



**Dunmow St Mary's
Primary School
Curriculum Policy
(January 2022)**

'Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.'

Yeats

At Dunmow St Mary's we aim to make learning meaningful through memorable and practical hands on experiences.

We believe that children learn most effectively when they learn from experience, can make connections with other learning, learn from other people (experts, enthusiasts), learn for a purpose, can celebrate and take ownership of their learning.

Our curriculum is designed in a series of cross curricular themes. By making these connections between subjects we deepen and enhance our children's learning.

Our themes are taught through a variety of engaging approaches:

Book Based Themes

In a book based theme the starting point is a high quality children's picture book or novel. The content (e.g. friendship/journeys/good and evil) and context (e.g. Historical or Geographical setting or Science properties of materials) of the story provide the subject specific starting points.

Enterprise Theme

In an enterprise theme the children are given the challenge of producing a product for a specific purpose. The challenge is often given by an expert from outside school e.g somebody from the local council. Their task is to cooperatively produce a design specification, to make the product and to evaluate and make marketing materials for it. An example of an enterprise theme is the local wildlife group requesting nesting boxes and feeders for a small wildlife reserve in the town.

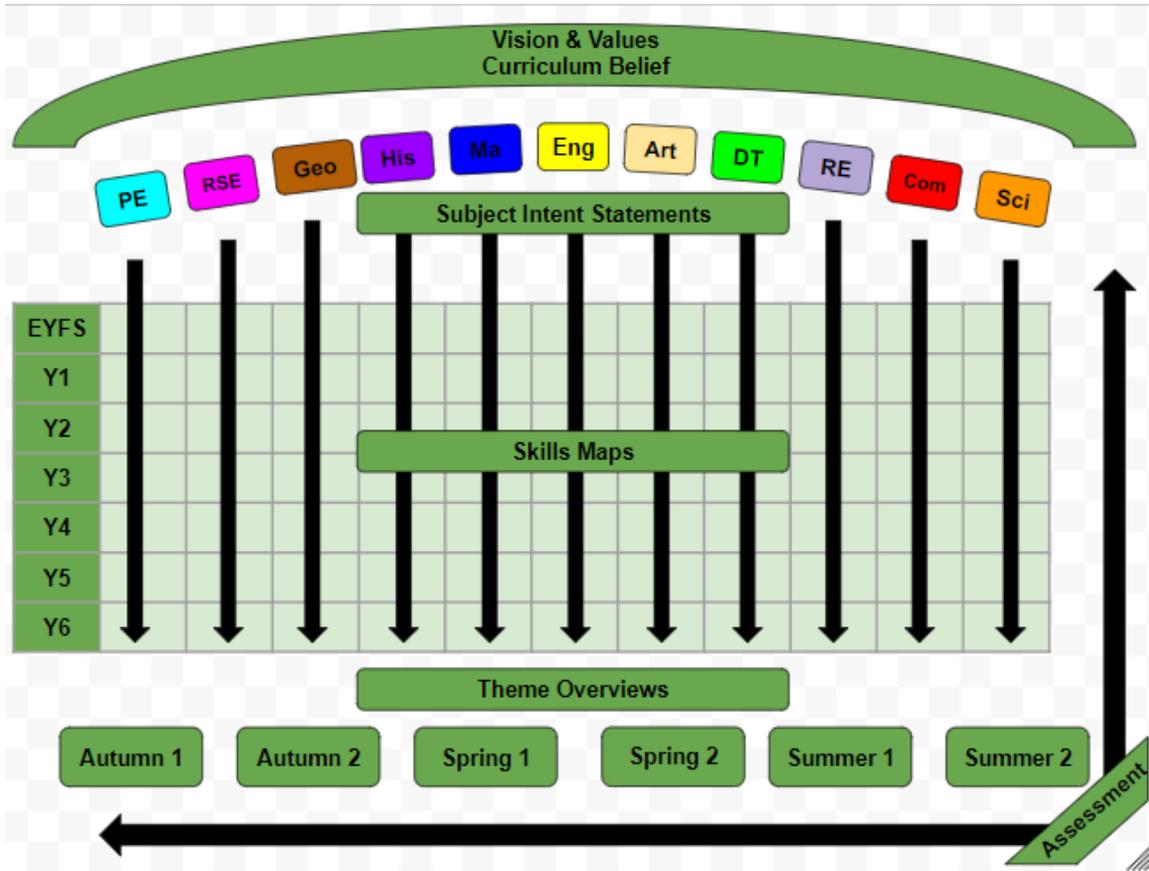
Mantle of the Expert Theme

In a Mantle of the Expert theme the children take on the role of an expert in a particular field. For example, they become archaeologists, builders or zoologists. This theme involves problem solving for a client and will include learning across different subjects.

They assimilate skills and knowledge through role play.

Starting with this statement of curriculum ethos and the intent statement for each subject and using the National Curriculum, each year group then plans six topics per year. The skills maps are used to ensure that the learning is built on each year and that all the relevant skills are covered. Teachers can see what learning has gone before and how their year group's learning will be built upon.

Each National Curriculum subject has a specialist coordinator or team within the school. Teachers who are subject coordinators help to plan, organise and monitor work within their subject throughout the school. To ensure the delivery of the National Curriculum, the teachers in each year group plan their work together very carefully and teach through a number of integrated topics or themes to provide subject balance over the school year. These are supplemented by work in individual subjects. The topics that children study provide a structured and coherent framework for the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge and understanding.



1. Intent

Early Years Foundation Stage (YR)

Around here, we don't look backwards for very long... We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things because we're curious... and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.

Walt Disney

At Dunmow St Mary's Primary School, it is our intent that the children in Reception secure strong foundations for learning that can be built upon, whilst developing a positive attitude to school life. Each child is valued and their individual achievements celebrated. Learning in Reception at DSM is based on an 'In the Moment' approach, following Development Matters and works towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. Discrete maths and Letters and Sounds sessions are taught daily for children to learn reading, writing and number skills. Children pursue their own interests in an enabling environment, facilitated by adults, building on and embedding these taught skills. The observation, assessment and planning cycle is carried out 'In the Moment'. Each week there are 3 focus children in each class. Staff look closely at what this child's interests are, where they are excelling and what their next steps are. This information is shared with parents via Tapestry Online Learning Journal. Working with focus children allows each member of staff in the classroom to know exactly where that child is in terms of their development and how to support them next. It also allows strong positive relationships to be formed. Children are busy and learning all the time in Reception about things they are excited by. Different cultures and festivals are celebrated and children are involved with whole school initiatives such as 'Number Day' and 'World Book Day'. Children take part in daily 'Writing Workshop' where phonics skills are put into practice and confidence and writing for pleasure is developed. Children have free flow access to an outdoor environment and take part in 2 Forest School sessions each half term.

Reading

A room without books is like a body without a soul.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Reading is immensely important to us at Dunmow St Mary's. We know that Reading is the key to learning: being able to read in all its varied forms allows learning in all other areas to be achieved deeply and with confident mastery. We believe that reading is fun and therefore all learning is made enjoyable and effective.

Our library is our pride and is at the very heart of the school. Texts saturate the environment; books, magazines, comics, leaflets, newspapers, online materials are visible in every area of the school and invite the children to read.

Our curriculum depends on texts and each topic uses high quality reading materials. Many of the topics are focused on developing knowledge and understanding in a variety of subjects through the use of a story or another text.

We encourage children to understand that reading matters, reading in all forms and we take an interest in the children's choice of books and guide them to discuss their books and support them with their next choices.

As well as children reading for pleasure independently, we also read to them as we believe that this broadens their horizons and enables them to connect and relate to authors and to other readers.

The phonics scheme we follow is 'Letters and Sounds'

Writing

"Children want to write."

- Donald Graves

Our curriculum is special and unique, like the children we teach. Our writing curriculum fully supports that ethos.

Why do we write at Dunmow St Mary's? There are many reasons but some of the crucial aspects are to teach others, to persuade, to entertain, to paint with words, to reflect, and to make a record.

The writing that the children do is REAL-world writing, focusing on developing their thinking and their voice through the written word. We only engage the children in tasks which they want to write about - stories and poetry are published in class books, information texts are framed and displayed, persuasive letters really do get sent to the intended recipients!

Another crucial part of writing for us at Dunmow St Mary's Primary is the teaching of accurate grammar, spelling and handwriting with the express aim of learning to express ourselves most clearly and carefully to our audience. We ensure that the children learn that these skills are a key part of their writing and go hand-in-hand with the creativity and personality shown in the content of their written work.

Our writing ethos is strongly influenced by the principles of writing for pleasure: the writing workshop approach is evident in every classroom from Reception to Year 6, where children learn real writing skills from the teacher, each other and from the authentic voices of established authors. Through this approach, the children learn to hone their writing voice and contribute to a writing community in the classroom, where every writer is valued and respected. Teachers and teaching assistants are encouraged to write alongside the children, to model the writerly life and to experience the excitement and challenge of writing.

As a result of all this, we are proud that at Dunmow St Mary's to echo the great Donald Graves: 'Children want to write'.

Maths

Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty.

Bertrand Russell

At Dunmow St Mary's we recognise that Maths is an integral part of everyday life and children need key maths skills to become independent, successful members of society. We want children to understand that maths will be useful to them in any choice of career that they aspire to. From the beginning of their school journey children have the opportunity to play, experiment, discover and investigate mathematical concepts in a nurturing and supportive environment that celebrates mistakes as opportunities for learning. This enables our children to build their resilience in facing mathematical problems now and later in life.

We know that children learn best when they are active learners and this is as true in maths as in any other subject. We value and teach the core skills to produce efficient mathematicians. Then,

for each new concept taught we start with using resources to build understanding, then move to visual and pictorial representation and finally into abstract form. We teach our children to use trial and error when faced with a problem, to work systematically and methodically and to choose efficient methods of calculation. We want the children to understand that the answer is only the beginning: maths isn't just about getting the answer, it is about all the other things you can discover in the journey. Children are encouraged to make connections and use knowledge from other areas of maths to support new learning, to explain their thought processes and understanding and to justify their decisions on how they reached an answer.

Through our maths mastery approach we believe that all children will succeed. We empower children to become curious and excited about making new discoveries and solving problems. They will be prepared to tackle challenges and to take risks, determined to overcome difficulties and recognise that they can be expressive and creative in their responses.

Although much of our maths is taught discretely we make links to our curriculum themes wherever possible. We regularly have whole school maths days or even a maths week. For example, a day where every year group explored mazes. We take advantage of our grounds and our local community by exploring maths outdoors and in real life scenarios e.g. visits to the shops to buy ingredients, then weighing those ingredients and scaling recipes up or down. Many of our enterprise topics involve statistics and questionnaires to interrogate people's preferences before a design is created. This involves many areas of maths whilst learning for a purpose.

Science

'Men love to wonder and that is the seed of science'.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our science curriculum provides brilliant opportunities to explore the world around us and ask questions. It encourages children to problem-solve, as well as think creatively while exploring questions and possible explanations for our findings.

At Dunmow St Mary's Primary School we want to nurture children's natural inquisitive nature through science while developing a broad understanding and respect for the natural world and beyond through exciting opportunities that provide real awe and wonder.

We recognise that one of the best ways children can acquire, develop and expand their scientific knowledge is through practical lessons where skills are built on year on year. We want children

to find out for themselves through first hand experiences. They should be active learners within lessons, hypothesising along with their peers and teachers. They should be given the opportunity to test their ideas on a regular basis and explore what the results mean by drawing conclusions and making links.

Children will be given the opportunity to explore the world around them in our very own “Discovery Den”, that takes children outside to explore woodland areas and our pond.

Science is celebrated at Dunmow St Mary’s Primary School by the award of Science Stars, which children receive for having shown a flair for or particular interest in science. In addition to this we offer additional science opportunities in partnership with other local schools that include guest scientific speakers or even the visit of a planetarium.

We want children to cover the national curriculum, but we also want children to be engaged with their scientific learning and invested in the outcomes. Through our theme based curriculum children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to explore scientific concepts with real, genuine purpose.

In our everyday lives you can not avoid science, it is all around us all of the time. Ensuring children have the opportunity to understand this is part of our mission.

Computing

‘Information technology and business are becoming inextricably interwoven. I don't think anybody can talk meaningfully about one without talking about the other.’

-Bill Gates

The use of technology is of ever increasing importance within the world in which we live. At Dunmow St Mary’s Primary School we recognise that technology will play an ever increasing role in their lives and aim to prepare them for this. We believe that we should provide children with a broad range of opportunities to develop skills, using a range of devices or software as well as provide them with the chance to be selective when making decisions about how best to complete a task. We want children to consider if the tool they are using will meet the needs of their project or task and compare it to analogue alternatives.

The use of technology should support our wider whole school curriculum goals to give projects purpose so that skills are taught with an end product in mind, be that publishing a piece of writing, designing a computer game that features the characters of The Firework Maker's Daughter, programming a bot to help locate a pirate's treasure, collecting data to help with our Save the Sea topic or presenting findings when conducting research into product design for making our own chocolate.

We want children to use technology in a collaborative way so that work produced is not always a solo endeavor, while developing a rich discussion around what children are trying to achieve.

Pupils also need to be smart and respectful technology users who are aware not only of all the positive ways technology can be used, but also of the dangers. Children will develop digital literacy through discussing scenarios, including risks, to establish acceptable use standards and recognise potential pitfalls and how to protect themselves against these.

By the time children leave Dunmow St Mary's Primary School they will have experienced a broad range of technologies and produced a wide range of projects that demonstrate clear progression in skills. We aim to give them a solid foundation for their own technological futures, whatever they may be.

History

'The more you know about the past the better prepared you are for the future.'

Theodore Roosevelt

At Dunmow St Mary's we teach children the skills to become historians. We use engaging trips, activities, visitors, drama and first hand experiences to support our History curriculum. By combining these approaches children are given the opportunity to think critically, ask historically valid questions and develop perspective and judgement.

Children's understanding of history begins with first hand experience. For example, our school is built on the site of a Roman town and we have many pieces of Roman pottery from various archaeological digs. Children have the opportunity to handle historical artifacts which stimulates their curiosity to know more about the past.

We are able to take advantage of the richness of our local area such as Dunmow itself, which has many examples of Victorian architecture - the workhouse, the station and the old school to name a few. We also visit Great Easton Lodge nearby which was the home of the Countess of

Warwick and whose grounds became a WW2 airfield in the 2nd World War. Slightly further afield we visit Colchester, Britain's oldest recorded town. These site visits help children build their understanding of Britain's past and its place in the wider world.

Our mantle of the expert approach (in which teachers plan a fictional context where our pupils take on the responsibility of an expert team) provides opportunities to bring to life history from a long time ago and far away. For example, children take on the mantle of archaeologists exploring and excavating Tutankhamun's tomb ending with an exhibition at the 'museum'. Children are given a purpose for their learning and also an understanding of how history is shared. They develop another set of history skills in finding interesting and engaging ways to share their knowledge of the past with others.

Thoughtful cross curricular links ensure that historical understanding is nurtured and we balance teacher directed learning of skills with independent learning and exploration. We want to inspire curiosity about and a fascination with history and want to enable children to understand why History matters and to make connections between different time periods and their own lives.

Geography

'The study of geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together.'

Barack Obama

Our themed based curriculum with its leaning towards practical activities, visits and visitors is a brilliant way of developing children's natural fascination for the world around them. It breathes life into the subject by providing investigative and enquiry based learning opportunities that children become invested in and care about.

This starts as soon as children start school. In Early Years and Key Stage 1, the work in Forest Schools help the children to become aware of a variety of environments and even start to use compass directions and maps. In Key Stage One we continue to use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of our school and grounds and the local area. We visit the sea side so we can compare the geography of the coast to our inland town and Hatfield Forest so we can explore the woodland.

This exploration of the local area continues in Key Stage Two and we learn about rivers through weekly visits to our local River Chelmer. We also look further afield and study environmental

issues e.g. plastic pollution in the oceans as well as comparing and contrasting the way we live and our environment with other countries and other peoples. A good example of this is our Rainforest topic where we learn about the environment of the rainforest as well as the people and the impact of deforestation. Our Year Six residential enables us to carry out an in depth study of the differences between a coastal town and landscape and the impact of tourism with Dunmow.

Our Mantle of the Expert themed approach can support Geography well - for example our Y2 children have to make a variety of maps and plans to help a pirate find his lost treasure and the Y3 support a polar explorer on his expedition through doing important research to help him on his journey. In return he sends blogs and photos back documenting his journey and the problems he encounters.

Design Technology

"Design is a funny word. Some people think design means how it looks. But of course, if you look deeper, it's really how it works."

Steve Jobs

In our curriculum we aim to bring learning to life, to have a hands on practical approach wherever possible, to encourage children to think creatively, imaginatively and independently and to problem-solve.

It is very easy to do all of these things through Design Technology. Design and Technology education involves two important elements - learning about the designed and made world and how things work and learning to design and make functional products for particular purposes and users. Children love creating products they can see, touch and even taste for themselves. They feel proud of the results.

Our cross curricular themes give children opportunities to solve real and relevant problems through enterprise projects or to solve problems as experts posed in Mantle of the Expert or book based themes e.g. designing and making a clay mug to hold hot chocolate to keep the characters warm in Narnia.

Problem solving individually or collaboratively means that the finished products will be unique rather than predetermined by the teacher and identical. As well as encouraging children to be creative and innovative, the activities in our themes can encourage children to think about important issues such as sustainability and the environment in the things they design. E.g. our Y3 children were part of a community project to design and make a greenhouse out of single

use plastic bottles. We have a dedicated cooking area and cooking comes into many of our cross curricular themes for e.g. Often, the food used is grown in our own kitchen garden. Children are very proud of their topic books which they make to display their work. This also enables the older children to start to learn the skills of book binding.

For children, having to think about specific purposes and users for their products is much more demanding than simply following instructions to make something. This makes the results much more rewarding for them. By offering children opportunities to learn how things work and contexts to build, create and discover the joy of inventing and making a working design, we are helping to inspire children to become engineers, designers, chefs or architects.

Religious Education

'Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads as long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many different religions as there are individuals.'

Gandhi

Religious Education is an important and relevant subject which encourages children to explore and reflect on different religions and their beliefs and non-religious views.

We teach the beliefs and values of Christianity and explore other faiths, often drawing out the similarities between them through a focus on themes such as worship and kindness to others. Our curriculum encourages children to have opinions supported by reasons and to be tolerant of others' views; these skills support our teaching of RE and help children to understand and be accepting of differences between ourselves and other people.

In our world religion often causes conflict and controversy and we believe it is important for children to have knowledge of the beliefs of a variety of religions and to use these to help formulate and develop their own personal beliefs and practices. We want to put the foundations in place so pupils can hold balanced and well informed conversations about the complex world in which they live. Our theme based approach means that children have many opportunities to learn about other faiths and to talk knowledgeably about the differences and similarities between these faiths and Christianity. In depth exploration of different religions are brought to life with historical and story themes, for example, the inspiring story of Moses when studying Judaism. The local history of St. Mary's Church and its surroundings is a major theme in Year 3 when children make a number of visits to the church gaining in depth knowledge of the building and the significance of the religious artefacts within it.

Personal, Social and Health Education

'Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.'

Nelson Mandela

At Dunmow St Mary's Primary School, PSHE reflects the schools vision and values which demonstrate and teach the skills, knowledge and understanding pupils need to lead confident, healthy lives to become informed, active and responsible citizens. PSHE is taught in the context of relationships and promotes self-esteem and emotional health and wellbeing to help children form healthy meaningful relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others. We believe that PSHE must include information about physical, moral and emotional development and ensure that pupils are given information appropriate to their age and stage of development.

We want children to be able to achieve their potential in whatever field they choose. Emotionally healthy children do better at school and PSHE education helps children and young people to achieve their potential by supporting their wellbeing and tackling issues that can affect their ability to learn such as anxiety and unhealthy relationships.

We have introduced mindfulness sessions with an aim to promote children's emotional well-being and increase their self-awareness. With the occasional pressures of school life, we wish to support and encourage children to find these moments of calm and to develop tools that will positively impact their social and emotional intelligence. Some year 6 children, in addition to their role of Payleaders at lunchtime have volunteered to take on the role of mindfulness mentors, where they have led one-minute breathing exercises with younger children to help calm and refocus them for their afternoon learning.

We have a restorative approach to behaviour management and teach not only mutual respect for all but also the necessity of listening to others and empathising with their point of view. PSHE lessons teach children these skills and enable them to practise the skills in a supportive environment. We believe in working in partnership with parents so we share the content of any PSHE lesson which may raise questions with parents so they are able to support their children at home.

Art

'Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you anywhere.'

Albert Einstein

Art plays a central part in learning at Dunmow St. Mary's. We give children many different opportunities to use art to learn about and explore the world around them. Using a range of skills they are able to record experiences and ideas and express themselves creatively. We teach the very important skill of observational drawing from an early age and this emphasis continues throughout the school. Carefully recording an object, a scene, a pattern or texture enables children to look closely and learn to pay attention to detail and form.

We also encourage children to experiment with all kinds of materials including painting, charcoal and pastels, clay and 3D modelling, collage, printing and textile work. These can all be seen in the vibrant displays of the children's work throughout the school.

Our art curriculum also encourages critical thinking by examining the work of many different artists and illustrators. This supports children to think carefully about their own designs.

As the children move through the school, their growing range of skills and knowledge of different techniques enables them to make decisions about the materials they use and the composition of their work. We believe that it is a worthwhile investment to give children access to high quality materials including different types of paint, for example watercolour, poster, acrylic and high quality glazes for their pottery models.

Much of our work in art enhances other subjects in the curriculum, for example using watercolours to paint landscapes or water scenes when undertaking a geographical study of the River Chelmer. Ancient History comes alive when studying portraits of the pharaohs or the pictures of daily life decorating Greek pottery.

We take part in Art activities in the town including the "Big Draw" and make visits to the local gallery which inspires our own gallery exhibitions such as sketches and paintings of the historical buildings of our town.

PE

"Sportsmanship for me is when a guy walks off the court and you really can't tell whether he won or lost, when he carries himself with pride either way."

Jim Courier

PE at Dunmow St Mary's aims to develop an enjoyable, high quality physical education curriculum that encourages all pupils to take part in activities and become physically confident in a way that supports their health and fitness. Every child is different with different skills, abilities and talents so we offer a wide range of activities to inspire them. We have a highly skilled dedicated PE teacher who not only teaches classes but also trains teams and squads for competitions and matches. This teacher also liaises with sports coaches to ensure continuity of progression and with other schools to arrange friendly and competitive matches and competitions. This, in conjunction with interform and inter year competitions means that a large percentage of pupils can enter competitions. Our specialised teacher also searches out professionals to work with the children and opportunities so you can often see children having training sessions in Archery or riding scooters or Curling or Boccia. Inclusion is important to us and not just the talented sportspeople are given the opportunities. We know that sport builds character and helps to embed values such as fairness and respect. We run many extra curricular clubs with a wide range of activities from dance and gymnastics to cross country and tag rugby.

However, we also realise that some children shine in sporting activities and these children are given the opportunities to take part in the more formal matches and competitions and encouraged to reach their potential.

A healthy body supports a healthy mind and aids concentration. Each year group have at least two hours of PE per week and additional opportunities for exercise such as the Daily Mile. We have our own swimming pool and every child receives twelve swimming lessons per year.

Music

'Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without.'

Confucious

Music is an important part in our curriculum which is well represented in our cross curricular themes. It is a subject which is predominantly practical whether children are singing, composing, playing instruments or performing. We are lucky to have both teaching staff and parents who are talented musicians and willing to share their passion for the subject.

Very young children dance, sing and enjoy music naturally and we harness this love and enjoyment by developing their musical skills. Through music pupils we can increase children's self confidence and sense of belonging by ensuring there are opportunities for ensemble work for example, groups of children composing music to accompany a scene from Macbeth. Working in a group gives children self confidence and a sense of belonging.

Music is a wonderful cross curricular subject which supports other learning. Children in year 1 listen to the storm music from Benjamin Britten's 'Peter Grimes' whilst enjoying the words and artwork from a picture book featuring a storm at sea. Children learn about other cultures and traditions, changes in music through history as well as patterns, counting and fractions in maths. Our cross curricular themes give children opportunities to explore music from other cultures including African Drumming, Javanese Gamelan patterns, Indian Ragas and Samba music. They also explore music from the past such as Tudor dances and the purpose of different types of music e.g. sea shanties to raise sailors' spirits and hymns to praise God.

Our school has a strong singing tradition as well as giving opportunities for instrumental lessons. We celebrate children's musical skills through performances in assemblies. We have a large collection of musical instruments and class sets of conga drums, recorders and ukuleles. We have our own Steel Band which performs regularly at local events as well as at school and church.

Our school productions are given a high profile, allowing every child an opportunity to sing and dance as well as act. These start in YR and carry on throughout the school culminating in a leavers' show for Y6. We regularly collaborate with local schools to put on joint enterprises and performances e.g. concerts to commemorate the anniversary of World War One.

Languages

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."

Nelson Mandela

At Dunmow St Mary's we want children to develop an interest in learning other languages through lessons that are enjoyable and stimulating. They acquire language skills through games and speaking and listening as well as through reading and writing. The children learn French in Years 3,4,and 5 and Spanish in Y6. The lessons are often linked to the topics children are studying in class so if they are learning about the planets in space for example they will learn the English vocabulary and the Spanish vocabulary at the same time. This helps them to make connections between their learning. Research has shown that learning two languages has a beneficial effect on stretching the brain and making other new learning easier. However, there are many other benefits of learning another language: It enables children to learn about other

cultures and to celebrate and welcome differences in the world. It provides them with opportunities to communicate and to show respect to other people by responding to them in their own language. The world opens up to those who have languages skills and enables people to study and work in other countries.

2. Implementation

Click on the link below to see our skills maps

 **DSM Skills maps Overview Master**

For PSHE we follow the Discovery Education schemes of work.

For maths and English, we follow the National Curriculum.

3. Impact

Foundation subjects are assessed half termly against the subject skills maps. This assessment informs future planning and supports differentiation of work. Core subjects are formally assessed termly and gap analysis carried out to inform learning and teaching. Further information can be found in our Marking, Feedback and Assessment Policy.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QBcb5_0qTeZoQuhM9gVLzE6jXysFdTIO/view?usp=sharing