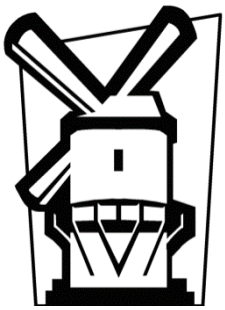
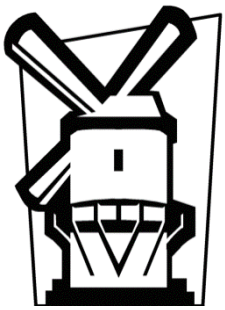
Great Paxton CE Primary School

Policy Statement on



Early Years



Mission Statement

We build upon strong foundations of excellent teaching, with high expectations of children's achievements, encouraging all pupils to aspire to be the very best that they can be in the future.

We do this by:

being generous and visible people of Jesus Christ, helping our local community to discover together the transforming presence of God in our lives.

striving to provide and maintain for our pupils an education that provides opportunities so that they can explore and develop their own values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of other cultures.

promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Policy agreed: Autumn 2025
Leader: N Upson
Date for review: Autumn 2028

GREAT PAXTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Principles of the policy

Early Years education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. Throughout this document, the terms Early Years and Foundation Stage are synonymous. The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth until the end of reception year. At Great Paxton School children join Reception at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Key Stage 1 begins at the beginning of Year 1.

Admission Procedures

In the first week of the school term the class teacher and teaching assistant offer each parent a visit to the family's home. This allows them to meet each child in his/her own familiar surroundings, prior to starting school. This gives the teacher and parent time to have a private conversation and for the child to share toys, thoughts and feelings in the security of their home.

After all the home visits have been completed we recommend children attend mornings only for the first week, staying for school lunch and going home at 1:10 pm. On their second week of school (if appropriate to the child's needs) children stay full time. It is hoped that all children are in school full time by the end of September.

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS at Great Paxton Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2021).

The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into three prime areas and four specific areas of learning and development.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others.
All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

The EYFS Profile, completed towards the end of the Foundation Stage, aims to provide parents and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Teachers will also consider each child's 'characteristics of effective learning'. There are three sets of characteristics associated with effective learning in the EYFS Profile. These are:

- Playing and exploring; which show how a child investigates and experiences things, and the child's willingness to 'have a go'
- Active learning; which shows how well a child concentrates, perseveres, and enjoys achievements in learning
- Creating and thinking critically; which show how well a child develops ideas, makes links between ideas, and develops strategies for doing things

A completed EYFS Profile consists of 17 items of information. This is made up of an attainment of each child, assessed in accordance with the 17 ELG descriptors, to determine if they are meeting the expected level of development at the end of EYFS (expected) or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

Aims of the Foundation Stage

At Great Paxton School, we actively promote the curriculum of the Foundation Stage, which underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- **Personal, social and emotional well-being:** in particular by supporting the transition to our setting, promoting an inclusive ethos and providing opportunities for each child to become a valued member of the school so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted.
- **Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning:** in particular the enthusiasm for learning and the confidence in their ability to be successful learners.
- **Social skills:** by providing opportunities to enable them to learn how to cooperate and work together harmoniously.
- **Attention skills and persistence:** to build the capacity to concentrate on their own play or on group tasks.
- **Language and communication:** with opportunities for all children to communicate in a wide range of situations, to respond to adults and peers and to practise and extend the range of vocabulary and communication skills they use and to listen carefully.
- **Reading and writing:** with opportunities for all children to explore, enjoy, learn about and use words and text in a broad range of context.

- **Mathematics:** with opportunities for all children to develop their understanding of number, measurement, pattern, shape and space by providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about them.
- **Understanding the world:** with opportunities for all children to solve problems, make decisions, explore, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts.
- **Physical development:** with opportunities for children to develop and practise their fine and gross motor skills and to increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe.
- **Expressive arts and design:** with opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feeling through a variety of art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and imaginative and role play activities.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Great Paxton CE Primary School we recognise that every child is unique, constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration / sharing assemblies, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to their learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Great Paxton CE 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 our children matter. We aim to give our children every opportunity to achieve their full potential. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we value the contributions of their parents and of their previous settings.

In the EYFS we set realistic and 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 and children of different ethnic groups.
We meet the needs of all our children through:

• planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their 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;
• planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;

• monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand that they are there to keep them safe. 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. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Positive Relationships

We value and appreciate the role of the home as a learning environment and seek to develop an effective partnership with parents. We are aware that many of our Reception children attend other pre-school establishments and we endeavour to include them and their families in all our liaison meetings and communication.

- The Reception teacher and head teacher will hold a welcome meeting with the parents of pre-school aged children in the term before admission. We use this opportunity to explain the aims of our Early Years Foundation Stage practice as well as explaining the way in which the school day is structured.
- During this meeting, prospective parents will also receive copies of our 'Starting School' booklet as well as our prospectus.
- The Reception teacher works closely with local pre-schools and nurseries in the summer term. A visit to the setting will take place and discussions with the children's key workers will allow the Reception teacher to gain an understanding of how that particular child has found pre-school/nursery and how well they are getting on socially, emotionally and academically. As well as discussing any barriers to learning or extra challenges that they may require. All children are invited to visit the Reception class during the summer term.
- Children and their parents are invited to try out a school lunch towards the end of the summer term.
- Parents are offered a home visit in September the week before their child starts school.
- During the autumn term, parents are invited to attend information sessions about learning to read and how phonics is taught in the foundation stage.

We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Parents are also encouraged to share any significant achievements that their child may have made at home. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through informal conversations at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual. This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will promote, enhance and extend play as needed to further individual learning. At the end of the year children will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest.

The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children space to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development
At Great Paxton CE Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

Characteristics of Learning

At Great Paxton CE Primary School we believe "What children learn is important, but how children learn is even more important if they are to become learners for life in today's society" (Helen Moylett, How Children Learn. The Characteristics of Effective Learning, 2011). We ensure we plan for the 3 areas of Effective Learning as these underpin learning development across all the areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Playing and Exploring
Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. We believe that children need to have periods of extended play in order for them to engage in quality play where the most useful learning takes place. It is important for children to have the time and space to practise and become confident using their developing skills. It is important that children are able to practise applying new skills in a meaningful way to them. The learning environment is

carefully planned to help children use and develop their skills and to allow them to follow their interests at their own level whilst also challenging them.

Active Learning
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.

Creativity and Critical Thinking
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 classroom to extend their learning.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part of the learning process. Assessments are based primarily on observation of daily activities and events. Practitioners note in particular the learning (knowledge, skills and understanding) which a child demonstrates independently and consistently in a range of contexts. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress. To achieve accurate assessment we will take account of a range of perspectives including those of the child, parents/carers and other adults who have significant interactions with the child.

We use an online journal system, Tapestry, as a record of a child's learning journey through Reception. Observations from the class practitioners together with parent observations, are uploaded and secured in a child's file, supporting the assessment of individual children. Tapestry also allows parents to stay updated with children's learning in school.

Children's progress is discussed during twice termly Pupil Progress Meetings with the Headteacher. Children are assessed using The Early Years Outcomes and practitioners make a judgement in the summer term for each Early Learning Goal.
In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. For each goal teachers determine whether children are meeting expected levels, exceeding expected levels or are not yet at the expected level (emerging).

We use internal data sheets to record judgements and assessment data is sent to the Local Authority in June.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. (See Initial Equality Impact Assessment)

Data Protection – Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR)

This policy has been produced in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. Further information is available in our Privacy Notice and Data Retention Policy which can be found on our website.
The person responsible for Data Protection in our organisation is Mr Lee Frost (Headteacher) and you can contact them with any questions relating to our handling of your data. You can contact them by email at office@greatpaxton.cambs.sch.uk or telephone 01480 472132
To read about your individual rights and/or to complain about how we have collected and processed data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer. If you are unhappy with how your query has been handled you can contact the Information Commissioners Office via their website.