

Scoil Mhuire U.R. 11894I

English Plan

The process of planning for a school is a work constantly in progress, comprising research, practice and evaluation at all times. The initial stage of drawing up or customising the curriculum to suit our own needs was perhaps the most valuable and while we have updated the programmes since then, we have not completely deleted all of our original work. Rather we have sought to develop each of our policies and subject programmes, to create a framework from which each teacher can draw, a rich source of topics and methodologies rather than a rigid programme from which no-one can deviate. Our approach has been that we must first and foremost value and acknowledge what is already established good practice or content and not bring in change merely for the sake of change.

We hope in this way to remain responsive to the needs of each child, the dynamics of each class group, the talents of each teacher, the current events of each year and the rich tapestry of life as it affects Scoil Mhuire.

The Cuntas Miosuil remains the tool with which we plan for each year and avoid unnecessary overlap and repetition.

In this way we hope to keep adding to or altering our Plean Scoile through constant evaluation and enthusiastic teachers meetings, thereby maintaining an energy and freshness in everything we do.

The teaching staff of Scoil Mhuire devised this school plan for English in April 2003. It was written as a response to changed emphases and new methodologies for the teaching of English as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum and is intended for the information of all teachers, the induction of new teachers and special needs assistants. The plan was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2003. It was revised and re-written in January 2007, reviewed during the school year 2011/2012. It was further evaluated and reviewed under School Self Evaluation in 2013/14 and the amendments as a result are to be seen later in this document.

Changes in the guidelines re Subject allocation hours are also taken into account here and the added time for Literacy is reflected in this document.

In 2018 it was agreed that the School Self Evaluation Process would focus on ICT with reference to the development of Language in Scoil Mhuire.

The most recent amendments appear in italics.

Language needs of children in Scoil Mhuire:

Most of the children in our school come from a language rich environment. However, we do have some children from less privileged backgrounds and a small minority for whom English is not their first language. Through every aspect of our English language programme we hope to meet all these needs. Our approach to the teaching of English is an integrated one. We believe that oral language is the first and most important strand and that it forms the basis or prerequisite of reading and writing. Oral language,

reading, writing, and spelling cannot be discrete activities but must all enhance each other.

Our Plan also take in all of the requirements of the Language and Literacy programme for Junior Infants to 2nd Class as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

Our Vision and Aims for teaching English:

Our overall aim is to enable children in our care to be competent communicators in the areas of spoken and written language and to foster in them a life-long love of reading.

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for English and seek 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 self 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
- Enable pupils to listen, understand and respond to other people and a range of media;
- To facilitate children whose first language is not English to be able to communicate and access the curriculum effectively through English
- Distinguish between standard and colloquial English usage;
- Encourage pupils to develop an ability to read independently, accurately, fluently and widely;
- Foster a love of reading (textual and pictorial);
- *Foster the use of language when working with iPads or computers of any sort, oral, pictorial and text*
- Help pupils to write as a means of enjoyment as well as a form of communication;
- Encourage clear and fluent writing which is suited to audience and purpose;
- Develop pupils' imaginative use of language in drama activities;
- Enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experiences;
- Encourage clear legible handwriting;
- Encourage spelling competence and confidence;

Principles of Language Learning:

We believe in:

- The integration of oral language, reading and writing in a coherent language process
- The complementary outcomes of language learning and learning through language
- The central place given to oral language throughout the curriculum

- The development of reading skills through language experience, phonological awareness and a range of word identification strategies as well as the use of a wide range of reading material to satisfy children's reading needs.
- The importance of working concurrently on the teaching of reading and writing.

This English plan will be addressed under the following headings:

Curriculum planning:

1. Strands and strand units
2. Language programme
 - 2.1 Oral language
 - 2.2 Reading
 - 2.3 Writing
 - 2.4 Spelling **
3. Poetry
4. Handwriting
5. Children with different needs
6. Equal Opportunities
7. Assessment and record keeping

Organisational planning:

1. Timetable
2. Homework
3. Library
4. Resources and ICT
5. Individual teachers' planning and reporting
6. Staff development
7. Parental involvement
8. Community links
9. Review

**** Spelling** in Scoil Mhuire is now being delivered through the Jolly Phonics Programme where the children get the list of Phonic based words each week, various activities to consolidate these words and a test at the end of each unit. This has done away with the use of a Spelling book and the photocopied lists are provided by the teacher.

Poetry

Poetry is a rich area for language development and enjoyment and is always encouraged.

The children keep a hard-backed book from 2nd Class onwards to record poems and songs that they are learning.

Curriculum Planning:

1. Strands

There are four strands in the English Curriculum, each one containing three strand units:

Strands	Strand units
Receptiveness to language	Oral, Reading, Writing
Competence and confidence in using language	Oral, Reading, Writing
Developing cognitive abilities through language	Oral, Reading, Writing
Emotional and imaginative development through language	Oral, Reading, Writing

At Scoil Mhuire we envisage language learning as an integrated process in which all three strand units are interconnected. The curriculum promotes the centrality of language - and particularly oral language, as a vital context for learning, not just in English, but in every curriculum area. We endorse this approach to language learning and teachers will adopt this approach in the teaching and learning strategies utilised in classroom work.

2. Language Programme

Oral Language – an overview.

Much of our English Programme at infant level will be devoted to oral language and informal emergent reading activities. The thrust of learning at this level will be to explore and develop the four areas of oral language: receptive, expressive, cognitive and emotional/expressive.

Language is the means by which we teach and learn most things but for the purpose of our plan for the development of English as a first language, we will deal with language under three headings:

- Oral language
- Reading
- Writing

Within the classroom, oral language skills will be fostered within a range of learning contexts - pair work, group work, whole class work, mixed ability group and similar ability groups. The focus of formal oral language lessons will be:

- To provide meaningful life experiences/learning contexts within which language skills are developed and vocabulary is developed
- To enable pupils to express their ideas clearly
- To enable pupils to reflect on how they communicate and its effectiveness.
- To enable pupils articulate experience

The main contexts in which oral language in will be taught formally are through:

- Talk and discussion;
- Personal and wider news
- Play and games;
- Story;
- Improvisational drama and role-play;
- Show and Tell
- Poetry and rhyme;

- Circle time;
- Writing through symbols;
- Mind maps;

Each subject area within the broader curriculum provides rich opportunities for the development of oral language as for instance in the following contexts:

Maths: Use of guided discussion in developing strand units, problem-solving process and reporting on the process subsequently, children working in pairs, groups ...

SESE: History - drama, debate, analysis, prediction; Geography - comparing, contrasting, discussing, giving reports, presentations on topics; Science - use of terminology, process of researching and reporting on findings

P.E.: Use of terminology, e.g. football/rounders/basketball terms. Use of sports' events to promote language development

Visual Arts: Opportunities to describe the process and to verbally respond to art

Drama: Opportunities to explore and develop language use (each class is timetabled for 30 minutes drama each week)

Music: Terminology, words of songs as a source of vocabulary especially with younger children, instruments of orchestra ...

SPHE: Exploring relevant themes through the medium of talk and discussion (See Teacher Guidelines: SPHE pp. 79 – 85)

Religion: Reading to children, dramatising stories from the Bible, Assembly time, discussion about a given theme.

Reading

From the initial child centred oral and written language which will scaffold future learning, to the multitude of genres introduced to stimulate and delight, the skill of reading is at the core of all learning and a lifelong source of pleasure and companionship. For this reason, we do everything possible to promote reading. We celebrate World Book Day, Roald Dahl Day and others to promote the enjoyment of reading.

Speech is the basis of the written word. We believe that rich oral language is paramount in giving the child tools to develop their reading skills both technically and for pleasure.

The objectives of our reading programme are to enable each child to:

- Gain pleasure from reading on an individual and paired basis
- Develop print awareness and an understanding of print
- Develop a range of reading skills and abilities that includes phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and a growing sight vocabulary
- Develop a range of comprehension strategies
- Literacy Power hour
- Develop an awareness of the richness and diversity of reading material available and to read form a variety of texts of gradually increasing complexity
- Choose reading material and engage in and enjoy sustained silent reading

- Develop a sense of discrimination with regard to the use of language and images in the media.

The New Guided Reading Approach has been very successful and followed initiatives from Staff to enhance the learning of reading. See note on Guided Reading.

Books are kept beside the Library and children work through the many levels available to learn and to enjoy reading other than with only their 'Class Reader'.

Reading in Junior and Senior Infants:

Phonics:

Both Junior and Senior Infants use "Jolly Phonics" which is an early systematic phonics programme where children are taught the main 42 phonemes of English, not just the alphabet sounds. They are then taught how to blend the sounds to form words, therefore reading. At the same time they are taught to write.

In other words, during the first weeks of Junior Infants children will learn:

- The single letter sounds of the alphabet;
- The letter names of the alphabet;
- To listen for the letter sounds in the vocabulary they encounter in class;
- To identify the initial sound of a word, the final sound and the middle vowel sound.
- To blend cvc words
- To read words with the single letter sounds they have learned;
- They will be introduced to half of the double letter sounds (vowel digraphs);
- The sounds these double letters make;
- How to make words using these sounds;
- How to read words that have these sounds;

Using all of the above skills children will learn to blend sounds.

Children from Infant Classes who attend learning support will also benefit from the Oxford Reading Tree and the Phonological Awareness Training Programme (P.A.T. programme).

Blending Sounds:

When reading, children need to understand the meaning of words. Before they can do this, they have to be able to work out what words say. The phonic skill for this is to look at the letters, say the sounds and hear the word- blending. Initially the blending of words is done with the sounds being called out aloud. Gradually the children are encouraged to blend silently in their head. This promotes fluency in reading. Children will also be given word boxes – graded to progress from simple words, using the first sounds taught, to more complicated sounds using digraphs. The aim is to give children blending practise which can be done at home with a parent's help.

The Look and Say method is also used and the children are introduced to the vocabulary of the reading Series initially through their word box.

Identifying the sounds in words:

The main phonetic skill for writing is to start with the spoken word, then listen, identify and write the sounds in that word. Phonological awareness is the ability to hear the sounds in words. When a child is able to distinguish the sounds in a word and knows how to write the letter sounds the child can then write a word without help. This is the opposite of blending. In this way we link reading and writing – children help the teacher to write a word by teasing out the sounds and writing them up. Then the children read

the word by blending the sounds together again. Children themselves begin to see the significance of decoding and encoding in order to read and write. In this way children take their first steps towards becoming independent writers.

Rhymes:

To develop phonological and phonemic awareness the following visual and auditory activities are used in the classroom:

- Nursery Rhymes
- Rhymed Stories
- Tapping out syllabic rhymes
- Activities involving onsets and rhymes.

Big Books:

We have a selection of big books. They are an excellent teaching resource to further develop language skills and extend children's vocabulary. We also use them to help teach children structures of reading, left to right direction, sentence structure and to help children understand that text is linked to illustration. Through whole class teaching with big books children will also learn the parts of a book and enjoy a story on a collaborative basis. They will understand sequence, retell, predict, question, personalise, express opinions, show empathy and dramatise events.

Reading Schemes:

Junior Infants will normally be introduced to our reading scheme in the First Term. This will of course depend on their readiness in terms of oral language and maturity. They will take a book home each night and discuss both the text (at first one word only, repeated on each page) and the illustrations with their parents. Children in Junior and Senior Infants will be heard reading aloud every day, by their teacher or classroom assistant. They will have a reading record which parents and teachers will sign.

Development of Sight Vocabulary:

The development of sight vocabulary is an important element in the emergent reading phase and we believe is critical for the later development of meaningful, independent, reading skills. At this stage high interest words such as common words form the environment and the names of characters from stories, will form the sight vocabulary.

Encouragement:

Encouragement and praise and positive attitudes are at the heart of all our teaching. Our emergent readers learn that reading and writing are pleasurable by:

- our positive attitudes
- having a print rich environment,
- having their work carefully displayed and valued
- making books using their own work and taking part in the write a book competition.

Reading in Senior Infants:

Senior Infants will build on work covered in Junior Infants.

The teacher will create a print rich environment which may include the following:

- Labels in the classroom

- Alphabet frieze
- Charts e.g. poems, songs or time line
- Children's own writing
- Library- a wide collection of books
- Tricky words and useful words as required for writing.

Word Identification Strategies:

Continue to build up a sight vocabulary including everyday words used in personal writing, labels and posters and continue to learn sight words from the Dolch list of 100 Basic Sight Words. Children will also begin to build a knowledge of books- e.g. author, illustrations, left to right, page turning, awareness of punctuation.

Phonics:

Continued use of "Jolly Phonics" for letter sound relationships, Onset and rhyme, word families, adding on rhymes, simple rhyming poems, Games- clap each syllable, I spy, action songs and poems.

Comprehension:

Children will be given the opportunity to respond to characters, situations and story details relating them to personal experience. They will also recall and talk about significant events and details in stories and poems and predict future incidents and outcomes in stories. They will ask and answer questions about stories and retell stories focussing on sequencing.

Formal Reading: Children will take a reader home each night and parents will sign the child's individual reading record. Each child will be heard to read each day, by the teacher and/or by the classroom assistant.

Reading for Pleasure:

This is an important part of our reading curriculum and will be encouraged through giving the children opportunities to hear and respond to stories /rhymes and poems. Shared reading with older children and with parents. Reading their own text to the class and enjoying big books together. Reading material will be chosen from both fact and fiction.

GUIDED READING:

During guided reading, we have the *time* to work with small groups of children who have reached similar stages of reading development on sets of books that present a successful challenge for the children.

We are able to:

- Observe the reading strategies that children are using.
- Demonstrate reading strategies and conventions in context, e.g. letter/sound.
- Show relationships, punctuation, rhyme, rhyme and repetition, figures of speech.
- Develop individual children's competence in using those strategies and conventions.

- Help children to make connections between life and literature.
- Discuss the authors and illustrators' styles and techniques.
- Provide opportunities for children to respond

Books for Guided Reading are stored beside the Library.

Teachers record progress each week.

Developed for the school by Ms. Martley who has responsibility for the overseeing of Language Development

Reading in First and Second Class:

First and Second Class will build on all of the above and use the same basic approaches and principles. They will continue to give each child broader reading strategies by means of some or all of the following:

- The Jolly Phonic Programme, to aid decoding of new words
- The PAT programme (Word families) e.g. -old, -at.

Onset and Rime:

different onsets:

single onsets	e.g. r- at
consonant blends	e.g. pl- an
digraphs	e.g. ch-at

different rimes

vowel digraphs	e.g. tr-ee
vowel/consonant combinations	e.g. h-and

Inventory of Phonic Skills that children should have acquired by the end of Second Class:

- Knowledge of alphabet lower case and alphabet upper case;
- Knowledge of single letter sounds (consonants);
- Knowledge of single letter sounds (vowels);
- Knowledge of phonic words (cvc pattern);
- Knowledge of phonic words (cvcc pattern);
- Knowledge of initial and final consonant blends (cc)
- Knowledge of word endings: all, y, ost, ild, int, ind;
- Knowledge of initial and double consonant blends
- Knowledge of vowels modified by: r, ar, or, ir, ur, er;
- Knowledge of consonant digraphs: sh, ch, th, wh, ph, tch;
- Knowledge of magic e;
- Knowledge of vowel digraphs: ai, oa, ow, oo, ea, ee, ew, ue, ay;
- Knowledge of consonant vowel initial blend: wa, wo;
- Knowledge of consonant digraph, sch;
- Knowledge of silent letters: b, g, igh, w, t, h, u, c, n, o, l;
- Knowledge of sound patterns: sion, tion, ture, ous, gue, que, ought, ious, ior;

Children will also learn about common word endings, word families and roots of words.

They will be taught how to use letter-sound relationships, (grapho/phonic cues), grammar and syntax (syntactic cues) and surrounding text (contextual cues) while attempting to identify unfamiliar words.

They will also be encouraged to break unfamiliar words into syllables e.g. A-mer-ica
Children will be encouraged to self correct when what she reads does not make sense.

Reading Schemes for First and Second Class:

See Current Book lists

Reading Intervention Strategies:

The following strategies are helpful to children who experience difficulty at this level:

- The Language Experience Approach;
- Jolly Phonics for Spelling and Grammar
- Teaching to pupil's strengths (auditory/visual);
- Over-learning the sound/letter relationships;
- Over-learning of key sight vocabulary;
- Multi-sensory approach;
- Literacy Power hour

In addition to the above, support will be provided by the learning support teacher. This intervention will be negotiated and agreed with the class teacher, and parents, taking into consideration the strengths and needs of pupils individually, and collectively.

Reading in Third & Fourth Class:

At this stage most children are fairly competent readers. It is important for us to remember, particularly at this stage, that in teaching a child to read we want not only to give each child strategies for comprehending a text but especially a love of books and the ability think and retrieve information. Reading will also be an important tool in developing the emotional and imaginative life of a child.

The child will be enabled to:

- Use more than one strategy when reading unfamiliar text
- Use known parts (prefixes and suffixes) to decode words
- Self correct reading errors
- Explore the relationship between text and illustrations
- Learn to select personal reading material and develop personal taste for authors and genres
- Experience different types of texts
- Develop information retrieval skills
- Enjoy silent reading
- Talk about choice of books and reasons for choice
- Literature Circle
- Understand the structure and terminology of books (cover, spine, blurb, illustration, dedication)
- Develop a range of comprehension strategies, e.g. deduction, inference, analysis, prediction, evaluation and summarising)
- Explore printing convention to aid expression and comprehension (bold, italics)
- Discuss books in terms of setting, plot, characters
- Experience a shared response to reading through the class novel.

Literature Circle for 3rd -6th - see appendix

Reading for pleasure:

Third and Fourth Class children will be enabled to:

- have access to a plentiful supply of books in the class/ school library
- use the school library and local libraries
- select personal reading material and develop a personal taste in reading for pleasure and information
- engage with a variety of poetry and verse
- develop basic information retrieval skills
- use simple dictionaries/thesaurus

Developing interests/attitudes, information retrieval skills and the ability to think:

The Third and Fourth Class teachers will seek to help each child to:

- extend participation in listening and silent reading activities and read books independently
- explore new interest and perspectives through reading
- seek recommendations for books to read and recommend books to others
- Literature Circle
- know the structure and terminology of books and develop skills in locating books in the library
- use a knowledge of printing conventions as an aid to expression and comprehension
- Recognise and discuss differences in reading tastes and talk about choice of books and reasons for choice
- Provide increasingly challenging reading material and develop responses
- Experience a shared response to fiction through the use of the class novel
- Read aloud with expression

Some possible methodologies for teaching reading at Third and Fourth Class levels:

- Skimming and scanning passages- Teacher provides questions- pupils read passage to find answers
- Use of dictionaries/ thesaurus
- Use of computer to source specified information
- Pupils read and select favourite poems
- Book reviews and recommendations for other pupils to read
- Cloze procedure
- Class novel and Literature Circle

Reading in Fifth and Sixth Class:

Children will be enabled to:

- Achieve proficiency in word identification by refining the different word identification skills- grapho/phonic, syntactic and contextual
- Improve ability to recognise and understand words by using root words, prefixes, suffixes, syllabication
- Engage with an increasing range of narrative, expository and representational text
- Literature Circle
- Become self reliant, confident and independent readers having time in class for sustained silent reading.

Reading for Pleasure and Information:

Children in Fifth and Sixth Class will be enabled to:

- Read widely as an independent reader from a more challenging range of reading material, including stories, poems, myths, legends, novels and non fiction texts
- Engage with books in groups and whole class settings
- Learn about the structure and appreciate the component parts of a newspaper e.g. Editorial, News, Feature, Review, Sport, Obituary, Advertisement, schedule of radio and television programmes etc.

Developing interests, attitudes, information retrieval skills and the ability to think:

Children in Fifth and Sixth Class will be enabled to:

- Listen to, read, learn, recite and respond to a challenging range of poetry
- Have access to a wide range of reading material in the classroom including magazines, newspapers, fiction, non fiction, books written by other pupils, collection of materials related to hobbies and interests, reference material, poetry anthologies
- Continue to keep a journal of personal reading
- Use comprehension skills such as analysing, confirming, evaluating, synthesising and correlating to aid deduction, problem solving and prediction
- Develop study skills such as skimming and scanning, note taking and summarising
- Retrieve and interpret information presented in a variety of ways: e.g. flowchart, table, diagram, list, web, survey, or review.

They will support arguments and opinions with evidence from text and read and interpret different kinds of functional text e.g. forms, menus, timetables. Recipes and explore appropriate non fiction texts for various purposes such as furthering a personal interest, or completing a project.

Children in Fifth and Sixth Class will use information retrieval skills in cross curricular settings. They will learn to distinguish between fact and opinion and bias and objectivity in the media and in text. Children will learn to further use the library to gain greater insight into book location, classification and organisation.

Children will hear the teacher model a response to poems, fiction, plays and parts of plays and so learn to develop their own individual responses.

Comprehension Skills in Fifth and Sixth Class:

A range of approaches to the development of comprehension skills will be used in Fifth and Sixth Class. The key opportunity presented by oral language lessons will be exploited. To ensure this, pupils will be:

- taught to use simple cognitive strategies when reading;
- encouraged to answer a range of question types (implicit/ explicit/ critical/ inferential/ creative), from an early age – orally at first and then symbolically;
- encouraged to respond to text, both when read to, and when reading independently. Responses to text will include pupils analysis to the story, the characters and their views of the story- orally or in written/symbolic form;

Writing

We believe that in teaching a child to write the process of writing is as important as the product because, it is in consistent practice in using that process that children learn to write. Pupils will always have an audience and a purpose for their writing from an early age and they will be encouraged to write for different audiences on a wide range of topics and in a variety of genres. Pupils will have the opportunity to draft, edit and re draft a piece of writing. Teachers will act as mentors and guides in this process of drafting and editing and so will help each child to develop expressive skills and accuracy. Through this interactive process our pupils will gradually develop the ability to self correct their writing and will be encouraged to become independent writers

Our main objectives in teaching children to write are to help children to:

- gain pleasure and fulfillment from writing
- express intuitions, feelings, ideas and reactions in response to real and imaginary situations through writing
- compose, relate and write stories and poems
- explore and express reactions to poetry, fiction and the arts through writing
- write for different purposes and audiences
- write in a variety of genres appropriate to school and outside needs
- learn to edit and refine writing and to develop a sense of appropriate presentation
- develop a personal style of writing and learn to distinguish and to use appropriate levels of formality
- share writing with other people
- use computers in learning to write
- become independent writers.

Writing in Junior Infants

Children in Junior Infants are first taught how to hold a pencil correctly. As each sound is learnt, the formation of the letter is also shown.

- Letter formation taught - in air, sound sheets, basic letter knowledge
- Capital letters - lower case formation is concentrated on in the beginning. Later, in Senior Infants, the formation of capital letters is taught.
- Many letters have a joining tail at the end to make it easier to transfer into joined-up writing. (This is as used in the Jolly Phonic Letter Scheme and is a multi-sensory approach of visual, auditory oral and kinesthetic as channels to learning letter sounds and formation.

Writing in Senior Infants:

All writing activities will generally be preceded by oral language work. A key part of the class teachers' role is to foster the impulse to write; she may do this by:

- Acting as scribe while pupils tell story
- Writing captions, words and sentences and illustrating them
- *Giving constant opportunities for children to view* personal writing displayed- description of a piece of artwork, class book, school outing

- Reading personal writing aloud and e.g. writing our news on flip chart and reading it with children

The Process of writing at Senior Infants level :

It is important for children at this stage to:

- Form letters using correct formation
- Write letters and words from memory
- Become aware of lower-case, capitals
- Rewrite sentence to make message clearer
- Add descriptive words to naming words

Writing genres:

Children in Senior Infants will:

- Choose subjects for drawing and writing
- Draw a picture and write about it - captions/news
- Listen to a story/poem and draw and write about it
- Write and draw about feelings- I feel happy when ...likes and dislikes, a piece of music/labels
- Write a poem
- Make a card/invitation
- Collaborate to write experience charts
- Write a book-my book of red things, our book of Summer
- Make a list - shopping, party, friends

Spelling

- Copy words from environment-useful words and tricky words
- Use Jolly Phonics skills for approximate spellings
- Learn conventional spelling of familiar words

Writing in First & Second Classes:

In 1st & 2nd Classes there is continued emphasis on creating and fostering the impulse to write

through:

- personal writing collections and news
- displays of writing
- observing teacher as she/he models writing stories
- writing for different purposes e.g. personal, the teacher, other children. the family, choosing topics, exploring different genres such as story, letters, invitations
- working collaboratively with other children

It is very important for children to see that their writing is valued by seeing it well displayed, by positive comments and special stickers, by being invited to read it aloud for others.

In order to develop competence and confidence and the ability to write independently in First and Second Class children it is important that they:

- experience oral language activity prior to writing
- realize that 1st attempts are not necessarily the finished product and learn to draft and edit
- understand how the purpose of punctuation helps to make meaning clearer

- e.g. full stops, capital letters
- spell words in recognizable way based on an awareness of the most common spelling strings and patterns
- use approximate spelling as an interim measure
- spell correctly a range of familiar, important and most often used words
- use a variety of sources as aids to spelling e.g.
- words displayed in class
- personal dictionaries
- words learned in reading
- choose topics themselves
- have regular opportunities to write e.g. to describe pictures
- write notes, messages to different audiences e.g. teacher, parents, friends.

First and Second Class will learn to further clarify thought through language through being given opportunities to:

- write in a variety of genres e.g. stories, diaries, poetry, charts, lists, captions, cards, invitations and simple letters.
- write about something that has been learned
- write the significant details about an activity e.g. a game I play
- write an explanation of something
- re-read work, confer and rewrite
- write a simple sentence and add words to extend meaning
- listen to a story and write down questions
- write answers to questions asked by teacher.

First and Second Class will continue to develop emotional and imaginative life through writing by being given constant opportunities to:

- express feelings in writing
- write about experiences
- react to experiences of others in writing
- draw and write about sensory experience
- write about feelings experienced in drama
- draw and write stories and poems
- express personal likes and dislikes re events and characters in stories and poems
- listen to music and write about it.

Writing in Third and Fourth Class:

Our continued aim is to create and foster the impulse to write in each child, and to assist their competence and confidence in their ability to write independently. Writing is a vital tool in developing the emotional and imaginative life of the child and to help the child discover the joy of clarifying thought through writing.

The Third and Fourth Class child will be enabled to:

- experience a classroom environment that encourages writing with a class library, displays of writing and captioned drawings/work
- observe the teacher modelling different writing genres eg writing about a personal experience, writing a letter, writing a description.

- re-read his/her writing for pleasure
- choose an audience for which to write
- write stories, diaries, letters, notices, lists, menus
- receive (and give) positive responses to writing
- see his/her writing valued through constructive comment - having it read/displayed.

We aim to nurture each child's impulse to write in Third and Fourth Class by allowing children to:

- Experience a classroom environment that encourages writing
- Observe teacher modeling different writing genres
- Use personal reading as a stimulus to writing
- Write stories that explore a variety of genres
- Re-read his/her writing for pleasure
- Choose an audience for which to write
- Receive and give positive responses to writing
- See her writing valued

We seek to help Third and Fourth Class to continue to developing competence and confidence in writing and the ability to write independently by providing children with opportunities to:

- write regularly and gradually extend period over which a writing effort is sustained
- engage in the writing of one piece over a period
- experience varied and consistent oral language activity as a preparation for writing
- learn to use questions as a mechanism for expanding and developing a story
- give sequence to ideas and events in stories
- develop an awareness of the difference between language and oral language
- learn to revise and redraft writing

Aware of the importance of helping children clarifying thought through writing the Third and Fourth Class teacher will help children to:

- read a story and write it in her own terms
- read a narrative or expository piece and summarize it
- write about an idea and explain it to someone else
- write down directions on how to perform a particular process
- write a list of questions about a topic - then prioritize them
- write a sentence - elaborate on it by adding more ideas to it
- expand and clarify thoughts on a particular idea through drafting and redrafting.

Third and Fourth Class Teachers will seek to develop each child's emotional and imaginative life through writing by providing opportunities for each one to:

- express his/her reactions to particular experiences in writing
- create stories and poems

- write about favourite moments, characters and events in stories
- express in writing her reactions to poems and to personal reading.

The following are some of the writing methodologies used in our Third and

Fourth Class:

- writing in different genres e.g. letter writing, report writing, explanatory writing, narrative, writing fiction
- building a story
- poetry writing
- pupils read written work to class
- display written work
- encouraging pupils to ornament work for display create book covers
- brainstorming for story writing
- Using questions to expand
- Sequencing events
- Provide middle of story - tease out beginning/conclusion. Discuss different beginnings and endings.
- Use of rough drafts
- Earmark weeks for letter writing, poetry etc.
- Read story to class. Ask them to write a summary
- Take a paragraph from familiar piece - have children rewrite it in her own words
- Select person you would like to interview - draw up list of questions you would ask.
- Writes uniformly, legibly and fluently in Infant Sassoon script
- Makes appropriate use of capital letters and a range of punctuation marks correctly.
- Uses direct/indirect forms of speech in narrative writing
- Proof reads for spelling and punctuation errors
- Chooses adjectives to refine meaning
- Writes stories which include setting, character, plot, resolution.

Writing in Fifth & Sixth Classes:

The child In Fifth and Sixth Class will enjoy working in a classroom that encourages writing by having some or all of the following:

- class library
- writing corner
- displays of writing for visitors
- anthologies of each pupil's writing
- anthologies of other pupils' writing
- books written by each pupil
- captioned charts, pictures, posters

The child will observe the teacher model a wide variety of writing genres including:

- narrative
- expository
- letters

- poems
- project work
- fiction

Each child will have opportunities to:

- express and communicate reactions to reading experiences
- experience and communicate reactions to reading experiences
- experience interesting and relevant writing challenges
- write for an increasingly varied audience
- receive and give constructive responses to writing. Children will see their work being valued in many ways including taking part in the "Write a Book Competition", class anthologies, displays of personal writing, printed examples of writing, writing exhibitions, reading their very special writing aloud in class or sometimes in assembly.

Fifth and Sixth Class teachers will continue help each child to develop competence, confidence and the ability to write independently by enabling each child to engage in some or all of the following:

- write regularly on chosen topics
- write for a sustained length of time
- engage in the writing of one piece over a period - a week, number of weeks, a term
- experience varied and consistent oral language activity as part of the pre-writing process
- observe the teacher modeling good practice in writing - drafting, revising, editing
- write independently through a process of drafting, revising, editing and publishing
- write, without redrafting, on a given topic within certain time constraints
- observe the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- use dictionaries and thesauruses to extend and develop vocabulary and spelling
- explore the possibilities of syntax and sentence structure in reading and writing
- choose a register of language appropriate to subject and audience - to a friend, for a display, to seek information
- choose a form and quality of presentation appropriate to the audience
- help others with editing their writing
- take part in co-operative writing activities such as projects, writing and publishing a class newspaper, writing and publishing compilations of stories and poetry.
- write fluently and relevantly in other areas of the curriculum
- develop a legible, fluent, personal style of handwriting

In Fifth and Sixth Class we will continue to help children to clarify thought through writing by giving them opportunities to write in a variety of genres. Genres which are especially useful in achieving this objective include mind mapping, narrative prose, poetry, writing instructions, keeping diaries, learning logs, reports, letters, summaries,

forms, recipes.

Children will be taught to:

- examine the characteristics that differentiate written and oral language
- write for a particular purpose and with a particular audience in mind
- reflect on and analyze ideas through writing
- refine ideas and their expression through drafting and redrafting
- express and communicate new learning
- relate new ideas to previous learning
- use notes to summaries reading material and write an account from the notes
- sketch an ordered summary of ideas and draft a writing assignment based on it
- argue the case in writing for a particular point of view
- argue the case in writing for a point of view with which she disagrees
- explore the use of compound and complex sentences in expressing thought.

The Fifth and Sixth class teacher will seek to help children to grow emotionally and in creativity by giving them opportunities to:

- analyse in writing reactions to personal experiences
- express in writing reactions to the experiences of others
- write stories and poems
- write longer stories or a series of related stories in book form
- keep a personal diary
- express a personal reaction to ideas, emotions and images encountered in literature
- express and analyze reactions to poems
- analyze different interpretations of poems in writing
- write about the relationship between poems and personal experience
- write short plays on activity in improvisational drama
- express in writing reactions to music, artwork, films, television programmes and videos/DVDs.

Spelling:

Pupils will be taught spelling through a multi sensory approach which will be used consistently in each class. This means that children will look at the word, cover it, say it and then spell it aloud before writing it down. They will then check the spelling themselves against the correct spelling in the spelling book. It also means

- Sometimes accepting approximate spelling in writing especially when the focus is on the content of the writing, especially in creative writing
- Linking spelling with the development of phonological and phonemic awareness (p.58 T.G.);
- Linking it with 'onset and rime' (p.58 T.G.);
- Building up a bank of commonly used words;
- Having a print rich environment;
- Compiling personal dictionaries;
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses;
- Using strategies such as predict, look, say, cover, write, check, (p.86 T.G.)
- Becoming familiar with common spelling rules.

Poetry:

We believe that poetry should have a special place in children's language experience. Poetry offers children an opportunity to experience beauty through imagery, rhyme, rhythm and so heightens their enjoyment of language and awakens an aesthetic response in them. For this reason children will frequently hear poetry read to them in every year group. In the early years the emphasis will be on rhymes, riddles and nursery rhymes and jingles. As they grow older, children will become familiar with a wider range of poetry, humorous, narrative and lyric. The content of the poems children encounter will touch on every area of the child's experience and will also engage their imaginations. (c.f. page 71 Teachers guidelines)

There are poetry books in every class library and also in the main school library. Children will also be encouraged to write their own poetry. While each child will become aware of the importance of rhyme they will also learn that accuracy of expression and sincerity are of tremendous importance in creating a beautiful poem.

Handwriting:

Pupils will be helped to develop an appropriate handwriting style with which they are comfortable. Those in Junior Infants class will develop pre-writing skills through emphasis on pattern work using a range of tools and working with different media. They will be shown how to hold a pencil comfortably and will be encouraged to adopt a correct posture when writing. Correct letter formation will be taught in a subject specific way. We use a text book for teaching handwriting from Junior Infants to Fourth Class. Pupils will begin to use a pen in Third Class.

Children with Differing Needs:

Children who require extra support with reading, writing and spelling will be identified and supported through the Staged Process of Learning Support. This process is outlined in our Special Needs Policy. The identification, remediation and assessment of pupils experiencing difficulties will be processed in collaboration with the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher and the Principal. An Individual Plan is devised for each pupil in consultation with teachers and parents. This plan will specify and address the particular needs of the child and will be revised twice during the school year. Every effort is made in our school to boost the reading confidence of pupils experiencing difficulties with English through a variety of methods:

- Reinforcing reading strategies (contextual, structural analysis)
- Reinforcing word de-coding skills
- Phonological awareness
- Word identification skills
- Focusing on comprehension techniques
- Daily reading
- Reading motivation and interest

With these strategies, we aim to support the child as much as possible to become competent readers.

Equal Opportunities

Everyone is valued equally at Scoil Mhuire. We will endeavour to ensure that all pupils will have equal opportunity to achieve their full potential in writing, reading, speaking and listening, regardless of their race, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment of a child's language is both formal and informal and is happening all the time in the classroom. The purpose and value of assessment is to facilitate short term and long term planning. Teacher observation is at the heart of informal assessment and is an integral part of our teaching process. From time to time the teacher may find it helpful to make brief notes on a child or a group. Each teacher may also design her/his own tests and there is normally a weekly spelling test in each class from First Class upwards. All children from Junior Infants upwards will have an age appropriate reading record.

Senior Infants are given the MIST (Middle Infants Standardized Test) in the spring/summer term each year. Parents of any child who scores at a lower level are invited to meet with the teacher to determine the best action for the future.

We use MICRA T as the standardised test from First Class to Sixth Class and a tracking system is in place which allows us to see at a glance how each child is progressing from year to year.

Organisational Planning

1. Time Allocation

While the teaching of language is an integrated process and is happening all the time, children in Junior and Senior Infants will receive a minimum of three hours formal language teaching a week and children and children from First Class upwards will receive a minimum of four hours formal language teaching time.

2. Homework

All children will receive homework in English each night from Monday to Thursday. Friday homework is at the teachers' discretion. For children in Junior and Senior Infants this will normally be reading activities and parents will always be advised by the class teacher how best to support these.

Children in First and Second Class will have reading and spellings and will often be asked to put the spellings in a sentence.

Children from Third to Sixth Class will always have reading and spellings for homework and will usually be asked to complete a written assignment as well.

3. The Library

We have a dedicated library and all the books are catalogued and computerised. Each class is allocated a half an hour library time weekly but children may use the library under the supervision of their teacher at other times. Junior Infants also enjoy the library especially for story time.

4. Resources and ICT

The school uses a variety of reading resources, all of which assist us in our aim of presenting the pupils with a range of genre, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama.

We also have the Oxford Reading Tree in the Guided Reading Programme. Beside the staff room there is a large English reference section for teachers including anthologies of children's poetry, photocopiable resources, and resources for language development at each stage.

Children will now be timetabled to use

- iPads
- Chrome books
- PC's

For the development of Language in all strands.

They have started on eBooks as their initial writing project and use ICT for all subjects as required.

School Self Evaluation is focusing on ICT with reference to Language development at all levels.

When using the iPads or any form of ICT, children work in pairs or groups to encourage language and cooperative learning, creativity and problem solving.

5. Teachers Planning

Each teacher has an overall plan of the work to be covered in his/ her class for the whole year. Working from this s/he will create fortnightly plans outlining learning objectives in each strand area.

6. Parental Involvements

Each teacher will seek to involve parents in so far as is possible in supporting children in their language development. This can range from making them aware of assigned homework to keeping them updated on their child's progress. For parents of children availing of learning support specific help is offered to parents so that working together we can maximize the learning opportunities offered to the child.

As well as the above parents are invited to work in the library on a rota basis.

7. Community Links

Our school enjoys close links with the library and with local book shops.

A favourite annual event is Book Week, and we invite a professional storyteller most years.

8. Review

This document completed in 2008 is the result of a review of our original policy document which was first created in 2003 and now supersedes it.

It was updated with School Self Evaluation in 2013 and further reviewed in 2015/16, although amendments may be added as they arise.

Amendments in connection with ICT have been made as our ICT resources have increased to include iPads and Chrome books- 2018/19.

Ratified by the Board of Management:

Signed: _____
Josephine Henry, Chairperson

Date: October 2018

Synopsis

Broad Areas	Detailed breakdown of topics to be covered
Oral Language	Talk and discussion Play and Games Story Improvisational Drama Poetry and Rhyme
Reading	A print-rich environment Reading strategies Comprehension Responding to text Emergent reading Use of the novel Phonological awareness
Writing	Process of writing Early writing Writing genre Grammar and punctuation Spelling
Approaches to Poetry	Poetry throughout the school
ICT	Using ICT in English
Assessment	Teacher designed tasks and tests Teacher observation Work samples Curriculum profiles Diagnostic tests Standardised tests
Planning	Class : short/long-term School Planning
Home/school links	Helping parents to help their children at home
Resources and equipment	Sourcing and storing resources

Monitoring work and tests in Scoil Mhuire.

The purpose of work given to children to do in school or at home is to improve learning and develop skills. With this in mind it is important that work is corrected and affirmed as soon as possible after it is done.

It is important that the child receives approval and praise for work that is well done and that the effort is also validated.

Correcting work can have different purposes at different times. It may involve written or verbal feedback or both and as often as possible it is desirable that the teacher give verbal feedback to children about their work.

Correcting work should be frequent and consistent and relate directly to the aim or objective of the given task.

Teachers should try in the first instance to look for strengths as well as identifying weaknesses – two stars and a wish.

Senior Classes may be asked to edit their own work and the correction might ask them to find 2 spelling mistakes or review paragraph 2.

Look for opportunities to provide positive feedback to children whenever possible in class, especially for those children who may not always reach the higher standards of some of their peers.

In order to make the best use of correcting work, it is the aim here to provide a consistent scheme of correction throughout the school and to ensure that all teachers, children and parents are aware of the scheme.

It is vital that we are clear in the learning objectives of every lesson and that we then monitor work according to that objective.

We aim to make comments on work that include information on how to develop rather than just 'good' or 'excellent'