THE GREAT LEIGHS CURRICULUM

What we want children to learn—and why it matters

Subject ambition and educational rationale | EYFS to Year 6 |

OUR CURRICULUM PROMISE

At Great Leighs, every subject is an entitlement. Our curriculum gives children powerful knowledge, the language needed to think and communicate, and repeated opportunities to work in the distinctive ways of each discipline. It is ambitious for every pupil and enriched by our locality, wider experiences, carefully chosen schemes and the habits developed through Building Learning Powers.

Knowledge, practice and possibility

Children need more than a list of topics. They learn substantive knowledge—the content of a subject—and disciplinary knowledge: how historians use evidence, how scientists test explanations, how artists refine ideas or how geographers conduct enquiries. Clear end points identify what should be remembered and applied. Enrichment then gives this learning context, purpose and possibility.

The Great Leighs learner

- Grow — connect new learning with secure foundations and broaden experience.
- Learn — remember important knowledge, use precise vocabulary and apply it purposefully.
- Persevere — respond constructively to challenge, feedback and productive difficulty.
- Succeed — participate confidently, make informed choices and recognise improvement.

How to use this document

Each subject statement answers four public-facing questions: what we want children to achieve; why the subject matters; what makes the Great Leighs experience distinctive; and what future possibilities the learning can open. Detailed progression, unit knowledge, vocabulary and end points remain in the individual subject curriculum documents.

Ambition and inclusion

The intended curriculum is for all pupils. Adaptive teaching, accessible resources, careful scaffolding and additional practice remove barriers without replacing subject ambition. Assessment helps teachers identify what pupils remember, understand and can apply so that support is precise and learning remains cumulative.

SUBJECT AMBITION

Early Years Foundation Stage | Reading

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

Early Years Foundation Stage

Belonging • communication • exploration • foundations

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want children to become confident communicators, curious explorers and increasingly independent learners. Through purposeful play, direct teaching, rich stories and responsive interaction, they build the language, knowledge, physical development and personal foundations needed for Year 1 and beyond. Children learn to notice, question, imagine, cooperate, persist and explain their thinking across all seven areas of learning.

Why is this subject important?

The Reception year establishes children's relationship with school and with themselves as learners. Secure language, positive relationships, self-regulation, physical development, early literacy and mathematical understanding give children the tools to participate fully in later learning. A strong EYFS curriculum also helps adults identify and address barriers early.

The Great Leighs experience

At Great Leighs, provision begins in Reception because the school does not have a nursery. Reading and talk sit at the heart of the curriculum. Carefully planned continuous provision, adult-led learning, outdoor exploration and Building Learning Power habits help children connect experiences, revisit important knowledge and grow in confidence. Phonics begins systematically through Twinkl Phonics.

We are nurturing confident communicators, imaginative creators, caring friends, determined problem-solvers and joyful lifelong learners.

Reading

Decoding • fluency • comprehension • reading for pleasure

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want every pupil to read accurately, fluently and with understanding. Pupils develop secure word reading, an extensive vocabulary and the ability to retrieve, infer, summarise, compare and evaluate. They learn to support interpretations with evidence, encounter a wide range of authors, genres and viewpoints, and form a positive reading identity that extends beyond school.

Why is this subject important?

Reading provides access to the whole curriculum and to lives, places and ideas beyond pupils' immediate experience. It supports language, imagination, empathy, knowledge and independent learning. Becoming a confident reader enables children to make informed choices and participate fully in society.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs teaches early reading through Twinkl Phonics and fully decodable Rhino Readers. As decoding becomes secure, teaching increasingly develops fluency and comprehension through rich fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Teachers read aloud, teach vocabulary explicitly and create opportunities for book talk, research and reading for pleasure. Assessment identifies precise next steps without narrowing the experience of reading.

We are nurturing discerning readers, researchers, storytellers, critics, librarians, journalists and thoughtful citizens.

SUBJECT AMBITION

Writing | Phonics

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

Writing

Purpose • audience • composition • transcription • authorial choice

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to communicate ideas clearly, accurately and creatively for different audiences and purposes. They learn to generate and organise ideas, select vocabulary and sentence structures, control grammar and punctuation, spell and present accurately, and improve work through purposeful revision, editing and proofreading. By Year 6, pupils should make increasingly independent authorial choices and sustain a coherent voice.

Why is this subject important?

Writing enables children to explain, imagine, persuade, record, reflect and participate. It strengthens thinking because writers must select, organise and connect ideas. Confident writing supports achievement across subjects and gives pupils a durable means of personal expression and public communication.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs writing sequences use high-quality texts, meaningful experiences and curriculum knowledge as purposeful stimuli. Spoken rehearsal, modelling and shared construction make expert choices visible. Clear half-term end points ensure that grammar, spelling and transcription serve composition rather than becoming isolated exercises. Pupils plan, draft, revise, edit, proofread and publish with increasing independence.

We are nurturing authors, poets, communicators, journalists, playwrights, advocates and children who know their words have power.

Phonics

Sounds • graphemes • blending • segmenting • fluency

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to master the alphabetic code and use it automatically when reading and spelling. Children learn grapheme-phoneme correspondences in a cumulative sequence, blend through whole words, segment spoken words for spelling, read common exception words and reread successfully until accuracy develops into fluency.

Why is this subject important?

Secure phonics gives children an efficient route into independent reading. It reduces reliance on guessing, allows pupils to tackle unfamiliar words and creates the cognitive space needed for comprehension. Early success also builds confidence and protects pupils from difficulties becoming entrenched.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs follows Twinkl Phonics with fidelity from Reception Level 2 through Year 2 Level 6. Daily teaching follows a consistent revisit, teach, practise and apply structure. Rhino Readers are matched to the code pupils have securely learned. Assessment triggers prompt, aligned catch-up—including beyond KS1—while pupils continue to access rich language and age-appropriate comprehension.

We are nurturing accurate, fluent and confident readers who can unlock every other area of learning.

SUBJECT AMBITION

Mathematics | Science

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

Mathematics

Fluency • reasoning • problem-solving • mathematical language

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to develop a deep, connected and adaptable understanding of mathematics. They become fluent with important facts and procedures, represent ideas in different ways, notice relationships, reason precisely and solve familiar and unfamiliar problems. Pupils learn to select efficient methods, justify conclusions and recognise when mathematics can illuminate a real situation.

Why is this subject important?

Mathematics helps children recognise pattern, quantify the world, make decisions and solve problems logically. It is essential for everyday life and for understanding science, technology, finance and data. Mathematical reasoning also teaches pupils to persevere, test ideas and value proof rather than guesswork.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs uses the White Rose progression to organise small, connected steps while retaining clear separate end points for every block. Concrete and pictorial representations support conceptual understanding before increasing abstraction. Teachers revisit prerequisite knowledge, teach precise vocabulary and expect every pupil to reason. Building Learning Power is visible when pupils notice, conjecture, adapt and persist.

We are nurturing mathematicians, engineers, economists, architects, data scientists, designers and confident everyday problem-solvers.

Science

Biology • chemistry • physics • working scientifically

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to understand important scientific ideas about living things, materials, forces, energy, Earth and space, and how these ideas connect. They learn to work scientifically by asking questions, observing, classifying, researching, predicting, planning tests, measuring, analysing patterns and evaluating conclusions. Pupils distinguish evidence from opinion and use accurate scientific language.

Why is this subject important?

Science helps children explain phenomena, make evidence-informed decisions and appreciate the natural and engineered world. It develops curiosity while showing that explanations must be tested and may change when better evidence appears. Scientific literacy is essential for understanding health, technology, sustainability and contemporary debate.

The Great Leighs experience

White Rose Science supports the Great Leighs progression, with separate essential knowledge and end points for each unit. Practical enquiry is purposeful and linked to the concept being learned rather than treated as an isolated activity. Teachers model fair comparison, careful measurement and responsible conclusions. Outdoor learning and wider curriculum connections help pupils see science in authentic contexts.

We are nurturing scientists, doctors, engineers, ecologists, technicians, researchers and evidence-informed citizens.

SUBJECT AMBITION

History | Geography

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

History

Chronology • evidence • change • causation • interpretation

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to build a secure chronological framework and a connected understanding of significant people, societies and events in Britain and the wider world. They learn to question sources, make inferences, compare accounts and explain cause, consequence, continuity, change and significance. Pupils understand that historical claims are constructed from evidence and can be interpreted differently.

Why is this subject important?

History helps children understand how the present has been shaped and why societies remember the past differently. It develops perspective, curiosity and disciplined scepticism. Encountering diverse experiences helps pupils challenge simplistic stories, recognise change and make better-informed judgements about contemporary life.

The Great Leighs experience

Kapow supports Great Leighs history units, but the school's progression and end points define the intended curriculum. Enquiry questions connect substantive knowledge with the work of historians. Timelines, retrieval and recurring concepts create coherence between units. Local history and carefully chosen sources connect national and global developments with places and experiences pupils can investigate meaningfully.

We are nurturing historians, archaeologists, curators, archivists, researchers, writers and informed citizens who question evidence.

Geography

Places • people • processes • environments • fieldwork

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to understand where places are, what they are like, how human and physical processes shape them and how they are interconnected. Pupils learn to use maps, photographs, data and fieldwork evidence; compare places at different scales; explain geographical patterns; and reach supported conclusions about environmental and social questions.

Why is this subject important?

Geography helps children make sense of their local area and the wider world. It develops curiosity about people, landscapes and cultures while revealing how choices in one place affect others. Geographical understanding prepares pupils to consider climate, resources, inequality and sustainability as responsible global citizens.

The Great Leighs experience

Kapow supports the Great Leighs sequence, enriched by local observation and fieldwork. Pupils investigate Great Leighs and studies such as Flatford Mill and the River Stour alongside contrasting regions and global processes. Outdoor learning, maps and first-hand data make geography tangible. End points require pupils to answer enquiries using evidence, not simply recall disconnected facts.

We are nurturing geographers, explorers, environmentalists, cartographers, planners, conservationists and responsible global citizens.

SUBJECT AMBITION

Religious Education | PSHE and RSHE

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

Religious Education

Religion • worldviews • belief • practice • meaning

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to gain accurate and respectful knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews and to understand how beliefs, texts, traditions and communities shape lived experience. They learn through the lenses of theology, philosophy and human and social science: interpreting sources, asking substantial questions, comparing viewpoints and reaching reasoned conclusions.

Why is this subject important?

RE helps children understand a diverse society, recognise both shared humanity and genuine difference, and discuss questions of meaning, truth, identity and ethics with intellectual care. It supports informed judgement, respectful disagreement and freedom from stereotypes.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs follows the Saffron Academy Trust RE curriculum, aligned with the Essex agreed syllabus. Official SAT enquiries provide coherent end points from EYFS to Year 6. Teaching represents diversity within as well as between worldviews and distinguishes accurate knowledge from generalisation. Discussion and reflection are rigorous, inclusive and never assume a pupil's personal belief.

We are nurturing theologians, philosophers, community leaders, researchers and respectful citizens able to live well with difference.

PSHE and RSHE

Relationships • health • wellbeing • citizenship • wider life

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to understand themselves, build healthy relationships, keep safe, manage emotions, respect boundaries and make informed choices. They learn about physical and mental health, families and friendships, growing and changing, rights and responsibilities, money, work and participation in community life. Pupils develop language for help-seeking and respectful disagreement.

Why is this subject important?

PSHE and RSHE equip children for the realities of life now as well as for adulthood. Knowledge about safety, health, relationships and consent can be protective. Reflection, empathy, risk assessment and decision-making help pupils become confident, responsible and compassionate members of their communities.

The Great Leighs experience

The 3D PSHE programme supports a sequenced Great Leighs curriculum with separate expectations for each unit. Teaching is age-appropriate, inclusive and grounded in statutory requirements. Carefully managed discussion, scenarios and retrieval help pupils apply knowledge rather than offer rehearsed slogans. Building Learning Power strengthens resilience, reflection, reciprocity and responsible independence.

We are nurturing empathetic friends, resilient individuals, responsible leaders, active citizens and young people who know how to seek help.

SUBJECT AMBITION

Computing and Online Safety | Design and Technology

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

Computing and Online Safety

Computer science • information technology • digital literacy • safety

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to understand how digital systems work, create purposeful digital outcomes and use technology safely, critically and responsibly. They learn to design algorithms, program, test and debug; organise and interpret data; create media; understand networks; and evaluate whether a digital solution meets its purpose. Online safety knowledge develops alongside technical capability.

Why is this subject important?

Computing enables children to move from passive consumption to informed creation. It develops logical thinking, creativity and problem-solving while preparing pupils to navigate information, privacy, relationships and risk in a changing digital world. Digital literacy is necessary for participation, but safe and ethical judgement is equally important.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs sequences computing and online safety as connected but explicit strands. Pupils repeatedly revisit programming, systems, data, media and responsible use with increasing complexity. They learn to pause, question, verify, protect information, communicate respectfully and report concerns. E-safety is reinforced across subjects and school life rather than confined to occasional lessons.

We are nurturing programmers, designers, analysts, digital creators, cyber-safety advocates and critical, responsible technology users.

Design and Technology

Research • design • make • test • evaluate • improve

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to design and make purposeful products for real or imagined users. They investigate existing products, identify needs, establish criteria, communicate ideas, select materials and components, work safely and evaluate outcomes through testing. Pupils develop technical knowledge of structures, mechanisms, textiles, electrical systems, food and nutrition.

Why is this subject important?

Design and technology brings knowledge into purposeful action. It teaches children to balance function, user needs, appearance, safety, cost and sustainability. Iterative design shows that testing and failure provide information, helping pupils become resourceful, precise and willing to improve an idea.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs projects—including structures, textiles, food and electrical products—follow the complete design, make and evaluate cycle. Corrected unit mapping ensures that the intended technical knowledge matches each outcome. Teachers protect genuine pupil decision-making while explicitly teaching safe tool use and accurate techniques. Enrichment and expert examples connect classroom design with the made world.

We are nurturing designers, engineers, architects, chefs, product developers, inventors and thoughtful makers.

SUBJECT AMBITION

Art and Design | Music

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

Art and Design

Artists • ideas • techniques • making • evaluation

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to develop an individual visual voice grounded in knowledge of artists, craft-makers, designers, media and techniques. They learn to observe carefully, investigate context, control line, colour, tone, texture, form and composition, develop ideas through sketchbooks, make resolved outcomes and explain how refinement changes effect.

Why is this subject important?

Art allows children to perceive, interpret and communicate aspects of experience that words alone cannot capture. It develops imagination, cultural knowledge, dexterity, judgement and confidence in ambiguity. Studying diverse artists helps pupils understand that art is shaped by time, place, identity and intention.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs art connects explicit technical progression with purposeful themes and local studies, including John Constable and Flatford Mill. Pupils compare artworks, experiment before committing to an outcome and use critique to improve rather than merely decorate. Workshops, three-dimensional work and varied media broaden entitlement. Building Learning Power supports close observation, risk-taking and reflective refinement.

We are nurturing artists, illustrators, photographers, animators, architects, curators, designers and perceptive visual thinkers.

Music

Perform • compose • listen • appraise • notation

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to sing and play with confidence, listen with attention, compose and improvise, understand notation and explain how musical elements create effect. They encounter music from different periods, traditions and genres, develop ensemble awareness and refine performances through rehearsal and feedback.

Why is this subject important?

Music develops listening, memory, coordination, creativity and emotional expression. Making music together teaches discipline, responsiveness and belonging. A broad musical curriculum enables pupils to participate in cultural life and appreciate forms of expression beyond those they already know.

The Great Leighs experience

Stave House builds secure notation and instrumental understanding, while Charanga and carefully selected thematic units broaden listening, composing and performance. Great Leighs pupils sing, rehearse and perform collaboratively in lessons and wider school events. Each genuine unit has its own knowledge and end point, so recurring performance opportunities apply rather than obscure the intended learning.

We are nurturing singers, instrumentalists, composers, producers, conductors, sound designers and attentive, confident audiences.

SUBJECT AMBITION

Physical Education | French

What children will achieve • why the learning matters • the Great Leighs experience

Physical Education

Movement • competence • teamwork • competition • healthy lives

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want pupils to move confidently and competently across games, gymnastics, dance, athletics, outdoor activity and swimming. They develop fundamental movement, control, balance, coordination, tactics, teamwork and the ability to evaluate performance. Pupils understand how sustained activity supports physical health and mental wellbeing.

Why is this subject important?

PE gives every child the knowledge, skills and confidence to lead an active life. It develops physical literacy, perseverance, self-regulation, cooperation and fair competition. Positive early experiences help pupils see activity as something they can enjoy and sustain, not only something for the naturally accomplished.

The Great Leighs experience

Great Leighs teaches two distinct PE units where the overview specifies them, with separate essential knowledge and end points. Lessons maximise purposeful movement while explicitly teaching technique, tactics, safety and evaluation. Inclusive adaptation allows all pupils to participate meaningfully. Competition, teamwork and enrichment help pupils apply skills while showing respect and resilience.

We are nurturing active citizens, athletes, dancers, coaches, outdoor leaders, health professionals and supportive team-mates.

French

Listening • speaking • reading • writing • culture

What do we want our children to achieve?

We want KS2 pupils to understand and communicate simple ideas in French with increasing independence. They develop pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and intercultural knowledge. Pupils retrieve vocabulary, notice language patterns, ask and answer questions and adapt known structures to express new meanings.

Why is this subject important?

Learning another language strengthens listening, memory, pattern recognition and confidence in communication. It helps children appreciate that languages reflect cultures and that there are different ways to express ideas. A positive primary experience establishes foundations and motivation for future language learning.

The Great Leighs experience

Rigolo supports the Great Leighs French sequence, with each topic treated as a genuine unit with its own essential knowledge and end point. Songs, stories, games, conversation, reading and short writing provide repeated meaningful practice. Teachers model accurate pronunciation and make grammar visible without allowing terminology to overwhelm communication. Cultural learning avoids stereotypes and encourages curiosity.

We are nurturing linguists, translators, travellers, diplomats, international collaborators and curious learners open to other cultures.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

The threads that make Great Leighs distinctive

Coherence • inclusion • enrichment • learning power • preparation for life

Every subject keeps its disciplinary identity

Connections enrich learning when they are genuine, but subjects are not reduced to a single topic. Pupils learn the distinctive questions, methods, evidence, language and standards of each discipline. This protects progression and helps children understand what it means to think as a reader, writer, mathematician, scientist, historian, geographer, artist, designer, musician, linguist, theologian, philosopher, programmer or athlete.

Golden threads across subjects

Vocabulary and communication

Pupils acquire precise subject language and learn to listen, explain, question, discuss and present with increasing confidence.

Remembering and connecting

Retrieval, revisiting and carefully sequenced examples help pupils retain knowledge and make increasingly complex connections.

Enquiry and evidence

Children learn that strong conclusions depend on suitable evidence, whether from a text, source, test, map, performance or evaluation.

Creativity and problem-solving

Pupils generate ideas, test possibilities, make informed choices and refine outcomes rather than simply reproduce a model.

Locality and the wider world

Great Leighs, Essex and local studies provide meaningful starting points that connect with contrasting places, cultures, periods and global questions.

Personal development

Building Learning Powers, enrichment and responsibility help pupils become resilient, resourceful, reflective and collaborative learners.

From vision to classroom

- This document explains the public ambition and educational value of each subject.
- One-page subject overviews show strands, vocabulary and broad progression.
- Full progression documents map substantive and disciplinary knowledge across year groups.
- Unit sections identify essential knowledge, teaching objectives, vocabulary and clear end points.
- Year-group overviews show when children encounter the curriculum and how subjects combine within each term.
- The Enrichment Strategy explains how visits, visitors, performance, fieldwork and wider opportunities deepen entitlement.

Our goal is not simply that children have covered a curriculum, but that they know more, can do more, recognise the value of different forms of knowledge and leave Great Leighs ready to continue learning.