

ENGLISH CURRICULUM

A. Introductory Statement:

The plan was formulated by the school staff after due consultation with relevant document and attendance at relevant in-service and other relevant courses.

B. Rationale:

- To benefit teaching and learning in our school.
- To conform to principles outlined in the primary curriculum
- To review the existing plan for English in light of changed emphasis and new methodologies outline in the primary curriculum.

C. Vision:

Our school cherishes all children equally and to that end the school's plan on English will endeavour to help each child to reach his potential.

D. Aims.

We endorse the aims and objectives of the primary curriculum for English:

- To promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language – spoken, read, written.
- To create, foster and maintain the children's interest in expression and communication.
- To develop the child's ability to engage appropriately in listener – speaker relationships.
- To develop confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- To develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through oral language, writing and reading.
- To enable the child to read and write independently.
- To enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experiences.

We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the English curriculum, to set out our approach to language learning. This plan will form the basis for teachers' long and short term planning. It will also inform new and temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in our school.

E. Broad Objectives.

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the English curriculum should enable the child to:

- gain pleasure and fulfilment from language activity
- develop the skills of listening actively and appreciate the significance of tone of voice, facial expression and gesture

- learn to understand the conventions of oral language interaction and use oral language in a variety of social situations
- expand his/her vocabulary and develop a command of grammar, syntax and punctuation
- become fluent and explicit in communicating ideas and experiences
- explore and develop ideas and concepts through talk, directed discussion and writing
- identify and evaluate the key points, issues and central meaning of a text or oral presentation and organise efficiently the information gained
- justify and defend opinions and present a coherent argument orally and in writing
- use oral language to manipulate images in problem-solving
- express intuitions, feelings, impressions, ideas and reactions in response to real and imaginary situation through talk, discussion and writing
- organise, clarify, interpret and extend experience through oral language activity and writing
- explore and express reactions to poetry, fiction and the arts, and refine aesthetic response through oral language activity and writing
- create, develop and sustain imaginary situations through talk, discussion and improvisational drama
- compose, relate and write his/her own stories and poems
- explore, experiments with and enjoy all the playful aspects of language
- develop print awareness, an understanding of the purposes of print and a control over the different ways meaning is derived from print
- develop a range of reading skills and abilities that would include phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and a growing sight vocabulary
- develop an appropriate range of comprehension strategies
- develop and awareness of the richness and diversity of reading material available and read from a variety of texts of gradually increasingly complexity
- choose his/her reading materials and engage in and enjoy sustained silent reading
- develop a sense of discrimination with regard to the use of language and images in the media
- write for different purposes and different audiences
- write in a variety of genres appropriate to school and outside needs
- learn to edit and refine writing and develop a sense of appropriate presentation
- develop a personal style of writing and learn to distinguish and to use appropriate levels of formality
- share writing and responses to reading experience with other children and adults
- use computer technology in learning to write and for information retrieval
- enhance reading and writing development through the involvement of parents or guardians.
- expressing individual responses to poems, stories, plays, and television programmes.

OVERVIEW.

Structure of the English Curriculum		
Organisation of Content		
The Strands are		
Oral Language	Reading	Writing
The former strands now fulfil the role of strand units and are briefly described below:		
Receptiveness to language is concerned with the child's willingness and ability to listen, to be aware of the nuances of language and to understand what he/she hears and reads.		
Confidence and competence in using language is concerned with the child's ability to use and experience language with confidence and success as a speaker, as a writer and as a reader.		
Developing cognitive abilities through language is concerned with the child's use of language to learn. It encapsulates the curriculum principal that the child not only learns language but also learns through usage and experiencing language.		
Emotional and imaginative development through language is concerned with the child's emotional and imaginative response to the world he/she encounters through talk, writing, play and drama. Reading and listening also help the child to come to a better understanding of him/herself and his/her relationship with others.		

ORAL LANGUAGE.

Oral language shall be addressed under the following three headings:

- (a) Oral language across the Curriculum
- (b) Through the English Programme
- (c) Discrete oral language time.

Children will be enabled to develop their oral language in various contexts as follows:

- Talk, discussion and questioning
 - Play and games
 - Story
 - Improvisational drama
 - Poetry and rhyme
- } c.f. Teacher's Guidelines pp. 38 - 49

Children will be helped to develop their oral language and conversation skills by giving them opportunities to practise the following activities:

- Listening attentively
- Taking turns to speak
- Offering the information most essential to the listener
- Making appropriate responses
- Arguing a point of view and trying to persuade others to support it
- Expressing individual responses to poems, stories, play, and television programmes

READING.

Children will be introduced to formal reading instruction at an appropriate stage in their language development.

The following words identification strategies will be used to develop children's reading:

- Sound-letter relationships(grapho/phonic cues)
- Semantic cues
- Syntactic cues.

Reading culture will be fostered among the children in class by giving them opportunities to:

- Share their own personally-created story books with peers
- Use, and help to administer, a class library
- Help to update charts, e.g. job charts, weather charts
- Share responses to books, e.g. writing reviews, presenting dramatic adaptations
- Participate in book events, e.g. visits by authors, book fairs, write-a-book projects

- Share reading activities with their parents
- Collaborate on reading activities e.g. paired reading
- Listen to the teacher or other children reading e.g., serial reading of class novel
- Model the reading process
- Read widely as an independent reader from a range of reading material etc.

WRITING.

Children will be encouraged to engage in personal/independent writing.

The genres which children will use in their writing will be:

English Genres.

- Argument
- Complete book
- Critique
- Description
- Dialogue
- Diary
- Explanation
- Letter
- Note
- Learning logs
- Captions
- Poems
- Proposal/plan
- Recipe
- Record of learning
- Reaction to reading
- List (e.g. shopping list)
- Report
- Story
- Summary
- Fiction
- Project work.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation will be taught in 'mini lessons', incorporated into the writing process (drafting/editing/redrafting) as follows:

'Mini lessons' incorporated into the writing process.

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Punctuation

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES.

The following organisational settings in the teaching of English will be used:

Organisational setting

- Whole class teaching
- Pair work
- Group work
- Individual work.

Children in class(es) will present their work in English as follows:

Type of presentation.

- Play scenarios
- Oral presentation, e.g., talk, drama, poetry, oral reading
- Hand-written, e.g., copy, poster, scrap book
- ICT-based presentation, e.g., using PowerPoint, Word etc.

ICT will be used to support the English curriculum in the following way(s):

Use of ICT in the English Curriculum

- Reading
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Phonics
- Poetry
- Projects
- Letter writing
- Essays

Type of ICT used

- Internet
- C.D.'s
- WORD (Microsoft)

Assessment.

Children's progress in English will be assessed in some or all of the following ways:

Assessment tools

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Work samples, portfolios and projects
- Formal standardised tests
- Diagnostic test
- Standardised tests

General.

Parents/guardians will be involved in supporting their children in English by:

- Parent/Teacher meetings
- Signed homework
- Forward Together programme
- Supplying Library Books
- Reading Books

Review:

This will take place at every appropriate opportunity.

Children with learning difficulties (c.f. Learning Support Policy Resource Policy).

Children with exceptional ability.

The school will support children of exceptional ability by:

- Differentiated programme within the classroom and/or homework
- Accelerated reading programmes
- Use of I.C.T.
- Independent Research projects
- Working with parents
- Consulting organisations such as 'Centre of Talented Youth'
- Use of local library.

Equality of participation and access:

- Non-sexist reading materials, will as far as feasible be provided to children.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that children whose first language is not English will be facilitated to progress in the mastery of the English language.
- Children with disabilities will be given priority where resources permit (c.f. Learning Support/Resource Policies).
- Children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds will be identified with a view to accommodating them in 'After School Homework Classes'

Homework.

- Homework in English will be given at the teacher's discretion.
- Homework to seek to reflect the active learning approach as described in the Curriculum.
- Teachers will seek to maintain a balance in homework assignments between oral, reading and writing assignments.
- Teachers will as, far as is feasible, allocate homework appropriate to children with specific learning requirements.
- Co-ordination between class teacher and Special Education teachers, in assigning homework, will be a consideration.

Library

- A post holder has responsibility for the maintenance and up dating of the school library services.
- Each class has its own class library.
- There is also a general school library
- Books in the school library will as far is possible, meet the wide ranging needs and abilities of children.
- Books cover a wide interest level – fiction, factual, reference, poetry, joke books, puzzle books, books suitable for different reading ages, books written by children.
- Children are encouraged to write their own books/poems and display them
- Children are encouraged to bring their own reading materials to school
- A Book Fair is held annually in the school.
- Provision is made to provide suitable reading materials to the special education teachers.
- Appropriate records will be kept of what children have read.
- Class/individual pupils visit the public library.
- Classes attend literary presentations in the library.
- On occasions local library personnel visit the school and address classes.
- A strong reading culture is encouraged in the school by:
 - providing wide range of reading materials to children
 - involving parents in reading schemes (c.f. Junior/Senior classes)
 - encouraging children to join local library
 - Authors invited to visit the school

- children encouraged to write their own books
- library corners in class rooms
- use of ICT etc.

Resources.

Resources such as the following are used to promote English:

- Schemes, programme, posters/charts, flash cards, resource books, ICT.
- Resources are kept in classrooms, library, teachers room.
- Clothes for drama/role-play in stored in the school container.
- Technology such as tape recorders, video cameras, digital cameras are used as resources to further the curriculum:
- E.g. Tape recorder: (How ?)
Video Cameras: (How?)
Digital cameras: (How?)
Computers: (How?)

I.C.T.

- A post-holder is responsible for storage/up-keeping/up-dating of ICT.
- The following software is available in the school (c.f. list)
- The software is stored in the computer room and individual classes.
- Demonstrations of new software are arranged from time to time.
- ICT can be used to help children with special needs in the following ways. (list ways).
- Computers are used to help children to present their work and help develop writing in different genres e.g. project-work, displays, make a book, newsletter, poetry writing etc.
- The school's policy on Internet usage will be followed at all times.

Individual teachers' planning and reporting.

- The whole school plan and curriculum documents for English will be available for consultation by staff members in the staff room.
- This plan and documents will guide teachers in their short/medium/long-term planning
- Summer courses will be advertised in the staff room.
- Teachers will have access to resource materials, reference books, websites.
- A member of staff may be appointed to monitor developments.
- Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss literacy issues, language development, specific language disorders.
- The Teachers Centre in Waterford will be used a resource in helping to up-date teachers' skills.

Parental Involvement

- Every year the Junior and Senior Infant teachers arrange for the parents of these children to participate in a reading course entitled 'Forward Together'.

- The rationale underpinning this course is: to equip parents with skills/competence to develop their children basic literacy skills.
- Children from Infants to 3rd class are provided with books to take home to read with their parent.
- Certificates are awarded to the child at the completion of this reading programme.
- Clubs: 'Read Aloud Club' – 'Infants book Club'.
- Parents are encouraged to provide a rich reading environment for their children at home.
- Monies from the grant for children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be used to purchase books.
- Certificates are awarded at the various stages of the reading programme.
- Parents are encouraged to work with their children in developing oral language by participation in:
 - homework assignments
 - attending courses
 - materials and books etc.
- Information is shared with parents through:
 - induction meetings for Junior Infants
 - A.G.M. of Parents' Council
 - Parent/teacher meetings
 - Newsletter
 - Website
- The school will seek to provide courses for parents in the use of ICT in order to help them with their children's progress.
- This can be done using the school's computer room.

Community Links:

- Local storytellers, song writers, poets etc are invited to speak to the children.
- Children will be encouraged to use the local library.
- E-mail may be used to contact other school and/or community groups.
- Children are encouraged to write articles for the local newspapers/newsletter.
- Children will be encouraged to interview local people as a basis for writing their own books, e.g. collecting ghost stories, local sporting hero, history of local G.A.A. Club etc..
- Children's work can be displayed in the classroom, hall, local library/museum.
- The school will endeavour to liase with groups such as the homework/after school club to discuss ways of supporting language development!

Success Criteria.

Implementation.

- Teachers' preparations based on this plan.
- Procedures outlined in this plan will be followed as far as is feasible.

Indicators of success.

- Reference will be made to the AIMS
- Teacher/parent/pupil/community feed back
- Inspector's suggestions/report
- Second level feed back
- Staff discussions (Formal/Informal).
- Assessment will be used as indicators of enhanced pupil learning.

Implementation.

- Each teacher will be responsible for the implementation of the plan in her/his class.
- The principal/delegated teacher will monitor the implementation of the plan.
- Report on findings will be given to staff.

Review.

Those involved in the review as are as follows.

- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents
- Co-ordinator (if appointed).

This review will occur at end of each school year (if possible).

Ratification.

This policy is ratified by the BOM.

Phonics.

- Letterland. (Junior/Senior Infants).
 - P.A.T. (supplemented by teachers own schemes/materials).
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Spellings.

- Folens Spellings & Tables.

Tests.

- Starways: Junior Infants – 2nd Class
- Magic Emerald: 3rd to 6th Class.

First Steps Writing Plan 2011	
Month	All Classes
FREE WRITING	Approx 10 min 2-3 p/wk
February	Procedure
March	Recount
April	Recount
May	Report
June	Consolidation

Genre to be taught explicitly – all other genres to be exposed/maintained

First Steps Writing 2011-2012 and following years	
Month	Genre
FREE WRITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Topic Tree • A-Z writing list. • Approx 10 min 2-3 p/wk • Free writing copy per child – Work dated
September	Recount
October	Narrative
November	Narrative
December	Explanation
January	Consolidation
February	Persuasive
March	Persuasive
April	Procedure
May	Report
June	Consolidation

Genre to be taught explicitly – all other genres to be exposed/maintained.

Genres given one month will, the following year, be given two months and visa versa through the years.

