

Prospective Parents FAQs – November 2020

How many children do you have in the school and what is the average class size?

We currently have 69 children altogether, across 3 classes. We can take a maximum of 15 children per year group, which would mean the school would have 105 children altogether if each year group was full. Class 1 (Year R, 1 and 2) has 23 children, Class 2 (Year 3 & 4) has 25 children and Class 3 (Year 5 & 6) has 21 children.

How have you organised the teaching space/s for Class 1 if they have a mixture of Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils?

Class 1 has 3 distinct teaching spaces that they utilise for their learning. The first two of these are classrooms that are adjacent to one another. One classroom has different activity areas laid out, such as an art area, a role play area, a construction area, a writing area and a group teaching zone. This helps the children experience a wide range of opportunities required in the EYFS.

Linked to this class is an outdoor area where the children can continue their learning using resources such as sand and water, tricycles, the role play structure and much more.

Finally, next to the first classroom is a second classroom that has tables and chairs for the children to work at and a library/reading area.

The children will get to work in a variety of ways, sometimes as a whole class, sometimes in their year group, either collaboratively or individually. All the children get to work with the class teacher each day and our highly skilled Teaching Assistants who support the class in both the morning and afternoon.

How do children in mixed-aged classes get suitable work given to them?

All of our classes are mixed-aged, in other words they have more than one year group per class. Many of our subjects, except English and mathematics, are taught on a 2-year rolling programme. For example, this means that if Year 3 & 4 learn about Romans one year, the teacher will not cover it again for 2 whole years. When they do return to this topic, all of the children who would have learnt about Romans previously will have moved onto the next class.

For maths and English, there are separate national curriculums written by the Government that we will follow for EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2), Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 & 4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5 & 6). Aspects of English and mathematics are taught throughout the academic year and then built upon in subsequent years. The children should be given work that is appropriate to their ability and takes into consideration their previous experiences and successes or difficulties.

Our Class 1 currently has a mixture of both EYFS and Key Stage 1. These are both distinct curriculums, so the class teacher plans experiences for the children that meet the requirements of each curriculum, and most importantly, the needs of the child.

Which schools do the children go to once they leave your school at the end of Year 6?

There are 2 main destinations for our children to join for their secondary education, which reflects that we have families who live in Essex, Cambridge and Suffolk. These are Saffron Walden County High School and Linton Village College. Sometimes families choose alternative schools for their child, such as private education.

We work closely with both secondary schools to provide transition activities for our pupils, to help prepare them for the next phase in their education.

Are you holding an Open Morning or giving school tours to help us see the school?

Unfortunately, due to the current situation with COVID-19, we have decided to minimise the number of visitors to the school, as part of our Risk Assessment, which is based on guidance given by the Department for Education and our Local Authority.

This means we have taken the decision to cancel the 2 Open Mornings we had planned and cease tours with the Headteacher around the school and its grounds.

The Headteacher has produced a short video outlining the school site to prospective parents, but we appreciate this will never be the same as seeing it in person.

How do I find out more information about the school?

The best place to start is the school prospectus, as this is packed with information about school life, including uniform, school dinners, etc. It has been placed on the front page of the school website, along with these FAQs, to give easy access to prospective parents.

Once you have read the prospectus and taken a look at the different sections of our website, then do contact us if you have any queries about the school or the application process (contact details are given in the answer to the last question in this document).

I live in Essex, where do I apply for a school place?

Applications are made online through the Essex Admissions Team:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/apply-for-a-primary-school-place>

I live in Cambridgeshire or Suffolk; can my children attend an Essex school?

Yes, families who live in either Cambridgeshire or Suffolk can apply to our school – indeed we have a number of families who currently attend our school who are not based in Essex. When you do apply for a place, you must do so from the county you live in, rather than the county where the school is based (if this is different).

Therefore, if you live in Cambridgeshire you must use their application process:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/primary-reception-junior-or-middle-school>

If you live in Suffolk you must use their application process:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-places/apply-for-a-primary-school-place-20212022/>

What is the closing date for applications for a Reception school place in September 2021?

15th January 2021.

Please note that admissions applications that arrive after this deadline will be considered 'late' applications, and will be put to the bottom of the priority list when the Local Authority allocates places to schools. This even applies if you live within the school catchment or there is an older sibling already attending the school – so get your application in on time!

Are places allocated on a first come, first served basis?

No, each school has its own admissions criteria by which places will be allocated. Local Authority schools, such as Ashdon, will have their admissions criteria decided by the Local Authority.

Therefore, being first to submit your application gives you no advantage over those who submit their application by the deadline day, only those who make 'late' applications will be at a disadvantage.

In the event of oversubscription places will be allocated using the following criteria in the order given:

1. Looked After Children and previously looked after children (as defined in the Primary Education in Essex 2021/2022 booklet);
2. children with a sibling attending the school;
3. children living in the priority admission area;
4. remaining applications.

In the event of oversubscription within any of the above criteria, priority will be determined by straight line distance from home to school, those living closest being given the highest priority.

If I only put one school on the admissions application form, does this guarantee a place at that school or help avoid being allocated a place at a particular school that I don't want my child to attend?

No, if the school you have chosen is over-subscribed, then the Local Authority you live in will allocate another school to your child. Where possible, they will allocate your second choice school, if you indicated it your application, then failing that, your third choice or fourth choice. Therefore, if you have not indicated any other schools when you applied, then the Local Authority will give your child a place at the nearest school to your home that has places available.

Does the school hold a waiting list for places?

Ashdon is a Local Authority school, so all admissions are handled by the Local Authority on our behalf, including the use of waiting lists if a year group becomes over-subscribed.

When legally does my child have to start school?

Children legally have to start school in the term following their 5th birthday. Therefore, if their 5th birthday is in February 2021, they do not have to join school until the beginning of the summer term 2021. Those children who would have their birthday until the summer term, including August, do not need to start until September 2021. Some parents of summer-born children choose to defer their school admission, so that the child would begin Reception in September 2022.

The reality is that most parents let their child start the school in the September of the year, so that they can spend the full year with the class teacher and the other children within their class. This helps both their social and academic development.

If you are considering starting your child later in the academic year than September, then please contact the school in advance so you can discuss these arrangements with the Headteacher.

Please remember, even if you plan to defer your child's entry by a whole academic year, you must apply January 15th 2021!

When will I find out which school my child has been allocated a place for?

There is a national day in England, when school places are shared with parents. For this forthcoming year it is:

Friday 16th April 2021

These days, most parents will find out via an email sent to them but some may still find out by a letter posted via Royal Mail (dependent on the options/systems available via each admissions authority).

I didn't manage to get a place in any of the schools I had indicated during the application process, what should I do?

Firstly, it is important to note that your child will have been allocated a primary school place somewhere, but we know how disappointing it can be when your child was unable to get in any of the schools you wanted them to go to. The most important thing to do is to speak to the admissions team who handled your application. They will be able to advise you on what options will be available to you. This might include advising you on which schools have places still available within the local area or discussing the appeals process with your family.

Once we have been allocated a place at Ashdon Primary School, what happens next?

We will write to you outlining what opportunities you and your children can take part in prior to September 2021. COVID-19 allowing, this would usually include transition 'taster' sessions where your child can stay for either morning or afternoon sessions to familiarise themselves with the school, the staff and the other children. We would also normally arrange a parents' meeting for all parents to meet the class teacher and the Headteacher and individual meetings for you to discuss your child with the class teacher.

In addition to these events, you will be given all the paperwork you need to complete and have support from the school office staff to organise the purchase of school uniform.

We can always be contacted with any queries that you may have, no matter how small, via either the phone on 01799 584219 or via email at admin@ashdon.essex.sch.uk