

LETTERFRACK NATIONAL SCHOOL

English – Whole School Plan

INTRODUCTION

This English whole school plan was prepared by the staff of Letterfrack N.S. during the academic year 2014 -2015 and will be implemented in full from January 2015.

RATIONALE

In Letterfrack N.S. we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils. We see the development of their fluency in the English language 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 through the written word. In our school, therefore, we attach a high priority to giving pupils a command of English.

AIMS OF THE ENGLISH PLAN

Our vision is to value all pupils equally and prepare them to contribute and play a meaningful role in their school and community. We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for English

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

ORAL LANGUAGE PLAN

BROAD OBJECTIVES

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

- 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, language conventions, vocabulary, aesthetic response and language manipulation.

FIVE CONTEXTS OF ORAL LANGUAGE

Teachers help children to develop their oral language through the following five contexts;

- Talk and Discussion
- Play and Games
- Poetry
- Story and Improvisational Drama

STRATEGIES

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

- To gain maximum information
- To seek and to give explanations
- To discuss different possible solutions to problems
- To argue a point of view
- To persuade others
- To examine fact and fiction, bias and objectivity etc.
- To develop critical thinking skills

DISCRETE ORAL LANGUAGE TIME:

Form, structure, use of language and grammar are addressed during Discrete Oral Language time. Children are encouraged and taught to use correct pronunciation, grammar etc. when speaking. On occasions this may need to be done discretely by the teacher. Teaching strategies are carefully selected with the ultimate aim to develop children's confidence in speaking in small group/large group situations.

ORGANISATIONAL SETTING

Teachers use a range of organisational settings for development of Oral Language such as pair work, group work, whole class discussion, formal and informal debates and circle work.

PRESENTATION

Children are encouraged to present their work to a range of audiences such as classmates, other teachers, and school visitors. The Christmas Concert, local concert, St. Patrick's Day Parade and other performances also give the children opportunities to present their work to a range of audiences.

ORAL LANGUAGE RESOURCES

RESOURCES

Junior/Senior:

Ancillary oral Activities and resources with Reader
Prim-Ed exercises in listening and Oral Comprehension

1st/2nd:

Posters – cross curricular
Ancillary oral Activities and resources with Reader
Prim-Ed exercises in listening and Oral Comprehension

3rd/4th:

Posters – cross curricular
Oral exercises/debating topics from class reader
PowerPoint presentations
Speaking & Listening 3rd & 4th Class (Folens)

5th/6th:

PowerPoint presentations
Activities/exercises from class reader
Speaking & Listening 5th & 6th Class (Folens)

Learning Support/Resource:

Language at home 1&2&3
Help for Auditory Processing
Speaking And Listening Pri-Med

ORAL LANGUAGE ACROSS THE OTHER CURRICULAR AREAS

Vocabulary and terms specific to all subjects will be taught as part of the teaching of individual subjects. Talk and Discussion will be a core methodology in those subjects:

- **Maths:** Guided discussion in developing strand units, the problem-solving process, and reporting on the process subsequently
- **P.E.:** Use of terminology, e.g. football/rounders/basketball terms; Use of sports' events to promote language development.
- **Science:** Use of terminology, process of investigating and reporting on findings
- **SPHE:** Exploring relevant themes through the medium of talk and discussion
- **History and Geography:** Exploration of cause and effect

PHONICS PLAN

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.

PHONICS

- This programme is based on Jolly Phonics program from infants to 3rd class and Spell Bound program from 1st to 6th along with list attached.
- A systematic phonic programme with daily instruction is in place. It is desirable that the phonic programme should be integrated with the spelling and reading programme.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Phonic method

An approach to reading instruction where the emphasis is placed upon the sound value of letters as a means of word recognition.

Analysis

Breaking down a word into its individual letter sounds, e.g. ship = sh+l+p

Blending

Linking together the individual sounds to form the whole word, sh+ee+p

Digraph

Two letters, vowel or consonant, which combine to make one sound:

chin meat

Diphthong

Two vowels blending to make one sound: oil

ASSESSMENT

Assessment in phonics will mainly be informal teacher observation. Assessment can also be monitored through the use of a variety of activities and games. In addition, the following strategies will be used:

Junior Infants – formal assessment. Check if each child knows letter sounds on his/her own.

Senior Infants – as above and standardised test (M.I.S. T.) is administered to all children in Senior Infants.

Rang 1 – Use relevant parts of a suitable test if a teacher is concerned about a pupil's reading and writing activities. Standardised tests and diagnostic tests.

Rang 2 – Rang 6: Teacher monitors individual children through the daily reading and writing activities. Standardised tests and diagnostic tests.

RESOURCES

Junior Infants & Senior Infants

Jolly phonics IWB programme

Word Lists

Phonics workbook

Flashcards of letter, pictures of objects that began with sound

Phonic games on IWB

Flashcards of CVC words

Rang 1 – 2

Phonics worksheets

Phonic Poems

Spellbound a&b

Rang 3 – 6

Spellbound book c,d,E & f

Phonological Awareness & Phonics – Better English (Folens)

Brendan Cullan Dictation, corewords 1&2 3&4

SOFTWARE RESOURCES

Lexia to be purchased in 2014/15

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Particular problems will be documented informally and parents will be orally notified. They will be encouraged to help the child, and will be shown how to support their child's learning in this area, e.g. through work lists, word games, strategies etc. Notes should be made in the child's file of any such consultations with parents.

READING PLAN

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

The class reader is gauged towards the average child. The purpose of using a class reader is to develop reading skills such as using picture cues, word attack skills, dictionary work, comprehension, information retrieval skills etc. Teachers cater for the different needs in the classroom when using the class reader by asking questions gauged at different levels of ability.

READING SCHEME

The *Reading Zone* reading scheme is used from infants to 6th class.

The English *Teacher Guidelines* (pg. 54) state that

“...the child will not be expected to engage with a structured reading scheme until his/her language competence is strong enough to support reading development. Children by and large, can begin a structured reading is strong enough to support reading development. Children by and large, can begin a structured reading programme some time during the Infant cycle”

INFANT READING

The emphasis in Infant classes is on pre-reading skills. Big Books, Picture Books etc are used so that children are given many opportunities to hear reading, talk about reading appreciate the usefulness and pleasures of reading, to help them understand the conventions of text and the terminology of books (letter, word, sentence, page number, reading from left to right) etc..

Basic sight vocabulary will be taught in Junior Infants including the vocabulary used in the Reading scheme in preparation for the time when the children will be introduced to the reading scheme. However, if children are able to read when coming to school they will be encouraged to continue reading at their level and suitable reading material will be available for them in their classrooms. Appropriate library/ancillary books are read in school and at home depending on the child's ability as follows:

- Picture books – no script
- Books with one or two words
- Books with one sentence
- Alphabet books e.g. everything in book beginning with c

1ST – 6TH CLASS: COMPREHENSION

Comprehension skills are developed through a combination of reading the text, reflecting on the text, discussing it, and writing about it. In the early years children are encouraged to use

picture cues when answering questions. Children are encouraged to approach comprehension tasks in three phrases

- ❖ Prior knowledge before reading text
- ❖ Reflecting while reading
- ❖ Responding after reading

For developing comprehension skills teachers use a variety of methodologies such as the following:

- ❖ Talk and discussion is used as a basic strategy in developing comprehension skills
- ❖ KWL: What is it you want to know? What have you learned?
- ❖ Predicting
- ❖ Visualising
- ❖ Questioning

CLASS NOVELS 2ND – 6TH

The novel is used from second class up to give children the experience of using real books. Novels can be read independently or used in a group or class setting. Carefully selected class novels help to encourage children to read and draw the child's attention to descriptive text, development of characters, plot etc. Big books are used in the early years.

Outside the set novels listed teachers use their own discretion in using novels in the classroom to develop skills in English.

Middle classes Novels:

Senior Classes Novels: Carries war, Guns of Easter,

Supplementary/ancillary/parallel readers are used to give children the opportunity to read at their level. At an early age children become aware of their different abilities. Teachers make every effort to instil confidence in children, and help them to identify and use their talents. It is very important that children with difficulties in reading are affirmed, encouraged and supported in taking the next step. Every child needs to taste success regularly in some area of school life.

Junior Classes:

Middle Classes:

Senior Classes: Better English (educate.ie), Folens Reading Pack

Learning Support Room: Orchard Reading tree, Storyworlds, Banana's series, Young Hippos series, Fast Fictions, Sportzone, Wild Reads, Disasters.

SILENT READING

- Silent Reading is done in all classes from 1st up is timetabled for Thursday 2.30 – 3.00.

- In acting as a good role model the teacher reads silently as well.
- Teachers of lower classes use their discretion in deciding the amount of time children spend reading silently.
- Children are always encouraged to read silently if they've finished their work early.

POETRY

Teachers and pupils have their own individual personal tastes in poetry. It is important that there is some flexibility in the selection of poetry by an individual class.

General Guidelines:

- It is important that children have the opportunity to hear, read, write and enjoy poetry on a regular basis.
- When writing poetry allow the children to work as a whole class, in groups and pairs as well as individually.
- Model writing the different types of poems.
- Give children plenty of opportunity to see and discuss the style of poem you have selected before writing it themselves. Photocopy and laminate poems and have them in your room.
- Give children the opportunity to present their work.

PRINT RICH ENVIRONMENT

In our classrooms and school children are surrounded by print. The classroom is labelled at a level appropriate to the age of the children in the class. Teachers use posters, charts, dictionaries, newspapers etc. to provide an appropriate print rich environment for the children. From Infants children are able to use the labels and posters in their classrooms as cues for writing.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Teachers recognise that the parent's support is crucial and parents support teachers primarily by showing an interest in their child's learning: listening/talking with their children, talking about pictures in books, listening to their children reading, asking them questions on what they have read, checking spellings, encouraging them to become members of the local library etc. Parents are asked to sign their children's homework diaries. Some class teachers may ask parents to sign reading logs. If parents are concerned about their child's progress they should discuss this with the class teacher at the earliest opportunity.

Parents have a very important role in encouraging their children to read. Time the children spend reading together with parents should be a pleasurable experience. Parents are given advice at parent/teacher meetings as to how they can best support their children with reading and how they can reinforce what is done in the classroom.

LIBRARY

The Parent's association of Letterfrack NS have set up a very successful school library. Parents volunteer to come in once a week and the children visit the library in groups. The

parents help them choose a book to read, encourage them to do reviews on the books and sometimes read books aloud to the younger children.

BOOK RELATED EVENTS

- Book Fair: A Book Fair is held every year for one week in the local hall in conjunction with the local sea week festival. It is run by the book company scholastics. Responsibility for its organisation lies with Leo Hallisey of CCEEC. Parents are notified in advance of the Fair in a school letter. At the end of the week a percentage of money spent during the fair is given to the school to choose books for the school. The company voucher is divided equally between all teachers to select books for their classes.
- Book Week: World Book Day Tokens are distributed during this week

WRITING PLAN

Having reviewed current practice, and in the light of school self evaluation and literacy initiative we agreed that it was necessary to devise a more structured approach to teaching writing in our school.

Year 1: 2015-2016 Formal	Revise	Year 2 2016-2017 Formal	Revise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recount • Persuasive • Procedural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative • Explanation • Report (exposition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative • Explanation • Report (exposition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recount • Persuasive • Procedural

INTRODUCTION OF A NEW GENRE

The formal teaching of one individual genre will take place over 6-8 weeks during each term, while the genres taught in the previous year will be recapped on and revised.

The suggested structure for teaching a new genre is:

Week 1-2

Familiarisation – showing the children lots of examples of this genre.

Week 3-4

Modelled writing

Shared writing – teacher writes the children’s ideas

Guided writing – using frameworks devised by teacher or the resource book.

Week 5-6

Modelled writing
Independent construction

Week 7-8

Editing

Independent reconstruction

Presentation to audience (reading it for different classes, hall display, school website, class book, parish newsletter, bringing it home, etc).

FUNCTIONAL WRITING/PUNCTUATION/GRAMMAR

Rang 1

Sentence Construction

Use of capital letters at beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences

Parts of Speech

The children will be introduced to the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns, without use of formal terminology

Rang 2

Sentence Construction

Use of capital letters at beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences

Use of the question mark

Awareness of inverted commas for direct speech

Parts of Speech

Revision and extension of the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns, without use of formal terminology

'Special' names such as John, Mary, Rex and Mallow get capital letters, while

'ordinary' words such as boy, girl, dog and town get lower case letters. Masculine and Feminine nouns bus/cow; king/queen; prince/princess.

Rang 3

Sentence Construction

Use of capital letters at beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences

Use of the question mark

Use of commas in lists

Use of inverted commas for direct speech

Use of apostrophe

Parts of Speech

Revision and extension of the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns, plus the introduction of the terminology

Proper Nouns such as John, Mary, Rex and Mallow get capital letters, while Common nouns such as boy, girl, dog and town get lower case letters

Use of collective nouns, e.g. herd of cattle, school of dolphins etc

Masculine and Feminine nouns, e.g. Bull/cow; king/queen; prince/princess
Plural of nouns

Rang 4

Sentence Construction

Use of capital letters at beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences

Use of the question mark.

Use of exclamation mark

Use of commas in lists

Use of inverted commas for direct speech

Use of direct speech and indirect speech

Use of apostrophe

Parts of Speech

Revision and extension of the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns.

Proper Nouns such as John, Mary, Rex and Mallow get capital letters while Common nouns such as boy, girl, dog and town get lower case letters.

Use of collective nouns, e.g. herd of cattle, school of dolphins etc.

Masculine and Feminine nouns

Plural of nouns

Verbs: Verbs have tense past/present/future tense.

Rang 5

Sentence Construction

Use of capital letters at beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences.

Use of the question mark

Use of exclamation mark

Use of commas in lists

Use of inverted commas for direct speech

Use of direct speech and indirect speech

Use of apostrophe

Parts of Speech

Revision and extension of the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns.

Masculine and Feminine nouns.

Collective nouns.

Abstract Nouns.

Plural of nouns.

Adjectives

Rang 6

Sentence Construction

Use of capital letters at beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences

Use of the question mark

Use of exclamation mark

Use of commas in lists
Use of inverted commas for direct speech
Use of apostrophe

Parts of Speech

Revision and extension of the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns
Masculine and Feminine nouns
Collective nouns
Abstract nouns
Plural of nouns
Adjectives
Verbs – Past, Present and future Tense Verbs
Conjunctions
Adverbs
Prepositions
Definite and Indefinite Article

PENMANSHIP

In accordance with our DEIS plan we agreed that it was necessary to devise a uniform, progressive handwriting approach for our school. We examined a selection of handwriting schemes and we decided to change to **Just Handwriting by educate.ie**.

A consistent approach is used throughout the school:

- Emphasis on proper pencil grip.
- Emphasis on good writing posture.
- Emphasis on proper letter formation.
- Emphasis on quality presentation

Junior Infants: Letter formation samples are included in the enrolment pack and are sent out to parents when developing pre-writing skills.

- Use of crayon and plastic materials.
- Scribbling and drawing shapes.
- Free style drawing.
- Print with environment.
- Use of finger rhymes to prepare fingers for writing work.
- Prewriting letter patterns
- Develop satisfactory grip using crayons progressing to pencils.
- Use of hand hugger pencils. (tripod grip)
- Kinaesthetic approach emphasised.
- Creating awareness of left-right, top-bottom orientation
- See Teacher model writing as an enjoyable experience

Senior Infants

- Children will be encouraged to write and draw frequently throughout the year.
- Greater emphasis on left-right orientation.
- Copy words from the environment.
- Capital letters introduced in alphabetical order.
- Write labels to name families, people and things
- Write his/her full name.
- Awareness of lower case and capital letters and full stops.
- Awareness of ascenders and descenders.
- Awareness of spacing between words.
- Trying to keep writing on the line.

1st and 2nd Class

- Consolidation and reinforcement of Senior Infant work.
- Use of HB pencils
- A red pen is introduced in 2nd class for headings, and dates

3rd and 4th Class

- Use of HB pencils
- Introduction of joining
- Children are encouraged to have a drawing pad and are allowed to draw when they are finished a task early.
- Use of pen to be introduced in late 4th class

5th and 6th Class

- Pens rather than ball points to be used
- Develop a fluent personal style of handwriting
- Write for more sustained periods

Left Handed Pupils

- Children's hand dominance will not be influenced.
- Children will be encouraged to find a pencil grip that is comfortable, and allows good writing.

SPELLING PLAN

General Guidelines

1. Guiding the child in developing their phonological and phonemic awareness in order that they can readily identify sound and letter patterns within words.
2. Using onset and rime strategies to inculcate an awareness of spelling patterns.. this is achieved by introducing word families that share the same 'rime', e.g. the family of 'evy' words.
3. Building up a store of High Frequency Words.
4. Highlighting Commonly Misspelled Words and Homophones.
5. Advocating the use of strategies such as Predict, Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check.
6. Enabling the children to become familiar with common spelling rules, e.g. the fact that the plural of most words is formed by adding 's'.

Teachers are aware of current thinking and research regarding the teaching and learning of spellings and have been given copies of extracts from Brendan Culligan's book on spelling. The school's structured phonics programme will help children learn spelling. However teachers are aware that phonics alone cannot be used to teach spelling and a consistent multi-dimensional approach is used in order to ensure that children do not become over reliant on phonics when spelling. Teachers encourage children to use a combination of Look, Predict, Say, Cover, Write and Check, Phonics and Word Attack skills when teaching spelling.

Junior & Senior Infants

- Learn to form and name individual letters using various materials
- Understand left-right orientation when forming words
- Copy letters and words informally and form signs in the classroom
- Write own Christian name
- Use labels to name familiar people and things
- Write letters and simple words from memory
- Become aware of lower case and capital letters
- Develop the confidence to use approximate spelling

Spellbound programme adheres to the objectives advocated by the Revised Primary School Curriculum which state that:

- In **First and Second Class** the child is enabled to:
'spell correctly a range of familiar, important and regularly occurring words...'
- In **Third and Fourth Class** the child is enabled to:
'use a range of aids and strategies (dictionaries, word lists, word searches, spelling checkers, anagrams, regular word patterns)... to improve his/her command of spelling. Dictation exercises from Brendan Culligan and Teachers will try to ensure that the children know how to spell Brendan Culligan's corewords lists 1 and 2
- In **Fifth and Sixth Class the child is enabled to**
'*observe the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling in his/her writing*'
Teachers will try to ensure that the children know how to spell Brendan Culligan's corewords lists 3 and 4

Assessment of Spelling

- Regular testing will take place
- All children will be given the opportunity to experience success, and will learn spellings at own ability level
- Full sentence testing will occasionally be used from 1st to 6th
- Spelling tests will be marked by the teacher, and records of progress kept

ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

TIMETABLE

All teachers adhere to the new DES guidelines for the teaching of English: 5 hours from 1st to 6th and 4 hours in the Infant Room. The children receiving learning support or resource hours are accommodated in this arrangement.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is used by teachers to inform their planning, selection and management of learning activities so that they can make the best possible provision for meeting the varied needs of the children in our school.

Teachers select from the following range of assessment approaches:

- Teacher observation of reading, writing and language knowledge and skills
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Work - samples, portfolios and projects
- Children will be encouraged to assess their own work on a continuous basis

TEACHER OBSERVATION

The curriculum makes reference to the validity of teacher observation as a means of building a broad understanding of a child's strengths. Teachers will note anything that they feel is important in relation to a child's progress in English.

Observations may include the following:

- Confidence and competence in talk and discussion
- The response to and initiation of questioning during class or group work
- Strengths and concerns in relation to prescribed and personal written work
- Strengths and concerns in relation to spelling

TEACHER DESIGNED TASKS AND TESTS

The following are used throughout the school to inform the class teacher of each child's progress in English:

- Oral language work
- Reading and phonological tests
- Written tests – close procedure, grammar, sentence formation etc.
- Weekly or fortnightly spelling tests

STANDARDISED TESTS

The following procedure is used for Standardised tests:

MIST PROGRAMME

MIST is a screening programme for Senior Infants. It tests listening skills, initial sounds, written vocabulary, blending 3 letter words and sentence diction. It is given to Senior Infants

children after Christmas. Children who are experiencing difficulties are selected for the MIST Forward Together Programme.

All children from First to Sixth classes are given **Micra-Tor Drumcondra** Reading test in May/June

- In line with the school's policy on record keeping results are kept until the child reached the age of 21. The actual test will be stored for the school year in which the test was given. The results are sent home to the parent each year in the end of year report.

CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS

The English programme for Letterfrack N.S. aims to meet the needs of all children in the school. Teachers vary the pace, content and methodologies to ensure adequate learning for all children will achieve this. Those children who receive scores at or below the 30th percentile on the standardised tests will have priority in attending the Learning Support teacher for supplementary teaching for English. The availability of supplementary teaching for English depends on the caseload of the Learning Support Teacher.

Arrangements will be in accordance with the recommended selection criteria as determined by the DES. At the junior end of the school teacher observations are taken into account for learning support teaching. Also we would take into account the involvement of outside agencies e.g. speech therapist.

Diagnostic tests may also be administered where the need arises. Parental permission must be obtained before these tests are administered.

The requirements of children with special needs will be catered for in the IEP, through consultation between the class teacher and the L/S teacher.

For children of exceptional ability, opportunities will be provided to work on independent research projects, ICT and with other children who have a similar interest in English.

Ratified on _____

Signed _____