

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



Vision, Ethos and Values

At Ashurst CE Aided Primary, our overall aim is to foster a lifelong love of learning through an exciting, enjoyable, challenging and motivating curriculum. We firmly believe that every child deserves the very best start in life and have high aspirations for all. We have three core aims to further improve the children's learning which are:

- To challenge and motivate each and every child
- To continue to raise standards and levels
- To ensure the needs of every child are met appropriately

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Ashurst we lay the foundations for lifelong learning. We want each child to be happy, cared for and excited to learn. Children of this age learn best through play-based activities and first-hand experience. Children become independent learners through a provision of a balance of child-initiated and adult-led experiences. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually to their full potential and at their own pace.

The EYFS is based upon four principles. These principles form the basis of our Early Years Foundation Stage policy:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development.

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

At Ashurst CE Aided Primary, we aim to support and challenge each child at their unique pace of development. We want the children to achieve a positive sense of their own identity and culture which helps them to develop a positive self-image. We acknowledge the different ways in which children learn and recognise and praise their

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



efforts as well as achievement. We aim for all children to develop a positive attitude to themselves as learners.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We do this by considering our children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning. We adapt our planning when necessary to link with the interests that we have noticed in our observations of the children playing and learning.

It is of vital importance to us that all children in the school are safe. Children should be allowed to take calculated risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them to understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (See Whole School Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy and our Health and Safety Policy).

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued at Ashurst CE Aided Primary irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provision available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments consider contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage. (Please see SEND policy).

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. In the EYFS we aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with all children, their families and members of staff.

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



We recognise the important role that parents and carers have played in educating their children and acknowledge that this role will continue in the future. We therefore carry out:

- Visits to pre-schools to see the children in a familiar environment and to begin to establish relationships with the children and liaise with staff.
- New parents' meetings to support parents when their child starts school.
- Home visits; we believe that these are a vital way of getting to know the child and parent before the child starts school.
- Parents Evenings; 3 times a year to discuss the progress of each child.
- Open mornings at school.
- Ad hoc meetings. We have an 'open door' policy. Parents can chat to us at any time but may need to make an appointment with staff if they are busy working with the children.
- Regular communication via text and our website to inform parents of our curriculum.
- School Events; Parents are invited to join in and get involved.
- Reports; Parents will receive an end of year report on their child's attainment and progress.
- Children's work is shared with parents at each Parent's Evening, and parents are given the opportunity to respond by completing an evaluation sheet.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Children's wellbeing is central to the Early Years Foundation Stage; it is intrinsically linked to their ability to be involved and engaged in social and learning activities.

Strong mental health and wellbeing is developed and enhanced by establishing daily routines, providing a nurturing, caring environment and a welcoming atmosphere for all children.

Adults nurture strong relationships with children by responding to them in a warm, calm and understanding way. This encourages co-regulation and helps children learn how to manage their own emotions and responses, learn appropriate strategies to self-regulate, develop healthy stress response systems (which can reduce the risk of stress related illnesses) and learn how to build and maintain their own healthy relationships.

Working in partnership with parents and families is crucial when children are first settling into new environments, and conversations between home and school to support a child who may be struggling, recognise that all behaviour is a form of communication and use appropriate language such as 'emotional wellbeing'.

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



Our well qualified staff promote key messages about positive emotional health and wellbeing to children, and everyone is included in our whole school wellbeing days.

Our supportive learning environment promotes children's mental health and wellbeing by providing a range of resources and opportunities to build confidence, resilience and independence through activities tailored to individual need and challenge.

EYFS children at Ashurst are included in school assemblies, trips and collective worship from when they arrive and this contributes to their sense of belonging and affirms them as being part of our school community.

Children in EYFS at Ashurst benefit from being part of a mixed age class and have the opportunity to share ideas and skills when working with older children. This fosters a classroom culture where children are encouraged to support one another, develop broader friendships and learn to navigate different dynamics. This enhances their interpersonal skills and supports the development of collaboration and independence.

Enabling Environments

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 / carers.

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

Equal Opportunities

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School has universal ambitions for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. Children learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged. In order to engage all children cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children.

Observation, Planning and Assessment:

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



The planning within the EYFS follows the school's long-term planning which is based around termly themes. These plans are used by the class teacher as a guide for medium and weekly planning. However, these may be altered in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children at any point.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, the teacher will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). All children are assessed on their levels of expressive language on entering the EYFS. We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Staff will record observations and take photographs of individual development. Interventions are planned for children identified as 'below expectations' and are reviewed regularly.

At Ashurst CE Aided Primary we observe children's 'Characteristics of Effective Learning', i.e. playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents to report:

- the child's attainment against the Early Learning Goals,
- brief particulars of attainment in all areas of learning;
- comments on general progress including the characteristics of effective learning;
- arrangements for discussing the report.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways. We teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. We foster the characteristics of effective early learning.

The EYFS classroom and outdoor area are organised in a way that will allow the children to explore and learn in a safe and secure environment. The children are able to access the outside area daily. Adults support and extend the children's learning every session. We believe that the outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore using their senses and to be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help in all areas of learning.

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



Learning through Play

At Ashurst CE Aided Primary, we believe that play is a vital and essential part of children's learning and development. Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build upon 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.

The resources that we provide for play are often selected and related to our themes and learning objectives. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move around the classroom and outdoor area to extend their learning.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. This provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

We believe that children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

Specific Areas

- Literacy

ASHURST CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



- 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.

Monitoring and Review

We constantly review our teaching and learning considering the four key principles outlined above ensuring that through our planning and delivery of the curriculum we respond to the particular needs of our children and their individual stages of development. This policy will be reviewed by the Early Years coordinator, in consultation with the staff, as and when elements of Early Years are identified or prioritised within the School Development Plan.

This policy was adopted in: September 2025

The policy is to be reviewed: July 2026