

# Ashford CE Primary School



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Ashford CE Primary School children generally join the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday (Please see the admissions policy regarding deferred entry).

We aim to ensure that the children at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement. We strive to provide our children with an education that is both enjoyable and inspirational; it is tailored to the children's needs and interests, providing them with a skill set that will make them a life-long learner. We will ensure that our curriculum is memorable and relevant. Through our planning, engagement with children, creative use of resources and personnel, professional development and training, we will aim to make learning and teaching at Ashford CE Primary School of a consistently high standard.

## Our School Vision

We are a caring Christian community where everyone adopts an "I can" attitude; everyone feels valued, safe and loved by God. We celebrate our God-given individuality, achievements and talents and we aspire, with God's help, to become the best that we can be. We believe that each one of us has the ability to achieve our highest potential, living and learning in the fullness of God.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

*Philippians 4v13*

## Admissions and Induction

Please see school admissions policy for details of entry criteria and pattern of school entry.

Induction includes:

- Pre-school visit by the parent and child;
- Home Visit carried out by the child's teacher and teaching assistant.
- Welcome card sent directly to the child's home during the summer holidays.
- New parents information meeting during the term before the child starts school;
- Staggered admission dates allowing children to start in a smaller group;
- Initially parents may accompany their child into the classroom at the start of the day.

## Aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception classes at Ashford CE Primary School aim to provide a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum which addresses the children's social, emotional, physical,

intellectual, moral, spiritual and cultural development within a safe, secure, stimulating environment.

We believe that childhood is a time of play, and through play we discover the excitement of learning, the reward of achievement, and acquire our life skills. The EYFS setting, with its bright, colourful, well planned, stimulating environment, encourages the children in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to live full satisfying lives and become confident, active members of a diverse constantly changing society.

It is through this process that children will work towards (emerging), achieve (expected) and work beyond the level of development (exceeding) expected at the end of the EYFS.

We aim:

- To make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun.
- To provide a safe, stimulating and welcoming environment in which children can continue their overall development.
- To ensure that all children feel valued and secure in the Foundation Stage setting with positive relationships between carers and staff.
- To provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and help them to learn effectively.
- To promote independence by offering the children the freedom and flexibility to take responsibility and make choices.
- To implement key strategies from The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum covering care, learning and development.

## **Objectives**

- To have a minimum adult to child ratio of 1:15 in Reception.
- To engage in children's play and provide positive adult models of language to support communication skills.
- To listen to children and provide opportunities for them to express feelings, opinions and ideas.
- To monitor children's progress through ongoing observation and adult initiated activities in order to plan future learning to meet children's needs.
- To promote gender and cultural diversity through positive role models and choice of resources.

## **Organisation**

Each Reception class is staffed with one teacher and a teaching assistant. Children can access learning in both Reception classes and outside areas. The areas of learning spread across the entire space with children making independent choices. All staff work across the learning environment and contribute to planning and assessment for all children. Support staff in the EYFS have Paediatric first aid qualifications.

The Early Years Team meets weekly to plan their developmentally appropriate curriculum.

## **Teaching and Learning**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and 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**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

As a team, we write medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of themes each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

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

## **Play**

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They practise 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 have the opportunity to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all of the areas through planned purposeful play and learning experiences with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

The children have free flow access to the outdoor learning environment where there is at least one adult. The adults role is to supervise and facilitate play. Outdoor learning is planned to link with indoor learning activities but there is a greater emphasis on gross motor activities.

## **Planning and Assessment**

Observation, assessment and evaluation are planned for and used throughout the year to inform planning that will allow the children to succeed in their next steps of learning and ensure that each child's differing needs are met. Half-termly topics are based on the seven areas of learning that make up the EYFS curriculum including appropriate skills. Assessment is based around ongoing observation and the recording of progress towards the 17 Early Learning Goals.

In line with whole school methodology, Assessment for Learning (AFL) is part of EYFS practice.

Assessment opportunities include:

- All observations, assessments and recording are an integral part of teaching, as they inform future planning for children's needs and development;
- Careful observation carried out whilst children are engaged in child initiated activity/play, in order to gain an insight into children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts;
- Careful observations carried out during focused group work/whole class teaching in order to assess children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts;

- Informal observation both in the background and whilst participating with children;
- Discussions with children about their interests and their learning;
- Baseline assessments of key skills and aptitudes on entry to initiate each child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile;
- Ongoing recording of progress in the EYFS;
- Exchange of information with parents at parent teacher meetings providing a two way process where teachers and parents share their understanding of a child;
- Pupil progress meetings with the Senior Leadership Team;
- Annual school report relating to the EYFS goals;
- Information is gathered from previous setting initially and at the end of the reception year each child's progress is discussed with the receiving teacher;
- Information from parents and discussions with the teacher;
- The Early Years Leader works with other leaders and the Year 1 teachers to assist transition and planning for each child;
- Participation in moderation internally and with the Local Authority.

### **Parents as Partners and the wider context**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care. We recognise the need for a secure and happy transition from home to school and organise the classroom routines accordingly.

We believe that home support is vital in furthering the development of the individual child. We aim to build good relationships with parents and carers by keeping them informed about the life of the school and their child's progress; ways in which we aim to do this include:

- Discussions with Headteacher and EYFS staff prior to seeking admission
- Information booklets on the EYFS
- 'Welcome Evenings'/informal events for parents where staff explain routines and philosophy
- Home-school reading diaries
- Half-termly curriculum letter
- Photographic displays to show parents what their children have been doing
- Newsletters
- Open door policy – teachers available before and after school
- Parent and child induction programmes
- Open days
- Parents' evenings
- Sharing children's records with parents
- Curriculum workshops for parents

- Parents encouraged to help in the classroom
- Using parents' skills
- Parent Teacher Association
- Interpreter if required or introduction to a parent with the same language

Community links include liaison with previous EYFS settings, EYFS meetings and regular communication with the school nurse, speech and language, occupational therapy services and children's centre. Close links to the church are valued highly and provide support to parents, especially for families who qualify for foundation admission places.

## **Equal Opportunities**

All children and adults are valued, respected and enabled to develop a positive self-image, regardless of culture, gender, race, religion or disability. Our school policies promote equal opportunity inclusion and racial equality which permeate all aspects of the curriculum.

## **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that our children can achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

## **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and child minders. Children attend an introductory session to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

## **Leadership and Management**

The EYFS Leader is responsible for:

- Understanding the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework and practice guidance;
- Preparing policy documents, curriculum plans, Schemes of Work etc. for the EYFS when appropriate;

- Encouraging staff to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils;
- Helping all colleagues to develop their expertise and understanding of the EYFS;
- Ensuring all school safeguarding procedures relating to intimate care, cameras, electronic devices, e-safety and child protection are followed and where appropriate a designated safeguarding Lead is involved;
- Collecting and auditing EYFS resources;
- Ensuring and moderating standards and formats for recording and assessment;
- Liaising with external EYFS practitioners and other key stage staff particularly year 1 teachers;
- Communicating developments in the EYFS, e.g. through staff meetings and distributing information;
- Organising and monitoring continuing professional development in the EYFS;
- Driving an EYFS development plan including costings and priorities which informs the school development plan;
- Liaising with relevant organisations regarding the EYFS, e.g. advisory teachers, inspectors, libraries.