

Gastrells

Community Primary School

PROSPECTUS



"a flying start to a life of learning"





Welcome to our School

We are a caring and friendly school for children aged 4 to 11 years. Maintained by Gloucestershire County Council, our school nestles just below Rodborough Common on an extremely attractive site. The present building was opened by Dick-King Smith in 1992 and we strongly believe that our surroundings enhance learning for everyone.

Here at Gastrells we are proud of our tradition of nurturing the individual by celebrating diversity of interest, experience and achievement. We also work hard to foster relationships both within school and the wider world and so create a community where everyone is valued and feels they belong.

Children follow the National Curriculum and we are particularly keen to provide breadth and balance across its full range of subjects. In addition, our children are encouraged to develop self-confidence; articulate feelings and ideas; be involved in the community and be active and creative. Indeed our outstanding provision for the arts is acknowledged by the award of ARTSMARK in 2006.

Our youngest children follow the Foundation Stage Curriculum in their Reception Year, and we were one of the first schools in the county to achieve the Quality Assurance Award for this provision - an award we still hold.

We hope you find our prospectus useful and if there is anything further you would like to know about our school then please do not hesitate to get in touch. We would be delighted if you came for a visit.

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Headteacher

The Aims of Gastrells Community Primary School

We aim to provide a friendly and supportive learning environment where an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance is nurtured. Every child is encouraged to achieve their best and we actively seek the involvement of parents and the local community in their learning.

We aim to:

- provide 'a flying start to a life of learning'
- promote an enthusiasm for learning and so develop lively minds
- enable children to gain a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills
- provide stimulating and intellectually challenging learning opportunities
- encourage independence, co-operation and collaboration
- develop an understanding and respect for the moral and cultural values and religious beliefs of all individuals
- develop an awareness of the changing world in which we live
- value and celebrate achievement

Keeping in touch

Close links between home and school are vital and we actively encourage an open door policy.

Before and after your child has been admitted to school there will be a number of opportunities for you to meet the class teacher. An extensive induction programme aims to introduce both you and your child to our school. This starts with an invitation to our Christmas drama productions and continues into the summer term with your child spending a series of sessions in school with their peers. Once your child starts school with us, you will receive outlines of the work planned for your child's class each term, and this may include details of the ways in which you can help or support your child's learning.

Class and Music Show Time assemblies are held each term and parents are invited to join us in a celebration of their child's work. This is an opportunity for children and adults to share some wonderful moments.

Termly Open Events are another very popular feature at Gastrells. This is an opportunity for parents, friends and the community to visit school and see the work the children are doing. These have included a World Awareness Week, a Design & Technology EXPO and a Take One Picture Project.

Every year, each class also stages a major drama production and we are fortunate to have staging and lighting to showcase their talents. Our youngest children

usually perform a Nativity and thereafter their confidence and talent are nurtured and developed throughout the school culminating in an outstanding Shakespeare performance in their final year.

Parent Consultation Evenings are held termly. In July you will also receive a written report.

Regular newsletters are sent home by pupil post.

A noticeboard for parents is situated on the outside wall, near to the infant cloakroom door.

Our website offers instant access to information outside school hours.

Our contact with you is not just confined to consultation about your own child. Many of you have a great deal to offer the school and enjoy giving your time. Parents, grandparents, friends and members of the local community are invited to contribute to school life by talking to children about specific interests and topics, listening to children read and even demonstrating and sharing particular skills and talents in art, craft, design & technology.





THE CURRICULUM

At Gastrells, our curriculum is based on a clear understanding of children's development. We acknowledge that children develop at different rates, not only physically, but also emotionally and mentally. The work we plan, therefore, ensures progression for all children, and is matched to the children's differing needs and abilities. The teaching and learning is clearly structured, is provided through a variety of approaches and involves parents through a sharing of expertise, time and resources. Within the Curriculum, emphasis is put on first hand experiences, including educational visits. Our cross-curricular approach ensures that all aspects of learning are woven together.

CORE SUBJECTS

English

To get the most out of school your child needs to master four basic skills in English – speaking, listening, reading and writing.

They will learn to express themselves clearly and creatively and by Year 6 take to the stage for a very polished Shakespeare production. They will learn to listen and discuss ideas; read for enjoyment and for a purpose and in addition to the curriculum the children will have reading buddies and play an active part in events such as Book Week. Our celebration of children's writing is plain to see all around the school as we strive to give real purpose to the tasks.





Mathematics

We all use maths every day to check our change at the shop, understand timetables and manage a household budget. Some people may go on to use these skills at an even higher level e.g. a brilliant scientist, using maths to understand the laws of the universe. We aim to lay the foundations that will make all of these activities possible.

We see the successful pupil in Mathematics as one who approaches work with confidence and enjoyment, who demonstrates sound mathematical knowledge and skills, has an understanding of mathematical concepts and the ability to use and apply skills and knowledge.

Science

Every child has a natural curiosity about the way the world works and we seek to ensure that learning science is enjoyable by awakening the children's interest and demonstrating the relevance of the subject in our everyday life. We use open-ended investigation to develop scientific skills, encourage logical thinking and problem-solving. Our science scheme allows for a cross-curricular approach.

We aim to equip our children not only with the knowledge that they will need to be discerning consumers and responsible and caring citizens, but also with the sense of self-worth, which results in the motivation to participate actively in the school and wider community.

The school has a rich environment to support the Science curriculum, including a pond, woodland, class gardens and extensive grass land. Our gardening club is very popular indeed and enhances our commitment to supporting 'Stroud in Bloom'.

Information and Communication Technology

Modern technology is rapidly changing the way we live and work and our children need to learn how to manage it all. They will learn how to use the internet and email, digital cameras and microscopes and a whole range of computer software. The older children have prepared Powerpoint presentations for Open Days and Governors meetings!

All classes have an interactive whiteboard and a mobile laptop trolley enables 16 wireless laptops to be used in classrooms. A further 14 computers are available in our ICT suite and library. This generous hardware provision enables us to plan a truly cross curricular approach to ICT.

Religious Education

At Gastrells, Religious Education is not concerned with nurturing children in a particular faith but rather with enabling them to understand their own beliefs and values and those of others.

We are required to teach Religious Education and we follow the Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus.

If you think it is best for your child, you can take them out of all or part of religious education lessons following discussion with the Headteacher.



HUMANITIES

History

History introduces children to an unfamiliar yet important world – the past. Piecing the picture of the past together is rather like detective work and the children use different kinds of evidence to find out about people's lives and events and how things have changed. Learning how to weigh up evidence and reach conclusions are just some of the skills children develop through studying the history of Britain and the wider world.

We aim to make history exciting and accessible to the children through a cross-curricular approach including the use of artefacts, hands on activities, drama, visits and visitors.

Geography

Children use geographical skills to find out about different places, physical and human features in the environment, changing environments and the ways in which people and the environment affect each other. They find out about an area in the UK and how it compares with other places in the world.

Our work in Geography is complemented by our annual World Awareness Week during which each class chooses a country to study and to explore across the curriculum. We welcome numerous visitors, provide ethnic dishes at break and lunch time culminating in an Open Day for parents, friends and the community.





THE ARTS

We are justly proud of our Silver Artsmark award for outstanding provision in the arts — art, music, drama and dance — and our children enjoy many exciting opportunities to explore these areas during their time at Gastrells.

Art & Design

The encouragement that we give our children to develop an awareness and appreciation of art and to acquire the necessary skills and techniques can, and we hope will, stay with them for life. We aim to promote the children's enjoyment of art and an ability to express themselves in a wide variety of media. In addition to classroom displays we also celebrate children's work in our Hall gallery. Participation in the National Gallery 'Take One Picture' project is another exciting way in which we use art to enhance learning across the curriculum. We are delighted to have a kiln in school enabling children to explore clay. A recent major project has been for each child to make their own tile for our class cooking area.

Music

Making music together helps children to explore and express their thoughts and feelings. We have a flourishing choir and school band and we take part in many local musical events, hosting some ourselves.

Children at Gastrells participate in singing, playing musical instruments, creative music and listening. They perform in class assemblies, music Show Time assemblies, plays and concerts as well as in lessons.

In Year 2 children are able to start learning to play the recorder. In the junior years they may learn other instruments, such as the violin, guitar, clarinet, flute, trombone and cornet.

All junior children take part in our Christmas Carol Concert, which is held in Rodborough Tabernacle. Other community events are enthusiastically supported, e.g. Stroud Schools Music Festival, Stroud Music Society and Stroud Goodwill Evening.





SPORT

Keeping fit is essential for a healthy lifestyle and children learn that P.E. is fun. We aim to provide a balance between the development of co-operative skills and teamwork, and the opportunity to participate in competition. Our Adventure Playground, obstacle course and large playing field ensure that physical activity is irresistible!

Physical Education

During lesson time children are taught gymnastics, dance, games, athletics and swimming. There are also opportunities for our older children to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities on a residential visit and to perform annually at the Stroud Dance Festival.

Sports Day takes the form of a 'Mini Olympics' involving all the children. They are placed in teams, and although the emphasis is on children improving their own performances, there is an overall winning team at the end of the event.

We provide a varied programme of extra curricular sporting activities, e.g. athletics, cross country, football, games, hockey, judo, netball, rounders and tag rugby. Our philosophy is open access and our clubs are open to boys and girls equally. We meet other schools through taking part in matches, tournaments and festivals.





DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design Technology lessons give children the opportunity to investigate how objects and products actually work and learn how to solve practical problems skilfully, creatively and with imagination.

Children have the opportunity to exhibit their class work at our annual Design Technology EXPO Open Evening. This is a hugely popular event with parents and the local community. Some recent visitor comments were:

'An inspiration to see such creativity within the school ... what talent.'

'Truly wonderful. Must have been such fun to make. Super smoothies too.'

In addition, Year 6 children always compete in the Knex Challenge Schools competition. Our 'Ready Steady Cook' club provides further opportunities for children to enjoy designing, making and tasting healthy food!

SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

The development of caring and sensitive relationships, and the fostering of children's self esteem are both central to the ethos of Gastrells School. The aims of our Sex Education teaching form an important aspect of our approach to the whole curriculum, and an emphasis is placed on the encouraging of respect for self and others and the development of a sense of personal responsibility. The delivery of Sex Education takes place through Science (as part of the National Curriculum) and also through Health Education in Years 5 and 6. Parents are invited to view the video and materials used in the lessons and to raise any queries or concerns.

Further detail is available in our Sex & Relationships Education policy, which, along with all school policies, is reviewed regularly.





Assessment

Children learn at different rates and have strengths in different subjects and our day to day assessments help inform future teaching and learning. This is done by talking to the children, observing them working and marking their work.

From time to time, however, more formal assessment is required. The Foundation Stage Profile is completed at the end of the Reception Year and the National Curriculum includes assessment at ages seven and eleven. At seven years this is a Teacher Assessment i.e. the teachers' judgement of each child's performance related to nationally agreed standards. At eleven years the Teacher Assessment is accompanied by national tests (SATs) in English, Maths and Science.

Homework

We give children a variety of homework tasks to support their learning. These are well planned and manageable, yet still allow children to have the time at home to relax and pursue their own interests. More details are available in our Homework policy and the class termly plans.

Extended Provision

We are extremely proud of our extended provision, with teachers, parents and outside agencies providing a wide variety of activities. These do vary but recently the children have been offered gardening, cookery, drawing, textiles, art & craft, games skills, netball, football, rounders, athletics, cross country running, judo and tag rugby. School teams compete in local school leagues and tournaments with great success.

Many children enjoy musical activities and participate in the school band, choir and recorder club. Children are able to learn the recorder, violin, clarinet, flute, guitar, cornet and trombone. Our children have many opportunities to make music in the local community, by being invited to sing for local events and taking part in school festivals.





Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs are valued equally with others, and their progress is recognised and celebrated. All difficulties, social, emotional, behavioural, physical, medical or academic, are dealt with sympathetically and with understanding. We aim to provide an atmosphere in which all children can achieve their best and Special Educational Needs provision is therefore seen as of great importance within the school.

All children at Gastrells are offered access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Children are grouped in different ways for different tasks and activities and in order to offer work appropriate to the abilities of all children, we provide a differentiated programme in all subjects. We have a good adult/pupil ratio at Gastrells which benefits all children, including those with SEN.

For further details please refer to our Special Educational Needs policy.

As a relatively new, well-designed school, Gastrells is ideal for the integration of both children and adults with physical disabilities. Access by wheelchair is possible from the front of the school via dropped kerbs and a stairlift, and the rear of the school, where all entrances have ramps. There is one disabled toilet.

More Able Children

The needs of the majority of our more able children are met through normal differentiated classroom provision; the opportunity to work at higher cognitive levels and access to appropriate enrichment activities e.g. music and writing workshops. The exceptionally able may need additional provision and/or an individually tailored programme of work. At Gastrells we work hard to ensure a positive environment for all our pupils. We value and recognise achievement in all areas of endeavour equally. Outstanding work in academic areas is given the same degree of regard as outstanding performance in sport, music or inter-personal skills. Working hard is seen as worth rewarding, and independent thinking is actively encouraged.





PASTORAL

Behaviour and Discipline

Our school rules are kept to a minimum, and have been created for the wellbeing and happiness of the children and staff at Gastrells. We explain to the children that the rules are there to help keep everyone safe and develop habits for a healthy life.

At the beginning of each school year teachers involve the children in the formulation of rules for the class and we use these rules in our Home-School Agreements. The rules are expressed in positive terms with an emphasis on desirable behaviour. The staff maintain a consistent and fair approach to behaviour management and we encourage children to reflect on their own learning and behaviour.

We recognise that there are times when some children find it difficult to conform to the expected standards of behavior and our Behaviour policy sets out the strategies and procedures that we follow in individual cases.

We aim to promote a caring environment where everyone takes responsibility for the welfare of others with an emphasis on praise and encouragement. Our positive approach to discipline includes a variety of rewards such as team points, certificates, stickers, badges, Merit and Head Teacher awards. These awards are then published in our weekly newsletter. Rewards are given not only for academic effort and achievement but also for contributions towards the school ethos, e.g. acts of kindness and helpfulness. Our Midday Staff are fully involved in our reward system too, with children receiving stickers and lucky stars.

We do not tolerate bullying or racism in any form, and we have developed a full Anti-Bullying policy detailing our approaches to dealing with incidents.





Circle Time

We use Circle time sessions regularly in class to develop children's ability to express their feelings and thoughts. Every child has a chance to speak and, more importantly, a chance to be listened to within a supportive environment. This also helps to develop interpersonal skills, strengthens relationships and enhances self-confidence and self-esteem.

The School Council

Representatives to the council are elected annually from each junior class. The council meets regularly under the guidance of a teacher. These meetings are planned to develop issues raised in class Circle time and also to initiate ideas for discussion in class sessions. It is important that our children have a voice and know that we are listening and value their ideas.

Peer Mediation

The children receive training in techniques of conflict resolution which develop their skills in dealing with a range of situations commonly encountered in school. This provides children with important life skills. The project also gives children the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Once trained, the children volunteer to be 'Mighty Mediators'. They are easily identifiable by their smart black and red caps and are available for consultation by children concerning those minor squabbles and disagreements that are an everyday part of community life. The children have been very carefully briefed on the sorts of situations they may help with and those that they may not; serious incidents are dealt with by members of staff.



Communication and Interaction Centre

This is a Centre for children with communication and interaction difficulties resulting in the inability to access the academic and social curriculum within their local mainstream setting. The Centre is staffed by a full time Teacher, a part time Speech and Language Therapist and a team of Teaching Assistants. Although requiring discrete education programmes children are integrated into the mainstream where appropriate.

Details of the admissions procedures for the Communication and Interaction Centre, which are the responsibility of the LA, can be obtained separately.

Friends of Gastrells

All parents and staff are members of the Friends of Gastrells (FOG), which is a registered charity that works to benefit and support our children. An elected Committee organises many fund-raising events. FOG usually supports the purchase of items that are beyond the basic provision made from the school's budget and in this way make a real contribution to enrich the school and its environment.

Gastrells and the Community

We encourage the children to take an interest in the local and wider community. We have links with local pre-school settings and make visits to the Rodborough Tabernacle and Stroud Subscription Rooms. At Christmas our Year 6 children usually deliver food hampers, that they have prepared themselves, to elderly members of the local community.

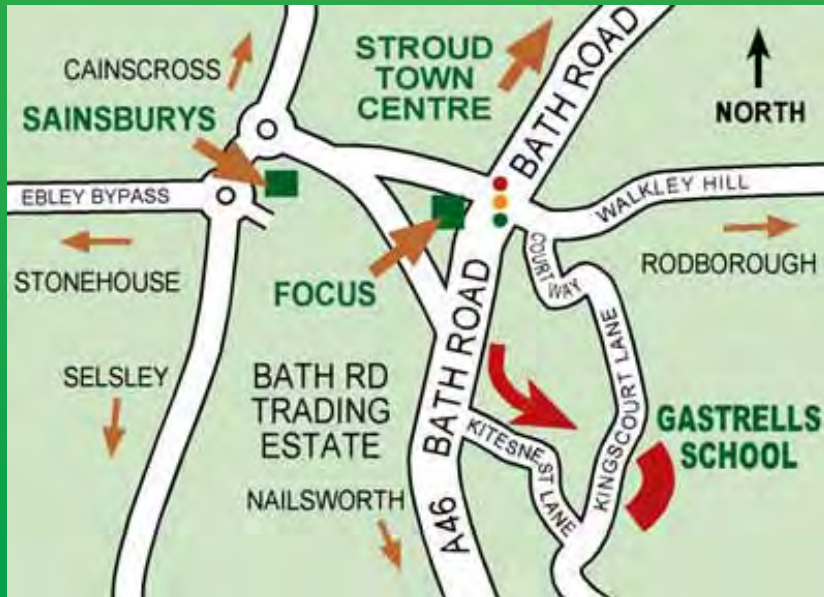
Members of the community are invited for school lunch and class drama productions.

We also make regular donations to charity, e.g. Cloud Nine, Meningitis Trust, Winston's Wish and Barnardos. The children often request that specific appeals are supported, such as Comic Relief, Children in Need and the Blue Peter Appeals.

In partnership with Bar-Bar, we provide after-school care at the Rosary Primary School. Jane Arnold Independent Nursery is situated on our site, providing nursery care for 2-4 year olds.



HOW TO FIND GASTRELLS



GASTRELLS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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