

Bohola NS 19914f



Whole School Plan: English

Introductory Statement

This whole school plan for English was initially formulated in consultation with teaching staff in Bohola N.S. of the 2022/23 school year.

Rationale

We prioritised this area of the curriculum because of the increasing importance placed on literacy because of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020. We also prioritised this curriculum area in light of the implementation of the new Primary Language Curriculum which came on stream in September 2016 and was revised in September 2019. Staff have engaged in training days based on the new Primary Language Curriculum and will continue to engage in these.

We believe that a consistent, structured and intensive oral language and phonics programme will improve learning and teaching in all areas of the curriculum. Therefore, we are using the **Jolly Phonics** programme in Junior and Senior Infants to enhance the competence and confidence in phonics and blending, which will enable development in reading and writing.

We are using the **Rainbows** oral language programme in **Junior Infants to Sixth Class** to enhance competence and confidence in speaking and listening.

A thematic approach is used to teach Oral language, Reading and Writing from 3rd to 6th class. To further develop English comprehension, we are using the **Building Bridges of Understanding** programme in blocks of 6 to 8 weeks and we are also using the **Literacy Lift Off** programme in 1st and 2nd Class again in blocks of 6 to 8 weeks.

Vision

It is our vision to create a school where our pupils will communicate, read and write with and for each other, staff, parents/carers, visitors and the wider school community with clarity, confidence, fluency and respect.

Aims

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

We endorse the aims of the New Primary Language Curriculum, which are presented in 3 groups. The Primary Language Curriculum, and this whole-school plan, aims to support teachers to:

1. Children and their Lives

- enable children to build on prior knowledge and experience of language and language learning to enhance their language learning
- encourage children of different languages and cultures to be proud of and share their heritage
- recognise the wide variation in experience, ability and language style which children bring to language learning in school as a first step in enabling them to engage in relevant and meaningful communicative relationships.

2. Children's communications and connections with others

- embrace children's uniqueness by nurturing their appreciation of their home language, their understanding of language and diversity, and their ability to use different languages, gestures and tools to communicate with people in a variety of contexts and situations.
- encourage and enable children to communicate effectively in both the first and second language of the school and to communicate in their heritage language for a variety of purposes.
- enable children to fully engage with and enjoy a wide range of relevant and meaningful linguistic and communicative experiences with peers and adults.

3. Children's language learning and development

- promote a positive disposition towards communication and language by fostering within children a lifelong interest in and a love of language learning for personal enjoyment and enrichment
- broaden children's understanding of the world through a rich variety of language experiences and through fostering an awareness and appreciation of other languages and cultures in an enriching learning environment

- encourage children to engage personally with and think critically about a broad range of spoken, gesticulated, written and multimodal texts
- support children to develop their literacy skills and enable them to progress at their own learning pace in oral language, reading and writing
- nurture within children an awareness of language, allowing them to appreciate and understand the content and structure of languages and acquire a basic understanding of the history of languages and other cultures.

Curriculum Planning

Strands and Elements

The following table sets out the Strands and Elements of the Primary Language Curriculum:

Element 1: Communicating

Strand:	Learning Outcome:
Oral Language	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engagement, listening and attention (intentionality, verbal memory)2. Motivation and choice3. Social conventions and awareness of others (relevance, turn taking, extra- and paralinguistic skills)
Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engagement (intentionality)2. Motivation and choice (relevance)
Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engagement (intentionality)2. Motivation and choice (relevance, purpose, audience)

Element 2: Understanding

Strand:

Learning Outcome:

Oral Language

1. Sentence structure and grammar (syntax, morphology)
2. Acquisition and use of oral vocabulary (semantics, verbal memory, articulation skills)
3. Demonstration of understanding (semantics)

Reading

1. Conventions of print (meaning and understanding of text/illustration)
2. Phonological and phonemic awareness
3. Phonics and word recognition (alphabetic principle, word identification strategies)
4. Reading vocabulary (semantics)

Writing

1. Conventions of print and sentence structure (syntax)
2. Spelling
3. Vocabulary (semantics)

Element 3: Exploring and Using

Strand:

Learning Outcome:

Oral Language

1. Requests and questions
2. Categorisation
3. Retelling and elaborating (narrative text and response)
4. Playful and creative use of language (aesthetic dimension of language)
5. Information giving, explanation and justification (expository text)
6. Description, prediction and reflection

Reading

1. Purpose, genre and voice (awareness of author's purpose)
2. Comprehension (comprehension, text organisational structure and fix-up strategies)
3. Response to author's intent
4. Fluency and self-correction (accuracy, fluency and meaning)

Writing

1. Purpose, genre and voice (sense of voice, aesthetic dimension of text)

2. Writing process (using processes, structures and language register)
3. Response and author's intent (author's purpose and responding)
4. Handwriting & Presentation (legibility)

Approaches in our School

1. Oral Language

Learning Outcomes for Oral Language

- See Page 22-23 of the Primary Language Curriculum

Element = Communicating

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Engagement, Listening & Attention | 2. Motivation and Choice | 3. Social Conventions and awareness of others |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|

Element = Understanding

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 4. Sentence Structure & Grammar | 5. Vocabulary | 6. Demonstration of Understanding |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|

Element = Exploring & Using

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 7. Requests, Questions & Interactions | 8. Categorisation | 9. Retelling & Elaboration |
| 10. Playful and Creative Use of language | 11. Information Giving, Explanation & Justification | 12. Description, Prediction & Reflection. |

Whole School Strategies for Oral Language

- **Assemblies:**
Regular whole school/class group assemblies

Appropriate and respectful language is modelled
Good listening and appropriate responses are encouraged
Common social functions are taught
Positive non-verbal behaviour is encouraged

- **Yard:**

Using words to communicate and solve problems
Self-Maintaining Language
Model positive and respectful language
Use of Restorative Practice Questions

- **School Related Functions:**

Greetings as *Gaeilge*
Etiquette for children visiting classes

- **Aistear:**

Aistear activities daily in Junior and Senior Infants classes. Aistear activities in 1st Class at the discretion of the class teacher. We use a thematic approach for Aistear and ensure that an oral language/role play station is included in Aistear theme.

- **Rainbows Programme:**

Effective use of digital resources on the Fallons Online website using a thematic approach.

Timetable for Oral Language

- Aistear: 30 - 45 minutes every day
- Oral language lessons daily: discrete lessons/formal lessons/informal language use

Some Activities/Methodologies currently used for Oral Language

The following skills will be modelled and taught in our school at all class levels:

- Using words for common social functions in a polite and respectful manner (ongoing, daily)
- Communicating to meet personal needs (on-going, daily)
- Listening (rhymes, jingles, riddles, listening activities, bingo, news)

- Recalling (re-telling stories, class trips/visits, news)
- Naming (name, address, days, months, seasons, family members, things you need for/find in)
- Categorising and classifying (people, places, family, clothes, weather, animals, food, pets)
- Describing (colour, shape, feelings, characters)
- Denoting Position (orientation-left/right, relational-under/beside/behind/on/in)
- Sequencing (alphabet, days, months, seasons, times of day, sequencing words)
- Reasoning (relational words-because/but, problem solving-what shall I do? 20 questions, proverbs)
- Giving instructions and directions (how do we make a cup of tea/go to the shop?)
- Reporting (reporting back from a group activity or project)
- Speaking out clearly (on going, daily)
- Predicting (hear part of a story, what do you think will happen next? picture sequences)
 - Projecting/empathising (picture/story, How do you think they are feeling? How would you feel if I?)
- Imagining (a new planet, a newly discovered species of animal)
- Questioning (20 questions, the Yes/No game show)
- Interpreting and using appropriate non-verbal language
- Taking turns in speaking and listening (circle-time, news time)
- Showing tolerance for views of others (circle-time, debating)
- Think Talk time (thinking and talking about questions of a philosophical nature to develop critical-thinking)

Resources/Methodologies for Oral Language

- See each class level below

Teacher's Planning for Oral Language

- English oral language and Gaeilge ó bhéal are integrated thematically through Aistear, through teaching topics at the same time, discussing language based on stories
- New vocabulary is displayed in the classrooms. Aistear words are displayed with pictorial clues (Infant classes) and WOW words are displayed from 1st class upwards. Synonym triplets are encouraged to be used to teach new vocabulary e.g. good, great, fantastic.

- Key vocabulary for pupils is identified for all subject areas and listed in teachers' short-term planning.

2. Reading

Learning Outcomes for Reading

Element = Communicating

1. Engagement

2. Motivation and Choice

Element = Understanding

3. Conventions of Print & Sentence Structure

4 Phonological & Phonemic Awareness

5. Phonics, Word Recognition & Word Study

6. Vocabulary

Element = Exploring & Using

7. Purpose, Genre & Voice

8. Response & Author's Intent

9. Comprehension

10. Fluency & Self-Correction

Aims for Reading

In the area of reading development we aim to:

- promote positive attitudes and develop the appreciation of reading
- develop print awareness, an understanding of the purpose 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 to help interpret text beyond the literal level (prediction, inference, etc.)
- develop an awareness of the richness and diversity of reading material reading from a variety of texts of gradually increasing complexity
- engage in and enjoy sustained silent reading
- enhance emotional and imaginative development through reading

- develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through reading
- Use the school library to increase fluency and interest in books.
- Use explicit instruction of reading skills and strategies to enable at-risk children to participate more fully in literary experiences.

Whole School Initiatives for Reading

- World Book Day
- Daily D.E.A.R. time
- Literacy Lift Off
- Paired/Buddy Reading
- Study of Authors and Visiting Authors
- Visits from and to Castlebar library
- Accelerated Reader - online quizzes for books read
- Team Teaching focus on Reading Skills

Resources/Methodologies for Reading

- See each class level below

Supplementary Resources for Reading

- Big Books
- Key Word Books
- PM Readers
- Dandelion Readers
- Leap Frog Readers
- Osborne Readers
- Sets of Class Novels
- SEN Books
- Comprehension Cards
- My Read at Home Book
- Picture books to support the teaching strategies from the Building Bridges Programme
- School Library
- Swinford/Kiltimagh/ Castlebar Libraries
- Reading Eggs - Interactive Reading Programme for Juniors to 2nd class
- Poetry & Rhyme Books
- Story Books

- Fairy Tales
- Books of Myths and Legends
- Scrapbooks
- Posters
- CDs/Interactive whiteboard resources
- Games
- Activities
- IT
- Dictionaries
- Thesaurus

Class Library

Books are sourced to reflect the diversity of our school population and the wider world. Every pupil is encouraged to use the classroom library weekly with their class. Pupils are also encouraged to visit their local libraries.

Rhymes

Children in Infant classes will learn one Nursery Rhyme per week - See Nursery Rhyme Scheme (Infant level)

Poetry

Children from First to Sixth class will learn one poem per month by heart. A poem will also be used as a stimulus for discussion and integrated with Art/SESE/Ethical Ed - See suggested Poetry Scheme at each class level from First to Sixth.

Children are provided with frequent opportunities to experience poetry and are encouraged to respond to it in different ways. Children are given opportunities to write poetry after teacher modelling and immersion in the genre. Children are given the opportunity to display and read poetry.

Story

The children will explore the following types of story between Infants and Second class Fairy Tales, Fables, Myths and Legends. Picture books should not only be used merely as storybooks but as a meaningful context for teaching

sight-words, phonics, fluency, comprehension, concepts of print, phonological awareness and critical thinking. Novels will be used from First to Sixth class and will be integrated with SESE where possible.

See the Story Scheme at each class level.

Phonological Awareness & Phonics

Phonological Awareness and Phonics is an integral part of the acquisition of the English language and a huge emphasis is placed on its importance in the early school years.

Phonics is taught explicitly using the **Jolly Phonics** scheme in Junior and Senior Infants primarily to teach phonics. See the Phonics scheme at each class level.

Phonological Awareness Methodologies:

- Rhyming Awareness
- Word Awareness
- Syllabic Awareness
- Phonemic Awareness - Isolation of initial/final/medial sounds
- Blending
- Segmenting
- Manipulation
- Look and Say

Timetable for Phonological Awareness

Junior Infants:	15 minutes per day
Senior Infants:	3 x 20 minutes per week
First - Sixth Class:	1 x 30 minutes per week

Alphabet

Reciting the alphabet will be taught in Junior and Senior Infants. Children will be asked to say the alphabet starting and stopping at different intervals to promote familiarity. Children will be encouraged to state the name and the sound together using the **Sounds in Words Book in Infants**. Awareness of vowels will be taught from Junior Infants.

Sight Words

Sight words are taught as Tricky Words in Junior and Senior Infants as part of the Starlight Skills programme.

Dolch list is used to teach Sight words from First Class. A multi-sensory approach is used to teach all sight words. The sight word is taught in isolation initially before being taught in context.

Reading Comprehension

"Comprehension is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text" Pardo, 2004

Comprehension Strategies Target Plan for 2023-2024

Teacher Reference Book: *Building Bridges of Understanding*_Martin Gleeson.

As part of the school self-evaluation process comprehension was a particular area of focus.

Junior Infants

Predicting T1
Connecting T2
Visualising T3

Senior Infants

Predicting T1
Connecting T2
Visualising T3

First Class

Predicting T1
Connecting
Visualising
Questioning
Declunking
Clarifying

Second Class

Predicting T2
Connecting
Visualising
Questioning
Declunking
Clarifying

Third Class

Predicting T1
Connecting
Visualising T2
Questioning
Declunking
Clarifying
Determine
Importance

Fourth Class

Predicting T2
Connecting
Visualising T2
Questioning
Declunking
Clarifying
Determine
Importance
Inference

Fifth Class

Predicting T2
Connecting
Visualising
Questioning
Declunking
Clarifying T2
Determine
Importance T3
Inference

Sixth Class

Predicting T2
Connecting
Visualising
Questioning
Declunking
Clarifying T2 T3
Determine Importance
Inference

Comprehension strategies will be taught using the Gradual Release of Responsibility (Pearson and Gallagher 1993). model as follows:

- First, the teacher explicitly describes the comprehension strategy about to be taught and states why good readers use this strategy when reading.
- The teacher explicitly models the strategy by demonstrating and thinking aloud while the children observe the strategy in action.
- Following this, the teacher continues to model the strategy and invites the children to contribute their ideas.
- Next, the children engage in collaborative use of the strategy through guided practice where the teacher gradually releases responsibility for the strategy to the children through scaffolding instruction and facilitation.
- children engage in independent use of the strategy in subsequent lessons.

For help further develop comprehension skills teachers encourage children to use the following strategy:

- **KWL:** What is it you Know? What is it you Want to know? What have you Learned?

In a whole class situation during an oral language lesson teachers cater for all abilities through clever use of well thought out questions. Teachers use a variety of organisational settings when striving to develop the pupils' comprehension skills: sometimes children working individually, in pairs, in groups or with the whole class. Comprehension skills are developed through oral and written work with an emphasis on discussion. Workbooks and class readers are used selectively and judiciously by teachers as a tool to develop the pupils' comprehension skills. Comprehension skills are developed across the curriculum in all subject areas.

Silent Reading

DEAR time - Drop Everything and Read.

Silent Reading was introduced in September 2015 and teachers have noted its success. First - sixth classes drop everything and read at a regular time chosen

by the teacher. Teachers ensure that all children have a book they can read in advance of DEAR time. Teachers of 1st and 2nd classes use their discretion in deciding the amount of time children spend reading silently.

Assessing Individual Ability

- Teacher Observation
- Listening to reading and assessing comprehension skills. The careful observation and recording of the miscues a child makes when reading a suitable text can tell the teacher much of what she needs to know about the particular reading difficulties a child is having.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Standardised Testing
- YARC
- Drumcondra /Micra T Reading Test to be administered in the 3rd term
- Diagnostic Testing

When a child exhibits reading difficulties diagnostic testing will be used to identify the detailed learning needs involved. Diagnostic tests may be administered by the SET teacher or educational psychologist.

3. Writing

Learning Outcomes for Writing

- See Page 30 of the Primary Language Curriculum

Element = Communicating

1. Engagement, Listening & Attention
2. Motivation and Choice

Element = Understanding

3. Conventions of Print & Sentence Structure
4. Spelling and Word Study
5. Vocabulary

Element = Exploring & Using

6. Purpose, Genre & Voice
7. Writing Process & Creating Text
8. Response & Author's Intent
9. Handwriting & Presentation

Aims for Writing

In the area of writing development, we aim to:

develop competent and confident writers in all First Steps writing genres

- develop print awareness and an understanding of the purpose and conventions of print
- promote a growing sight vocabulary
- utilise the various comprehension strategies
- write for different purposes and different audiences
- learn to edit and refine writing and develop a sense of appropriate presentation
- develop a personal style of writing and learn to distinguish and use appropriate levels of formality
- share writing experiences with others
- use computer technology in learning to write - use of Google Docs and Google Classroom to publish pupils' writing

Resources for Writing

See each class level below

Writing Genre Plan ~ A Whole School Approach

2021-2022	2022-2023
Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Recount▪ Writing to socialise	Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Report▪ Writing to socialise
Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Narrative	Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Explanation
Term 3: Procedural	Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Persuasive

2023-2024	2024-2025
Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recount ▪ Writing to socialise 	Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report ▪ Writing to socialise
Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Narrative 	Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explanation
Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procedural 	Term 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Persuasive

Complete a free writing activity 2-3 times a week.

The 7 Steps to Teaching a Genre:

1. Familiarisation with the genre
2. Analysing
3. Modelled Writing
4. Shared Writing
5. Guided Writing
6. Independent Writing
7. Presentation to audience

Spelling

We recognise that, as a whole school, a multi-dimensional approach to spelling is essential. Every class has varying levels of spelling ability and the pupils are differentiated and assessed accordingly. Some children struggle to move from the phonetic to transitional stage of spelling.

The following programmes have been adopted after various consultation among staff, monitoring of existing programmes and reviewing of previous practices. This was completed as part of our SSE with assistance from PDST.

Spellings are addressed as follows:

Pupils from First to Fourth Class are using SWST lists. Spelling Stations are established according to ability and assessed through dictation exercises weekly. SET teachers and SNA under the guidance of the teacher assist with the testing.

Objectives for Spelling

- Equip all pupils with strong phonological awareness skills incorporating awareness of syllables, rhyme and phonemes in words
- Spelling must be taught
- Spelling must be fun
- Realisation that not all spelling is phonetically based
- Spelling activities should be written
- Spelling lessons should be daily; short and snappy
- Spelling strategies are taught to all children especially those who experience difficulty
- Self-checking is continuously encouraged to foster a more independent approach
- Spelling must never be a barrier to children's writing as it is vital not to dampen a child's enthusiasm to write by always insisting on accurate spelling
- Children are encouraged to take risks and attempt unknown words
- Provide opportunities for children to 'problem-solve' the rules themselves
- Children begin spelling informally in Senior Infants through exposure to phonics.
- Formalised spelling is introduced in First Class and continues throughout the remainder of the pupils' years in the school.

Source of Spellings

- SWST
- Dolch list
- Phonics Scheme
- Spellings for Me Programme (5th- 6th classes)
- Children's Writing Needs
- Extension Work: Themed Spelling
- Dictionary Book/Folder

- Fry's Word List
- SNIP
- PAT Series of books 1-4

Our Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Spelling

- As spelling is visual, learning to spell cannot follow a completely phonics-based programme. The pattern in words must be visual so that words that look alike are grouped together although they may not sound alike. e.g. caught, daughter, taught
- Our focus is on letter patterns instead of just learning mat/hat, but/cut, we focus on 'at' patterns (letter strings), and therefore include ate, what, etc. It is important that we teach words which look the same irrespective of their sound, e.g. come, some, women...
- Children are taught to look at words, see words within words and compare letter strings regardless of sound
- Spelling is taught with emphasis on the type of spelling errors rather than the number of errors
- The use of mnemonics and other strategies are encouraged to help children who struggle with spelling
- Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check Methodology (Look, Write & Check are all visual which emphasises the importance to spelling being a visual endeavour)
- Using Sound Letter Relationships
- Using Pattern
- Continuation from class to class
- Linking with onset and rime
- Print Rich Environment (ensuring balance between cursive displays and print displays)
- Class Based Incentives
- Spelling Box
- Spelling Bingo for weekly assessments of spellings
- Spelling Grid Activities

Assessing Spelling

The children are encouraged to improve their spelling in writing rather than an over emphasis on 'the Friday spelling test'.

Children may perform well in their spellings tests but unless there is an improvement in the child's writing, it is pointless. Children are assessed by way of a spelling/dictation test once a week. This will consist of a selection of words

from their spelling list of that week and/or sentence dictation. This may also take place the form of a spelling bingo game. This is combined with regular assessment of the child's independent writing.

Correcting Spelling

- Teachers will correct the spelling/dictation tests and return them to the children.
- Teachers are encouraged to avoid marking every spelling wrong, instead to underline the part of the word that is incorrect.
- We do not make public any child's results
- Teachers are encouraged to avoid asking children to write out corrections several times
- The children must have their test signed periodically by parents/carers

Spelling and the Learning Support/Resource Teacher

Arrangements may be made under the direction of the class teacher.

Timetable and Spelling

- Monday-Thursday: 20 - 30 minutes per week, introducing and teaching new words, with the assistance of spelling strategies, when necessary, for spelling homework that night
- Friday: up to 30 minutes for Spelling/Dictation check or daily check for 5 minutes

Parental Involvement and Spelling

Parents are encouraged to ensure that their children learn their spellings each night as part of their homework using a multisensory approach. This can be done by using the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check Method and by practising sentence dictation.

Grammar & Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation are introduced formally from first class through the Rainbow Programme, Treasury series of books and Master your Grammar is being trialled in the senior room.

See each class level for resources

Handwriting/Penmanship

As per the primary language curriculum, children will be encouraged to write legibly and fluently in a chosen script using a personal style, ensuring correct formation of lower and upper-case letters.

As children have been taught to form letters in cursive script they will be encouraged to write in this script. Throughout the school there is an emphasis on penmanship. Each week children are rewarded for consistent or extra effort in handwriting.

The pupils begin pre-cursive script from Junior Infants and continue this style of writing through all classes up to Third Class.

From Third Class upwards the children are encouraged to use cursive writing. However, some pupils find the process challenging and revert back to script.

In Junior Infants, the pupils begin by learning one lower-case letter per week. As their fine-motor skills develop, the pupils continue learning 2 letters per week until the formation of all letters is taught. In Senior Infants they will learn how to form upper case letters.

The importance of precision and presentation is constantly reiterated and encouraged in copies, worksheets, free writing and otherwise.

Children will present copies neatly always using a date, title and ruling margins where necessary. An emphasis will be placed on this from second class up.

Our Approach to Handwriting:

- The best way to ensure good handwriting is to learn it correctly from the beginning
- A good cursive style of handwriting will ultimately improve the speed and fluency of writing, which in turn will assist the child's written expression.
- Good penmanship also improves spelling since letter strings are connected when the child is writing a word.
- Good posture, pencil-grip and how the children form their letters are explicitly taught
- Children with poor motor control or little stamina need a cursive model that makes minimum demands on their physical abilities - when the brain has a visual image of the word then the hand takes over.

- Pre-writing patterns are taught before separate letter formations at infant level
- Children are encouraged to practise common letter strings after learning how to form an isolated letter, e.g. 'a' - ate, at, eat, etc...
- On completion of a page of the workbook 'All Write Here" the children are to copy that same letter into their handwriting copies to reinforce the formation of that letter. (Infants)
- A multi-sensory approach to handwriting is adopted in the school
- Where appropriate, all teachers will follow the same style/format of cursive handwriting throughout the school.
- Where appropriate, all teachers are encouraged to use cursive script on classroom displays, on the Smartboards/whiteboards and when correcting the children's work, etc.
- Cursive script is encouraged for all written activity and not just English alone.
- Excellent handwriting or significant improvements in handwriting is awarded in assembly weekly with a 'Handwriting Hero' certificate.

Approach Used to Introduce Letters

- All Write Here Workbook
- Air pencil
- Tracing: on table, on each other's backs
- Márla
- Sandpaper letters
- Large Letter in Crayon
- In Sand
- In paint bags

Pencil Grip & Position of body

- Tripod Grip with 'frog legs'
- Helper hand to hold page in place

Provisions for Left Handed Children

- Sit at the desk on the left hand side
- Letter writing worksheets designed for children who are left handed in infants when they are practising handwriting if required E.g. writing the example of the letter on the right hand side of the page

Timetable for Penmanship

- Junior Infants and Senior Infants: 15 minutes/day
- First to Sixth: Daily practice in handwriting copies

Correcting Handwriting

- If a mistake is made when writing in pencil it is erased with an eraser
- If a mistake is made when writing in ink children are instructed to put brackets around the offending word and a line through it. (-----).
- Tip-ex is not allowed in school.

Pen Licences

- Pen licences will be introduced from 4th class onwards. Children will present their work and take care with their handwriting consistently before being awarded a pen licence. Necessary modifications will be made for children with SEN by the relevant staff in the school.

Parental Awareness of Handwriting

- Parents will be informed of the handwriting style in the school at parent/class meetings. They will also see it as part of homework.
- Guidelines/instruction for parents will be provided at the teacher's discretion

Creative Writing

Children begin Creative Writing informally in the infant classes. This is stimulated and developed in many ways such as through Aistear and through the use of free drawing (Infant Classes) and free writing copies. Creative Writing is introduced formally in First Class and continues throughout the remainder of the children's years in the school.

Selecting Topics for Creative Writing

Sources of topics for children's writing include:

- Print-Rich Environment
- First Steps Writing- Narrative Genre
- Thematic Approach
- Personal Concerns
- Life at home and in school
- Stories

- Social Needs
- Personal Reading
- Poetry
- Drama
- Aistear
- Everyday personal experiences
- Use of home language

Strategies for Planning Creative Writing

- First Steps Writing- Narrative Genre strategies and ideas
- Oral Discussion: Whole Class, Teacher/Pupil, Pupil/Pupil
- Brainstorming
- Webbing
- Story Board
- 3 Story Plans
- Story Templates
- Poetry/Drama/Story as stimulus

Whole School Approaches to Writing and Drafting

- Planning, Drafting, Editing, Re-drafting Method through the medium of First Steps from First Class
- Encouraging Self Correction and Self Checking
- Publishing in our School Newsletter/"Write-a-Book" competition

Whole School Approaches to Valuing Creative Writing

- Displays
- Writer's Corner
- Newsletter
- Constructive and precise comments when possible
- Work included in anthologies
- Team Teaching with a focus on the Narrative Genre for creative writing

Assessment and Record Keeping

- Standardised testing: BIAP, Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy, Drumcondra Reading Tests etc. Drumcondra Spelling
- Schnoell Word Recognition and Spelling Test
- Aston Index
- First Early Years
- EAL~ Up and Away
- Fluency Tests by Timothy Rasinski
- Teachers will hear children reading formally at least once a week.
- Spelling tests (weekly from 1st class)
- Teacher checklists
- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks
- Work samples
- Portfolios
- Projects
- Diagnostic tests
- Phonological Assessments

Children with Different Needs

English activities will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children in a particular class. Children with special educational needs will receive support from our Special Education Teachers.

We promote an active learning environment, with children working in groups at their level, where the class teacher is responsible for the learning in the classroom and is assisted by the SET team. Team teaching and Station teaching blocks are arranged throughout the year.

Where a teacher recognises that a child displays a particular ability in English, this will be communicated to the parents, so that the child may have opportunity

to take out of school lessons, circumstances permitting. Teachers will encourage such children to read and write for their classmates, so that the other children will have opportunities to listen and respond.

E.A.L. Provision

The SET teachers work in a withdrawal and in-class support capacity, dependent on the needs of individual classes.

Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background, socio-economic status across all strands and activities.

Homework

Teachers can assign English homework at their discretion in accordance with the guidelines of the homework policy and the Department of Education. As a core subject, English homework should be assigned daily. From first class spellings are assigned each day. Parents/carers are regularly reminded of the importance of oral language and reading homework, as well as written work.

Organisational Planning

The teaching of English will be conducted in line with the time allocation as set out by the DES and NCCA (ref: Circular 0056/2011), as follows:

Class Level:

Time Allocation for Language 1 (i.e. English):

Junior and Senior Infants

4 hours per week

First - Sixth Class

5 hours per week

★ Discretionary time may also be used for the teaching and learning of English

The teaching of English will be organised on both a **whole-class** and **team-teaching** level. A team teaching approach will be taken to support the teaching and learning of English and will involve the input of the support staff in the classroom. Such will be organised based on the needs of each class and will focus on specific areas of the curriculum.

Resources and ICT

We endeavour to build on and develop the resources available for teaching and learning. Teachers will be encouraged to maximise on all resources available to them. The school will ensure that teachers' resources for school-wide programmes will be available to all teachers, including Jolly Phonics, First Steps, Building Bridges of Understanding, PM+, Oxford Reading Tree

ICT will be used in classroom and support settings to further support the teaching and learning of English in the form of Interactive Whiteboards, iPads, online programmes etc.

Individual Teachers Planning and Reporting

Class Teachers' Planning:

Individual teachers will plan their yearly English programme specifically for their own class, while at the same time ensuring that their plan coordinates with and is reflective of this overall school plan. This should ensure clear progression as children move from class to class. Teachers at each class level will collaborate on content and methodology for English from this whole school plan and it will be monitored and assessed on an ongoing basis.

Teachers are expected to complete yearly (or termly) plans for the teaching of English in their classes and are responsible for the implementation of such. Learning outcomes directly from the Primary Language Curriculum are included in each teachers' long term scheme. They must also include English in their fortnightly plan. Such must include specific objectives, learning content and key vocabulary.

The Cúntas Míósúil must document what has been covered in the teaching and learning of English each month.

Staff development

Staff needs will be assessed and the local Education Centre will be requested to provide suitable ongoing training as the need arises. The staff will also avail of training as provided by the Department of Education and Skills, particularly in relation to further training days for the implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum

Parental Involvement/Community Links

Parents/carers have a crucial role to play in their children's language development. Talking to adults, hearing them talk, hearing stories read and told and being encouraged to read all have an influence on children's language development that supports and compliments the school experience. Parents are informed of this at the beginning of the year at each class meeting.

Success Criteria

Means of assessing this plan are as follows:

- Teacher/parent/pupil/community feedback
- Children's feedback regarding their learning
- Suggestions and reports of DES Inspectorate
- Monthly records of teaching and learning

The success of this plan will be measured by teacher observation of pupil enjoyment and participation in oral language, reading and writing activities. The success of the plan will also be measured by the achievement of pupils in standardised tests. Feedback and reflection will be used as an informal method of measuring the success of this whole school plan

Implementation and Review

(a) **Roles and Responsibilities** The plan will be implemented by all members of the teaching staff. The principal will play a role in overseeing its implementation.

(b) **Timeframe**

This plan will be reviewed in Term 1 2024/2025.

Ratification and Communication

The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to this whole-school English plan upon their appointment to the school by the Principal. This policy will be published on the school website, upon its development, and a copy of it will be provided to the Parent Teacher Association.. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school upon request

Signed:

Chairperson BOM

Signed: _____ (Principal) _____

Date:

Date of next review: Term 1 2024/25
