



POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE FOUNDATION STAGE

September 2017

Our aim is to raise standards and make learning irresistible!

Introduction

We strongly believe that play is a child's work. We build firm foundations for learning by developing concepts and skills through a variety of play activities and contexts. However, we do not assume that children will automatically develop knowledge, skills and concepts by engaging in activities that are rich in opportunities. Input by adults is crucial and planned.

Aims of Setting

Our aims are to:

- provide children with a happy, caring, stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors
- raise attainment by building on the strengths and weaknesses of all pupils
- use thinking skills & questioning activities to help raise attainment
- raise standards and achievement in literacy and mathematics
- meet the needs of all our children across a wide range of capabilities
- use planned observations to extend and improve children's play and play opportunities
- reflect the needs of children in a multi-ethnic society
- help them to develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually
- value them as individuals
- help them to gain confidence and lay good foundations for entry to Key stage 1
- involve parents in their child's learning
- recognise the different learning styles used by the children
- engage and improve children's thinking skills through skilful questioning and sensitive intervention
- To nurture the characteristics of learning through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically

The Curriculum

There are 7 areas of learning, 3 are the prime areas and 4 are the specific. The prime areas are Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and language and Physical Development. These prime areas are fundamental, link together and move through to support development in all other areas. The specific areas are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. These specific areas include the skills and knowledge children need to participate successfully in society.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories.

Planning

Underpinning our planning is a belief in the value of learning through play, first hand experiences and enjoyment. The Foundation Stage planning involves all members of the team to provide continuity and progression and is supported and monitored by the Foundation Stage lead teacher.

Long Term Plans

We use the Early Years Outcomes as our long term plans. Topics are mainly chosen depending on the interests of the children. Topics covered every year are as follows:

- Ourselves/all about me
- Light and Dark
- The 4 seasons
- Traditional Tales
- Festivals (Christmas, Easter Chinese New Year, Diwali)

Medium Term Plans

Medium term plans cover a ½ term and provide further details of each area of learning and how we develop particular aspects of learning. Activities may be continuous or blocked and learning objectives are identified to ensure all areas and outcomes are being covered.

Short Term Plans

Short term plans are weekly and are adapted daily where appropriate. These provide the detailed plans for provision. Learning objectives are clearly stated. They include details of activities, deployment of staff, teacher led or independent activities and differentiation for groups of children. They also include a separate page for reflection and evaluation so staff can use their observations to inform future planning.

Visits and Visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Pinewood is given great emphasis. We aim to have a visit out of school each half term. 3 of these are termly to the local woodland where we choose a tree and watch it change through the seasons. The other trips range from a farm visit to a visit to a local garden centre and are linked to our topic.

We actively seek parental support on trips, aiming for a ratio of one adult for two children in Nursery and a minimum of 1:5 in Reception. For safety reasons we say no to younger siblings coming along on school trips. Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a nurse for example. We often ask parents/carers if they are able (and brave enough!) to share knowledge or a skill, be it bringing in pets, how to bath a baby or how to look after our bodies.

Classroom Organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, reading area, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for bird watching, mark making and construction.

Each child has their own labelled peg and tray. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely!

Assessment, Observations and Portfolios

- Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.
- To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual learning journey: these are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child.
- Parents/carers have access to the portfolios which are stored in the classroom. They are encouraged to contribute by completing stars. Stars are where significant events that happen at home can be recorded, they are available in each cloakroom and can be taken home to complete or can be completed with the support of a member of staff. The portfolio is given to parents when their child enters Year 1 or leaves our setting.
- Staff use the 2Simple software to record observations and reports are printed off termly to monitor progress and to look for any gaps in learning. Where appropriate, next steps are recorded
- In Reception, all children have a maths book and a writing book, which is marked in line with the school's marking policy. These books are closely monitored by the SLT.
- On entry to Nursery we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the head teacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final parents meeting of the year.

Partnerships with Parents and Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents/carers to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer a Meet the Teacher session at the beginning of the school year and offer parenting workshops and other sessions for parents, such as our successful maths pack sessions!

When a child gains a place at Pinewood we ask them to attend a session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting and with their parents/carers. We give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer. Over the first few days at the school we encourage parents and carers to stay for as long as they wish in the classroom to ensure the transition to the school goes smoothly. We have a slight staggered entry into Nursery. In Nursery we sit down with each parent/carer within the first few days to go through their booklet and learn more about the child and their family.

All children new to nursery receive a home visit where 2 members of staff go and see the children in their home environment.

In reception, parents/carers are invited to attend a meeting in July to discuss their child coming into full time education. They are also invited in 2 weeks into September to discuss this in more detail.

Reception children have 3 parent evenings throughout the year where the parents/carers are invited in to discuss their child's learning. In F1, there is a parents/carers meeting on entry to the unit and one on exit.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. This also applies to parents/carers who are on school premises, including those who come on school trips.

Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website. All parent/carers are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a government scheme. We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Rachel Otter, Head Teacher, is the named lead Child Protection Officer and all concerns are discussed with her.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

Quality Assurance

Quality is maintained by:

- constantly reviewing practice
- informal and formal evaluation and assessment of children
- well planned activities informed by a sound knowledge of child development
- training through courses, visiting speakers and Inset days
- careful monitoring by head teacher and governors
- aspirational performance management target setting for all staff by HT
- monitoring by lead teacher
- moderation of children within the FS is done by staff in school and through liaisons with other schools in the area
- monitoring by the head teacher and governors.

Policy reviewed by: Rebecca Guy (Foundation Stage Lead Teacher)