



Nurturing **Ambition Through a Living Faith**

English Policy

Mission Statement

Nurturing ambition through a living faith.

Vision

Our Academy delivers a purposeful curriculum through its living Christian faith. We nurture ambition in all our learners in order for them to become positive citizens of tomorrow.

Bible

‘Let us not love with words or speech alone but with actions and truth.’ 1 John 3:18

Aims and Objectives

The study of English develops children's abilities to listen, speak, read, and write for a wide range of purposes, using language to learn and communicate ideas, views, and feelings. It enables children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively as they become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry, and drama, as well as non-fiction and media texts. Children gain an understanding of how language works by exploring its patterns, structures, and origins.

The aims of English at Darwen St James' are:

- To enable children to speak clearly, audibly, and adapt their speech across a range of situations and audiences.
- To encourage attentive listening and the ability to reflect on and evaluate their own and others' contributions through drama, discussion, and debate.
- To foster fluent, confident, and independent readers who engage deeply with vocabulary, inference, and challenging texts for both learning and pleasure.
- To instil a love of writing, enabling children to write accurately, meaningfully, and adaptively across narrative and non-fiction genres.
- To embed effective planning, drafting, proofreading, and editing skills across the curriculum.
- To promote high standards of presentation, legibility, and handwriting across all subjects.

Teaching and Learning Framework: Literacy Counts

At Darwen St James', we adopt the high-quality, text-based curriculum programmes from **Literacy Counts**: *Ready Steady Read*, *Ready Steady Write*, and *Ready Steady Spell*. This ensures a consistent, progressive, and ambitious approach to English across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Mixed-ability classes are taught using a scaffolded approach that meets individual needs. Working walls are maintained in every classroom to display model texts, rich vocabulary, sentence frameworks, and cumulative writing toolkits that encourage independent learning.

Writing: Ready Steady Write

Writing is taught through Ready Steady Write, exposing children to high-quality literature, rich tier-2/3 vocabulary, and contextualised grammar instruction. Each unit follows a clear, progressive cycle:

1. **Re-read and Immersion:** Children immerse themselves in the vehicle text through reading, drama, speaking and listening, and vocabulary exploration.
2. **Analyse:** Pupils deconstruct model texts (WAGOLLS), analysing structure, language features, and grammatical toolkits.
3. **Plan:** Children construct structured plans using shared frameworks and sentence stems.
4. **Draft, Edit & Present:** Teachers model writing explicitly. Children draft their work, practise proofreading and editing for punctuation, spelling, and clarity, and publish their final outcomes.

Spelling: Ready Steady Spell

Spelling is explicitly taught using the Ready Steady Spell programme. This systematically embeds national curriculum spelling rules, morphology, and high-frequency words through daily, interactive micro-lessons and contextual practice. Weekly spelling patterns are reinforced both in class and through home learning.

Reading and Phonics

Systematic Synthetic Phonics: Bug Club Phonics

Phonics is taught systematically from EYFS through Key Stage 1 using **Bug Club Phonics**, ensuring pupils build secure decoding, segmenting, and blending skills. For comprehensive details on our phonics curriculum, progression maps, and assessment, please refer to our dedicated Phonics Policy.

Guided & Whole-Class Reading: Ready Steady Read

Reading comprehension is delivered through the *Ready Steady Read* framework alongside targeted reading content domains (vocabulary, retrieval, inference, prediction, summary, authorial choice).

- **Whole-Class Guided Reading:** High-quality, challenging texts (fiction, non-fiction, and poetry) are explored daily. Lessons incorporate teacher modelling, echo/choral reading for fluency, vocabulary pre-teaching, and explicit comprehension instruction.
- **Targeted Support:** Small-group reading sessions are structured to support fluency, decoding, and deeper comprehension for lower-attaining pupils and

those with SEND. Pupils in the lowest 20% receive daily individual reading support with a Learning Support Assistant (LSA).

Home Reading

Children are expected to read at home with an adult or older sibling for 10 minutes, 5 times a week:

1. **Decodable/Levelled Book:** Matched 100% to the child's current phonic knowledge/reading level (aligned with Bug Club Phonics).
2. **Library Choice Book:** Chosen independently from the school library to read for pleasure.

Reading records are checked daily by staff. Pupils who require additional opportunities read with an LSA during the school day. A token-reward scheme operates to motivate and celebrate home reading consistency.

Handwriting, Presentation and Cross-Curricular Writing

High expectations for neatness, letter formation, and legibility are maintained across every subject.

- **Handwriting Paper Across the Curriculum:** To support children with letter sizing, spatial awareness, and legibility, special **handwriting-lined paper/exercise books are used across all curriculum subjects** (including history, geography, science, and RE). This ensures high presentation standards are transferred beyond English lessons.
- **Letter-Join Scheme:** Systematic handwriting instruction is delivered using *Letter-Join* resources (3x weekly in KS1, 2x weekly in KS2). Printed formation is established in Reception, with cursive joins introduced in Key Stage 1 and consolidated in Key Stage 2.
- **Pen Licences:** In Years 5 and 6, pupils who demonstrate consistently clear, joined, and well-formed handwriting are awarded a Pen Licence to write in handwriting pens.

Inclusion, SEND and Early Years (EYFS)

- **EYFS:** In Pre-School and Reception, physical literacy, communication, language, and early literacy are developed in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. Children engage in adult-led and child-initiated activities, developing early mark-making, phonics, and expressive language.
- **Access for All:** English lessons are fully inclusive. Teachers adapt learning using helpdesks, visual scaffolds, sentence stems, and the **STEP framework** (Space, Task, Equipment, People).
- **Intervention:** Pupils needing additional support are identified during termly Pupil Progress meetings. Targeted interventions and booster programs are delivered by teachers or TAs and monitored regularly for impact.

Assessment, Recording and Subject Leadership

- **Formative Assessment:** Teachers assess writing, reading, and spelling daily through observation, live marking, and work scrutiny to inform immediate next steps.
- **Summative Assessment:** Pupil attainment is tracked half-termly using **SONAR** against National Curriculum objectives. Termly **NFER** progress tests are used alongside teacher assessment to verify reading and grammar judgements.
- **Monitoring:** The English Subject Lead conducts regular book looks, learning walks, pupil voice interviews, and data reviews to ensure high standards and targeted staff CPD across the school.