



*To become the very best version of yourself*

## **Curriculum Overview – November 2022**

*Our curriculum ensures learning is effective, exciting and above all, relevant to the needs of our children.*

**All pupils will secure firm foundations in English and Mathematics and this underpins a growing excellence in other subjects. Our child-led and knowledge-based curriculum offers a broad range of subjects from Early Years through to Key Stage 2 (KS2). We believe in bringing learning to life, both indoors and out, with an emphasis on engaging and purposeful learning.**

Shears Green Junior school aims to provide a curriculum that is engaging, balanced and relevant. While emphasis is placed on children learning core skills of English and Maths, we place great value on developing the 'whole child' and provide an engaging programme of study in all curriculum areas.

Our exciting School journey begins in Year 3. Transition from Shears Green Infant School (our main feeder school) to School is carefully planned for throughout the Summer term, ready for pupils to start Shears Green Junior School in September. Over the period of two terms, children have the opportunity of spending time getting to know their new teachers in both settings. Parents are invited to meet teachers at open evenings and picnics as well as receiving phone calls to talk about their children.

In KS2, children are treated to a daily diet of rigorous teaching, taking part in Pixl sessions; maths, reading and writing lessons every morning.

English skills are taught in daily English lessons. The focus is on the teaching of reading and writing with opportunities for children to listen and speak in many different situations across the curriculum. To make writing purposeful and interesting and develop and enhance opportunities to write and learn in different areas of the curriculum.

The enjoyment of books and a love of reading are fostered from the early stages of their education. The children have access to a range of books so that reading skills can progress. Children are given a weekly opportunity to visit the library with their class to choose books that engage them. In class, reading is taught primarily through the Whole Class Reading approach in which the class share a book or extract of text together and are supported by the teacher to improve their vocabulary and comprehension skills. Drama and role-play allow the children to explore their own feelings, develop speaking and listening skills and learn about the world around them. In Key stage 2, children study a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts, they use different genres for writing and are taught to draft and re-draft before producing their final piece of work. High expectations in correct spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence formation are emphasised.

Children are taught to value the importance of arithmetic in their mathematical development. Knowledge, understanding and skills to develop numeracy are taught in the daily maths lesson. Maths is used in a wide range of contexts to help children appreciate the purpose and relevance of mathematics in the real world. After focused teaching in each lesson, opportunities are provided for children to independently apply skills and all groups are provided with challenge.

In the afternoons, children access the wider curriculum through carefully planned subjects. In KS2, PE takes place during timetabled sessions with one session being taught by specialist coaches who work within school and the other by the class teacher. Music is taught to all classes by a specialist music teacher where children in Year 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn the recorder and those in Year 5 and 6 are taught to play the ukulele. Children are taught French by a specialist French teacher.



## AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

### Reading

Aims: The aim for children at Shears Green Junior School is to: Read easily, fluently and with good understanding; Develop the habit of reading for both pleasure and information;  
Acquire a wide vocabulary and understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading;  
Apply this knowledge and understanding to all areas of the curriculum.

All classes follow a high-quality text-based English curriculum, whereby they read and respond to a range of books (see Writing/ GPS Policy.) The expectation is that the majority of pupils will move through the programmes of study at broadly the same pace; however, where children demonstrate particular difficulties with an aspect of the English curriculum, it may be necessary to involve specialist support.

Early Reading: For children who did not pass their phonics screening, and cannot decode fluently, phonics is taught in **five** groups across Years 3 and 4, both in the hub and within phonics/ spelling sets (see phonics policy) using Read Write Inc. These children have access to Read Write Inc reading books appropriate to the sounds that they are learning and their level. Once the children reach Phase 3, they will also be encouraged to also have a reading for pleasure book of their choice and they will begin to use Reading Plus.

In addition, a National Tutoring Programme teacher works with a selection of Year 4 children- these children have access to the online version of the RWI books both in school and at home.

Whole Class Reading (WCR): All year groups participate in three WCR sessions per week. These sessions focus on teaching children the knowledge and skills needed to answer comprehension questions about a text, based on the eight content domains (2a-2h). Particular focus is given to retrieval, inference and vocabulary. It is an expectation that teachers will: read and discuss a text (including vocabulary); model skills such as skimming and scanning and how to answer questions associated with the particular aim for the session. Comprehension tasks may be based on the class novel or from an extract. All children will complete meaningful written tasks, related to the learning objective, on whiteboards, or in their books. PiXL therapies may be used to support WCR sessions, or be used as a basis for intervention groups. In order to catch some children up with their peers, intervention sessions are run to support and accelerate children's progress.

Reading Plus: In order to further develop reading stamina, speed, comprehension and vocabulary, all year groups have two Reading Plus sessions timetabled weekly, using the banks of iPads and Kindles. Adaptive weekly lessons are set for each child. Teachers are expected to monitor individual and class progress, present certificates and encourage children to complete tasks at home, in order to meet the expected grade for their age. This time also provides an opportunity for teachers/ teaching assistants to listen to children read and carry out specific interventions with children who are not able to access the lowest level of the program.

Reading for Pleasure: In order to enrich the children's joy of reading and to create an ethos whereby children can develop a love of reading and literature, including poetry, books are displayed in every



classroom. Children may borrow from the book selections and they are updated regularly with child and teacher book recommendations. All children visit the new school library weekly, where they have access to a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books.

### Home Reading:

All children are encouraged to select books from their classroom or the library to take home. It is the teachers' and teaching assistants' responsibility to ensure that the children are choosing books appropriate to both their ability and age. All children are expected to read at home for 20 minutes every night in order to support their progress in reading. In addition, they have access to Reading Plus (see above).

For some early readers, who need a more supportive and progressive reading for pleasure experience, Oxford Reading Tree books are available.

To support children with their reading and to ensure that all children are being heard read, teaching assistants- as well as parent helpers- have dedicated time to listen to readers. Vulnerable children are heard read daily in school and teachers have dedicated time to read with children in receipt of pupil premium.

### Writing

At Shears Green Junior School we believe that literature, language and communication are key life skills. Through the English curriculum we aim to help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively with the world at large, through spoken and written language. We provide children with a rich variety of both written, visual texts and film in varying genres to help children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety

High-quality texts are frequently read to the children, unpicked and discussed during lessons: the key themes, characters and story lines are used, alongside personal experiences or topical issues, as a stimulus for writing. Children are given opportunities to study examples of writing from a variety of genres, in order to help them to plan their own pieces; furthermore, techniques such as drama, collaborative planning, or first-hand experiences help children to develop their ideas in a creative way, so that children write with depth.

Independent sustained writing tasks take place every other week in Years 3, 4 and 5, but writing opportunities are more frequent during the summer term of Year 5 and in Year 6, as the children prepare for secondary school.

Teachers encourage children to extend their vocabulary. Practice is best where teachers demonstrate spoken language, as they model writing. Children are given the opportunity to justify their ideas, ask questions, negotiate, evaluate and select the appropriate register when conversing or writing. Working walls are used at the front of the class to act as a prompt or reminder for children and to aid children's learning. All classes have access to dictionaries and thesauri: children

should be explicitly taught how to use these so that they can effectively and efficiently access them. Emphasis is also given to teaching children how to proof-read, edit and read aloud their own work independently and collaboratively. Publishing opportunities are also given to the children.



## **Phonics**

At Shears Green Junior School we believe reading is at the heart of a child's education and journey through the primary phase. With this in mind, we have designed a high quality, robust and systematic approach to the teaching of phonics for those children are working at below age expected for reading and spelling. The core principles of our phonics programme stem from Read Write Inc Written by Ruth Miskin. Our high-quality phonics teaching helps children bridge the gaps ensuring accelerated progress in reading fluently, word recognition and spelling. This approach ensures that those struggling are targeted and supported as they continue on their reading and spelling journey. **Phonics in Year 3 is taught in groups 3-4 times a week in ability groups until they can read enough to pass the Year 1 Phonics Screening Test.** As a school we are working together in partnership with Shears Green Infant School to ensure continuity. Children may have gaps in their phonic knowledge and this will be addressed in the classroom with regular 1:1 interventions targeted to specific individuals.

The structure of all Phonic sessions are as follows:-

- Revisit/review of previously taught graphemes and words
- Introduction of new phoneme, including how to write it correctly
- Time to practice blending and segmenting with the new phoneme
- Revisit phonemes previously taught, segmenting and blending words as well as nonsense words.
- Time to practise writing the new phoneme in words read in the session.

In Year 3 we teach three sounds per week and common exceptions words through small group interventions. In addition to this, children are given the opportunity to partake in a Phonics Screen Check three times a year to track progress.

Some children may continue their phonics learning into Year 4 on a 1:1 basis using the RWI tutoring programme. This intervention is based on the individual needs and attainment of children.

Once the children are secure in the Phonic knowledge they move onto lessons where the children are taught Year 2 spelling patterns.

## **Home Readers**

Children are given the opportunity to continue their phonic learning at home. At Shears Green Juniors, we have invested in our reading books to ensure they are matched as closely as possible to each child's fluent reading ability to allowing them to consolidate and embed their phonic learning, develop comprehension skills and becoming more confident.

These books are provided in addition to books for pleasure from the classroom and our School Library. Children also have ample opportunity to develop their phonic knowledge during reading and writing lessons.

## **Maths**

At Shears Green Junior School, we aim to deliver a high-quality mathematics education, which provides a foundation for understanding the world, the ability to reason mathematically, an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics, and a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about the subject. Through our lessons, children become fluent in maths, able to reason mathematically and solve problems by applying their understanding of mathematics. The structure of the mathematics curriculum across school shows clear progression in line with age related expectations and provides opportunities to use the learning in other subject areas.



We start every lesson by focussing on arithmetic questions, in order to recap and reinforce arithmetic skills which have been taught in our weekly arithmetic test lessons. Classes also chant a times table. We believe that this plays an important role in the children becoming fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics and develops the children's ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately. 15 minutes a day, for 5 days a week, 39 weeks a year provides us with over 48 hours of arithmetic and times table practice across a year, which has had a huge impact on children's success in mathematics.

Maths lessons in all classes follow the same structure. The teacher introduces the concept, drawing attention/defining/modelling specific key mathematical vocabulary. The teacher models how to complete a calculation/question and then the class works through examples together, allowing the teacher to question and assess children's understanding. Pupils are then given time to answer questions independently. The teacher/TA live mark during the lesson and give in-the-moment feedback, to address. Intervention groups also take place during the lessons. The aim is to give extra support to the children who require it, ensuring all children reach a certain level of understanding by the end of the lesson. This prevents an achievement gap from forming. At the end of the lesson, the teacher provides whole class feedback and addresses any common misconceptions.

Maths lessons follow a similar structure to the White Rose Schemes of work and are supplemented with resources from, Rising Stars, White Rose Premium Resources, Classroom Secrets (based on the White Rose Schemes of work) and Maths Frame, as well as other appropriate resources, such as NRICH, Test Base, TT Rockstars and Twinkl.

TT Rockstars is used from Y3 to Y6. By the end of Y4, it is expected that children are fluent in all their times tables. A range of maths interventions are run in each year group, led by both teachers and TA. These interventions have a focus on arithmetic, times tables, reasoning and problem solving.

Our maths curriculum is high quality, well-structured and is planned to demonstrate progression. The components of the teaching sequences demonstrate good coverage of fluency, reasoning and problem solving. As a result, we are seeing a growth in confidence in all our learners, when presented with challenging questions. Children know that maths is a vital life skill that they will rely on in many areas of their daily life. Children have a positive view of maths and are proud of their achievements, due to learning in an environment where maths is promoted as being an exciting and enjoyable subject, in which they can investigate and ask questions. Children are confident to 'have a go' and choose the strategies they think are best suited to each problem. They know that it is reasonable to make mistakes because this can strengthen their learning.

## **Science**

At Shears Green, we aim to provide our children with a strong understanding of the world around them, whilst acquiring specific skills and knowledge to help them to think scientifically, to gain an understanding of scientific processes and an understanding of the uses and implications of Science, today and for the future. Throughout the programmes of study, the children will acquire and develop the key knowledge that has been identified within each unit and across each year group, as well as the application of scientific skills. We ensure that the Working Scientifically skills are built-on and developed throughout children's time at school so that they can apply their knowledge of science. We aim to do this through practical and exciting experiences, which encourage curiosity and foster learning. Children at Shears Green have the opportunity to observe the life cycles of caterpillars (yr5) first hand in their classrooms and the life cycle of tadpoles in our school pond, which is an invaluable resource available to all year groups, ensuring they have a real world setting which to base their investigations. Throughout the year, we are also lucky enough to have educational visitors: including the 'poo' nurses, 'dental' nurses and the local astrological society, who come into school to enhance children's learning. In addition to this, our Year 5s get to experience life under the stars, when they sleep on the school field for 'Cosmic Camp' and explore some planets of the solar system and the moon through high-powered telescopes. A real 'wow' moment! Finally, every year we take part in



British Science Week, this gives the opportunity to use their working scientifically skills in a different context and to celebrate and recognise the brilliant science that happens in school all year round.

### **Computing, Information and Communications Technology**

At Shears Green Junior School, we recognise the importance of technology in the ever-changing world that our children are growing up in. We aim to ensure that the children are equipped to thrive in a technological world. Therefore, we want to educate our pupils and model to them how we use technology positively, safely and responsibly.

Through developing computational thinking and creativity, the children can grow to become active participants in the digital world. Our aim is for children to become autonomous, independent users of computing technologies, gaining confidence and enjoyment from their activities. We offer our children a broad curriculum, encompassing: computer science (programming and understanding how digital systems work), information technology (using computer systems to store, retrieve and send information) and digital literacy (evaluating digital content and using technology safely and respectfully).

As a school, we model how technology can be utilised in a positive way through the Head teacher's weekly Pod Cast and Microsoft Sway newsletter - The Clipper. The children use online programs to support their learning in English and maths, making good use of: TT Rockstars, Reading Plus and Spelling Frame. We value the use of a range of devices to support the children's learning. Along with our dedicated Computing Suite, each year group has access to a class set of laptops or tablet devices which can be used to support the wider curriculum.

### **Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) including RSE**

At Shears Green Junior School we use JIGSAW to cover the three main strands that are embedded within PSHE (Physical, Social, Health and Economic Education): Relationships, Health and Living in the Wider World. Children progress yearly with their learning by following the overall subheadings:

- Being Me
- In My World
- Celebrating Difference
- Dreams and Goals
- Healthy Me
- Relationships
- Changing Me

In addition to the above, children support and learn about a number of charities such as Remembrance Day, Anti-Bullying Week and Black History Month to name but a few.

RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) is taught within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum, and other aspects are included in religious education (RE). The national curriculum for science includes subject content in related areas, such as the main external body parts, the human body as it grows from birth to old



age (including puberty) and reproduction in some plants and animals. Pupils also receive stand-alone sex education sessions delivered by experienced staff.

Relationships education focuses on teaching the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships including:

- Families and people who care for me
- Caring friendships
- Respectful relationships
- Online relationships
- Being safe
- Sex Education is taught in Upper Key stage 2, Year 6.

Please note that parents have a right to withdraw their child from Sex Education taught in Relationships but not that taught in Science:

Assemblies are delivered 4 times per week, covering elements of current topics in the news or celebrations. In addition, the teaching of the core British Values and School Rules outline how these are exemplified in our own school values.

### **Religious Education (RE)**

At Shears Green Junior School, we follow the Kent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. It will:

- include a study of the key beliefs and practices of religions and other world views, including those represented in Britain.
- provide opportunities to explore key religious concepts and common human questions of meaning, purpose and value.
- enable pupils to investigate how beliefs affect moral decisions and identity, exploring both diversity and shared human values.

These three areas together will nurture pupils' religious literacy and enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The Local Agreed Syllabus for RE requires all pupils to:

1. Investigate the beliefs and practices of religions and other world views, including:
  - Beliefs and authority: core beliefs and concepts; sources of authority including written traditions and leaders
  - Worship and spirituality: how individuals and communities express belief, commitment and emotion.
2. Investigate how religions and other worldviews address questions of meaning, purpose and value, including:
  - The nature of religion and belief and its key concepts
  - Ultimate questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth.
3. Investigate how religions and other worldviews influence morality, identity and diversity, including:
  - Moral decisions: teachings of religions and other world views on moral and ethical questions, evaluation, reflection and critical responses
  - Identity and diversity: diversity among and within religions and other world views; individual and community responses to difference and shared human values.



Teaching and learning is focused around developing pupils' understanding of Christianity and Islam, and non-religious perspectives extending to Judaism and Sikhism. It may also include aspects of other faiths or world views

## **History**

At Shears Green Junior School, children are taught aspects of British and World history including ancient civilisations. British history is taught chronologically: Stone age, Bronze & Iron age; the Roman impact on Britain; Anglo-Saxon invasion and settlement; Viking invasion and settlement; Tudors and World War II. We also teach an overview of ancient civilisations and study ancient Egypt, ancient Greece and the Maya in depth.

## **Geography Curriculum**

At Shears Green Junior school we aim to deliver a high quality Geographical curriculum which inspires pupils to have a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Our geography curriculum aims to equip pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth's key Physical and human processes.

Children extend their locational knowledge when they learn to locate and name European countries as well as North and South America countries, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities. In addition to this, they extend their locational knowledge to be able to name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, describing key geographical regions, human and physical characteristics, key topographical features and land-use patterns. This is further extended to identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, the Equator, the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, the Arctic and Antarctic Circle and the Greenwich Meridian and time zones.

They build on their understanding of place by comparing the geographical similarities and differences through studying the human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a European country (France) and a region within South America.

Human and physical geography knowledge is extended to allow children to develop an understanding of aspects of physical geography; investigating climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle and human geography; learning about types of settlement and land use, economic activity and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.

This enables them to have a deeper understanding of the interconnections between human and physical geography and change over time.

Children continue to develop geographical skills and fieldwork skills. They learn to use maps, atlases and globes and digital/computer mapping; eight-point compass directions; four and six-figure grid references, symbols and keys and the Ordnance Survey maps. They also use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in Gravesend and the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.





## **Subject Specialisms**

The following subjects are taught by specific teachers across the school:

**MFL:** At Shears Green Junior school we aim to deliver a high quality French curriculum which inspires pupils to have a curiosity and fascination about another country and the culture and language of another country.

The teaching enables pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It also provides opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read literature in the original language. Language teaching provides the foundation for learning further languages, equipping pupils to study and work in other countries in the future, should they wish. During Year 5 & 6, children will start to write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences, using the variety of grammatical structures that they have learnt.

Throughout the year, we are lucky enough to have groups of students, from a local secondary school, coming into school to teach French (and Spanish) to year 5 & 6 children. There is also an after school French club aimed at all year groups, running once a week, for children to enhance their language learning in French. At the end of the academic year, to coincide with Bastille Day celebrations in France, we hold a French Day. The children are encouraged to wear fancy dress and have the opportunity to sample a typical French breakfast and lunch. Each year group studies a French artist and also finds out about Bastille Day. The children also have the chance to play typical French games, such as Boules. This day is designed to enhance the children's learning of French culture and history.

**Art and DT:** a range of artists, styles and techniques are studied. In DT children are encouraged to practice a range of skills, respond to work and given time to improve. Both subjects are also celebrated through specific Art/DT weeks.

**Music:** In our Music lessons at Shears Green, we aim to provide children with a passion for music, in all its varying forms. Our pupils will be encouraged to celebrate cultural diversity and richness through a range of music. We want our pupils to experience the sheer joy of music, we want our children to be able to express their creativity and individuality through music as well as participating in music as a group activity.

Our curriculum is designed to engage all pupils and prepare them for continuing learning. In Music, we aim to develop our pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding by having a curriculum that is cumulative. We recognise that children need to have a basic knowledge of the key elements of music before beginning to learn to play an instrument. Both theoretical and practical skills will be developed in each year group as pupils progress through the school.

## **Experiences**

We truly believe in experiences for children in school. Year 3 go to Jeskyns park for a session with the park rangers; Year 4 spend a day taking part in adventurous activities at the Kent Scouts HQ at Lower Grange



Farm; Year 5 spend an evening camping on the school field, star gazing at Cosmic Camp; Year 6 spend a week team building on the Isle Of Wight at PGL.