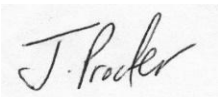




EYFS Policy

Review cycle	1 / 2 / 3 years	Date: September 2025
Approved by	Executive Headteacher	
Changes made in this review cycle	2024: Some additions to sections relating to home learning and to the table outlining the different provisions linked to the core and specific areas of learning. 2025: Edits made regarding the 2025 framework updates, and to reflect the changes made to planning documents.	
Linked policies	Teaching and learning Subject leadership Book & Marking Policy	
Signed		Date: September 2025
Position	Executive Headteacher	
Date of next Review	September 2026	

Introduction

Early Years Education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. The provision within the Pioneer Federation is based on the understanding that children learn best when they learn through a means of making connections, through play and adult interaction. Planning is developed that allows for rich child initiated learning, alongside well-planned and highly intentional adult directed learning experiences.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Early Years across the Pioneer Federation.

The Nature of Early Years Education

In this policy, the Early Years education refers to children from the age of 3 to 5 in the Nursery and Reception classes. This is referred to in the Foundation Stage curriculum, which also covers pre-school settings 'Birth to Five'. Early Years education is concerned with the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the individual child, with no area standing in isolation from the others.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum across our settings are three **Characteristics of Effective Learning**.

- **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

The EYFS has four guiding principles:

- Every child is a **Unique Child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- We provide an environment that develops **Positive Relationships**, encouraging children to be strong and resilient.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- Children benefit from a **strong partnership** between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- We have an awareness and knowledge of the fact that children develop and learn at different rates and this must underpin our planning and the way in which we interact with children and extend their learning.

Entitlement

The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (which includes areas of learning and development) have been updated and were published by the government in July 2025. These areas of learning are used when observing, assessing and planning for a child's individual needs.

There are seven areas of learning, which have sub sections to focus learning. The seven areas are also split into two categories, **Prime Areas** and **Specific Areas**.

1. The **three prime areas** apply to all children and provide the solid foundations for accessing other areas of learning.
2. The **four specific areas** build upon the three prime areas to facilitate and extend learning, igniting curiosity and enthusiasm.

The prime areas are:

- **Personal, Social and emotional development.**
Self-Regulation
Managing Self
Building Relationships
- **Physical development**
Gross Motor Skills
Fine Motor Skills
- **Communication and language.**
Listening, Attention and Understanding.
Speaking.

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy**
Comprehension
Word Reading
Writing
- **Mathematics**
Number
Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World**
Past and Present
People, Culture and Communities
The Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design**
Creating with Materials
Being Imaginative and Expressive.

Planning, Implementation and Play

Throughout the EYFS, we plan activities to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum and lifelong learning. Teaching and learning will take place within the classroom, outside areas and in the local area. Within these areas, children will participate in a variety of activities, both with an adult and independently.

We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Play can be enjoyed and challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the inter-connected Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards the Early Learning Goals.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, guidance and directed teaching, children will be able to,

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk to rehearse their feelings
- Take risks and make mistakes
- Think creatively and imaginatively
- Communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
- Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Adults in the setting will support play and learning by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment
- Supporting children's learning through planned play and directed teaching
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.
- Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning.
- Narrating children's play.
- Exposing children to a wide range of stories, poems and genres of text.
- Encouraging children to use a range of vocabulary.
- Asking questions about children's play.

Each child is viewed as an individual, with specific needs being met in appropriate ways, according to their stage of development. Individuality is encouraged, independence is fostered, and each child is encouraged to achieve their best.

Adults will be aware of the importance language and vocabulary has on children's development and keep this in the forefront of their minds.

The Role of Parents

Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with staff and become involved in their child's education. The Foundation Stage Profile is discussed at regular intervals, including parent's evenings, and parents are informed of their child's achievements. Parents are encouraged to contribute through a range of strategies', which may differ between schools. These contributions may include discussions around the children's achievements outside of the school environment, which are then celebrated with their peers in the classroom, show and tell, celebration assemblies, or termly questionnaires. Parents are also invited into school to share the children's learning journeys with them.

Prior to starting Reception, the parents of pre-school children will receive the Early Years Policy, information packs, including the school prospectus, and starting school booklet. Children and parents are invited to a variety of Stay and Play sessions (varied across the federation) in the final term of the year before they begin school. An individual meeting with parent and child is arranged during the first week of autumn term either in school or as a home visit (Term 1).

Admission

Children are admitted in September for school, on a full-time or part-time base, depending on a professional discussion between parent and teacher. A quickly staggered admission system is used in order to settle the children comfortably, enabling them to gain confidence and familiarity with the routines in their new setting. A buddy system is used, pairing the new Reception children with Year 6 children, supporting the transition to school life. Buddies help school starters to line up, manage the lunch hall and support them in the playground.

Children in Nursery are admitted throughout the year, following their second birthday or when parents choose to start nursery. This transition is developed and planned in partnership with parents around children's individual needs.

Inclusion

At Pioneer we promote equality of access to the whole curriculum for all learners. The EYFS team is aware of the physical, sensory, cognitive and emotional development and needs of learners. When planning learning objectives, a variety of activities and experiences are planned to meet the needs of different learners.

In accordance with the school policy of special educational needs, all children with a special need are identified as early as possible and an intervention strategy put in place to help the child deal with or overcome their particular special needs.

The EYFS team is well placed to liaise with parents and other early years settings to help identify any special needs specific children may have. The school has established relations with all special needs providers and a number of agencies are regularly in communication with our setting. On entry to school and nursery, parents are asked to inform the staff of any medical conditions or other important information we may need to be aware of. We reinforce the importance of equality of access to education for all children of all aptitudes and abilities.

Planning

Planning follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. These curriculum plans have been developed alongside the education programmes and practitioner knowledge of the cohort, child development, and wider learning opportunities. Long term, termly and weekly plans ensure activities and all areas of learning are covered both outside and inside of the classrooms. In addition to this formal planning, staff across the federation will take account of pupil interests and passions, and will adapt the environment and learning to utilise these interests and engage pupils in play and learning.

Termly topics and big questions are introduced through wow starters or stories and are drawn together and ended through celebration.

Teaching and Nursery assistants are consulted, advised and kept informed of planning and work closely with teachers to assess, monitor and deliver learning objectives.

Assessment, Reporting and Recording

Class Teachers, teaching assistants and Nursery staff are continuously observing and assessing the reception children. Records of observations and assessments are recorded within the children's learning books; Mathematics, Literacy and a 'Learning Journey'. These are used as an 'assessment for learning' tool to inform planning and future learning and development. The EYFS team uses both summative and formative assessment trackers on Arbor to assess children who are 'on track' to meet the end of age assessments in Nursery and the Early Learning Goals in Reception. Staff use assessment guides such as Development Matters and Birth to 5, to support discussions, assessments and next steps.

Moderation style discussions take place within the federation and with local schools and nurseries to check that all assessment judgements are secure. The end of year report to parents/carers is a summary of the data collected throughout the year. It informs the parents/carers of whether the children have met or not met the end of year Early Learning Goals, the progress they have made, and the next steps the children need to make in order to develop even further. Reports will also include a summary of the children's Characteristics of Learning. Once these reports have been presented, parents have the opportunity to discuss them at the end of year reports meeting.

These reports and assessments also form the basis of transition discussions and support into Year 1. When children are moving from Nursery onto School, the child's Key Person completes a 'moving on assessment' form to inform the child's new settings of their strengths and areas of development.

Learning Journeys

As a federation, we have made the decision to continue using learning journeys to celebrate and record children's learning achievements in EYFS. Part of the rationale for this, is that it is challenging for staff to retain evidence of progression without it being recorded and evidenced specifically. It also secures against loss of access to knowledge due to staff moving/leaving or illness. Children in our Reception and Nursery classes regularly get to enjoy and review their learning journeys and often choose pieces of learning to include. The work in the Learning Journeys is shared with parents at various points in the year, and enables them to see and celebrate the progress in pupils' learning.

There is an expectation that these Learning Journeys also provide a resource for anyone to be able to pick up and gather a child's ability or assessment in an area of learning. The learning journeys are built using examples of children's work with adults, in continuous provision and will also contain observations containing pupil voice, photos, and whole class or school events such curriculum days. The Learning Journeys will be individual to a child and reflect their learning journey and interests.

The evidence in the Learning Journeys should cover the broad and balanced EYFS curriculum. There should be an equal balance of evidence from staff working within the class and there may also be evidence from wider school staff and home. The amount and quality of evidence should be of the highest standard of presentation (see book policy) and this standard/amount/variety should calibrate across the federation. This consistency is important for moderation activities across Pioneer. EYFS teachers are given the professional courtesy to ensure that a good range of evidence is provided for each pupil to help formulate judgements of progress and achievement. If leadership are concerned about the range and quality of evidence provided by a staff member, they may define a set amount of evidence needed for that staff member over a period of time.

Curriculum Books

As a federation, we also use individual Literacy and Mathematics books to track and record children's progress in these areas. These books will contain a variety of photographs, written work, observations and 'wow' moments, specific to these areas. The content of these books will reflect the ability and progress of the individual child.

Nursery

One of our settings has an onsite Nursery which also has its own range of specific policies linked to situations and roles suited to the needs of younger children, including nappy changing and the role of the key person, copies of these can be found on the website. Nursery provision provides the starting foundation for pupils experiences, building relationships and developing children and active, curious learners. Our Nursery team work in partnership with the Reception teachers all year round and are continually adapting and reviewing provision around their unique cohorts of children.

Continued Professional Development (CPD) and Networking

All EYFS staff attend relevant training courses, related to curriculum developments and termly Foundation Stage meetings are held with the teachers across the federation. The EYFS Lead works closely with the early year's team across the federation to share and develop CPD.

The Role of the Head teacher and the Early Years Leader

The Early Years Leader will work alongside the Executive Head/ Head of School to inform all school and nursery staff of any new developments and changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Policies and framework will be reviewed as part of the school development plan.

Home Learning

Children and parents are encouraged to read regularly together at home, in line with the federation reading policy. There are also a range of opportunities for parents and children to build upon their learning in school, at home, through the use of termly challenges, phonics games and flash cards and some weekly ideas. A weekly 'learning summary' is sent home, which outlines the planning for the week ahead, together with a detailed outline of the phonics planning (Little Wandle weekly grids). Little Wandle reading books are sent weekly. These are carefully chosen to include sounds and tricky words that the children have been taught, together with other books of the child's choice.

Curriculum Area Leaders

Across the pioneer federation, our middle leaders work with teachers to develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum. Within Early years, we are passionate about developing other teachers and middle leader's knowledge of the EYFS curriculum. We actively encourage teachers to spend time within EYFS and review our provision as part of their subject leadership, sharing ideas and effective early years practice. The table below shows how the Early Years curriculum areas link with the national curriculum subjects and explain some suggested provision or focus ideas which will support development of pupil knowledge and skills.

Early Years Area of Learning		National Curriculum Subject Links	What could this look like in an EYFS Setting?
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self- Regulation	PSHE Curriculum	Roleplay areas, playing games, turn taking, zones of regulation Stories, playing and working in pairs or groups Self-care needs – getting dressed, healthy eating
	Managing Self	PE, Science	
	Building Relationships	Drama Art and Design	
Communication and Language	Listening Attention and Understanding	All subject areas	Attending assembly, focusing on instructions, listening games. Listening to music, songs stories, and friends. Exploring a range of genres of texts, word play, songs, rhymes, Acting out stories, roleplay
	Speaking	All subject areas	
	Fine Motor Skills	PE Literacy	Threading, peg boards, write dancing, dough discos, art and creative activities using different implements. Writing letters and making marks with a variety of materials.

Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	PE PSHE	Yoga, trim trails, balance beams. Jumping on and off things, climbing, bikes, scooters. PE Sessions – Ball skills, throwing, catching, rolling, pushing, pulling.
Literacy	Comprehension	Literacy Drama All curriculum areas	Sharing stories as a class, 1-1, in groups Phonics Acting out stories, roleplaying our own stories, Small world play Drawing and making pictures/art models. Songs and phonic actions
	Word Reading		
	Writing	Literacy All curriculum areas	Mark Making, painting, labels, initial sounds, stories, cards, shopping lists, posters. Tricky words, songs, phonics sessions Sand trays, writing letters with paint. Building words with magnetic letters, CVC cards
Maths	Number	Maths Science	Number hunts, counting objects, numbers in provision, numicon, number blocks, practical addition and subtraction. Roleplay shops, buses and centres. Subitising amounts, use of dice, number songs and patterns
	Numerical Patterns	Maths Science History	Pattern making with pegs, shapes, stamps Sorting different objects by colour, shape etc.
Understanding the World	The Natural World	Science, Geography	Experiments, walks, roleplay, animal small world areas, topic themes, trips, cars and toys, puzzles, stories, Forest School activities.
	Past and Present	RE, History, Drama	Exploring jobs, celebrations events, difference, stories and videos. Puzzles, pictures, visitors and trips.
	People, Cultures and Communities	RE, Geography History, PSED	Exploration of different climates, homes, celebrations throughout the world.
Expressive Art and Design	Being Imaginative and expressive	Art and Design, Science Forest School Music Drama Literacy	Role play, creation stations – lots of different materials Forest School Musical instruments, singing songs, Junk modelling Mud Kitchens, Sand and water play
	Creating with Materials		

Policy: EARLY YEARS POLICY

Date: September 2025

Review: September 2026

Co-ordinator: Katy Taylor