

Scoil Mháirtín Whole School Plan for English

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Introductory statement

First draft:

The following policy is the first draft carried out by Scoil Mháirtín by English committee following many meetings and consultation with other staff.

Rationale:

This policy is a combined reflective response to the needs of the revised curriculum and of considerable importance to the whole school policy on English.

Aims:

We at Scoil Mháirtín, endorse the aims of the curriculum as stated on page 10 of the curriculum.

1. Promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language-spoken, read and written.
2. Create, foster and maintain the child's interest in expression and communication.
3. Develop the child's ability to engage appropriately in listener- speaker relationships.
4. Develop confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
5. Enable child to read and write independently.
6. Enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experiences.

Oral Language

Developing receptiveness to oral language in order to:

- Create meaning, listen
- Attend to others
- Aware of content
- Correct grammar, tone
- Pitch and emphasis, body language

Oral Language; Junior Infants – 6th Class

Children are encouraged to use oral language incidentally, integration, as an English plan and in discrete time.

Strategies

Oral language is used as a basis for reading and writing. All lessons are introduced with an oral language activity. The development of oral language takes place across all subjects and throughout the whole school day. Sometimes oral language is used as an alternative to written exercises in developing children's comprehension skills. In an effort to develop higher thinking skills the teachers use questions:

- To gain maximum information
- To seek and 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 etc.

Discrete Oral Language Time

Form, structure, use of language and grammar are addressed during Discrete Oral Language Time. 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/large group situations.

Organisational Setting

Teachers use a variety of organisational settings for development of oral language, such as pair work, group work, whole class discussion, formal and informal debates and circle work.

These relate to:

- Receptiveness to language
- Competence and confidence in oral language
- Developing cognitive ability through language
- Emotional and imaginative development through oral language

Aim of Oral Language Programme

The *Starways* scheme is the basis of our oral language scheme.

- Vocabulary development
- Create confidence
- Social skills i.e. communication and turn taking
- Providing pupils with correct usage in relation to language
- Developing listening skills is seen as an important part of our oral language scheme

Junior & Senior Infants

Content:

- *Starways Now You're Talking* Scheme
- Nursery Rhymes
- Stories – teacher and child reading
- Big books
- News time
- Plays and drama
- Incidental conversation
- Circle time/ poetry
- Oral language games e.g. Simon Says . . .

1st & 2nd Class

Content:

- Starways *Now You're Talking* Scheme
- Stories – developing characters, predicting
- Stories – teacher/child reading
- News – topical, general, national topics
- Circle time
- Memory games
- Literacy games
- Poetry

3rd & 4th Class

Content:

- Starways *Streets Ahead*
- Oral language games/activities
- Paired & group work
- Improvisational drama
- Circle time
- Memory games
- Listening games
- Novel discussion
- Brain storming
- Topical discussions

5th & 6th Class

Content:

- Starways *More Blarney* section
- Discuss issues of major concern
- Giving directions
- Role play
- Debating – terms
- Memory games
- Listening games
- Circle time
- Novel discussion
- Pair/group work

Writing

Junior & Senior Infants

The child should be enabled to:

- draw a picture and write about it (creative writing)
- write about everyday experiences – news
- write naming word from class reader and classroom environment

Penmanship

- Write Here book A (Folens)
- Handwriting- Letterland copy, news copy, homework copies, red and blue lined copies
- Pattern work and formation, letter formation

1st & 2nd Class

The child should be enabled to:

- Write in a variety of genres – stories, lists, letters
- Writing sight words and most commonly used words – Murray McNally – sight words into sentences
- Write an explanation, description.
- Write simple sentences and add words to extend meaning.
- Write questions about a story
- Write about each picture
- Picture – sentences, Stories of 1 or 2 lines
- Adding to a story

Penmanship

- Handwriting copies – red and blue lines
- Modern handwriting 2A, cursive writing in 2nd class

Process writing

- 1,2,3, sentence stories
- Draft and redraft twice a month

3rd & 4th Class

The child should be enabled to:

- Write in a variety of genres – dictation, letters
- Write a story with a beginning, middle and end
- Summarise
- Write about ideas encountered in other areas of curriculum
- Write directions
- List of questions
- Expand and clarify through drafting and re-drafting
- Penmanship
- Modern handwriting workbook book3,4

Process Writing

- Draft and re-draft whole work once a month. At other times re-draft one paragraph.
- Edit and redraft as a class
- Story on the board

Grammar

Lift off and spellbound

5th & 6th Class

The child should be enabled to:

- Write in a variety of genres
- Examine characteristics that differentiate oral and written language
- Reflect / analyse through writing
- Expand and clarify through drafting and redrafting
- Use notes to summarise and write an account
- Argue the case in writing
- Explore the use of compound and complex sentences in expressing thought

Penmanship

- Children develop their own style of handwriting
- Neat, tidy, legible
- Use of margins, date and title

Process writing

- Draft and re-draft whole work or selected paragraphs

Grammar

Lift off, Streets Ahead and spellbound

Agreed Editing Symbols re: Drafting of written work

Class	Symbols being used
1 st & 2 nd Class	C-to denote capital letters Sp – to denote incorrect spellings
3 rd & 4 th Class	C-to denote capital letters Sp – to denote incorrect spellings ^ - Letter omitted
5 th & 6 th Class	C-to denote capital letters Sp – to denote incorrect spellings ^ - Letter omitted • - New paragraph

Reading

In every class there are children with different reading abilities. The teacher caters for these different abilities in a sensitive manner and strives to develop confidence in the child as they learn to read. It is important that children taste success while reading. This is done by ensuring that the material they read is appropriate to their ability. The material can be taken from any area of the curriculum.

Every child in each class from Junior Infants to 6th Class is given an opportunity to read short or longer pieces of reading. (This can be prepared with weaker children in the class.)

The Class Reader: is gauged towards the child of average ability. The purpose of using a class reader is to develop reading skills such as using picture cues, word attack skills, dictionary work, comprehension, information retrieval skill etc. Teachers differentiate to meet each child's needs using questions which are gauged at different levels of ability.

Class Novels: The novel is used to give children the experience of using real books. Novels can be read independently or used in a class/group setting. Carefully selected class novels help to encourage children to read and draw the child's attention to descriptive text, development of plot, characters etc. It is expected that class teachers have read and are very familiar with novels before using them for class discussion. Workbooks are used to supplement the work being done with the novel. Real books are also used in infant classes - simple novels are read to them and Big Books are used in the early years.

Promoting Reading: World Book Day and associated activities are promoted in the school. Visits from local poets/authors are welcomed.

Reading Scheme: Junior Infants – 6th Class: *Starways* Programme (CJ Fallon) and novels.

Print Rich Environment/Resources:

- Notices
- Word/sight word lists
- Phonic charts
- Grammar charts
- Writing skills charts
- Information charts/labels
- Letterland charts
- Instructions/directions charts

Methodologies and Approaches for Reading: Teachers are in agreement that a number of methodologies are used in the classroom for reading:

- Silent reading (U.S.S.R./D.E.A.R.)
- Reading for an audience
- Reading for personal enjoyment/need
- Children reading their own written work
- Child reads to teacher
- Group reading
- Round Robin Reading
- Reading 1 to 1
- Paired reading
- Shared reading
- Guided reading
- Reading both narrative and informative texts

Organisation of Reading Lesson:

- Word identification skills/strategies
- Phonological awareness
- Basic sight vocabulary
- Reading for meaning
- Paired reading

Reading Resources:

Junior & Senior Infants

- Class Reader – 4 books for each class
- Big Books
- Additional readers – shared reading
- Additional literacy readers – Letterland, story books and school/class visiting the library and mobile library visits

1st & 2nd Class

- Class reader – Starways English Language programme
- Additional readers – information/fact/fiction – favourite books
- Class novels – teacher reading age appropriate novels to class *The Dinosaur Egg* – 1st class, *Hitch Up Your Roots and Walk* – 2nd class (Starways CJ Fallon)
- Library books – class/school/visiting mobile library, library books also used in paired reading and shared reading

3rd & 4th Class

- Class reader – Starways English Language programme
- Novel -From library/mobile library or teacher's choice *Spud Murphy* by Eoin Colfer – 3rd Class, *The Butterfly Lion* by Michael Murphy
- Additional Readers-Information books, Fact/fiction books, Magazines, Periodicals, Class library/school library/mobile library

5th & 6th Class

- Class reader – Starways English Language Programme
- Novel-Novel read to children by teacher e.g. *Narnia*, *Goodnight Mr. Tom*, *The Thief Lord*, *Under the Hawthorn Tree*
- Additional readers-Information Books, Fact/Fiction books, Magazines, Periodicals, Newspaper etc.

Phonics Programme

Junior & Senior Infants

Pupils have the opportunity to:

- Segment
- Blend
- Manipulate sounds in CVC & VCC words
- Switch phonemes and graphemes

Scheme used:

- Spellbound
- Letterland
- Supplemented by Look Listen and Learn, Sounds At Work, Streets Ahead

1st & 2nd Class

Pupils have the opportunity to:

- Develop and complete early code, VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCVCC, CCCVC etc

Scheme used:

- Look, Listen and Learn
- Spellbound
- Lift Off

3rd & 4th Class

- Initial and final blends
- Three letter blends
- Magic e
- Vowel diagraphs
- Consonant diagraphs
- Soft g and hard g
- Silent letters
- Syllables
- Compound words

Scheme used:

- Lift Off

5th & 6th Class

- Word endings e.g. -ought, -sion, -ture
- Three letter blends

- All silent letters
- Compound words

Scheme used:

- Lift Off

Spellings

Senior Infants

- While officially spellings begin in first class, if the children are capable and using the developmental stages of 1) using sound- letter relationships, 2) using pattern 3) using meaning then spelling can be introduced in senior infants. The ‘look, say, cover, write’ approach is used.

1st Class

- Formal spelling scheme – spellbound A
- Informal spelling scheme – dolce list
- Using the ‘look, say, cover write and check’ approach
- Spell check

2nd Class

- Formal spelling scheme – Spellbound B
- 100 high frequency words
- Using the ‘look, cover, write and check’ approach.
- 4 spellings each night
- 16 spellings on Friday test

3rd Class

- Formal spelling scheme – Spellbound C
- Informal – Basic sight vocabulary
- Oral spellings with phonic words
- Spellings are asked and corrected every day
- Dolce Sight test
- Formal test on Friday

4th Class

- Formal Spelling Scheme – Spellbound D

- Supplemented by 4 spellings every night
- Spelling test on Friday

5th Class

- Formal spelling scheme – Spellbound E
- Oral and dictation
- Formal test on Friday

6th Class

- Formal Spelling Scheme – Spellbound F
- Oral spellings daily
- Formal test on Friday

I.T. in English

Junior & Senior Infants: will undertake word related activities on the literacy/phonics programme Letterland.

1st – 6th Class: Word processing for re-drafting and displaying work. Senior classes will type different pieces for project work.

A variety of word games are used on PCs.

Resource/ Learning Support: Certain programmes such as ‘Fuzz Buzz’, Word Shark’.

Poetry

Poetry should have a special place in children’s language experience. Children’s engagement with poetry should be governed by the ‘pleasure principle’. Teachers and pupils have their own individual personal tastes in poetry. It is important to have flexibility in the selection of poetry by an individual class. However there are some set poems for each class so that each child will have a collection of poems learned on leaving primary school.

Compulsory poems:

Infants:

- Nursery rhymes in Rhyme Away book.

1st Class:

- The Dustman

- A-choo
- Bubbles
- Upside down
- Twinkle, Twinkle Chocolate Bar

2nd Class:

- The Haunted House by John Foster
- Stegosaurus by Wendy Lamont
- Sand by John Foster
- (Taken from Jill's New Rollerblades Starways CJ Fallon)

3rd Class:

- To a Squirrel at Kyle-na-no by W.B. Yeats
- My Puppy by Aileen Fisher
- My Playmate by Mary I. Osborn
- (Taken from Bright Sparks CJ Fallon)

4th Class:

- Me - Blue Skies
- Greedy Dog – Blue Skies
- Two Witches Discuss Good Grooming – Lift Off
- The Wolf's Excuse – Lift Off

5th Class:

- Leisure by W.H. Davies
- My Room by Patrick Kavanagh
- A Soft Day – Winifred M. Letts (Irish Poems for Young People)

6th Class:

- The Lake Isle of Inisfree by W.B. Yeats
- I Have a Dream by Leah Waldron
- The Listeners by Walter de la Mear

Junior Classes: emphasis is on rhymes, riddles, nursery rhymes and jingles. These emphasise poetry as a special use of language for use as class/group recitations.

Senior Classes: wide range of poetry in use e.g. humorous, narrative (including traditional ballads, modern ballads and folk songs) and lyric. Poems used should touch on children's experiences as well as engaging their imaginations. Particular emphasis on 20th-century Irish writing appropriate to their age is essential.

Poetry will encompass:

- Seasons
- Festivals
- Home and family relationships
- Nature
- Magic and mystery
- Story
- History and mythology
- Humour
- Children's preoccupations and interests
- Other areas of the curriculum
- A concern for broadening and deepening children's tastes
- Events in the wider world

Developing children's responses: Children can approach a poem in a number of ways –

- read it silently
- listen to another pupil reading it
- teacher can read it aloud
- listen to a professional reading of it on a recording
- listen to teacher reading it aloud as they follow it in a text.

The teacher's role is to encourage the children's response by prompting children to:

- look for the thrust of the poem
- distinguish the deeper meaning
- appreciate how words are used to achieve particular effects
- appreciate the effects of rhythm and rhyme
- examine the function of repetition
- recognise the effects of simile and metaphor
- Examine the effects of alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance and imagery
- Compare 2 or more poems on the same topic.

Teachers Planning and Preparation

- Teachers use curriculum guidelines and English school plan to prepare long and short term schemes
- At the end of each month each teacher provides a written summary of work covered in the English programme to principal (Cúntas Míósúil)
- Staff development, courses organised by staff member and course planning days
- Every teacher receives a plan on school English policy

Staff Development

- Staff consultation / discussion re teacher planning and preparation/ implementation of English programme etc.
- Consultation with cuiditheóir service
- Staff notification on staff board of all upcoming courses / seminars etc... i.e. Cork Teacher Centre
- Liaison between class teachers and SEN teachers

Parental/Community links

- Pantomimes, local drama
- Invitation to parents to attend school performances – drama / plays
- Visiting author/outsider
- Parental assistance in redrafting written work – writing competitions / projects
- Display of children's written work in church, halla, classrooms, local credit union etc.
- Spell check system, parent/pupil/teacher link
- Written communication via homework journal
- P/T meetings and school reports
- Induction day

Success Criteria

- Analysis of Drumcondra results
- Teacher observation
- Weekly/ monthly/ termly tests
- Discussion at staff meetings

Implementation

This English plan is being implemented at present and under ongoing review by both the English committee and the whole school staff.

Review

Assessment & Record Keeping

We use assessment for the following reasons:

- To provide the teacher with continuous detailed information about children's knowledge.
- To design appropriate learning activities
- To identify individual needs
- To plan future learning experiences
- To monitor the rate of children's language development

The following are the assessment tools used in this subject area

- Teacher observation
- Standardised assessment is administered on an annual basis during the last term. The tests in use are Drumcondra and the M.I.S.T. in senior infants.
- Diagnostic assessment is administered as required at learning support level.
- Informal assessment by the class teacher is conducted on an ongoing basis.

Test results are used in the following ways:

- To establish the needs of individual pupils and to inform future planning.
- Samples of the written work of individual pupils are collated to keep a record of his/her performance in different areas over the period of a school year.
- To pass on to the next year teacher when the child is moving class.
- Teachers will devise their own marking systems for spelling etc in the form of a checklist.

Communicating

- The results of tests will be made available to the Principal and other Teachers and to Department of Education and Science Inspectors, as necessary.

Equality of Participation and Access

- We are committed to the provision of equal opportunities to all our pupils in the implementation of our English programme
- Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in all language activities
- All text books are selected with equality in mind.
- Teachers are aware that gender differences regarding reading and writing readiness can exist between boys and girls and take account of this in their class planning.
- We encourage gender awareness through promoting consideration of the roles associated with men and women in literature, the media and advertising.
- All children regardless of background have access to all services, facilities and amenities in the school environment.

