**English Policy**

**Introductory Statement**

The following is an English plan for our school. It is anticipated that it will be updated soon to reflect changes brought about with the introduction of the Primary Language Curriculum. The school has applied for sustained support from PDST for support in this area.

# Rationale

* To benefit teaching and learning in our school.
* To conform to principles of learning outlined in the Curriculum.

**Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Here in Scoil Gormáin Naofa, 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. We also believe that their academic progress depends to a large extent on their ability to communicate orally and thence through the written word. In our school, we attach a high priority to giving pupils a command of the English language.

**General Aims**

1. To enable the children to speak, read and write independently and effectively.
2. To foster an enjoyment and appreciation of the English language.

**Broad Objectives, Content and Methodologies**

The broad objectives, content and methodologies for the teaching and learning of oral language, reading and writing are detailed in this document. Each of these areas is presented under the headings of the New Language Curriculum.

**Oral Language**

**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 activity.
2. Develop the capacity to express intuitions, feelings, impressions ideas and reactions in response to real and imaginary situations through talk and discussion, experimentation 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.

**Oral Language**

1. Oral language is the backbone of the curriculum, and is explored throughout each subject every day.

Extra time is devoted to the lower classes, taking into account their needs and backgrounds. Rhyme and song encourage participation from the whole class and take pressure off individual speech. Story-time, news accounts, and discussions all give the children opportunity to partake at their own pace.

Discrete time is used to further enhance any particular lesson relating to what is currently happening or that which needs extra reinforcement, e.g. Chatterbox games, circle time to discuss a poetry lesson.

2. Constructed teacher-led discussions prior to most reading and writing activities.

Discussion (class-based) in response to the text.

3. Various strategies and techniques will be used throughout each subject area as teacher deems necessary.

4. In younger classes, Aistear provides an excellent vehicle to develop oral language and an expanded bank of vocabulary

5. The station teaching model provides ample opportunity for teachers to work with small groups (various ability groupings) in the area of oral language development.

#### 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.

Reading is viewed as an integral part in the child’s education at our school. This is stressed at every possible opportunity –

* Parent/Teacher meetings
* Pre-School talks and pre-school packs
* Graded Reading schemes taken home each week
* Big Books
* Class Readers
* Class Novels
* Reference Books
* Internet work for projects
* Use of digital technology (ipads, apps, chrome books)
* Classroom Libraries
* Access to Gorey library

**Strategies that go towards Independent Reading**

* + Prior knowledge
  + Semantic Cue
  + Syntactic Cue (reflect while they are reading)
  + Letter-sound relation
  + Predict and check
  + Confirm and self-correct
  + Reread

The reading skills acquired in formal reading classes will be further reinforced in other subject areas where reading is required. To improve reading comprehension across each class level, class based discussions will take place before and after all texts used. Teachers will draw from a variety of techniques to accomplish this, e.g. low to higher order thinking.

Poetry is imperative for emotional and imaginative development. Stories and poems can be further explored through the use of dramatic techniques. Arklow Music Festival annual entries reinforce the love of poetry and enable children to have a bank of poetry enjoyed through performance. The talents of staff trained in Speech and Drama will be utilised and this aspect ties in well with the Drama curriculum.

We note the importance of phonological awareness in our approach to teaching reading. In acquiring the ability to use sound/letter relationships, the child needs to develop phonological awareness leading to phonemic awareness.

**Junior – 2nd Classes**

1. Awareness of rhyme
2. Awareness of syllables
3. Awareness of onset and rime
4. Awareness of rhyme and analogy
5. Awareness of phonemes

See Appendix VI

**Junior/Senior Infants**

* Jolly Phonics is the scheme that is used and reinforced with the use of the app in station teaching

**Writing**

**Broad** **Objectives**

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

* Write clearly, correctly, and fluently
* Use a wide range of vocabulary
* Use grammar and punctuation appropriately
* Write in a wide variety of genres encompassing differing styles, purposes, audiences and level of formality.
* Experience opportunities to develop presentation, spelling, editing, and publishing skills.
* Engage in collaborative writing experiences.
* Develop a high standard of penmanship.

Through the SSE process, the school worked over two years on embedding the Genres of Writing at whole school level. Resources are sourced from PDST to support this.

Each class teacher will create an environment that encourages writing which explores the different genres:

Recount; Report; Procedure; Narrative; Persuasive; Explanatory; Poetry.

This will be done through:

* Stories
* Descriptions
* Explanations
* Argument
* Letters
* Notes
* Diaries
* Recipes
* Writing in other curricular areas
* Records of learning
* Reactions to reading
* Complete books

Each class strives to create a print-rich environment to suit their requirements.

**Organisational Aspects of Our English Plan**

1. **Parental Involvement**

Here in Scoil Ghormáin Naofa, we greatly encourage and welcome the involvement of parents in their children’s education. Such partnership is exemplified in:

* + Weekly paired reading run by parents. Comprehension sheets are given for parents to question children on the text
  + Annual Parent/Teacher meetings which allow for a discussion on individual children’s progress
  + Informal Parent / Teacher meetings convened at the request of the parent or teacher.
  + Parental participation in reading library and school books at home is encouraged. Reading logs are sent home for this
  + Opportunities for parents to share their talents and expertise with us e.g. local writers, poets, artists, historians etc.

1. **Learning Support and Special Needs (See Special Needs Policy)**

Children with learning difficulties and special educational needs are helped to achieve their potential in the core skills of oral language, reading and writing. Assessment is ongoing and a Student Support Plan is drawn and co-ordinated by the Resource/Learning Support Teacher in consultation with the class teacher and the parents. In-class support is given in literacy and station teaching is very effective in working with targeted children. Differentiated work and targets are given. When necessary, consultation takes place with external professionals. The class teacher maintains first line responsibility for the welfare of the child. Suitable resources are provided to meet the learning needs of individual children.

1. **Linkage and Integration**

While our English Plan is presented under the three strand unit headings of oral language, reading and writing, the practice in this school is that all three strand units are interlinked. The manner in which our plan is organised also provides significant opportunities for its integration with all other curricular areas.

**Success Criteria**

The school-wide implementation of this plan will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways:

**Oral Language**

* Increased confidence and competence in communicating.
* Greater willingness to express opinions and participate in class discussions.
* Improved listening skills.

**Reading**

* Improved standards in reading.
* Increased involvement in voluntary reading.
* Involvement of parents in reading activities at home.
* Experience reading as an enjoyable pursuit.

**Writing**

* Greater fluency and explicitness in communicating ideas and experiences.
* Enhanced experience of writing and sharing stories and poems.
* Use of ICT.
* Improved presentation of written work, e.g. projects.

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through feedback from teachers, pupils and parents.

***2023 Update:*** The Parents’ Association identified that children love graphic novels and asked us to survey children about their favourite books (graphic novel and otherwise). This survey was undertaken by the Student Council and supplied to PA who purchased books. The Artist in Residence programme (2nd-6th class) will focus on comic books to link these themes.

**Assessment and Recording**

This policy works in tandem with our Assessment and Recording policy. Standardised testing is undertaken each May. A fuller description of all testing is available in the policy.

**Ratification and Communication**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_