

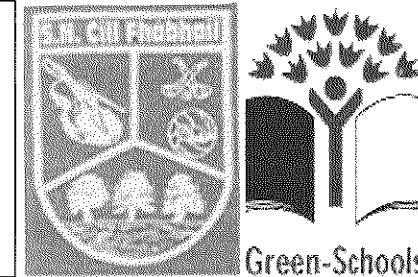
# Killavil NS- Whole School English Plan

*Killavil National School*

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## Introductory Statement

The plan was prepared by the staff of Killavil NS during the 2024/2025 school year following on from the publication and implementation of new Primary Language Curriculum. A collaborative approach was adopted when writing this plan to ensure that all staff share a sense of ownership in the planning process. It is hoped that this school plan will be a useful tool for teachers, providing them with clear guidelines in the teaching of English, as well as ensuring consistency and continuity in practice throughout the school.

## Rationale

In Killavil NS we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils and language is key to the development of the child as a person. In developing this whole-school plan for literacy, we aim to:

- To provide an overview of the English curriculum throughout the school.
- To benefit teaching and learning in our school.
- To provide a framework in which more specific planning can take place.
- To conform to principles of learning outlined in the Primary Language Curriculum.

## Our Vision

In Killavil NS, we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils in order to assist them to contribute and play a fulfilling role in their own community. We see the development of their language skills as being 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. It is our belief that their academic progress depends to a large extent on their ability to communicate orally and through written word. In this school, we attach great

importance to giving pupils a command of the English language. We see the teaching of English as something which underpins all other subjects across the primary curriculum. We believe that language learning is a tool for lifelong learning.

## **Aims and Objectives of Primary Language Curriculum**

### *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 to 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 language, gestures and tools to communicate with people in a variety of contexts and situations.
- Enable children to fully engage with and enjoy a wide range of relevant and meaningful linguistic and communicative experiences with peers and adults.
- 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.

### *3. Children's language learning*

- 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.
- 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
- 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
- Support children to develop their literacy skills and enable them to progress at their own learning pace in oral language, reading and writing.

## In teaching language, we aim to:

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

## Curricular planning

The whole school plan and the Primary Language Curriculum will seek to provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short term planning.

Class teachers will be required to produce:

- Yearly
- Fortnightly plans in conjunction with the New Primary Language Curriculum.

The Cuntas Míosúil will be used to measure the success of the English plan and will inform teachers' preparation for the following month.

Circular 0056/2011 suggests schools increase the time spent on literacy to 6.5 hours in infants and 8.5 hours to seniors with *priority to the first language of the school*. Time spent on English is 4 hours per week for Infant classes with a shorter day and 5 hours for Senior classes for students with a full day. This is approx. 48 minutes per day for infants and 60 minutes per day for other classes.

The process of language learning is naturally developed through integrated activities and through a thematic/cross-curricular approach.

## Strands and elements

Across the strands of oral language, reading and writing, the elements describe essential language learning. Each element has a set of Learning Outcomes, which describe important language learning in terms of concepts, dispositions and skills.

*The elements of language learning across each of the strands are:*

1. Developing communicative relationships through language.
2. Understanding the content and structure of language.
3. Exploring and using language.

## ORAL LANGUAGE

### Language Needs Within Our School:

Within the context of Killavil National School, we are aware that there is a huge diversity in the oral language skills of children entering our school. Therefore, the pivotal role that oral language plays as an integrating factor in all aspects of the English program is recognised. As Killavil is a very small school, children have ample opportunity to develop their oral language skills on a daily basis. Children work in a range of situations – developing the ability to question, explain and present ideas; give and understand instructions; plan, discuss, tell stories and take part in collaborative and exploratory play. They will learn to develop confidence, precision and competence in reasoning, predicting, recalling and expressing feelings.

### Broad Objectives

The aim of this plan is to provide a structured sequential programme for teachers to enable children to:

1. Gain pleasure and fulfilment from language activities.
2. Develop the capacity to express intuitions, feelings, impressions, ideas and reactions in response to real and imaginary situations through talk and discussion and the development of ideas.
3. Develop fluency, explicitness and confidence in communication.
4. Develop listening skills, language conventions, vocabulary, aesthetic response and language manipulation.

For the learner outcomes for oral language for each stage please refer to the Primary Curriculum at the following link:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/curriculum-areas/primary-language/>

	Junior and Senior Infants	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Class
Programmes Used/Interventions used to implement these outcomes	Vocabulary development through Picture books  <u>My News</u>  Discrete oral language lessons  <u>Station teaching</u>  <u>Phonics programme:</u>  Jolly phonics in junior and Senior infants  <u>Just Phonics Workbook</u>  <u>Phonemic Awareness:</u>  Station teaching for junior and	Station teaching  <u>My News</u>  Discrete oral language lessons  <u>Phonics programme:</u>  <u>Jolly Phonics</u>	Oral reports and presentations (Both individual and collaborative).  Literacy groups  Guided reading  Selection of oral language games (Word association, I went to the shop and bought ... etc)	Oral reports and presentations. (Both individual and collaborative).  Literacy groups  Guided reading  Selection of oral language games (Word association, I went to the shop and bought ... etc)

	senior infants DEAR time in senior infants Building Bridges	DEAR time Building Bridges		
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## oral Language Methodologies

### Approach to Oral Language:

While oral language exercises still provide support for other literacy tasks, the focus of oral language development shifts to include more advanced skills including the ability to articulate opinions and ideas, to formulate questions, to process information when listening and to organise ideas in logical order. While oral language activities are used in every area of the Primary Curriculum, specific discrete time is allocated towards oral language lessons within the English programme in order to develop advanced receptive and productive skills. As much as possible, student “talking-time” will be maximised across the curriculum in order to provide the widest range of opportunities to practice and develop skills in context.

The schools approach to Oral Language will draw on three areas of content:

#### 1. Discrete Oral Language

Form, structure, use of language and grammar are addressed during Discrete Oral Language time. Some of the discretionary curriculum time may be used for this. Children are encouraged and taught to use correct pronunciation, grammar etc. when speaking. Discrete oral language will be addressed using curriculum objectives as guidelines e.g.

- introducing oneself and others;
- greeting others and saying goodbyes;
- giving and receiving messages;
- discussing world news,
- using the telephone;
- making requests for information;

- giving directions;
- expressing appreciation;
- welcoming visitors;
- making a complaint;
- expressing sympathy, etc.

## **2. Integrating Oral language through the Reading and Writing Process**

The following oral language activities and skills will be developed through the teaching of reading and writing –

- language development through guided reading
- comprehension strategies e.g. think aloud – building bridges programme
- language experience approach,
- brainstorming at the pre-writing stage,
- peer-conferencing and conferencing with teacher,
- children in author's chair,
- use of novel,
- use of real-life scenarios
- writing process, etc.

## **3. Integrating Oral language across the Curriculum**

The following oral language skills will be targeted in an integrated way e.g.

- describing skills in Visual Arts
- listening skills in Music and PE
- turn taking
- expressing opinions
- Circle time in SPHE

There is an emphasis on classroom organisation and methodologies that provide children with an opportunity to learn the form and structure of language and to use language discursively through questioning and for coherent expression. Teachers will incorporate a variety of organisational settings into the teaching and learning for development of Oral Language such as pair work, group work, whole class discussion, formal and informal debates and circle time. This plan reflects the use of

methodologies as described in the Primary Language Curriculum. There are some methodologies that are followed at whole school level and others that are more relevant to a particular stage of development. Listed below are a sample of methodologies employed in our school. This list is not exhaustive.

These methodologies include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active Learning</li><li>• Book discussion groups</li><li>• Collaborative/co-operative learning</li><li>• Direct teaching</li><li>• Free exploration of materials</li><li>• Free writing</li><li>• Guided discovery/enquiry</li><li>• Guided reading</li><li>• Station teaching</li><li>• Guided writing</li><li>• Improvisational drama</li><li>• Independent reading</li><li>• Independent writing</li><li>• Language experience</li><li>• Learning through play</li><li>• Library usage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modelled reading genre</li><li>• Modelled writing</li><li>• Modelling language</li><li>• Oral familiarisation</li><li>• Interview</li><li>• Paired reading/buddy/peer reading</li><li>• Play and games</li><li>• Presentation to audience</li><li>• Problem solving</li><li>• Reading</li><li>• Reading for purpose</li><li>• Reading to children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shared reading</li><li>• Shared writing skills through content</li><li>• Story</li><li>• Talk and discussion</li><li>• Use of ICT and multi-media</li><li>• Use of poetry and rhyme</li><li>• Sayings</li><li>• Song</li><li>• Drama</li><li>• Using the environment</li><li>• Yard games</li></ul>
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### Oral Language Strategies

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

- To gain maximum information
- To discuss different possible solutions to problems
- To seek and give explanations

- To argue a point of view
- To examine fact, fiction, bias and objectivity
- To persuade others
- To develop critical thinking

*In planning for oral language across the strands, the following contexts are utilised:*

- Talk and discussion
- Play and games
- Story
- Improvisational Drama
- Poetry and Rhyme

# READING

## **Broad Objectives:**

The aim of this plan is to provide a structured and sequential programme for teachers to enable children to:

1. Develop print awareness, phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and sight vocabulary.
2. Develop their comprehension and analytical strategies.
3. Expand their understanding and usage of grammar, syntax and punctuation.
4. Develop their appreciation of the richness and diversity of reading material.
5. Experience the pleasure and fulfilment to be gained from reading- DEAR time, paired reading, etc.
6. Develop skills to become fluent, confident and independent readers.

For the learner outcomes for reading for each stage please refer to the Primary Curriculum at the following link :

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/curriculum-areas/primary-language/>

	Junior and Senior Infants	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Class
Programmes/ Interventions	Station Teaching with SET Teacher & SNA  Small Groups/individual – SET	Station Teaching –  Small groups/Individual - SET  The PM readers  Access to library	Novels  The Primary Planet  Read at Home 3&4  Building Bridges  Over the Moon  Access to library  Station Teaching  Guided Reading  DEAR  Shared Reading/Buddy Reading Epic	Novels  The Primary Planet  Read at Home 5& 6  Building Bridges  Over the Moon  Access to library  Station Teaching  Guided Reading  DEAR  Shared Reading/Buddy Reading Epic

## **Approaches to Reading**

In this school, we consider the following components when planning for the teaching of reading:

- The children's general language development and sight vocabulary
- The central role of phonological and phonemic awareness
- The discrete teaching of reading skills and comprehension strategies
- The use of appropriate reading material
- The understanding that motivation and enjoyment are key aspects of the reading process

These approaches will be recognised at all stages of children's acquisition of reading i.e. from the emergent reader, to the instructional reader and to the independent reader.

### **Pre-Reading and Early Reading Experiences – Infant Classes**

The emphasis in Infant classes is on the development of pre-reading skills and shared reading experiences. This is characterised by activities that expose the children to the pleasure of reading and develop the skills, strategies and confidence required to negotiate and understand the features of print.

Big Books, nursery rhymes, poems, songs, picture books and library books are used to give the children opportunities to hear reading, talk about reading, handle books, appreciate and enjoy reading as well as begin to understand the conventions of text – left to right orientation, and the terminology of books.

### **Language Development and Sight Vocabulary**

A level of language acquisition and a basic sight vocabulary are important components the child needs before embarking on structured reading. In this school we aim to develop four types of vocabulary

- Listening vocabulary- the words we need to know to understand what we hear
- Speaking vocabulary- the words we use when we speak
- Reading vocabulary- the words we need to understand what we read
- Writing Vocabulary- the words we use in writing.

## **Basic Sight Vocabulary**

Basic sight vocabulary is an important component of the language base the child needs before embarking on a structured reading programme. It will be acquired from a number of sources, such as language experience material, large-format books and a print rich environment. Sight vocabulary will be developed through the teaching of common words, core words i.e. Dolch lists, high interest words and social sight vocabulary and sight vocabulary from the Starlight reading scheme.

## **Phonological Awareness**

The starting point for reading is the ability to recognise speech sounds. To support future reading, children must become aware that the words in their oral language are composed of small segments of sound in order to comprehend the way that language is represented by print. Therefore, before we expose children to print, we want to ensure that they have strong phonological awareness skills. Phonological awareness is considered an umbrella term that encompasses a range of subskills. These subskills include **word awareness, syllable awareness, onset–rime awareness and, crucially, phonemic awareness**.

Children will develop these skills using decodable readers e.g. Oxford Reading Tree, Dandelion Readers leading to Over the Moon scheme and library books. Children use levelled readers towards the end of Junior infants/beginning of Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> class, 2<sup>nd</sup> class. The child's level is based on their instructional reading level.

Phonemic Awareness activities begin for Junior Infants in September. The following early literacy skills will be developed, using playful learning opportunities and the Jolly Phonics Programme, – This programme is used in Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class. The teacher also uses the book - Phonological Awareness Skills from Prim-Ed.

- Listening
- Word Awareness
- Syllable Awareness
- Onset Rime Awareness
- Phonemes Identity: Initial Sounds
- Phonemes Identity: Final Sounds
- Phonemes Identity: Medial Sounds
- Phoneme Blending
- Phoneme Segmentation

## Phonics Chart:

<i>Junior Infants</i>	<p>Junior Infant children are systematically introduced to the 26 letters/sounds of the alphabet, from October onwards, using the Jolly Phonics programme. Each unit introduces six or seven letters. These groups of letters have been carefully chosen based on frequency of use, as well as to enable pupils to naturally begin blending and forming words.</p> <p>Children also learn the vowel digraphs: (ai, oa, ie, ee, or)</p>
<i>Senior Infants</i>	<p>Using Jolly Phonics: Senior Infant children revise the 26 letters/sounds of the alphabet, before learning the consonant digraphs (sh, ch, th, wh, ph), vowel digraphs (-ai-, -oa-, -ie-, ee, -or, -ue-), consonant blends (bl, br, cl, cr, fl, tr, fr, dr, gl, gr, pl, pr, sl, sm, sc, sk, sn, sm, sl, sw, sp, st) and long vowel sounds. Extra digraphs covered: ou, oi, ow, aw, ay, er, ar, oo.</p> <p>Word Families: -all, -ash, -ump, -ink, -ank</p> <p>Twin Letters: ss, ll, zz, ff.</p>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> class</i>	<p>Revising work completed in junior and senior infants. Children will also cover the following digraphs: ay, igh, y, ew, ue, oo, ee, ea, oi, ar, or, oy, al, er, nk, ir, ur, er, au and magic e.</p> <p>Spellwell 1</p> <p>Over The Moon Reading Programme</p>
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> class</i>	<p>Spellwell 2</p> <p>Homophones</p> <p>Plurals</p> <p>Hard c, soft c, hard g, soft g,</p> <p>Silent k,l,w</p> <p>Magic e.</p> <p>Over The Moon Reading Programme</p>
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> class</i>	<p>Spellings for Me</p> <p>Over the Moon Reader</p> <p>Long a,e,i,o,u sound, st blend, thesaurus work - ch and sh words, silent letters, syllables, compound words, hard c and soft c, hard g and soft g, au and aw sounds, rhyming sounds, homonyms, suffixes - tion and - sion and ph sound.</p>

<i>4<sup>th</sup> class</i>	<p>Spellings For Me</p> <p>Over the Moon Reader</p> <p>Long a,e,i,o,u sound</p> <p>st blend</p> <p>thesaurus work</p> <p>ch and sh words</p> <p>silent letters, syllables, compound words, rhyming sounds, homonyms, homographs, homophones</p> <p>hard c and soft c, hard g and soft g</p> <p>au and aw sounds,</p> <p>suffixes – tion –sion –ic –ick –able –ous, -ee and –ful</p> <p>prefixes dis- un- sur- ei or ie</p> <p>digraphs gh, ph</p>
<i>5<sup>th</sup> class</i>	<p>Spellings For Me</p> <p>Over the Moon reader</p> <p>Suffixes, -ant, -ent, -tion, -able, -ible, -ous, -ious, -er, -ar, -or, -ic and- ick, -ough, -sion, -ery, -ory, -ary, -ture, -ence, -ance, -le, -el, -il, -al, -ful, -some, -ment, -ness, -ace, -ade, -ate, -age, -are.</p> <p>Prefixes: un-, dis-, ex-,</p> <p>Silent letters</p> <p>Sounds - ie or ei</p> <p>Homophones</p> <p>Root words</p> <p>Rhyming words.</p>
<i>6<sup>th</sup> class</i>	<p>Spellings For Me</p>

	<p>Over the Moon reader</p> <p>Suffixes: -ies, -s, -cial, -tial, -able, -ible, -cy, -ist, -less, -ness, -ment, -th, -ht, -ful, -ward, -ture, -ous, -ious</p> <p>Prefixes: dis-, de-, ex-, en-, extra-, re-, pro-, en-, in-, inter-, un-, uni-, up-</p> <p>Silent letters, Root words, Rhyming words, Homophones</p> <p>Long e /u sound</p> <p>The /f/ sound spelled with 'ph'</p> <p>Consonant digraph ch, th</p> <p>Diphthongs /ou/ and/ow/</p> <p>Sounds - ie or ei</p>
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Using a multi-sensory approach each letter sound is introduced with fun actions, stories and songs. Word families are introduced as well as alternative spelling patterns and sound exception work.

Children can begin reading activities after the first group of letters have been taught. The progress of the pace of this scheme will be determined by the teacher as they see suitable.

**1. *Learning letter formation:***

This is taught alongside the introduction of each letter sound. Typically, children will learn how to form and write the letters down during the course of the lesson.

**2. *Blending***

Once the first few letter sounds are learnt, children begin blending the sounds together to help them read and write new words.

**3. *Segmenting:***

When children start reading words, they also need to start identifying the phonic components that make the word sound the way it does. By teaching blending and segmenting at the same time children become familiar with assembling and breaking down the sounds within words.

Children will develop these skills using decodable readers e.g. Songbirds, PM Readers, Oxford Reading Tree before progressing to the Starlight Reading Scheme in Junior Infants and Rainbow Reading Scheme in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. The child's level is based on their instructional reading level. This level is assessed by SET at the beginning of the teaching block.

## **Station Teaching**

In this school we use Station Teaching as an instructional approach to the teaching of reading and comprehension skills as well as oral language development. It allows for differentiated teaching to occur in small-groups.

Children are introduced to Station Teaching in junior infants when they have developed some early literacy skills, have a bank of sight vocabulary, have mastered some letter-sound relationships and understand that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension of the text. Station Teaching allows the teacher to explicitly teach vocabulary, fluency, word identification, comprehension strategies and writing skills, to observe children's application of strategies as they are engaged in the act of reading and to scaffold their efforts on the spot.

## **Comprehension Strategies**

Teachers explicitly teach specific strategies through the Building Bridges Programme, that relate to both factual texts and fictional texts by modelling the language and process for children. Comprehension skills are developed through oral, reading and written work with an emphasis on discussion.

## **Paired Reading**

Shared Reading is co-ordinated by the class teachers . Reading train between all classes and presentation of work between rooms.

## **Picture Books**

Picture books are used on a regular basis to consolidate themes taught throughout the year. There are a large number of picture books in the library to support teaching and learning in the junior classes.

## **Class Novels**

There is a range of class novels available for teachers to use. These novels cover a range of genres and assist with differentiated learning. Where possible there are audio versions available to assist with teaching and learning. Class novels can also be block booked through the local Libraries. The class novel can be used as reading material in a number of ways:

- Individualised reading
- Group reading
- Whole class reading
- Teacher reading aloud: modelling and demonstrating

## **Library**

Both classrooms have a class library. The class library has a wide range of books, which are available and suitable for all learning abilities.

Class teachers will be encouraged to visit local libraries with their class and will be encouraged to invite authors/mystery reader to the school. Visits to the library will be arranged, subject to transport.

**Poetry** – Poetry will be taught in the context of oral language, reading and writing.

- Through the use of poetry, we will expose the pupils to the experience of sounds of words, rhymes and rhythms, syllabication, wordplay and poetic licence.
- We will ensure that the pupils will develop an enjoyment for poetry through hearing and reciting poetry which will deal with topics of interest to the pupils
- Pupils will compose their own poems throughout the school year which will provide for the experience of this writing genre.
- Poetry will be integrated with other areas of the curriculum – Drama, SPHE, special occasions and Music.

**In each class pupils will:**

- learn poems and rhymes off by heart
- enjoy poetry
- discuss poetry

- respond to poetry - through discussions, drama, art, movement etc.
- self-expression through the medium of poetry - compose poems

### Use of Dictionaries

Dictionaries are used from 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Class up. Formal time is devoted to teaching the children how to use a dictionary correctly. Pupils also have access to online dictionaries and thesauruses using the tablets.

# WRITING

### **Broad objectives:**

This plan aims to provide a structured and sequential programme for teachers to enable children to:

1. Write clearly and fluently with the correct letter formation.
2. Use a wide range of vocabulary.
3. Use grammar and punctuation appropriately.
4. Write in a wide variety of genres encompassing differing styles, purposes, audiences and level of formality.
5. Experience opportunities to develop presentation, editing and publishing skills with the aid of free writing copies.
6. Engage in collaborative writing experiences.
7. Develop a high standard of penmanship using print writing.

For the learner outcomes for writing for each stage please refer to the Primary Curriculum at the following link:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/curriculum-areas/primary-language/>

	Junior and Senior Infants	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Class
<b>Programmes Used/ Interventions</b>	Free Writing Copies Jolly Phonics Genre writing Plan Shared writing Station Teaching	Free Writing Copies Project Work and Presentations	Free Writing Copies Project Work and Presentations Genre writing plan ICT – laptops and tablets Pobble The Literacy Shed Reading Zone Guided Reading Over the Moon Class Novels Pupil's story collection	Free Writing Copies Project Work and Presentations Genre writing plan ICT – laptops and tablets Pobble The Literacy Shed Reading Zone Guided Reading Over the Moon Class Novels Pupil's story collection

## Approach to Writing

At the earliest stages, writing is explored both from a technical and an expressive point of view. In addition to developing fine motor skills and correct letter formation, children are given the opportunity to explore the creative aspects of written expression. Initially, this is largely explorative and then structures of specific genres are introduced gradually.

As in the case of developing reading skills, writing increasingly becomes a primary vehicle for students to demonstrate their knowledge and learning across the curriculum. A special focus will be on developing students' awareness of various genres, both by reviewing examples and engaging in the creation of written compositions. At each class level, writing tasks exploring multiple genres, will be completed using a writing process including brainstorming/planning, drafting, revising and editing, redrafting and publishing. In addition, freewriting will be an essential component of

writing practice, giving children an opportunity to explore expressive aspects of writing. Specific writing skills and conventions will form a core component of the English programme, applying these skills both in authentic writing tasks as well as structured exercises. Spelling and handwriting will continue to be developed, helping students see the link between these skills and the ability to communicate clearly.

## **Writing Genres**

As part of the whole school plan, each class will cover all writing genres every school year. Integration with other subjects will be used to give opportunity to write in various genre. By the time a child has reached Fifth/Sixth Class, they will have experienced multiple different writing genres. The children will experience the different genres of writing through reading/being read to, teacher- modelled writing, shared writing, guided writing, all leading to independent writing.

The genres of writing: Narrative, Recount, Procedural, Report, Persuasive and Explanation

## Grammar & Mechanics of Writing

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	1 <sup>st</sup> class	2 <sup>nd</sup> class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to text format and orientation.</li> <li>• Capital letters</li> <li>• Ending punctuation</li> <li>• left-to right orientation.</li> <li>• Spacing: finger width between words.</li> </ul>		<p>Capital letters, sentence structure, proper nouns, common nouns, alphabetical order, definite &amp; indefinite articles (the, a or an), plurals, pronouns, verbs, conjugating verbs, past tense, future tense, present tense, adjectives, compound words, adverbs, plurals, antonyms, speech marks, questions, parsing</p>	<p>Alphabetical order, sentence writing, speech marks, questions, proper nouns, adjectives, plurals (s) and (es), possessive adjectives, homophone mix-ups, sentences and verbs, adverbs, verb 'to be' (present and past), regular and irregular past tense, using a dictionary, proofreading sentences, expanding a sentence, conjunctions, plurals (s) and (ies), word webs, proofreading a story, prefixes, contractions, finding the meaning, suffixes (-ing, -er and -est) , interesting words,</p>
3 <sup>rd</sup> class	4 <sup>th</sup> class	5 <sup>th</sup> class	6 <sup>th</sup> class
ABC order, addressing envelopes, capital letters, full stops and	Capital letters, full stops, masculine & feminine,	Capital letters, commas, nouns, gender of noun, verbs, tenses, adverbs, pronouns,	Capital letters, punctuation, review nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions and conjunctions,

question marks, nouns, verbs, compound words, adjectives, verb tenses, plurals, antonyms and synonyms, sentences, syllables, homophones, adverbs, apostrophes, prefixes, suffixes, contractions, homonyms, conjunctions, prepositions, exclamation mark, apostrophe	question marks, common noun, singular & plural, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, commas, prepositions, apostrophes, The past tense – irregular words, contractions, common mistakes, conjunctions, ordinal numbers, quotation marks, adverbs.	adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, apostrophe, quotations marks and plurals, compound words, similes, metaphors, contractions, idioms, abbreviations, indirect speech	grammar revision, pronouns, adverbs, naming parts of speech, apostrophe, direct/indirect speech, extending sentences, homophones, homonyms, homographs, synonyms and antonyms, personal pronouns, interrogative/demonstrative pronouns, abbreviations, compound words, suffixes
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## Free Writing

All children will have the opportunity to use free writing activities throughout the school. There is no pressure on children to “produce” an amount of writing. Spelling is not the focus of the work as it is about the child getting his/her message down. The reluctant writer may use picture to convey a message.

## Handwriting

Good habits in handwriting are developed at an early stage e.g. posture, paper position, pencil grip. In Junior Infants children will write with thick pencils and crayons, senior infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class use standard pencils, pen licenses are given to children in 3<sup>rd</sup> class. Children in 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> classes use pens. Children will be introduced to print writing in Junior Infants and print writing will be the style of writing used throughout the school. A print handwriting alphabet will be displayed in each classroom. Teachers will endeavour to display samples of the children’s handwriting in their classrooms. Cursive writing will be introduced from 3<sup>rd</sup> class CJ Fallon- Go With The Flow scheme. Children will be encouraged to obtain a pen licence in the last term of 3<sup>rd</sup> class onwards. Occasionally, incentives such as ‘Writer of the Week’ will be used throughout the school to encourage good writing practice.

**Identifying handwriting challenges early:** Significant faults will mainly be diagnosed by watching children write. Faulty pencil grip, reversals and incorrect letter formation should be identified as early as possible and interventions put in place to correct them.

### **Left-handed writers**

All children need to feel comfortable and relaxed when writing. They should be encouraged to sit up straight with the body slightly inclined towards the table and the elbows just to the side of the body. The left-handed pupil may need to turn slightly to allow the left hand more freedom of movement. The paper should be placed to the left of the centre of the body and it is helpful to tilt the paper slightly to the right.

### **Spelling**

In this school, phonological awareness is introduced in the first week of Junior Infants. From this point the children engage in a systematic phonic programme developing both phonemic and phonological awareness, building the blocks for spelling work from 1<sup>st</sup> class onwards.

While the school's structured phonics plan plays a core part in the development of children's spelling ability, phonics alone cannot be used to teach spelling and a multi-disciplinary approach is required to ensure children do not rely solely on phonics when spelling.

We are cognisant of varying abilities and the need for pupils to experience success therefore individual class teachers will discuss the need to vary spellings for children receiving support in consultation with the SET and parents.

- In Junior and Senior Infants, a range of programmes are used: Jolly Phonics, Dolce List and progressing to Spellwell in 1<sup>st</sup> class.
- The *Spellings For Me* programme is used from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes for the teaching of spelling strategies. The children complete the activities based on the unit in class or for homework depending on the teacher's preference/pupil's needs. We have spelling tests on Fridays in 3<sup>rd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> class. These spellings are based on words that children misspell in their written work and also on their Spellings For Me words. Dictation takes place in small groups organized by SET teacher depending on pupils' needs. This is informed by Brendan Culligan's *Spelling and Handwriting*

The convention of spelling will be achieved progressively through a multidimensional approach. This will include:

- Linking spelling with the development of phonological and phonemic awareness.
- Linking it with onset and rime.
- Building up a bank of heart words.
- Having rich experience of environmental print.
- Compiling word walls and personal word banks, e.g. personal names, local place names, seasonal words.
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses.
- Using strategies such as:
  1. Predict, look, say, cover, write, check
  2. Music
  3. ICT
  4. Mnemonics
  5. Rhythm and rhyme
  6. Creation of word searches
  7. Spelling buddies
  8. Breaking words into syllables
  9. Exaggeration of the word
  10. Learn and locate 'word strings'/chunks in words to spell successfully. Making and breaking words using magnetic letters.
  11. Be provided with prompts to hear the words in context.
  12. The ability to self-correct.

- Becoming familiar with common spelling rules
- Accepting approximate spelling in creative writing

## **Literacy Support for pupils with additional needs.**

Children with learning difficulties and special educational needs are helped to achieve their potential and access the Primary Language Curriculum in the core skills of oral language, reading and writing. Differentiation is outlined in our Cuntas Míosúil to enable the teacher reflect how effectively and successfully they have differentiated for children with differing needs in this subject Area.

Assessment is ongoing and a school support plan/school support plus plan is drawn up and co-ordinated by the SET in conjunction with the parents, class teacher and Special Needs Assistant (SNA) where applicable. Specific short term targets are agreed. Regular consultation also takes place with external professionals e.g. NEPS psychologist, NCSE advisors, Speech & Language Therapist, Occupational Therapists etc. The class teacher maintains first line of responsibility for the welfare of the child. Suitable resources are provided to meet the learning needs of individual children. The SET may provide direct instruction to individuals or small groups of children regarding literacy development, sometimes withdrawing from the classroom or through station teaching in the classroom and other co-teaching models, whichever is deemed most appropriate to meet the needs of the child/children. SET's meet with class teachers to plan, teach, assess and review the learning of pupils on a regular basis. More information can be found in the Special Education Policy.

A multi-sensory approach to teaching is provided to scaffold our students with additional needs. These include visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and tactile activities to enhance learning and memory.

While methods of organisation are subject to change, the underlying principle is always that the children experiencing the greatest difficulty will get the most support in an inclusive whole-school framework.

## **E.A.L. Provision**

The Department of Education (DE) provides additional educational resources for pupils who are learning English as an additional language (EAL) in primary schools. The English language needs of each child in our school will be assessed and support will be provided when necessary. If required EAL teachers work in a withdrawal and in-class support capacity, dependent on the needs of individual students.

## Assessment

Assessment is seen as an essential element of the teaching and learning process. The school has set up and will continue to use an effective system of monitoring, recording and reporting children's progress through formal and informal assessment tests and standardised attainment tests as appropriate.

We identify pupils who achieve at or below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised tests in the Micra T English standardized test. The Drumcondra Spelling standardised test can be used when teachers are concerned about spelling ability. We also identify children with special educational needs based on the opinion and observation of the class teacher and with input from other professional e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, OT, Medical Consultant and Psychologist etc. Where the needs of those children are being met, the school has the flexibility to provide for children above the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile.

As a school, we engage in:

- Assessment of Learning
- Assessment for Learning

A variety of methods are used to assess English skills. Standardised testing is used as a measure of Assessment of Learning. It is also reported to the DES, the Board of Management and parents as required in Circular 0018/2012. The following tests are administered in term 3 of each year:

- ✓ Junior Infants – BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile) From September 2024
- ✓ Senior Infants – MIST (Middle Infants Screening Test)
- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Class – Drumcondra test of Early Literacy
- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class – Micra T Reading test
- ✓ English Language Proficiency Benchmarks (A grid for assessing language proficiency) - (EAL students)  
[https://ncca.ie/media/2064/english\\_language\\_proficiency\\_benchmarks.pdf](https://ncca.ie/media/2064/english_language_proficiency_benchmarks.pdf)
- ✓ Primary School Assessment Kit (NCCA) <https://ncca.ie/media/2172/primary-school-assessment-kit.pdf> (EAL students)

We engage in the following tests, which informs our Assessment for Learning:

- ✓ Teacher Designed Tasks
- ✓ Teacher Observation
- ✓ Teacher intuition
- ✓ Running Records
- ✓ Letter, Name and Sound Test
- ✓ NRIT ✓ The Dolch Sight Vocabulary list

These tests will be interpreted as needed by the class teacher and SET's. Parent's consultation will be sought at this stage to refer the child for further intervention where appropriate e.g. psychologist, speech and language therapist etc.

Assessment for Learning Strategies used in classrooms will include the following.

Self-assessment	Two stars and a wish	W.A.L.T/W.I.L.F
Peer assessment	Think, pair, share	Simple rubrics/checklists
Thumbs up/down	Questioning	KWL Charts
Writing Portfolios	Teacher observation	Peer and self-assessment through feedback on oral and written presentations
Reading Log	Teacher comments	Teacher designed tasks and tests Questioning - open ended

### Conferencing

Teacher and parent

Teacher and pupil

Teacher and teacher

Teacher, parent and pupil

### Questioning

- Cloze Test Questions

- Correcting responses
- Free-response questions
- Matching
- Multiple-choice questions
- Open questions
- Pupil questions
- Questioning
- True/false questions

### **Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests**

- Group assignments
- Individual assignments
- Oral tests
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Written tests

### **Teacher Observation**

Anecdotal Observation- personal observation on a casual basis

### **Work Samples**

Target pupil observation

### **Self-Assessment**

- Checklists
- Know, want to know, Learned (KWL)
- Ladders
- Rubrics
- Self-assessment
- Talk Partners/Buddies

- o Traffic Lights
- o Webs

## Timetable and organisation planning

A significant emphasis is placed on the provision of discrete time for oral language in the Junior to Middle classes, with a greater focus on integrated oral language time in Middle to Senior classes. The process of language learning is naturally developed through integrated activities and through a thematic/cross-curricular approach.

Circular 0056/2011 suggests schools increase the time spent on literacy to 6.5 hours in infants and 8.5 hours to seniors with *priority to the first language of the school*. Time spent on English is 4 hours per week for Infant classes with a shorter day and 5 hours for Senior classes for students with a full day. This is approx. 48 minutes per day for infants and 60 minutes per day for other classes.

The whole school plan and the Primary Language Curriculum will seek to provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short term planning.

Class teachers will be required to produce:

- Yearly/ Termly plans
- Fortnightly plans in conjunction with the New Primary Language Curriculum.

The Cúntas Míosúil will be used to measure the success of the English plan and will inform teachers' preparation for the following month.

SET will be required to produce weekly plans which include annotated reflections and Cúntas Míosúil

## Literacy and ICT

Acknowledging that ICT has its own unique literacy to be developed, ICT tools have the potential to help support the development of literacy across the curriculum. A variety of strategies are already being used in the school including the use of online programmes to develop phonemic awareness and basic reading skills as well as comprehension skills; the use of word-processing programmes for the drafting and redrafting of written work; whole-class revision of literacy skills using specific activities for IWBs; the creation of blogs, movies, audio recordings, podcasts and PowerPoint

presentations in various interdisciplinary projects; and the use of the internet for information gathering and research activities. Teachers regularly use the internet to source activities and lesson plans as well as research new texts and classroom resources.

- We have tablets for use throughout the school. Pupils have access to these tablets to assist with literacy activities. Each tablet is equipped with numerous Literacy and Phonics Apps to assist with the teaching of Literacy in the school.
- use Microsoft Word and Microsoft Powerpoint to assist them in presenting oral reports, organise presentations, work collaboratively and foster better communication.
- E-Books are available for teachers to use to assist with differentiated learning through online programmes.
- Portfolios/ Bound samples of work will be used from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> to monitor progress.
- T.T.R.S. (Touch, Type, Read, Spell) Programme- SET

## **Homework**

Discrete English homework is a regular feature in all classes, from learning letter sounds and sight words to reading for pleasure. The learning of English spellings is also a consistent component. Please refer to our school Homework Policy.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to support their child's development of literacy skills by:

- Written communications via the child's Homework diary
- Written communications e.g. the school Newsletter or website
- Attending parent/teacher meetings.
- Taking part in Whole School Literacy initiatives throughout the year.
- Enrolling their child in the local library and encouraging reading for pleasure. (Information on initiatives and opening hours in local libraries are made available to parents through the school app.)
- Supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in collaborative activities.
- Implementing suggested home-based activities in their child's classroom or school support plan and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.

- Book sharing/ reading stories.
- Storytelling e.g. as part of the bedtime routine.
- Paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading)
- Having discussions about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills.
- Writing lists and short accounts about children's experience.
- Using simple computer software and apps to support learning in English.
- Taking children on trips to the library, museum, zoo and other places of educational interest.

### **Community Links**

- Children are encouraged to register with their local Library.
- Regular school visits to the local library
- Authors are invited to take part in writer's workshops with senior classes.
- Pupils participate in projects organized by Tidy Towns Committee

### **Continuing Professional Development**

As an integral part of the Primary School Curriculum, English literacy will be addressed on a regular basis through staff meetings, other whole-staff professional development experiences and all curriculum planning exercises. Teachers are encouraged to seek out opportunities to improve their practice in literacy through their own personal continuing professional development, and all teachers are encouraged to consider connections between their annual personal professional development goals and literacy teaching/learning. Details of courses and training days relevant to the English programme will be emailed to staff. Finally, the school will avail of special professional development opportunities, as much as is practical, related to English literacy.

### **Equality of Participation/Access**

We are committed to the provision of equal opportunities for all our pupils in the implementation of our English programme. Equal opportunities are provided to all pupils to participate in discussions, debates, reading and writing opportunities. We encourage gender awareness through promoting consideration of the roles associated with men and women in literature, the media and advertising as well as consideration of the language associated with such roles.

## **Success Criteria**

The success of this school plan will be assessed based on the following criteria:

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

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The principal is responsible for:

- Lead the teaching and learning of Literacy throughout the school.
- Lead the school in a continuous process of self-evaluation in the area of Literacy.
- In consultation with other staff members, develop, promote and review school policy in relation to Literacy.
- Disseminate information about new ideas in the teaching and learning of Literacy.
- Encourage the implementation of Whole School strategies to improve areas of Literacy.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- The implementation of the English programme for their own classes.
- Differentiating the Primary Language Curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils within the class.

### **Timeframe:**

This policy will be implemented following ratification from the Board of Management. It will be reviewed on a regular basis particularly in regards to developments and training within the New Primary Language Curriculum Framework.

### **Ratification and Communication**

On ratification of this plan by the staff and Board of Management this plan will be communicated to all teachers through distribution and will become part of the School Plan. This policy was ratified on June 2025.

Signed Michael Hall Date 11/6/2025  
Principal

Signed Bill Cull Date 11/6/2025  
Chairperson