



**DARWEN  
ST JAMES**



**COMPUTING**

**Nurturing ambition  
through a living faith in  
computing at Darwen St  
James' is...**

# Nurture

At Darwen St James', we recognise that the use of computing is a valuable tool to develop and enhance the learning experiences of our pupils. Because technology is always emerging and evolving, we feel it is vital to teach the necessary skills to prepare children for their future. In our Early Years and Year 1 classes, children do not have standalone computing lessons; instead, they are nurtured through daily exposure to technology in many different forms, including remote control toys, digital cameras, Chromebooks, and interactive screens. This builds natural curiosity and confidence. We are also sensitive to the fact that not all children have access to technology at home. We actively tackle this digital divide by providing a computing-rich environment within school, alongside after-school computing clubs, ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive.

# Ambition

We are fully aware of the modern rise in children's screen time outside of school, which is why we align our practice directly with the Department for Education's screen time guidance. In line with national DfE guidelines for the early years, we strictly limit screen exposure, completely avoiding solo screen use or passive consumption. At our academy, technology is never used to fill time or as a passive distraction; it is treated strictly as an active, purposeful educational tool only, prioritising slow-paced, high-quality content that actively extends learning.

To address low standards historically in computer science, we have driven our ambition forward by introducing mandatory, additional computer science units across every single year group. This ensures children build strong coding, programming, and logical thinking skills from an early age. From Year 2 onwards, children show their ambition during standalone lessons where they have independent access to Chromebooks.

Through Purple Mash, children have individual logins so they can confidently showcase their ambition by continuing their coding and computing learning at home.

# Faith

We have chosen five whole-school values to live out through our actions and deeds: perseverance, courage, hope, love, and friendship. We explicitly teach our children that these Christian values apply online just as much as they do in person. Online safety education is not taught as a one-off topic; it is delivered dynamically across the whole year using Purple Mash and is explicitly linked to our PSHE curriculum. This continuous learning teaches children from Nursery all the way to Year 6 how to keep themselves safe while remaining respectful, kind, and honest to others when using digital platforms.

# Citizens

Through high-quality computing and a heavy emphasis on computer science, we aim to equip pupils with the practical life skills they will need to progress and succeed as positive citizens in a modern world. To ensure our classrooms are entirely focused on learning, our academy fully enforces the DfE mobile phone guidance, acting as a mobile phone-free environment by default to protect pupil focus, attention, and well-being.

From coding and computational thinking to sending emails and using shared documents, we prepare our children to be active participants in a digital society. Our children take real ownership of their environment; for example, Year 6 pupils are responsible for presenting the digital presentations used in collective worship, and all pupils are responsible for handling, respecting, and correctly recharging the school Chromebooks after use, developing into responsible, positive citizens of tomorrow.



# **Curriculum Intent, Implementation & Impact Statement**



# Intent

At Darwen St James' C of E Primary Academy, our central ambition is for pupils to become masters of technology rather than slaves to it. We recognise that technology is a pivotal part of modern life, and we have a duty to educate our pupils on how to utilise it positively, responsibly, and safely. We want our children to be creators rather than consumers. Guided by our Christian values, our knowledge-rich curriculum balances computing theory with creative, hands-on application to develop skilful computer scientists who can think computationally and creatively to understand and change the world.

Historically, standards in computer science have been low across the school. To explicitly combat this, we have reshaped our intent to place a significant, rigorous focus on computer science across all age groups, introducing additional computer science units into every year group to build deep programming and computational thinking skills. We aim to ensure that by Upper Key Stage 2, children possess the independence, resilience, and confidence to select the best digital tool to express their understanding and tackle complex challenges creatively.

Furthermore, we deliberately address the modern rise in screen time outside of school by ensuring that technology within our classrooms is strictly treated as an active educational tool only, completely avoiding passive consumption or time-filling screen use.

# Implementation

To ensure high standards and clear progression, our computing curriculum is structured creatively and adapted to the developmental stages of our children.

## Early Years and Year 1

In the Early Years and Year 1, we do not teach standalone computing lessons. Instead, pupils are exposed to technology in many different forms embedded within their daily learning environment and continuous provision. Children explore simple algorithms, coding, and basic device control through a wide variety of interactive resources, including remote control toys, Beebots, iPads, sound recorders, digital cameras, interactive screens, and Chromebooks. In line with DfE screen time guidelines for early years, we strictly limit screen exposure, completely avoiding solo screen use and prioritizing high-quality, slow-paced content that actively extends learning.

## Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

From Year 2 through to Year 6, computing is taught as a standalone subject via the progressive Purple Mash scheme of work, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the national curriculum across three core strands: computer science, information technology, and digital literacy. To address previous gaps, every year group benefits from newly introduced, additional computer science units focusing heavily on coding, programming, spreadsheets, and logical thinking. Lessons are practical, hands-on, and engaging, utilising class sets of Chromebooks to allow every child independent access to technology.

## Online Safety, PSHE, and Mobile Phone Policy

Safeguarding and computing go hand in hand. Rather than being taught as a single, isolated topic, online safety is delivered dynamically across the entire year using Purple Mash. It is explicitly linked with our PSHE curriculum, ensuring that children regularly learn about digital well-being, cyberbullying, data privacy, and online kindness. This is reinforced annually through National Safer Internet Day activities, specialised assemblies, and parent workshops. To protect pupil focus and mental health, the academy fully enforces DfE guidelines by acting as a mobile phone-free environment.

## Inclusive Adaptations for SEND

Thoughtful, intentional adaptations are built into our computing implementation across the four broad areas of need, overseen by the subject leader and the SENCo:

- **Cognition and Learning:** We break complex coding concepts and programming sequences down into small, highly structured steps with frequent repetition. Staff utilise unplugged computing activities, and visual coding blocks to make abstract computer science theories concrete before children move onto screens.
- **Communication and Interaction:** We utilise symbol-supported software, visual timetables, and communication aids like Widget and Clicker. Children are often paired intentionally for peer programming tasks, which encourages joint problem-solving, vocabulary acquisition, and rich oral language development during digital challenges.
- **Social, Emotional, and Mental Health:** We recognise that debugging code or facing technical errors can cause frustration. We foster a safe, resilient learning environment through growth mindset language, teaching children that errors are a natural, positive part of problem-solving. Purple Mash uses highly motivating, game-based learning to protect pupil well-being and build intrinsic confidence.
- **Sensory and Physical:** We accommodate learners by adjusting the physical and digital classroom environment. This includes utilising enlarged print, high-contrast screen displays, tactile keyboards, adaptive mice, or screen-based assistive technologies. In the early years, physical exploration with toys and physical devices builds the motor skills needed to interact with hardware comfortably.

# Impact

The impact of our computing curriculum is that children at Darwen St James' leave as digitally literate, highly capable computer scientists who respect the power and responsibility of technology. Through our heightened focus on computer science and additional programming units, children achieve greater fluency in algorithms, coding, and logical problem-solving. We measure the impact of our curriculum through several key methods, including analysing pupil voice through regular interviews, viewing children's digital work and portfolios saved on Purple Mash, monitoring lesson delivery, conducting learning walks, and tracking progress against national curriculum expectations.

Ultimately, the true impact is seen in our pupils' ability to navigate the online world safely, apply digital skills across other subjects with pride, respect technology as a tool for active learning rather than passive distraction, and flourish as positive, resilient citizens in a modern digital society.