

# English Plan

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## **Introductory Statement**

This English Whole School plan was initially formulated by the staff of Kilbonane National School in 2007. The planning framework drafted by the Primary Professional Development Service, School Development Planning Support (SDPS) National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Department of Education (DES) was used as a guideline for reviewing the Whole School Plan for English in 2020-21. It is hoped that the redrafted version will be a useful tool for teachers providing them with clear guidelines and ensuring consistency and continuity in practice throughout the school.

## **Rationale**

We, in Kilbonane National School, are committed to the holistic development of all pupils. The fluency in the English language is central to this process. We believe that the ability of our pupils to communicate fluently, confidently and effectively will contribute greatly to the development of their self-esteem and their personal growth. We also believe that their academic progress depends to a large extent on their ability to communicate orally and through the written word. In our school, therefore, we attach a high priority to giving pupils a command of English.

## **Vision**

Our school cherishes all pupils equally and aims to aid them in achieving their true potential. The English plan will contribute to this vision and facilitate the school community in promoting and developing all aspects of English.

## **In teaching English we aim:**

- To promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language- spoken, read and written
- To create, foster and maintain the child'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

## **This English plan will be addressed under the following headings:**

### **Curriculum planning**

1. Strands and Strand Units
2. Language Programme
3. Assessment and Record Keeping
4. Children with Different Needs
5. Equality of Participation and Access

### **Organisational planning**

6. Timetable
7. Homework
8. Library
9. Resources and ICT
10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting
11. Staff Development
12. Parental Involvement
13. Community Links

### **1. Strands and Strand Units:**

English in Kilbonane National School will be planned through the three Strand Units of Oracy, Reading and Writing. We aim to serve the two fundamental principles of the curriculum:

- Children learn language and learn through language.
- Language learning is an integrated process in which it is difficult to separate the functions of oral language, reading and writing. For example a lesson in oral language may have related activities in reading and writing and may also address a number of strands e.g. Competence and confidence in using language and Developing cognitive abilities through Language.

To satisfy these two principles, the English curriculum is structured according to the strands and strand units. Within each strand, the strand units reflect the contribution oral language, reading and writing make to that particular facet of the child's development and these strand units contain the detailed elements of curriculum content.

Teachers will familiarise themselves with the strands/strand units/content objectives for their class level.

### **2. Language Programme:**

#### **Oral Language**

***Strand: Oral language; Strand unit: Receptiveness to language.***

- Most pupils enter the school with a rich/varied oral language experience. We do not currently have any non-English speaking foreign national children attending Kilbonane National School. We have a very small percentage of children who may not have had the same language experience as their peers. Children will experience a variety of age-appropriate strategies to develop conversational and oracy skills.

***Strand: Oral language; Strand unit: Competence and confidence in using language.***

- Specific approaches taken by the school to develop oral fluency and expressiveness, taking into account the language needs of the children include:
  1. Using the five contexts in the teaching of oral language: *Talk and discussion, Play and games, Poetry, Story and Improvisational drama*
  2. Developing children's social use of language through practice, role play etc e.g. *giving and receiving greetings, making introductions, using a telephone, making an inquiry, giving directions*
  3. Improving children's expressive use of language through increasing their vocabulary and sentence structure
  4. Teachers adopt thematic approaches wherever suitable. There is continuity and progression in relation to many themes and this is evident in our policies in other subjects.
  5. Children are given regular opportunities to speak and listen in the following organisational settings: *pair work, working collaboratively, working in whole class settings, formal and informal debates, circle work/individual and group presentations/other activities*

Oral language activity is used as a basis for reading (through language-experience material, reading aloud, oral book reports, questioning, discussing, etc) and writing (through brainstorming, conferencing, etc) and through using thematic approaches.

The school uses the Jolly Phonics programme (from Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class) to develop knowledge of grammar, vocabulary skills and their accurate use. A coherent approach to the teaching of grammar on a whole school basis has been formulated.

***Strand: Oral language Strand unit: Developing cognitive abilities through language.***

- The following strategies are being used to develop children's higher order thinking skills, e.g. *to use questions in order to gain maximum information; to seek and to give explanations; to discuss different possible solutions to problems; to argue a point of view; to persuade others; to examine fact and fiction, bias and objectivity*
- The school uses oral language in developing children's reading comprehension skills.

***Strand: Oral language Strand unit: Emotional and imaginative development through language.***

- Children are encouraged to explore experiences and feelings through talk, writing, play and drama.

***Discrete Oral Language time:***

During this time specific oral language skills are taught and practised e.g. listening, memory training, vocabulary development, form, structure, use of language and grammar. Children are encouraged and taught to use correct pronunciation, grammar etc. when speaking. On occasions this may need to be done discretely by the teacher. Teaching strategies are carefully selected with the ultimate aim to develop children's confidence in speaking in small group/large group situations.

***Oral language across the curriculum:***

An integrated, incremental and thematic whole school approach will be adopted where possible in all curricular areas. The following examples show how the use of oral language in different subjects can be used to address the strands of the English curriculum. See relevant policies

- **Maths:** Guided discussion in developing strand units, the problem-solving process, and reporting on the process subsequently [Receptiveness to Language]
- **P.E.:** Use of terminology, e.g. football/rounders/basketball terms; Use of sports' events to promote language development. [Competence and confidence in using language]
- **Science:** Use of terminology, process of investigating and reporting on findings ([Developing cognitive abilities through language]
- **SPHE:** Exploring relevant themes through the medium of talk and discussion [Emotional and imaginative development through language]

## Reading

### **Strand: Reading; Strand unit: Receptiveness to language.**

- Children are encouraged to appreciate the usefulness and pleasures of reading as it is policy of the school to introduce the children from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class to as many books as possible.
- The following strategies are used to develop literacy, e.g. *acquiring an appreciation of the conventions of text, knowledge of the terminology and conventions of books, an ability to use a range of reading and comprehension skills*
- Approaches to reading are based on the children's general language development and decisions are taken on the nature, quality and extent of language activity that is needed to support the introduction of reading.

### **Strand: Reading; Strand unit: Competence and confidence in using language**

The class teachers, at every level, provide for an appropriate print rich environment e.g. *labels, posters, charts, captions, language-experience charts, library, ICT resources, dictionaries, newspapers*

- The following schemes are used:
  - Starlight (Folens) – all classes

<b>Class Level</b>	<b>Name of Reader</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	(i) Starlight Core Reader – 1 <sup>st</sup> Class (ii) Starlight Skills Book – 1 <sup>st</sup> Class (iii) Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book – 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	(i) Starlight Core Reader – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class (ii) Starlight Skills Book – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class (iii) Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	Year 1: Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Class Year 2: Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book – 4 <sup>th</sup> Class
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Class	Year 1: Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book – 5 <sup>th</sup> Class Year 2: Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book – 6 <sup>th</sup> Class

- Supplementary Reading as follows:

<b><i>Class Level</i></b>	<b><i>Name of Novel/Reader</i></b>
Infant Classes	(i) PM Starters Phase 2, 3 & 4 (ii) Oxford Reading Tree 2-5
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	A classroom selection
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	A selection, rented from the City Library
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Class	(i) Reaching The Heights (ii) Boy In The Striped Pyjamas (iii) Holes (iv) War Horse (v) Hunger (vi) The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips

All schemes are selected on the basis of suitability for children with varying needs. Schemes are reviewed annually by all teachers prior to formulating of booklists.

- Alternative reading material such as supplementary readers, textbooks from other areas of the curriculum, big books, ICT programmes, novels, library books etc are also used.
- A reading culture is promoted in the school through activities such as DEAR (Drop Everything And Read). A book fair is organised regularly (Setanta Books).
- The school puts great emphasis on the role of the home in relation to the emergent reader. Teachers stress the importance of parents reading to/with children on our Open Night (usually held mid to late February).
- Early intervention programmes eg. Literacy Lift Off is implemented from Senior Infants to 4<sup>th</sup> Class (See Literacy Lift Off Policy at end of Plan).
- Authors, poets, journalists or other writers are invited to read and speak to the children.

#### *Key elements of emergent reading in infant classes*

- The school supports the emergent reader through implementation of a pre-reading and emergent reading programme using resources/materials such as *large format/big books, shared readers, class readers, language-experience material, print-rich environment etc*
- In the early years the following word identification strategies are used: *phonetical clues, blending, picture clues, contextual clues.*
- A basic sight vocabulary – the Dolch List – is taught from Junior Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> class.
- The Jolly Phonics programme is currently being implemented throughout the school. It operates from Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class.

#### *Key elements of instructional reading in the school (Senior Infants to Second class)*

- Continuity and progression from class to class is ensured through the reading scheme, core curriculum and teacher contact
- Children are exposed to a range of expository, narrative, diagrammatic, representational text
- The word identification strategies that are used are the same as in the early years including: *phonetical clues, blending, picture clues, contextual clues, sight vocabulary*
- Children are introduced to formal reading instruction at an appropriate stage in their language development in Junior Infants
- Poetry and fiction are used as a springboard for activities such as writing, drama, SPHE, SESE, Visual, Arts.

### *Key elements in developing independent reading in the school*

- The key elements in developing independent reading in this school include:
  - *Paired/shared reading from junior infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, Drop Everything And Read (or Silent Reading), book reports/reviews, class novel, magazines and newspaper articles where appropriate*
- The print-rich environment further enhances reading at this stage.
- Use is made of group work/active learning, e.g. paired reading, reading with parents, buddies, discussions
- Class novels are used from 1<sup>st</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

### ***Strand: Reading; Strand unit: Developing cognitive abilities through language***

- Strategies used to develop the children's cognitive abilities i.e. developing interests, attitudes, information retrieval skills and the ability to think include: *re-telling, re-calling, analysing and interpreting characters, situations and events, prediction, developing comprehension strategies, seeking and giving recommendations etc.*
- Oral language activity is emphasised in the development of comprehension skills. Comprehension strategies are taught on a school wide basis.

### ***Strand: Reading; Strand unit: Emotional and imaginative development through language.***

Strategies are used to foster emotional and imaginative development through story, poetry, drama include: *listening, sharing, imagining, reading with expression, responses (to character, plot...) etc*

## **Writing**

### ***Strand: Writing; Strand unit: Receptiveness to language.***

- Children experience a classroom environment that encourages writing through e.g.
  - encouragement to write for and present to different audiences
  - encouragement to choose their own topics for writing
  - providing arrangements for group work, e.g. co-operative stories, class anthologies, project work, peer-editing
  - exploring different genres
- The role of oral language is a central part of the writing process and must be engaged in before writing takes place

### ***Strand: Writing; Strand unit: Competence and confidence in using language.***

- Topics are selected for writing through linkage with oral language and reading themes; writing from their own experiences/ideas etc
- All the conventions of grammar/punctuation can be developed through the writing process and this is approached and progressed throughout the school by each teacher. Please refer to appendix
- In planning writing, children are introduced to a variety of strategies, e.g. *brainstorming, webbing, research,*
- Strategies are used to develop the ability to use different genres of writing through giving children the opportunities to write e.g. birthday invitation, writing to seek information, diaries, reports, etc.

### *Key elements in the early writing stage in the school*

- In the infant classroom the children first use all forms of written expression (scribbles, drawings, lines, letters etc.) and this eventually evolves to use of letters and words.

- Children are introduced to the concept of writing through a print-rich environment, language experience materials, teacher modelling writing, teacher acting as scribe, early reading, copying letters and words informally.

*Key elements in the development of handwriting skills in the school*

- In 2020, the school focused on the PLC element of 'Handwriting' and as part of our school improvement plan, decided to focus on the script (print) style of handwriting throughout the school.
- The school uses the 'Handwriting Made Easy – Print Style' (CJ Fallon) from Junior Infants to 4<sup>th</sup> Class and 'Write This Way – Book 6' (Folens) in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class.

*The development of spellings skills*

- The focus of planning is on the child's acquisition of spelling skills and his/her progress with spelling.

***Strand: Writing; Strand unit: Developing cognitive abilities through language.***

- Children are encouraged to clarify their thoughts through writing through the process of drafting and redrafting
- The following genres are introduced: stories, descriptions, explanations, argument, letters, notes, diaries, recipes, writing in other curricular areas, records of learning, reactions to reading, complete books.
- Integration: Writing is incorporated into most subject areas. It is the main method children have of recording their work and expressing themselves.

***Strand: Writing; Strand unit: Emotional and imaginative development through language.***

- Children's expressive and communicative abilities are developed through the writing process through the opportunities to draw and write about feelings, likes and dislikes, write stories, listen to music and write about it, write about favourite moments, characters, reactions to poems etc
- Poetry is used to expose children to a different use of language. Children are encouraged to explore and use a variety of poetry forms. Children memorise a set list of poetry per class.

**3. Assessment and Record Keeping:**

Teachers ensuring that a broad range of assessment tools is being used including:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks/tests
- Portfolios of children's work
- Checklists/profiles
- Standardised tests:
  - MIST (late in second term of senior infants)
  - MICRA-T Reading (for 1st to 6th Class pupils each year in May)
  - Diagnostic tests listed in Special Education Policy
- Standardised tests are used in accordance with instructions given with the test.
- Teachers assess on a continuous basis through observation; weekly (for spelling etc); at the end of each term; and the standardised tests as above.

**What use is made of the results of assessments?**

- Assessments are used to inform class teaching e.g. we look at scores from MICRA-T
- Examine and adjust our methodologies accordingly.
- To select children for learning support/early intervention.
- Teachers discuss children on an ongoing basis and share information with each other, with parents, through parent-teacher meetings (formal and informal). These results are also shared with other professionals such as psychologists, speech and language therapists
- Each teacher keeps records of class results/observations. Full scores of standardised tests are kept by individual teachers and teachers have access to results on the Aladdin system.
- Results are also stored in the Principal's office
- Teachers' records are kept in classroom for the year and results of written tests are passed on to the next class teacher where applicable
- Standardised tests are kept until the children are 21 years of age. All results are kept on the Aladdin system. Each teacher has access to the records of their own class. Principal has access to all records. Special Education Teachers have access to relevant records. Records are given to parents.

#### **4. Children with Different Needs:**

##### *Children with learning disabilities*

- Children with learning disabilities have Student Support Files (SSF's) made out by the Special Education Teacher, in consultation with Class Teacher, Parents, Principal and/or other professionals e.g. psychologists, OT, Speech & Language therapists, Physiotherapists etc.
- Teachers support and ensure the participation of these children in language activities by differentiating the curriculum and all children are included in the lessons
- The specific responsibilities of class, learning-support, resource teachers are outlined in our Special Educational Needs policy
- The specific role and responsibilities of the special needs assistant as outlined by the Department of Education and their specific responses to the needs of individual children are governed by Principal and Class Teacher.

##### *Children with exceptional ability*

The school supports children of exceptional ability through

- Differentiated programme within the classroom and/or homework
- Differentiated reading programmes
- Use of ICT
- Independent research projects
- Working with parents – guiding them towards developing the special talents a gifted child may have

#### **5. Equality of Participation and Access:**

Equality of participation and access is ensured in the English Curriculum through:

- Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussions, presentations etc
- Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in reading activities
- Teachers are cognisant of developmental differences between boys and girls when starting to read
- Teachers are aware of gender differences in reading. They select reading material suitable for both genders.

- Teachers are conscious of gender difference in writing readiness
- Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in writing activities
- Boys and girls have equal access to, and opportunities to use, ICT
- All children have access to services, facilities and amenities in the school environment

# Organisational Planning

## 6. Timetable

Time is allocated at each level for English as laid out in the *Literacy and Numeracy* Strategy for Learning and Life 2011

- Discrete time is timetabled for elements of the language programme at the discretion of individual teachers
- The process of language learning is naturally developed through integrated activities and thematic/cross curricular approach

## 7. Homework:

- English homework reflects the active-learning approach as described in the curriculum
- The homework is tailored to the needs and abilities of the class and special consideration is given to some pupils
- There is co-ordination between the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher in setting homework assignments to avoid overlapping of homework. This co-ordination varies depending on the abilities and needs of the child.

## 8. Library:

- Class libraries are used in our school.
- There is a wide range of books available from the class libraries and shared-reading activities including a variety of fiction, non-fiction and poetry to cater for the range of abilities at all levels
- There is a reading corner for younger children in most classes
- Each class teacher organises their own class library. Children change their books daily/weekly and this is monitored by each class teacher
- Book fairs (Setanta Books) are also held every two/three years. Money is provided for buying books from a small proportion of central funds in the school
- Children are encouraged to do book reviews/make presentations

## 9. Resources and ICT:

In our school, we have the following resources to facilitate the implementation of our plan.

- Starlight (Folens) Language Programme;
- Building Bridges of Understanding
- Jolly Phonics Programme which includes a DVDs, manuals, posters and charts
- Sets of Class Novels for 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes (including access to Cork City Library rentals)
- Ancillary materials from language scheme which include resource books, posters, worksheets, flashcards, tapes and CDs;
- Well stocked classroom libraries including a selection of Big Books
- Prim-Ed Copymasters etc.
- Drama / dressing up box
- Selection of toys, phones etc
- Interactive Whiteboards
- CD player in each classroom; and a laptop in each classroom
- iPads (25)

If a pupil requires assistive technology e.g. computer software/hardware this can be identified by the class teacher/SET teacher in the child's Student Support File (SSF).

- ICT is used to help children present their work
- ICT can be used to develop writing in differing genres, e.g. project-work, displays, poetry, newsletters
- Children research famous authors, poets, scientists, others, using the Internet
- The appropriate hardware and software have been installed to ensure internet safety. Teachers usually familiarise themselves with material on websites prior to use by the children. There is ongoing monitoring of these sites.

### **10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting:**

- The whole-school plan, through core curriculum and agreed policies, and the curriculum documents for English provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short-term planning
- The Cuntas Míósúil serves as a statement of the aims, objectives and content covered and helps in reviewing and developing the whole school plan/individual teacher preparation for following years.

### **11. Staff Development:**

- Staff development needs are identified through review and discussion at staff meetings. When needs are identified, an action plan is devised to ensure that such needs are adequately addressed. Responses may include the organisation of a staff development day/session, engagement of external expertise, attendance by a representative of the staff at specific in-service and/or the provision of required resource materials.
- Notices of upcoming courses are circulated to each staff member via email. Staff members who have attended courses are given opportunities to report back to other staff members during time allocated at staff meetings or a staff development day.
- Notice boards are located in the staff room.

### **12. Parental Involvement:**

- Parents are made aware of the central importance of oral language in the learning process during the information night for new entrants, during parent-teacher meetings and other informal meetings during the year.
- Parents are encouraged to involve children in purposeful language activity, through chatting with children and to extend conversations through further questioning and prompting. Parents are also made aware of the importance of discussing pictures in readers.
- Our school supports parents in accessing suitable reading materials through the Setanta book club and being available to discuss and advise parents' choice of material
- Parents can support their child's reading through paired reading, visiting local library, reading stories, reading environmental print, Setanta book club, visiting book fairs, buying books as presents etc
- Parents can assist in the development of their child's writing in the early years through pre-writing activities such as colouring, marla, cutting, threading etc, through practising letter formation at home and encouraging the children to scribble, draw and write frequently. Parents can assist further up the school by encouraging neat presentation of their children's work and through showing an interest in, listening to and praising written efforts.

- Parents can be involved in using ICT to support language learning through using software which achieves this.
- Information can be shared with parents through presentations at induction meetings for
  - new pupils, discussion at parent teacher meetings, the school's facebook page and website

### **13. Community Links:**

In recent years we have developed active links with our local community to promote pupils' learning.

- Local storytellers, authors and poets visit our school to read and share their work.
- We encourage the children to talk with their grandparents and others in the locality regarding its history and folklore.
- Contributions from the children are encouraged and welcomed for the school's facebook page/website
- Pupils display their work in Cloughduv Church at First Communion and Confirmation occasions.
- The following members of the community become involved in supporting the language programme – fireman, garda, farmer, nurse, vet etc – through visiting various classes in our school. They enhance specific language development in the area of occupations
- Local literature has been gathered as children progress through the school in the curricular areas of history and geography. Much of this literature has been sourced from local people
- Children's work is displayed in the corridors on several noticeboards

## **Review and Implementation**

The plan was reviewed and updated in April 2021 by Cathal Brophy (Principal), in consultation with Teaching and Special Education staff, and will be reviewed on a 3-year basis

Date for review: April 2024