TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

The Pines School

Be Your BEST
Believe – Excellence – Safe – Team

September 2025

At The Pines, we believe that our approach to Teaching and Learning is critical to the success and life-chances of our children. Whilst ensuring the required National Curriculum objectives are covered, we recognise the importance of making learning relevant, accessible and engaging for our children. We want our children to develop an intrinsic motivation, to love learning and to have a thirst for knowledge. This policy sets out our approach to ensure there is a consistent approach throughout the school and to enable monitoring to be both easy and effective.

Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think.
Albert Einstein

Intent

At The Pines, we aim to:

- meet the needs of our pupils and prepare them for their future education and lives as global citizens
- provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is engaging and relevant for all
- provide Quality First Teaching in all subject areas and year groups
- ensure our Curriculum Drivers are the core motivator of all Teaching and Learning
- make learning varied, making the most of a range of resources including visitors and external visits
- ensure there is a balance of the teaching of both skills and knowledge
- encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning and be reflective of their own work
- make effective use of assessment information so it has an impact on learning and progress
- encourage teachers to be reflective and experimental in their approach to teaching
- ensure curriculum decisions are based on latest educational research, are for the benefit of the children and are made in a way that makes workload manageable

Implementation

Teaching and Learning is the core purpose of The Pines School and we interpret this in its broadest sense, going beyond simply considering the academic curriculum. We recognise that in order to raise standards, our focus needs to be on what goes on in each classroom and that sustained improvements come from improving the quality of teaching and learning. We also recognise that children learn best when they feel happy, safe and valued and when they are motivated by their lessons. Our approach to Teaching and Learning has these considerations at its heart.

Teaching and Learning Principles

At The Pines we have agreed the features of Quality First Teaching. We recognise that consistency is crucial for high quality teaching and learning and therefore we use a structured coaching programme to support all staff in developing evidence informed strategies which are used in every classroom.

Curriculum Drivers

Throughout all year groups, we ensure coverage of the National Curriculum objectives are underpinned by our four Curriculum Drivers:

Our Place in Our World
Language and Oracy
Learning Skills
Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

These four areas have been identified by our staff as being crucial for our children in relation to the area in which they live and the skills necessary for them to be successful in the future. They drive our curriculum design at The Pines and ensure that pupils receive the knowledge and cultural capital necessary to succeed in life.

More detail can be found in our Curriculum Drivers document.

Curriculum Cycle
At The Pines, we have devised our own curriculum units for children in Years 1 to 6, ensuring coverage of all the National Curriculum objectives in KS1 and KS2 for the subjects of Science, History, Geography, and Art. Within each subject discipline, learning has been planned to ensure there is an appropriate progression of skills and knowledge and links between different subjects are made where relevant.

Each KS2 unit has a 'big question' as its focal point and the learning that takes place within the unit addresses this question. Within each unit there are also planned links to our Curriculum Drivers, that guide the direction of the unit and enable children to make links with their own life experiences.

At The Pines, we believe that every child is a writer. We are passionate about developing every child's knowledge, motivation and confidence in their writing. We have chosen HFL Education's **ESSENTIAL**WRITING as the basis of our writing curriculum for years 1-6. This is an ambitious and progressive writing scheme which provides our children with opportunities and tools to write for a range of specific purposes and authentic audiences. As a result, our children feel inspired and ready to write high-quality outcomes within the classroom but also have the knowledge, strategies and confidence to choose to write in their own lives
Other curriculum areas, such as Maths, Physical Education, Music, Computing and DT are taught discretely and not usually linked to our main topics, unless appropriate. Religious Education is planned in line with the Berkshire Agreed Syllabus using key questions to learn about and from a number of world religions. A Modern Foreign Language is also taught discretely although links are made to other curriculum areas where possible. PSHE is taught by revisiting key themes each year at an age-appropriate level. This includes coverage of the statutory Relationships and Sex Education curriculum.

Planning
Teachers produce Topic Overviews for each topic taught which provides a summary of the National Curriculum objectives covered within each topic, links to our Curriculum Drivers and details of the 'big question' as well as entry and exit points. These are produced collaboratively within phase teams and are reviewed and evaluated regularly.

Medium term planning documents are used for more detailed planning of all curriculum areas. These are also produced collaboratively within phase teams but are adapted to reflect the needs of individual classes and cohorts. More detailed planning includes reference to key resources needed and how the needs of individuals will be met as well as highlighting key vocabulary and ensuring the overall learning objective is clear.

All planning documents are saved on the shared R drive on the school computer network, meaning they are accessible to all staff in case of absence and for monitoring.

Oracy

Oracy has been proven to be a key factor in determining life success. At The Pines, the development of oracy skills is reflected within our Curriculum Drivers and our approach to Teaching and Learning enables children to develop their confidence and skills in articulating knowledge and expressing thoughts and opinions.

Continuous Provision

In EYFS and Key Stage 1, we use an approach called Continuous Provision which enables children to pursue their own interest and to use and apply their knowledge and skills in creative and unique ways. The core principles of continuous provision are:

High-quality environments: The inside and outside classroom environments are set up so that, even if there was no teacher-directed time and no adult interactions, the children would still be engaged in high-quality learning opportunities. There are a number of features of our high-quality learning environments: defined areas, carefully selected resources, carefully organised resources, displays which showcase knowledge and skills and which reflect the pupil voice.

Curriculum and timetabling: It is important that time spent in continuous provision is valued as highly as direct teaching or group work. The timetable is designed to reflect this by giving children long, uninterrupted times in continuous provision as well as direct taught sessions. Alongside a high-quality learning environment, this approach ensures thorough coverage of the National Curriculum. Parts of the curriculum are delivered in taught sessions whilst others are built into 'little and often' routines. There are continual opportunities for repeated practise of skills in the learning environments.

Role of the Adult: In continuous provision adults in the classroom facilitate learning in a wide range of ways. Sometimes this is through direct whole-class teaching or group work but there are also many times when adults skilfully move learning forward though modelling, encouraging, explaining, resourcing, scaffolding and joining the children in their play. High-quality interactions are at the core of continuous provision.

High Expectations: During their time in continuous provision, children are expected to lead their own learning. Adults have high expectations of children's behaviours for learning and reinforce these regularly.

Learning Environment

At The Pines, we believe that a child's surroundings, as well as the resources available to them, hugely enhance the learning experience. The learning environment is an extension of the curriculum and should inspire all members of our school community and make children and staff proud to be a part of our school.

Classrooms should be well-presented and tidy with resources easily accessible and clearly organised; corridor and other communal areas should also be kept tidy and uncluttered. Children should be taught to respect the school environment and to take responsibility for ensuring that the school and, in particular, their classroom are looked after.

Displays are not for the benefit of parents or visitors; they are to enhance the learning process and to celebrate and value children's work.

Displays are an integral part of learning and should be updated regularly, in line with the display policy.

Focus days/weeks

Over the course of any academic year, we aim to have a number of focus days or weeks linked to different curriculum areas or national/international events. We believe these enhance the learning experience for the children and enable a greater flexibility of timetabling, a focus on a specific subject,

topic or issue and inspire greater enthusiasm for these areas. We welcome visitors into our school at any time but particularly value the contribution they make to focus days/weeks. We also support charitable work and always mark Children in Need and Sport/Comic Relief by raising money, participating in fun activities and learning about the work of these valuable organisations. By doing this, we are enabling our children to learn more about the world around them, the experiences of others and to develop greater empathy and understanding of the needs of people they may never meet.

Effective Feedback
At The Pines, we recognise the importance of feedback within the Teaching and Learning cycle and have based our policy on research from the Education Endowment Foundation. We believe that feedback can be given in a variety of different ways and has greatest impact when it is given during or immediately after the learning has taken place. The sole purpose of feedback should be to further children's learning.

Full details can be found in our Marking and Feedback policy. (Appendix ii)

Assessment
Assessment is an integral part of the Teaching and Learning process and at The Pines we recognise the importance of a full range of forms of assessment. The main purpose of assessment is to inform teachers so that they can best address any misunderstandings or gaps in learning and can adjust future planning accordingly. Children also benefit from understanding what they have done well and what they can do to further improve.

A high proportion of assessment is carried out informally during lessons and as a result of observations, discussions and the learning process. This is formative assessment and should be used in the moment by staff to enable them to support the children's learning and to plan subsequent lessons. Sometimes 'low stakes tests' in the form of quizzes, practice questions and challenges can be used to see how well a child can recall what has been taught.

Summative assessments are also used to assess children's learning and understanding over a longer period of time. From Year 2 upwards, children complete tests in Reading, Maths and Spelling & Grammar towards the end of each term. Children in year 1 begin to complete more formal tests towards the end of their year. The outcomes of these tests are used to track children's progress and to inform teaching in the next term or academic year. Children in Year 1 take the statutory Phonics test; children in Year 4 take the statutory Multiplication Tables Check and children in Year 6 take statutory SATs tests.

Whilst we recognise the importance of assessment data and its value in providing an overview of the attainment or progress of groups and cohorts, we place great emphasis on the individual knowledge of children that teachers have and the child as a whole person not simply a set of test results.

For further information see our Assessment policy.

Impact
At The Pines, our approach to Teaching and Learning centres around preparing children for the future and ensuring they are ready to make the most of the learning opportunities they will have at secondary school and beyond. We want to ensure our curriculum and all the learning opportunities we offer provide our children with the cultural capital necessary to be successful in the future. Children have a positive approach to their learning and develop increasing independence, resilience and self-motivation to ensure they are able to continue their learning successfully when they leave The Pines.

Through high quality teaching and learning experiences, all children have the opportunity to achieve or exceed the expected standards for their age group in all curriculum areas. Where children do not reach these standards, support is provided to ensure that they make good progress from their individual starting points.

The quality of Teaching and Learning is monitored throughout the school by the Senior Leadership Team and subject leaders. Data is used to monitor the impact of Teaching and Learning alongside observations of lessons, book-looks and discussions with pupils and staff. Steplab is used to provide Professional Development to address common areas for improvement across the school, or on a more individual basis through coaching, to enable all staff to develop their skills. A key element of our school value to 'Be Your BEST' is to not only ensure children are encouraged to be the best they can be but also to promote a culture of continual improvement amongst staff as well.