



EYFS Policy

The Corporation of Oundle School includes both Oundle School, a boarding and day School for pupils aged 11 – 18 and Laxton Junior School, a day School for pupils aged 4 - 11. This policy applies solely to Laxton Junior School.

Introduction

At Laxton Junior School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order for them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and a child's experiences between birth and age 5 have a major impact on their future. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important to us and, as children commence their journey at Laxton Junior School, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes, where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment. It is important to view the EYFS as not only preparation for the Year 1 experience, but preparation for life, also, where children become ready to benefit fully from all the opportunities that lie ahead of them.

Aims

Our EYFS Policy aims to support this determination and ensure that:

- Children understand and embody our School Values and Mission
- Children access an engaging and enriched curriculum that gives them the knowledge and skills necessary to make excellent progress throughout school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning enables every child to make excellent progress
- Close partnerships between EYFS Teachers and parents / carers are developed
- Every child is included, supported and challenged through excellent teaching and learning, equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

As with all aspects of school life, at Laxton Junior School, our approach in the EYFS is underpinned by our School Values and Mission. Our Values represent what we believe to be our absolute priorities both now and in the future. They are the qualities that resonate throughout all aspects of our education and are our guiding principles for behaviour and decision-making. These are A Love of Learning, Care, Community, Opportunity and Quality. Our mission is to prepare our children for their futures, developing a series of essential characteristics that will enable them to thrive in whichever direction they wish their lives to take. These characteristics are woven into our EYFS curriculum so that all children receive a rich provision of academic and co-curricular opportunity; we want our EYFS children to be confident and resilient, kind and respectful, open-minded and well rounded, collaborative and independent.

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Laxton Junior School has been granted an exemption from the Learning and Development requirements of the Framework; this exemption was awarded by the Department for Education in October, 2012, as a

result of the school's quality of education being inspected as 'Excellent' by ISI in 2008. The quality of education was further inspected as 'Excellent' in our 2022 ISI inspection and, as such, the exemption has been renewed and remains in place. Confirmation of this exemption, including an update following the introduction of the new EYFS Framework in 2021, is held by the Head.

It is not possible to be exempt from the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, and we ensure that we comply with all aspects of the requirements relating to the safety and wellbeing of our children.

Structure of the EYFS

Our EYFS includes Reception only, admitting children at age 4 who will turn 5 over the course of the academic year. We have a maximum capacity of 40 pupils, who are admitted into two parallel Forms of 20 pupils each. The two Forms comprise children of mixed ages, abilities and genders. Each child in the EYFS is allocated a key person; this is their Form Teacher in all cases. The key person ensures that the child's care is tailored to meet his or her individual needs.

The Management of the Setting

Strategic Lead: Mrs Rachel Waterhouse, Assistant Head Admissions - rew@laxtonjunior.org.uk

Manager: Mrs Jennifer Burnham, Reception Teacher – jemb@laxtonjunior.org.uk

Deputy Manager: Mrs Alice Ticehurst – akt@laxtonjunior.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ms Stacey Crump, Deputy Head - smc@laxtonjunior.org.uk

Our Principles and Approach

Four distinct but complementary guiding principles shape our practice, as outlined in the statutory guidance. These are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Our curriculum covers the education and care of all children in our early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Whilst we have an exemption from the Learning and Development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, our curriculum underpins all future learning by promoting and developing the seven areas outlined in the Framework. However, we believe that we deliver a curriculum that goes far beyond these expectations, and we are proud of the breadth, balance and challenge that we provide to our Reception children.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is divided into three prime areas and four specific areas. The three prime areas are particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive; they are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Physical Development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas, which are:

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

In addition, we develop the children's critical thinking skills using the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which are:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically.

A number of areas are enhanced by the delivery of discrete subject teaching by specialist teachers, namely:

- Expressive Arts – Music
- Physical Development – PE and Swimming
- Understanding the World – MFL

Teaching and Learning

In line with the Framework, our educational programmes involve activities and experiences for our children, as set out under each of the areas of learning. We have high expectations of our children and ensure that cognitive development proceeds hand-in-hand with their social and personal development.

Our children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning, and it is the privilege of the adults working in our Early Years to accept the task of building upon the children's previous learning experiences. At Laxton Junior School this is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents and carers, support staff and the EYFS team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their care.

The features of excellent teaching and learning at Laxton Junior School include:

- The partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- The understanding that teachers have 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 or other means of communication
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage
- 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

- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents
- The good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working within the EYFS

Further details on our approach to teaching and learning can be found in our Teaching and Learning Policy.

Learning Through Play

At Laxton Junior School, we do not make a distinction between learning and play. Play is learning; children make sense of themselves and the world around them through their play experiences. In their play, children are able to take risks, explore, be curious, wonder and choose. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. Children are given the opportunity to explore and discover within a safe, secure and supportive environment. The children are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by themselves and some by the adults. Through play, children will develop intellectually, creatively, socially, emotionally and physically. Learning through play gives children the opportunity to take risks, make mistakes and learn from their mistakes.

The Learning Environment

At Laxton Junior, we value the importance of a high-quality environment, inside and out, that stimulates interest and learning, creating the conditions to acquire skills and to develop within all seven areas of learning. We plan and prepare a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning, linked to our Love of Learning value. We aim to create an attractive, creative, stimulating and enriched learning environment, which encourages children to explore, investigate, communicate and collaborate whilst enabling them to become independent learners. It evolves throughout the year, so it is suited to the children's developmental stages. Materials are thoughtfully added to reflect interests and current themes and promote next steps. We aim to make the environment a safe and secure place where children are confident to take risks, to make mistakes and are challenged to develop their independence. Teachers make the environment an integral and ever-changing part of their early years practice.

Planning

We believe carefully considered planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, prior knowledge, learning styles and developmental and learning needs. All staff who work in the EYFS are committed to working together and are involved in this process.

The long-term planning within the EYFS is based on very open-ended themes with the children's interests and local, national and global events interwoven within them. Religious and national events are also highlighted as appropriate. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for medium and weekly planning. As teachers respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions, these plans may be adapted. EYFS staff use their knowledge of individual children to focus on next steps and to consolidate learning within their co-play. We plan weekly learning opportunities in maths, phonics, literacy, handwriting, art, RE and Understanding of the World, alongside the specialist teaching.

As children grow older and move through the Reception year, there is a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This includes weekly focus activities in skills such as writing, appropriate to the needs and next steps of each child. This will help children to prepare for Year 1 and beyond.

Mastery

We use a mastery approach to learning which means that we meet the needs of individual children in accordance with the pace of their learning. Support is given to enable children to have a solid understanding of concepts before building upon these and moving on to the next steps.

Assessment

At Laxton Junior School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Teachers observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests, learning styles and next steps. All formative and summative assessment data is used to shape future planning so that each child's experience is individually tailored to their needs.

Formative Assessment

We carry out baseline assessments on all children entering our EYFS classes. We make regular assessments of children's learning each week and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs, next steps and interests. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of recorded observations, annotated examples of work and photographs and this involves all adults within the EYFS as appropriate. Each child has an individual online 'Learning Journal' in which evidence is recorded. Reading records are updated each time a child reads within the school, both in home/school reading record books and, in the class reading record file. Each child also has a paper Profile to record art, Understanding of the World, maths or child-led learning, where a paper-based task is appropriate. In addition, the children will use a writing book from a point in the year when they demonstrate readiness, usually during the Michaelmas term.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through a variety of communication methods - daily contact with staff, termly Parent Conferences, face to face meetings, both regular and ad-hoc, twice-yearly formal written reports and in person open evenings. In the EYFS, we use the Development Matters ranges to make judgements about children's progress; on-going assessments feed into this and enhance our assessments further still. Progress is updated on an on-going basis and action plan meetings take place on a termly basis.

Summative Assessment

When children join us at the beginning of the academic year, we carry out standardised Baseline assessments in Literacy and Mathematics, including bespoke, in-house assessments in the seven Areas of Learning within the first three weeks of the Michaelmas Term. These summative in-house assessments are completed again in December, March and at the end of the year. Little Wandle phonics assessments are completed half-termly to assess phonic knowledge and recognition of high frequency and common exception words. All data, alongside the information gathered on each child's online Learning Journal, is collated and assessed against the Development Matters ranges and the Early Learning Goals. Statements can then be made about the child's achievements in the seven areas of learning at the end of EYFS to be shared with Assistant Head Admissions and Year 1 Teachers.

Working in Partnership with Parents and / or Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators. We believe that all parents/carers have an essential role to play in the education of their child and, as such, we know that

learning and development is at its best when there is a strong partnership, relying on a two-way flow of information and knowledge, between home and school. We achieve this by:

- Move up afternoon in June
- Holding at least two transition sessions for new children before they start school, on the Monday and Tuesday morning before they start school on the Wednesday.
- EYFS staff contacting and visiting pre-school settings for all children
- Parents are provided with a variety of information prior to their child's first day at school, to support the whole family in their transition to school
- EYFS staff are present on arrival and at dismissal. They are therefore available to speak to parents and to share information. Parents may alternatively use contact books or email to communicate with staff.
- Having year group specific information available on the school website
- Organising regular Parents in Partnership sessions to share information about aspects of their children's learning
- Holding three Parent Conference evenings, discussing progress, celebrating success and sharing individual targets
- Providing twice yearly written reports to parents to celebrate their child's achievements and to highlight next steps
- Inviting parents to attend Parent in Partnership workshops, special performances, assemblies, FoLJS events and EYFS specific coffee mornings so that strong relationships may be fostered between families and the school
- Sharing information with parents in a variety of ways including contact books, Tapestry, SchoolPosts and email
- Giving parents a variety of ways to contact their child's teacher, such as contact books, Tapestry or email

Transition

We understand that starting school is a significant and potentially challenging process for children and their families, and we ensure that this is smooth and contains all the necessary information to support a happy transition into Laxton Junior School. This is supported in the following ways:

- EYFS Open Afternoons are held at regular intervals throughout the year for new and prospective parents to engage with staff and the School environment
- At least two half-day transition sessions prior to starting school in September, where they meet their teachers, classmates and get to know their environment. Key staff will be present.
- A Move up afternoon session is held in June when children spend the afternoon in the setting without their parents.
- Parents are asked to complete a 'Starting School Questionnaire' which staff use to begin to build a picture of the whole child, further information may be sought where appropriate
- Staff contact and visit (where possible) pre-school settings for all children
- Informal meetings are organised between parents and staff should there be issues or concerns that need to be addressed prior to the new year beginning
- Parents are invited to visit the setting after school within the first few weeks with their children
- Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and Tapestry provide regular updates on the experiences that the children are having in Reception

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equal Opportunities

We are an inclusive school and ensure that all children - irrespective of gender, race, religion and belief, cultural background, linguistic background, SEN or disability - have equal opportunity to access our curriculum. We are committed to improving our curriculum, learning environment, provision of resources and mechanism for sharing information to enable all children to participate fully in our curriculum. Further details of our work, in this regard, are set out in our Accessibility Plan, with some of our ongoing strategies outlined below:

- Small class sizes enable greater personalisation of the curriculum
- Resources reflect positive role models and include a range of diversity
- Individual Education Plans enable staff and children to work on specific targets relevant to their need
- Staff deliver a differentiated curriculum using a variety of appropriate resources to tailor the learning to all children
- Regular progress reviews take place with children and parents

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Our approach to the support of children with SEND is defined by the following:

- All children with SEND must have their needs routinely met
- Raising the achievement of children with SEND is a whole school responsibility
- Early identification and early intervention are essential for ensuring better outcomes for children
- All children are encouraged and supported to be active partners in the decision making about their education
- Active, respectful involvement of parents as equal partners in the education of their child has a positive impact on the learning and well-being of their child
- All children with SEND should have the opportunity to learn alongside their mainstream peers in a fully inclusive environment
- All children benefit from Quality First Teaching, meaning that all teachers are expected to assess, plan and teach all children at an appropriate level that allows them to progress
- Collaborative working with all parties, both internal and external, is essential to ensure we effectively meet children's need
- Effective transition arrangements must be in place across all phases of education (and into adult life) to ensure positive outcomes for the child and their family
- Resources allocated to SEND must be effectively used to secure maximum impact and value for money
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating developments in SEND support improvement in students' learning and provide appropriate challenge

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

If a child is deemed to have an additional language need in which they require support, teachers will be advised by the Educational Support Team as to strategies for use in the classroom by a Teaching Assistant and/or Form Teacher as deemed appropriate. Useful strategies including bi/multilingual signs for vocabulary in the classrooms (depending on a child's first language), a visual timetable to support with transitions and organisation of the day, and access and use of first language dictionaries and computer programmes to help with translation.

More Able and Exceptionally Able

We strive to provide the highest quality education for all our children, by providing a challenging environment within which children are encouraged to take risks and become resilient to and learn from mistakes. For those children who have been identified as more able or exceptionally able, we aim to provide opportunities for them to:

- Learn in an environment that is stimulating and rich in challenge, including access to enrichment materials and resources to stretch thinking and enhance learning
- Have opportunities to work at a level that challenges and enables them to think deeper, using skills such as analysing, synthesising and evaluating
- Access objectives that are challenging, exploring the depth and breadth of our curriculum and working through higher order thinking activities which challenge children's current thoughts and understanding to help this to develop and evolve
- Receive quality feedback that continues to challenge beyond the learning objective

Managing Behaviour

Laxton Junior School recognises that each individual child is at a different stage of social learning. Only through a consistent approach to supporting their behaviour will we be able to achieve an environment in which children can learn and develop as caring and responsible citizens. We have developed a rights and responsibilities based Behaviour and Exclusion Policy, because we want all pupils to consider the consequences of their choices in the context of what is 'fair' and just; the children's Rights. Each class, including in the EYFS, will create their own Behaviour Charters which are working charters designed to enhance learning alongside social wellbeing.

Our approach to behaviour emphasises prevention, positive praise, routines and restoration as well as applying proportional rewards and consequences where appropriate. The fair and consistent implementation of our behaviour policy is everyone's responsibility.

Safeguarding

We take all necessary steps to ensure that we keep our children safe and promote their wellbeing. The Safeguarding Policy details the procedures in place to safeguard all children, including those in the EYFS; this includes the procedures undertaken to check the identity and suitability of visitors. Additional details, specific to safeguarding in the EYFS, are found below, as well as in the Safeguarding and Whistleblowing policies.

Ms Stacey Crump, Deputy Head of Laxton Junior School, is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for all children within the school, including those in the EYFS.

Laxton Junior School will notify Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children within the Corporation of Oundle School, including if these allegations relate to harm or abuse committed in another location. We will inform Ofsted of the nature of these allegations and the action taken within 14 days of the allegation being made.

Laxton Junior School will notify Ofsted and our local child protection agency of any serious accident or injury to, or the death of, any child while in our care, and will act on any advice from those agencies. We will report any incident within 14 days.

Electronic Devices, including Cameras and Mobile Phones

Laxton Junior School recognises the need to manage the risks posed by use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting. As such, the School's Cameras and Mobile Phones Policy states the following: In using any electronic device, the School Technology Policy, including the Staff Acceptable Use Policy, must be adhered to at all times. EYFS staff may use their devices at break times and lunch times provided that (i) pupils are not present, (ii) they are not on duty, and (iii) this does not prevent them from responding to a request for assistance from another member of staff or other aspects of their professional duties. In the EYFS, staff should keep their mobile phones in a secure place away from the children; these are to be

stored securely during the working day. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to areas of the school where pupils are not present, such as our staff room. Should staff, working with children in the EYFS, need to use their phone in an emergency, this must be reported to the Head or Designated Safeguarding Lead; this is for calls taken in the EYFS classrooms, the EYFS outside area or in any classroom or area where EYFS children are present.

There may be circumstances in which it is necessary for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time; for instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- To seek help in an emergency if there is no other immediate solution
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips (the school phone should be taken)

If a child in EYFS is ever recommended to have their own mobile phone to enable ease of contact of parents for medical reasons (e.g. diabetes), then this phone must remain switched off in the child's medical bag. The school recognises that it may be unsafe to keep this phone locked away and therefore a risk assessment for this phone must be written and approved by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head. Any phone calls on this phone will be recorded on CPOMS, and linked to Parent Contact and Medical. Visitors must not use their phones or cameras during their visit and are not permitted to capture images of our children at any time; this will be communicated to all visitors on arrival and through the 'Visitors' Information' leaflet given to them on arrival. For further guidance see the Cameras and Mobile Phones Policy.

Health and Safety

All full-time EYFS staff members hold a current and relevant Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate. At least one person who holds a PFA certificate is always on site and accessible, and we ensure that there is always at least one member of staff with a PFA certificate on trips and outings. PFA certification is updated every three years. Details of the staff with PFA certificates, and the expiration of these, is held by the Deputy Head.

We ensure there is a first aid kit accessible at all times with appropriate content for use with children. A written record is kept of accidents or injuries and any first aid treatment given. Staff will always inform parents and/or carers of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, and of any first aid treatment given. Further details can be found in our First Aid Policy.

Where a child has a specific or regular medication need, staff liaise with parents and the Deputy Head to ensure that the correct information is held and that it is kept up to date. Further information about the administration of medicine in the EYFS can be found in the Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy and the Administering Medicines Policy.

The emergency evacuation procedures for children and staff in the EYFS are set out in our Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy.

Recruitment, Induction, Supervision and Training

We maintain robust recruitment procedures for all staff members, including those working in the EYFS, that are in line with statutory expectations; further information can be found in our Recruitment and Safeguarding policies.

An induction programme is provided for all new staff, including those working in the EYFS. This includes a pre-start induction meeting with the Head, DSL and Assistant Head Admissions to ensure relevant safeguarding, supervision and health and safety policy and procedures are understood as well as a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The Assistant Head Admissions and/or the partner teacher in Reception will form a mentor team for a new EYFS teacher or teaching assistant, and will provide regular formal and informal opportunities to discuss policy, procedure and any other specific issues or concerns. New members of staff will also meet with the Head after one month, at the end of the first term and at the end of the academic year to discuss settling in and raise any issues or concerns.

Adult: child ratios are in line with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and take into consideration up to date DfE guidance about EYFS staff qualifications.

The Assistant Head Admissions will, in most instances, be the line manager for new and existing members of staff working in our EYFS; they will provide regular meetings, lesson observations and target setting as part of our approach to professional development and appraisal. Further details can be found in our CPD and Appraisal Policy.

Complaints

Written complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements at Laxton Junior School will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the school having received the complaint. The School will provide ISI and/or Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all EYFS complaints made during any specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint. EYFS parents can make a complaint to Ofsted or ISI directly if they believe Laxton Junior School is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Further information about making a complaint can be found in our Complaints Policy.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Head of EYFS is responsible for reviewing this policy in conjunction with up-to-date statutory guidance. Following each review, the policy will be made available to the LJS Subcommittee of the Governing Body for their approval and, subsequently, all members of staff working with children in the EYFS will be expected to read each updated version.

Linked Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Accessibility Plan
- Administering Medicines Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour and Exclusion Policy
- Cameras and Mobile Phones Policy
- Complaints Policy
- CPD and Appraisal Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- EAL Policy
- Educational Support Policy
- Fire and Emergency Evacuation Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Reviewer	Jennifer Burnham
Post of Reviewer	Head of EYFS
Review Date	Summer 2025
Approved by the Governing Body	Awaiting Review
Reviewed and filed with both Schools	Summer 2025
Next Review (max 3 years)	Summer 2027