



Great Gaddesden Cof E (VA) Primary School

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Welcome to Great Gaddesden Early Years. We hope you had a good summer and that your child's first term in Nursery or Reception will be an enjoyable and exciting time. This letter gives you information about our class routines and an outline of the teaching and learning that will take place.

Our priority in this first term is to ensure that the children feel safe, happy and secure in their new environment and that they build relationships with the other children in their class and the adults who are working with them. Our aim is for the classroom to be a busy and fun place where the children can develop the skills to become independent and enthusiastic learners. We of course have put extra measures in place to ensure the safety of all children and staff following the government guidelines.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum covers 7 areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are:

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

We also support children in four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics



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- Understanding the world
- Expressive Art & Design

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. The children are encouraged to select and use the resources independently, challenge themselves and develop their critical and creative thinking skills. Throughout all these areas opportunities are given to children to experience a rich language environment, to develop their skills in expressing themselves and speak and listen in a range of situations.

Our topics are based on the interests of the children in our class and so can be short 1 or 2 week topics, or something that covers the whole half term. The topics planned so far are:

- All About Me: (The first half term at EYFS is all about settling in, getting used to new routines, trying new things and beginning to build relationships)
- Traditional Tales
- Autumn

A day in our classroom:

The Reception children will come in and select their lunch choice as part of self registration. For the Nursery children, they come and select their picture with their name to self register and all children choose a 'Busy Fingers' activity. These activities are set up to strengthen the muscles in the children's fingers (fine motor skills) which support pencil grip and dexterity. The children then tidy and we will do a 'wake up shake up' movement song. This time of the day is when children are most focused so we will teach Phonics for Reception and Nursery will have an adult led group time activity (such as nursery rhymes, talking about the weather, counting activities etc).

The daily Phonics session is a big part of EYFS and we mainly cover Phase 1 phonics in Nursery over the year (This concentrates on developing the children's listening skills. The aspects covered are General sound discrimination, Rhythm and rhyme, Alliteration, Voice sounds, Oral blending and segmenting). In Reception we will begin to introduce phase 2 letters and sounds using a range of programmes to provide varied, fun and stimulating sessions.

We then have snack time and the children are then shown the activities that will be set up in the continuous provision. The children are then able to learn independently in both the indoor and outdoor areas, during which time adults observe the children and work with individuals and groups on focused activities. We call this time 'Play and Learn'. The



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Reception children will also have a short adult directed Maths session before lunch each day. In the afternoons, the learning will be around the theme that week. For example, there will be lots of activities available for the children to choose from that are linked to our weekly story.

Each Wednesday, we have our 'World on Wednesday' session. This might be a forest school session where we will use the church yard or occasionally we may go to the local woods. The session may be used to do gardening or cooking. Playing and learning outside improves children's physical and emotional wellbeing. Rather than using classroom resources and equipment, children can use natural materials found in the woodland and enjoy activities such as collecting sticks and leaves, making dens, handling tools, using twigs to write in the mud, to name a few. Please ensure your child has a named pair of wellington boots in school. We have waterproof overalls that the children can wear in damp/wet weather.

We plan to do lots of cooking this year which the children love. The children gain valuable learning opportunities and have lots of fun. We ask for a voluntary contribution of £5 per term to help us to buy the ingredients.

In the current circumstances we are unable to hold our weekly Collective Worship at the church. From time to time we will be able to go to the church as a class, and our weekly celebration assembly will be held in the classroom.

Lastly, we will be visiting the school library each Tuesday, where the children will be able to choose a book to take home. Please ensure they bring the book back each week so it can be swapped. After half term the Reception children will start taking home a reading book that will be changed each week on a Monday.

Any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

The EYFS Team



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