

LEAF @ Rockingham - EYFS Provision

Helping children blossom in the outdoor world

Aims:

- Make connections
- Create new relationships with others and the environment
- Solve problems and make connections
- Develop socially, physically and emotionally
- Support a love of nature and reduce reliance on digital technologies

Problem
Solving

Teamwork

Modelling
effective
communication

Resilience

Challenge

Exploration



Rationale -

At Willow Tree Academy, our Profound Primary Curriculum extends learning far beyond the four walls of the classroom, laying a vibrant foundation for our youngest learners in the Early Years. Introducing Forest School at this early stage nurtures a lifelong connection to nature, fostering sustainability while significantly enhancing physical development, mental health, and emotional well-being. By swapping screen-filled environments for real-world exploration, we actively counteract the growing impact of the digital world, giving children the freedom to engage their senses, assess risk, and build resilience naturally.

In our Early Years Forest School provision at the LEAF, the outdoor environment acts as a dynamic third teacher, sparking curiosity and accommodating diverse learning styles. Whether a child is exploring early mathematical concepts through natural patterns or developing language skills through collaborative play, the outdoor environment offers a rich canvas for academic and creative growth.

Crucially, open spaces serve as a bridge between home and early education. We actively involve parents in this journey, through different groups and bonding experiences, sharing outdoor achievements and welcoming them into our natural spaces. These shared experiences strengthen parent-practitioner relationships, foster a strong community spirit and encourage families to embrace screen-free, outdoor adventures together at home.

Stage 1 - Targeting new parents and marketing

Short term aims

- Development of parent and baby groups through Forest Bugs
- 5 week chargeable programme focusing on early development in the outdoors pre 2 years
- Adult and child sessions for up to ten families
- 10 families to start but further sessions if more uptake
- Audit and promote to gauge potential numbers for a full EYFS outdoor provision.
- Marketing in the community and with local parent groups.



Stage 2 - Outdoor provision - Pre school

Long term aims

- Development of a full outdoor EYFS provision from 2 year olds to pre Reception.
 - Morning sessions 3 hours daily - using the 15 hours funding
 - Further group sessions for adults and pre two year olds building Forest Bugs
 - Potential for working with more outside agencies to use the space further
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- All learning taking place outdoors following the EYFS curriculum
 - Developing spaces for napping and entry into the provision
 - Indoor space used for changing facilities and snack area

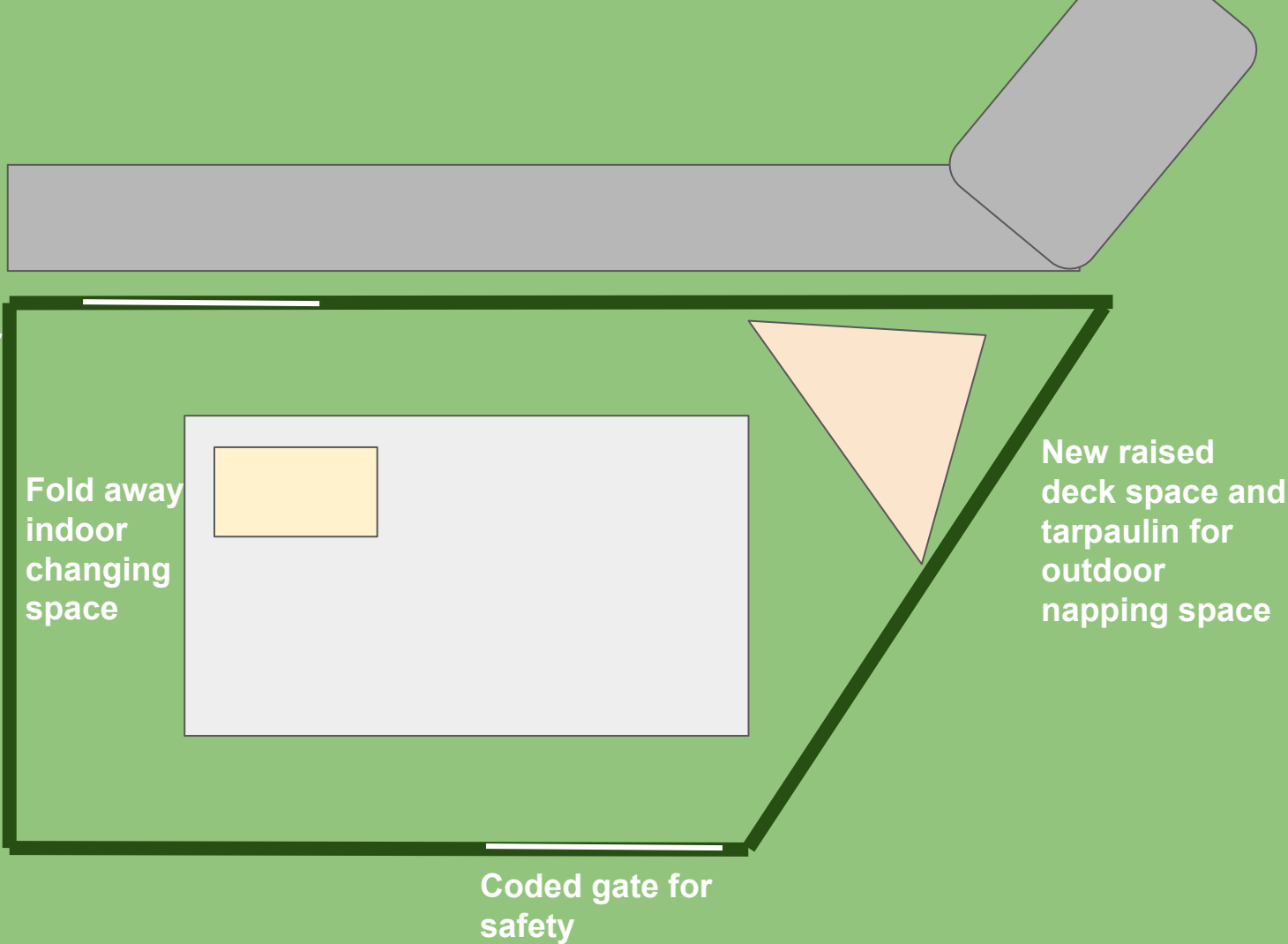
Plans

New fencing to contain the area



Coded bottom gates for entrance into the provision with signage.

Plans



Key considerations

- Safeguarding procedures of the provision and new entry point into the provision
- Staffing numbers and qualifications required
- Numbers of children with funding to make the space a viable option
- Changing space and the key legalities
- Opening times to allow school access to the Forest School provision as well
- A new provision not and extension of REY/F1
- Time frames for stage 2