

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Early Learning Children's Forest Nursery

Site: Old Brickfield Farm Ardingly RH17 6SD

Applicant: Mr. George Stokeley

Application Reference: DM/26/1868

Date: 10/08/2026

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the establishment of an **early learning children's forest nursery** at Old Brickfield farm. The proposal seeks permission for the use of the site as a nature-based early-years education and childcare facility, providing children with regular opportunities to learn and play within a natural woodland and outdoor environment. The proposal is intended to provide a high-quality, child-centred form of early education which places outdoor learning, interaction with nature, physical activity, creativity and personal development at the heart of the nursery experience. Studies have shown a greater improvement in children's mental health benefitting from spending time outside and being around and taking part in outdoor activities.

The proposed development is deliberately designed to be low-impact and sympathetic to its surroundings. The use will make extensive use of the existing natural environment, with outdoor learning undertaken within the woodland/landscape setting and with only limited development required to support the nursery operation which would consist of modernising 2 of our stables to provide a dry shelter for wet weather.

The proposal will provide a valuable local education and childcare facility whilst also supporting children's health, wellbeing and connection with the natural environment.

The proposal comprises the establishment of an early learning children's forest nursery for approximately **20 children**, aged approximately **2-5 years old** operating between **0700 - 1800** 5 days per week.

The nursery will provide a combination of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities, with the principal educational activity taking place within the natural environment.

The proposed facilities comprise:

- Modernisation of 2 stables
- nursery accommodation and welfare facilities;
- secure storage for educational and outdoor equipment;
- toilet and changing facilities;
- outdoor learning
- nature-based play features
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- The natural environment are not simply an amenity surrounding the nursery; they form an integral part of the educational resource.

The children will undertake activities such as:

- nature observation;
- environmental education;
- storytelling;
- outdoor creative activities;
- gardening and food growing;
- den building;
- supervised physical activity;
- seasonal activities;
- wildlife observation;
- learning about trees, plants and habitats; and
- practical development of independence, confidence and social skills.

The operation will be managed in accordance with appropriate safeguarding, childcare, health and safety and early-years requirements.