

English Intent – Oct 2023

At Locks Heath Junior School it is our firm belief that English has a fundamental and empowering place in the education of our children. Our high-quality provision in English will teach pupils to read, speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Our English curriculum is underpinned with opportunities to develop our core learning values of independence, curiosity, perseverance, bravery, teamwork, imagination and reflection. Furthermore, safeguarding remains at the forefront of what we do and our every opportunity is taken to develop children's knowledge of how to keep themselves safe through the texts and subject matter covered.

Books are at the heart of all we do at Locks Heath Junior School and our children use books as a gateway into the past, different places, cultures and perspectives. Through reading in particular, pupils will have a chance to acquire knowledge and cultural capital and develop emotional, social and spiritual literacy. English lessons are taught discretely to ensure academic rigor but also fundamentally underpin our foundation projects to enrich, supplement and embed learning for our pupils.

English, at Locks Heath Junior School will provide all the skills of language essential to participating in the wider curriculum, accessing secondary education and engaging fully as a global citizen. Through our English curriculum, we promote high standards of language and literacy for all pupils by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

We aim 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 through high-quality, aspirational texts which build a rich and varied vocabulary and are introduced sequentially to develop skills and knowledge;
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, genuine purposes and audiences;
- are provided with the scaffolds and appropriate levels of challenge and their barriers to learning are removed;
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas;
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate with a focus on genuine, purposeful outcomes for units of learning.

Reading

At Locks Heath Junior School, we firmly believe that it is the right of every child to learn to read fluently and to use reading skills to access the wider curriculum by the end of the Primary Phase. We know that fluent readers have increased chances of future success in terms of academic achievement, career opportunities and physical and mental health. Quite simply, reading is the greatest gift we can give our children. In order for children to achieve this, we teach to develop all aspects of reading – decoding, fluency, comprehension and reading for pleasure.

During their time with us, children read a broad range of high-quality, engaging texts during dedicated guided reading lessons, through reading as a writer in our writing lessons and through the high-quality texts used to deliver our foundation projects in the wider curriculum. Our curriculum ensures that we progressively build reading skills in all our children through decoding, fluency, comprehension and reading for pleasure and we regularly assess progress so that texts are closely matched to children's reading levels so that they experience an appropriate level of challenge.

All our children enjoy dedicated time in our well-stocked library for at least an hour a week where they are able to borrow two books: one precisely matched to their reading level and an additional book chosen for interest and pleasure. During library visits, our experienced librarian supports children by assisting in the selection of books, reading stories aloud and sharing recommendations and peer reviews while the class teachers listen to individual readers to develop their skills.

We create a culture of reading for pleasure through a wide range of activities and events. Class teachers are role-models as readers through sharing book review recommendations, reading daily to their classes and providing book corners with appealing and relevant books. We hold events through the year which promote reading and encourage good reading habits in our children. For example, the school celebrates World Book Day and hosts a children's author annually and the 'Monster Must Read Challenge' promotes reading across the whole year and across a broad range of texts, culminating in the Mad Readers' Tea Party for all children who have successfully completed the challenge.

There is also an expectation that parents will continue to share books with children at home as much as possible in order to continue to develop fluency and talk around reading. To support this, the school hosts workshops and 'cosy reading evenings' to support parents and guardians and inform them how best to develop reading at home.

Phonics

When children join us who have not yet secured fluency in decoding, we will continue to teach reading through the systematic synthetic phonics scheme, Floppy's Phonics. This scheme is also used by our attached infant school (which constitutes the majority of our intake of children). This means children can seamlessly continue

their journey towards fluency without the increased cognitive load of grappling with unfamiliar materials. All children who continue to receive phonics lessons, are provided with phonically decodable texts at their current level (in school and to take home) to assist them in catching up with peers as quickly as possible.

Please see below for curriculum overviews for guided reading in each year group and for skills progression documents.

Writing

In writing at Locks Heath Junior School, we use a range of exciting, experiential hooks (such as exploring a dark, Egyptian Tomb or role-playing life in the Roman Army) and associated high-quality, ambitious texts to inspire the children to write for a wide range of genuine purposes. We believe that it is important for children to realise the power of the communication of their writing first-hand.

There are three parts to our learning journeys:

- 1) text immersion
- 2) capture sift and sort - specific skills
- 3) application - planning, editing, publishing

Through our learning journeys, we expose our children to rich vocabulary and focus on oracy skills through our dialogic talk approach. Through a progressive and sequential curriculum, our children learn the fundamental skills of grammar, punctuation, composition and effective vocabulary through our class texts in order for them to be able to apply their new skills in context. We write for a range of purposes and audiences through the year to give children a wide variety of genres and contexts and to equip them with the life-skills they will need when writing as adults.

Spelling is taught in three, discrete sessions across the week. Our spelling curriculum is closely linked to a phonics approach so it builds on the knowledge and skills children have acquired through their early reading lessons. Children are taught the 'science' of spelling through phonological, orthographic, morphological and etymological approaches. Newly acquired spelling knowledge is applied through our writing lessons.

Below you will find the overview of the different year groups and their chosen texts each half term.

Speaking and Listening

At Locks Heath Junior School, we recognise that mastering good oracy skills for a variety of audiences and purposes, is vital for functioning as a successful adult in wider society.

A dialogic approach to all our teaching and learning encourages pupils to voice their ideas in small group and class discussions. We firmly believe that sharing ideas, explaining concepts and challenging peers allows children to co-construct meaning and leads to deeper thinking and learning for all.

Staff model the use of higher-level vocabulary within their speech and expanding children's vocabulary is a key focus of our English curriculum. Subject specific vocabulary is embedded across the curriculum, through teacher modelling in context. Contextual learning through thematic projects helps children to build schema, understand new words and supports them in including these in their growing bank of vocabulary.

Guided Reading and writing sessions encourage pupils to explore unfamiliar vocabulary and expand their knowledge of words. Staff model correct grammar in speech and encourage children to reflect this in their use of spoken and written language. Children are given the chance to orally rehearse ideas for writing regularly.

Throughout our curriculum, there is a progression of oracy skills and opportunities to practise these is detailed in the document below.