Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
VERSION: September 2026
REVIEW: September 2028

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

Vision Statement
At Ashby Hill Top Primary School, we are committed to providing a high-quality early year's education that gives every child a secure, happy and confident start to their school life. We nurture curiosity, independence and a lifelong love of learning through meaningful experiences, strong relationships and a rich learning environment.

We offer our children 'the brightest of beginnings'.

We recognise that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. We are fully committed to the principles and requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and strive to ensure that every child feels valued, included and successful.

Legislation
This policy is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers, effective from September 2026. The policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Equality Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

EYFS Principles
The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles that shape our practice at Ashby Hill Top Primary School.

A Unique Child
We value the diversity of all children and aim to meet the needs of every individual. We recognise that every child develops and learns in their own way and at their own rate.

We believe every child is capable, competent and successful. Through careful observation and responsive planning, we provide opportunities that build upon children's existing knowledge, interests and experiences.

Positive Relationships
We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with children and their families. Secure relationships enable children to develop confidence, resilience and independence.

We value parents and carers as children's first educators and work in partnership with families throughout their child's journey at Ashby Hill Top.

We maintain strong relationships with feeder settings and other professionals to ensure continuity and support successful transitions.

Enabling Environments
We recognise that the environment plays a crucial role in children's development and learning. Our indoor and outdoor environments are carefully organised to provide opportunities for creativity, exploration, challenge and discovery. Children are encouraged to develop independence by accessing resources freely and making choices about their learning. Play is valued as a powerful vehicle for learning and development.

Learning and Development
We understand how young children learn and develop and use this knowledge to inform our teaching. We provide a balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning opportunities that promote curiosity, communication, creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking. Adults skilfully scaffold learning, supporting children to extend their language, knowledge, skills and understanding.

Staffing and Organisation
Ashby Hill Top Primary School has two Reception classes which share a large classroom base and dedicated outdoor learning environment.

The Reception provision is staffed by:

- Two full-time teachers
- Two full-time Learning Support Assistants
- Additional support staff where required to meet children's needs

The environment is organised into clearly defined learning zones and children access both indoor and outdoor provision throughout the day.

Practitioners remain flexible, responding to children's interests and significant learning opportunities as they arise.

Curriculum and Planning
Our curriculum follows the seven areas of learning and development within the EYFS Framework.

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Our planning reflects children's needs, interests and developmental stages.

Learning experiences are carefully planned to make meaningful links across all areas of learning. New concepts are introduced within real-life and engaging contexts to support understanding and retention.

Children participate in "Brilliant Beginnings" Inspiration Days at the beginning of topics and "Epic Endings" at the end of each half term of learning, allowing them to reflect upon and celebrate their achievements.

Our curriculum offers:

- First-hand experiences
- High-quality texts
- Outdoor learning opportunities
- Exploratory play
- Creative experiences
- Community engagement
- Problem-solving activities

We recognise that both indoor and outdoor environments are essential components of a high-quality curriculum.

Teaching and Learning

Learning is achieved through planned, purposeful play and a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children are actively involved in shaping their learning experiences. Adults engage children in discussions about their interests, ideas and next steps.

Continuous provision enables children to revisit, consolidate and extend learning independently. Enhanced provision is carefully planned to reinforce current teaching and challenge children's thinking.
Practitioners use questioning, modelling and interaction to support children in becoming confident and independent learners.

Assessment

Assessment plays an integral role in supporting children's learning and development.

At Ashby Hill Top Primary School we use:

- Ongoing observations
- Professional dialogue
- Adult interactions
- Learning Journey evidence
- EEXREC on-entry assessment
- Parent contributions

The Reception Baseline Assessment is completed within the first six weeks of children starting school along EEXREC on-entry assessments to establish children’s starting points and to build a holistic picture of individual children. Ongoing assessment builds a picture of children's progress and development over time alongside our Learning Journey approach. Parents are encouraged to contribute evidence from home.

At the end of Reception, practitioners assess children against the 17 Early Learning Goals and determine whether children are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Emerging towards expected levels of development

Assessment judgments are based upon ongoing observations, professional knowledge, parent contributions and evidence collected throughout the year. Results are shared with parents and used to support transition into Year 1.

Learning Environment

We aim to create environments that inspire learning, exploration and creativity.

The classroom and outdoor area are organised into learning zones, enabling children to access resources independently and make decisions about their learning.

Resources are:

- Accessible
- Open-ended
- Clearly organised
- Developmentally appropriate
- Reflective of the wider community and world

Staff regularly evaluate and adapt the learning environment to ensure it continues to meet children's needs and interests.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Strong partnerships with families are fundamental to children's success.

We support these partnerships through:

- Home visits or school-based introductory meetings
- Parent induction meetings
- Open-door communication
- Learning Journeys
- Parent consultations
- Stay and Play sessions
- Epic Ending events
- Workshops and curriculum events
- End-of-year reports

Parents are encouraged to share achievements from home and contribute to discussions regarding their child's progress and next steps.

Community Links and Wider Experiences

We actively encourage children to engage with the wider world through:

- Educational visits
- Visitors into school
- Community projects
- Cultural celebrations
- Real-life experiences
- High-quality texts and artefacts

These experiences help children develop their understanding of the world and their place within it.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities
We are committed to ensuring all children can access and benefit from our provision.

We achieve this by:

- Identifying needs early
- Working closely with families and professionals
- Removing barriers to learning
- Providing appropriate support and challenge
- Celebrating diversity
- Promoting equality and inclusion

Children with SEND are fully included within all aspects of school life.

Safeguarding and Welfare
The welfare of children is paramount. We provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment where children can learn and thrive. All safeguarding procedures follow statutory guidance and school safeguarding policies.

Children's Screen Use and Digital Technology
From September 2026, Ashby Hill Top Primary School has regard to Department for Education guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Technology is used only where it has a clear educational, communication, accessibility or inclusion purpose.

Screen use:

- Is carefully planned and supervised
- Is age-appropriate
- Does not replace quality interactions with adults
- Does not replace play, storytelling, outdoor learning or physical activity
- Supports accessibility where appropriate for children with SEND

All digital content is checked prior to use. Staff avoid inappropriate advertising, autoplay content and unsuitable AI-generated content.

Use of Electronic Devices
The use of mobile phones, cameras and electronic devices is managed in accordance with school safeguarding procedures. Children's privacy and safety remain central to all decisions regarding digital technology and image capture.

Safer Recruitment
Ashby Hill Top follows all EYFS and Keeping Children Safe in Education requirements regarding safer recruitment. Appropriate checks, including identity verification, references, enhanced DBS checks and barred list checks where applicable, are completed before adults work directly with children.

Paediatric First Aid
The school ensures that suitably qualified paediatric first aiders are available at all times when children are present, including educational visits.

Oral Health
Children are supported to understand:

- The importance of brushing teeth
- Healthy eating choices
- The importance of visiting the dentist

Healthy snack options are promoted daily.

Premises and Security
Access to the school site is controlled through the main entrance.

All visitors:

- Sign in
- Wear identification
- Follow safeguarding procedures

Staff challenge any unknown adults on site and follow safeguarding procedures where necessary.
In accordance with EYFS statutory requirements, prohibited breeds listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, including XL Bully-type dogs, are not permitted on school premises, including those with exemption certificates.

Arrival and Collection of Children
Children are admitted to school through established Reception procedures. Only adults identified by parents/carers may collect children unless alternative arrangements have been communicated and verified. Where a child is not collected, school procedures for uncollected children will be followed.

Missing Child Procedure
Should a child go missing, staff will:

1. Conduct an immediate search.
2. Inform senior leaders.
3. Contact parents/carers.
4. Contact the police if necessary.

Full details can be found in the school's safeguarding procedures.

Educational Visits
Parental consent is obtained for visits. Appropriate risk assessments are completed for all educational visits and experiences.

Key Person Approach
Every child is allocated a Key Person.
The Key Person's role is to:

- Foster positive relationships
- Support wellbeing and learning
- Liaise with families
- Help children settle and thrive
- Identify and respond to individual needs

The class teacher acts as Key Person, supported by other members of the EYFS team.

Transition Arrangements

Pre-School to Reception

We are proud of our extensive transition programme which includes:

- School visits
- Parent information evenings
- Story sessions
- Meetings with current parents
- Home visits or school-based introductory meetings
- Visits to feeder settings
- Transition sessions
- Staggered starts where appropriate

We believe positive transitions support children's wellbeing and future success.

Reception to Year 1

Transition into Year One includes:

- Visits to Year One classrooms
- Shared learning experiences
- Move Up Day
- Parent information sessions
- Detailed staff handovers

This ensures continuity of learning and supports children emotionally and academically.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher, EYFS Lead and Governors will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance or school practice.

Linked Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy