



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) Policy

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Owner: EYFS Leader

1. Aims and Principles

At Penshurst Primary School, we aim to provide a high-quality Early Years education that gives children the best possible start to their school life. We follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which sets standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. Through our school values of '**Work Hard, Be Kind and Dream Big**' we ensure that teaching is informed by an understanding of how young children learn, including the Characteristics of Effective Learning, ensuring children develop sustained attention, active engagement and critical thinking.

We place a strong emphasis on the following Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) core principles:

- **Every child is unique and capable of learning.**
We recognise that each child is an individual who brings their own strengths, interests, and experiences to their learning. All children are valued and supported to develop resilience, confidence and independence, enabling them to achieve their full potential regardless of their starting points.
- **Children learn through positive relationships.**
We prioritise the development of warm, respectful, and trusting relationships between children and adults. Through consistent, nurturing interactions, staff create a secure environment where children feel safe to explore, take risks, and develop their social and emotional skills.
- **Children thrive in enabling environments.**
We provide a carefully planned, stimulating, and well-resourced environment that supports learning both indoors and outdoors. Our provision is designed to encourage exploration, curiosity, and independence, ensuring children have access to meaningful opportunities that extend and deepen their learning.
- **Children develop at different rates.**
We understand that children's development does not follow a fixed pattern and that each child progresses in their own way and at their own pace. Our teaching and provision are responsive and inclusive, with regular assessment used to adapt support and challenge to meet individual needs.

2. Learning and Development

At Penshurst Primary School, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other.

We understand the importance of play-based learning, enabling children to explore, investigate, and think critically.

The EYFS curriculum is structured around seven areas of learning:

The three prime areas that enable our children to develop are:

- Communication and language (Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships)
- Physical Development (Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills)

The four other specific areas are:

- Literacy (Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing)
- Mathematics (Numbers and Numerical Patterns)
- Understanding the World (Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World)
- Expressive Arts and Designs (Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive)

3. Teaching and Learning Approach

At Penshurst, learning is delivered through a balance of child-initiated play and carefully planned adult-led activities, ensuring that children have opportunities to explore independently while also benefiting from direct teaching. In addition, whole-class teaching is used to introduce key concepts and shared learning experiences, while small group teaching provides targeted support and challenge to meet the needs of individual learners.

We provide a language-rich environment that promotes the development of communication and vocabulary as a foundation for all learning. Structured Phonics, Reading, Writing and Mathematics sessions are delivered daily to ensure children develop secure early skills and knowledge. Staff use high-quality interactions to extend learning, modelling language and thinking to deepen understanding. Planning is responsive and informed by children's interests as well as their identified next steps, ensuring learning is purposeful and engaging. We actively promote independence, resilience and curiosity, enabling children to take ownership of their learning and develop positive attitudes. This approach ensures that children are well prepared for a successful transition into Key Stage 1.

3a. Phonics (Little Wandle)

Phonics lessons follow the Little Wandle programme and are taught daily. Lessons follow a consistent structure to support children in securing and applying their phonics knowledge:

- Revisiting and reviewing previously taught graphemes, phonemes and tricky words.
- Teaching and practising new learning.
- Blending to read words and sentences.
- Segmenting to spell words.
- Applying phonics skills in reading and writing activities.

Teaching follows the Little Wandle principle of revisit, teach, practise and apply, enabling children to build fluency and automaticity. The taught content follows an 'I do, we do, you do' approach, with the teacher providing clear modelling of correct pronunciation and articulation of phonemes. Children are encouraged to practise blending and segmenting skills throughout lessons, and new vocabulary encountered in words, phrases and texts is explicitly taught and discussed to develop language and comprehension. Assessment is ongoing, with regular review and retrieval opportunities built into daily lessons. Additional 'keep-up' sessions are delivered immediately for any child who requires further practice to keep pace with the programme. Fully decodable reading

books matched to each child's phonic knowledge are used to support the development of accuracy, fluency and confidence in reading.

3b. CUSP Early Foundations

CUSP lessons will follow the CUSP Early Foundations structured story time planning which uses the following structure for each focus book: introduce the text; introduce key vocabulary; reading the text; practice fluency/oracy/drama; thinking harder; and provision enhancement to consolidate.

1. Connect: teachers connect with what pupils already know with what they are about to learn, activating prior knowledge.
2. Explain: teachers explicitly introduce the text and instruct identified key vocabulary for that day.
3. Example: teachers model fluent reading of the text and pause when the key vocabulary word has been reached to explain the vocabulary meaning within context of the story.
4. Attempt: through guided practice, teachers break down key language to provide deeper understanding of the text.
5. Apply: learners can practice 'thinking harder' through deliberate questioning and paired partner talk.
6. Challenge: all learners are challenged to deepen their knowledge of the text by taking part in provision enhancement activities/tasks.

CUSP Early Foundations lessons are taught daily. The deliberate vocabulary instruction follows the 'I do, we do, you do' approach following a correct pronunciation of the word. Each week a new text will be introduced, and the same text will be read daily for the week to build on fluency and deepen understanding.

3c. EYFS Mathematics

EYFS Mathematics delivery follows the Mastering Number planning and White Rose Education Maths planning within Reception. In Nursery, Master the Curriculum planning is used to enhance learning alongside regular opportunities to develop number knowledge through songs, rhymes and practical activities.

Mastering Number and White Rose Education Maths are used together within Reception to provide a cohesive and progressive approach to mathematics. Through a combination of structured whole-class teaching, practical exploration and mathematical discussion, children develop a secure understanding of number, numerical patterns and mathematical concepts. The programmes support the development of strong number sense, fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills, building firm foundations for future learning. Master the Curriculum resources are used within Nursery to enhance mathematical learning and provide opportunities for children to deepen and apply their understanding through practical and engaging activities.

- Mathematics lessons are taught daily.
- Learning focuses on the areas of Number, Numerical Patterns, and Shape, Space and Measure.
- Lessons are carefully sequenced and build on previously taught knowledge and skills.
- Deliberate mathematical vocabulary instruction is embedded within daily teaching.
- Retrieval practice is incorporated regularly to support children in recalling and applying prior learning.
- Children are provided with practical, hands-on learning experiences that enable them to explore, investigate and develop mathematical concepts.
- Opportunities to apply mathematical learning are woven throughout the continuous provision and wider curriculum.

4. Enabling Environments

Our learning environments are safe, stimulating and carefully designed to promote independence and purposeful engagement. They are well-resourced, accessible and support children to explore, develop and take ownership of their learning.

Children are encouraged to:

- Select and use resources independently
- Engage in sustained, purposeful play
- Use indoor and outdoor spaces effectively to support their learning

5. Inclusion and SEND

We are committed to inclusive practice, ensuring that all children are supported to achieve their full potential. Additional support is provided where needed, with staff working closely with the SENDCo and a range of external agencies to meet individual needs effectively. Parents and carers are fully involved in decision-making, recognising their vital role in supporting their child's development. Concerns about progress are identified and addressed promptly through a collaborative approach, ensuring that appropriate support is put in place without delay.

6. Monitoring Learning

At the end of Reception, each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals as either 'expected' or 'emerging'. Continuous monitoring and assessment informs planning and supports individual progress. If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the SENDCO in order to access additional educational support.

7. Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is a priority at Penshurst Primary School, and all practices are underpinned by a strong culture of vigilance and accountability. We ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorously adhered to in line with current statutory guidance, and that all staff receive regular, high-quality training to maintain a secure understanding of their responsibilities. Robust risk assessments are undertaken routinely to promote a safe learning environment, and clear procedures are in place to respond effectively to accidents and emergencies. We also maintain strict protocols to ensure the safe use of mobile phones and cameras, the secure storage and administration of medicines, and the accurate and timely recording of all incidents, ensuring that the welfare of children remains paramount at all times.

8. Health and Safety

We maintain a safe, secure and healthy environment that supports children's wellbeing and enables them to learn effectively. This includes:

- Providing clean, well-maintained and hygienic spaces
- Ensuring children have regular access to fresh drinking water
- Promoting healthy eating and positive lifestyles.
- Teaching the children the importance of personal hygiene, including effective handwashing, as part of their daily routines.
- Participation in the free milk scheme for children under five
- Providing free fruit as part of a healthy snack

Children are supervised at all times by suitably qualified and trained staff to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

We follow clear and robust procedures to promote health and safety, including established protocols for first aid, fire safety and evacuation, and ongoing risk assessment and management. These procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and compliant with statutory requirements.

All health and safety practices are implemented in line with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). At least one person with a current paediatric first aid qualification is on the premises and available at all times when children are present and accompanies children on outings ensuring that immediate and appropriate care can be provided in the event of an accident or emergency.

9. Behaviour and Wellbeing

We promote positive behaviour and wellbeing through a consistent, nurturing approach that supports children's social and emotional development. Staff model and reinforce high expectations, including respect, kindness and positive interactions, while explicitly teaching children about appropriate choices and the impact of their actions.

Children are supported to:

- Build positive relationships with peers and adults
- Recognise, understand and manage their emotions
- Develop confidence, independence and resilience

This approach ensures that children feel safe, valued and ready to learn, supporting both their wellbeing and their engagement in learning.

10. Working with Parents

We value strong, collaborative partnerships with parents and carers, recognising them as children's first and most influential educators. We are committed to working closely with families to ensure a shared approach to supporting each child's learning, development and wellbeing. We provide regular, meaningful updates on children's progress and actively encourage parental involvement in all aspects of school life. A range of opportunities for open communication are established, including both formal and informal discussions, to ensure that parents feel informed, supported and able to contribute. We actively invite parents to share information about their child's experiences and achievements at home, ensuring that they play a central role in shaping their child's learning journey.

11. Transition

We work in close partnership with local nurseries to gather comprehensive information about each child prior to starting school. During the summer term, the SENDCo and Early Years Leader liaise with nursery staff and visit settings to observe children in familiar environments, ensuring a clear understanding of their needs, strengths and interests. Children are supported through 'Stay and Play' transition sessions, and home visits are offered, where appropriate, to build strong relationships with families.

To support transition into Key Stage 1, Year 1 teachers visit Reception to observe learning and engage with children. Pupil Progress Meetings between Reception and Year 1 staff ensure that end-of-year data and individual needs are shared effectively, enabling a smooth and well-informed transition. Children are also given opportunities to meet their new teacher, helping them to feel confident and prepared for the next stage of their learning.