

## **School Policy on English (updated March '12)**

### **Introduction**

We at Croom National School endorse the principles outlined in the Revised Curriculum. Our school cherishes all pupils equally and to aid them in achieving their true potential we have devised the following policy. Our experience since the introduction of the revised curriculum in English informs much of this updated plan. The needs of the type of child attending our school now need to be addressed and are reflected in our plan.

### **Rationale for update**

It is now deemed necessary to update this plan due to the issuing of circular 0056/2011 on literacy & numeracy.

### **By whom was the policy updated:**

The staff of the school updated this policy using

- (a) the needs of all pupils in the school
- (b) the curriculum guidelines
- (c) the available school resources- both personnel & books of all kinds
- (d) circular 0056/2011
- (e) inservice training on literacy and numeracy
- (f) the aggregated class scores on MicraT

### **Aims:**

- to foster a love of Reading and Books
- to develop a range of reading skills and abilities that would include
  - (a) phonemic awareness
  - (b) word identification
  - (c) a growing sight vocabulary
- to read independently and accurately
- to read with understanding

- that all children have a good command of the English Language both oral & written
- be familiar with a wide variety of writing genres - narrative expository letters, poems, fiction
  - (d) knowledge of grammar
  - (e) functional/creative writing

**Approach:**

The school has decided to update its plan through the strand units; Oral language, Reading and Writing but the strands; Receptiveness to language, Competence and confidence in using the language, Developing cognitive abilities through language and emotional and imaginative development through language are addressed and will be addressed specifically in individual teacher's planning.

The staff favours an integrated approach, as language learning is an integrated process in which it is difficult to separate the functions of oral language, reading and writing. However, discrete time for oral language is set-aside at each class level cf. Oral Language below

Our English Policy includes the following aspects of the English Curriculum

- Pre-reading Activities
- Oral Language
- Functional Writing
- Creative Writing
- Spelling
- Drama
- Penmanship
- Assessment

- Resources
- Library
- Methodology / I.C.T.
- Textbooks

### **Oral Language:**

A pivotal role is given to oral language in all classes. It is the precursor to reading and writing.

#### Background

A sizeable percentage of the children entering our school now at junior infant level do not enter with a rich/varied oral language experience.

A mini review of our school plan was undertaken by the principal & the I.S.M. team in September '12 arising out of concerns expressed by staff, particularly by staff in the junior end of the school.

We reviewed our approach in September '12 and decided that an update was necessary as there is a marked deterioration in spoken English in the Junior Classes. Coupled with this many of those coming to us in recent years have come with language impairments and a very restricted vocabulary.

We decided to put the following in place to address these issues

- Juniors-2<sup>nd</sup> Fallons Oral Language
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Folens Oral Language Programme
- Continue with the arrangements put in place in the past three years between the school and the H.S.E. to ensure that children with language/speech disabilities are assessed and receive therapy where necessary.

### Aims

- To develop receptiveness to oral language
- To develop confidence and competence in using oral language
- To develop cognitive abilities through oral language
- To develop emotional and imaginative life through oral language

### Oral Objectives

- To develop a wide range of language skills through the use of a variety of classroom organizational settings - story - telling, participating in drama, discussing, debating, and role-play, photographs, local environment and mime.

Jn I - II -Fallons Oral Language Programme

III- VI - Folens Oral Language Programme

- To develop the habit of listening actively.
- To express ideas in a logical sequence.
- To expand their vocabulary and develop their command of grammar
- To Listen to stories  
For the sheer enjoyment
- To develop good listening skills and recall sequence ability
- To relate their own stories

### Oral Language across the curriculum/Linkage with other policy areas.

Oral language will be integrated in the language programme and in the curriculum generally. The strands of the English curriculum

will also be addressed through the use of oral language in different subject areas across the curriculum for e.g.; the use of oral language in the guided discussion involved in the problem solving process in Maths, the use of terminology and reporting in science, geography and history and the exploration of relevant texts in S.P.H.E. In the English programme itself the use of oral language in developing comprehension will be maximized. Oral Language activity will be used as the basis for writing and as a teaching strategy in every area of the curriculum. Through integration in other subject areas across the curriculum oral language can be developed further and the strands of the English curriculum will be addressed.

Formal Oral Language Programmes and Resources used in the school include

- a. Fallons Language Programme
- b. Folens Language Programme, Listening and Speaking
- c. Twenty Steps to Language Development

### **Reading:**

#### **Reading Objectives**

- To foster a love of reading and books
- To develop a range of reading skills and abilities that would include
  - (a) Word identification strategies
  - (b) "Phonemic and Phonological Awareness" - cf. School Policy on Phonics.
  - (c) A growing sight vocabulary.

### **Key Elements of Instructional Reading**

- (a) Work done at pre reading and emergent reader stages.
- (b) Print-rich environment
- (c) The Fallons Scheme is presently being used throughout the school. While the children will have opportunities to read from a wide variety of books and will be encouraged to do so, we feel that the use of a reading scheme will ensure continuity and progression from class to class.
- (d) The diverse reading needs of the children are provided through use of
  1. C.A.P.E.R.: Junior & Senior Infants
  2. Reading different genres: Fourth, Fifth & Sixth e.g. Recount, Report, Procedure, Narratives, Exposition, Explanation.

### **Key elements involved in the development of independent reading.**

- (i) The class library
- (ii) The school library
- (iii) Involving parental support
- (iv) Learning Support Back-up cf. School Policy on Learning Support
- (v) Encouragement to visit local libraries (parental involvement)

**The School Library** is of such importance in the life of our school that it warrants a Post of Responsibility. It forms part of the post of Deputy Principal Mrs. Bernie O'Rourke, responsible for organizing the library and providing a wide variety of interesting books - fiction, reference, science, poetry, and nature.

The County Library updated our stock of books in October 2011.

A special room has been created to accommodate this large collection of books. Class library corners have been set up in the classes' junior infants to first. The classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class have been allocated a weekly time to visit the library and the sixth class acts as a librarian, thus enabling the children to choose independently and to browse in an orderly manner.

Children are encouraged to visit local libraries and bookshops to access a greater number of books.

Attention is drawn to World Book Day and Bookmark Competitions are held each year.

### **Paired Reading**

We regard paired reading as being of immense value-

- (a) In developing a love of reading
- (b) In fostering the children a deep appreciation of books
- (c) In engaging the parents in meaningful involvement
- (d) In providing "Quality Time" for parent and child

Strategies in Use: Paired Reading/Story

Sacks/DEAR/Word Games/Thesaurus Work

### **Poetry Objectives**

To build on the children's innate interest in Rhythm, sounds and words

-To listen to rhymes

To read, memorise, recite a wide variety of poetry

To compose their own poems and encouraged to take part in poetry competitions.

## **Writing**

Functional and Creative

Writing Genres

Recount, Report, Procedure, Narrative, Explanation, Exposition.

Functional and creative writing from the core elements of the writing programme.

Through use of discussion, oral language lessons, work-cards, workbooks, written homework, project work, letter writing and the children's own experiences they are guided towards independent, expressive creative accurate work.

Aims:

- To enable the child to write independently
- To enable the child to communicate ideas, information, thoughts and feelings with accuracy and expression
- To use computer technology in learning to edit written work and for information retrieval
- To see his/her writing valued
  - Class anthologies
  - Displays of personal writing
  - Writing exhibitions
- To enable the child to experience a level of success in writing that will be an incentive to continue writing
- Through use of work cards, workbooks, written homework project work, letter writing and their own experiences children are guided towards independent expressive creative accurate words

## **Handwriting/Penmanship**

Aims/Objectives

- to develop a comfortable and legible handwriting style
- To follow correct letter formation



- To practice correct sizing letters in relation to one another
- To use correct spacing
- The correct use of Capital letters and Punctuation.

Formal lessons on penmanship are given in every class

Junior Infants - Write Here A Folens  
Senior Infants - Write Here B Folens

First Class	All Write Now 1
Second Class	All Write Now 2
Third Class	Write This Way 3
Fourth Class	Write This Way 4
Fifth Class	Write This Way 5
Sixth Class	Write This Way 6

Children are encouraged to take part in Handwriting competitions

Approaches to Phonics

(a) Jolly Phonics is used in Junior, Senior Infants & First Class. It is interactive and child friendly. Children are encouraged to be dramatic and memorize rhymes and sounds. It is used in conjunction with the interactive whiteboard.

It is an enjoyable activity based programme which links letter sounds, letter blending, and reading and letter formation leading to phrase and sentence formation. It is direct and time efficient and can be used on a day-to-day basis

## **Spellings**

Aim: to enable the children to write with accuracy. The importance of correct and accurate spelling is emphasized and encouraged in our school.

Develop in the children an ability to spell the most commonly used words drawing from the Dolch List and the Social sight vocabulary list.

## **Approach/Strategies**

A multi-dimensional approach will be used consistently throughout the school.

We use a variety of strategies based on

1. List of most commonly used words
2. Reading Material
3. Conversation Lessons
4. Common errors arising in written work
5. Folens Series in use 1-V1

This process is started in First Class. The multi-dimensional integrated approach is used when teaching these.

## **Assessment and Record Keeping**

### **Evaluation Strategies**

#### **(a) Formal**

1. The Micra T administered every year to all classes from 1<sup>st</sup> to sixth. Results are tabulated on the regular

score sheets and transferred to the Data Analysis sheet.

2. Appropriate action will be taken in the area of differentiated learning
3. Pupils performing below the 10<sup>th</sup> Percentile are referred to learning support
4. The results of the testing will inform the teaching for the forthcoming school year.
5. Teaching strategies including phonic/phonemic awareness programmes will be put in place for children who are under performing
6. End of year school reports will include test results in Sten format. An explanatory note re: scoring is included with school reports.
7. Time is allocated each June for parents to come and discuss reports (includes Micra-T results).

(b) Informal

- (i) Spelling Tests
- (ii) Dictation
- (i) End of Year Testing
- (ii) Learning Support Testing
- (iii) Word Recognition Tests throughout the year
- (iv) Dromcondra Oral Indicators of pupils' oral work.

**Individual Teacher Planning**

To be in line with school plan

**Equality of Participation**

- ❖ Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in discussions, presentations, reading activities and research.

- ❖ We endeavour to ensure that reading material chosen is neither sexist or racist or discriminatory in any other way in line with our mission statement
- ❖ Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to use in I.C.T.
- ❖ There is open access to all services, facilities and amenities for both boys and girls
- ❖ Children for whom English is not their first language are supported in the classroom and in L.S.

### **Children with Different Needs/Differentiation**

We feel that children with learning disabilities, bearing in mind the levels of staffing and resources available are well catered for in our school. Our approach is collaborative involving the parents, the child, the class teacher, and SEN teachers.

Differentiation is addressed at Junior level through such approaches as C.A.P.E.R., D.E.A.R., Paired-Reading etc.

The use of accelerated reading programmes, the use of the school library, I.C.T., differentiated approaches within the classroom, independent projects and competitions, support children who present with exceptional ability

### **Use of I.T.**

Children have access to computers in their classrooms. A wide and varied selection of software is available in the school to support the English curriculum. Much use is made of software in English in the Learning Support and Resource areas.

Computers are used for Pre Reading games, talking stories and word games. Senior classes use, Internet search engines to access information on computer.

Much use is made of broadband to support not only English but also other areas of the curriculum and within this there is great scope for integration.

Use of the Internet is guided by our A.U.P.

### **Staff Development**

- The staff of our school has always been progressive in the area of development in curricular and curriculum approaches. Our S.E.N. teachers engage in on-going inservice to keep abreast of new approaches and thinking in the area of special needs.

Mainstream teachers actively involve themselves in all inservice organised by N.C.C.A. and the P.D.S.T. and engage in a number of inservice activities outside of school time.

- There is generous sharing of expertise and knowledge acquired
- Staff meetings are excellent opportunities for discussing and sharing ideas and approaches and also for feedback from courses attended and initiative being undertaken in individual classes
- Professional dialogue occurs easily at coffee breaks and lunch breaks on an almost daily basis

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents are seen clearly as partners in their children's education at school level and are encouraged by the staff to become fully involved. There are arrangements for both informal and formal consultation and the school welcomes discussion with parents.

We are very fortunate in the high level of support we get from parents and we actively engage in ensuring this good-will.

Teachers at Infant level make parents aware of the many ways by which they can support their child's learning.

Paired-reading plays a central role in parental involvement and

homework is also seen as a means by which parents become involved and play an active role in their child's language learning.

### **Community Links**

- Local storytellers, historians may visit the school
- Local clergy visit the school
- Children's articles may sometimes be published in the local newsletter or the school newsletter
- Children's work is sometimes displayed in the local church or in local shops.

### **Review**

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation, but also in the light of any future developments.

However, a definite review will be undertaken in school year 2017.

### **Ratification**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management

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Chairperson B.O.M.

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

