

# GEARIES NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1

## Co-Head Message

Welcome to the Spring 1 Newsletter which marks the half-way point of the school year. Let's hope that Spring 2 brings us some better weather! This half term has been shorter, but has had just as many exciting things happening.

Movie nights have begun which, alongside being a fun time for the children who attend, are a great fundraiser for the school. There have been some great sporting events such as girls and boys football tournaments as well as the school team taking part in the local netball tournament.

This is in addition to the choir taking part in the very exciting Young Voices concert at the O2. Year 5 have had workshops from Prevent and Road Safety shows for Years 1, 5 & 6. As ever, please enjoy reading and catching up with all that has been taking place.

We would also like to wish Ramadan Mubarak to all members of our community who will be taking part in Ramadan, and we hope this special time brings peace, reflection and blessings to you and your families.

We hope that you have a very enjoyable February Half Term and we look forward to seeing you all on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February at the usual times.

Mr Lea and Mrs Dias

# SCHOOL DIARY

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR SPRING 2

### Performance Assemblies

Date	Class	
Thursday 5th March	6B at 9:00am in the Junior Hall	
Friday 6th March	1B at 9:10am in the Infant Hall	4B at 9:00am in the Junior Hall
Thursday 26th March	6D at 9:00am in the Junior Hall	
Friday 27th March	1A at 9:10am in the Infant Hall	3B at 9:00am in the Junior Hall

# SCHOOL DIARY

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR SPRING 2

### Other Key Dates for This Half Term

	Event	Date	Timings
Spring Term 2024	First day of Spring Term 2	Monday 23rd February	Usual timings
	WORLD BOOK DAY	Thursday 5th March	ALL DAY
	Book Fair after school	Thursday 5th March – Tuesday 10th March	Year group timetable TBC
	Parent Consultations	Thursday 12th March	3.45 to 5.45 pm
	Parent Consultations	Wednesday 18th March	3.45 to 5.45 pm
	Last Day of Spring 2 Term	Friday 27th March	Usual timings
	Spring Disco	Friday 24th April	TBC

Please note for the most recent dates, please check the calendar on the school website. This can be found on the 'About Us' section of the drop-down menus. Please click on the link below to take you straight there:

[Calendar | Gearies Primary School](#)

# EVENTS

## Nursery

The Nursery children have been busy enjoying a wide range of exciting learning activities. They explored different textures while playing with foam, listened carefully as their teacher read *The Gruffalo*, and used their creativity to make masks and shadow puppets. The children also had fun investigating snow and ice and practised their counting skills using snowmen, combining play with learning in a fun and meaningful way.



# EVENTS

## Reception

Reception have been reading the book *Here We Are* by Oliver Jeffers and have been learning all about Planet Earth. They created their own planets, explored which animals live on land and in the sea, and learned how to look after and protect our world.

In Maths, the children have also been developing their measuring skills by exploring mass using scales.



The smart brothers visited Gearies and performed a road safety show for Reception and Year 1. The show was a fun road safety adventure where loveable animal characters help pupils discover the basics of road safety in a captivating and interactive performance.

# EVENTS

## Year 1

This half term 1B have been looking at the story Rapunzel, we became witches and wizards for a morning and made our own potions to use to curse Rapunzel.



We have also been using beebots in computing to learn how to program a robot and make it move.



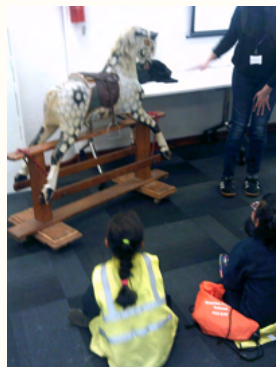
In Science we have been learning about shadows, how they are made and some scientific words such as opaque and transparent. Here are some shadows that we made ourselves.



# EVENTS

## Year 1

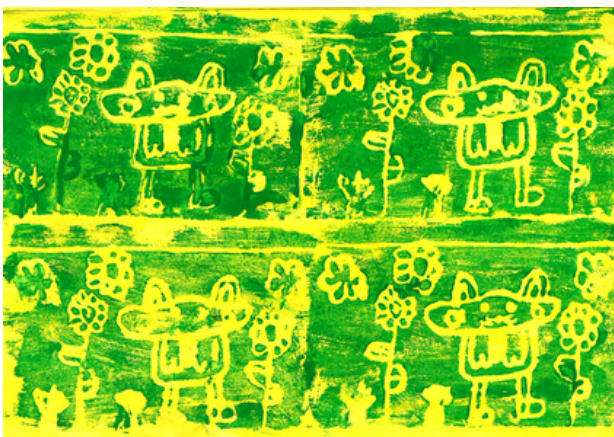
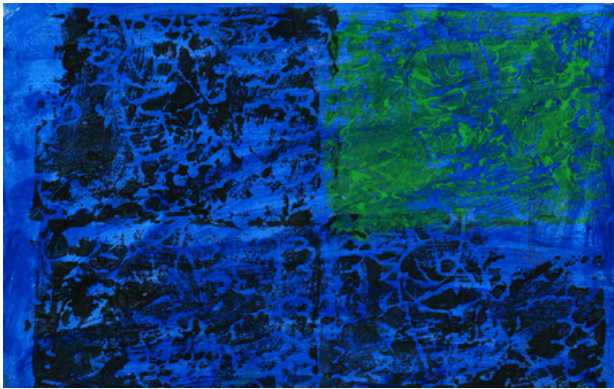
In Year 1 the children have been learning about old and new toys in History. The children visited the Redbridge Museum and had the opportunity to play with Victorian toys and looked around the Museum.



# EVENTS

## Year 2

Year 2 have been exploring the work of William Morris and using his designs as inspiration for their own artwork. They carefully created detailed patterns and colourful tile art, developing their creativity, attention to detail and understanding of repeating designs.



The children worked extremely hard throughout the topic and thoroughly enjoyed developing their skills and learning about this style of art.

# EVENTS

## Year 3

In DT lessons, the children designed and created their own healthy sandwiches by carefully selecting suitable ingredients and planning their designs. They learned how to use knives safely to cut and prepare food, thought about how different layers work together to build a balanced sandwich, and followed clear steps to assemble their final product. The children worked responsibly and hygienically throughout the process, developing both practical skills and confidence in food preparation.



In Maths, the children took part in an investigation where they worked collaboratively to explore different strategies and solve problems. They discussed their ideas, explained their reasoning, and tested possible solutions, helping to develop their confidence and mathematical thinking. Through teamwork and perseverance, the children strengthened their problem-solving and reasoning skills.



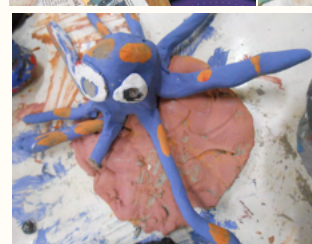
# EVENTS

## Year 4

Year 4 were lucky enough to take part in some African Drumming workshops run by renowned specialist Mouhammadou Sarr, in the first week of January. They had a fantastic time learning all about the different tones on the djembe drums and how to play some Senegalese rhythms.



Year 4 have enjoyed using clay in their art unit to create sculptures inspired by the work on Anthony Gormley.



The children carefully explored shape, texture and form to create thoughtful and expressive pieces.

# EVENTS

## Year 5

In DT lessons, the children completed detailed embroidery projects, developing their needlework skills through careful and patient practice. They followed a clear design brief, worked accurately with different stitches, and showed great focus and perseverance throughout the process. Their finished pieces reflected their creativity, attention to detail, and pride in producing high-quality work.



# EVENTS

## Year 6

Year 6 were treated to the character Skellig, who came to visit the school and did some roleplay questions. The children were asked to come up with some open-ended questions for him. Skellig also read a chapter from the book to them! The children were truly captivated and enthralled!



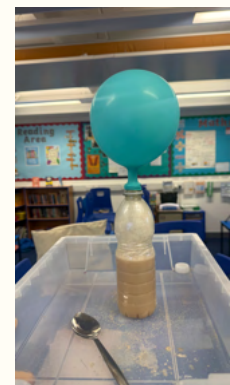
Year 6 pupils were delighted to meet David Almond and share their own writing and drawings inspired by his books. He praised their creativity and effort, making it a memorable and inspiring experience for everyone involved.



# EVENTS

## Year 6

In Year 6 the children undertook a yeast experiment to investigate if yeast is a living organism by observing how it consumes sugar and produces carbon dioxide (a gas) in warm water. By sealing a mixture of yeast, sugar, and warm water, in a bottle with a balloon on top, the students observed the balloon inflating as the yeast breathes.



On Thursday 5th February, Mr Nobeebaccus and Mr Mason took a selection of Year 5/6 boys to Frenford for a 7-a-side football league. Gearies were in a group with Aldersbrook, Uphall, Winston Way and Farnham Green and Our Lady of Lourdes. Four games were played and Gearies won all four, putting them top of the league after the first round of games! This was an incredible achievement despite the weather. We look forward to the next round of games in March. Well done!



Gearies Primary School	
DIVISION 1	
Schedule	Standings
Thursday 5 February	
Group A - DIVISION 1	Pitch 1 - Frenford Clubs
Winston Way Primary School	0
Gearies Primary School	1
Group A - DIVISION 1	Pitch 2 - Frenford Clubs
Gearies Primary School	2
Aldersbrook Primary School	1
Group A - DIVISION 1	Pitch 1 - Frenford Clubs
Gearies Primary School	2
Uphall Primary School	0
Group A - DIVISION 1	Pitch 1 - Frenford Clubs
Gearies Primary School	4
Winston Way Primary School	0

Gearies Primary School	
DIVISION 1	
Schedule	Standings
Group A	PLD PTS GD
1 Gearies Primary School	4 12 7
2 Aldersbrook Primary School	4 9 7
3 Uphall Primary School	4 6 -1
4 Farnham Green Primary School	4 3 -4
5 Winston Way Primary School	4 0 -9

# EVENTS

## Special Events

First, I would like to start off by saying a BIG THANK to our amazing talented Gearies School Choir. The Choir worked extremely hard learning a multitude of songs and medleys in preparation of the 30th anniversary performance of the Young Voices Concert.

On Wednesday 21st January, the children sang their hearts out at The O2 Arena with a choir consisting of 8890 children all performing together.

They were amazing. Well Done! We are very proud of you all.

We also received this email by YV2026:

“A big THANK YOU for being part of our YV26 concert at The O2. What an incredible way to celebrate our 30th anniversary year! The energy and commitment Gearies Primary School brought to the day is exactly what makes these concerts so special, and none of it would be possible without you”.



Performing on such a prestigious stage in front of a large audience was a remarkable achievement and one that they will remember for years to come.

# EVENTS

## Sporting Events

On Monday 26th January, we took a team to Glade Primary School to take part in the Boccia competition as part of the Local School Sports Network. The children had a great time competing against other local schools and finished an impressive 2nd overall.

They also had the opportunity to try New Age Kurling, which we may look to include in future competitions. This excellent performance has helped place Gearies joint 2nd in the LSSN League this year.



# EVENTS

## Sporting Events

Children across KS2, accompanied by Miss Smith and Mrs Ciobanu, had the opportunity to attend the 10-Pin Panathlon event on Thursday 22nd January at Namco Romford. This followed on from their success in last year's Panathlon Bowling Finals and gave the children the chance to take part in a sport outside the usual school curriculum. The team performed brilliantly and finished in an impressive fourth place, showing great teamwork and determination.

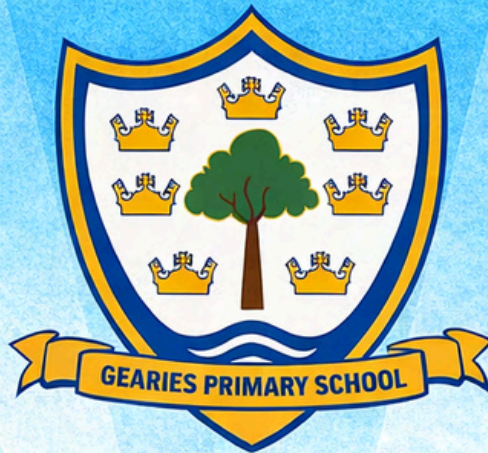


On Tuesday 13th January, seven girls from Years 5 and 6 attended the Redbridge Sports Taster Day as a reward for their hard work and effort in PE lessons. They had the opportunity to try a wide range of activities, including boxing, badminton, round net, rowing, boccia and New Age Kurling, many of which are not usually covered in the PE curriculum.

The girls especially enjoyed using the Concept 2 rowing machines and learning new boxing skills, and they were also able to share their views through pupil voice activities, ensuring their feedback on school sport is heard.



# Voices of our School Podcast



# Voices of OUR SCHOOL

Tune in to hear the views and voices of pupils, staff and parents at Gearies Primary!



**PODCAST**

Hosted by Mr. Alam

**WEEK BEGINNING 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY**

Each episode goes live on the Gearies Primary School website every Friday

# Online Safety – A generative AI guide

At The National College, our **WakeUpWednesday** guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and well-being, and digital change. Formed & endorsed by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, lists and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://www.thenationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GENERATIVE AI SAFETY

Generative AI tools – such as ChatGPT – are now commonly used by children. In fact, 3 in 4 pupils in the 2024 Annual Literacy Survey reported using generative AI, up from just 2 in 5 the previous year. While these tools can boost learning and creativity, they do raise concerns around misinformation, privacy and overuse. This guide explores the key risks and how to support safe use.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### MISINFORMATION AND ACCURACY



Generative AI can sometimes produce false or misleading content. Children – and even adults – may assume the information is accurate and trustworthy. This can affect learning and understanding of important topics. It's vital to teach children to critically assess all information, even when it comes from AI.

#### EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Because generative AI is trained on vast datasets from across the internet, there is a chance it may occasionally generate harmful or inappropriate content. Without supervision, children could encounter disturbing or unethical material. Active monitoring and clear usage boundaries can help reduce this risk.

#### PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

Some AI tools ask for personal details or store users' information. If privacy settings are not correctly configured, children's personal data could be exposed or misused. Teaching good digital hygiene and setting strong privacy controls is essential for protecting children online.



#### REDUCED CRITICAL THINKING



Relying too heavily on AI-generated responses may reduce children's willingness to think independently. If they consistently use AI to solve problems or complete tasks, it could impact their ability to reason, and you and form their own ideas. Encouraging thoughtful reflection is key.

#### DIGITAL DEPENDENCY



Regular use of generative AI can contribute to increased screen time and less real-world interaction. If left unmanaged, it may affect physical activity levels, sleep, and social development. Finding a healthy balance between on-line and off-line activities is important for wellbeing.

#### UNCLEAR ETHICAL BOUNDARIES



Children may not fully understand the ethical implications of using AI to complete homework or creative tasks. This can lead to dishonest and illegitimate or dishonest academic practices. Conversations around responsible use and academic honesty are crucial.

### IDEAS

## Advice for Parents & Educators

#### ESTABLISH CLEAR GUIDELINES

Set clear, age-appropriate rules for when and how generative AI can be used. Reinforce these regularly to help children develop a healthy, respectful and informed relationship with the technology.



#### ENCOURAGE CRITICAL EVALUATION

Help children to question the accuracy of AI-generated information and seek out additional trusted sources. This builds essential digital literacy skills and supports better decision-making.



#### PROMOTE ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Keep an eye on how the children in your care use AI tools. Check in regularly to ensure they're using them appropriately and be ready to step in if something doesn't feel right.



#### ENHANCE PRIVACY AWARENESS

Talk to children about the importance of keeping personal information private. Make sure privacy settings are in place and explain how data shared with AI tools could be used.



### Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Kawla, Deputy Headmaster and Director of Digital Strategy at Eton House School, has extensive expertise in digital safety, using leading, new generative AI in education. As an author and speaker on digital literacy and online safety for institutions such as The National College, Brendan guides parents and educators in creating safe digital learning environments.



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