

**Ashbury Meadow Primary School**

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

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**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

*Our school is very special and unique, as are the children, families, staff*

*and members of the wider community we serve. Everyone takes responsibility*

*for the wellbeing of others, particularly for those who are younger.*

**Introduction**

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is how the Government describes the time in a child’s life between birth and five.

At Ashbury Meadow children enter our Foundation Stage, Nursery, once they are three. They transfer into Reception in the September of the year they are five. Reception places are allocated by the Local Authority.

All transition is child led and gradual. Attending full time is dependent on your child’s individual needs, and is determined by staff.

**Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage at Ashbury Meadow**

At Ashbury Meadow we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally in order to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child’s social, emotional and educational needs by:

* Recognising that all children are unique and special; developing individually in different ways, at varying rates.
* Providing a happy, safe and welcoming environment where children learn and their families feel welcomed as partners, created an environment based on the Nurture Principles and our UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award.
* Using a rich and varied topic-based curriculum, which encompasses both inside and outside learning, to support every child’s individual learning and development needs.
* Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others; including others with beliefs, cultures and opinions that differ from their own.
* Fostering and nurturing the development of a child’s self-identity and understanding their role within the communities in which they live.
* Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways; so developing their understanding of social skills. This includes working within the codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
* Providing experiences which build on a child’s existing knowledge and understanding, their personal interests and areas of curiosity – should produce an independent child with the natural desire, excitement and motivation to learn.

**Teaching and Learning**

**The Early Years Foundation stage framework**

The EYFS Framework is mandatory for all early year’s providers in England and was last updated in September 2021. It sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

* The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings
* The early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
* Assessment arrangement for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).
* The safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare

**Overarching principles**

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings these are:

**A Unique Child** - Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

**Positive Relationships** - Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships

**Enabling Environment** - 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

**Learning and Development** - Children develop and learn in different ways (see “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.9) and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is organised into seven areas of Learning and Development. Each area has associated Early Learning Goals (ELG). ELG’s are established expectations for most children to achieve by the end of the EYFS. At Ashbury Meadow we strive to achieve these established expectations by the end of the EYFS, but acknowledge that some children, depending on their individual needs, for example, younger children with summer birthdays, children with learning or physical difficulties, as well as some children learning English as an Additional Language - may still be working towards some goals when they enter Year 1. At Ashbury Meadow the EYFS philosophy continues through a planned transition into Year 1. The experiences the children encounter in Year 1 builds upon the children’s skills, knowledge and experiences

**The seven areas of learning**

All of the seven areas of learning are interconnected. 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 are the **PRIME** areas:

* Personal, Social and Emotional Development

At Ashbury Meadow our aim is to foster and develop relationships between home, school and the community in order to make strong foundations for the children to learn. Our children are encouraged to work, share, take turns and cooperate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect one another’s rights, cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

* Communication and Language

As a communication friendly school, we recognise this area of learning to be fundamental in supporting our pupils across all other aspects of their learning development and in particular their literacy skills. We focus on developing the children’s competence in speaking and listening. We aim to extend and enrich the children’s vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions, saying rhymes and singing songs together. Alongside Elklan strategies, for those who need it, we implement WellComm which identifies areas of language that children lack knowledge and understanding in and supports them to develop this through repetitive small group activities. In addition staff have been trained on the use of the ‘First response’ which through assessment identifies the areas of communication the child find difficult and provides activities and resources to support them with this.

* Physical Development

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, and develop and practise their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This can best be achieved by using both the indoor and outdoor environment, and by working with a wide range of resources.

We are proud to have a partnership with City in the community whereby our children receive a weekly PE lesson taught by specialist coaches from Manchester City.

The prime areas of learning are fundamental to children's successful learning in the specific areas. The specific areas cannot be encountered in isolation from communication and language, or personal, social, emotional and physical development, since children always experience the world through communication,

physical interaction and sensory involvement. A strong foundation in the prime areas is essential, as evidence shows that if it is not securely in place by the age of five, it holds children back in other areas of learning and development.

The **SPECIFIC** areas of learning are:

* Literacy

Children have the opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. They are encouraged to develop their early literacy skills in many different ways. Some of these activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing.

* Mathematics

In the Foundation Stage we aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation of numeracy, through practical activities and by using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement.

* Understanding the World

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

* Expressive Arts and Design

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to paint, draw, make collages, models and use musical instruments. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching.

**Development Matters and our curriculum**

At Ashbury Meadow Primary school, we use Development Matters (EYFS guidance) to support each individual child’s development pathway. We have both carefully and conscientiously mapped out our curriculum using our prodigious understanding of both the knowledge and skills children need to gain across each educational programme within the EYFS alongside a close reference to the year 1 expectations of the National curriculum to ensure pupils have the smoothest transition and are school ready. This has included working closely with curriculum subject leads to embed our understanding of each discreet subject within the NC and knowingly incorporating these into our own curriculum to guarantee our pupils a progressive development of skills and knowledge. As part of this curriculum we believe it to be essential to provide our pupils with real-life, hands on experiences arranging visitors such as ‘Andrew the animal man’ and local service professionals such as the police or firemen and planning for endless learning outside the classroom experiences; growing our own vegetable patches, carrying out environment walks and problem solving to get across different obstacles such as water by building bridges or tunnels.

**Active learning through play**

At Ashbury Meadow we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Being active involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve the children. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as fun and practical as possible.

In Nursery and Reception, play is our basic tool for teaching. Play is essential, a powerful motivator, it encourages children to be creative and to develop their ideas, learn new skills and mix with others. At Ashbury Meadow we use the **‘Rainbow challenge’** to both support and encourage our pupils to learn through play. Both structured and unstructured play opportunities are planned for inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, and develop their personal interests and curiosity. Play helps children make sense of the world around them and to begin to understand new concepts, apply new skills and develop existing ones. The ‘Rainbow challenge’ is continued as the children move into year 1 providing them with an element of familiarity as they transition into school.

**Assessment**

Pupils in Reception are assessed within their first 6 weeks of entering school using the statutory baseline assessment. This is an activity-based assessment of pupils’ starting points in: language, communication and literacy and mathematics. In addition to this assessment pupils may also be assessed using Wellcomm should we feel it necessary to do so.

As a school we follow and implement the ‘Little Wandle letters and sounds’ programme for phonics. This outlines that pupils should be assessed on their development in phonics every 6 weeks. This happens throughout the school year.

Assessment for Learning is used throughout school; it is a formative approach, based on observation and is well suited to EYFS practice. Planning for individual needs and learning requirements is one of the most effective ways of meeting the diverse needs of all children.

During the day staff spend a great deal of time watching how and where children play, how they relate to other children using the same equipment, how much language is being used and how technical that language is. From our very thorough observations we plan activities to reinforce, develop and extend children’s knowledge. We work with children individually and in small groups — trying to narrow any gaps that there might be in an area of learning. During the day we also get together in large groups - giving all the children the opportunity to sit with friends, listen to a story or sing songs together. Each week a meeting is held to discuss pupil progress and next steps.

**Partnership working**

At Ashbury Meadow we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents/carers, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We welcome and encourage parents/carers to become involved with their children’s education, on a daily basis. We acknowledge that *parents/carers are their children’s first and most enduring educators* and recognise that when parents/carers and school work together, the results have a positive impact on the child’s development and learning.

Parental involvement with school begins even before children start Nursery or Reception; firstly, with a home visit and then with an invitation to visit the school, staying and playing together, meeting other children, parents and staff.

From the moment children start with us we use the online platform **‘Tapestry’** to document every individual pupil learning journey which parents are grated access to. This enables parents to receive email notifications when an observation of their child’s learning in school has taken place and informs their next steps.

Parents’ meetings are held throughout the year. The first meeting takes place during the autumn term this allows teachers and parents to discuss how well children have settled into the setting. The second parents’ evening takes place during the spring term. In this meeting, teacher’s feedback on children’s learning and developmental progress. A written report is sent out at the end of the summer term.

Newsletters are sent out each half term on our school website to inform parents/carers about the learning that is taking place, as well as keeping parents/carers informed of events taking place in the Foundation Stage.

Parents are invited to join our parents’ group (Friends of Ashbury Meadow).

**How we promote good behaviour**

We aim to promote good behaviour in every area of school life by teaching children to make sensible choices about their behaviour. This is done within a framework of rights, responsibilities, rules and routines. Children must understand that they are making choices about their behaviour and that these choices inevitably lead to consequences which are consistently and fairly applied. Positive choices lead to supportive consequences such as rewards and negative choices lead to corrective consequences such as sanctions.

**EYFS Values**

We use an indoor voice.

We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.

We share with each other.

Providing for equality of opportunity

**Rights**

As a Unicef Gold Rights Respecting school we frequently discuss and promote the Convention of children rights. As children enter and move through our school each academic year begins with a class charter being made whereby 3 overarching rights are outlined.

In EYFS we focus in on;

* Article 6 – Every child has the right to life and to be safe
* Article 28 – Every child has the right to an Education
* Article 31 – every child has the right to relax and play

As a Nurture School we follow the six principles of nurture, which link directly to the Rights Respecting School’s Articles.

The Six Principles of Nurture

1.       Children's learning is understood developmentally

2.       The classroom offers a safe base

3.       The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing

4.       Language is a vital means of communication

5.       All behaviour is communication

6.       The importance of transition in children's lives

Every person working or involved in Ashbury Meadow has a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference – not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but so that they learn from the earliest age, to value diversity in themselves, and others. All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable childhood. As already stated, AfL is used throughout school, its formative approach, based on observation, is well suited to EYFS practice. Planning for individual needs and learning requirements, is one of the most effective ways of meeting the diverse needs of all children.

Please refer to following policy on school web-site: Equality Action Plan

**Special Educational Needs**

The school’s purpose is to deliver a well-planned, balanced and appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the community we serve. We have high expectations of all our children and provide them with quality learning experiences covering all aspects of the curriculum. These are irrespective of race, gender, class or disability. Every child needs to achieve success in order to develop a positive self-image. We recognise that all our children, including those with special educational needs, require a differentiated approach in order for them to have access to the whole curriculum and therefore reach their potential. It is the responsibility of ALL members of staff to ensure that teaching strategies, resources and support are appropriate to the needs of each individual. The school policy is to provide special needs support earlier rather than later. This means that staff becomes aware of the importance of any special needs as the result of early assessment. At Ashbury Meadow we will be actively asking parents to share the outcomes relating to their child’s progress check at age two.

Please refer to following polices on school web-site: SEND policy, SEND report, Accessibility Plan

**Transition**

The key to ensuring successful transition between all settings is to ensure that the child’s social, emotional and educational needs are addressed. We follow the Nurture Schools Transition Principle. Transitions are significant in the lives of children. The nurture group helps the child make the difficult transition from home to school. However, on a daily basis there are numerous transitions the child makes, e.g. between sessions and classes and between different adults. Changes in routine are invariably difficult for vulnerable children and need to be carefully managed with preparation and support. Transition must be seen as a process, not an event and should be planned for appropriately. It should be gradual and child led. Children will enter EYFS on a part time basis, as they develop in confidence the time in school will be extended. A child will only be able to stay full time once EYFS practitioners are confident they are ready to do so. As each child moves through our EYFS transitions into their new classes (e.g. from Nursery into Reception) are planned for with equally as much importance and the children will meet their new teachers and visit new classes several times before they move. We place equally as much emphasis on children’s transition into year one. Throughout the school year Reception and year one staff work collaboratively on classroom environment, moderation and sharing knowledge of the children. Pupils have lots of opportunities to visit their new classes and meet their teachers prior to their move.

Relevant EYFS policies: Intimate Care Policy, EYFS Risk Assessments, Equality Policy, SEND Policy, Safeguarding Policy, LOTC Policy, Rights Respecting Behaviour Policy.