

# English Curriculum Statement

## **Intent**

At Godwin Junior School we believe that a quality English curriculum should cultivate children's love of reading, writing and discussion. Our aim is for children to develop a secure knowledge base in English which follows a clear pathway of progression as they advance through the primary curriculum. A sound foundation in English skills is crucial to a high quality education and will give our children the tools they need to participate confidently within the school and wider society.

## **READING**

At Godwin Junior School we aim to inspire an appreciation of our rich and varied literary heritage through exposure to a range of high-quality, inclusive fiction and non-fiction texts. We believe that nurturing a love of reading is key; through reading widely and often, pupils acquire knowledge and build on what they already know, their imaginations and curiosity are piqued and they develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We understand the importance of children having access to reliable information (UNCRC Article 17). Therefore, it is our objective to create fluent, confident readers who can evaluate texts and discuss what they have read. Our intention is to immerse our children in outstanding, vocabulary-rich environments and teaching to support their comprehension of literature as well as their own use of language.

## **WRITING**

Writing is an integral part of our curriculum. It is our intention that pupils develop a clear understanding of the writing process in order to establish themselves as an author in their own right. We recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where children take pride in their writing and aspire to improve our pupils' grasp of written English, so that they can effectively communicate their thoughts, opinions and emotions (UNCRC Article 13). As part of our Learning Powers approach, we understand that children need to persevere with the writing process - planning and revising drafts in order that they write coherently and with clarity and grammatical accuracy. Through evaluating their own work - adapting their language and style to suit a range of contexts, purposes and audiences - we aim to support children to become competent, confident writers. We intend that pupils learn how to understand the relationships between words, word meaning, implied meaning and figurative language, whilst also ensuring that children are supported in their spelling strategies. In addition, we aim to ensure that pupils develop a fluent, legible and efficient handwriting style.

## **ORACY**

Oracy skills are foundational to human communication and we believe these are key to attainment in reading, writing and beyond. As such, oracy is promoted across the whole curriculum. Please see our Oracy Curriculum Statement for more details.

## **Implementation**

### **READING**

The ability to read is essential for independent learning, the world of work and many other aspects of everyday life. Reading is a fundamental life-skill that enables children to live fulfilled, successful and happy lives. In developing the skill of reading, children gain access to and derive pleasure from many rich and varied sources of literature. Therefore, reading comprehension and the joy of sharing books and stories across a range of genres with children, provides the foundation for much of the learning that takes place in our school.

**Taught Comprehension Sessions:** These take place as a distinct lesson for half an hour a day and involve a two-week teaching cycle. The first week involves whole-class, teacher guided reading of a challenging text. Working together, the teacher and pupils clarify unfamiliar vocabulary and explore techniques and language choices made by the author. Newly acquired vocabulary is added to the vocabulary board at the front of each room, accompanied by the definition. The focus throughout these sessions is on explicitly teaching the vocabulary and independent skills required for successful reading and comprehension. Children are also able to practise the Learning Power of Collaboration. In week two, children have opportunities to apply their improved comprehension skills autonomously. This involves written activities focussed on one skill (such as labelling or sequencing) at a time.

**Library Sessions:** Each class visits our well-stocked school library on a weekly basis. During these visits children can enjoy reading purely for pleasure and select new library books to take home. The variety of non-fiction books, together with a selection of children's newspapers and magazines is part of our commitment to UNCRC Article 17 (The right to information from a variety of media sources). We always hope to encourage the Learning Power of Curiosity.

**Class Reading Time:** These short, timetabled sessions give children the opportunity to read their class book along with the teacher. This builds an enjoyment of reading and provides a role model of what experienced readers sound like. It also ensures children are familiar with the process of reading longer books over time and can experience the feeling of accomplishment which comes with completing one.

**Phonics Sessions:** Children who progress from KS1 without a secure grasp of phonics will receive regular phonics intervention. Progress is monitored to ensure the sessions are correctly targeted and to allow pupils to move on from these sessions when ready. These focussed sessions help ensure all our pupils experience UNCRC Article 29 (education which develops their talents and abilities to the full).

**1:1 Reading:** Struggling readers, or those who are unable to read with an adult at home, are offered additional 1:1 reading time within the school day to ensure their progress.

## **WRITING**

Across each English unit of work, children will have the opportunity to create a range of longer and shorter pieces of writing, working across a range of genres. This may include writing plans, or focused activities which improve children's skill in a particular area of writing. Each task is given with the aim of ensuring that children make significant progress and have the skills and understanding needed to achieve an excellent final piece or outcome. Article 12 (respect for children's views) and Article 13 (freedom of expression) of the UNCRC underpin our determination to make every child a writer.

**Hourly English Lessons:** Each unit of work (with the exception of oral storytelling) is planned to be five weeks long and to include the following stages:

- *Text immersion* enables children to explore the features of a text and provides them with a clear understanding of the text type. It will also illustrate and exemplify the writing they will be expected to produce.

- *Skills lessons* focus on a particular aspect of writing which the children need to understand more fully or develop their skills within. Focused tasks set by the teacher give pupils the opportunity to practise these skills, leading to greater progress and a more successful outcome.
- *Application lessons* allow children to focus on creating a short part of the text in order to practise or develop that particular section.
- In *whole-text writing* children apply the skills they have been taught in order to create a completed text, whilst still receiving guidance and support from their teachers.
- The *assessment phase* gives pupils an opportunity to write independently and gives teachers a wealth of evidence about each child's progress. The independent texts are edited and peer assessed before being written into the child's Writing Portfolio book. This book is a collection of their best work and celebrates their achievements.

**Editing:** whether self-led, guided or carried out with a peer, this is planned in advance and takes place regularly during the skills, application, whole text and assessment stages of writing. Editing is a key area in which children can strengthen the Learning Powers of Evaluating, Embracing Mistakes and Perseverance.

**Modelled writing:** This takes place regularly and is a whole-class teaching technique. It involves the teacher writing; demonstrating the skills and thought-processes it takes to create the text which they expect the children to produce. The modelled writing must clearly demonstrate the features of the intended learning outcome and exemplify the success criteria.

**Guided Writing:** This occurs in a small, teacher-led group while most of the class undertake independent writing. This guided writing session provides the children with additional quality support and challenge so that they can improve and extend their writing. The shared writing this group produces is a key feature of our lessons as it means children are given a chance to input their ideas and their teacher can give them feedback about their suggestions, guiding them to make even greater improvements. This also informs the teacher about the children's understanding of the learning objective. In addition, it builds the Learning Power of Collaboration.

**Handwriting:** The importance of handwriting should not be under-estimated. It is vital that children can write quickly, comfortably and legibly as it is a skill needed in many curriculum areas and in adult life. Children's self-esteem is also heightened when they can take pride in their handwriting. Discrete handwriting sessions take place weekly, although teachers also maintain and demonstrate high expectations for handwriting and presentation in every lesson.

**Grammar and Punctuation:** In discrete grammar sessions, teachers unpick key grammatical concepts and give the children short, focussed tasks to allow them develop their understanding. Grammar and punctuation are also made explicit in modelled writing during main English lessons.

**Spellings:** Children receive a homework sheet once a term, outlining which spellings they will be tested on each week. Each set of spellings is based around a spelling rule. Teachers review the spellings for the next week with the class, pointing out key graphemes and ensuring children understand the meaning of each word.

## **ORACY**

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing; it is vital for developing vocabulary and grammar, as well as comprehension. Therefore, each unit of work in English begins with opportunities for children to develop their abilities and confidence in this area through drama, performance and presentations to a range of audiences. All year groups compose and perform poetry, with our annual school-wide Poetry Slam providing an audience. Additionally, they learn about the features of effective public speaking and apply this in our school-wide Raised Voices competition.

Additionally, we promote high-quality discussion in every lesson through regular use of paired discussion. Children are taught to structure debate and discussion through the use of the ABCs (agree, build and challenge).

## **Impact**

The curriculum and teaching methods employed at Godwin Junior School support our children to speak, read and write with fluency and confidence across a broad range of contexts and on a variety of subjects. Our commitment to library access and whole-class reading supports children to develop a genuine and long-lasting enjoyment of reading, while the design of our focussed Taught Comprehension sessions systematically increases pupils' vocabularies.

Our School Vision states that 'opening minds to develop responsible global citizens' is one of our highest aims. The five-week learning journeys which make up the vast majority of our English curriculum, combined with deep, intrinsic cross-curricular links, encourage pupils to develop a profound understanding of both the past and our current world (UNCRC Article 17: access to information). In writing and orally, our children know how to make their voices heard. They can express their ideas with clarity, passion and respect for others, assured that their views should be heard and have power (UNCRC Article 12: respect for children's views).

Quality teacher modelling provides clarity which allows Godwin pupils to be successful in any given text type. Regular developmental feedback and pupil conferencing also aid children in continuously building their writing skills, as does our commitment to the Learning Powers of Embracing Mistakes and Perseverance. Through consistent opportunities to edit and improve their written pieces, pupils become aware of the true, ongoing nature of successful writing and can strive to better theirs.