



ASHGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Policy

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Supporting Documents:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- School Handbook
- Teaching and Learning Document

Head teacher: Mr Peter Seargent

Approved by the Full Governing Body on:

Signed: ----- (Chair of Governors)

Signed ----- (Head teacher)

To be reviewed 3 years from date of last approval, subject to alterations in practice, legislation or policy guidance.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Principles:

Four guiding principles shape our practice in early years settings. These are:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

This policy reflects our school ethos, which recognises, celebrates and welcomes diversity. We believe that each and every one of us brings something valuable to our school community. We aim to develop children's personal qualities and achievements and are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest standards.

This policy helps to ensure that this happens for all children in our school, regardless of age, disability, religion, gender, ethnicity, attainment or background.

Aims:

- to provide a welcoming environment for children and their families;
- to ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued;
- to establish positive relationships with parents/carers;
- to keep parents well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress;
- to build on what children already know and can do and celebrate achievement;
- to help children make links in their learning;
- to stimulate positive attitudes and dispositions to learning;
- to encourage independence;
- to value children's interests, providing a balance of direct teaching and child initiated activities;
- to help children build friendships and learn to co-operate with each other;
- to provide a solid foundation in the seven areas of learning through well planned, rich and stimulating activities;
- to make careful observations in order to support and extend children's learning appropriately; and
- to ensure that children with special educational needs are identified and receive appropriate support.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, children are able to attend school full time in September following their fourth birthday.

A Unique Child

At Ashgate Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We understand the importance of recognising each child's developmental phase in order to plan the next steps in learning. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and

encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Ashgate Primary School, and their families, are valued; they are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. At Ashgate Primary School every child matters, and is given the opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; and
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Keeping safe

It is important to us that all children in our school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (see Safeguarding Policy).

Health and well-being

"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."

At Ashgate Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. We understand that we are required to:

- safeguard children;
- ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children;
- promote good health;
- manage behaviour; and
- maintain records, policies and procedures.

Positive Relationships

Respecting Each Other

At Ashgate Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Everyone's views are listened to and considered fairly, always keeping the needs of the children firmly in mind.

Parents/Carers as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role in educating the children. We aim to build good relationships with parents/carers and keep them informed about the life of the school and their child's progress by:

- talking to them about their child before their child starts in our school;
- giving out copies of the school prospectus;
- providing the opportunity for the children to spend time with their teachers before starting Reception by way of 'taster sessions';
- signing a home school agreement with parents/carers;
- inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and providing them with information of ways to help their child settle into school;
- posting regular newsletters on the school website and also displaying these in prominent positions around school;
- sending home information booklets on EYFS and curriculum newsletters;
- encouraging parents to share and support their child's learning by sending home books, games and activities aimed at developing literacy and maths skills;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents/carers to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;
- providing home/school planners in reception for parents/carers and teachers to leave comments relating to the children's achievements; and
- writing a report to parents/carers on their child's attainment and progress at the end of reception.

Supporting Learning

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them, helping children build on prior learning by pitching activities at a level that is demanding but still within the children's reach. At our school the EYFS teachers act as a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

Enabling Environments

At Ashgate Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We begin by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas and communication spaces, where children are able to find and return equipment and resources independently. The EYFS Unit has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers children the availability to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

The Wider Context

We have links with local nursery schools who are invited to visit with, and discuss, new intake children. Where children continue to attend other pre-school provision in addition to our school, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements.

Members of the local community, for example the police community support officer and fire-fighters are invited into the setting to share their expertise.

Learning and Development

At Ashgate Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Teaching and Learning

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. The three characteristics of effective learning:

Playing and exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

At Ashgate Primary school we aim to develop secure and confident children. We continue to review the EYFS environment to ensure that it is interesting, attractive and accessible to every child so they can learn independently. We recognise that every child's learning journey is unique to them and that children need to have some independence and control over their learning.

Creating and thinking critically

We allow children opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. We value each child's culture and help them to make connections between experiences at home, the setting and the wider community.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS curriculum is made up of seven areas of learning and development. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn and form relationships. These three areas are the *prime* areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The *specific* areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Transition

At Ashgate Primary School we have close links with local nursery school providers and reception staff meet regularly with them to discuss assessment and transition issues and attend training.

Transition week/weeks

During the final term in reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reached expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning. This ensures each child's stage of development and learning needs are clearly identified and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Children from reception spend time in their new class with their new teacher towards the end of the summer term. Opportunities for children to get to know their new teachers also arise throughout the year through staffing at playtimes and assemblies. All staff meet at the end of the summer term for important 'handover sessions.'