



Policy Document

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| Policy Document | |
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| Role: | Headteacher |

EYFS Policy

Statement of Intent

At Ashwell School, we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for 2023. We aim to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Introduction

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years learning and teaching at Ashwell Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Ashwell, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The statutory framework for EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Ashwell, the EYFS applies to children attending our Nursery to the end of the Reception year when they are five years of age.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life, in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four guiding principles shape our practice:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- 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 overtime. Children benefit from a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which takes children’s different stages of development and own interests into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provides each child with a key person to ensure close relationships are developed.
- Provides a safe, secure and enriched learning environment.

Learning and Development

The EYFS curriculum is based on an observation of children’s needs, interests and stages of development.

In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections – prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected and important.

The ‘prime’ areas of learning and development are:

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| <p>Communication & language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listening, attention and understanding ➤ Speaking | <p>Physical development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gross motor skills ➤ Fine motor skills | <p>Personal, social and emotional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-regulation ➤ Managing self ➤ Building relationships |
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The ‘specific’ areas of learning and development are:

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|--|--|
| <p>Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comprehension ➤ Word reading ➤ Writing | <p>Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Numbers ➤ Numerical patterns |
| <p>Understanding the world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Past and present ➤ People, culture and communities ➤ The natural world | <p>Expressive arts and design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creating with materials ➤ Being imaginative and expressive |

** The 7 areas of learning above, include the 17 early learning goals used to determine the level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS.*

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Activities are planned to reflect children's interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience. The school will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through friendly and positive interaction.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS are:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things.
- **Active learning** – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

A Unique Child

At Ashwell, we recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

At Ashwell, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this. See Appendix 1.

Enabling Environments

At Ashwell, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Children have access to both an indoor and outdoor environment, where they can move freely between activities and experiences.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

Formative assessments are used to assess the learning and development of children in the EYFS. Staff members will observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. This information will then be used to shape learning experiences for each child.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, your child's class teacher will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

The Early Learning Goals

The 17 early learning goals (ELGs) as listed above, are not used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to a child's development. The ELG's are used to support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development and their readiness for Year 1.

In the final term of the year in which a child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS profile will be completed by the child's class teacher. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

Children will be assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

Teaching and Learning

At Ashwell, we recognise children develop and learn in different ways. Effective learning and teaching is supported through:

- The understanding that staff have the knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching.
- The range of approaches that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children to achieve the ELG's at the end of the EYFS.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellect, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management.
- Learning with appropriate accessible space, facilities and equipment both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of technology.
- The identification of children's needs, through observations of children's progress, which are regularly shared with parents.
- Plans are monitored by the EYFS Leader.

How is teaching and learning organised in the EYFS at Ashwell?

Learning in the EYFS is organised in several ways:

1. Whole Class Teaching

From the start of their journey in the EYFS, children join in with whole class teaching activities.

2. Adult Led or Adult Directed Learning

The activity is set up in or outside of the classroom and led by an adult (teacher, teaching assistant or parent). The adult knows what they want the children to learn and shares this with the children. They then support the children's learning by asking questions, talking and interacting with them.

3. Child Initiated Learning

During periods of child initiated learning, children can choose which activity they want to complete and how they wish to do so. For these activities, the adult has a role in planning and setting up the learning provision, providing resources and materials to allow opportunity for children to embed and extend learning experiences that have previously been explored with an adult.

Play Based Learning

Well planned play both indoors and outdoors, is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world through curiosity. It is not just imaginative play and role play, but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children's lives. It is an important way skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, and behavioural and social development.

Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Role of the Adult

- To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
- To support children's learning through planned play activities.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play.
- To plan and deliver high quality focussed sessions based on prior learning and next steps of individual children.

Role of the EYFS Leader

It is the role of the Early Years Leader, under the guidance of the Head Teacher:

- To organise the delivery of Early Years Curriculum and to ensure progression and development.
- To monitor planning and quality of delivery within the curriculum.
- To keep abreast of developments within Early Years.

- To monitor and update resources and draw up a budget.
- To attend EYFS Coordinator meetings as appropriate and keep up to date with new initiatives.
- To ensure the development of practitioners in Early Years through training and courses.

Assessment & Parental Engagement

At Ashwell we use Tapestry. This is an easy-to-use and secure online learning journal helping staff and families celebrate their children's learning and development. Tapestry builds a very special record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey through their early years and primary education.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that children should be treated as individuals but they should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We carry out visits to current settings for all children starting our Nursery and Reception classes, as well as completing a transition level of need report to provide a smooth and comprehensive transition for all children, enabling us to support families and children at the earliest opportunity.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Concerns about a child's progress, are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

The school's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. We also have extremely strong links with our Outreach Workers.

For further information, see our Special Educational Needs Policies.

The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if a child is found to not have a strong grasp on English, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to assess if there is cause for concern about a language delay.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

At Ashwell, we know that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

Staffing Ratios

At Ashwell, we follow the statutory framework guidelines for staffing ratios:

Nursery

For children aged three and over in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools:

- there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- at least one member of staff must be a school teacher as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002
- at least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification

Reception

Reception classes in maintained schools are subject to infant class size legislation.

The School Admissions (Infant Class Size) Regulations 2012 limit the size of infant classes to 30 pupils per school teacher (subject to permitted exceptions) while an ordinary teaching session is conducted. 'School teachers' do not include teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants or other support staff.

Mixed Nursery and Reception Classes

Some schools may choose to mix their reception classes with groups of younger children (nursery pupils, non-pupils or younger children from a registered provider), in which case they must determine ratios within mixed groups, guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of individual children within the group. In exercising this discretion, the school must comply with the statutory requirements relating to the education of children of compulsory school age and infant class sizes. Schools' partner providers must meet the relevant ratio requirements for their provision.

Key Person

Each child in our EYFS setting will be assigned a key person. In most cases, this will be the child's class teacher.

Paediatric First Aid

At Ashwell, we will have at least one practitioner with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings.

Oral Health

The EYFS Framework states that early years providers must promote good oral health of children who attend their setting. At Ashwell, we promote oral health through play experiences, linking to topics such as self-care and healthy eating.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

Role of Parents/Carers

The Foundation Stage team strongly believe that developing an effective working partnership with parents/carers has a positive impact on children's development and learning.

We value parents/carers by:

- showing respect and understanding for the role of parents/carers as children's first and most enduring educator.
- encouraging parents/carers to share accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have and take action to support where appropriate
- providing a welcoming environment by being approachable and friendly
- establishing an atmosphere of trust and confidence
- inviting parents/carers to initial meetings to share information about their children and about our school
- sharing information about the curriculum through meetings e.g. reading meeting for the reception parent/carers, sending newsletters/leaflets home about topics, displays, informal discussions, class and general boards sharing plans and other school and community information
- providing opportunities for parents/carers to attend social events with children and staff e.g. coffee morning for new Nursery & Reception parents
- inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests and time to work with and help the children and staff in a variety of ways
- meeting with parents/carers each term to share children's achievements and together discuss next steps for development
- encouraging home school links through support with the home school reading programme
- invitations to assemblies and other whole school events
- by being available at the beginning and end of the day to talk to parents/carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss particular issues an appointment can be arranged.