

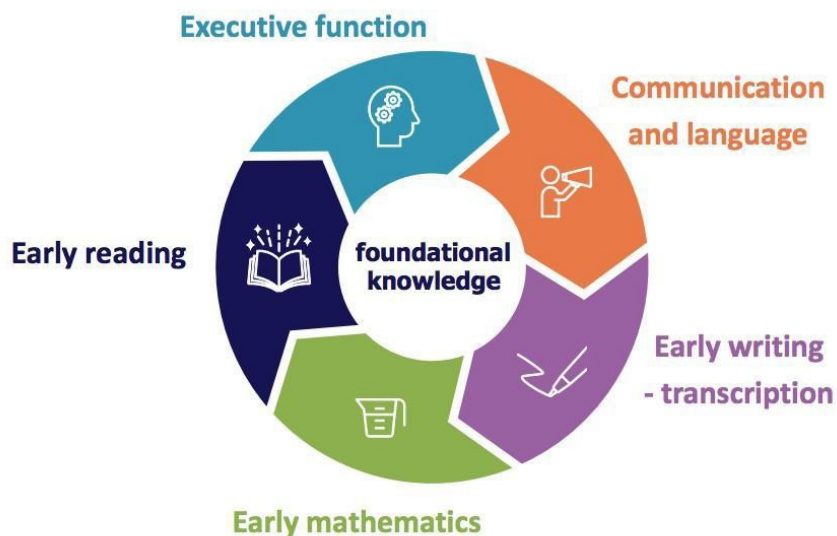
Shaping futures: Together we learn, care and grow

Principles of Foundational Knowledge

Foundational Knowledge @ Ashwell Primary School

The Ofsted research report [*Strong foundations in the first years of school*](#) (October 2024), emphasised how it is key for children to secure strong foundational knowledge across the Early Years Foundation Stage / Key Stage 1 (and if necessary into Key Stage 2), to give them the best chance of educational success. The report states:

'By the end of key stage 1, all children need foundational knowledge: how to communicate, read, write and calculate. This includes the general knowledge that will help them to understand the world around them. Their physical, emotional and social development are also important. Finally, developing [executive function](#) is crucial for both learning and well-being.'



The report highlighted some that some schools were:

- ✚ Introducing complex tasks too early
- ✚ Emphasising activities rather than what children need to learn
- ✚ Not taking enough notice of children's starting points
- ✚ Overloading children's working memory
- ✚ Not building effectively on previous learning
- ✚ Using ineffective play-based learning

Based on this report, we have identified the foundational knowledge every child at Ashwell Primary School needs to secure so they can effectively progress through the school and successfully transition into their next stage of education. These principles have been created through discussion, research and supporting documentation including:

- The DfE Writing Framework (2025)
- EEF – Literacy KS1 Guidance Report
- Voice 21 – Student friendly oracy framework
- Development Matters
- Early Learning Goals
- The National Curriculum
- Ofsted – Strong foundations report
- Harvard University - Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children from Infancy to Adolescence
- DfE – Mathematics Guidance KS1 and 2
- The contextually based school curriculum

The purpose of this document is to outline the specific foundational knowledge to be taught at Ashwell Primary School and embedded across the curriculum to **all** our pupils from their range of starting points.

These principles of foundational knowledge acquisition are used primarily across Key Stage 1 to ensure every child has the prerequisites to achieve success. However, they also underpin our EYFS provision and may be used as part of our adaptive quality first teaching and targeted interventions for identified children in Key Stage 2.

Principles of foundational knowledge at Ashwell Primary School

1. Our school's contextually based curriculum is at the heart of our teaching and learning.
2. Our curriculum clearly identifies end points and the foundational knowledge and skills, as outlined in the EYFS and national curriculum that our children will need for later learning.
3. Across all key stages, we will make sure that assessment picks up children's misunderstandings quickly and gives our teachers early opportunities to help children who need extra teaching and practice.
4. Any identified gaps in children's foundational knowledge are quickly identified, addressed and closing.
5. We will give children sufficient high-quality opportunities to practise using foundational knowledge and skills so that they become fluent and confident.
6. We will carefully select and adapt teaching methods that are suited to what is being taught and what children already know.
7. We recognise that our children will have a range of starting points and are often at different stages of the curriculum. High priority will be given to those that need it most.

Foundational Knowledge Base

Executive Function

Working Memory
Remember and follow multi-step instructions involving three or more steps
Recalls and apply the rules of games independently
Holds in memory the information needed to solve simple puzzles
Focuses on the right topic when contributing to discussions
Inhibitory Control
Waits their turn without showing impatience
Sustains focus on an activity for an extended period
Reflects and thinks before responding or reacting
Expresses feelings without acting out emotions
Cognitive flexibility
Thinks of more than one way to solve a problem or complete a task
Participates in activities which require listening to others and contributing at the right time (such as singing rounds)
Adapts to unexpected changes in their daily routine
Ability to assess their own individual strengths and next steps.

Early Reading

Word Reading
Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
Respond speedily with the correct sound/grapheme for all 40+ phonemes
Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught
Read aloud accurately and with increasing fluency books that are consistent with developing phonic knowledge
Read common exception words without needing to blend
Comprehension
Check the text makes sense to them as they read and correct any errors independently
Re-tell familiar stories with increasing detail
Predict what might happen and the basis of what has been read so far
Make simple inferences about why a character might feel a certain way
Discuss word meaning and link those meanings to words already known
Understand that non-fiction texts give factual information.

Early Writing

Transcription

Holds a pencil correctly using the tripod grip

Forms lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place

Forms capital letters correctly

Segments spoken words into phonemes and represent these by graphemes, spelling some correctly

Correctly spells most Year 1 common exception words

Leaves a space between words

Says out loud what they are going to write about

Composes a sentence orally before writing it

Reads back what they have written

Accurately writes sentences dictated by an adult that include the phonics sounds and common exception words taught so far.

Demarcates some sentences with capital letters and full stops

Communication and Language

Physical

Can control the speed and volume of their voice when talking aloud

Beginning to use gestures and expression to help make their point

Uses eye contact and faces the speaker when listening

Linguistic

Uses sentence stems to link others' ideas

Uses new and appropriate (taught) vocabulary about a topic

Cognitive

Organises clearly what they want to say

Asks relevant questions of others

Gives reasons / justifies what or why they are saying something

Social and emotional

Take turns to talk and listen

Begins to think about their audience when communicating

Can retell and repeat a response

Early Mathematics

Place value and the number system

Count reliably with numbers from 1- 20

Place numbers 1 -20 in order

Say which is one more or one less than a given number.

Operations

Add and subtract two-single digit numbers counting on or back

Double numbers from 1-10

Half even numbers from 1-10

Language and vocabulary

Use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare objects

Recognise and describe patterns

Uses mathematical language and sentence stems taught

Transcription

Forms all numbers correctly

Sets out work using one digit per square when recording