

## **English Curriculum Statement**

### **1. Curriculum Intent**

At Gearies Primary School, we believe that being literate and able to communicate effectively are fundamental life skills. Through the English curriculum, we help our children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate successfully through spoken and written language and equip them with the skills to become lifelong learners. We want children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

Literacy is at the heart of all children's learning. Literacy enables children to both communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving these order and meaning. Because literacy is central to children's intellectual, emotional and social development it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive.

The National Curriculum states that the purpose of study for English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

Our local community is very ethnically diverse. This stresses the importance of ensuring our English curriculum is accessible to all children irrespective of their background. Our teaching and learning opportunities provide many different ways for children to develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. These include:

- Opportunities to make verbal communication more visual
- Using drama and role play
- Developing opportunities for exploratory talk
- Incorporating opportunities for talk before writing
- Valuing home languages in school
- Using high quality texts as models of effective writing
- Opportunities to share the writing process, to include editing, with the teacher and peers
- Providing effective scaffolds for planning, writing and editing

Our core school values are realising the potential of every child; tolerance and respecting others and also providing an environment that will support effective learning. Through the teaching of English, these core values are upheld and are a part of weekly lessons.

English at Gearies supports a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes excitement and wonder for children through opportunities arising in other subjects.

The English curriculum ensures it is grounded in the school values and the ethos of Gearies. We help the children to acquire the knowledge, skills and application necessary to succeed.

### **2. How our vision is ambitious.**

English at Gearies has been designed to give all children the opportunity to make progress and achieve personal success. Our curriculum, programme of study and teaching units are reflective of the English Leaders' understanding of our community's needs and are adaptable to ensure total inclusivity for children of all backgrounds. This allows us at Gearies to give all children the cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

Our academic ambitions are high for all children. Short and long-term planning is cyclical during and across the Key Stages, allowing children to build upon prior knowledge, make links between concepts and commit their learning to memory.

### 3. **Curriculum enhancement**

At Gearies Primary School we pride ourselves on our ability to offer our children a broad and balanced curriculum. As part of our English curriculum, we offer our children creative opportunities to build on and celebrate their enjoyment for the subject. These include World Book Day, book clubs, the Book Fair, visits to the school library and National Poetry Week as well as knowledge and skills-based homework tasks.

In the Early Years, English is covered in a variety of different ways through written activities, continuous provision opportunities, as well as focus tasks and through the other core areas through play. Writing opportunities are explored daily within the indoor and outdoor environments, through situated play; adult and child initiated activities.

In Year 6, children take part in the *Accelerated Reader* programme, in addition to their usual reading lessons. This is hugely successful at further developing the children's love of reading, their vocabulary, their ability to recall information and the level at which they can answer a range of questions about the texts they have read. Children select texts that provide an appropriate level of challenge for them, and by taking online quizzes about the books, teachers monitor the children's individual reading practices and progress.

In addition, it is expected that cross-curricular links will contribute to pupils' effective learning in speaking, listening, reading and writing. This is reinforced through our delivery of the curriculum. Children will also benefit from daily story sessions.

### 4. **The Curriculum Implementation**

Our curriculum is organised to achieve the following expectations:

By the end of Year 1, a child should be able to write simple sentences independently, that include a capital letter at the beginning, a full stop at the end and finger spaces between words, be able to produce pieces of writing that communicate meaning by sequencing sentences; combining ideas into complete sentences. Children must be able to show an understanding of how words can be combined to make sentences. Varied and age appropriate adventurous vocabulary must be developing and is sometimes used appropriately. Children should begin to include some of the tricky words taught in their independent writing and should be able to read their sentences out loud to an adult. Children should be able to apply simple spelling rules. In Reading children should be recognising familiar words, and using a knowledge of phonemes and graphemes to decode unfamiliar words. They should be reading, discussing and enjoying a range of stories, poems and non-fiction texts to promote a curious mind. Children should express personal opinions about stories and listen to what others have to say.

By the end of Year 2, a child should be producing pieces of writing that clearly communicate meaning in a variety of different forms independently. Children show some awareness of their audience and maintaining form throughout a piece of writing. Children can develop their ideas in a sequence of varied sentence, applying the skills listed below. Vocabulary used is interesting, varied and appropriate with some word choices used to create interest. Children are able to apply simple spelling rules that have been taught. In Reading, children should be reading age appropriate texts, showing understanding that is generally accurate. They must be able to express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction. They should be able to use more than one strategy, such as phonic, graphic, syntactic and contextual, when reading new and unfamiliar words and establishing their meaning.

By the end of Year 3, a child should be producing pieces of writing that are often organised, imaginative and clear, whilst beginning to adapt them for a variety of audiences and purposes. Children should be sequencing their sentences to extend their ideas logically, usually using the

correct grammatical structure. The vocabulary used in their writing is chosen for variety and effect, developing a rich vocabulary over time. In Reading, children should be able to decode texts with increasing independence and will be able to confidently make simple inferences.

By the end of Year 4, a child should be producing a variety of writing which is lively and thoughtful. Children should be able to sustain their ideas and develop them in interesting ways, using appropriate organisational structures, for the purpose of the reader. Complex sentences used should be grammatically accurate to extend meaning. Vocabulary choices are often adventurous and words are used for effect, with spelling generally accurate. In Reading, children should be able to decode unfamiliar texts with increasing independence, will be able to confidently make more complex inferences and summarise the plot.

By the end of Year 5, a child should produce writing which is varied and interesting. Children should convey meaning clearly in a range of forms for different readers, using a wide range of styles, where appropriate. Their writing should be clearly structured with cohesion and links between paragraphs. Punctuation used accurately, should include; commas, apostrophes, inverted commas and semi-colons, in addition to all previously taught punctuation, and should be used to contribute to meaning. Children should be able to confidently justify their choices to their teacher. Their writing should include a variety of sentence lengths, structures and subjects providing clarity and emphasis. Vocabulary choices should be imaginative and words should be used precisely. In Reading, children should be able to analyse an author's choice of grammatical structures and begin to comment on their impacts. Children should also make justifiable inferences about texts across a range of forms.

By the end of Year 6, a child should be producing writing that engages and sustains the reader's interest, making appropriate adaptations for different forms. A range of sentences is used to create different effects and a range of punctuation is used correctly to clarify meaning. Vocabulary is varied to create different effects. In Reading, children should be able to analyse an author's choice of grammatical structures and confidently comment on their impacts. Children should also make justifiable inferences about texts across a range of forms and give clearly structured responses using evidence from the text.

This organisation of study enables the teaching at Gearies to be firmly embedded and create strong links across both the reading and writing domains, which is crucial to children's learning. Over time, learning is both developed and built upon to ensure all children achieve their own personal targets. By creating strong links across the Key Stages, the English Leaders have ensured children from all backgrounds can be catered for within lessons and are challenged appropriately. All teaching staff and inclusion teams have a common understanding of this expectation across Reading and Writing.

The time allocated for English is in line with recommendations for Key Stages One and Two. This amounts to 10 hours per week at both key stages (this amount is built up to within Year 1).

A comprehensive range of resources are available in school. Every class has a selection of reference books e.g. dictionaries, thesaurus etc. and a class book corner. The school's Mitchell library contains a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Reciprocal Reading resources are stored in our PPA room. Staff recommended reads are collected and displayed. Children are able to borrow these books from the library and the various book displays around the school.

To complement the children's learning in school, parents enter an agreement that they will support the development of their children's reading ability at home. To achieve this they are expected to read regularly at home with their child and document this within their Home Reading Record. Each child receives a piece of writing homework either each week or bi-weekly, dependent on the year group, which parents are expected to support.

## 5. The impact of the curriculum on our children

The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the art of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Post-Covid-19, the English Leaders have worked hard to maintain standards. Gaps within learning have been identified early with interventions and lesson planning tailored to close these missed areas of learning.

## 6. Our Strengths

Within Gearies, we pride ourselves on our ability to:

- Create passionate readers amongst our students.
- Promote a love of reading and writing.
- Deliver a Global Curriculum that ensures a wide range of cultures are represented in the texts we study.
- Develop language and vocabulary that challenges the children's understanding of the world.
- Develop reading and writing skills across the curriculum.
- Continue to achieve highly within phonics due to our passion, creativity and dedication to its effective implementation.

## 7. Our Programme of study

In the EYFS and KS1, our Programme of Study for phonics centers on the Jolly Phonics scheme, with the additional inclusion of Letters and Sounds to ensure a holistic approach. Children receive reading books based upon the grapheme and phoneme knowledge covered within lessons.

In Year Two and Key Stage Two, research-informed practices ensure reading domains are covered within both whole class study and small interventions. The principle of discussion and shared knowledge underpins the Gearies approach to reading.

The CLPE Core Units and the Opening Doors approach by Bob Cox are incorporated into the majority of our writing programme. Spelling, Grammar and punctuation is taught both directly and discreetly throughout the entire English programme to ensure children have a solid understanding of its impact on the written word. More detailed information on what is covered within the units can be found in the Year groups Topic Webs.

Handwriting teaching and learning uses the Letter Join, cursive resources.

## 8. Assessment Arrangements

Assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy. Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment and that pupils know what they need to do to achieve the next steps. Group or individual targets are set accordingly. Marking is in line with the school marking and feedback policy.

Analysis of assessment data is used to set targets. Class targets are derived from the school's key skills and are regularly reviewed. Children are informed of their own targets for learning and supported to make progress towards them. Children are also involved in setting their own steps to success and encouraged to review their progress towards these through self, peer and teacher assessment. The teacher keeps records that enable them to deliver an effective, creative and relevant curriculum that builds on prior attainment and meets the needs of pupils.

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the majority of children will have achieved "the Expected standard" or higher.

Children in Year One take the statutory Phonic Screening Check in June every year. Each child's results are passed onto the parents at the end of the year.

By the end of key stage one, the majority of children will be working "at the National Standard" or higher.

By the end of key stage two, the majority of pupils should be working "at the National Standard" or higher.

#### **9. Aspects of learning we are currently developing**

At Gearies, we are currently developing the following areas:

- Rebuild all children's love of reading for pleasure, post Covid-19.
- Create fully literate classrooms which promote the acquisition of language.
- To develop a fully-cohesive approach to the teaching of Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation.

#### **10. Impacts of recent professional developments of standards.**

English Leaders hold staff to account against the high standards of Gearies. This is supported, developed and embedded through regular training, both internal and external, to further raise standards. The English Leaders regularly research quality-assured practices to allow our provision to continually evolve. Lesson content and quality is regularly monitored against the school's outlined expectations.