



**Kilgarvan Central School**

**Whole School Plan for  
English**

## ■ Title English

## ■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

### (a) Introductory Statement

This is the whole school plan for Kilgarvan Central National School. It is a rural school with 4 classroom teachers, 1 resource teacher and 1 part-time learning support teacher. The following plan was developed over a number of years, beginning in 2000 when inservice training was provided to schools. The plan has been developed over a number of planning days and with the assistance of a Cuiditheoir from the Primary Curriculum Support Programme. A collaborative approach was adopted when writing this plan to ensure that all the staff shares a sense of ownership in the planning process.

### (b) Rationale

It is hoped that this school plan will be a useful tool for teachers providing them with clear guidelines in the teaching of English and ensuring consistency and continuity in practice throughout the school. During the development phase of this plan, some concern was expressed regarding pupil achievement in certain aspects of our English programme. We have therefore decided that pupils would benefit from the development and implementation of a co-ordinated programme of learning. This plan also reflects main areas of emphases in the English curriculum statement (Gov. Of Ireland 1999) and accompanying Teacher Guidelines.

## ■ Vision and Aims

### (a) Vision

Our vision in Kilgarvan Central School is to ensure that pupils are holistically developed in order to assist them in contributing and playing a fulfilling role in their own community. We see the development of their language skills as being central to this process. We believe that the ability of our pupils to communicate fluently, confidently and effectively will contribute greatly to the development of their self-esteem and their personal growth. We also believe that children leaving our school should have a competency in all aspects of the English language. We also see the teaching of English as something which underpins all other subjects across the primary curriculum. We believe that language learning is a tool for life long learning.

### (b) Aims

In teaching English we aim:

- To promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language – spoken, read and written
- 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.

English Curriculum pp. 10-12

## ■ Curriculum Planning

### 1. Strands and Strand Units

the broad objectives, content and methodologies for the teaching and learning of oral language, reading and writing are outlined in the English Curriculum pp. 2-3. The English curriculum is structured according to the strands and strand units. To aid clarity the staff has chosen to plan through the strand units:

- Oral Language
- Reading
- Writing

The strands of Receptiveness to language, Competence & Confidence in using language, developing cognitive abilities through language & Emotional & Imaginative development through language are understood in the context of learning language and learning through language. We feel the better the child's ability with language, the more effectively he/she will learn. Therefore the integration of oral language, reading and writing is of paramount importance. The development of oral language is given an importance as great as that of reading and writing at every level.

Within each strand, the strand units reflect the contribution oral language, reading and writing make to that particular facet of the child's development and these strand units contain the detailed elements of curriculum content.

### 2. Language Programme as developed through the strands and strand units.

#### 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

#### Methodologies:

This plan will inform all teachers of the methodologies used in teaching English i.e. talk and discussion, collaborative learning, active learning, use of the environment, problem-solving and skills through content.

#### Oral Language:

##### Approach to Oral Language:

The school's agreed approach to Oral Language will draw on three areas of content:

- **Discrete Oral Language**

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. Discrete oral language will be addressed using curriculum objectives as guidelines e.g. introducing oneself and others; greeting others and saying good-byes; giving and receiving messages; using the telephone; making requests for information; giving directions; expressing appreciation; welcoming visitors; making a complaint; expressing sympathy etc.

Bearing in mind the context of the school, we are aware that there is a huge diversity in the oral language skills of children entering our school. Therefore the pivotal role of oral language as an integrating factor in all aspects of the English programme is recognised.

This is timetabled oral language activity (ref. below) and will address the objectives that are not being addressed thoroughly in an integrated fashion.

- **Integrating Oral Language through the Reading and Writing process**

The following oral language activities and skills will be developed through the teaching of reading and writing – comprehension strategies, language experience approach, brainstorming at the pre-writing stage, peer-conferencing and conferencing with teacher, children in author's chair, use of novel, writing process, etc.

- **Integrating Oral Language across the curriculum**

The following oral language skills will be targeted in an integrated way e.g. describing skills in Visual Arts, listening skills in Music and PE, turn taking, expressing opinions, media study in SPHE.

Planning oral language across the three strands ensures that these three areas of content are adequately addressed.

In planning for oral language across the strands, the following contexts are utilised (T.G. pp. 38-49):

- Talk and discussion
- Play and games
- Story
- Improvisational Drama
- Poetry and Rhyme

There is an emphasis on classroom organisation and methodologies that provide children with an opportunity to learn the form and structure of language and to use language discursively through questioning and for coherent expression. Teachers will incorporate a variety of organisational settings into the teaching and learning for development of Oral Language such as pair work, group work, whole class discussion, formal and informal debates and circle work.

Resources that will be used in our school include: Chatterbox, Magic Emerald, Loop Cards, Story Cubes books, language activities from various web sites.

### **Reading:**

#### **Broad objectives**

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

- Develop print awareness, phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and sight vocabulary
- Develop their comprehension and analytical strategies
- Expand their understanding and usage of grammar, syntax and punctuation
- Develop their appreciation of the richness and diversity of reading material
- Experience the pleasure and fulfilment to be gained from reading

#### **Approach to Reading:**

In our approach to reading, we consider the following:

- the children's general language development
- the central role of phonological and phonemic awareness
- the involvement of parents' in children's reading

these approaches will be recognised at all stages of children's acquisition of reading i.e from the emergent reader, to the instructional reader and to the independent reader.

### **Print-Rich Environment**

We are very conscious of the importance of a print-rich environment throughout all classes and a variety of examples of a print-rich environment are evident in our school including big books in a range of genres, picture books, independent reading books, charts of poems, songs and rhymes, labels and directions, name charts, written materials produced by children, jobs chart, timetables, word charts, magnetic surfaces and magnetic letters, notice board (messages for children to read), charts of days, months, seasons and festivals calendars, theme charts, environment print in the neighbourhood, etc.

### **Basic Sight Vocabulary**

Basic sight vocabulary is an important component of the language base the child needs before embarking on a structured reading programme. It will be acquired from a number of sources, such as language experience material, large format books, environmental print, labelling, flash cards, etc. Sight vocabulary will be developed through selecting common words, core words, words from the reader, high interest words, Dolch list and social sight vocabulary.

- **Phonological Awareness**

Phonological awareness will be developed through:

- Syllabic awareness – syllabic blending, syllable segmentation, syllable counting, syllable isolation
- Onset and rime – nursery rhymes and rhyming poems, detecting rhymes in stories, rhyme judgement, rhyme generation
- Phonemic awareness – identify initial sound – final sound – medial sound;  
Phonemic blending  
Phonemic deletion  
Phoneme isolation  
Phoneme substitution  
Phoneme transposition

- **Reading Fluency**

The primary strategies recognised in this school to enable children to identify words are their knowledge of letter-sound relationships (grapho/phonic cues), their experiences and understanding of the world (meaning or semantic cues) and their knowledge of the forms of language (syntactic cues).

From the outset children are encouraged to look at letters in words, the shape of words, for letters they recognise, to sound our letters that they know, to look for little words in big words etc.

Other strategies used with the children every day are encouraging the children to look at the shape of the word, look for small words, breaking the word into syllables etc.

The phonics programme used in our school is Jolly Phonics. In order to develop reading fluency among our children, we ensure time is allocated to reading activities such as USSR. Dear. Buddy reading.

- **Comprehension Skills**

The comprehension skills that will be developed through language activity in our school included analysis, synthesis, inference, deduction, summarisation, evaluation and correlation. Teachers

explicitly teach a number of strategies that relate to both factual texts and fictional texts including scanning, skimming, search reading, KWL, reflective reading, brainstorming and categorising, sequencing, predicting etc. by modelling the language and process for children. Comprehension skills are developed through oral and written work with an emphasis on discussion.

- **Reading Material**

In Kilgarvan Central School we aim to use a variety of reading material such as big books, class readers, parallel readers, poetry anthologies, etc. Big Books are used to expose children to reading in order to develop their receptiveness to language. It also provides children with an opportunity to talk about reading and expose them to the conventions of print. The class reader is used to develop reading skills such as word attack skills, dictionary work, comprehension, information retrieval skills etc. Teachers ensure that their use of questioning on the class reader is differentiated to cater for the varying needs within the classroom. Parallel readers serve to give children the opportunity to read independently at their level to ensure they view reading as an enjoyable activity, to develop fluency and heighten their self-esteem. We endeavour to select reading material that lends itself to group/individual recitation, and we aim to include expository, narrative and diagrammatic/representational texts in our selection. We recognise the importance of using reading material as a means to develop our children emotionally and imaginatively and engage in activities such as character development, discuss why they chose a particular text, respond to material read through drama, art and music, etc. We have adopted a variety of approaches such as collaborative reading, independent reading, group reading, whole class approach, etc and we aim to strike a balance throughout the year. The LS/RT supplements the reading programme by implementing early intervention programmes during the year, devising the phonics and phonological awareness programme in consultation with staff, etc.

**Class Novels :** Class novels will be used from Rang 3 to Rang 6.

**Use of Dictionaries :** Dictionaries will be used from fourth class up. Formal time will be devoted to teaching the children how to use a dictionary correctly.

**Internet Resources for book related activities :**

[www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)

[www.fireandwater.com](http://www.fireandwater.com)

[www.pcsp.ie](http://www.pcsp.ie)

[www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie)

**Writing:**

The school's approach to writing concentrates on the writing process in order to develop the child's expressive and communicative abilities. Through the process of writing, children will explore a selection of independently-chosen topics, through a variety of genres for different audiences within a whole school that values children's writing.

**Fostering the Process of Writing**

The school will provide opportunities for children to write for real purposes and real audiences, recognising that drafting, editing and redrafting are at the heart of the writing process. Free writing will be used to enable the children to become independent writers.

- **Genres of writing**

The purpose of the writing and the audience for whom it is written will determine the genre. In Kilgarvan Central School, we teach all the following genres to all classes.

- Recount – school trip
- Report writing – factual – e.g life history of the butterfly – book review
- Explanatory writing – how a volcano is formed
- Procedural writing – rules, directions, recipes

- Persuasive writing – debate
- Narrative – story e.g Cinderella
- Creative writing

In teaching the genres of writing, the children will encounter the genres through reading/being read to, teacher-modelled writing, shared writing, guided writing, leading to independent writing.

- **Poetry**

In order to develop the child emotionally and imaginatively, we will encourage children to write a variety of poetry. Children will be given the opportunity to work as a whole class, in groups and pairs as well as individually when writing poetry and the writing of different types of poems will be modelled e.g. Limerick, acrostics, riddle poems, rhyming poems, pyramid poems.

## **Handwriting**

### **Broad Objectives**

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

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

Good habits in handwriting are developed at an early stage e.g. posture, paper position, pencil grip. In order to make handwriting more accessible to Náí. Shóis., the letters taught are based on the print style in their reading material. In Náí. Shóis. children write with thick pencils and crayons, Náí. Shín go Rang a Trí use standard pencils and Rang a Ceathair is Rang a Sé use pens. In Kilgarvan Central School Náí Shóis. will focus on pre-writing skills and lower case letter formation. This is developed at Náí. Shín. In Rang a hAon where they will focus on upper and lower case letter formation. Joined writing will be introduced at Rang a Dó. By Rang a ceathair children will be expected to write in legible joined script and in Rang a Cúig is Rang a Sé children will be expected to develop a legible, fluent personal style of writing.

- **Spelling**

In Kilgarvan Central School we recognise that spelling must be viewed as a fun activity by the children and we acknowledge that spelling activities must be written, as oral spelling is of little value. Regular class time will be timetabled for the teaching of Spelling Strategies. We understand that mastering spelling is a developmental process and when children attempt to master the complexities of English spelling they go through a number of overlapping developmental stages:

- using sound-letter relationships
- using pattern
- using meaning

We also believe that spelling must never be a barrier to children's writing and therefore we must not dampen a child's enthusiasm to write by insisting on accurate spelling. To this end we are very conscious of the value of invented/approximate spelling as it allows children to self-correct their

attempts as the move through the different stages. “*However direct instruction can be of benefit to those who fail to spell accurately, particularly children who find it difficult to develop literacy. Direct instruction in spelling should be undertaken in the context of reading and writing and should be guided by information derived from the children’s approximate spelling.*” (TG. P.85). The children’s spelling programme in our school is Jolly Phonics Grammar, Spellbound (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> classes) and other sources from a combination of the child’s own writing, words from the Dolch list, words from the Phonological Awareness Programme, and words from the class reading material. We endorse the Teacher Guidelines which states that “progress in spelling takes place when children experience a consistent and systematic approach to its teaching. They need to master strategies for learning new words which ensure that they don’t rely totally on spelling out words letter by letter. Their attention needs to be directed to the whole word with the intention of reproducing it” (TG p.86). In keeping with this rationale, we will enable children to learn spellings through the Look and Say, Cover, Write and Check method.

- **Grammar and Punctuation**

In Kilgarvan Central School we aim to teach grammar and punctuation in the context of the children’s own writing and/or reading and we emphasise the oral aspect of teaching. The main features of grammar and punctuation needed and taught at each level are outlined in Appendix 2.

### **3. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. In Kilgarvan Central School, we value the different assessment tools that we use that include:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Running Records and Free Writing
- Work samples, portfolios and reports
- Diagnostic tests e.g. YARC, WIAT 2 Literacy Test
- Standardised tests e.g. Drumcondra Primary Reading and Spelling Test, MIST

Each of these has a contribution to make in helping to monitor individual children’s rates of progress and levels of attainment as they engage with the language curriculum and by using the information provided in them, we can build up a profile of each child as they progress through the school.

### **4. Children with Special Educational Needs**

In the teaching of English in Kilgarvan Central School, we aim to ensure that all are included. The SEN supports language/literacy needs through team teaching/collaborative approach. We have children with EAL and we support them by establishing buddy systems, using visual cues where appropriate, facilitating access to the school and class library to ensure that the child is encouraged to read as much as possible.

We also use a variety of strategies to stimulate the better able children.

### **5. Equality of Participation and Access**

All children are included and participate. Reading material reflects intercultural approach in the school and the use of language and textbooks deemed to be sexist is avoided. Each child’s culture is valued and encouraged. We encourage gender awareness through promoting consideration of the roles associated with men and women in literature, the media, advertising etc. as well as consideration of the language associated with such roles.

## ■ Organisational Planning

### 6. Timetable

6.5 hours – Infants (T1 & T2)

8.5 hours – 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> (T1 & T2)

Integrated approach to English but discrete time is allowed to Oral Language e.g. (recommended minimum time) Infants – 15 minutes daily, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes – 3 x 15 minutes per week, Senior Classes – 2 x 15 minute sessions per week.

### 7. Homework

Refer to homework policy

## 8. Library

### • Class Library

In our school, there is a library in each classroom. Each class teacher ensures that there is a variety of factual and fictional texts, poetry anthologies and texts in a range of genres. All books are organised according to their level of difficulty and category of interest. Each class teacher is responsible for organising their class library. Picture books, short books that can be read at one sitting, poetry anthologies, collections of short stories, a wide range of information books, dictionaries, periodicals suited to the interests and age levels of the children are included in the Junior Library as recommended by the Teacher Guidelines in English. The Senior Library is characterized by a wide range of fiction, biography, non-fiction books that will cater for a wide variety of interests, poetry anthologies, plays, reference books, newspapers, magazines and periodicals. Pupils change their books as often as required and a record is kept of books read to ensure they experience reading in different genres. Children are encouraged to visit the local library. We also have book fairs in our school.

## 9. Resources and ICT

**Class teachers are responsible for resources relating to the English curriculum in their own classrooms.**

## 10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

This plan in English and the curriculum documents will inform and guide teachers in their long and short term programme of work in English. Each teacher will keep a Cuntas Míosúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in English.

## 11. Staff Development

Staff development needs are identified through review and discussion at termly staff meetings. When needs are identified, an action plan is devised to ensure that such needs are adequately addressed. To date staff has participated in the following training e.g. inservice days, workshops, Cuíditheoiracht etc. we have also availed of a number of support services as part of staff professional development such as PCSP, SDPS, etc. Teachers are also encouraged to attend literacy courses and will share information/skills acquired at these courses with other members of staff during staff meetings.

## 12. Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is considered an integral part of effectively implementing English as Kilgarvan Central School appreciates that parents are the primary educator and that therefore play a

crucial role in the language development of their children. This plan and the curriculum documents are available for parents to inform them of the programme for English. We involved parents in a number of ways in their children's learning in English, for example, Library Involvement, Paired Reading, Forward Together, (MIST), Shared Writing, etc.

### **13. Community Links**

Kilgarvan Central School believe that the local community has a very important role to play in supporting the programme in English. We also encourage our children to take part in initiatives such as competitions, quizzes, debates and Readathon.

## **■ Success Criteria**

The success of this plan will be evaluated through teacher's planning and preparation, and if the procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed. We will also judge its success if the children have been enabled to achieve the aims outlined in this plan and children's learning has been enhanced in the following ways:

### **Oral Language**

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

### **Reading**

- Improved standards in reading
- Increased involvement in independent reading
- Involvement of parents in paired reading
- Experiencing of reading as an enjoyable activity

### **Writing**

- Greater fluency and explicitness in communicating ideas and experiences
- Enhanced experience of writing in a variety of genres and sharing stories and poems
- Increased use of ICT to support the writing process
- Improved presentation of written work

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

Assessment - Refer to Assessment Policy

## **■ Implementation**

### **(a) Roles and Responsibilities**

Kilgarvan Central School believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement the English Curriculum. Therefore the teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, Parents and the Local Community.

### **(b) Timeframe**

The plan will be reviewed and updated as the need arises.

## **■ Review**

### **(a) Roles and Responsibilities**

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the English curriculum in the school.

Those involved in the review will include:

*Teachers*

*Pupils*  
*Parents*  
*Plan co-ordinator*  
*Board of Management*

**This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014.**

**(b) Timeframe**

This plan will be reviewed as the need arises.

## Appendix 2

### **Punctuation Topics for each Class Level**

#### **Senior Infants:**

- Draw yourself and write your name
- Find capital letters in words
- Find capital letters in lists of words
- Matching lower case to capital letters
- Copy lower case and capital letters
- Write the correct lower case letter with the capital letter
- Rewrite sentences using capital letters and full stops
- Identifying correct sentences ie. with capital letter and full stop

#### **First Class:**

- Revision of capital letters/full stops
- Capital letters in months, days, titles, places
- Capital letter ~ 'I'
- Question marks

#### **Second Class:**

- Ordering the days/months ~ capital letters
- Commas ~ writing lists
- Writing addresses correctly
- Rewriting passages correctly ~ capital letters, full stops, commas
- Use of comma ~ not before 'and'
- Exclamation Marks!
- Using exclamation marks as punctuation marks in a sentence
- Speech Marks
- Rewriting sentences / short passages using correct punctuation ~ revision of above work
- Composing short stories from pictorial clues, paying attention to correct punctuation

#### **Third Class:**

- Revision of punctuation concepts to date
- Changing sentences to questions
- Identifying sentences where commas should be used
- Further work on speech punctuation

#### **Fourth Class:**

- Use of hyphens
- Use of apostrophe
- Apostrophes for possession
- Apostrophes to shorten words
- Apostrophe ~ use with plural nouns ending in s
- Semi-Colon
- Negatives

#### **Fifth Class**

- Revision of punctuation concepts to date
- Contractions
- Direct and Indirect Speech

- Working with tenses, prepositions and clauses
- 'I' or 'me'

#### **Sixth Class:**

- Dashes
- The Colon
- Simple Sentences
- Compound/Complex Sentences
- The Passive Voice
- Use of Brackets in sentences
- Conditionals