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Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and should receive appropriate support to reach their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

In our school, all children join us, if they are ready and able, full time, from the very first day of the school year. Where parents and/ or early years settings feel that isn't appropriate, we will explore this with them to ensure an excellent start to school for all pupils.

At Pensford Primary School we:

- Promote our school values of Happiness, Excellence, Ambition, Respect and Togetherness, with children's Happiness being the thing we value first and foremost. This includes promoting and supporting children's mental and physical health.
- Promote children's independence
- Promote outdoor and physical learning
- Promote the safeguarding and welfare of children, through our strong safeguarding procedures.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum follows the latest Development Matters document, and is based upon the seven key features of effective practice:

- . The best for every child
- High-quality care
- The Curriculum: what we want the children to learn
- Pedagogy: helping children to learn
- Assessment: checking what children have learnt
- Self-regulation and executive function
- Partnership with parents

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these seven features.

The best for every child, high-quality care and inclusion

At Pensford Primary School we recognise that every child is unique and that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Pensford Primary School are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. We give children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning.

We aim to provide high-quality inclusive education for all children. This includes identifying needs and disabilities early on so that extra help can be provided and no child is at a disadvantage when accessing their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Welfare, Pedagogy and Self-regulation

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. Our approach to developing our children's understanding of choice and themselves as individuals aims to develop their ability to self-regulate and become independent, focused learners.

"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." *Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage March 2017*

We recognise the children as individual learners who are all able to make progress when challenged and supported in a way to suit their learning needs. At Pensford Primary School we offer a mix of learning through play, planning and supporting next steps in the moment, direct teaching/ modelling, classroom provision that allows learning to continue beyond adult input.

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Please also refer to our [Safeguarding policy](#).

Partnership with parents

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- . Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- . Offering children the opportunity to spend time in the Foundation Stage before starting school, usually in the form of a morning and an afternoon session.
- . Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries at the end of every day.
- . Sharing regularly the children's interests and achievements with parents through the Tapestry online learning diaries.
- . Offering three parent/teacher consultation evenings per year.
- . Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation stage.
- . Developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.
- . Encouraging parents to talk, play and read with their children.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

We have very strong links with various feeder pre-schools and the early years teacher(s) visit the children in their preschool settings during the summer term before they start school in the autumn. During the visit each individual child and their transition process into school is discussed.

Learning and Development: The curriculum and helping children to learn

At Pensford Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. We use the Development Matters Educational Programmes to guide our curriculum planning, which feeds directly into our Whole School Curriculum. We consider our EYFS curriculum to be a separate plan of what we would like the children to learn in the Foundation Stage, but one which will provide the first steps in enabling our children to build their future learning on as they continue through our school.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are called the prime areas.

Prime Areas:

- . Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- . Communication and Language
- . Physical Development

Children are also supported in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- . Literacy
- . Mathematics
- . Understanding the world
- . Expressive arts and design

We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations.

In their play children learn at their highest level."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Linking the seven key features of effective practice to the themes to the prime and specific areas of learning, are The Characteristics of Effective Learning.

These are characteristics which highlight how the children are engaging with the people and the world around them and are named as: Playing and Exploring; Active Learning; Creating and Thinking Critically.

At Pensford Primary School we ensure the children's learning opportunities are structured to encourage all three characteristics. This enables the children to move through the Foundation Stage, supported by a holistic approach to their development – allowing the whole child to grow and thrive.

Enabling Environments

At Pensford Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Foundation Stage staff use observations to aid their planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. We notice what the children are doing at the time and where possible, support their next steps in the moment. It helps us identify needs early on and provide the support the children want when they require it.

These observations also lead to planning future provision to support children's needs and interests. The majority of the children's learning should come through play, however the children are also taught essential skills and knowledge such as phonics and number skills for a short period of time daily.

We assess the children's communication, literacy and mathematical attainment within the first 6 weeks as part of the Department for Education's reception baseline assessment. This happens during short one-to-one practical tasks using physical resources. We also carry out our own baseline assessments to cover the Prime Areas and Specific Areas of learning and much of this is done through observation of the children at play and in response to the direct teaching provided. We only assess what we feel to be useful in helping us get to know the children and their learning needs.

The Planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. At the end of their foundation year in school the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor classroom area. At the times when staffing levels and weather conditions allow it, the free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active. The children are encouraged to look after their environment and we are proud to have an outdoor space and garden which inspires this.