



**PINEWOOD INFANT SCHOOL**  
**AND**  
**FOUNDATION UNIT**

**POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE EARLY  
YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

February 2025

# **Our aim is to raise standards and make learning irresistible!**

## **Introduction**

We strongly believe that play is a child's work and that they learn best when motivated in an exciting and stimulating environment. We build firm foundations for learning by developing skills and knowledge through a variety of fun play activities and contexts. We aim to provide children with a happy, secure environment with carefully designed areas to ensure children reach their full potential. We do not assume that children will automatically develop knowledge, skills and concepts by engaging in activities that are rich in opportunities. Direct teaching by adults is crucial and planned.

Our ethos is underpinned by the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021 (last updated November 1<sup>st</sup> 2024)

## **Aims of Setting**

- To give all children the best possible start in life to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- To value children as individuals and for them to feel loved and cared for.
- To embed the Pinewood Values.
- For our practise to be shaped by the 4 overarching principles: The Unique Child, Positive Relationships, enabling environments and learning and development.
- To provide children with a happy, caring, stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors.
- To provide a curriculum driven by giving children opportunities, ensuring engagement, and developing a sense of responsibility.
- To use our curriculum as a progression model.
- To ensure we have a focus on improving speech and language, including broadening children's vocabulary.
- To make sure our children experience high quality texts that are revisited.
- To provide high quality opportunities for children to be inquisitive, curious, creative, critical thinkers and to give them the chance to consolidate, rehearse and develop their skills and knowledge.
- To teach phonics systematically using the Little Wandle scheme.
- To be committed to the arts including drama.
- To nurture the characteristics of effective learning through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically

## **Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

## **The Curriculum**

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- A unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Developing in different ways

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**

We understand the importance of a play based curriculum and appreciate that play is a vehicle for learning. Play allows children to express themselves in a developmentally appropriate way "Children in the Early Years are in the Early Years because they develop best with this type of Early Years experience, play based, adult supported, unique child initiated, developmentally appropriate learning" (Alistair Bryce Clegg, 2021). We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. 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 and staff regularly reflect on this. Careful thought and planning is put in place not only for our curriculum but also our environment. We want our indoor and outdoor environment to have the maximum impact on children's potential. We strive to provide high quality opportunities for children to be inquisitive, curious, creative, critical thinkers and to give them the chance to consolidate, rehearse and develop their skills and knowledge. Our pedagogy is varied and is a balance of direct teaching and play based learning. We are constantly reflecting on our practise, attending training and reading books or research papers to ensure we are providing the best possible education for our children.

### **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 the 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, handwriting, phonics, and stories.

### **Our Curriculum**

Our curriculum is driven by giving children opportunities, ensuring engagement, and developing a sense of responsibility. We have given great consideration to the knowledge and the skills that we want the children to learn during the EYFS which all feed into our curriculum. We are committed to the whole child and to the characteristics of effective learning, we want to make sure that our children have the learning behaviours they need to succeed not only in school, but in life. We chose our curriculum by thinking about the children in our school and their needs. We used the Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters non-statutory guidance and our knowledge about the children to devise our curriculum as a team. We also met with all subject co-ordinators in school to go through each area of learning to ensure clear progression through year groups. Our curriculum is adapted and tweaks are made where needed. It is a working document.

### **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 throughout F1 and F2 and is supported and monitored by the Foundation Stage lead teacher. We have key skills documents which run from F1 to Year 2 to show clear progression in skills and knowledge throughout school.

Long Term Plans *Giving children **opportunities**, ensuring **engagement** and developing a sense of **responsibility*** drives the curriculum we offer our children. This is our rationale:

#### Rationale

- We give great consideration to what we want children to learn – the knowledge and the skills
- Our key school values of honesty, self-belief, kindness, respect, curiosity, independence, resilience and responsibility run through everything that we do.
- At Pinewood we make ‘learning irresistible’ sparking the interest, enthusiasm and curiosity in our children. This motto runs through everything we do from day to day lessons, our learning environment, visits and visitors, extra-curricular activities.
- We want our curriculum to be meaningful for children giving them a real sense of purpose when they learn.
- We are committed to the development of the ‘whole child’ and acknowledge literacy and numeracy skills are essential but are only part of the education jigsaw. All pieces are important.
- We want children to leave Pinewood with a thirst for learning, to be independent thinkers and to care for the environment with self-worth and confidence, with a care for the world and care for each other.
- We want our school values to be embedded within our children and we want to educate them to be ‘good people’ who care for others and the community, who care for all things around them, including animals and the environment.
- We aim for our curriculum to be skills based and knowledge rich. We also recognise the need for intelligent repetition as nothing has been learnt until it goes into your long term memory.

#### Yearly curriculum/Long term plan

This contains all of the skills and knowledge we want the children to gain over a year in all areas of learning. It is split into half terms and this informs our medium term plans. It shows the books we will be using and the overarching themes.

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 taken from the long term plan to ensure all areas and outcomes are being covered.

Short Term Plans are weekly and are adapted daily where appropriate. These provide the detailed plans for enhanced provision which is linked to our children’s needs and interests. Learning objectives are clearly stated. They include details of activities, teacher led or independent activities and differentiation for groups of children.

#### Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Pinewood is given great emphasis. We often bring visitors into school. We want to provide opportunities for children to be curious, explore and try new things. These include; visits from the police, fire service, nurses, the CORAM SCARF team come in to discuss being healthy, pet week where the children meet and hold a range of animals, hatching chicks/ducklings, hatching butterflies and watching frogspawn grow and change into frogs. Visitors 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. We also go on a yearly visit to the farm in F2, linked to our topic.

#### Enabling Environments

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. Table top planning serves to enhance our continuous provision.

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 safe.

### **Assessment**

The following is taken from the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (1<sup>st</sup> November 2024)

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers, and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. This section sets out the assessment requirements group and school-based providers must meet, as well as guidance on assessment.

Assessment should not involve long breaks from interaction with children or require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. Practitioners are not required to prove this through collection of any physical evidence.

Practitioners should keep parents and/or carers up to date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

Our curriculum is built on a progress model and we focus our assessment on key milestones in that model. We need to be sure that children are secure in what they know and can do, before introducing them to something new. 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.

Observation of children engaging in their own learning is our main form of assessment. We pride ourselves on knowing the children well. We take photographs and videos where appropriate which are logged on a DOJO app. We use these to support our judgements. Parents are encouraged to contribute and use DOJO to send us photographs and videos of their children's learning at home.

Moderation is rigorous and regular. Informal conversations are held daily about children and more formal moderation happens termly.

There is a statutory Reception Baseline Assessment which began in September 2021. The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of early mathematics and literacy, communication and language. It is delivered in English and is administered within the first six weeks of a pupil starting reception.

### **Partnership 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 to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. We have an 'open door policy' and parents are able to message their child's class teacher directly through the DOJO app.

We endeavour to invite parents into school on a regular basis. We offer exciting events such as reading assemblies, art exhibitions, Valentine's day dinners, Christmas plays, Easter parades etc....

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. In F1, we give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child. Over the first few days at the school we encourage parents and carers to stay 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 within the first few days to go through their booklet and learn more about the child and their family.

All children new to nursery or F2 receive a home visit where 2 members of staff go and see the children in their home environment.

In reception, parents are invited to attend a meeting in July to discuss their child coming into full time education. There are also 2 twilight transition sessions.

Reception children have 2 parent evenings throughout the year where the parents are invited in to discuss their child's learning. In F1, there is a parents meeting on entry to the unit and one on exit.

We use an app for parents (previously Seesaw moving over to Dojo in September 2023) and this has been an invaluable resource for building relationships with parents and for engaging them in their child's learning. We encourage parents to share information and achievements from home so we are working in partnership. We use it to let the parents know what their child is learning about in school.

We closely monitor parental engagement. Parents who are not engaging are identified and actions are taken.

### **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 (2023) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS\\_statutory\\_framework\\_for\\_group\\_and\\_school\\_based\\_providers.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)

Members of staff use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in year group learning journeys, on class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the website, the DOJO app and in school 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 and Dave Armstrong Jones, school business manager are the Designated Safeguarding Leads in school and all concerns are discussed with them. Rachel Makey is our safeguarding governor. We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by explicitly teaching children about the importance of eating healthy food and the importance of brushing their teeth.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

### **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
- Aspirational performance management target setting for all staff by head teacher
- Monitoring by lead teacher
- Moderation of children within the Foundation Stage is done by staff in school
- Monitoring by the head teacher and governors.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Rebecca Guy, EYFS Lead Teacher every year. This will be available on the school website.

Next review date: February 2026