



Ashbridge

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL & NURSERY

EARLY YEARS

POLICY AND CURRICULUM

Approved by: SMT

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Accessibility: Available on the school website and paper copy on request

Scope: Ashbridge School (Reception Class), Ashbridge Nursery, Ashbridge on Ribble, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, The Fledglings Nursery

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines our aims and goals and gives details of the curriculum and methods of planning and assessment we employ. It is agreed by the Development Forum and is monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure we meet our overall aims. It is available to parents/carers via the company website and promoted and implemented throughout the company.

The needs of children within the Early Years Foundation Stage (from 0 – 5 years) has formed the basis of this policy, which provides a framework for teachers and practitioners, giving guidance on practice, planning, teaching and learning, and monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The Early Years Curriculum is being developed in accordance with the Practise Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and National Curriculum programmes of study for KS1.

At Ashbridge the term ‘Early Years’ refers to children from birth in nursery classes, to the end of reception year in school.

The policy reflects the company vision statement, which is:

Ashbridge:

“Aspiration, Attitude, Achievement”

Potential nurtured, success realised.

Ashbridge children will be:

- High academic achievers.
- Unique, respectful, self assured individuals.
- Skilled, independent and eager for challenge.
- Confident, self motivated life long learners.

Every child at Ashbridge will achieve success through experiencing:

- The highest standards in academic excellence.
- A challenging curriculum tailored to the individuals needs
- The dedication and expertise of a highly effective and specialist team.
- Positive attitudes and consistent moral values
- Continuity of excellent care and education from birth to eleven years
- An Inspirational outdoor environment providing unique learning opportunities.

Introduction

Our Early Years Policy addresses all aspects of the needs of young children and ensures that:

- Early Years education is valued, in its own right and as the foundation for further learning it begins a continuum of learning throughout the primary phase.
- Our provision and curriculum provides children with experiences which are appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- The identification of and provision for special educational needs and disabilities of children are included.
- The importance of ‘play’ and active ‘first-hand’ experiences both inside and outdoors are acknowledged and recognised in planning learning opportunities for young children.
- There is shared understanding of the emotional and developmental needs of young children, how they learn and develop skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The needs of the children are considered carefully in matters of organisation, management and administration.
- Children experience a smooth transition from home, previous pre-school or nursery, into the reception class and into KS 1.
- Statutory curricular obligations laid down by DFE and the requirements for the completion of the Early Years Profile are followed.

- The core British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are promoted.

At Ashbridge we believe that the following aims underpin our practise and reflect our shared vision of how children develop and learn. The aims of the Early Years Curriculum are;

- To provide a happy, safe, secure and stimulating environment with opportunities for children to enjoy learning, develop confidence and self-esteem, and build good relationships with others.
- To ensure warm consistent care to individuals through a key person approach, facilitating physical care in feeding, changing and sleeping patterns.
- To support, foster and develop children's personal, social and emotional well being.
- To build on what children already know and can do.
- To enable children to express preferences, communicate needs, make choices and decisions that others will act on and respect.
- To value parents/carers as important partners in their children's learning.
- To address the individual needs of all children by enabling them to participate in a broad, balanced, age-appropriate and relevant curriculum, with due regard to equal opportunities.
- To promote the moral, spiritual, cultural intellectual and physical development of children.
- To effectively prepare children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British Society.
- To develop positive attitudes/ dispositions for learning, which will make transition between stages happy and rewarding.

Early Years provision, organisation and the learning environment.

Early Years provision at Ashbridge is organised into nursery classes and a Reception class.

In addition to the Early Years practitioners, we have qualified teachers with EYT status who work directly with the children throughout the nursery, and specifically within the pre-school year. The Reception class is led by a qualified and experienced teacher, supported by an additional early years practitioner.

Classes are well resourced and provide children with areas of continuous provision where they are encouraged to make independent choices. They also engage in focused activities, which are developed in the main from children's individual interests and needs.

Classrooms and nursery areas open onto outdoor learning areas and in addition time is scheduled that all may access the outdoor and indoor play areas and adventure play spaces within the setting.

Ashbridge operates a **key person approach** throughout the EYFS as we believe that the role of a known care giver/teacher is of primary importance. Children learn through interactions with adults who are trained, knowledgeable committed and responsive with a positive attitude. This role is especially important in caring for babies and children in their first 3 years. (See also our Quality Care and Education Under 3 Policy).

Children are assigned a Key Person when they join the EYFS/setting. Care is taken to ensure bonds are established quickly and children's early attachments to individuals are taken into account. Parents are informed of their child's key person once established in order that effective relationships can be developed. Members of staff each have a group of children for whom they are responsible and as a key person are responsible for meeting all the care and learning needs of their key children. (See also our Admissions and Key Person Policies)

Parental involvement, contributions and communication

We aim to create a welcoming, happy and relaxed environment in which parents and carers are encouraged to share in their children's progress and achievements. Teachers and practitioners recognise that effective partnerships have a positive impact on children's development and learning, and therefore aim to provide opportunities for parents/carers to be fully involved, and keep us informed about their child's development or share any concerns they may have.

On admission to nursery and Reception class in school, parents are asked to complete a questionnaire 'All About Me'. This gives us a valuable insight into the child's interests, achievements, and their likes and dislikes, giving a foundation on which we can build. It can also provide a basis for sharing any concerns or issues parents may have. This important document is renewed and updated regularly.

Parents/carers are given regular information of daily activities and through an open door policy, daily contact takes place. Opportunities are also available for parents/carers to review, and contribute to the child's Learning Journey records with their child's key person at anytime and more formally throughout each year of attendance.

For children under 3 years old, daily record sheets are completed which give details of children's feeding, sleeping and toileting patterns. This also provides information on the learning that has been observed and the child's responses to the activities and provision as a whole. Between the ages of 2 and 3 years old, Parents/Carers are invited to a statutory two year old progress check meeting and are given a written summary of their child's development, in line with EYFS Statutory Guidance.

Parents/carers of children in all nursery age groups are invited regularly to meet with their child's key person to discuss progress, review their child's Learning Journey and if applicable, identify any areas in which staff or parents/carers feel may need to focus on or require additional support or challenge.

In the Reception class, a daily journal ensures good communication between home and school and formal Parents Evenings are held each term with written reports in October and July.

In the Summer term, there is a welcome evening where parents/carers of children beginning pre-school in September, are invited to meet staff, hear a presentation relating to pre-school and the the EYFS curriculum and ask any questions.

In October and February of the pre-school year, parents/carers are invited to discuss their child's progress with their key person and in July a written report is issued. A welcome to Reception class also takes place at the point of transition into school, for those children continuing their education at Ashbridge.

Early Years Curriculum

The Early Years Curriculum is underpinned by the "DFE Practise Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage", and is planned to lead smoothly into the National Curriculum at KS1 in a way which is relevant and meaningful for all children. (See also details in the School or Nursery Welcome Pack)

Children in the early years learn in a variety of ways: by playing, watching others who model activities, talking, thinking out loud, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. The EYFS includes a section on the importance of play in helping children to learn and develop. It says 'Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge', and it recognises the crucial role of practitioners in planning real experiences to enable children to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Play helps children explore ideas, role and relationships. The Practise Guidance clearly states that effective planning requires staff to;

- Plan and resource a challenging environment
- Support children's learning through planned play activity
- Support and extend children's spontaneous play
- Support and extend children's language and their communication in play

Appropriately planned and structured play supports and develops children's need to socialise, express ideas, thoughts and feelings, experiment, observe and try things out.

Children's Learning and Development is promoted through the three Prime areas of learning and four Specific areas of learning. The characteristics of effective learning ; playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically, underpin learning and development across all areas and support each child in becoming a lifelong, effective and motivated learner.

The three Prime areas of learning and development are:

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

The four Specific areas are:

- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Literacy
- Expressive Arts and Design

With children under the age of 2 years old we focus primarily on the three Prime areas which naturally progress to include the four Specific areas as they develop.

However, we recognise that children's learning is holistic and that children neither recognise nor benefit from these being considered in isolation. We aim to provide a coherent curriculum that provides a clear focus for learning and draws together relevant activities, which contribute, to the development of the whole child. Thus children are able to use and extend what they know, can do and understand within a realistic context.

At Ashbridge we have high expectations and work towards children achieving the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The EYFS helps practitioners identify children's developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes as they make progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

We firmly believe in the importance of outdoor learning and play to support the children's development. Our environment enables us to provide Forest sessions and ongoing access to a variety of outdoor environments, which offer exciting and challenging experiences across all areas of the curriculum. In addition, in the Reception year, children also take part in and are taught French, Horticultural and Forest school lessons.

The wider curriculum at Ashbridge consists of:

- Educational visits and visitors into our settings.
- Links with the local and wider community including events.

Teaching, planning, assessment, recording and reporting

Within the Early Years we define teaching as practitioners' interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities; communication and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges are all elements of teaching in its widest sense.

The physical environment as well as the structure and routines of the day are important as they establish expectations. The way practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do as well as take account of their interests and dispositions to learning and use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress are all important features within our definition of teaching at Ashbridge. With this in mind, all our Early Years practitioners are classed as teachers as they are engaging in teaching activities daily as part of their routine practice, working with young children.

In order to offer experiences and create active learning opportunities for young children, we believe it is essential to develop and maintain quality planning and procedures for recording this vary to reflect the age and stage of children's development.

Practitioners use 'in the moment' and planned observations to inform each child's next steps. Staff analyse these observations and decide what they tell us about the child's learning. Practitioners then plan to provide ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development (next steps).

Evaluations of activities, observations, dialogue with parents, and talking to children are key strategies for practitioners to gain information on each child's progress and development. As a record of a child's learning and development we establish and maintain a 'Learning Journey'. This contains pieces of work, observations and photographs annotated by staff and is kept both electronically and in document form. It is then passed on to the child's next key person at times of transition and finally to parents as they move to school. Children from our nursery classes who go on to attend Ashbridge School have progress data from their Learning Journey entered into the whole school tracking system. This helps to monitor and maintain progress and plan for future learning.

We share and report details on children's progress in the following ways:

- Regularly through daily dialogue in the nursery and via a daily journal in Reception class.
- At a 'settling-in' meeting in nursery after a child's first month with us.
- At review/parents meetings twice a year in nursery and Reception class. In Reception class a written summary is also produced in October.
- At the statutory 2 year check meeting, at which point a written report is also produced.
- Through a written report at the end of the pre-school and reception.