

### Prospectus

Headteacher

Ms S Holden

Chair of Governors **Doug Mills** 

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Pitcheroak School, Willow Way, Batchley, Redditch, B97 6PQ

#### Welcome

Pitcheroak School is an all-age Special School which provides education for pupils aged 4-19 with a wide range of learning difficulties, including severe/complex needs; moderate learning difficulties, Autism; sensory problems and communication difficulties.

It is an amazing school that caters for approximately 155 pupils, and you will soon discover that there is a wonderfully friendly atmosphere that you will experience as soon as you enter the building.

Pupils enjoy their learning at Pitcheroak and are provided with the very highest quality of care and education. We have an enormous range of educational opportunities on offer and promote very high personal and academic achievement.

We work in close partnership with our parents, carers, partner schools and the wider community to provide a rich, creative and inclusive learning community for all. We are fortunate to have a well-trained and multi-professional team who work with other agencies to provide a wide range of integrated services to pupils and families.

Relationships around the school are extremely positive, and as a result, pupils love coming to school and quickly become confident learners. The school monitors results and data frequently, so that staff can respond immediately if there are concerns from home or if any child is felt to be doing less well than expected.

Pupils leave the school extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

We continually review our provision and work hard to achieve external evaluations for what we do. We have successfully gained the Autism Award (June 2023); Music Mark (May 2023); achieved 100% progress on 8 x Gatsby Benchmarks (June 2022); School Games Mark Gold Award (May 2022); Signalong Friendly Silver Award (April 2022); Anti-Bullying Quality Mark Silver Award (October 2021); Basic Skills Award (July 2021); National Online Safety Certified School (May 2021); Leaders in Safeguarding Award (April 2021); Governor Mark (March 2021 for the second time); Leading Parent Partnership Award (March 2021 for the third time); AfPE at Distinction Level (November 2020).

All the staff who will work with your son or daughter are caring and together we make a strong, dedicated team to support the individual needs of your child.

We aim to provide an exciting and vibrant environment for our pupils, staff and parents, to learn and work together. Within this prospectus we detail information about the school, the curriculum and our achievements however further information can be gained by visiting the school's website

www.pitcheroakschool.co.uk.

If you require any further information do not hesitate to contact us.

Ms S Holden, Headteacher

## learning and growing together

# The School's Statement of Purpose

Pitcheroak School offers a differentiated, exciting and creative curriculum which is relevant, broadly based, inclusive and promotes personalised learning opportunities.

The learning environment we create is inspirational and challenging, yet supportive, safe and friendly. Pupils are taught in a positive atmosphere of recognition where each person's individuality and talents are celebrated, encouraged and nurtured. Everyone in the school strives to develop a community of mutual respect and trust regardless of culture and background.

We offer a personalised learning journey that maximises the potential of our pupils so that they mature into adults who can contribute and be a part of their community achieving personal fulfilment.





#### **Aims and Values**

At Pitcheroak School we aim to:

- Encourage all pupils to enjoy, learn and achieve personal success by igniting a passion for learning - CONFIDENCE
- Provide an engaging environment where pupils are valued, feel safe and are encouraged to make healthy choices - WELL-BEING
- Support all pupils to develop their full potential in order to become lifelong learners and contribute to society - LIFELONG LEARNERS
- Prepare pupils and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge required for life beyond school in order to lead a rich and independent lifestyle - INCLUSION
- Provide all pupils with knowledge skills and understanding appropriate to their individual stage of development - INDEPENDENCE
- Enable all pupils to develop a moral set of values that promotes honesty, respect, trust, courage and empathy both in school and in the wider community - RESPECT

- Promote positive partnerships between pupils, parents/carers, community users, multiprofessionals and the school - TEAMWORK
- Ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils that celebrates cultural diversity - EQUALITY.

#### Our Long Term Vision for the School

We will be a centre of excellence that provides a high-quality needs led, balanced education for all. We will share our expertise to promote awareness, social integration and tolerance within the wider community. We will effectively support pupil development in the areas of communication, cognition, emotional well-being and personal and social development. We will respect and recognise the contributions and achievements of all pupils as individuals in a safe and caring environment to secure better outcomes so that they can meet their full potential and prepare them for their futures.



### Admissions Arrangements

Admission of pupils to the school is through an Educational Health Care Plan or through an assessment placement as negotiated with the Local Authority.

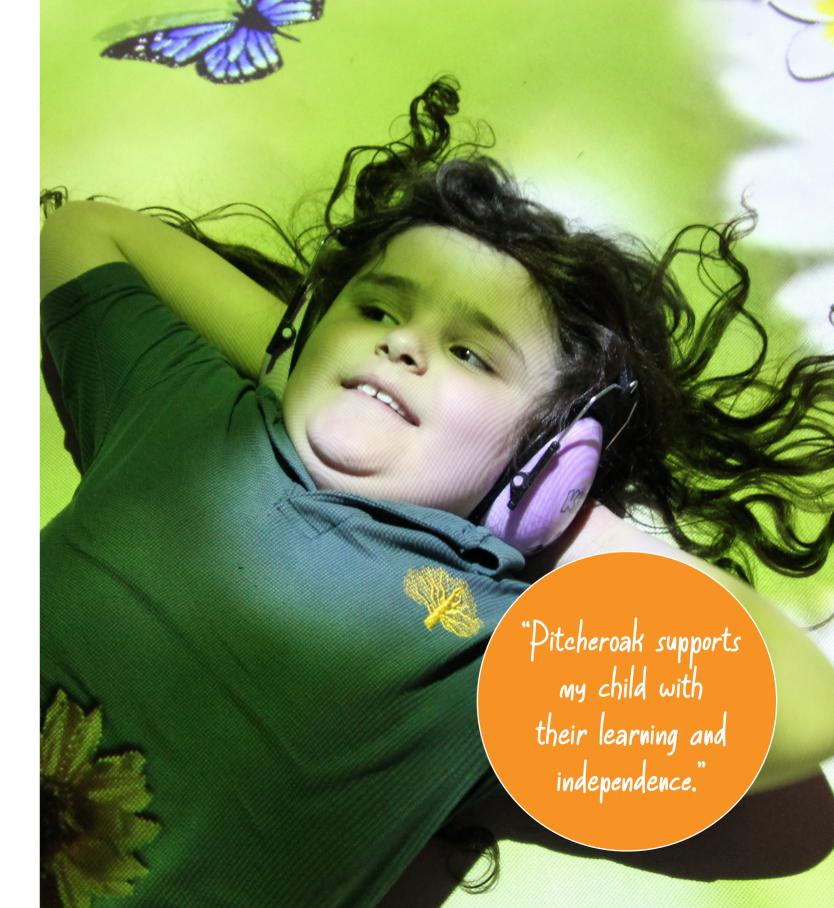
School placement of pupils with Special Educational Needs is determined by Worcestershire County Council (The Local Authority). Most of the pupils attending the school are resident in Worcestershire. The Admissions Process at Pitcheroak School is determined by 'The School Admissions Code' and 'The Admissions Appeals Code' written by the Department for Education (DfE). Both codes are available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code.



#### **The Admission Process**

- The school receive a formal request for a placement from the LA
- The school reviews all documentation and considers whether the pupil's needs can be met and whether the school has the space, staffing and resources to accommodate the pupil within its existing operational organisation
- The school will then respond to the LA as to whether or not they can meet the needs of the child
- Worcestershire SEND team will then send confirmation to the school of a place

- Once a place has been offered parents/carers, prospective pupils, their teachers and supporting professionals are advised to and welcome to visit the school by prior appointment
- The school may offer taster sessions or a phased entry into school life if that is requested or visit the pupil's school and family as necessary
- In common with other schools Pitcheroak hold transition days for pupils transferring between schools at the end of Key Stage 2
- Children can be admitted to Pitcheroak School at any age depending on availability of spaces.







#### **Behaviour**

At Pitcheroak School we aim to:

- Develop a pastoral provision both whole school and targeted, which will support any pupils who may be facing difficulties
- Help pupils improve their social, emotional and behavioural skills and to promote and re-enforce self-esteem by individual support or class-based support
- Develop and promote positive relationships and to praise specific behaviour and positively reward individual efforts and achievements
- Support pupils with transitions whether that is between different areas in the school or from one Key Stage to another
- Liaise and support parents, carers and families and take advice and support from outside professional agencies when needed
- Provide a supportive calm and challenging environment which allows pupils to experience and express their feelings.

All pupils follow the PSHE curriculum as part of the National Curriculum this supports the development of social, moral and spiritual understanding. Reporting behavioural incidents is important as staff can then identify patterns of behaviour and intervene if necessary. Therefore, as a school we record each significant incident using 'SLEUTH' our behaviour tracking system. This is monitored on a fortnightly basis and strategies are amended if necessary. Appropriate behaviour strategies and achievable/understandable targets are identified and put in place for each individual pupil. This assistance can be given to pupils individually or in a specific small group e.g. social, and emotional, behaviour etc. Additionally Pastoral Support Plans are put in place with regular Pastoral Support meetings taking place with parents/carers to ensure a consistent approach both at home and school.

#### Curriculum

The curriculum at Pitcheroak School promotes respect and tolerance for people of all faiths (or those of no faith) including different races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations (and any other groups with protected characteristics) as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We actively promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and personal development of all our pupils. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the Early Years Framework and the National Curriculum in England, whilst ensuring personalised, differentiated learning for every child.

The curriculum is designed to offer a differentiated and creative pathway that is progressive, relevant, broadly based, inclusive and promotes personalised learning opportunities. As a school we use each learning experience as a platform on which our pupils will learn, both formally and informally. Our ultimate aim is to help pupils develop transferable skills that will prepare them for adulthood so that they can contribute and be a part of their community achieving personal fulfilment.

The RE statement is published on the school's website and is based on the Equals Schemes of work. RE topics provide an opportunity for pupils to explore all aspects of religion at an appropriate level for our pupils. In RE we create an environment that enables pupils to reflect and respond in their own way, however, should parents/carers wish to, they may withdraw their pupils from such education or worship by writing to the Headteacher.

At Pitcheroak School our intention is to help each pupil realise their full potential. This is achieved by

developing a curriculum that meets the needs of each individual child. The school curriculum has been carefully planned and developed alongside the National Curriculum. It is designed to provide a programme which guarantees continuity and progression for all pupils across the Key Stages. Through our programmes of study, we provide a wide, differentiated, varied and inter-related programme of work that is essentially practical and relevant to a young person's daily life.

The performance and achievements of each individual child is recorded on SOLAR, our assessment tool and each profile contain curriculum targets and reflects the progress made as each child moves through the Key Stages. Class records, workbooks and pupil progress files are also available to evidence individual work and demonstrate the standards each child is capable of.

Further detailed information regarding the The RE statement is published on the school's curriculum, reading schemes, accreditation, website and is based on the Equals Schemes of work. RE topics provide an opportunity for pupils to explore all aspects of religion at an appropriate school's website together with our 4 year long-term rolling programme.

The School Health Service aims to help all school children to achieve their potential for physical, mental and social well being and to gain the maximum possible benefit from their education. We believe this service is integral to our pupils because children who are supported and cared for will thrive intellectually.

# Enrichment and Residentials

As an integral part of our curriculum, our pupils are offered the opportunity to participate in a varied programme of half/full day and residential visits. All of our pupils participate in visits to places of local interest and have the opportunity to take part in other activities over a four-year cycle such as residential experiences to Boreatton Park, Kingswood, Malvern, YHA Cheddar, Blackwell Adventure Centre, Condover Hall, Frank Chapman Centre in Bewdley and Dodford Farm for the younger pupils.

We believe that enrichment activities that are adventurous, progressive, innovative, challenging and exciting provide opportunities for young people to take ownership of their experiences and be challenged at a pace appropriate to their stage of development, no matter what their background or previous experience.

Residential opportunities often require commitment, endeavour and develop resilience. As a result, many young people develop leadership qualities and grow in self-confidence and self-respect, often finding a voice that may not be apparent in their everyday lives. By using real life settings and experiences, young people have the opportunity to



develop an understanding of risk and consequence in a stimulating and challenging environment.

A residential course can help to develop core values and our school ethos reflects a focus on the emotional, physical and mental well-being of every individual as the skills that young people use and develop during a residential visit are skills that they use in later life.

We actively encourage parents and carers to allow their child to participate on these trips, as they not only encourage educational attainment but also give our pupils the challenges necessary for them to develop social maturity.

We believe that every young person at Pitcheroak School should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

## Parents, Carers and **Multi-Professional** Working

"Someone is always there that is concerned for my child."

Good communication is vital between the school and parents/carers. There are consultation evenings throughout the academic year. The dates are communicated in advance so that individual appointments with teachers can be made. Parents/ carers are formally invited into Pitcheroak School to discuss their child's **EHCP** once a year during an annual review and this is usually conducted with the class teacher. This review allows the school to report on progress and to jointly discuss targets that the pupil is working towards.

"I was invited to attend an annual education health care plan meeting. I felt very included in the process and the targets were discussed for both the long term and short-term benefits. I feel the process was very clear and accurate to what progress we expect in the coming year. I feel more informed that I have with past experience of school's sharing information about my pupil's education."

Parent engagement activities and workshops are arranged on specific topics, and we also run family support mornings throughout the school year.

These events are an opportunity for parents to meet each other as well as informally chatting with staff from school. We also hold social activities throughout the school year that are well attended.





### Inclusion - Working with other **Schools**

Inclusion is about engendering a sense of community by belonging to it. At Pitcheroak we encourage mainstream and special schools to come together to support each other and pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Staff work to facilitate inclusion opportunities for our pupils on a one-to-one basis or in small groups where appropriate. This provides a unique opportunity for our pupils to be supported within a Integrated activities with our local mainstream mainstream environment, undertake appropriate work experience placements and experience the facilities within the local community. Where appropriate we identify the individual needs of pupils and provide opportunities for them to access enjoyable, engaging and stimulating learning experiences as part of their inclusion in other

schools. We also support the inclusion of pupils from partner schools to access areas of 'specialism' within Pitcheroak.

By having a strong inclusive ethos at Pitcheroak we encourage and nurture our pupils' self-esteem and self-belief which provides enormous benefits and rewards in their lives.

schools and colleges are an important feature of work and we endeayour to establish collaborative projects including drama productions, musical performances, theatre visits, joint classroom based activities and work experience placements wherever possible.



#### **Early Years**

Pupils start in Early Years in their reception year and remain in the department until the end of year two. We follow the Early Years foundation stage statutory framework. Although the framework does not specify a particular style of teaching, we recognise that play is a vital component of children's lives and is an important way that skills are developed and practised. We believe that pupils learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

There are seven areas of learning and development that form the basis of our educational programme in Early Years. We have a particular focus on developing skills within the 3 prime areas of Communication and Language, Personal Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development. We also develop knowledge and skills in the 4 specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. We follow the DfE validated Twinkl Phonics programme and the Rhino Readers reading scheme.

Within Early Years, the teachers plan activities around a termly topic of which there is a 3-year cycle. Teachers reflect on the different rates at which pupils are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Planned activities encourage playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically which all help to support the children to be effective and motivated learners. We aim to give all children a wide variety of personalised experiences and activities both in school and the wider community.

Our overarching principles in the Early Years department are to promote:

- Happy, safe learners
- Communication friendly environments
- Co-regulation and self-regulation
- Strong relationships
- Pupils to grow and reach their full potential.



#### Key Stage 2

Pupils in this department are in years 3-6. In this department pupils will follow either a subject specific curriculum or an aspect specific curriculum (for learners not engaged in subject-specific study). The subject specific curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and the aspect specific curriculum is based around the broad areas of need.

Early Years experiences which consolidates the foundation on which pupils will develop skills for life. We believe that pupils learn best in a happy, stimulating, caring and safe environment where high expectations allow pupils to achieve their best.

The curriculum aims to provide a broad and balanced experience that is relevant and personalised according to need. There is a Long-Term Curriculum map which identifies the coverage across each half term of the 4 year cycle. A key principle at the heart of the Long-Term Curriculum map is that all content should have a direct connection to preparation for adult life. A range of teaching approaches and strategies are deployed, matched to the individual needs and learning styles of pupils. Staff are expected to bring the curriculum to life by using high-quality resources and where possible, first-hand experiences, that make explicit the knowledge and skills that pupils are expected to develop.

The development of communication skills is inherent throughout the school day and a range of individualised approaches support this, for example a total communication approach, **Signalong**, symbol supported text (Communication in Print), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Objects of Reference and various other Auamentative and Alternative Communication tools. Alongside the development of communication skills is the development of pupils' reading skills. Pupils have access to a range of reading schemes and a school library. In addition to a dedicated timetabled reading session every day, staff provide opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practice using their phonics skills as well as whole In Key Stage 2, pupils build progressively on word recognition and development of social sight vocabulary. Staff recognise the pleasure that can be gained from books (electronic and hard copy) and aim to foster a love of reading for all pupils regardless of their reading ability.

> Information is shared with parents and carers each term, regarding their child's individual targets for learning and this includes ideas for activities that parents/carers can engage in with their child to support their learning in school.

> All pupil efforts and attempts to learn are recognised and rewarded in a way that is meaningful and motivational to the individual. There is an emphasis on positive praise and encouragement and certificates are awarded for achievement, effort and behaviour.



#### **Key Stage 3**

Pupils in this department are in Years 7-9. In this department pupils will follow either a subject specific curriculum or an aspect specific curriculum (for learners not engaged in subject-specific study). The subject specific curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and the aspect specific curriculum is based around the broad areas of need.

Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and there is a consistent, structured rewards and sanctions system in place. Regular enrichment trips and activities are planned as part of the curriculum to enable Key Stage 3 pupils to extend their learning in different environments and under different circumstances other than the familiar school environment.

Pupils who have more complex needs are provided with personalised opportunities such as access to the **sensory studio**, **TEACCH**, **PECS** and experiencing the outdoors in **Forest School** sessions.

#### **Key Stage 4**

Pupils in this department are in Years 10-11. In this department the curriculum has been designed to provide the pupils with the skills that they need to move from their starting points in Year 10 to a defined destination at the end of Key Stage 5.



The curriculum is aimed at engaging and challenging pupils with a strong focus on preparing for adulthood. Pupils are also offered a range of options each year which complement and enrich our curriculum offer.

When pupils arrive in Key Stage 4 most of their learning is delivered in school through class teaching and specialist subject teaching. Pupils are assessed and predominantly follow two different accreditation pathways.

Pupils are based within a class group for some areas of the curriculum and then move into specific learning groups for accredited courses appropriate to their ability. Pupils at Entry Levels 1 to 3 follow a two-year mixture of academic courses and pupils with more complex needs follow an **ASDAN** personal progress pathway.

#### Key Stage 5

Pupils in this department are in Years 12, 13 and some pupils stay on into Year 14. At Key Stage 5 there is a specific focus on preparing our pupils for transition to further education and for adult life, with a view to enabling them to live as independently as possible in the future. Learning takes place in a variety of places, in school, off-site, through accredited courses, work experience and through local college links.

Most pupils choose to stay on and access Post 16 provision at Pitcheroak, which is a 5-day, full time provision for 2-3 years. The school provides a variety of courses matched to pupil ability. Where appropriate pupils continue to follow a broadly academic curriculum leading to external accreditation at Entry Levels 1-3.



#### The curriculum in Key Stage 5 covers the following:

- Core Subjects: Maths, English and ICT
- Foundation Subjects: Art, Food Technology,
   Physical Education, Communication;
   Life and Living skills: independence in daily living skills, including PSHE, Sex and Relationships
   Education, personal hygiene, getting about safely, making choices, cooking, washing and cleaning;
   Work Skills: Careers Education
- Work Experience opportunities
- Employability, leadership and management qualifications where appropriate. Pupils and parents have regular meetings with our

Careers Advisor who is able to support and review transition plans in order to help progress end of school destinations. We provide our pupils with a sound local knowledge of services, providers and other opportunities and we are dedicated to gaining the very best outcomes for our young people. As a school we use a range of service providers and destinations are tracked from year to year. Additionally, our Careers Advisor undertakes group work on careers, further education and leisure opportunities. The advisor is available to attend annual reviews and other relevant meetings if requested and is able to advise parents/carers on the options available for destination planning.



# Specialisms and Therapies

Pitcheroak School can offer outreach provision if requested. We have a number of staff who are able to offer this work. Other local schools or the Local Authority can make a request to Pitcheroak School for support for pupils they feel would benefit from some specialist input in the field of SEN strategies such as **Speech**, **Language** and **Communication** or **Behaviour Management**. Our outreach work can involve supporting pupils in mainstream schools who have barriers to learning and whose learning difficulties are acknowledged in an EHCP.

At Pitcheroak School we work very closely with a range of other professionals, both from the Local Authority and other services. The school buys in the services of a designated Educational Psychologist, Careers Advisor and Educational Welfare Officer. We are fortunate to have access to a range of therapists who regularly visit the school, including speech and language therapists, occupational therapist, physiotherapists and Health Service staff. We are very keen to work with other agencies in the best interests of both pupils and families and often arrange multi-agency meetings to enable all agencies to discuss and share the support they are giving to individuals and their families.

We also have a team of Special School Nurses who are available to support children, families and education staff through competencies. Our School Nurses can help with routine health surveillance and health promotion in Special Schools, contributing to the Healthy Schools agenda; Care planning and supporting clinical assessments and interventions in school for individual children: Health intervention training for education staff, in skills required to meet child's needs (such as epilepsy care and administering medications); Advice and assistance in responding to first aid/emergency situations; Annual health reviews for all children and Looked After Child reviews; Promoting continence/providing continence support. The Special School Nurses can also signpost and refer pupils for sexual health and staying safe for vulnerable young people; Behavioural management support and Parenting Programmes and support regarding transition to adult services.

As a school we understand how important additional therapy can be to help our young people make sense of their worlds and their own emotions. As a school we buy in the services of specialist Music and Play therapists who enable our children and young people to express difficult emotions safely using creative distance. We believe that these techniques enable our pupils to develop positive socialisation skills, self-esteem and emotional literacy. Our therapists work on enhancing communication skills, self-confidence and self-enablement by using creativity to find expression without necessitating verbal or cognitive interpretation. All therapies are non-intrusive, child led and gentle.

# Pupil Premium and the Impact on Attainment

The Pupil Premium is a sum of money that the school receives for each pupil who is either in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) or who has been in receipt of them in the past 6 years (**Ever Six**).

Pupils have to be 16 or under or deemed 'looked after'. Nationally, the statistics show that pupils who are in receipt of FSM do less well than their peers in external exams. The aim of this money is to try to close that attainment gap.

Pitcheroak School has a number of pupils who are in receipt of FSM. The school focuses on maximising achievement for all and views each pupil as a unique individual entitled to the same quality of educational experience, in and beyond the classroom. Details of how we spend our PPG funding can be found on the school website.



#### The School Day

The school day starts at **08.45** and finishes at **15.00** After school clubs operate from **15.00** until **16.00** (Monday - Thursday).

Morning Registration Morning Lessons Morning Break Lunch and Playtime 08.45 - 09.00 09.00 - 12.00 10.45 - 11.00

12.00 - 13.00

Afternoon Registration
Afternoon Lessons
Afternoon Break
(EY's and KS2 only)

13.00 - 13.10 13.10 - 14.55 14.10 - 14.25

# Getting here and Transport

Pupils are transported to and from school, free of charge if they meet certain eligibility criteria. Transport is organised by the Local Authority in collaboration with families. There are a range of different transport options available from taxis to minibuses. All pupils are supervised on school transport routes by escorts employed and trained by the Local Authority.

As a school we also have access to a minibus with forward facing restrained seating and a people carrier for small groups of pupils. There is a charge for transport for Post 16 pupils.

### Attendance

Pitcheroak School is an inclusive school working in partnership with parents and carers to achieve good attendance. Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.

Parents and carers must contact the school on the first day of a pupil's absence. They should state the reason for the absence and also the date on which

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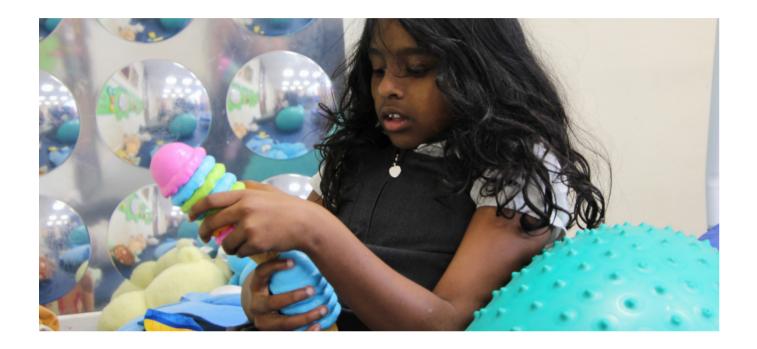
Parents and carers must contact the school on the first day of a pupil's absence. They should state the reason for the absence and also the date on which they are expected to return to school. Notification of absence can be by email, parental note, telephone call, informing the escort or in person.

When an appointment has been made for medical reasons (and these must be made outside school time where possible) the appointment letter or card should be shown in advance to the class teacher or the office staff who will make a note for the register.

Extended leave during the term time will not be authorised and holidays must be taken during the set weeks during the school year. We believe that education is essential for all and to achieve their full potential children need to attend regularly and punctually.



#### "My child feels safe and the staff are friendly."



#### Child Protection and Safeguarding

It is a legal requirement that we endeavour to keep children safe at all times and as a result of this we hold regular meetings where concerns can be raised in a multi professional forum. Similarly, if parents have any concerns, they are actively encouraged to contact the school and discuss their worries.

We take every concern seriously and follow the appropriate guidelines to ensure that rigorous and correct procedures are implemented.

On occasions, where Child Protection procedures may need to be implemented the school will consult with relevant statutory partners.

We have four fully trained senior members of staff who have the responsibility for Child Protection at the school. Additionally, as part of the recruitment process, right to work checks are undertaken on every adult working or applying to work at Pitcheroak School.

### The Work of the Local Governing **Board**

school provides a good quality education for all pupils. Their main role is to help raise standards cannot act individually. of care and achievement within the school. The Local Governing Board is accountable for the Governors can be parents or carers of pupils performance of the school and has an oversight on the school curriculum, personnel and finance.

The minutes of Local Governing Board meetings are available at school for anyone to read from the Clerk to Governors. Governors are like a Board of Directors: they make decisions about how the school is run. They meet as a full Local Governing Board at least once a term and they also have frequent other meetings where issues relating to curriculum are discussed.

Governors are appointed to help to decide what is taught, set standards for behaviour, interview and select staff and decide on the formulation of the school budget and how it is spent.

The Local Governing Board exists to ensure the School Governors have legal duties, powers and responsibilities. They can only act together; they

> attending Pitcheroak School and elected by the other parents and carers of the school, a member of staff elected by the School Staff, or co-opted representatives from the local community.



