

Ashmead Early Years Foundation Stage Policy – 2016/17

Introduction

Ashmead is a community primary school catering for pupils aged from 3-11 in Deptford, Lewisham. The majority of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and an above average amount of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is comparable to the national average. Ashmead has a 'Forest School' in its grounds, which is accessed by both the Nursery and Reception children on a weekly basis.

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years learning and teaching at Ashmead. This policy underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Aims, Values and Vision

Ashmead Primary School is a learning community where children come first. We have the highest ambitions and expectations for all our children and our vision is that **every child leaves us feeling 'loveable and capable'**. Children are supported to become active learners who are curious, independent, creative, risk-taking, ambitious and who relish being challenged.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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 it's 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.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, 2012

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

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well being. At Ashmead the key aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these 5 Every Child Matters outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual, and learning and teaching is based on the key understanding that children develop at different rates within the different areas of learning.

Therefore at Ashmead we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring environment which is sensitive to the needs of all children;
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant, creative and exciting curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development;
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment;
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress;
- enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self confidence;
- work in partnership with parents and carers and value their contributions
- ensure that all children feel valued, respected and included

Organisation

Within the EYFS there is one Reception class and one Nursery class. There are currently 2 teachers, 2 Nursery Nurses and 1 experienced teaching assistant staffing the EYFS. The EYFS leader is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Each classroom is equipped with an interactive whiteboard, a visualiser and children's computers.

Our two classrooms both connect with our designated EYFS outside area allowing free flow between Nursery and Reception. The outdoor area comprises of 'zoned' areas of learning including: sensory and vegetable garden, mud kitchen, stage/music, water/sand, story/writing den, role play area and a living willow dome and tunnel. The area can be partially covered to enable use in all weathers and the willow provides generous amounts of shade. Outdoor play is highly valued and activities outside compliment and reflect indoor provision. Toilets are available inside both classrooms and access to water is provided throughout the session. Children also carry out activities and learning in other areas of the school such as the community room/kitchen, the hall, Forest School, KS1 and KS2 playgrounds including the climbing frame and traversing wall.

The school day

Currently in the Nursery, children are all offered part time places with added the option of topping up their hours to full time once their child has settled. Part time is either 5 morning sessions from 9 am to 12am (15 hours) or 5 afternoon sessions from 12:30 to 3:30pm (15 hours). Parents have the option of applying for a small number of full time 'top up' places when their child is fully settled in the setting (*see appendix: Nursery admissions policy*). The full time hours would therefore increase to 9am to 3:30pm (full time place). In this instance a healthy school lunch is provided from 12-12:30pm in our community room space.

In Reception all places are full time (after the initial 'settling-in' period) and the school day runs from 9am to 3.30pm. A healthy school lunch is provided from 12-1pm, in addition to fruit (and milk for nursery children). Reception children have access to the school playground and 'quiet club' during the lunch session.

Admissions

Nursery (for more detail see appendix: Nursery admissions policy)

Every local authority must offer 15 hours per week of free early education to all children aged three and four. Priority for Nursery places will be allocated in the following order (according to the 'Starting school in Lewisham' booklet):

1. Children in public care (also called 'looked after'). A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions, or a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted
2. In exceptional circumstances there is discretion to admit children who would not otherwise qualify for admission, on the grounds of their or their family's severe medical or social need for that particular nursery school.
3. Applicants whose brother or sister (a 'sibling') is on the roll of the main school when the application is made
4. Children who live closest to the nursery school. All distances will be measured in a straight line, from the home to the nearest gate nominated by the school.

For details on admission details for taking up a full time Nursery place, please see attached appendix: Nursery admissions policy.

At Ashmead we strongly believe in the importance of creating routines that support children to develop to their full potential. It is therefore our policy that once a morning or afternoon place has been offered and accepted, your child will remain part of this session (AM or PM) for the entirety of their time at Ashmead Nursery. Not only does this help build children's confidence in the daily routine but it also allows them to develop strong bonds with the adults and children in their session. A period of three terms is regarded as the minimum time that children should spend in nursery, and the maximum is five terms.

Reception

A separate application must be made for a place in the reception class at Ashmead. Lewisham Council has a policy of offering a school place earlier as a 'rising five'. Children qualify for admission to a reception class full - time in September 2016 if they become five between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017. The above criteria for offering reception places will be taken into consideration when applying to Lewisham.

Settling in

All children who are new to Ashmead will be offered a home visit. This provides the staff with an opportunity to get to know your child in their home environment where they feel most comfortable. During the visit we aim to get to know your child better, exchange and share information that could support their settling in process and often support parents and carers to complete admission forms.

Starting Ashmead

We believe it is very important that children new to Ashmead or full time education are given a smooth and successful transition where both parents and children feel safe and happy. This is facilitated by:

- giving opportunities to visit the school before starting to meet class and teacher
- liaising with outside agencies where necessary
- home visits by Nursery and Reception staff
- an open door policy where parents can stay with child until they are ready for the parent or carer to go
- staggered start dates to suit the child's need
- meeting with parents to report back on settling in
- assigning a specific adult to act as key person (Nursery)

Starting Nursery

All children starting our Nursery will be offered a home visit and we aim to arrange these during the first week back to school in September, while our Nursery is closed. For Nursery aged children we feel a more recent home visit from Nursery staff members best supports a successful start in Nursery, especially as the occasion, and adults, remain fresher and more relevant in their minds before they start. We also offer staggered entry dates to Nursery that are often tailored to the child's specific needs.

Nursery to Reception

To support a smooth transition between our nursery and reception, and most importantly part time to full time, we have put in place a number of strategies;

- Our free flow outside area provides a constant opportunity for nursery and reception children to interact and thus allows all adults to get to know the children in the EYFS phase.
- All children and parents are invited to a Welcome meeting in the summer term before their child is due to start Reception at Ashmead. This is a chance to find out important information and provides an opportunity for us to welcome new families to Ashmead.
- All children will be invited to an open afternoon in our Reception class where they will get a chance to meet their new teacher and support staff, get to know their class and

become more familiar with the environment (we usually provide an informal parents/carers coffee meeting at this time to allow a space for questions and meet/greet.)

- Children who have not attended our nursery will be offered a home visit – usually arranged during the summer term.
- Transition booklet – all children will be given a transition booklet that provides a clear description of what they can expect from their new Reception class. It will contain photos of the environment and key members of staff and information about the school day.
- ‘Buddy’ system – All Reception children at Ashmead are allocated a Year 6 ‘buddy’ at the beginning of the school year. The aim of the system is to provide each child with a friend who can support them throughout the year. The Year 6 buddies will ‘look out’ for their reception friend at playtime, support and develop games at lunchtime and share a variety of learning experiences with them! Reception also read regularly with their buddies, and each year we aim to organise a buddy trip at the end of the academic year.

Reception to Year 1

Transition from Reception to Year 1 is carefully planned based on the needs of the current cohort. There is no ‘blanket policy’ as we feel that this would not accommodate the needs of every child. In general, however, transition is carried out so that children are given the opportunity to complete the EYFS and are able to continue with play based learning until they are ready for a more formal whole class ‘KS1’ style of teaching. In the summer term, opportunities are provided to support transition towards more formal KS1 teaching such as guided reading and more focused adult led activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS is based on four guiding principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that children should be treated as individuals but they should have equal access to EYFS curriculum.

We give every child an opportunity to achieve their best. We help them to do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those with English as Additional Language.

We believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and meet their needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents and carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we always seek their support and involvement. *For more information RE: EYFS SEN at Ashmead, please see appendix: Early Intervention at Ashmead (SEN).*

EYFS staff work with the school SENCo to provide additional information and advice to parents and carers and the SENCo will arrange external intervention, assessment and support where necessary.

Positive Relationships

At Ashmead we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop and foster caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their parents.

Parents as Partners

Parents are the child's first and most enduring educator and so we aim to work together with all parents and carers to ensure successful communication of knowledge and expertise between us. This will have a positive impact on the child's development. We aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

Role of Parents and Carers

At Ashmead we work hard to develop good and strong relationships and partnerships with our parents and carers to develop a positive impact on children's development, learning and achievement.

We value parents by:

- assigning a key person for each child (Nursery)
- recognising that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators
- showing respect and understanding for their role
- encouraging parents and carers to share accounts of their child's development and interests

- encouraging parents and carers to share any concerns they may have and take actions to support where appropriate
- providing a welcoming environment by being friendly and approachable
- providing an atmosphere of confidence and trust where parents and carers feel safe to leave their children at this early age
- inviting parents to initial meetings and/or by arranging home visits to share information about their children and our school
- sharing information about the curriculum through meetings, coffee mornings and parent workshops, sending newsletters and leaflets home about themes of special events, displays, informal discussions, class and general display boards sharing plans and other school and community information
- operating an open door policy where parents can come and spend time with their child in school and look at the work their child has been doing
- providing opportunities for parents to attend social events and assemblies
- regularly blogging activities and learning taking place within EYFS
- meeting with parents each term in Reception (or 3 meetings over their child's Nursery experience) to share children's achievements and together discuss next steps
- supporting parents to access their child's online learning journey via Tapestry.
- providing 'wow' notes/footprints for parents to share 'wow' moments their child achieved at home – these are then shared within the class in a celebratory environment and sometimes displayed
- encouraging home school links through support with home reading, Bug Club (Reception) and Child Interests form for Focus children
- being available at the beginning and the end of the day to talk to parents and carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss a particular issue an appointment can be made. Class teachers also provide parents with their email addresses so information can also be shared this way.

Enabling Environments

At Ashmead we acknowledge that the environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending the children's development. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment, which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are

planned for both the inside and outside environment. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the day.

Children have access to a wide range of equipment including construction materials, role play equipment, small world toys, sand and water equipment, art and crafts materials, musical instruments, ICT equipment, mark making materials, counting equipment, books, larger outdoor toys such as loose parts and specialist PE equipment.

All children and adults are expected to take responsibility for the care of and use of resources and the environment and we believe that supporting the children and helping them to look after and respect their environment is a very important part of a child's development. We encourage children to tidy up as they go through the day and we also have 'Tidy Up Time' before lunch and at the end of the day as this offers a valuable opportunities for talking, reading, problem solving, reasoning, counting and sorting activities.

Learning and Development

At Ashmead we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

Effective learning and development is supported through:

- the partnership between staff and parents that helps our children feel secure at school and to develop a sense of well being and achievement;
- the understanding that staff have knowledge of how children develop and learn and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk and other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that help children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of 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 and self management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of ICT;

- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

Play and Exploration

"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 to children's development."

(Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

At Ashmead we do not distinguish between work and play. We support children's play and learning through planned play activities, through observation of child initiated or adult led play activities and then provide the most effective learning opportunities. Adults 'play partner' with children to support their learning through play, carefully intervening when appropriate, getting involved with the play and modelling by example to extend the play. EYFS staff have knowledge of initiatives such as 'sustained shared thinking', ECaT (Every Child a Talker), Communication Friendly Spaces and 'learning through play'.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven inter-connected areas of learning and development. The three prime areas crucial for building foundations are:

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

These are strengthened and applied via the four specific areas:

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

These 7 areas provide a framework for the EYFS curriculum. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities and through our provision we attempt to provide activities which cover a range of learning areas and offer the opportunity for deep play experiences.

The revised EYFS curriculum also placed high emphasis on the importance of practitioners recognising and understanding the ways in which young children learn in order to support them as effective learners. These **characteristics of effective learning** are an integral part of the three prime and four specific areas of learning and describe the skills, attitudes and approaches to learning which can be nurtured in the EYFS.

The characteristics of effective learning are:

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

At Ashmead we believe that these three characteristics describe learning processes rather than outcomes. This means that how a child exhibits these characteristics is observed as part of our formative assessment process. This process enables us to understand each child fully and provides us with greater knowledge to best support the child’s development as a learner. These characteristics also form the basis of our end of year reports at Ashmead.

Play

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative and role play but includes spontaneous, self initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital part of children’s lives. It is an important way skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children’s learning and development
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas and materials, connections and consequences
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning
- Play allows children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults

- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Role of the adult

- To observe child initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment
- To support children's learning through planned play activity
- To extend and support children's play
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play.

Planning

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning is informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, experiences, development and learning needs.

Child Led Planning

At Ashmead we plan our curriculum in a way that completely reflects what the child are interested in and what they want to learn more about. Learning in this way promotes optimum engagement, high levels of interest, sustained concentration and development and progress.

With a child led curriculum approach, the teacher shares the driving seat with the child and the child's words, actions, thoughts and play guide the learning curriculum. So, given the child's current fascination with and questions about a topic, the focus of the learning and choice of activities evolves. At Ashmead the educator will balance this with knowledge of what skills s/he would like the child to be acquiring or practising.

How the Content is Formulated

At Ashmead, within a child led curriculum, the educator considers;

- What the child/ren already knows about the interest
- How to deepen the child's level of understanding, finding answers to their questions
- Appropriate creative and communicative mediums that will allow the child/ren to communicate their developing understanding
- What questions to ask of the child and research with the child to extend the interest
- How to use the child/ren's fascination to reinforce skill development (reading, writing, mathematical concepts, etc).

How the environment supports the curriculum

We believe that developing a learning environment that allows the children to select their own resources (using clear labeling) is a crucial part of creating independent and curious learners. Adults support the children to select the things they need to follow their interest. Often when a new interest develops the adults will then adapt the environment and resources to support this thread of learning.

The educator uses a '**Spontaneous planning**' document to record their observations, the activities or interests the children have been pursuing as well as any gaps in children's knowledge. They then record the ways in which they can extend, continue or further support the above, often thinking of ways they might adapt the provision or the adult led teaching to extend and develop thinking and learning. This style of planning document supports the teacher to constantly review the learning taking place in the setting and adapt and make changes to best suit the interests and needs of the children.

A **weekly plan** will also be planned to outline the objectives to be focused on in each area of learning and show how those activities and experiences (often generated from the Spontaneous plan) will be delivered through '**Adult Led**' and '**Child Initiated**' learning opportunities. Planning is therefore constantly developed, adapted and evaluated through ongoing observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to children's needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. The learning objectives are also informed by a thorough knowledge of child development enhanced by reference to the 'Development Matters' document.

Focus Child Planning

In addition each class is divided into Focus Groups comprising up to 6 children (these groups are often smaller in Nursery). Each week the children from a focus group have individual targets and objectives identified based on previous assessments and observations. Activities and experiences are planned for these individual children in each of the areas of learning that will best support their development and reflect their interests. These activities often link in with the experiences and activities on the weekly plan and spontaneous plan. Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's focus plan via the 'Tapestry' app and website where they can make comments on each observation made and by using our 'parent feedback sheets'. These sheets provide staff with vital information about the child's learning and interests at home and continue to support our planning process. Furthermore, observations made during a child's focus week often feed into the following week's whole class plan. This helps to ensure that each child's needs are catered for so that all children make consistent progress.

Assessment and Record Keeping

We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning and then make informed decisions about how to support the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps for individuals and groups of children by providing achievable and challenging activities and experiences to extend the child's learning. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Staff review the tracking data regularly with the EYFS Leader and termly with the Senior Leadership Team at Pupil Progress meetings. Nursery and Reception teachers currently record data using Tapestry and then transfer this information to Assessment ladders to track and monitor progress. Judgements are made against the Development Matters statements. From September 2016 we are hoping to move towards using the Early Excellence Assessment Tracker (EExAT) to record our judgements and monitor and analyse the data collected.

Baseline Assessment - Reception

In September 2015 Ashmead trialled the new government recommended baseline assessments in Reception. Ashmead used 'The Early Excellence Baseline Assessment' (EExBA) which was selected by us to ensure this new addition to our assessment schedule builds on current good assessment practice. EExBA required staff to carry out baseline assessments of all Reception aged children within their first 6 weeks of starting school and relied wholly on practitioner judgements. Due to a change in government policy to move away from reporting on this type of on-entry assessment we will no longer be using the EExBA system to record baseline assessment but continue to collect information based on observations and practitioner judgements in order to assess children's ability and developmental level upon entry into Reception.

Formative Assessment

This assessment informs everyday planning and is based on ongoing observations of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Each child's record consists of the following:

- 'Tapestry' Profile: This online photographic data collection system is shared with parents via an app or website which provides opportunities for parents' comment/suggestions. The Tapestry platform enables all staff to input comments relating to observations as well as to record each child's progress across the seven areas of learning. Children are able to review their own record with their key worker during their 'focus week' thereby enabling self-assessment. Next steps for learning are entered onto the child's Tapestry profile record.
- Learning journeys: Children are encouraged to collect valued pictures/collages/writing and maths samples for storage in their 'learning journey'. These books form an

additional source of evidence to monitor progress and are available for children and parents to share. We also regularly send these home to allow children to add items created outside of school.

All evidence collected is used to establish a child's developmental level, which forms the basis for planning the next steps in their learning.

Summative Assessment

In Nursery, children's progress is monitored and summarised using a tracking programme based on 'Development Matters' (this in addition to assessment using the 'Tapestry' evidence collection system). As well as Development Matters, Reception children are assessed against the EYFS profile, the nationally employed assessment tool. However, from September 2016 although we will no longer be required by the government to submit children's end of year EYFS profile data, at Ashmead we will continue to make assessments against these goals in order to best support the progress and development of the children. The EYFS profile is informed by the formative assessments undertaken and makes statements about a child's achievements against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). It is completed termly during the school year. Progress is monitored using a cumulative scoring system based on whether a child is 'emerging', 'meeting' or 'exceeding' expectations in each ELG. This data is then submitted to the LA at the end of the Reception year.

Appendix: Ashmead Nursery Admissions Policy 2016/17

1. Aims

Our aims are:

- 1.1 To ensure access and entitlement to the benefits of high quality child centred nursery education on a fair and equitable basis
- 1.2 To establish an admissions policy governed by clearly defined criteria that may be articulated to parents and other professionals
- 1.3 To provide high quality child centred nursery education to children and families in our community

2. Understanding Ashmead Primary School

- 2.1 All children who intend to take up a place at our nursery will be offered a home visit from two of the nursery staff. These visits (for Autumn Term starters) will usually take place in the first few days of the Autumn Term. The nursery class term therefore usually begins a week later than the rest of Ashmead Primary School. This visit is a chance for parents to find out information and ask any questions regarding this important phase of their child's life. All appropriate forms will usually be completed at this stage too.
- 2.2 To make the transition easier for the children, they will be staggered into the nursery in small groups. This is usually allocated by the child's age and those with siblings at the school will often start earlier. Therefore at each intake point (i.e. September or January) there will be a window of 'settling in' time allocated to ensure all new starters (and their parents/carers) are supported in this new and often challenging transition.
- 2.3 As of September 2015 we now offer parents the option to be able to opt for extra 'top up' sessions to increase their child's hours to full time, after the initial settling in period,. **(see below point 6)**

3. Nursery Session – timings and options

3.1 Current Hours 2016-2017

- Option 1 – Morning Class 9:00am – 12:00pm
- Option 2 – Afternoon Class 12:30pm – 3:30pm
- Option 3 – Full day 9:00am – 3:30pm

4. Criteria for admission to the nursery

- 4.1 The Nursery at Ashmead is a 50 place (25 FTE) Nursery based on 2 sessions per day: 25 children in the morning and 25 children in the afternoon. The government funds children for 15 hours a week.
- 4.2 A period of three terms is regarded as the minimum time that children should spend in nursery, and the maximum is five terms.
- 4.3 Where space is available, pupils will be admitted to the Nursery the term after they become 3. Pupils born on or before 31st August in the relevant year will be admitted in the Autumn Term.
- 4.4 If spaces in nursery become available then the school will offer a January intake for pupils born on or before 31st December.
- 4.5 The school will consider the intake of an Easter cohort of children if 4 or more spaces in the nursery are available at this time. We strongly believe that children need time and space to settle effectively but cannot do this successfully if there is not a sufficiently sized peer group for them to settle with. We believe that the benefits of starting 3 or less children at this point in the academic year outweigh the drawbacks. In this instance the school would recommend that the parent apply for a September place to allow their child to start with a larger cohort of children who are at

the same stage. This allows the nursery to tailor the settling in period more effectively to the child's individual needs.

4.6 Ashmead will offer children a place in the nursery according to the criteria in the following order of priority (as outlined by LEA):

Children in the care of a Local Authority (Looked after children)

Children with a particular compelling educational and/or social or medical need as referred by a professional (e.g. social worker, speech therapist, health visitor, doctor etc.)

Children who have an elder sibling currently attending Ashmead Primary School in the September of the year of their admission.

Children who live closest to the school.

Within the above criteria, each application is always considered very carefully on its individual needs.

5. Allocation of preferred sessions

5.1 Parents will be asked to indicate whether a morning or afternoon nursery session is preferred. Account will be taken of any preferences for session options expressed by parents, but preferences will be allocated subject to availability, with consideration taken of the needs of the children and are not guaranteed. It is at the EYFS phase leader's discretion to allocate places in order to best provide a balance of need and ages within the two classes to ensure quality provision is maintained.

5.2 At Ashmead we strongly believe in the importance of creating routines that support children to develop to their full potential. It is therefore our policy that once a morning or afternoon place has been offered and accepted, your child will remain part of this session (AM or PM) for the entirety of their time at Ashmead Nursery. Not only does this help build children's confidence in the daily routine but it also allows them to develop strong bonds with the adults and children in their session.

6. Top Up Nursery Hours

6.1 Children who are considered to be 'ready' for full time nursery might be offered the chance to take up a flexible full time place. This full time option enables your child to continue to develop within a rich and stimulating school setting that is lead by an experienced qualified teacher.

6.2 Top up sessions will therefore be allocated (usually within or after the child's first half term at nursery) by the Early Years Phase Leader who will take into account the following criteria/procedure:

Parent applies for full time place (indicating preferred days)



EYFS Phase Leader considers:



Child's readiness

- The child's personal, social and emotional well-being
- How effectively the child has settled into part time nursery
- level of child's independence



Child's situation/needs

- Children with a particular compelling educational and/or social or medical need
- Parent and home-life situation, i.e. working hours, family situation



Final decisions will be made based on the knowledge of the whole child and either when it is confirmed that individuals are able to manage an extended session and/or that the benefits of the child attending Nursery full time would significantly support the child's need or development.

6.3 In the rare circumstances that we were oversubscribed, and the above criteria was not sufficient, then places would be allocated by a lottery system.

6.4 Top up sessions will also be allocated based on the **current fees and term and conditions**.

6.5 As each child is entitled to 15 hours free provision per week/3 hours per day, the top-up costs will include provision for 3 ½ extra hours per day.

6.6 The top up fee is based on the standard rate we currently receive from the local authority and will be **£84.50 per week** (even if only two or three of the five days are taken up).

6.7 In order to provide a flexible top up system, that still ensures a high ratio of adults to children throughout the week, we ask parents to:

- **Agree top up sessions in advance on a half term basis.**
- **Pay for the extra sessions in advance (see terms and conditions).**

6.8 Parents will be **financially responsible** for days booked whether your child attends or not.

7 Transfer from Nursery into Ashmead School

7.1 If you are given a place at Ashmead Nursery it **does not mean** that you will **automatically be allocated** a place to our Reception class. This is managed by the LA and all applications need to be made through Lewisham.

7.2 Nursery staff will liaise closely with colleagues in Reception classes, under the guidance of the EYFS Phase Leader, to plan for a smooth transition to their chosen or allocated school. Nursery staff will send on reports and other agreed records to the school admitting the pupil as appropriate.

7.3 For more information regarding transition please see our **EYFS Policy**.