

Darwen St James'
C of E Primary Academy



ENGLISH POLICY

2022/23

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. 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, so 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 looking at its patterns, structures and origins. Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations.

The aims of English are:

- To enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners in a range of situations.
- To encourage children to listen with concentration in order to be able to identify the main points of what they have heard.
- To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands.
- To develop children's abilities to reflect on their own and others' contributions and the language used.
- To enable children to evaluate their own and others' contributions through a range of drama, speaking and listening activities.
- To develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text-level knowledge and understanding.
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts.
- To help children enjoy writing and recognise its value.
- To enable children to write with accuracy and meaning in narrative and non-fiction recognising features of both.
- To increase the children's ability to use planning, drafting and editing to improve their work using prepared planning sheets, with a view towards children developing the ability to create their own planning formats.

Teaching and learning

We believe that children learn best when they are happy, interested and motivated through challenging tasks that are appropriate to the level of ability. We have mixed ability classes at Darwen St James and provide learning opportunities that meet children's individual needs. We achieve this through adopting the highly scaffolded approach of Jane Considine's 'The Write Stuff'. The children have the opportunity to experience a wide range of texts and use a range of resources such as dictionaries and thesauruses to support their work. Displays also promote learning through interactive activities that extend and reinforce learning and each class has a Help Desk to support children's independent learning.

The English lessons follow the Jane Considine approach, with a strong emphasis on building children's vocabulary and understanding first. A typical Write Stuff plan includes:

- Experience Lessons - these cover 20% of the unit time and are used to engage students, deepen understanding and develop vocabulary.
- Sentence Stacking Lessons - these are highly scaffolded lessons that develop grammar, style and structure of writing. These lessons are split into 3 learning chunks lasting 20 minutes each. The chunks each have a focus from the writing rainbow and runs through each stage of initiate, model and enable. These lessons enable the children to learn very specific skills and gives them the opportunity to apply them straight away.
- Independent Writing Lessons - these lessons allow the children to plan and write a sustained piece of text that will encompass all the skills and experiences taught throughout the unit.

Links with Other Areas of the Curriculum

The skills that children develop in English are linked to and applied in every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

Reading

At Darwen St James, we recognise the need to promote reading, not only for the acquisition of skills and knowledge but reading for enjoyment as well. We have fostered a reading literate environment within school, with all classes having a stimulating book area too and we ensure children have numerous opportunities to read within the school week. In addition to the reading which takes place within shared, guided and independent reading in the literacy lessons, we are also dedicated to the use of silent reading, 1:1 reading, home reading and reading extended stories to the children outside the English lesson. Staff endeavour to promote reading through our shared story time. Reading is crucial to all areas of the curriculum and many opportunities are made for reading skills to be applied to the wider curriculum and worship.

At Darwen St James' we have started to use Jane Considine's 'Hooked on Books' approach to reading. In terms of lesson time, children get at least 40 minutes a day of direct reading, this is made up of 30 minutes daily book talk and 10 minutes of reading for pleasure. They also get Demonstration Reading - the art of modelling the internal thinking of a reader. This is to demonstrate how a reader thinks during the process of 'reading for meaning' and demonstration Comprehension - clear, out loud thinking by the teacher whilst modelling answers to questions and showcasing "thesaurus thinking" to ensure the most precise words are used.

Book Talk

As part of our English teaching EYFS to Six receive a half an hour Book Talk session.

- a whole class verbal comprehension and a targeted group approach, ensuring all individuals are accountable
- The Reading Rainbow - a fully comprehensive approach that targets reading Competencies, covers the National Curriculum and develops understanding
- The reading rainbow gives our book detectives a focus for their reading, 3 focuses per session, 1 per 10 minute chunk.
- Each chunk allows the children to read in a group, pair or independently with their focus in mind. They are then given a sentence starter to help them formulate a whole sentence to feed back their findings to the class and the teacher. The teacher gathers ideas and can question to deepen the moment.

Phonics

At Darwen St. James' we use the Phonics Bug scheme. Lessons are taught daily at the end of Pre-school, in Reception and Year 1. If necessary, targeted interventions are provided using this scheme in Year 2 and Year 3. Phonics lessons include review, teach and practise opportunities. All children record their learning in a blue phonics folder.

Assessment of phonics is completed using the Phonics Bug app.

If children after year 3 have a SEND barrier to understanding phonics we use an intervention called toe - by - toe.

Spelling

At Darwen St James' we have started to use Jane Considine's 'The Spelling Book' from Year 2 to 6. This approach to spelling teaching relies on teachers bringing the wonder of words to life. The daily and weekly activities are designed to help children's retention and increase stickability of vocabulary. The system is built on strong phonic foundations and includes a range of deep exploratory investigations, alongside short-burst 'chunked' revision activities.

Handwriting

Children are taught printing letter formation from Reception class. In Year 1 children are taught to join letters when learning digraphs and trigraphs in phonics sessions. In Year 2, children continue with this style, adding in other joins. All staff follow the 'Letter Join' handwriting sessions, beginning each session with a warm up activity.

Handwriting is taught three times a week from Year 1 to Year 6. The lessons take the following structure:

Lesson 1: selected sheet from Letter Join.

Lesson 2: practise of letter or join in Handwriting books on lines.

Lesson 3: dictation of graphemes, digraphs, words, captions or sentences using the letters from lesson 1 and lesson 2.

Handwriting pens are given to children who are competent with their letter formation, based on the teacher's discretion throughout Year 1- 4. Children earn their Pen Licence and then use a handwriting pen.

Home Reading

All children at DSJ are expected to read at home with a suitable adult or sibling for 10 minutes a day. Books are chosen for children from our Home Reading library. Children are given a book which is 100% decodable. In addition to this children select their own book to enjoy at home from an age appropriate section of the school library.

Children who read three times a week or more, are rewarded by earning tokens. These tokens can be exchanged for 'treats' at the school 'shop'.

Foundation Stage

During the foundation stage children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework that underpin the curriculum planning for children aged between three and five. Children experience independent and teacher led activities. Children are given the opportunity to talk and communicate in a wide range of situations, to respond to adults and each other, to listen carefully, and to practise extending their range of vocabulary. They have the opportunity to explore, enjoy and learn about and use words and text in a range of situations.

Teaching English to Children with Special Educational Needs

At Darwen St James' C of E Primary School we teach English to all children, whatever their ability. Through our 'access for all' pedagogy, we give the children opportunities to obtain resources for their level of attainment on our classroom helpdesks. Through our English teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. We identify which children or group of children are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Intervention and booster activities are provided for those children who need additional support and are identified during Pupil Progress meetings with the Senior Leadership team. The programmes are delivered by either the teacher or teaching assistant and reviewed on a regular basis.

Assessment and Recording

The use of Target Tracker each half term enables children's attainment to be tracked against the statements. Tracking of these targets ensures accurate targets are set, allowing children to move on to the next stage of their education. We also use termly Pira progress tests for Reading and Gaps for GPS, in addition to this we use optional end of year assessments from Rising stars, all of which give a standardised score, which help Teacher Assessment.