



The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Ashgate School (Revised April 2017)

Welcome to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Ashgate School. We hope that both you and your child will be very happy with us and settle quickly into school life.

Our aim is to provide a caring, stimulating and challenging environment, where your child will feel happy, safe and secure. We value and respect each individual child and everything we do reflects the unique needs of our pupils. We are mindful of the society in which we live, ensuring equality of opportunity regardless of differences in ability, culture and gender.

In line with our school motto we provide all our children with opportunities to explore, discover and learn new skills. We encourage our pupils to be as independent as possible and become confident learners who are proud of their achievements.

We currently have a small EYFS cohort and the majority of children join us in their Reception Year once the assessment for their Education and Health Care Plan is complete.

Starting School

The school welcomes parents and most families will have had a tour of the school and met the staff team before their child starts at Ashgate. As part of our admissions process we will visit your child in their Nursery or Playgroup setting to find out more about how they learn. We will also meet with you at home or in school so you can tell us about your child, we can answer any questions you have about your child starting school and we can make plans together for your child to visit their new class.

Your child will either be offered a part-time or full-time place depending on their age and individual needs and the vacancies we have in school. As a general guide, children of Nursery age will initially be offered a part time place for three days a week whilst pupils of Reception age will attend on a full time basis.

When children in the EYFS age range first start at Ashgate we usually offer a phased admission into school with children gradually building up to full time attendance over the first Half Term they are in school. Every child and family is different and during this time the class team will work closely with you to ensure the transition into school is as smooth as possible.

School Transport are unable to offer lunchtime pickups but if you are bringing your child to school yourself we are happy to discuss the possibility of morning or afternoon only attendance whilst your child is settling in with us if you feel they are finding the full day too challenging.

Clothing

Children in the EYFS do not need to wear school uniform but if you wish to purchase uniform it can be bought from Debonair Schoolwear in Wythenshawe. We do ask that your child wears comfortable clothes which are washable and hard wearing and labelled with your child's name. The children are encouraged to wear aprons for creative and water activities but they may still need a change of clothing after such activities so we do ask that your child has a spare set of clothes each day in their bag in case they are needed.

What to bring to school

When your child starts school they will need a school bag labelled with their name. This should contain a named set of spare clothes, the home – school diary and anything else needed during the school day, such as nappies, specialist milk or food and a spare gastrostomy button.

The school day

The school day is from 9.00am to 3.15pm. If your child comes to school on transport a member of class staff will collect them from the bus in the morning and help them get to class safely.

If you are bringing your child to school the class team will let you know about arrangements for the beginning and end of the school day.

Please let a member of staff know if a relative or friend will be collecting your child from school. For safety reasons, if this person is not known to the school you will need to set up a 'password' with the office staff. Your relative or friend will then need to tell the office the password before your child can leave the school in their care.

Communication between home and school

Your child will bring their Home – School diary home each night. Please check it for messages and do write in it to let us know how things have been at home. In addition each class has a designated area of the school website where you can find copies of the class ethos, newsletters and timetables.

If you phone during the school day it may not be possible for us to speak to you straight away but please leave a message with Michelle or Debbie in the office and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

EYFS classes hold parent events at least once a term where you can come into school and join in with learning opportunities alongside your child. The structure and focus of these events varies across the school and your child's teacher will let you know about forthcoming events.

If you would like to volunteer to help with specific activities such as Rebound Therapy or join us on class trips we would be delighted to hear from you.

Teaching and learning in the EYFS

Teaching and learning for pupils in the EYFS is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (revised 2017).

Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in all early years settings. These are:

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
3. 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
4. **Children develop and learn in different ways 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 EYFS curriculum

Children in the EYFS are given opportunities to learn in a way that best suits their individual needs. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified by the EYFS are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The curriculum is divided into **seven areas of learning** all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for building capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three **prime areas of learning** are:

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

Schools must also support children in four **specific areas of learning** through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas of learning are:

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

A typical day for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage would include group times, adult led activities and continuous provision where children are encouraged and supported to independently explore play opportunities. Snack and mealtimes are important learning opportunities and typically link to Communication and Personal, Social and Emotional Development targets. The Soft Play and Sensory rooms are used where appropriate and there is also direct access from each classroom to an outdoor play area.

Assessment for learning

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations, annotated photos, activity and personal learning plan recording sheets and examples of work such as paintings. We will complete a **baseline assessment** with your child during their first half term at Ashgate. This information will then be used to identify key points for learning for each individual pupil. You will be sent a copy of your child's baseline assessment report prior to their first review in school and we will have the opportunity to talk through the report with you during the meeting.

Every child in school also has a **My School Life at Ashgate** File. The file celebrates special achievements and experiences and certificates, photographs and wow moments are added each term that the child is in school. The file will be presented to your child when they leave school as a lasting record of their time with us at Ashgate.

Pupils are also encouraged to share and celebrate their achievements and Star of the Week awards are used across the school.



Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

In the final term of the year in which your child reaches age five the **EYFS Profile** will be completed and your child's level of development will be assessed against the **early learning goals**.

The assessment will reflect ongoing observation; discussions with parents and carers, and input from the wider professional team. It must also indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging') or if they are exceeding expected levels.

A report will be compiled each year your child is in school. There will be the opportunity to discuss the report with the class teacher at Parents Evening towards the end of the Summer Term.

Class Fund

Each class has a class fund and if you could make a regular contribution of £1 a week this would be really appreciated. The class fund contributes towards us providing your child with a wide range of activities, such as, trips out to the supermarket to buy ingredients for cookery or visits to the Donkey Sanctuary. The fund also allows us to buy what we need to make exploratory play resources such as play dough and gloop.

Illnesses and appointments

If your child is unable to come to school because they are unwell please contact the school office by telephone. We ask that you make sure that your child is completely better before they return to school, particularly if your child has an infectious illness. If your child has vomiting and diarrhoea they should stay off school for 48 hours.

If your child is going to be absent for any other reason, such as an appointment, please let a member of staff know in advance or contact the school office on the day.

We are only able to give medicine that has been prescribed for your child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. All medicines must be brought into school in the original container, with a pharmacy label stating your child's name and the dosage prescribed. You must also complete and sign a written consent form. A copy of the consent form for medication can be found on the school website or requested from the office.

Working with the wider professional team

If your child has additional health or medical needs they may need extra support from colleagues from other services. We work closely with the therapists that work in school to ensure that your child receives the support they require to meet their individual needs. When your child starts school they may be assigned a different Physiotherapist or Paediatrician and the health team will ensure that all relevant information is passed on so that there is continuity in your child's care.

We have a link Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired who is able to offer advice to staff about access to learning for children with visual needs.

Parents' Group

We hold a regular parents' coffee morning and new parents are very welcome to join the group. It is a friendly and informal group and you can come along whenever you are able. If you would like more information please ask Debbie or Sue, our Parent Support Advisors.

If you have any questions about Early Years provision or would like to visit us in preparation for your child starting school please ring school on 0161 359 5322 and ask to speak to Diane Wolstenholme (Headteacher) or Catherine Mattocks (Early Years Lead). We look forward to hearing from you.

