



# **Asterdale Primary School**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

Approved by Governing Board: Sept 25

Next Review Date : Sept 27

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

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## **1. Aims:**

**At Asterdale Primary School, we believe that:**

*“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.”*

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, 2025

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year.

At Asterdale Primary School children are eligible for a part time (15 hours) or full time (30 hours\*) Nursery place, subject to availability, from the beginning of the term after their third birthday. Places are allocated according to our nursery admissions policy.

All children start full time school in the September of the year in which they are five. Many of our nursery children transfer to the Reception class at Asterdale Primary School.

We provide a high-quality early years' education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

At Asterdale, we:

- Provide a safe, challenging, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of all children including those with additional needs.
- Provide a balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Provide our children with a curriculum that is designed to be flexible, engaging and exciting so that their unique needs, passions and interests are embraced within the wider school context.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn purposefully through carefully planned

experiences.

- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs enabling them to make progress.
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians, value their contributions and engage them in their child's learning journey.
- Provide a curriculum that is actively inclusive of all ethnicities, cultures, religions, home languages, family backgrounds, learning difficulties, disabilities, genders or abilities. To know that every child is an exceptional individual and to celebrate and respect differences within our diverse school community
- Allow all children to develop interpersonal skills and build resilience through our 'together we can' ethos to become critical and creative thinkers
- Inspire our children to become accomplished, happy individuals, ready to reach their full potential in an ever-changing world
- Create an environment in which children show care and respect for one another and the world around them.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities:**

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy, as well as policies that coincide such as our Safeguarding and Health and Safety.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The EYFS Lead(s), in conjunction with the headteacher, will have responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy

Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, will be responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- Remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

### **3. Early Years Learning & Development at Asterdale:**

At Asterdale we:

- Ensure that teaching and learning support the **Characteristics of Effective Learning:**

**a) Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and have a go:

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.” - EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

**b) Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.” - EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

**c) Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.” - EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the area to extend their learning.

In addition to the Characteristics of Effective Learning, at Asterdale we:

- Plan following the Early Years Statutory Framework
- Provide a curriculum that is child-centered which engages the children.
- Encourage active learning to ensure the children are motivated and interested.
- Ensure pupils learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities.
- Ensure all areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum.
- Offer learning experiences for the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum:

- 1.Communication and Language
- 2.Personal, Social & Emotional Development
- 3.Physical Development
- 4.Literacy
- 5.Mathematics
- 6.Understanding the World Expressive
- 7.Arts & Design

Our planning within these areas has a strong focus on the children's needs, their interests and their appropriate stages of development. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them where possible to enrich the curriculum.

We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know:

- Provide a full offer of enrichment activities including inviting external visitors to broaden learning further
- Strive for all children to reach a Good Level of Development at the end of Reception.
- Strive to ensure all children make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.

#### **4. Statutory Framework for the EYFS:**

This policy is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), published by the Department for Education, which applies to all early years providers in England. It incorporates the updated statutory requirements from September 2025.

At Asterdale Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Key features of teaching and learning that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;

- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the good relationships between our school and the schools that our children move on to after leaving our nursery.

## **5. Inclusion & SEND:**

All children at Asterdale Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of the children's range of abilities and life experiences when planning for their learning.

In our EYFS we have ambitious, challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests;
- planning opportunities that develop children's self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and providing additional support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We educate children about the boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist.

We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

**SEND:**

All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child.

Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school's SENDCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Local Offer.

Throughout our Early Years, we aim to ensure that our curriculum meets the needs of all children. Using our 'enhancement model' of provision, children have the opportunity to become very secure with the resources around them as they remain predominantly the same.

Children's learning is then enhanced with small added resources that the child can progress onto. Quality interactions are used to support those children with additional needs. Adults will focus their interactions to support specific needs and will always remain adaptive with their teaching.

Appropriate early identification interventions are implemented which support the development of those children who have communication and language needs by providing a communication friendly environment and ensuring staff are upskilled to interact in a way that promotes progress within communication and language.

Please see SEND policy for further information.

## **6: Positive Relationships:**

### **Parents as Partners:**

At Asterdale Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- welcoming families to visit our school prior to applying for a school place
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting. This is held during the term before their child starts in Nursery and in Reception
- initial visits where we talk to parents about their child prior to their child starting in our nursery
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's key person if there are any concerns
- arranged 'Stay and Learn' events in both Early Years settings to provide opportunity for further parent partnership working and sharing of progress

## **7: Assessment and progress:**

At Asterdale, we ensure that assessment processes do not prevent teachers and practitioners from spending as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development.

Parent progress updates in Nursery and Reception are arranged in the Autumn and Spring terms. During these meetings the child's key person and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents are informed of their child's key person at the initial visit to Nursery.

Parents receive termly report cards to inform about individual progress against Early Years areas of learning in both Nursery and Reception. An end of year report of their child's attainment and progress at the end of Nursery and at the end of the Reception year is written which also includes advice and next step targets for effective transition in readiness for future stages of learning.

At the end of the EYFS, a comprehensive assessment is completed called the Early Year Profile. This provides a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning:**

The planning within Early Years takes account of children's interests and needs, whilst following an identified long-term plan to provide progression of skills, knowledge and understanding from N1 to end of Reception.

These plans are used by the staff as a guide for weekly planning; however, these may be adapted in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children.

Regular assessments of children's learning are made and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves all staff as appropriate. Agreed assessment points for data input (in line with wider-Trust calendar) are agreed and followed (closely monitored by the Early Years and Assessment Lead).

These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform ongoing assessments and future planning. Reception children are assessed in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

## **8. Staffing:**

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy will be in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

The school will provide a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. Only members of staff with level 2 English and Maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.

The school will adopt the following staffing ratios: For children aged three and over:

- Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there will be one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff will hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
- Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children, there will be one member of staff for every 8 children, and at least one other member of staff will hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
- For children in Reception classes: - Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per school teacher.

## **9: Asterdale EYFS Learning Environments**

Our Early Years provision is organised into our Nursery setting and Reception settings.

Both of these settings operate in separate buildings but with a shared ethos for high-quality interactions and play-led learning, whilst also showcasing the learning journeys of each setting in the learning environment clearly.

Resources and adult interactions are adapted to ensure the most appropriate learning for all children.

In both settings, children have their own carpet spaces where they will participate in guided learning, such as phonics, mathematics, reading, writing and handwriting.

Children are encouraged to explore and learn securely and safely with age / stage appropriate resources and experiences. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Asterdale, we greatly value the important role the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

As a result, our learning environments in Early Years contain carefully planned enhancements and everyday open-ended resources to best promote high-quality learning interactions for all pupils.

Our learning environments are engaging and planned through the eyes of a child so that the learning space best supports learners to achieve their best.

## **10: Admissions**

Our Nursery provision comprises of two classes (Foundation 1 and Foundation 2). Foundation One children can be offered a place after their third birthday. They are known as N1 and are given time and support to understand and enjoy their nursery experience.

The September following their third birthday they are then known as N2. N1 children are usually offered an afternoon place and N2 children are usually offered a morning place. Foundation Two children begin full time education the September after their fourth birthday and are known as F2.

In Foundation 1, we offer both part and full-time places.

Places are offered to Foundation 1 children, based on availability and are prioritised based on the following criteria:

- Children living within the school catchment area.
- Date of application

Full time places are based on availability and are priorities based on the following criteria:

- Staffing capacity, including staffing capacity over lunchtime periods.
- 30 hours funding. Should demand exceed supply, places will be offered to N2 children in age order (oldest first)
- Early Years Pupil Premium Funding based on each child's individual needs and circumstances.

Full time places are offered at the start of every term.

To apply for a Foundation 1 place, contact the school office, where you will be offered an application form. Upon the receipt of this you will be sent a letter that will inform you that either a place has been granted or you will be informed that your child has been placed on a waiting list.

You will not usually hear from us again until the half term before your child's third birthday when you will be invited to visit us and attend an 'expectations meeting' with our Early Years Lead and/or Headteacher.

## **11: Safeguarding and welfare arrangements**

At Asterdale, we take our responsibility to safeguard children very seriously. The welfare, protection and safety of every child in our care is of paramount importance and central to our provision. Staff ratios and risk assessments are in place at all times to ensure the safety of our children.

We follow statutory requirements, including:

- Safe recruitment practices, including reference checks and suitability requirements.
- Clear whistleblowing procedures for staff, students, and volunteers.
- Attendance monitoring, including prompt follow-up of unexplained or prolonged absences.
- Maintaining up-to-date emergency contact details for all children.
- Safer eating practices, including allergy management and supervision at mealtimes.
- Safe toileting and intimate care procedures, ensuring privacy balanced with safeguarding.
- Paediatric First Aid (PFA) trained staff always present, including where trainees/students are counted in ratios.
- Appropriate staffing ratios and qualification requirements

For additional guidance on Safeguarding and whole-school policies please see:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E Safety Policy

## **12: Transitions**

We support smooth transitions into nursery, between classes, and from Reception to Year This includes sharing information, visits, and activities to prepare children for new stages and the next phase of their education to build on essential foundational knowledge and consolidate this effectively.

### **13: Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the Early Years staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Governor responsible for the EYFS has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the Early Years staff and provide feedback to the governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Headteacher, Senior Leaders, Subject Leaders and Early Years Lead(s) conduct monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule to inform school self-evaluation judgments

