



Ashford Oaks Primary School

Oak Tree Road, Ashford, TN23 4QR

Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy

September 2025

Document History: New Policy written by Gemma Rayner Gemma Rayner Reviewed by Gemma Rayner Reviewed by Gemma Rayner	September 2022 September 2023 September 2024 September 2025
Safeguarding approved: Toni Harris	23 September 2025
Ratified by Governing Body:	24 September 2025
Review date:	September 2026
Signed: Rob Cooke  Chair of Governors	

Contents:

1. Aims
2. Legislation
3. Structure of the EYFS
4. Curriculum
5. Planning
6. Effective Teaching and Learning
7. Assessment
8. Working with parents
9. Safeguarding and welfare procedures
10. Roles and responsibilities.
11. Transition
12. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities.
13. Premises and Security
14. Risk Assessment
15. Food and Drink
16. Illnesses and Injuries

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind. At Ashford Oaks we have a great focus on narrowing the gap for all children.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

At Ashford Oaks Community Primary School, we are committed to providing a high-quality early years' education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning through their positive experiences of adult interactions and independent critical thinking within an engaging, stimulating and enabling environment.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance- September 2025](#). We have embedded the four over-arching principles that shape the practice in our setting. We ensure that the children are given a variety of opportunities to support their learning and development, considering each unique child, developing positive relationships and within an enabling environment.

3. Structure of the EYFS

EYFS Assistant Headteacher- Early Years 0.8 supporting across the EYFS and early identification in SEND.

Nursery: 48 (15 and 30 hour entitlement)

1 Teacher.

3 Teaching Assistants level 2+ or equiv.

1 Level 3 Early Years Educator Apprentice

Reception: 60 full time places

2 Teachers

4 Teaching Assistants level 2+ or equiv.

Children are supervised continuously and follow the requirements for adult: child ratios set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework September 2025. All EYFS staff have a pediatric first aid qualification and have completed safeguarding, child

protection and PREVENT training. All staff have at least a level C at GCSE English and Maths or equivalent.

Reception uses two large classrooms and a dedicated outdoor area. The classroom has a carpet area, and the rest of the space is organised into learning zones for the children to access. The nursery has one large classroom and a dedicated outside area.

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult led and child-initiated experiences throughout the day. All play sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum (educational programmes) as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2025.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These prime areas are a major focus for each child as they enter our EYFS.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and language**
- **Physical development**
- **Personal, social and emotional development**

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the world**
- **Expressive arts and design**

At Ashford Oaks Primary EYFS, we aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. Resources are clearly labelled and organised into learning zones, enabling the children to access them with a high level of independence. Practitioners regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the learning zones and make adaptations as necessary. All learning zones reflect the EYFS framework ensuring the three prime areas and four specific areas (detailed below in 'Planning') are accessible throughout all learning times. Children take ownership of their space and play a large part in caring for their environment. There are low level displays which children can develop and communication boards to enable the children to communicate their wants

and needs. The furniture is arranged to promote talking and language development using nooks and quiet spaces (Elizabeth Jarman, Every Child a Talker and Early Excellence).

5. Planning

Our planning has a sharp focus on the children's needs, their interests and their stages of development. We aim to deliver the curriculum through a balance of play and adult directed activities. We present new concepts in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know. Practitioners are aware of the need to be flexible and respond instantly to unplanned events that the children are interested in to develop next steps (acting "in the moment").

Long-Term Planning

Our long-term planning is where we have clearly defined our curriculum intent for the academic year. The curriculum progresses throughout the year focusing on teaching the children skills, knowledge, key vocabulary and key opportunities. There is always a balance of adult directed, adult-led, adult-initiated and child initiated. Throughout the year the curriculum will also focus on different cultures, celebrations and festivals.

Short -Term Planning

Our Short-term planning shows the learning opportunities that will be available over the week. It includes enhancements to areas in response to the children's interests and the curriculum's progression. These will include opportunities for the seven areas of learning in the EYFS.

Reception

As soon as the children are full time the children will participate in adult directed Math's daily- Big Math's and White Rose, a daily phonics sessions (Little Wandle), reading and topic sessions. There is a large focus on the children's fine and gross motor skills to help develop the physical requirements for writing.

Nursery

Once we feel the children are confident and more settled within the Nursery a short adult directed will be introduced. This will initially focus on the Prime Areas of Learning. As the academic year progresses this will lead to a Mathematical, Literacy and Little Wandle (foundations in Phonics) focus, according to the children's needs. These sessions are play based and encourage the children to learn through play.

All our plans and opportunities are underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- **Playing and exploring**
- **Active Learning**

- **Creating and Critical Thinking**

6. Effective Teaching and Learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a combination of adult-directed and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

As the children grow older, and their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

We also aim to give children opportunities to learn through:

- Talk, investigation and interaction with adults and peers.
- Encouraging independent learning.
- A sense of ownership because of adults organising resources in stimulating way to encourage independence and self-help.
- Using all their senses.
- Through sufficient Child Initiated sessions providing time to explore their ideas and interests.
- To become confident learners enabling children to feel secure.
- Through creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

Play Based Curriculum

Play features strongly in the EYFS, this is a natural way for children to learn. Planned play helps children to think independently, increase their understanding and embed their knowledge. There is a range of "continuous provision" available in the indoor and outdoor environments, that are designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively, imaginatively, explore how resources can be adapted and encouraged to 'take risks' in their discoveries, understanding we can learn from 'mistakes'.

Each week, the provision is enhanced with additional resources, based on observations and the children's interests.

Adult-led activities are practical in nature and based on firsthand experiences wherever possible. The children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and opportunities to share their thinking with others.

7. Assessment

At Ashford Oaks Primary School, ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the

learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

We assess the children through:

- Having positive relationships with the children and knowing the children's needs.
- Observations on Tapestry and within all sessions.
- Talking and interacting with the children throughout all adult directed and child-initiated sessions.
- Discussion with parents/ carers.
- Home visits
- EY meetings where staff assess, monitor and discuss the children's next steps
- If required discussions with outside agencies.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts Reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- **Meeting expected levels of development**
- **Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')**

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance and Birth to 5 Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. The children are assessed on a 'Good Level of Development'. This is based on the above criteria but within the prime areas, Literacy and Mathematics. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

8. Working with parents

We value the contribution that our parents and/or carers make to their child's learning and take every opportunity to work in collaboration with them. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person/worker who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. Parents are informed of who their child's key

person is and this person will be a named point of contact with parents, however it is vital that all members of staff are approachable. The child's key worker will be assigned once the children are full time to ensure children and adults have had time to form positive relationships.

Parents can engage with their children's learning through:

- Attending 'Meet and Greet' information and phonics event in Term 1 and Term 2.
- Attending parent meetings throughout the year:
 - Autumn term
 - Spring term
 - Summer term
- Checking book bags every day for class and school letters.
- Sharing the reading books implementing 'Next Steps'.
- Implementing 'Next Steps'.
- Adding to the Tapestry Learning Journal or conversations with keyworker
- Viewing termly Newsletters.
- Talking to their child's key person at the end of each day if they have any queries.
- Supporting and encouraging their child to feel good about what they try and what they accomplish.
- Completing their child's "Summer Diary"

The key person's responsibilities include:

- Helping the child to become familiar with the setting
- Building a relationship with each child's parents, working in partnership with them to ensure that the child is being cared for appropriately.
- Responding sensitively to the child's needs, feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- Ensuring that the learning opportunities on offer meet the needs of each child
- Using observations to identify the teachable moment in which 'next steps' can be developed.
- Completion of Tapestry, setting next steps and contributing to children's reports.

9. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Promoting safeguarding is central to all teaching and learning and includes building positive relationships and understanding of staying healthy.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

The Early Years Team have collaboratively created the role of the Early Years Practitioner–

- To promote the welfare, learning and development of all children in the EYFS within an inclusive environment.
- To ensure all children's Personal, Social and Emotional needs are met, being aware of their wellbeing and involvement and to put support in place as and when it is required.
- To plan experiences that enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS and achieve a Good Level of Development.
- To provide an environment which inspires and encourages opportunities for talk, writing and enables children to demonstrate the skills they have learnt in adult directed in child initiated.
- To support and engage in children's play through modelling of play and vocabulary to scaffold learning and language.
- To observe the children and use these observations to inform the next steps for the children.
- To be a Keyworker to a group of children, building up supportive positive relationships, a familiar person for the children and parents to go to.
- To use Tapestry to record the children's observations, experiences and progress.
- To contribute towards assessments of the children and be aware of the gaps in their learning.
- To ensure we are narrowing the gap for all children.
- To involve the parents in their children's education through communicating with them about their child's day, parent meetings, workshops where teaching methods and strategies are demonstrated, "stay and play" sessions, home visits and Tapestry.
- To review practice and provision continually.
- To maintain good relationships with feeder Nurseries, Childminders and Playgroups, ensuring smooth transition into school.
- To provide opportunities for Nursery and Reception children to experience their transition classes.
- To liaise and work alongside Year 1 Practitioners to provide positive opportunities for transition.
- To communicate effectively with multi-agencies to ensure the children get the best start and support in their education.
- To baseline the children on entry to school to assess each child's learning needs and next steps. To complete an SEN referral form for the SENCO if there are any concerns. Equally to be aware of higher attaining children to ensure there is

challenge and motivation for these children.

- To be an effective team member to support the children, staff and parents.

11. Transition

Pre-school to Reception

Children within our Nursery have opportunities throughout the year to visit the Reception class e.g attending child initiated and story time sessions. The Reception adults will spend time in the Nursery getting to know the children prior to them starting school. Our Nursery children will visit Reception in term 6 during child initiated with their Keyworker.

We aim to work closely with our feeder settings to ensure that the children make a smooth transition to school. School staff make additional visits to talk to pre-school staff. The class teachers carry out home visits to all the children who did not attend our Nursery during the first week of September.

We hold a transition meeting for new parents in the Summer term, where we outline daily routines and expectations. During the Summer Term parents and children are invited in groups to 'Stay and Play' sessions across the course of a week. The final session is a 'Teddy Bears' picnic attended by SLT and staff.

There is a staggered intake during Autumn term all children are in school full time by the third week.

Transition from Reception to Year One

During the Summer term, the Reception children start transition to Year One. The children have weekly planned sessions of opportunities for stories, exploring the environment getting to know each other and playground playtime. The parents will be given the opportunity to meet the new teaching staff to ask any questions or concerns regarding the transition to Key Stage One.

Within the Summer term Year R and Year 1 Teachers have dedicated time to discuss children in depth. The discussion will involve:

- **EYFS Profile**
- **Well-being**
- **Environment**
- **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**
- **EYFS curriculum areas (including Prime and Specific).**
- **Parental engagement.**

The Year One classroom environment will be carefully organized to ensure the children get the most from their learning through child initiated and adult directed tasks. There will be some similarities to the Reception environment at the start of Year One with continuous provisions and enhancements linked to the National Curriculum expectations.

There will be a dedicated 'Discovery Time' of indoor and outdoor child-initiated play. This will then become more focused learning when the children progress through the Year One curriculum and show readiness for this.

Routines and sessions are monitored and developed throughout the year, by the Assistant Headteacher (Phase 2) and teachers, in response to the needs of the cohort. The development of the daily routine is carefully planned with the needs of the children and in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum.

12. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We have a responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference. We can support each child's needs by:

- removing or helping to overcome barriers where these already exist;
- being alert to the early signs of needs that could later lead to difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as required; challenging all children.
- Changing and adapting practice eg: routine, environment and resources to suit children.

Children with EAL

We value the linguistic diversity within our school and activities that involve speaking and listening in both English and their home language are given high priority in our planning. We provide opportunities for children to use and develop their home language in their play and learning. We also ensure that throughout both child-initiated and adult-directed sessions we model good language. We endeavor to provide a safe and trusting environment, encouraging children to talk using full sentences, extending on their existing language skills. All staff are required to use Makaton to support communication.

Children with ASC

As a school with ASC Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP), we are keen to support all our children individually with their needs. Specifically, to support children with ASC every class has a visual timetable, a visual 'who is in today' board, we use 'now and next' boards, general 'visuals' or communication boards attached to resources and in the environment, Makaton to support the children with communicating alongside reducing our language if needed and communication print in the environment. We work very closely with the SRP team who support us with the individual children we care for.

Please refer to the school's Teaching and Learning Policy for further information regarding Inclusion.

13. Premises and Security

The security and safety of the children at Ashford Oaks is paramount.

- Children are only sent home with adults known to staff and have permission from each child's parents.
- If the fire bell rings the fire drill is always followed.
- Children are never left inside or outside on their own.
- The outdoor areas are checked daily for hazards.
- Outdoor play structures undergo inspection.
- Reception outside space will always be supervised by 2 adults.
- The nursery outside space will always be supervised by 2 adults.
- Code 21 is practiced and followed. Children in Reception are expected to play sleeping lions when Code 21 is announced (lay on floor with head down). In the Nursery the children are encouraged to stand in the bathroom area.

Nursery Security

Children enter the nursery through their own external door, the door is then locked, with a thumb lock another high bolt lock once children have arrived in the morning until registration is complete. If children are late, they are required to enter through the main school door which has an electric switch lock on it.

Reception Security:

Children will arrive at the main gate and then enter the class via the knuckle area. The children will be collected from the exterior class doors at the end of the day. All outside gates entering the Reception outside area are kept closed and bolted throughout the day. There are bolt locks on the interior doors which remained locked once the children are in the classrooms.

Missing Child

If a child disappears during the school day, practitioners will; check with all members of staff when the child was last seen, that they have not been collected by a parent/carer, organise a thorough and systematic search of the building and surrounding playground etc, inform the Head Teacher of the situation and telephone the child's parents or other emergency contact to explain the situation and check that the child is not there or their whereabouts known. If the child is still unable to be located, the school will notify the police of a missing person.

Outings

Written parental permission to take the children into the local environment is sought upon admission to the school. Further permission is obtained for any other outings. Risk assessments are completed for each type of outing.

14. Risk Assessments

In addition to the school's risk assessment, daily informal risk assessments are completed in Reception and Nursery to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed before the children enter the classroom.

15. Food and Drink

The Early Years Foundations Stage Statutory September 2025 gives guidance on 'Safer Eating'. Before children start at our school we collect information regarding their allergies/dietary requirements at the home visit. If required these will be recorded on a care plan. Children with allergies etc are given a yellow lanyard for when eating in the hall. All staff within the Early Years settings are aware of each child's care plan and what they are allowed to eat.

Snacks are provided in Nursery by a 'free flow' snack area throughout the day. An adult remains at the snack area where children will be sat down and where possible with the children facing them. Children are always within sight and hearing of an adult. A range of healthy snacks are available, supplied by "The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme". Children are encouraged to wash their hands with soap before selecting a snack and pouring their own drink. The children are encouraged to choose healthy snacks and be independent with peeling/eating whole pieces of fruit. Fresh drinking water is always available.

In Reception the children initially have a planned 'snack time' where the children are seated on the carpet. The children are always within sight and hearing of an adult. As the year goes on this could lead to a free-flow snack if we feel the children are ready for this. The children will always be within sight and hearing of an adult.

The snack table is cleaned at the beginning and end of each session with an antibacterial spray and is regularly checked throughout the session. All food is stored according to the manufacturer's recommendations and in line with food hygiene legislation.

If a choking incident was to occur that requires intervention, we would record details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents and/or carers are made aware. The records would be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action would be taken to address any identified concerns.

16. Illnesses and Injuries

Parents and carers are asked not to send their child to school if they are unwell and to inform the school office of their absence. Parents/carers are asked to inform staff if their child is suffering from a minor ailment so that appropriate care can be given. Children must not return to school within 48 hours of a bout of sickness or diarrhea.

If a child becomes unwell whilst at school, a member of staff will:

- phone the parents/carers, explain that their child is unwell, explain the symptoms noted and ask them to collect their child.
- sit with the child in a quiet place away from other children until the parents arrive.
- if the child has had sickness or diarrhea, explain the policy of at least a 48 hour clearance of either symptom before the child may return.

In the case of an accident/injury, appropriate first aid will be administered by a qualified pediatric first aider. A first aid kit is kept in both the Nursery and Reception classroom and its contents are in accordance with advice from the Health and Safety Executive and the Community Health Physician. First aid cover is provided at playtimes and lunchtimes. All accidents are recorded in one of the accident books and signed by the member of staff who dealt with the incident. The staff member dealing with the incident is responsible for completing an accident slip and this is sent home with the child at the end of the day. Parents/carers may be contacted by telephone to inform them of a head injury or an additional injury if deemed necessary.

We ask for written parental consent to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future when the children are admitted to school. In the case of a more serious accident to a child, the practitioner/school will contact the parent/guardian to agree a course of action if time permits. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted the practitioner/school will seek appropriate medical attention or treatment for the child. The child should not be given anything to eat or drink. If a child or adult needs to be transported to hospital, every effort should be made to use a car with fully comprehensive insurance including business use. Two adults must accompany the child. Should an ambulance be required, one adult must accompany the child or adult. The child's registration form must be taken to the hospital with the child. Any major accidents requiring a medical intervention in then recorded on KELSI on a HS157 form.

17. Medicines

Please see our school Administration of Medicines in School Policy