



An overview of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) and class arrangements

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is how the Government and Early Years professionals describe the time in your child's life between birth and age 5. This is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. From when your child is born up until the age of 5, their Early Years experiences should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs. Nurseries, pre-schools, **Reception classes** and childminders registered to deliver the EYFS must follow a legal document called the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development. Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development. Children should mostly develop the 3 prime areas first.

These are:

- Communication and language;
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are those most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in 4 specific areas.

These are:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design.

These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. The professionals teaching and supporting your child will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. This is a little bit like a curriculum in primary and secondary schools, but it's suitable for very young children, and it's designed to be really flexible so that staff can follow your child's unique needs and interests. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

What does learning in Early Years at Ashdon look like?

Communication and language is core to everything we do. We expect children to actively listen, meaning we encourage children to respond to what they hear/observe with questions, wonderment and actions. We plan for language development and the acquisition of vocabulary to enable our children to develop and learn in all areas of the curriculum. We support children in developing language and communication skills needed to negotiate, share and take turns.



Physical development is two-fold;

- Gross motor – a lot of this is through outdoor play and PE lessons. In our Class 1 outdoor area we have carefully selected ride-on toys that help children develop a range of muscle groups. We also have our trim trail, 'Safari' walks, gardening and daily laps of our field all of which develop gross motor skills alongside other areas of learning.



- Fine motor – this is often associated with handwriting and of course at Ashdon we support our children in developing good handwriting. However this will not always be writing letters; sometimes this will be developing shoulder and arm strength by waving and swirling scarves or ribbons; developing finger strength by moulding Plasticine or clay; developing coordination through jigsaw puzzles and construction or developing tool skills by cooking, art, colouring, cutting and sticking.



Personal, emotional and social development has always been core to our teaching and learning at Ashdon, but at this time it will be even more vital to our children and their development.



Ashdon Primary School

Caring, Challenging, Celebrating

Caring, Challenging, Celebrating is core to our school values and ethos, and our expectation is that our children will reflect this in their attitudes to others and in their learning.



In **Literacy** our children learn to read and write. Phonics (letter sounds) is an important but far from exclusive part of this. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children have daily phonics lessons which they will use in reading, writing and spelling. Practise at home is key to good progress in phonics and reading; we change reading books daily and we update home phonics books weekly. Literacy is closely linked to Communication and language, especially in comprehension and vocabulary, this is why we read to our children daily and talk about the books we have shared.



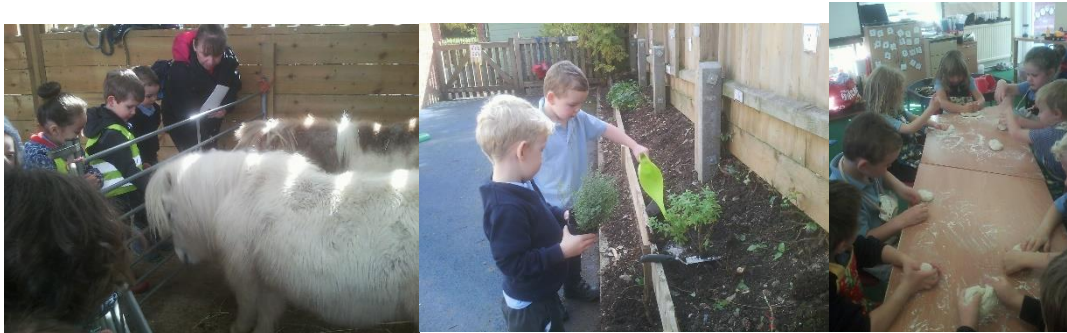
This video clip shows how to pronounce the different letter sounds:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-eTO8L3t40>

Mathematical development is almost entirely through play in Reception at Ashdon. Again talk and language development is key to progress so we talk constantly during Maths activities. As adults we model language to express the Maths the children are experiencing and expect the children to try to express themselves in a similar way. Construction and art activities provide great opportunities for development in understanding of shape and pattern. Role play is fundamental in understanding number, measuring and money. Cooking is great for measuring and weighing, as are sand and water play.



Understanding the world is the area of the curriculum in Early Years that leads into Science, Geography, History and RE in later years. Through 'Safari' our children observe seasonal changes, see how humans impact the local environment and discover Ashdon. Through stories and discussions they find out about other people's lives along with respecting similarities and differences in these. Through play they make scientific discoveries and observe changes in cooking and gardening. To enhance learning in understanding the world we have been on trips to Boydell's farm, Cambridge Botanical Garden's and Hatfield Forest. Our gardening activities enable our children to observe growth and change over time and discover mini-beasts.



Expressive arts and design is about children being creative and imaginative through role-play, Art, design, construction, music and dance. At Ashdon we are creative and imaginative indoors and outdoors. We are also lucky to have a specialist music teacher who enables us to perform fabulous creations at Harvest, Christmas and at our Spring Festival.



How will I know how my child is getting on and what they are doing in school?

In Early Years we continuously track children's progress by observing what they do and listening to what they are saying. Hearing what parents know about their children is really important in getting a complete picture of how children are getting on. At Ashdon we ensure this happens by encouraging parents to come into the Reception classroom each morning when they drop them off, this is a great time for a quick chat or to arrange a time for a longer discussion. We also invite parents to a consultation evening in the autumn and spring terms and you will get a written report at the end of the year.

We invite parents to join us on Fridays for Sharing Assembly, this is a good opportunity for you to see what your child has been doing in school and it is great for meeting other parents and becoming an involved member of our school community.

At the beginning of each term we send home an overview of what your child will be learning. You will know what your child is learning in phonics because we send home a 'Letters and Sounds' book with the letter sounds your child is learning that week. We ask that you practise these sounds daily (it takes just a few minutes) and spot them in the books that you read with your child.

From this year we are required to baseline assess our Early Years children using Government materials. At Ashdon we trialled this last year and found it a positive experience for the children and that it generally confirmed what we had already observed from our children. We also get to know children well by asking them to bring in a Chatterbox. This is a decorated shoe box containing photographs and objects that reflect your child and their interests. For example, Miss Foote's Chatterbox contains photographs of her dogs, horses and family, a toy tractor, a picture of a tent, a programme from Weeting Steam Rally and a medal from a fun run.

We have routine activities that happen daily or weekly;

- The daily laps of our field are great for fitness, social talk with friends and improved levels of concentration during other activities in the day
- Weekly PE lessons (PE kit required)
- Once weekly 'Safari' walks around our local area. We need parental support to be able to do this so please let us know if you are free to help on Thursday afternoons. Suitable clothing will need to be sent in for children to change into as we often get very wet and muddy!



- Once weekly music and drama with Mrs Clark on Friday mornings



- For gardening we request that children have welly boots in school. We grow vegetables that are used in our school dinners. From September we will have an allotment over the road from school as well as our vegetable garden on the school field.



How can I help my child settle in quickly and have happy days a school?

We have found that children who are able to manage their belongings, are familiar with routines, know what they are having for dinner and can manage toileting themselves are happiest in those first few weeks of school.

A few tips to help with this:

1. Label your child's school clothes, shoes, wellies and PE kit.
2. Share the dinner menu with them and help them decide what they might like to choose or let them see what they have in their lunch box.
3. Talk to an adult in school if your child or you are worried about anything (don't let little worries become big worries).
4. Before the first day, practise the journey to school, walk up the steps and have a look through the front gate at the classroom door.
5. Try to get your child as independent as you can with toileting.
6. Get them to undress and dress themselves.
7. Make sure they recognise their coat and bag, then when they come into school get them to hang them on their peg themselves, so they know where they are.
8. Make sure they recognise their water bottle.

What does my child need to have in school?

Clothing suitable for the weather i.e. sun hat/coat.

PE kit.

Welly boots.

Safari clothes on Thursdays – long trousers and sleeves (year-round), waterproofs, change of underwear and socks (sometimes we paddle in the stream or puddles).

A water bottle.

A bag for the books they bring home.

Packed lunch if not having a school dinner (you don't need to provide a snack as fruit/vegetables are provided).

Some useful links –

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/#3>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=zel-6Rog2IE&feature=emb_logo Help your child be school ready