

Great Easton C of E (Aided) Primary School
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Dear Parents and Carers

As you know I invited all parents to join discussions about uniform. We have had two working party meetings which have been incredibly useful and I'd like to update you all.

In addition, we have surveyed all of the children, the results of which can be found in the attached document.

As you will remember, the reason for evaluating our current uniform is to ensure the children are comfortable and can play and be active. Currently, 67% of girls feel that uniform prevents them from playing properly and 47% said that their uniform was uncomfortable.

In addition, only 17% of children actually felt that our uniform is smart.

At the working party we have been looking at different ways in which we can facilitate children being comfortable, warm, smart and provide a uniform that is cost effective. It's a very big job! I am very grateful to the team of parents who have given up their time to share their views and ideas and work at finding solutions. We have been looking at different options and compiling the pros and cons for each. Obviously this is a snapshot of our discussions. I would like to emphasise that whatever is decided, the new uniform will be phased in from September, but if you have current uniform that fits, your child can still wear this to get value out of it. The options the working party has come up with are:

- a. Wearing a smart sports kit (like the team kit)



Colours were discussed as our current kit is navy and sky blue. However, as children would wear tracksuit bottoms in the winter it was decided that black tracksuit bottoms are easier to source than navy ones. Purple is also a colour that isn't in the DEEP partnership and so we would be very individual at sports tournaments. Reception and key stage one children would wear a plain

purple school polo shirt, black skorts/shorts and tracksuit bottoms and trainers. They would also have a purple sweatshirt with a logo. The sports kit pictured above would be something the children graduated to for key stage two as, sadly, it isn't available in sizes small enough for KS1 children.

Pros	Cons
Comfortable (stretchy, soft material)	Would we look like a sporty school?
Children feel proud when wearing school logo	Would black be too hot as a colour in the summer months? It is sports wear so maybe not?
Smart	R and KS1 will look different from KS2
Saves a minimum of 12 hours a year changing for PE as they are ready to go	
All the same	
Cheaper than buying a uniform and PE kit - lose the expense of buying school shoes and PE kit	
Easy for parents to buy/source (from school company) and know what the expectations are	
Doesn't need ironing	
Very quick to dry.	
More durable and better quality than current uniform	
Suit all sizes of child	

b. Rainbow jumpers

The inspiration for this option came from the Isle of Wight hoodies. When the children go to the Isle of Wight in year 6 we buy them all a hoodie and they get to choose the colours. They look fabulous, even though they are all in different colours. The uniform companies all provide around 22 different colours for the school sweatshirt. It would have to have the school logo on and would be bought from the uniform provider, but the idea was that children and parents could choose which colour. The children would wear black 'sporty' bottoms (skort, short, tracksuits) to facilitate being active as well as comfortable.

Pros	Cons
Comfortable (stretchy, soft material)	Might not look as smart
Children feel proud when wearing the school logo	Children might choose same colours and create mini gangs!
Smart - all the same style of jumper with a logo	Would still require a PE kit (cost and 12 hours wasted changing per year)
Allows children to be more individual, show their personality off and have a bit of choice and freedom.	Choosing a polo shirt colour to match all options is tricky and may leave us with white (which the working party feels doesn't work well as they get so grubby)
Easy for parents to buy/source and know what the expectations are	Child could change their mind about liking the colour they have chosen and want to swap (too much choice/peer pressure?)
Suit all sizes of child	
R, KS1 and KS2 would look the same	

c. Non - uniform

You will notice that nearly 3/4 of all pupils surveyed would prefer to wear their own clothes to school every day if given the choice. There isn't a lot of robust data around the positive or negative impacts of uniform vs non-uniform, especially with regard to primary aged pupils. In an ideal world we would live in a society that didn't judge people by how they look, but for the content of their character. What better way to start than with our young people? At the working party we discussed the need for a code of conduct...for example the 3cs - clean, comfortable and covered up!

Pros	Cons
It allows the children to have their own individual style. Clothing is considered as one of the means of building an identity.	Possible perceived stress for both parents and children worrying over what to wear.
A study has shown children who wear uniforms had a lower self-perception and self-confidence score than those who didn't because uniforms don't fit all children in the same way, so rather than feeling the same, it can make them feel more different (fatter, taller, shorter, skinnier etc).	Uniform allows everyone to look the same and feel equal.
They will grow up in a culture where we can model being able to value and respect differences. We can embed a culture where children know they are judged more 'on the content of their character'.	Does a uniform create a sense of belonging - if so would this be lost? (Or can you belong to a school without wearing a uniform - is it more than just uniform?)
Children would learn to dress appropriately for activities and special occasions (not always the case when young people leave school having always worn a uniform).	The children won't look smart as they will all be very different. (only 17% of our pupils feel their uniform looks smart).
On PE days the children could come in 'active wear' so they are ready for PE and don't have to have a separate PE kit.	Uniform is convenient for parents - they know what is expected for children to wear, so non-uniform may take more time to think about.
Before school children don't wear a uniform (perhaps a pre-school or nursery top) but there doesn't seem to be huge issues with getting dressed in the morning.	There would be too much choice and getting ready in the mornings could be difficult for parents and children.
Children would be comfortable and able to play (due to the code of conduct influencing the choices they make).	Children not being so easy to recognise on school trips (although they wear coats on most trips which are all different - also they wear non-uniform for a week in the Isle of Wight and it doesn't cause a problem).
Children would get more use out of the clothes that they have anyway.	
Buying general clothes can be cheaper than buying school uniform.	

When children are restricted to wearing uniforms in school, they are denied the opportunity to make decisions for themselves.	
Some studies in America have shown bullying has increased following the introduction of uniforms.	Uniforms prevent bullying because everyone is the same.
Children have said they know what children's socio-economic status is regardless of uniform. Especially in such a small community like ours.	Uniforms can prevent children recognising socio-economic status.
In a 'Recruitment Today study' 61% of people looking for a new job in 2017 say they'd have a negative perception of any company that enforced a dress code.	Wearing uniform prepares children for the world of work.
42% of our children say their uniform is comfortable, they are divided but it does show that uniform isn't as comfortable as we may hope so it may be distracting during lessons. 47% of girls say uniform is uncomfortable. 61% of employees more productive when dress code is relaxed (Recruitment Today study')	Some people may feel children have better attitudes to work and can focus more on their learning when wearing a uniform (although there is no robust evidence to support this opinion).

We have decided that before we survey the school community and make a final decision we should trial a few of the options that won't have a cost implication for parents. As previously highlighted, almost 75% of children said they would like to wear non-uniform. Obviously, there are strong cases for and against and we feel to help the children and parents understand how this might work in real terms we ought to have a two week trial. This should be long enough for them to adjust and take away the 'novelty' factor. In addition, it should also mean that they don't run out of clothes and create too much additional washing for parents!

We would like the children to wear non-uniform from Tuesday April 23rd until Friday May 3rd. They may wear football kits but please ensure they are dressed appropriately and remember the 3cs - clean, comfortable and covered up. They should not wear expensive 'best' clothes because they will still be painting and playing outside in the dirt and bushes 'down the hill'.

The children should then wear uniform for the next two weeks.

For the last week of term (week beginning Monday May 20th culminating on sports day Friday May 24th) they should wear their PE kit or an appropriate equivalent if their one PE kit gets dirty and needs a wash (shorts, polo shirts, skorts or tracksuit bottoms) - no football kits please.

We will then survey parents, children, staff and governors and have a final working party meeting to draw it altogether before a final decision is made early in the last half term. This way we will be ready for September.

Best wishes

Claire

Claire Jackman
Headteacher