

# Find the perfect fit for your child at Polam

*Polam* School  
for boys and girls aged 12 months - 9 years



Support

Inspire

Nurture

Achieve

P

“Providing a happy,  
safe and very homely  
environment”





# Find the perfect fit for your child at Polam

**Choosing the right school for your child can be a puzzle but here at Polam we believe we have all the right pieces to create the perfect start to your child's education.**

At Polam our aim is to provide an exciting, stimulating and safe environment in which children flourish and learn. We foster and encourage a spirit of enquiry and exploration in our home from home setting, and are lucky to be able to offer small class sizes and dedicated teaching staff who have in depth knowledge of each individual child.

We offer one of the top nurseries in the Bedford and Milton Keynes area, with highly qualified nursery nurses and all the benefits, facilities and specialist learning opportunities of an independent school.

Whether they join us as babies, toddlers or for the school years, we are confident that when our children move on, they will be happy, caring, successful and ready for the learning journey that lies ahead of them.

I very much hope that you will visit to see our school for yourself. I look forward to showing you round and introducing you to our wonderful staff and children.

*Jessica Harris, Headteacher*



*Inspiring young minds*

# Our Philosophy

## Learning for Life

The greatest gift we can give a child is to instil a love of learning that will stay with them through life. We achieve this by creating a culture of high expectations. A robust system of assessment that starts with our youngest children and continues to our oldest, creates an environment where children are challenged to exceed their own goals. We aim to inspire and to encourage a spirit of enquiry and exploration; to give children the confidence to question and to search for answers; to become independent but also to work collaboratively. We guide them in making sensible choices and teach them to be caring. Through celebrating their achievements we build their confidence and enable them to develop a sense of pride in what they do.

## Taking Time With Every Child

Class sizes are deliberately small and staff to pupil ratios unusually high. In such a small setting we can genuinely focus on each child, enabling them to develop at their own pace to ensure that each child fulfils their potential. Our experienced teachers and qualified nursery nurses quickly develop positive relationships with both the pupils and their parents.

*“ The leadership and management of the school, supported by the hard working and committed staff, have ensured that school is a happy place and that pupils enjoy learning and are able to make progress. Parents unanimously agree that their children like the school. SIS Report – Dec 2016. ”*





## Our school ethos

At Polam, we know that every second of a child's education is precious. To ensure they get the perfect start in life we...

### Support

...support our children, providing a home from home environment where every day is filled with new learning adventures...

### Nurture

...where all children are nurtured as individuals and feel safe and secure...

### Inspire

...where a welcoming, stimulating learning environment inspires, enabling our pupils to become independent lifelong learners...

### Achieve

...in their journey to achieve their full and unique potential.

*“ The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. The ethos of the school and its aims contribute significantly to all aspects of pupils' personal development... They grow in self-esteem and self-confidence as they are well known and valued as unique individuals in the small, close community of the school. SIS Report – Dec 2016. ”*

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# NURSERY 1-3 YEARS

Children may join our Nursery from the age of 12 months. The baby and toddler rooms, Acorns (12 months to 2 years) and Saplings (2 to 3 years), provide the perfect environment in which to start your child's learning journey.

*"I would not hesitate for one minute in recommending Acorns nursery to any parent looking for a nursery which cares, nurtures and teaches through play. My son loved his time in Acorns, especially music time and PE. I never worried if he was ok as you are leaving your child with a nursery team which really cares."*

**Testimonial  
Acorn Parent**

High pupil/staff ratios enable children to start to take steps towards independence in everything from taking off their own shoes to exploring and learning. A strong key person system ensures that each child receives personal attention, enabling them to flourish and gain in confidence. Our well-equipped and comfortable nursery is a fully integrated part of the School, giving children the opportunity to benefit from the extensive range of facilities and specialist teaching such as music and PE.

Nursery sessions are flexible and can be tailored to your child's individual needs. We provide year round wraparound care from 7.30am until 6pm for those families that require it. In order that children feel settled and happy the minimum amount of sessions we offer is 3. In addition we encourage children to start moving towards full time care by their final term in the Nursery, to help prepare them for their transition to the School.

*“ The outcomes for children are outstanding. All children progress well from their different starting points and are able to meet or exceed the expected level of development. SIS Report – Dec 2016. ”*





## EARLY YEARS 3-5 YEARS

Our Foundation classes cover the 3 to 5 age range – Foundation 1 (3 to 4 years) and Foundation 2 (4 to 5 years). These all important years provide the building blocks for future learning.

At 3-4 years old our key person system is strong, enabling children to build their confidence whilst still feeling nurtured. The children follow a curriculum that includes a focus on early maths and literacy, as well as phonics. The emphasis is still very much on learning through play.

Our 4-5 year olds continue to learn through their experiences, however their day becomes more structured with literacy and numeracy sessions daily. As the year progresses they extend their reading, writing and mathematical skills.

Underpinning all our learning in Foundation is careful assessment and monitoring of progress. This continues from Nursery and allows staff to extend and scaffold learning. At this stage children embark on a more structured programme with Music, Modern Languages, PE and Swimming all forming part of the weekly timetable.

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides the guidance and requirements supporting the learning and development of children in our care.

*“My son has gained so much confidence since he started at Polam – we wish we had started him here earlier. The varied curriculum from a young age keeps him engaged and he is always positive when talking about his day. The difference in him is incredible.”*

**Testimonial**  
**F1 Parent**

*“ The care provided by the EYFS is outstanding and the learning opportunities are good for all children including those who have special educational needs. Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding...The children quickly become confident and successful independent learners who are emotionally secure SIS Report – Dec 2016. ”*

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# YEARS 1-2 (KEY STAGE 1)

5-7 years

In our Year 1 and 2 classes the children continue their learning journey, accessing a more structured curriculum with their skills, knowledge and understanding further developed across the full range of subjects.

*"Both of our children loved Polam School – there was never a morning they didn't want to go. Having an anxious child is worrying, but the teachers at Polam were great and knew how to get the best out of him. Polam is a fabulous school which lets your children be children but makes them feel grown up by the time they are ready leave."*

**Testimonial  
Year 2 Parent**

P

*"Polam is a wonderful little school and even though my daughter was only there for a year we are thrilled not only with how much she has come on academically but also in terms of her confidence levels. I will definitely recommend the school to others."*

**Testimonial  
Year 2 Parent**

P

Languages, music, swimming and physical education are taught by specialist teachers and a team of qualified and experienced teaching assistants help teachers in their role. School productions, assemblies, and public performances help to develop the children's creativity and imagination, with local visits and trips further afield enriching their learning experiences and building their understanding of the world around them.

*"Teachers are experienced and confident in teaching literacy and numeracy and as a result pupils make good progress in these key areas. Small classes and a high ratio of adults to pupils, ensures swift and direct learning support for individuals."*

**SIS Report – Dec 2016.**







*“Our son has learnt ‘the magic of education’ through the school’s engaging ways to learn and the staff’s enthusiasm... You took a child who was disillusioned and uninterested in learning and in one term made him hungry to learn and happy to do homework – an exceptional skill!”*

**Testimonial  
Year 4 Parent**

*P*

## YEARS 3-4 (KEY STAGE 2)

7-9 years

In Years 3 and 4 pupils enjoy taking on the extra responsibilities that come from being the oldest children in a small school, whilst continuing to grow academically through the broad curriculum provided.

Many children leave Polam at the end of Year 2 having gained places at other independent schools in the town. However Polam’s small Year 3 and 4 class is becoming increasingly popular, giving children extra time to prepare for this next step, or for pupils who join the school during these years specifically to access the opportunity of working in a small, nurturing environment.

Not all children are ready socially, emotionally or academically to move on to larger schools at the age of 7 but an extra two years with us can make a huge difference. With high teacher to child ratios, our Key Stage 2 class provides the perfect opportunity for children to increase their self-esteem and confidence in readiness for the next step of their educational journey.

*“Our son loved his time at Polam School, unlike his previous school where he was bored, as he was not being challenged enough. Polam’s wonderful teaching staff helped our son greatly and prepared him for the entrance exams for the local Harpur Trust schools, where he passed both. Sending him to Polam was the best decision we could have made.”*

**Testimonial  
Year 3 Parent**

*P*

*“ Pupils are highly motivated; able to concentrate; can work cooperatively; participate fully in lessons and work hard at the tasks they are given. They behave well and understand the rules of the classroom helping to ensure that no time is lost because of distraction or misbehaviour. They show consistently very positive attitudes to learning.*

*SIS Report – Dec 2016. ”*

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# The Wider Curriculum

We aim to educate in the broadest sense, providing our children with a wide range of opportunities to experience new areas of learning. Our focus isn't just on traditional classroom-based education; we offer an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs – from ballet to gym, construction to maths puzzles, tennis to IT and everything in between.

## Music & Languages

Music plays a very important role within life at Polam, thanks to our passionate specialist Music teacher, and is incorporated into every aspect of the curriculum, from the baby room all the way through the School.

All children have the opportunity to play percussion, and as they get older, they have an opportunity to learn a musical instrument, including guitar and piano.

Children are introduced to languages at an early age at Polam, with French, Spanish and German all part of the curriculum. The specialist language teacher uses music, rhyme and actions to help children develop their vocabulary, intonation and pronunciation and this not only makes the lessons fun and engaging, but enables children to memorise the words more effectively.





## Sport

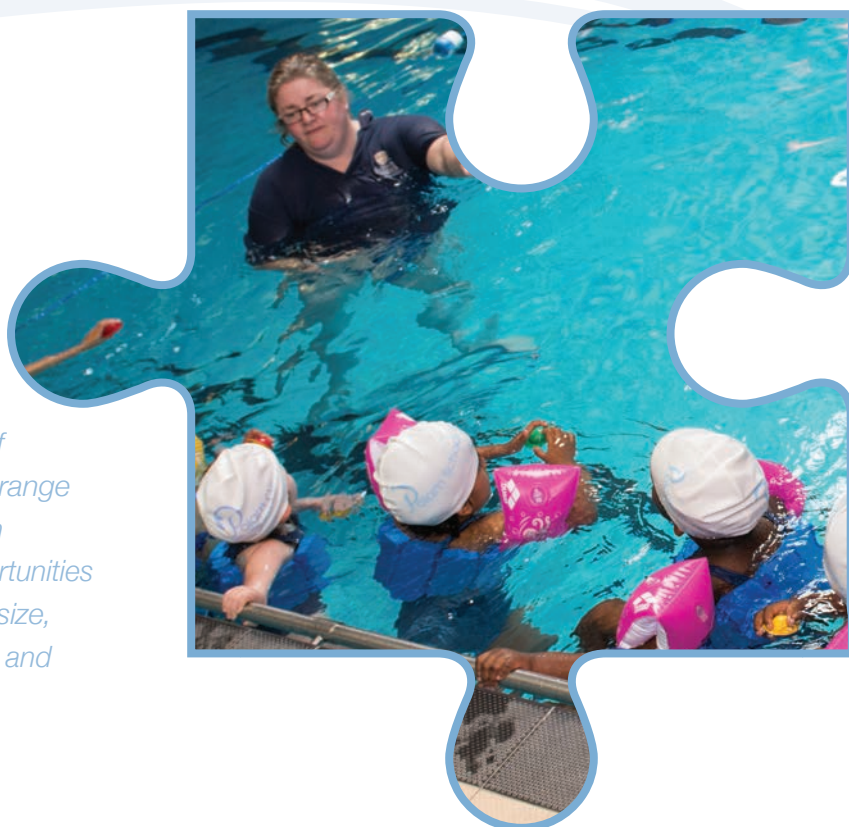
Sport plays an equally important role at Polam and we have our own dedicated and well-equipped gym, indoor swimming pool and use of local sports fields. Our specialist PE teacher ensures that all children are catered for irrespective of their age, ability or potential. The children benefit from playing in teams, competing and achieving at their own level.

Above all, we believe sport should be fun. We find that all the children enjoy PE and Games lessons in the Sports Hall. Various club activities also take place after school and on Saturdays. Swimming lessons take place throughout the academic year in our indoor pool.

## Polam Swim School

Our team of highly qualified and experienced swimming staff teach the children in small groups on a weekly basis. We also provide one of the town's premier swim schools with a variety of lessons taking place each week, including antenatal, baby and toddler, squad swimming, intensive holiday courses and adult beginners.

*“ Some aspects of the curriculum are of outstanding quality, for example the wide range of learning opportunities provided through extra-curricular activities and clubs... Opportunities for sport are excellent for a school of this size, which benefits from its own swimming pool and gymnasium. SIS Report – Dec 2016. ”*





## Wraparound care

Daily extended care is available from 8am (7:30am term time) to 6pm for 48 weeks of the year. We have an excellent reputation for our friendly and fun holiday clubs which run throughout the year and attract people from all over Bedford. The home from home environment and family atmosphere ensure that children feel safe, secure and at ease, providing them with the confidence to make new friends and try a variety of new activities.

## Maintaining Traditions

As well as educating our children academically, we believe it is equally important to instill good manners and respectful behaviour. At dinner time the children sit at tables laid with cutlery and tablecloths. They are guided to use good table manners by their teachers who eat with them. In assembly they say prayers and sing hymns. From our Foundation 2 class upwards, all children are allocated to a school House – Herons, Hawks, Owls and Eagles. Children compete on Sports Day and undertake charity fundraising activities in their respective houses, as well as earning house points in class and around the school for good work and good behaviour. At the end of each academic year at our Leavers Assembly the House Cup is awarded to the winning house and individual awards and achievements are recognised and celebrated across the school.

*“ Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They develop a growing understanding of British values through the school's emphasis on respect for others, and a sense of fairness and tolerance. SIS Report – Dec 2016. ”*



The  
learning  
adventure  
begins...



*Inspiring young minds*



*"Having had four children at the school of differing ages over the last 4 years, I have nothing but praise for Polam. From the warm and friendly welcome we received when our eldest started to the friendships we have made with the staff and other parents since. Our children have all grown in confidence and have a real desire to learn and compete. I could have not asked more from a school to prepare my children for the next step in their education".*

**Testimonial**  
F2/Year 2 Parent

## Moving on

### The end is just the beginning...

We believe we give our children the best possible foundation for the future, but the journey doesn't end here. We work closely with parents to help establish the best path forward, advising on which school to apply to and providing you and your child with support every step of the way. We enjoy very strong links with all the independent schools in Bedford and our children attend a number of events and activities throughout the year at each of these schools. We also see a number of children each year moving into the state sector. Whatever their path for the future, our parents are happy in the knowledge that their child has received the best possible start to their educational journey.

### Come and visit us

We hold a number of Open Day events throughout the year but private tours of the school are available at any time by request.

***Please come and visit us soon.***

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Bedford  
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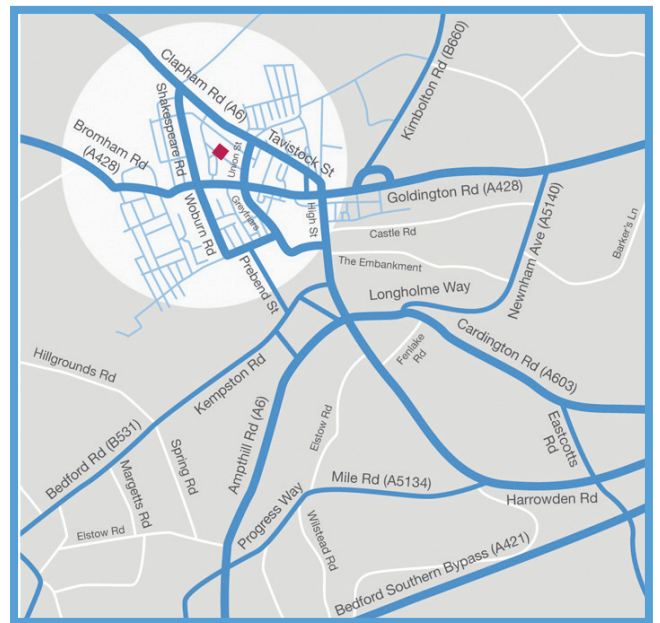
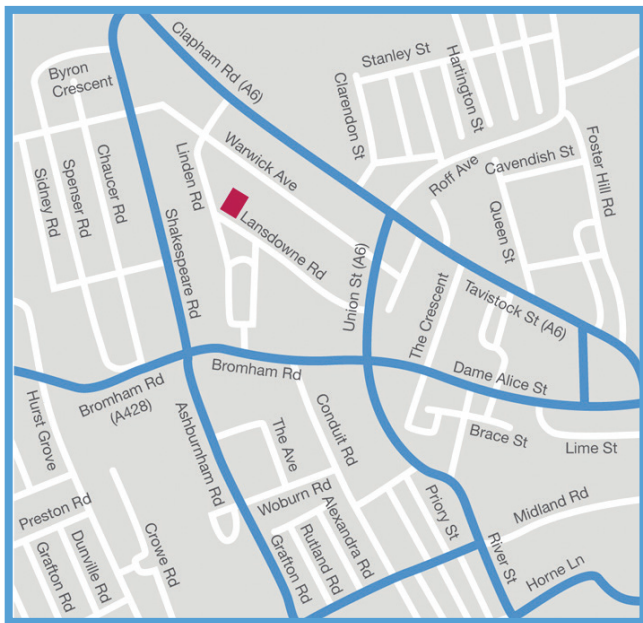
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