



DIRT – Frequently Asked Questions

What is DIRT?

DIRT is Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time.

As part of a lesson, or of a series of lessons, pupils are given specific, protected time to reflect on their work and to improve it.

How do children know what to improve?

Sometimes the teacher may be given a specific instruction to the whole class or groups within the class, 'Jackie and Eliza – DIRT your work looking for places where you can combine your sentences. Ben, Aliyah and Tam – I'd like you to DIRT your work thinking about paragraphs and how they help a reader understand your work. The rest of you please DIRT focussing on descriptive language'.

Sometimes pupils might work in pairs to look over each other's work and suggest a focus for DIRT.

As the children get better at this they will need less support and DIRT time will be less directed so the pupil will be empowered to make their own decisions. "My next step is to use tenses more accurately so I'm DIRTing my work looking for places where changing a tense can make a difference."

What lessons does DIRT happen in?

DIRT can be used in every subject – Design and technology, PE, Maths, Spanish, Literacy, RE – wherever the class and the children can take time to think about the task they are completing and how they can improve their outcomes.

When does DIRT happen?

There isn't just one way. DIRT could be within a lesson; for example, the children could work at their writing for twenty minutes then have ten minutes to reflect and improve before finishing off the lesson together. It could happen at the beginning of a lesson after the teacher has marked the books and given the children a prompt. Sometimes a lesson might have three or four mini DIRT sessions built in to the structure.

Didn't this always happen?

Teachers have always marked books and given the children to reflect on the marking and make changes. By giving this process a specific name and asking that teachers ensure it is happening wherever appropriate we hope they will build a culture where pupils are clearer that their first effort is not necessarily the finished article, that reworking and redrafting is an integral part of working –

and thinking – processes, and that they can become more sophisticated in looking at their own work and seeing opportunities to improve it. All of this is part of Larkrise’s journey to make the children truly responsible for their own progress in learning.

Are other schools using DIRT?

Yes. Many schools around the country have introduced DIRT with the same aim of making children more responsible for their own learning. For example, local secondaries St Gregory the Great and Oxford Spires Academy are both using DIRT with their pupils.