



**Ashlands**  
Church of England  
First School

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Crewkerne  
Somerset  
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FOREST EDUCATION INITIATIVE

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[www.ashlandsfirstschool.co.uk](http://www.ashlandsfirstschool.co.uk)

Dear Parents or Carer

Welcome to Ashlands Church of England First School. I am really pleased to share with you all the great things about our school and I hope you will enjoy playing a part in our continued success. We are very proud of our school ethos, which is commented on by everyone who visits. We have approachable, professional and committed staff; dedicated and effective Governors; supportive and caring parents and the loveliest children! We have worked hard over the last few years to refurbish our school and improve our resources to provide a good learning environment. We are also proud of our Church School status and our ethos reflects our Christian values.

We want learning to be fun, and for every child to do the very best they can. We provide a broad and balanced education - high expectations in reading, writing and mathematics coupled with opportunities to enjoy and excel in other areas.

Recent Ofsted reports and visits have recognised the school's rapid improvement and we are looking forward to working with you to make your child's years at Ashlands a truly happy and rewarding time.

Yours sincerely

*Carol Wills*

Mrs Carol Wills  
Headteacher



## About our school

Ashlands Church of England First School is a friely, vibrant four class school north side of Crewkerne. Our children move on aged nine to Maiden Beech Middle School. We have a Children's Centre on site and we have good links with the pre-schools in our catchment. The First, Middle and Upper schools work closely tighter to support good transition and we also work closely on joint projects. We are currently working towards forging even closer links with two local schools and undertake joint staff training and projects.

We have four bright, attractive classrooms plus a hall, library, ICT suite, office area, cookery area and kitchen. We also have two playgrounds, two grassed areas and a vegetable garden and a wildlife area which includes an outside classroom. The children in the Foundation Stage have a secure outside area linked to their classroom.

Our classes are currently organised into a mixed Foundation Stage /Year 1 class, a mixed Year 1 / 2 class, and mixed Year 2 / 3 class and a mixed Year 3/4 class. Our priority is always to keep our classes as small as possible so the organisation may vary from year to year depending on the number in each cohort.

The staff and governors are committed to achieving the highest possible standards of social, academic and moral education for the pupils.

### Pupil Conduct

If a child is to achieve their full potential in school they need to be attentive and apply themselves to learning. At Ashlands we expect a high standard of self-discipline and a good standard of conduct during the school day including times when pupils are off-site on visits. Our expectations are set out in our Behaviour Policy. We set an example by being caring, considerate and co-operative in our dealings with everyone in school. Although we use sanctions when necessary our ethos is built on a culture of positive reinforcement. This is embodied in our Golden Rules which are displayed around the school. If children keep our Golden Rules they earn 'Golden Time' at the end of the week and children who do something notable to keep our Golden Rules earn a 'Green Leaf' which is presented in assembly. Children can also award each other a 'Golden Leaf' if they see another child support our Golden Rules.

### Attendance

Regular school attendance and punctuality is vital if a child is to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available in school. A telephone call should be made to the school on the first day of absence, and a letter or phone call to the school office when the child returns to school, outlining the reason for their absence. Holidays should not be taken during term time and parents wishing to remove their children during term time need to complete a form requesting leave of absence. Absences for which a reason has not been given, unauthorised absences or patterns of absence are recorded and notified to the Educational Attendance Officer. Our register closes at 9.10am and children who are persistently late are also notified to the Educational Attendance Officer.

## **Welfare**

It is important to us that our pupils are safe and healthy at school.

We take all reasonable measures to protect our pupils and provide a high level of supervision at all times.

We know that healthy children are better learners so we want children to come to school fit, well and rested. There is always a member of staff available who has First Aid Training to ensure that children are well cared for in school. Our Medical Needs policy sets out our approach to supporting children who may have longer term medical needs.

## **Safeguarding Children**

Ashlands Church of England First School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

## **Prevention of Bullying**

At Ashlands we work towards a school community free from bullying by creating a caring, friendly and happy school environment in which bullying is out of place, respect for others is fostered and where children are encouraged to behave responsibly. Any report of bullying will be dealt with promptly.

## **School Uniform**

We ask all our pupils to wear our school uniform of red, white and grey, both in school and when representing the school at off-site venues. Wearing a school uniform helps develop pride in the school and gives the children a sense of belonging. It also saves time in the mornings!

## **Jewellery**

Jewellery should not be worn at school as it may cause injury, be broken or lost. Watches may be worn but will need to be removed for PE. If children have pierced ears we ask that, for reasons of safety, only small stud earrings be worn.

## **Applying for a place at our school.**

We are always pleased to show prospective parents and pupils around our school. Please ring the School Office to make an appointment. If you decided after visiting the school that you would like to apply for a place you will then need to make a formal application to the Local Authority who will make every effort to allocate a place at your school of choice

### **Security**

We take the security of the children, staff and the building seriously. The school is protected by an intruder alarm, a CCTV system and a door entry system. All staff and volunteers, including parents who help in and around the school, whether on a regular or irregular basis, are CRB checked.

### **Teaching and learning**

At Ashlands School we seek to foster a strong work ethic and motivate our children through praise for effort and genuine achievement. We take account of effective traditional teaching methods and the latest research into how children learn, for example different learning styles and the use of brain gym and music to stimulate the brain. We know that children are better able to fulfil their potential when their emotional health and well-being are promoted and we consider these aspects very important.

### **Assessment**

The school is required to undertake a statutory assessment at the end of Key Stage One - i.e. at the end of Year Two - to find out the level each child is working at in English, Mathematics and Science. However, teachers continually assess children's progress on a daily basis and the results are used to inform planning for future learning. We also involve the children in assessing their own learning to help them have a good understanding of how they can improve their work. We set termly targets for English and Mathematics and the children bring home these targets to share with parents.

### **Special Education Needs [SEN]**

On average, about 25% of children need special help at home at some point in their schooling. This may be because of physical, learning or behavioural issues and may be short or long term. Needs are identified in several ways: information is gathered from parents, pre-school groups, outside agencies, teacher observations and diagnostic assessment. Children with identified needs are identified by the school and may have an Individual Education Plan [IEP]. Most of the support is given within the classroom but small groups and individuals may be withdrawn when it is thought appropriate. The value of parental support and its effect on learning and the development of children are recognised and we involve parents at all levels.

### Teaching Methods

Teachers employ a range of teaching strategies and techniques within the classroom according to the subject being taught and the needs of the children. These include whole class teaching, group teaching, teacher or child led activities and one to one work. Role play, Drama and ICT are also used to motivate pupils and help embed learning.

We use cross-curricular topic work to deliver subjects within the context of the whole curriculum but each subject is planned separately within a whole school framework to ensure continuity and progression with an emphasis on direct, focussed teaching and oral and mental work. Even though we have mixed age classes work is planned at the appropriate level for each child.

We want our pupils to be confident, independent learners who delight in acquiring knowledge and developing skills.

### Our Curriculum

Every child at Ashlands has access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum comprises all the varied and exciting activities we offer the children and includes all the statutory requirements of the Early Years and Foundation Stage National Curriculum.

### National Curriculum Subjects

These are categorised as Core subjects - English [Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening], Mathematics [Number, Shape, Space and Measures and Data Handling], Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Foundation Subjects - Art, Music, History, Geography and Physical Education.

In addition we teach Personal, Social and Health Education through a weekly programme called SEAL [Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning].

We also teach Religious Education and the children join together for a daily act of collective worship. Reverend Gallagher leads a weekly assembly.

The basic skills of Reading, Writing and Mathematics are given a high priority.

### English [Reading , Writing, Speaking and Listening]

We place great emphasis on English at Ashlands. Children are taught skills of handwriting, spelling, comprehension, punctuation and grammar and are encouraged to write for many different purposes. They are given the opportunity to listen and respond to stories and poems so that they may become confident, independent readers and writers. Children read for enjoyment and information every day. Books can be taken home and we encourage children to read at home with their parents daily.

### The Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin school with a wealth of skills and knowledge. The period of education from birth to 5 is the Early Years Foundation Stage and all pupils in their first year at school continue to work towards Early Learning Goals in six areas of learning - Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication, Language and Literacy; Mathematical Development; Knowledge and Understanding of the World; Physical Development and Creative Development.

Learning activities are planned to allow children to learn through play based activities both within the classroom and outside.

### Mathematics [Number, Shape, Space and Measure and Data Handling]

Children are taught the importance of selecting from a range of mental strategies to solve mathematical problems.

Emphasis is placed on practical and oral work and mental computation as well as the application of principles and knowledge to everyday situations.

### Religious Education

Religious Education at Ashlands fosters in children a reflective approach to living and a feeling of belonging to our Church Community. We follow the agreed Somerset syllabus for Religious Education which seeks to develop an understanding of what it means to be a Christian as well as an understanding of other world religions. We are proud to be a Church School and we have strong links with St Bartholomew's Church in Crewkerne. This includes a weekly visit from Reverend Gallagher and opportunities for parents to join us at St Bartholomew's Church to celebrate many festivals and special events during the year.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship should they so wish. If parents do not wish their child to be taught the agreed syllabus or take part in short acts of collective worship then they should inform us in writing. Their child can then be excused and suitable alternative arrangements made.

### French

French is taught to children in Year 3 and Year 4. They learn basic vocabulary such as colours, numbers and objects as well as greetings and songs.

### **Science and Environmental Education**

Children are encouraged to ask questions and find out about the world in which they live. They investigate electricity, forces, materials, humans, plants and animals.

We are committed to developing in children an understanding and appreciation of the natural and constructed world, locally, nationally and internationally. We encourage them to develop a sense of responsibility to their environment and its improvement.

### **Information and Communication Technology**

Interactive Whiteboards are fitted in all our classrooms, and we have an excellent ICT suite where children are not only taught ICT but apply their skills to support their learning in other areas such as English and Maths.

Children learn how ICT is used in their daily lives and develop skills in communicating, data handling and control technology. Opportunities are also given for children to communicate with others, using e-mail, and to use the internet for research.

### **History and Geography**

We use History and Geography to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, both past and present. Children find out about famous people, places and events from the past as well as studying Ashlands in order to compare it with other localities in the United Kingdom and abroad.

### **Personal, Social and Health Education [PHSE], including Citizenship.**

We have an extensive PHSE programme which is based on a programme called Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning [SEAL]. The whole school studies a different aspect each half term, including themes such as 'new beginnings' and 'making friends'. They follow a programme in their classes as well as discussing aspects in whole school assemblies.

We also develop their awareness of health and safety issues. Children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One [Year 1 and 2] are provided with a piece of fruit each day and we ask the older children in Key Stage 2 [Year 3 and 4] to bring a piece of fruit each day. All children are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school each day. We are very pleased to be able to offer hot school meals at Ashlands. Vegetables are cooked freshly on site and the menus are carefully planned to meet 'Healthy Schools' guidelines as well as appealing to the children. The children eat their meals in two sittings in the School Hall.



### **Art and Design Technology**

The children are encouraged to use a variety of materials and techniques. They look at the work of famous artists and inventors and are given opportunities to reflect on their work and that of others. We are proud of our links with local artists who come into school to work alongside the children from time to time and we have been involved with many local projects and competitions to promote art and design.

### **Music**

Our music curriculum is designed to give the children the opportunity to enjoy all kinds of music and experience a wide range of musical activities. Children in year 2, 3 and 4 learn to play the recorder. We offer the opportunity for children to have guitar lessons.

### **Sex Education**

Sex Education is not taught as a distinct part of the curriculum. However, teachers deal sensitively, honestly and correctly with the questions of children as they arise.

### **Cooking**

We are very pleased to have a cooking area linked to our school kitchen which gives children an opportunity to take part in cooking activities as part of the curriculum. Fruit Smoothies, jelly and Gingerbread Men may feature!

### **Home-School Partnership**

At Ashlands we are proud of our commitment to working with parents in order to maximise the opportunities we offer the children. We are currently revising our Home-School agreement and we will be sending home a revised agreement in the near future. We know that children are not always forthcoming about school so we provide other opportunities for parents to learn about the work their child is doing. There is a termly class assembly to which parents are invited in order to see some of the work their child is doing. We also hold open mornings when parents are invited to come into school and see their child working in the classroom. We send home a written summary outlining the work the children will cover each term.

### **Friends of Ashlands School**

Our FOAS association is primarily concerned with raising money for the school, which is spent for the benefit of the children. Every parent is very welcome to join and a FOAS committee is formed at the start of each year. Parents and carers can also support FOAS by helping at special events such as the Summer Fayre and Discos. FOAS funds are used to help with the cost of school trips and visits and new equipment. The FOAS have recently raised money for fixed playground equipment such as balance beams and climbing frames.

### **Homework and helping at home**

Homework - little and often- can be hugely helpful but it must be fun and enjoyed by both child and parent. Please see our Homework policy for more details.

### **Parent Evenings and Reports**

Parents and Carers are invited each term to meet their child's teacher. They can look at displays around the school, and at their children's work. Teachers are always happy to arrange further meetings at the end of the school day. Parents receive an Annual Report of Achievement at the end of each academic year. The report includes comments about attitude and effort as well as attainment.

### **Parental Concerns**

As it is our hope that parents will support us in our work, it is our aim to support parents as fully as possible in the best interest of your child. We encourage all parents to approach the school if they have any enquiries or comments about their child's education or care of their child or about any school policies or procedures. We ask all parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, Deputy Head or Head teacher. A copy of our complaints procedure can be obtained from the School Office.

### **After School Clubs**

We are working to expand the range of after school clubs that we offer the children. We can currently offer Football, Multi Skills, Dancing, Gardening, Cookery, ICT and Film Club. We hope to be able to offer more clubs in the near future. In addition 'West One' offers before and after school provision, bringing children to school for the start of the school day and collecting them at the end of the school day.

### **Children's Council**

The school has a school council to encourage responsibility, democracy and ownership. Each year all classes select a representative to sit on the council which meets with the Head teacher regularly to discuss initiatives and issues.

### **Other experiences available to our pupils include:**

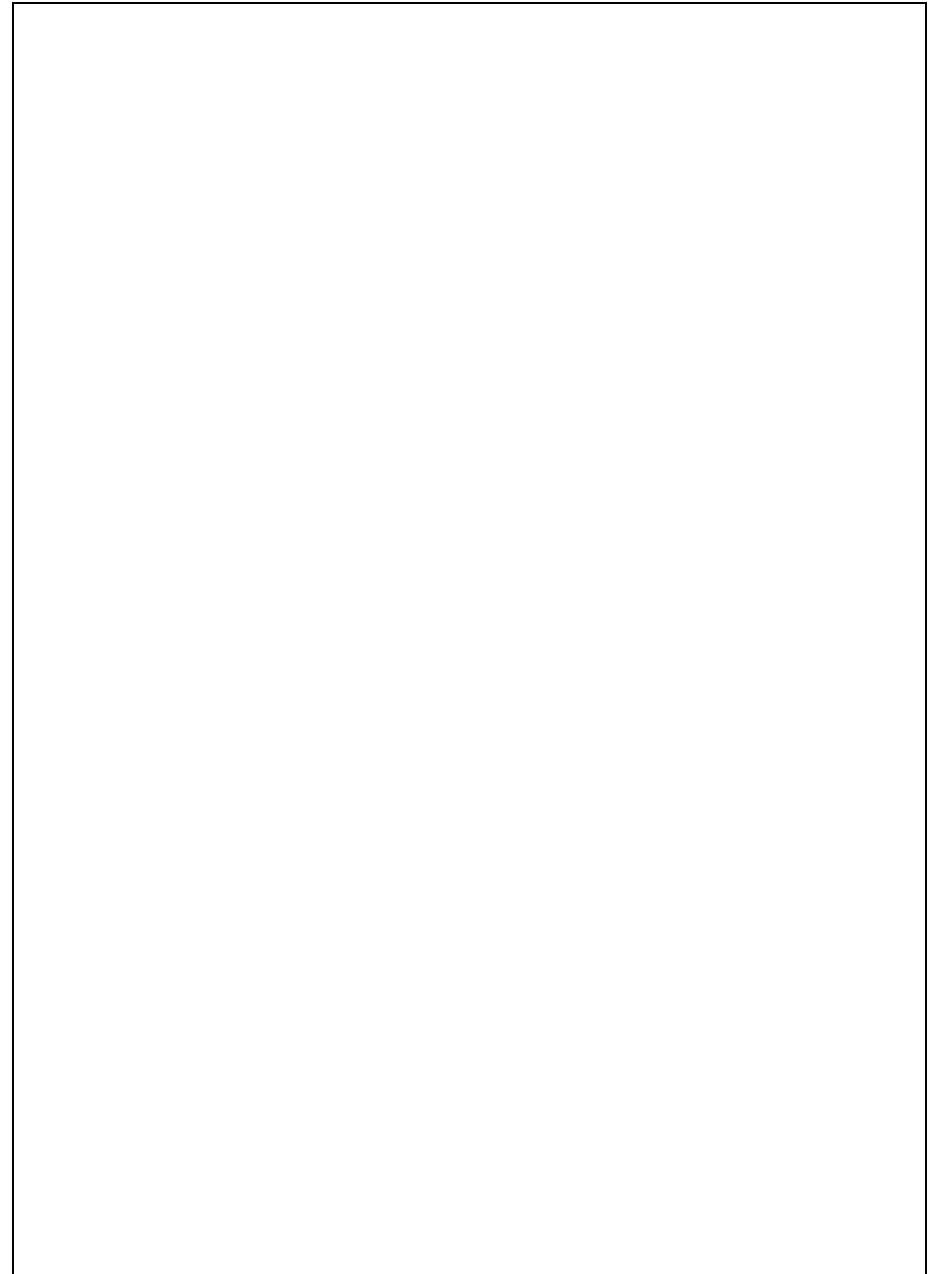
Participating in Leavers and Class Assemblies, Harvest Festival, Easter Worship and the Christmas Concert; an end of year Class Trip; School Fayres; Charity fundraising; caring for the school grounds and showing visitors around the school.

**Other School Polices and Procedures**

A selection of resources and copies of all school policies can be obtained from the school office.

**Visits and Visitors**

The curriculum is enriched by visitors including contributions from community members such as the school nurse, our County Councillor and local artists. These visits are arranged to support the curriculum.



**Staff**

Headteacher Mrs Carol Wills BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH  
Deputy Headteacher Miss Nicola Ball BA (Hons)

Teaching staff Ms. Yvonne Bell B.Ed. (Hons)  
Miss Bev West B.Ed. (Hons)  
Miss Victoria Clark B.Ed (Hons)  
Mrs Rachel Dicker B.Ed (Hons)  
Mrs Clair Findlay BA (Hons), PGCE

**Non teaching staff**

Office Administrator Mrs Lisa Carter  
Mrs Tracey Lawrence

School Assistants Mrs Sue Jarvis  
Mrs Jan Dawson  
Mrs Leigh Chick  
Mrs Jayne Grasby  
Mrs Dawn Harvey  
Miss Rose Obern  
Mrs Caroline Osborne

HLTA Mrs Tina Chesterman

Lunchtime supervisors Mrs Sandra Noake  
Miss Fiona Cairns  
Mrs Sue Richards  
Mrs Tracey Lawrence  
Miss Melissa Jones

Caretaker Mrs M. Read 01460 74251  
Cleaner Mrs J. Lane

**Governors**

Mr Richard Jeffery Community Governor & Chair  
Dr Colin Farrant Foundation Vice Chair  
Mrs Rosemary Drayton L.E.A. Governor  
Ms Wendy Abbott L.E.A. Governor  
Mrs Kate Tryhorn Elected Parent Governor  
Mr John Harris Elected Parent Governor  
Mrs Caroline Woodhead Elected Parent Governor  
Reverend Michael Gallagher Ex-Officio Governor  
Mrs C. Wills Staff Governor (HEAD)

Chairman to the Governors Mr Richard Jeffery 01460 72807

The clerk to the Governors is Mrs Sonia Yorke who can be contacted via the school.

