



**Whole School Plan
for
English**

English

1. Introductory Statement and Rationale

Staff began a review of our English plan in 2017 /2018 in response to the introduction of the Primary Language Curriculum. This policy has been updated in response to our School Self Evaluation and the Primary Language Curriculum 2019. It is intended to support and guide staff with the implementation of the curriculum and in meeting the intended learning outcomes for children.

The English curriculum is for children from junior infants to sixth class. The curriculum identifies the importance of language in the learning process.

The content is presented under three strands:

- Oral Language
- Reading
- Writing.

Planning for curriculum delivery

All the curriculum documents can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary>

Teachers can refer to the planning tool to help identify which strand and strand unit to teach in their short-term planning.

Rationale

English has a unique position and function in the curriculum because it is the first language of the majority of children in Ireland. The development of children's oral language skills is the foundation of all their learning in school. The better the child's ability with language, the more effectively he/she will communicate and learn. This plan is a record of our decisions regarding English. It is intended:

- To support the implementation of the new primary language curriculum
- To guide teachers in their individual planning of English
- To re-affirm and promote a thorough, balanced and relevant approach to the teaching and learning of English in our school as outlined in the Primary Language Curriculum

2. Vision and Aims

a. Vision

As a child centred, equality based, co-educational and democratically run school we strive to enable each child to fulfil their potential in the area of English. We are very fortunate in LETS to have a diversity of languages. We believe that a command of the English language and a fluency in its expression is fundamental to confidence and personal growth and our aim is to help the children develop their potential and play a meaningful role in their communities.

b. Aims

The aims of the English language curriculum are 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.

3. Curriculum Planning

Each teacher in LETNS aims to be familiar with the strand/strand units, content and outcomes for their class level. Language learning is a developmental process and we recognise that oral language skills need to be explicitly taught. In the Junior cycle, the emphasis will be children learning through play (Aistear).

See below for contents and outcomes for the three areas – oral language, reading and writing.

Overview of Learning Outcomes (Primary Language Curriculum p 19)

- Communicating/Cumarsáid
Oral Language
Reading
Writing
- Understanding/Tuiscint
Oral Language
Reading
Writing
- Exploring and Using/ Fiosrú agus úsáid
Oral Language
Reading
Writing

4. Strands

A) Oral Language

Some children enter LETNS with a rich and varied oral language experience.

However, some pupils have particular language needs i.e. English may not be his or her first language, special need, etc.

- **Learning Outcomes**
The aim of this plan is to provide a structured sequential programme for teachers to enable children to do the following with reference to the Continuum of Progression;
- Gain pleasure and fulfilment from language activity
- 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.

- Develop fluency, explicitness and confidence in communication
- Develop listening skills, conventions of language (speech), vocabulary, aesthetic response and language manipulation.
- Oral language skills need to be explicitly taught
- There are 5 components to consider when planning for effective oral language instruction.
- Vocabulary teaching depends on the pupils you are teaching

The 5 components to consider are,

- Promote Auditory Memory
- Create a Language Learning Environment,
- Teach a Variety of Spoken Text Types,
- Teach and Extend Vocabulary and Conceptual Knowledge,
- Develop Listening & Speaking Skills
- In planning for the teaching of vocabulary, teachers should include Tier 1, Tier2 and Tier 3 words.

- **Approaches and Methodologies**

Oral Language teaching demands a variety of approaches and methodologies. Our LETNS plan reflects the principles and priorities of the Primary Language Curriculum that can enhance children's language learning by realising the learning outcomes of the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to integrate oral language lessons into cross curricular topics and themes.

Following Inservice in the Primary Language Curriculum 2016/2017 and further CPD in January 2018, teachers have included targets and outcomes in their fortnightly plans for Oral Language as outlined in the Primary Language Curriculum .Teachers will endeavour to provide every opportunity for children to use and extend their language by promoting a dialogic classroom. This will include meaningful interactions between student and student and student and teacher, open ended questions to allow and encourage critical thinking on topics and issues.

- Starlight Oral Language posters are used throughout the school identifying specific vocabulary and themes to be taught at each class level.
- Learning and using language through Aistear in the Junior and Senior Infant Classes.
- Interactive White Board Oral Language Activities.
- Talk Time is currently being piloted as part of the OT/Speech Language Therapy (SLT) demonstration pilot project.
- Talk and Discussion
- Play and Games
- Story
- Improvisational Drama
- Poetry and Rhyme
- Methodology including visitors to the classroom and trips
- Websites

How do we teach these new words?

- Provide student-friendly explanations using the Starlight posters and other resources
- Get pupils actively involved with thinking about and using the meanings in the right way
- Create activities that will initiate pupil's engagement with the words

- **Activities to promote auditory memory**

- Recite poems and songs
- Repeat and use information
- Memorise and sequence
- Retell stories
- Recall verbal messages
- Use visual cues and mnemonics

Teach a Variety of Spoken Text Types

- Conversations
- Discussions
- Interest Talks
- Questioning & Interviews
- Storytelling
- Arguments & Debates
- Oral Reports Instructions

Develop Listening and Speaking Skills

- Broad Rules that Govern Social Interaction such as Turn taking, eye contact, no fidgeting, an awareness of body language and whole-body language.
- Paralinguistic such as Volume , Intonation, Pitch, Pause, Pace, Pronunciation
See PDST and class folders for oral language vocabulary and other resources.

b) **Reading:**

Outcomes

- Promote positive attitudes and develop the appreciation of reading
- Develop print awareness and understanding of the purpose of print
- Develop a wide range of reading skills and abilities that would include phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and a growing sight vocabulary.
- Develop an appropriate range of comprehension strategies using The Building Bridges programme
- Develop an awareness of the richness and diversity of reading material from a variety of texts of gradually increasing complexity
- Engage in and enjoy sustained silent reading
- Enhance emotional and imaginative development through reading
- Develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through reading

- **Infant Classes**

- Children will listen to enjoy and respond to stories, nursery rhymes, poems and songs
- Play with language to develop an awareness of sounds
- Enjoy a print rich environment
- Learn to recognise letter sounds and name the letters of the alphabet
- Use big books to model the reading process and collaborative reading
- In Junior Classes, build up a sight vocabulary from Jolly Phonics “Tricky Words”
- Develop phonemic awareness following the Jolly Phonics Scheme
- Engage in shared reading
- Re-read, retell, recall, analyse, interpret and talk about parts of stories and poems
- Pursue and develop initial interests through reading
- DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)
- No emphasis on formal reading will take place in Junior Infants

- Parallel readers (Oxford Reading Tree, Jolly Phonics, Story World, Big Cat Readers) are given out to children as decided by class teachers
- Team Teaching of Phonics and Power Hour is often used in the Infant Classes in collaboration with Learning and Language support team
- First and Second Classes
- Children will continue to build sight vocabulary from the English Reading scheme and other books read and personal experience and first-class literacy intervention.
- Develop phonemic awareness
- In First Class, build up a sight vocabulary from the dolch list and The Starlight Vocabulary lists and The Jolly Phonics Grammar Handbook.
- Develop reading skills and styles
- Engage in personal reading, silent reading and reading aloud for an audience
- Develop comprehension strategies
- Perform alphabetical order tasks
- Predict future events and outcomes in stories and re-tell, re-read, recall, analyse, and interpret parts of stories and poems through English Literacy programme.
- Concept of chapters will be introduced
- Children will engage with a wide variety of text
- Engage in a formal discussion of books with teacher and others.
- D.E.A.R. time (Drop Everything And Read)
- First Class Intervention. This involves team teaching where children are differentiated into groups .

Third and Fourth Classes:

- Children will continue to build sight vocabulary from English reading scheme and other books read and personal experience.
- Become increasingly independent readers continuing to self-correct reading errors.
- Explore new interests and perspectives through reading e.g. newspaper articles, poetry and non-fiction
- Explore different types of text and develop a personal taste in reading
- Use a variety of strategies when exploring unfamiliar text e.g. phonic, syntactic and contextual
- Develop basic information retrieval skills
- Use simple dictionaries effectively
- Use IT to increase motivation to read and enhance reading development
- Continue to develop a range of comprehension strategies using narrative, expository and representational reading material, assimilation, deduction, inference, analysis, prediction, evaluation and summarising – in conjunction with the English Literacy Scheme.
- The Building Bridges programme is used throughout the school as a resource and also use of Comprehension boxes (Prim-Ed) to develop Comprehension levels of pupils with reading difficulties. **Further details can be found in the Literacy Drive in the Teacher’s Drive on the LETNS computer system called “Comprehension strategies LETS”and Building Bridges.**

The following www.reading.ecb.org is a good site for comprehension strategies ideas. Another website www.interactivesites.weebly.com has good brain teaser and English Literacy ideas.

- Keep a reading record analogue
- Read aloud with expression
- D.E.A.R. and U.S.S.R (Uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading)
- Read and discuss Class Novels

Fifth and Sixth Classes:

- Children will continue to build sight vocabulary from English Reading scheme and other books read and personal experience
- Achieve proficiency in word identification by refining the different word identification skills e.g. phonic, syntactic and contextual
- Use root words, prefixes, suffixes, syllabication to recognise and understand words
- Read as an independent reader from a range of different materials e.g. stories, poems, myths, legends, novels and non-fiction texts
- Continue to keep a record of his/her reading
- Use comprehension skills such as analysing, confirming, evaluating, synthesising and correlation to aid deduction, problem solving and prediction.
- Develop study skills such as scanning, skimming, note-taking and summarising
- Read and interpret different types of functional text e.g. forms, menus, timetables, recipes and appropriate non-fiction texts.
- Respond to poetry, fiction, novels, plays and stories read
- Browse through, handle, discuss, recommend and select books for independent reading
- D.E.A.R. and U.S.S.R (Uninterrupted, sustained, silent reading)
- Silent Reading
- Paired Reading

C) Phonics/Grammar

Junior Infants

Jolly Phonics will be used in Junior Infant classes in the first term. Teachers will work at a child friendly pace and would hope to have all 42 sounds covered by the end of Junior Infants. Phonological awareness Training and blending will form part of the infant weekly scheme. The children with the teacher's guidance can start to blend words after the first six sounds have been introduced. Parents need to be familiar with this method and will be informed about this through the class curriculum meetings in the first term.

Senior Infants

Teachers will continue the Jolly Phonics scheme to allow for further work on blending etc.

First class

In – class team teaching with the Learning Support team.

Children will have access to the following resources:

Jolly Grammar 1 and Starlight Core Reader and Starlight Foundation Reader for First Class. Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Workbook for First Class will be introduced in Term two. Children will have differentiated Big Cat readers through- out the year.

Second class

Jolly grammar 2 will be introduced in second class. There will be a collaboration with the First Class teachers to ensure all topics have been covered.

Children will have access to the following resources:

Starlight Core Reader and Starlight Foundation Readers for Second Class. Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Workbook for Second Class will be introduced in Term Two. Children will have access to differentiated Big Cat readers.

Third Class:

Children will have access to the following resources:

Treasury 3, New Wave English in Practise, 3rd Class and Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book 3rd class .

Children will have access to differentiated Big Cat readers. Comprehension Box – Power Hour and Novels

Fourth Class:

Children will have access to the following resources

Treasury 4, New Wave English in Practise, 4th Class and Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book 4th Class will be used.

Children will have access to differentiated Big Cat readers. Comprehension Box – Power Hour and Novels

Fifth Class:

Children will have access to the following resources:

Treasury 5, New Wave English in Practise, 5th Class and Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book 5th class will be used.

Children will have access to differentiated Big Cat readers. Comprehension Box – Power Hour and Novels

Sixth Class:

Children will have access to the following resources:

Treasury 6, New Wave English in Practise, 6th Class and Starlight Combined Reading and Skills Book 6th Class will be used.

Children will have differentiated Big Cat readers. Comprehension Box – Power Hour and Novels

d) **Spelling**

- **A list of spellings for all classes are outlined in the Teacher’s Drive under Spellings**

- **General policy on spelling**

It was agreed that spelling is a written skill and that children would always be encouraged to practice spellings by writing them down. Parents should be informed of the importance of writing spellings at the Parent Teacher meetings in November.

The children will be taught “the magic spelling rule” (see below) approach to learning and revising spellings. Parents need to be familiar with this method.

At all class levels, spellings will be differentiated. and dictation of sentences will be included. Children will be encouraged to see words within words (e.g. **Mother**, **permanent**). Resources for spellings will be available in the school e.g. Alpha to Omega.

Magic spelling Rule:

- Look
- Say
- Cover
- Write
- Check

- **Junior/Senior Infants:**

Spellings will not be taught formally to infant classes. However, children will be encouraged to use their knowledge of phonics and reading to write simple words and sentences. All efforts are encouraged. Phonological awareness will be fostered through nursery rhyme sand oral rhyming games.

- First/Second Class:
Jolly Grammar 1 will be used as a resource for spelling in First Class and the Dolch word list, Jolly grammar 2 and Spellbound B will be used for spellings in second Class for completion in third Class. Words arising from free writing (Incidental words) will be learnt as necessary.
- Third – Sixth Class:
Spellbound (Folens) will be used from third Class onwards for spelling. Other resources will also be used such as the 100 most common mis –spelt words and the dolch spelling words. Folens and Fallons books are used. Spellings are differentiated according to ability. Differentiated spelling plans are in operation in classes and words need to be taught in context of a sentence/reading.

e) **Writing:**

The writing policy will cover both Handwriting and Creative writing.

- **Creative Writing:** (Go to Literacy in teacher’s shared drive for information and also below are websites for different writing genres)

www.readwritethink.org is a good resource for letter writing and various writing genres.

www.interactivsites.weebly.com has good literacy ideas too!

www.mystorybook.com is another useful website for writing stories and making the come to life suitable for the Junior classes up as far as third.

www.storybird.com uses illustrations to inspire students to write stories.

www.sparkadobe is good for writing stories and making videos also suitable for cross curricular writing.

- The process of writing is as important as the product because, it is through consistent practice in using that process that children learn to write.
- The Teacher will act as mentor and guide in this process of drafting, editing and redrafting, helping children to develop expressive abilities and accuracy.

The Teacher’s role is to guide & help the child to:

- choose topics for their writing
- choose the genre in which to write
- improve the quality of expression
- elaborate on what he/she says
- add new ideas
- use the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- achieve an acceptable level of overall presentation

Each individual piece of writing will be praised, valued and given gentle constructive criticism. It can be valued by:

- having it read aloud
- seeing it displayed
- having it included in the library corner or classroom library
- taking it home and reading it to parents.

Although copybooks will have a function, we will often use separate sheets that can be stored in individual folders as this is more amenable to the methodology and aims of the writing programme. for writing

The range of topics the child writes about should be broad and he/she should have a significant degree of autonomy in choosing them. This can mean that, although all the children in the class may be using the same genre (a letter, a story, a poem etc.), each child

will choose the particular topic for his/her piece. The topics on which children write should arise from the reality of their lives or imagined experiences and should reflect their concerns and interests. Children should be encouraged to list topics that they would like to write about. They may draw on experiences both in and out of school and on areas such as hobbies, friends, parties, trips, television programmes and children's literature. Sources of topics for children's writing will include:

- personal concerns
- everyday experiences
- life at home and in school
- stories
- social needs, e.g. a letter, a note
- personal reading
- topics arising from other areas of the curriculum
- poetry
- drama.

If a child is allowed to write on a topic without redrafting, then this can be taken as a sign of emergent writing competence.

The more obvious purposes of writing they should experience are:

- stories
- descriptions
- explanations
- argument
- letters
- notes
- diaries
- recipes
- writing in other curriculum areas
- records of learning
- reactions to reading
- complete books.

The following writing genres are taught in the following classes:

1st, 3rd, 5th

Narrative, Report and Procedural

2nd, 4th, 6th

Recount, Explanatory, Social & Persuasive

(Further details can be found in the Literacy Drive in the Teacher's Drive on the LETNS computer system called "Writing genres", LETS

Teachers will also teach the genres as covered by The Starlight programme from first to sixth class)

(ii) Handwriting:

All teachers In LETNS will follow the same handwriting programme – Just Write A1 and B1 and Modern Handwriting (CJ Fallon) – Cursive Scheme. Posters showing the style of letters used in our school will be displayed in all classrooms. Copies of this will be given to parent at the Parent Teacher Meetings. The Handwriting Without Tears programme will be used in class by the Learning Support Team for some children.

Junior Infants:

Introduction to all lower-case letters in accordance with the Jolly Phonic Scheme. (See appendix 1). Children will practise writing the letters with tails as opposed to print and the k from Jolly

phonics will be used. Just Write A1 will be used. The children will learn songs to encourage them to hold their pencils correctly. They will learn about diving letters and magic c letters.

Senior Infants:

Introduction to Capital Letters in accordance with the Jolly Phonics Scheme. Revision of all lower-case letters. Just Write B1 will be used.

First Class:

Revision and consolidation of work done in Infants. Introduction to cursive writing, lower case letters only. is used. Cursive Writing lower case using Folens” Ready Steady Write B” (Cursive) including the Digital on line resources available to accompany the Folens handwriting program.

Second Class:

Revision and consolidation of work done in First Class. Introduction to Cursive Handwriting – Lower case and capitals using Folens “Ready, Steady Write 1 Cursive “including the Digital on line resources available to accompany the Folens handwriting program

Third Class:

Revision and consolidation of work done in Second Class. Introduction to Modern Writing Scheme – Cursive 3A. Introduction of Capital Letters. We would aim for joined writing by the end of third class

Fourth Class:

Revision and consolidation of work done in Third Class. Introduction to Modern Writing Scheme – cursive 4A. Children will be allowed to use pen at the teacher’s discretion. (Pen Licenses will be given where applicable.)

Fifth and Sixth Class:

Revision and consolidation of work done in Third and Fourth Class. Children are encouraged to assess their written work and to continue to develop their Handwriting style.

7. Resources

(a) Library

In Lucan Educate Together, we have a combination of class libraries and a designated area for reading (school Library). Our classes benefit from a well-resourced class library of fiction and non-fiction for all levels and cater for a wide range of abilities. Children from Junior Infants to Second Class, may borrow from the school library if requested. Parents volunteer to hear reading for these class groupings on a weekly basis.

A **Reading Culture** is promoted in the school in a number of ways.

Occasionally, librarians, authors and storytellers visit the school to encourage and promote an interest in reading. A paired/shared reading system is encouraged in the school .e.g. A Junior class pairs with a Senior class once a week. Children will participate in DEAR for ten minutes each day.

The school also runs an annual Book Fair where reading is promoted, and any funds and tokens raised by running the Book Fair are put back into the class libraries.

(b) Staff Development

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with language learning. English will be on the agenda at staff meeting. This will allow for review of the policy and also give an opportunity for members of staff to express opinions. Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in the education centres and other bodies providing

professional development through the staff room notice board. Opportunities are encouraged for team –teaching by the learning support team.

(a) Parental Involvement. We acknowledge the crucial role that parents play in their children’s language development and the following strategies are employed to enhance such involvement. New Infant parents are invited to a meeting in May, where the school’s approach to oral language, reading and writing is outlined. This is reinforced at the class acquaintance meetings held in September. At these meetings parents are encouraged and affirmed in their role in these areas. Parental collaboration is also encouraged by encouraging parents to read with and to their children. Parents are also encouraged to listen to the child read at home, recite poems and read aloud their creative writing in poems and story. Parents are also advised at parent/teacher meetings of the central importance of oral language in the learning process. Parents participate in the school and volunteer to listen to children reading in the Junior Classes on a regular basis. Tips for parents re Comprehension and Shared reading is on the LETNS website which provides tips for guided comprehension and teaching for meaning.

(b) Community Links

LETNS is in ongoing contact with local agencies and guest speakers regularly visit the school. E.g. Gardai, fire fighters etc. Local authors/musicians/singers/poets visit the school and perform for the children. The school and mobile library and local library provide a wealth of local history material. The children in Lucan Educate Together School visit the Lucan Library for Literary events and are encouraged to join the library as members. Email is available in the school and is currently being developed to contact other schools and community groups.

(c) ASSESSMENT

Assessment in primary school is about building a picture over time of a child’s learning progress across the curriculum. The teacher uses different ways to gather evidence about *how* and *what* the child learns on an ongoing basis. This information is used to celebrate the child’s current learning, and to help make decisions about next steps for future learning. As a means of assessment, some classes in the school are in the process of developing a Digital platform using a digital portfolio on see- saw.

Some of the NCCA ‘Assessment Guidelines for schools’ at the link below yourself with the show a variety of assessment methods which can be used to support assessment of children’s progress and achievement, and to extend and enrich their learning.

<https://www.ncca.ie/media/1351/assessment-guidelines.pdf>

What is Assessment for Learning?

Assessment for Learning is a part of teaching and learning where the teacher and child agree what the outcomes of the learning should be and the criteria for judging to what extent the outcomes have been achieved.

Assessment for Learning, usually shortened to AfL, is based on the principle that children learn best and improve most if they understand...

- Where they are now in their learning
- How to judge their success in their learning
- What steps they need to take to get to the next point in their learning

Assessment for Learning establishes a clear focus on exactly what is being learned.

At the start of the lesson or unit of work the teacher shares:

1. **The learning intention** which lets the children know exactly what the ‘new’ learning will be and how it fits in with the bigger learning picture.

To make things easier for the children, the learning intention is often called the:

WALT – We Are Learning To.

The WALT is displayed in the classroom for the children, during the lesson or unit of work.

2. **The criteria for success** which helps the teacher and children to judge the work – ‘How do we know this is good work?’

The criteria for success are often referred to as the:

WILF - What I’m Looking For.

The teacher helps the children to identify the WILF which are then displayed in the classroom as a reminder to the children as they work

LETNS follow the PDST six step school self-evaluation process for primary schools. There is individual assessment in practice and records.

Standardised testing “The Drumcondra Reading test”, is administered from 1st to 6th classes in the last term. The equivalent of the MIST (Middle Infant Screen Test) is administered to Senior Infants in the 2nd term of Senior Infants.

Tools for assessing based on the NCCA Continuum in oral language. The assessment tools outlined in the Continuum of Assessment that is contained in the Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007) are very useful. The use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria is very much advocated and more information on this can be found on the NCCA website; <http://action.ncca.ie/primary.aspx>