local artist, local care homes and a PRU to cast story props together. We pay for this using our voluntary fund and also apply for arts funding from LBWF through ward funding. We have championed quality play at home for all families through our We Play project, ensuring that cultural capital begins in the home through equity of toys in the home.



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We are currently working with the West Walthamstow Partnership of 6 maintained schools on a wellbeing project to ensure that we can share our best practice and practitioners across our schools. The EHT has supported the Early Years of one of these primary schools in the form of a review of teaching and learning. During lockdown we developed our use of online communication with families through Class Dojo. The team created videos (singing, phonics, reading stories, and cookery) to inspire home learning and also talked to their key families directly through this platform. We have developed this further on our return in September 2020. Parents said, *"During the pandemic they were absolutely amazing and uploaded recordings of the teachers doing phonics and reading stories which made a huge difference for us to have these resources to rely on..."* *"Staff put in a huge effort over lockdown to stay connected to the kids and provide activities and communication..."* We have developed this further since September 2020 using class Dojo to promote local groups, evidence children's learning and engage with families at home.

SDP: 5 To further support our families and support WF settings developing their cultural capital offer for children

Equality objective: Be active - Provide information for families on local physical activities

Leadership and management: - We judge this to be outstanding

A strength of the nursery is the hard federation, The Forest Alliance of Nursery Schools (FANS), with Church Hill Nursery School, another state maintained nursery in Walthamstow. FANS has a single leadership in the form of one governing body, executive head teacher (EHT), an assistant head teacher (AHT) and school business manager (SBM). As we have very high numbers of children who need SEND support at our schools, we have a dedicated SENDco on each site who are key to our strategic vision. Through FANS we have established a shared vision and principled approach to early childhood education. Our governors and school leadership work closely to ensure this approach is evident in policies and practice. Our joint monitoring provides evidence that we offer families expert care across the federation, working together for all our children. FANS has ensured that expertise is shared amongst staff across both sites so that high levels of training provide excellent provision for children.

Our Executive Head Teacher has been in post for five years, and after a restructure in 2020, is supported by an assistant head teacher. We now recruit staff across the federation to strengthen the links and develop working relationships further. The leadership is distributive, with the senior leadership working together to ensure excellent leadership is modelled throughout our structure of staff, ensuring that all staff have opportunities to lead and develop professionally. Across the federation our staff share a clear vision, working together for all our children. We believe that all children can achieve and do well, ensuring they have the very best start in life. Our Governing Body plays a vital part in this leadership structure, challenging us and helping us to develop our practice. This year we have responded to staff concerns about work load by creating a simpler form of assessment. Our SENDco work collaboratively, this year developing provision places, commissioned by WF for children with complex needs, SEND visiting days and are applying for the Inclusion Quality Mark across FANS.

Strong practice is disseminated beyond the school through our development of the FANS training package with LBWF, which this year we are running remotely. We are also sitting on LBWF strategic boards including: Schools Forum, SENIF panel, Early Years Task and Finish Group, The Leyton Partnership, The Children and Family Centre Strategic board, The Learning Partnership and the SEND funding Task and Finish group. We are also part of a local school's soft federation, West Walthamstow Partnership working with two secondary and three primary schools. We have also just created a project called 'We play' in partnership with Leyton Children and Family Centre to support low income families. This project is due to start in the autumn term of 21 and was offered more widely to WF Early Years settings based on our practice. This academic year we are developing a 'We play bucket' which will encourage families to replicate our practice in their homes if they have SEND.

Our Executive Head has created a partnership between Tales Toolkit, Sheringham Teaching and Research School, NELTSH (Walthamstow School for Girls leading North East London teaching school hub), Groundswell Arts and the LBWF training lead to ensure that training offers our partners in other early years settings a wide range of expertise. Parents of children with SEND are equal partners in the development of support plans. We have enjoyed working with Waltham forest through an Intergenerational project, called We are Friends, where we have partnered with two local care homes.

SDP: 6. Creativity training – EHT to develop further training involving local artists for our team and beyond 7.

Year of Wellbeing: Plan a range of activities together as FANS over the year based on the 5 pillars of Wellbeing

Equality objective: Give - Plan termly charitable giving