

Great News! Forest Way has been awarded **Foundation level of the British Council's prestigious International School Award** in recognition of our work to bring the world into the classroom.

The International School Award celebrates the achievements of schools that do exceptional work in international education. Fostering an international dimension in the curriculum is at the heart of the British Council's work with schools, so that young people gain the cultural understanding and skills they need for life and work in today's world.

One of our visions at Forest Way, is to provide our pupils with the highest quality of education. We strive to engage our learners through an ever-evolving curriculum that meets the student's individual and holistic needs. As a SEN school, communication is everything. Our total communication environment ensures that specialist support is embedded in all aspects of the school day. We understand how crucial it is to empower our young people to master a variety of means to communicate. This will enable them to engage in meaningful interactions and exert choice and autonomy over their world. In today's digital age, it is more important than ever to provide our pupils with communication tools and platforms that will bring new dimensions to the classroom. We see that any online opportunity, is a unique opportunity to learn from each other. It enables our pupils to communicate for a purpose, e.g., ask wider questions, and understand global issues. We want our pupils to gain global perspectives and give them a broader knowledge base for their future careers. We see that internationalising our curriculum will support our pupils to develop attributes that equip them to make a difference in a complex world.

Forest Way's international work includes creating a pilot project that would maximise the use of communication in the classroom. Many of our learners are nonverbal and use Makaton sign language to communicate with their teachers and peers. We wanted to do something that would be fun, engaging and inclusive for the learners. This is where the idea came up for 'Mini Hands of the World'. This was an activity that is still ongoing. Each school practises an English song by signing the words in Makaton. At Christmas, the children in Acorns 7 and 8 took part in an international Christmas carol performance on TEAMS. To give the children a visual understanding of where the other children were from, the teachers used 'Google Earth' in their teaching. This was used as lesson starters to give the activities a sense of purpose. We want this to only be the beginning of Forest Way's international journey and we now want to expand the use of local and international partnerships across the school.

John Rolfe MBE, Schools Outreach Manager at the British Council, said: "Forest Way School's international work has earned the school well-deserved recognition with **the British Council International School Award - Foundation Certificate**.

We are delighted and proud that Forest Way School is committed to developing a whole school approach to embedding and celebrating international work. The dedication from everyone is enriching education and supporting globally aware young people and the development of key skills.

We thank all involved in this important work; embedding a whole school international ethos across a school can lead to accreditation with the Full International School Award so please contact us at the British Council".

The award is now available worldwide in countries such as India, Greece, Egypt, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Around 6,000 International School Awards have been presented to successful schools in the UK since the scheme began in 1999.

The International School Award encourages and supports schools to develop:

- An international ethos embedded throughout the school
- A whole school approach to international work
- Collaborative curriculum-based work with a number of partner schools
- Year-round international activity
- Involvement of the wider community