Dunn Street Primary School
English Curriculum
Text Overview and Rationale
Year 1 and Year 2

Our English curriculum aims to raise aspiration and close disadvantage gaps by promoting high standards of language and literacy for every child. Rooted in our values—**Together We Learn, Grow and Achieve**—we equip pupils with a strong command of both spoken and written language and nurture a love of literature through reading for pleasure. In our community, where many children have limited early language experiences, these skills are vital. They empower pupils to learn confidently, grow in knowledge and independence, and achieve the foundations needed to participate fully and equally in society.

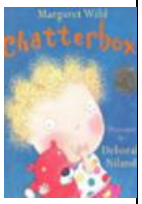
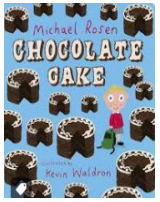
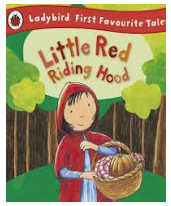
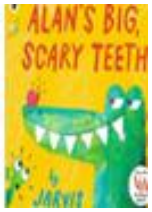
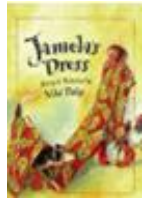
The Curious Quests

Curious Quests is a playful, story-rich approach to bring magic, imagination and purpose into the classroom. Children receive invitations, messages or challenges from characters in a fantasy world and work together to solve problems, explore ideas and complete tasks. Curious Quests:

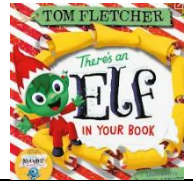
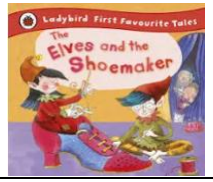
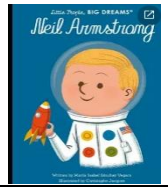
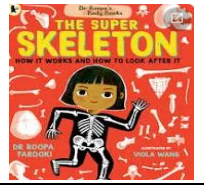
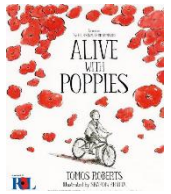
- Nurtures **curiosity, wonder** and **creative thinking**,
- Gives children meaningful **reasons to read, write and communicate**,
- Supports **collaboration, role-play and storytelling**,
- Encourages children to see literacy as part of an unfolding adventure.

The teacher acts as the "bridge" into the magical world, offering clues, mysteries and narrative prompts that drive purposeful reading, writing and talk.

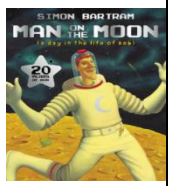
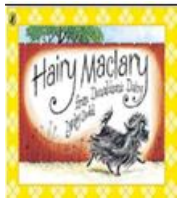
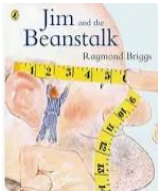
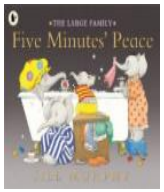
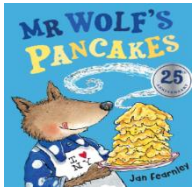
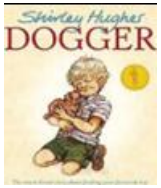
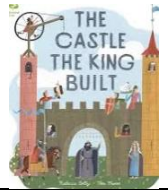
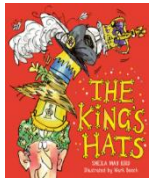
Dunn Street Primary School
English Curriculum
Text Overview and Rationale
Year 1 and Year 2

AUTUMN TERM									
									
This book encourages children to value communication and self-expression, vital for pupils with limited early language experiences.	It celebrates everyday joy and rhythm in language, helping children connect spoken and written words through humour and rhyme.	Little Red Riding Hood was chosen because it is a familiar traditional tale that supports sequencing, storytelling, and comprehension skills. The story also encourages discussion about safety, choices, and character behaviour while developing vocabulary and imagination.	This story teaches empathy and emotional awareness, supporting social development and language for feelings and behaviour.	It is chosen for its playful language and magical setting, which spark imagination and support early vocabulary development.	This book uses humour and surprise to build confidence in reading and comprehension, while promoting self-acceptance and honesty.	Empowering children to care for their environment and take action, fostering responsibility and global awareness.	This book is chosen for its playful language and imaginative surprises, which spark curiosity and build vocabulary for children with limited early language experiences.	This poetry book celebrates rhythm and word play, enriching vocabulary and phonological awareness for early readers.	This book is chosen for its joyful celebration of culture, community and childhood, giving pupils wider world knowledge and representation they may not encounter at home.

Dunn Street Primary School
English Curriculum
Text Overview and Rationale
Year 1 and Year 2

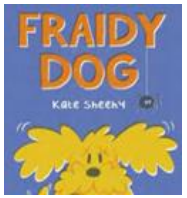
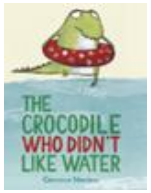
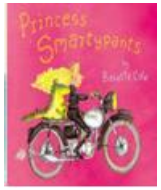
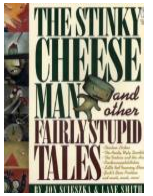
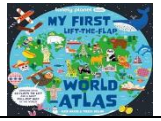
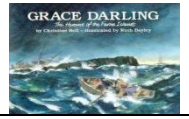
				
There's an Elf in Your Book was chosen because it is an interactive and engaging text that encourages participation, speaking, and listening skills. The story imagination, and enjoyment of books through humour and repeated actions.	The Elves and the Shoemaker is a traditional tale while developing comprehension, sequencing, and storytelling skills. The story also promotes themes of kindness, teamwork, and gratitude through engaging and familiar characters.	Neil Armstrong was chosen to link with our history topic because it introduces pupils to an inspirational historical figure and develops understanding of space exploration, perseverance, and ambition. The text supports reading, discussion, and history learning through an accessible and engaging biography.	The Super Skeleton was chosen because it helps children learn about the human body in a fun and engaging way while developing scientific vocabulary and understanding. The text supports science learning, discussion and curiosity about how our bodies work.	Alive with Poppies helps children explore themes of remembrance, reflection, and hope in a sensitive and age-appropriate way. The text also supports discussion, empathy, and understanding of important historical events.

Dunn Street Primary School
English Curriculum
Text Overview and Rationale
Year 1 and Year 2

SPRING TERM					
					
This book is chosen to spark curiosity and imagination while introducing children to space and exploration, broadening world knowledge and vocabulary.	Selected for its rhythmic, playful language that supports phonological awareness and early reading fluency.	It encourages problem-solving and empathy through a modern twist on a familiar tale, helping children connect imagination with real-world understanding.	Chosen for its humour and family themes, helping children relate to everyday experiences while developing emotional vocabulary.	This book promotes perseverance and independence, supporting comprehension and sequencing skills through a familiar, engaging story.	Selected for its warmth and emotional depth, teaching empathy and resilience while exposing pupils to rich, expressive language.
					
A First Book of Nature was chosen because it encourages curiosity and exploration of the natural world while developing early science knowledge and vocabulary. The text supports observation, discussion, and understanding of plants, animals, and seasonal change through engaging information and illustrations.		The Castle the King Built links to our history topic and introduces children to castles and life in the past through a fun, repetitive story that supports reading, speaking, and sequencing skills. The text also helps develop historical understanding and rich vocabulary in an engaging and memorable way.		The King's Hats was chosen because it develops prediction, imagination and storytelling skills through humorous illustrations and repetitive language. The text also encourages creativity and discussion while supporting vocabulary and speaking and listening development.	

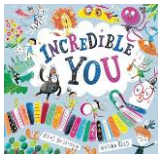
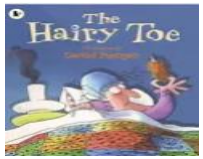
Together we learn, grow and achieve

Dunn Street Primary School
English Curriculum
Text Overview and Rationale
Year 1 and Year 2

SUMMER TERM								
								
This story celebrates reading and imagination, encouraging children to see books as empowering and fun while reinforcing story structure and rhyme.	Selected to build curiosity and resilience through mystery and adventure, helping pupils develop inference and comprehension skills.	This book uses rhythm and repetition to strengthen phonological awareness and sequencing, supporting early reading and language development.	Chosen to help children explore courage and overcoming fear, promoting emotional literacy and empathy.	This story engages children through interactive storytelling, encouraging prediction and participation while building confidence in reading.	Selected for its themes of self-acceptance and individuality, helping children value difference and develop positive self-esteem.	Chosen to challenge stereotypes and promote independence, encouraging children to think critically about fairness and equality.	This story explores curiosity and imagination, helping children articulate questions and ideas while developing descriptive language.	This book is chosen for its playful twists on traditional tales, fostering creativity, humour and deeper understanding of narrative conventions.
								
Prince Cinders has been chosen because it is a fun and engaging twist on a traditional fairy tale that supports reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. It also encourages discussions about stereotypes, kindness, confidence, and celebrating differences.			My First Lift-the-Flap Atlas introduces children to the world around them in an interactive and engaging way, helping to develop early geography knowledge and curiosity about different countries and cultures. The lift-the-flap format also supports communication, vocabulary development, and active participation in learning.		Grace Darling introduces pupils to a significant historical figure and develops understanding of courage, bravery and helping others. The text also supports history, reading, writing, and discussion skills through an engaging real-life story.		What a Waste was chosen because it helps children understand environmental issues such as pollution, recycling and protecting the planet in a child-friendly and engaging way. The text supports geography, science, and discussion skills while encouraging pupils to think about how they can make positive changes.	

Together we learn, grow and achieve

Dunn Street Primary School
English Curriculum
Text Overview and Rationale
Year 1 and Year 2

READING FOR PLEASURE During the year, these stories will be shared and enjoyed as a class at least once.		
 **The Queen's Handbag** Steve Antony	 **The Smeds and Smoos** Julia Donaldson	 **Ruby's Worry** Tom Percival
The Queen's Handbag was chosen because it introduces pupils to the role of the Queen in a fun and engaging way while supporting understanding of British values and history. The text also develops speaking, listening, and comprehension skills through humour and storytelling.	The book promotes inclusion and acceptance of difference, helping children understand diversity in a simple, engaging way. Its rhyme and repetition strengthen early reading skills.	This text develops emotional vocabulary and helps children recognise and talk about worries, a key need where spoken-language skills may be underdeveloped. It supports wellbeing and encourages open communication.
 **The Kindest Red** Ibtihaj Muhammed	 **Incredible You** Rhys Brisenden	 **The Hairy Toe** Steve Postgate
The story celebrates kindness, identity and belonging, offering positive role models for children who may lack wider cultural experiences. It reinforces empathy and the school's values of learning and growing together.	This uplifting book builds self-belief and aspiration, helping children see their own potential. Its poetic language enriches vocabulary and inspires creative thinking.	The Hairy Toe was chosen because it is a traditional story that develops prediction, sequencing and storytelling skills through repetition and rhythm. The text also supports vocabulary development and engages pupils in discussion about characters and events.

Together we learn, grow and achieve

Dunn Street Primary School

English Curriculum

Text Overview and Rationale

Year 1 and Year 2

Together we learn, grow and achieve