

# **CURRICULUM POLICY**

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL CHILDREN AT THE SCHOOL INCLUDING THOSE IN THE EYFS.

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# CURRICULUM POLICY

## 1. Introduction

The curriculum is the entirety of planned activities that the school organises in order to promote learning and development for all pupils. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), but also other subjects (such as French, Spanish, Drama and Critical Thinking) as well as the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that the school provides in order to provide breadth in the children's education. The school offers full-time education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with Section 8 of the Education Act 1996) which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.

The curriculum also includes the 'hidden curriculum', which reflects what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave as well as developing their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. As part of the education offered, Gayhurst instils the following values in pupils:

- An enthusiasm and thirst for learning (curiosity) and appreciation that it is a continuous process
- Flexible and adaptable minds - to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and understanding in different contexts and be able to solve problems
- To show empathy, care and consideration for others as well as themselves and value each other as equals
- The emotional strength to cope with adversity through persistence, resilience and development of a growth mindset - responding positively to failure and setbacks
- Leadership and teamwork - to collaborate, inspire and support one another
- Independence - to be self-motivated and able to act on their own initiative
- Confidence and self-discipline.

The school has an extensive extra-curricular programme, which runs across the school day throughout the week. A range of enrichment days and weeks are organised throughout the year to bring many facets of learning under one focus and enhance the taught curriculum; these include day trips and residentials, visiting speakers and workshops, World Book Day celebrations, STEAM week, Art & Literature week and leavers' programmes for example. Such days involve co-operation by all taking part - staff and pupils alike. A variety of after school clubs and lunchtime activities are also on offer throughout the school.

Personal, Social, Health, Emotional and Economic (PSHEE) Education is a fundamental part of the curriculum which supports and reflects the school's vision, aim and ethos to provide a happy and caring environment, where children's pastoral needs, happiness and wellbeing are paramount. Through this curriculum, children learn important aspects of citizenship and respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). Their personal and social development is further enhanced through a programme of Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) appropriate to their age and maturity and as required by the statutory guidance 2020. Lessons, circle times, assemblies and good role models amongst staff and pupils all make valid contributions to equip children with the skills and knowledge to stay safe and healthy, to make good relationships and to understand the expectations of behaviour towards each other throughout the school. Coverage of topics such as e-safety, healthy life-style, citizenship, drugs awareness, and

the promotion of fundamental British Values provides pupils with more detailed awareness and understanding of key challenges that they may encounter as they grow up.

The overarching aims of the school's curriculum are that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and through this, they are given effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

In delivering the curriculum, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with EHC plans and English as an Additional Language. Additionally, for those in the EYFS who are below compulsory school age, provision is made to offer a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to their personal, social, emotional and physical development as well as their communication and language skills.

## 2. School Aims

Gayhurst aims to:

- 1 To provide all children with varied opportunities, enrichment and support to develop their academic, sporting, musical and creative interests and talents in a caring environment.
- 2 To focus on children's personal and social **development** alongside their academic, physical, social and mental development.
- 3 To create **confident** and independent children with an understanding that effort, perseverance and resilience contribute to their development.
- 4 To prepare all children for their successful transfer to secondary school. provide a caring, sensitive environment where moral and spiritual values are of paramount importance.

An overarching aim of the school's philosophy is to enrich learning and develop resilience, independence and confidence (ELDRIC) in all pupils.

The curriculum is the main component through which:

- the school's aims can be achieved
- pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding enhanced and
- their progress assessed.

This policy outlines the scope and intent of our curriculum, taking into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan or English as an Additional Language and the challenge and extension required by the more able.

Regular curriculum review is undertaken by Department Heads, Working Parties, the Senior Leadership Team, the Headmaster and the Governing Body. Any changes required will be implemented into the next academic cycle and the relevant resources required to support such changes will be provided to the applicable departments as requested through the annual budget submissions by Heads of Departments.

The school's curriculum contributes to the promotion of fundamental British values providing children with an appreciation and understanding of democracy, the rule of

law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, including those with none.

### 3. The Curriculum and Inclusion

The curriculum is designed to be accessed by all pupils who attend the school. In most instances the teacher is able to provide the resources and educational opportunities that meets the pupil's needs, within normal class organisation. Through all teaching learning opportunities are provided that ensure all pupils make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities and EAL and those with special gifts and talents.

If children have additional needs, the school does all it can to meet the individual's needs, and complies with the requirements set out in the SEN Code of Practice (Sept 2014). If a pupil displays signs of having additional needs, then his/her teacher makes an assessment of this need in consultation with the SENCO. Once alerted to the need, one-to-one tailored support is provided by the SEND department, who also offer specialist advice and strategies to the teachers for use in the classroom.

### 4. The Curriculum and High Ability

The *Challenge and Extension Policy* sets out the school's approach to ensuring challenge for our most able pupils, although it can be offered to all pupils in cognisance that the most able can be risk averse.

The school recognises that all its pupils have the right to a challenging and enriching curriculum and believe that this raises standards of achievement across the whole school. However, there are those children whose attainment or talent is exceptional and, within our personalised learning approach, believe that these pupils should be further supported.

These pupils could be showing outstanding talent or ability in the following areas:

- Physical ability
- Ability in expressive arts
- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic ability
- Creative ability
- Artistic ability

#### 4.1. Identification

The identification of all able, gifted and talented pupils is the responsibility of all teaching staff, but is overseen and led by Heads of Department.

Identification of able, gifted and talented pupils is done using the following information:

- Summative assessments (including CATS and PTE, PTM, termly assessments and Spring and Summer term school exams)
- Teacher assessments (analysis of tracking, *Learning Ladders*, assessment of classwork)
- General discussion amongst teachers

Where additional support and opportunities are offered, the school does not keep a formal gifted and talented register in recognition that children's ability is fluid rather than fixed. This allows the flexibility to offer suitable support to children as relevant at any given time.

## **5. Classwork**

Enrichment/extension work is provided by all teachers in all classes as part of normal differentiated provision and especially where setting is used. Working with others of like ability is important, but it is vital that high attaining pupils work with mixed ability groupings in order to develop their communication skills and knowledge sharing. This can be made possible by group work of varied nature. Differentiation should provide activities requiring higher order thinking skills. More able pupils need to be challenged and it is the role of the teacher to provide suitable challenge activities and opportunities. Pupils should not always be given more of the same, extension work should enable the more able to think in more lateral ways rather than advancing on to future years study.

## **6. Teaching and Learning**

The school uses a variety of teaching and learning styles in lessons. The principle aim is to develop pupil's knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers ensure that the pupils apply their knowledge and understanding when developing ideas and then evaluating them.

This is done through a mixture of whole-class teaching and individual or group activities. Within lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to work on their own or to collaborate with others, listening to other pupil's ideas and treating them with respect. They have the opportunity to use a wide range of materials and resources, including IT.

In extremes, the teachers may have to adapt the curriculum and how it is delivered. During the Coronavirus lockdown in 2020, for example, a Gayhurst@Home curriculum was developed to facilitate remote teaching using different technologies.

## **7. Key Skill Development**

### **7.1. Linguistic**

This area is concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. This skill is developed extensively across the curriculum and children are able to develop additional linguistic skills through the teaching of French and Spanish.

### **7.2. Mathematical**

This area helps pupils to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space and to develop their capacity to think logically and express themselves clearly. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics is developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, problem solving, exploration and discussion through both the maths curriculum and teaching of critical thinking skills.

### **7.3. Scientific**

This area is concerned with increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and with developing the skills associated with science as a process of enquiry involving observation, forming, hypothesizing, conducting practical experiments and recording their findings. Opportunities are presented through the

teaching of science, STEM week and use of the lovely school site as well as occasional visits to dedicated outdoor education centres.

#### **7.4. Technological**

Technological skills are primarily covered through our computing curriculum and the occasional use of tools and technology in art, design technology and science lessons, as well as during enrichment weeks linked to these subjects.

#### **7.5. Human and Social**

This area is concerned with people and their environment, and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions. Children develop knowledge and understanding in this area through their studies of Humanities subjects, which at Gayhurst include History, Geography and Religious Studies.

#### **7.6. Physical**

This area develops the pupils' physical control and co-ordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses, which also help them evaluate and improve their performance. Pupils develop these skills through our PE and games curriculum, where there is a significant focus on decision-making and understanding the basic principles of health and fitness. An extensive extra-curricular programme and outward bound focused residential trips add further valuable experiences and opportunities.

#### **7.7. Aesthetic and Creative**

This area is concerned with the process of making, composing and inventing which children predominantly achieve through the teaching of art, music and drama.

### **8. Organisation and Planning**

The curriculum is planned in three phases. A long-term plan is agreed for each key stage and this indicates what topics are to be taught in each term, and to which groups of pupils. This long-term plan is reviewed on an annual basis at the end of the Summer term.

Each subject has schemes of work through which are articulated the areas of study. The school uses the National Curriculum schemes of work to inform much of its medium-term planning but is selective in its interpretation.

The school's short-term plans are those that its teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. These are used to set out the learning objectives for each session, including those that are differentiated for differing abilities and needs, and to identify what resources and activities are going to be used in the lesson. As the lessons have been delivered, these plans feature space for the teacher to annotate their observations or strategies for future development. These observations are used to shape future planning to better meet the needs of the pupils.

### **9. The Early Years (Nursery and Reception)**

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum is planned carefully, so that there is coherent and full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum and Early Learning Goals. The school ensures that there is planned progression in all curriculum areas and this is based on children's interests and the continual evaluation and evolution of medium term plans.

The Early Years Foundation Stage, which underpins the curriculum in the Reception

classes, is distinct in its identity. The curriculum, by which is meant the learning and development undertaken by every child in this Stage of learning, is planned in accordance with the framework '[The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#)'.

Under the guiding theme of Learning and Development there are seven areas of learning and development:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All areas are of equal importance, inter-connected and supported by the provision of a wide range of educational programmes. The development of each child is recorded through the ongoing observation of their progress, and the completion and monitoring of achievements on assessment scales which provide an accurate and detailed insight into the progress made by each child.

The observations on each child occur in a variety of environments and learning situations to ensure that an accurate recording of individual attainment is made.

With a comprehensive view of the level of development for each child, an appropriate and challenging curriculum, based on and exceeding the requirements of the EYFS stage can be planned to ensure the needs of the individual can be met effectively.

The pupils in the Nursery gradually increase the number of sessions they attend so that by the time they reach Reception age they are ready for full time school. Nursery and Reception pupils receive Music and Games/PE lessons from specialist teachers. They also take part in Music and Drama performances.

Reception pupils are completely integrated into the Junior School and as with Year 1, receive Games/PE and Music lessons. The Foundation Stage curriculum is followed and all pupils are expected to reach the Early Learning Foundation Stage goals at the end of the Reception year.

## **10. The Junior School (Reception - Y2)**

In Junior School, pupils are taught by their class teachers for the majority of their subjects. The concentration is on English: reading, writing and speaking; Mathematics: tables, number work and practical investigation; investigative Science and projects. Every encouragement is given to help pupils read fluently. Geography, History, PSHEE and Religious Studies are all taught to broaden the child's awareness and understanding and to help them appreciate the complexities of the environment in which we live.

Art, Drama, Music and Spanish form an extension to the core subjects as well as introducing pupils to specialist practical and creative skills in their own right. There are regular performances of music and drama.

Interactive whiteboards are located in every classroom and are a valuable learning aid. All the pupils from Reception upwards use the Junior School IT area. PE and Games are incorporated into the weekly curriculum and from Reception onwards the pupils can



participate in a variety of after school clubs.

Outings are an important part of the whole school curriculum for all the year groups to reinforce the taught curriculum and offer enrichment opportunities.

## **11. The Senior School (Years 3-6)**

The pupils from the Junior school join the Senior School in Year 3. Lessons are arranged into a weekly timetable based on 9 periods of 35 minutes each day. In Years 3-4 they will encounter some specialist subject teaching and by Years 5 - 6 almost all subjects are taught by subject specialists. Throughout the school, the emphasis in the Sciences is on practical work and learning through investigation. Written and oral French is studied from Year 3 while Spanish is taught from Reception. Mathematics and English are setted subjects in Year 4 and streamed against one another in Years 5 and 6. Computing is a timetabled subject for all year groups as well as being an integral part of all class-based lessons throughout the Senior School through the use of iPads and Lenovo Notebooks, which are kept centrally and available for booking and use in different lessons.

Geography, History, Religious Studies, Critical Thinking, PSHEE, Art, Music, Games and PE are all incorporated into the weekly timetable ensuring that the children receive a broad education through which they are able to develop all the essential skills, knowledge and understanding detailed in this policy.

## **12. Special Needs**

Children identified as having a learning difficulty are supported in a variety of ways depending on the nature of their need. This involves working one to one with specialists, using specialist equipment and being given appropriate time to complete tasks. The school employs two dedicated SEND specialists who between them have responsibility for the EYFS, Junior and Senior sections, providing advice to teachers, coordinating individual education plans, liaising with parents as well as teaching individuals on a 1:1 basis and in small groups.

Further details are provided in the school's Learning Support Policy.

## **13. English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

The school's intake is very much a cosmopolitan mix, reflecting the surrounding area of a commuting town close to London. Whilst it is expected that children admitted to the school have a good working knowledge and understanding of the English language, enabling them to communicate and access the curriculum, for some English will be their second or additional language to that predominantly spoken at home.

For these children with English as an additional language, the school recognises its responsibility to offer support and suitable content so that they can access the curriculum and make progress appropriate to their needs.

Further details on what types of support are available to EAL students can be found in our EAL Policy.

## **14. Assessment and Reporting**

Gayhurst aims to keep parents well informed about their child's learning and progress. An overview of each year group's curriculum is provided by letter at the start of each term.

Feedback on progress is shared in a variety of written reports and face to face meetings:-

Parents meetings are organized twice yearly, for all year groups, to keep the parent body informed and to allow face-to-face dialogue between teachers and parents.

Assessment is an essential part of each curriculum area across the school. Regular assessments of pupils' work and progress assist staff to track the progress of individual pupils, establish their level of attainment and inform future planning. Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a key feature of the marking and feedback system employed by the teaching staff and also forms the basis on which written and oral reports are produced.

## **15. Assessment for Learning**

Teachers assess pupils' work in three phases. The short-term assessments that teachers make as part of every lesson help them to adjust their daily plans. They match these short-term assessments closely to the teaching objectives. Written or verbal feedback is given to help guide pupil's progress and individual targets may be set. Older children are encouraged to make judgments about how they can improve their own work.

Teachers use medium-term assessment to measure progress against the key objectives, and to help them plan for the next unit of work.

Teachers make long-term assessments through a programme of structured testing through most terms of the school year, and they use these to assess progress against school and national targets. With the help of these long-term assessments they are able to review targets for the next school year, and to summarise the progress of each child before reporting to the pupil's parents each term. Assessments and progress data are used to inform setting decisions to support the needs of the different needs of pupils in a year group accordingly.

## **16. The Role of the Head of Department**

Each subject has a lead teacher in the Senior school with a 'shadow head' in the Junior School. In brief, their role is to:

- provide expertise and up to date curriculum knowledge of the subject;
- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject;
- support and advise colleagues on issues related to the subject;
- monitor pupil's progress in that subject area;
- provide efficient resource management for the subject, including decisions on any core text books or schemes of work;
- have oversight of the schemes of work from EYFS to KS2
- be responsible for the department administration, which includes handbook, development plan, annual review and budget and ensure that it contains relevant information, including examples of work;
- liaise with the Junior School teacher who is the 'shadow head' of the subject;
- update the Head on strengths and weaknesses of the subject and the strategies for improvement.

It is the role of the HOD to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level and then cascade these to other staff. They review the way the subject is taught in the school, and plan for improvement. The development planning links

to whole-school strategic objectives. Each HOD reviews the curriculum plans for the subject and sees that progression is planned into schemes of work.

## **17. Monitoring and Review**

HODS, the Director of Studies and the Head monitor the way the subjects are taught throughout the school. They examine long-term and weekly planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. HODS also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

The curriculum and the delivery of it, are monitored through occasional learning walks, book audits, tracking of progress and lesson observations by HODs, SLT and governors.