

PEN MILL INFANT & NURSERY ACADEMY



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY 2023-2024

| Version | Amendments | Date of Approval/Issue |
|---------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1.0 | | 2 nd June 2020 |
| 2.0 | Adopted new early year's framework. | 28 th June 2021 |
| 3.0 | Change to show sometimes we have more than one class. Not using Birth to five to support practise. No school nurse and added information about our PFSA. Focus is on non-statutory documents instead of referencing both documents. | 29 th March 2022 |
| 4.0 | Change to wording 'Characteristics of Effective Teaching Learning' We are no longer moderated by the Local Authority. We no longer do standalone guided reading sessions they are part of our daily phonics lessons. EYFS Lead attends the cluster meeting in the Summer term for moderation purposes. | 3 rd March 2023 |
| 5.0 | New EYFS Statutory Framework 2023 | 21 st February 2024 |
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Signed: 

Chair of Governors

Print name: Iain Crabtree

Date: 26/02/2024

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Our Vision and Intent

At Pen Mill, we aim to provide every child with the skills to become a happy, independent and curious lifelong learner. Our priority is that our provision provides a high level of engagement and active learning through a range of skill-based activities.

Our Principles and Implementation

At Pen Mill, we strive to meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible future life chances.

Key Requirements

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS DfE 2017)

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being by providing:

- quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- a secure foundation which creates learning and development opportunities that are planned around the interest and needs of the children, informed by regular assessments and reviews;
- partnership working between practitioners, parents and carers
- equality of opportunity ensuring that there is no discrimination and every child is included and supported'

The guiding principles which shape our practice are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Importance of Learning and Development

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At Pen Mill Infant and Nursery Academy we recognise that every child is unique. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We want our children to be independent and self-motivated learners, encouraging the children to adapt their work, think critically and take risks with their learning.

Our EYFS Curriculum:

- is at the heart of our learning journey approach
- is distinctive, innovative and strategically planned with the individual pupils in mind
- is reviewed in the light of national developments, new thinking and research and development
- introduces challenging, engaging and real-life problems
- strives to encourage and develop a love of learning
- let's learning happen within a child centred approach
- ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning at every stage of development
- ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning in every area of the EYFS curriculum
- ensures all areas of learning are regarded with the same level of importance and are interlinked in learning
- It includes fundamental British values to teach children a sense of self and belonging; enabling them to learn and stay true to the values that make people good human beings
- ensures that children learn to live together peacefully, with each of them playing a valuable role in the multicultural world in which they live

The Reception and Nursery classes follows the guidance outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2023). The EYFS Framework (2023) sets the standards to make sure that children aged birth to five learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. Priorities for the new EYFS are based on improving outcomes for children aged 5 especially in language and literacy and to reduce workload for staff. Alongside this we shall be using the non-statutory guidance 'Development Matters' published to support our practise. This will help to ensure quality and consistency, a secure foundation, partnership working and equality of opportunity.

The above documents shape what we teach and details the specifics of our setting and school.

The EYFS Framework (2023) includes seven areas of learning and development, all

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of which are important and included in the curriculum taught. There are three prime areas, which are seen to underpin all of the basics and support the other four specific areas of the curriculum.

The Prime Areas of Learning and Development

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development. This includes Early Learning Goals: Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships.
2. Communication and Language This includes Early Learning Goals: Listening Attention and Understanding as well as Speaking.
3. Physical Development. This includes Early Learning Goals: Gross motor skills and Fine Motor Skills.

The Specific Areas of Learning and Development

4. Literacy. The Early Learning Goals for Literacy include: Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing.
5. Mathematics. The Early Learning Goals for Maths include Number and Numerical Patterns,
6. Understanding of the World. The Early Learning Goals for Understanding the World include, Past and Present and People Culture and Communities and The Natural World.
7. Expressive Arts and Design. The Early Learning Goals for this include Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Through regular observations, we will discover children's interests and assess what children know. Also fundamental to our practice is to assess how children learn and it is our duty to report to parents their children's individual dispositions and attitudes to learning. This will be assessed using the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning which are:

Playing and exploring – engagement

Children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'.

Active learning – motivation

Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.

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Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning/Educational Programmes

Through planning, teachers ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day. During child-initiated activities the adults' role is to show an interest in the children's ideas, build conversation, facilitate and share ideas and model different skills. Such interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and therefore guides new learning. This is then re-fed back into the planning in order to ensure that the topics being covered reflect the children's fascinations currently within the class. Loops of learning are important and it is essential that we are constantly revisiting prior teaching and learning. We use key texts and books to also help guide our planning, this allows us to make further links in the children's learning.

Direct Teaching

At specific times in the day the children will take part in an activity that is teacher led. Such sessions include daily phonics lessons, daily literacy and daily maths/counting experiences, as well as teaching new skills to support their learning within the classroom environment and also in our extended outdoor classroom.

All direct taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each group using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and, in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

Learning Through Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. Children learn best from activities and experiences that they have initiated and play with peers is important for children's development.

We carefully plan our environment and provide opportunities to reflect these interests to inspire them further, whilst also making sure that children have the opportunity to extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching.

Constant opportunities are provided for children to be able to make their own decisions and choices in order that they can become independent, confident and happy learners as soon as is possible for each individual child. Some children will need gentle encouragement in this step as they become comfortable in their new

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setting.

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules.

Children at Pen Mill soon grasp the ‘Golden Rules’ we have in our Foundation Stage. They see the high expectations we have in every aspect of our day and delight in trying to meet these. 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. They enjoy risk taking in a controlled and fun way. Our ‘Forest School’ experiences are prime examples of this.

Giving children the opportunity to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. With adult support this process enhances children’s ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults can support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. Children have the choice to be outside.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress (Impact)

Assessment is an essential and important part of the Early Years for children’s learning and development. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain an understanding of each child’s level of understanding. These can be through observations, photographic evidence, examples of work, parental conversations. Assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during free flow times when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and adapt any future learning.

Observations are taken using the Tapestry App, which allows staff to take photos, videos and to make notes while observing what the children are doing or saying. From such observations we can ascertain what the next steps are for the children. We are then able to share these experiences with the children’s parents on an almost daily basis. This is a two-way process whereby parents may input observations of their own, add comments to post and like observations they can view. As it is an app based ‘Online Learning Journey’, it is highly accessible as parents can access on mobile phones, tablets as well as on computers.

Children at Pen Mill Infant and Nursery Academy are assessed at these stages of

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their learning as part of our duty:

- 1) Age 2 progress check (When turned aged 2 in our Nursery)
- 2) RBA Reception Baseline Assessment (September on starting Reception)
- 3) Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (June at the end of the Reception Year)

In our Nursery the teacher is responsible for the Age 2 progress check. This is a statutory document and should be shared with parents. This is also moderated by the Early Years Lead. This gives a brief overview of the child's development and can be used to help Health Visitors and other professionals make judgements about external support. This is also an indicator of whether children are working at Age Related Expectations.

On entry to Reception a baseline assessment is carried out for each child and at the end of each half term assessments are collated to track how well the children are progressing. The RBA (Reception Baseline Assessment) is statutory from September 2021 and needs to be taken in the first six weeks of children starting Reception. The assessment takes approximately 20 minutes and will assess the children's skills in Communication, Language and Literacy as well as Numeracy. Alongside this we will also use our own baseline materials to help make a much more informed judgement. Opportunities for parents' meetings are provided in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms to provide information about children's progress and to discuss the children's learning journey from Tapestry, to talk about children's strengths, achievements, interests and next steps. These form the basis for the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school. On-going teacher assessments are undertaken in line with the Foundation Stage Profile and these form the basis for the end of year report to parents.

We ensure our end of EYFS assessments are reliable through:

- our knowledge of the child gained through observation and interaction
- our environment enables the child to flourish to their full capacity
- our assessments ensure a range of contributors e.g. parents, PFSA, Speech and Language Therapy, and other relevant adults
- in-house moderation across the EYFS team
- EYFS Lead attends the cluster meeting in the Summer Term
- Collaboration with Early Years Learning Partnerships (Yeovil Area)
- Support from other outstanding schools in our Area.

Assessments at the end of the EYFS are reportable to the LA, parents and shared with the Year 1 teachers who are about to teach them.

Special educational needs and disability (SEND) and Inclusion

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At Pen Mill we value the diversity of all children in our school. We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

Assessments and teacher observations are used to identify children who may have specific needs within the first half term and ongoing through each child's primary education. Results of assessments are used to ensure that a differentiated curriculum is offered to such children to meet their needs. In extreme circumstances children may be assessed using the Developmental Journal. This breaks down the EYFS into even smaller steps and makes learning achievable for the child.

Safeguarding and Children's Welfare

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. We aim to ensure that all children feel happy, safe and secure through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our school has rigorous Safeguarding and Welfare policy and procedures that are used to identify anyone at risk or harm of radicalisation that sets out clear procedures for reporting any concerns. See our Schools Safeguarding Children Policy and Child Protection Procedures available on the school's website. Staff are aware of Safeguarding Leads and Deputies in school. My Concern is used to document safeguarding issues and provides us with a chronology of events in one place.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to teach children that, in society as in a classroom, there is a need for boundaries, rules and limits to which we all need to adhere to help us stay safe. We aim to teach children to be consciously aware of their feelings and the feelings of others and how to manage their own behaviour by identifying behavioural issues and using them as a teaching moment.

We also aim to teach our children to take risks whilst learning how to recognise and avoid hazards. Should accidents occur an emergency contact form is completed for all children on entry into school, which includes medical, personal and social details.

Other than minor cuts and bruises, all accidents on school premises are recorded, a bump to the head will result in a phone call home. Minor injuries are reported to parents at the end of the day.

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Induction and Transition

Parents of children who are offered a place in Reception are invited to an induction meeting in May. Children visit for three sessions before the summer holidays as part of transition.

The Reception lead visits all children in their current nurseries and settings before starting school. All children are offered a minimum of three taster sessions. More sessions will be made available if it is deemed necessary.

We endeavour to be flexible wherever it is possible in order that all children can attend three sessions. All children in Reception start in September on a slightly staggered basis. Children begin by staying for a short session and building up to full sessions, over two weeks. We also hold a parents meeting after the first two weeks in September to discuss how the children have settled.

To ensure the best possible transition we:

- value the parent as the first educator of their child
- make contact with our feeder pre-school within our new intake to discuss essential information on every child
- share important information about our school during new-parents meeting
- use written information sent by pre-schools to inform early planning
- hold a series of 'welcome/taster' sessions for parents and children in June and July
- share information in a transition meeting(s) with key adults for children with additional needs
- meet with every parent and child before beginning school to share important information from home and school (wherever this is possible).

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The school recognises the huge importance of establishing effective relationships with parents/carers in ensuring the children achieve their full potential. Parental involvement is actively encouraged. Parents are very welcome to chat to staff prior to the start of the school day or at the end of the school day giving them opportunities to discuss any concerns with staff.

Staff ensure that parents are well informed about the curriculum their child is experiencing through Tapestry, home school diary, notes, letters, newsletters, notice boards and the school blog. Staff take the opportunity at the end of the day to talk to

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parents about significant achievements or any concerns.

Parents are invited to Inspire which are workshops based around a theme and Celebrate and Evaluate so parents can see children's work in their books.

Equal Opportunities

Staff ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. They will be encouraged to respect similarities and differences within cultures other than their own. The school seeks to develop tolerance and concern for others.

Monitoring

The Early Years Leader is responsible for the monitoring of this policy. Areas for development will be incorporated into the SEF and the EYFS Action Plan.

The Reception Team

Our Reception team consists of experienced teachers and teaching assistants who are skilled in early years teaching. They understand the needs of the young child and how best to create an environment to enable a love of learning.

Our aim is that it is hard to distinguish between teacher and teaching assistants in our setting. Everyone works towards the same goal: to ensure every child achieves to their highest ability by learning through play and enjoyment.