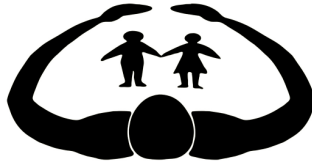


Donabate-Portrane



Educate Together

English Policy of D.P.E.T.N.S.

Introductory Statement & Rationale

The original school policy on English was formulated in line with the Revised Curriculum 1999. This current review took place in May 2015 to reflect latest best practice in the teaching of Literacy and to include recommendations from both the Whole School Evaluation Process 2012 and the national strategy to improve literacy document, entitled Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life.

Vision

In D.P.E.T.N.S, we are committed to treating all pupils equally and aim to help the children to develop their potential and play a meaningful role in their community. We believe that a command of the English language and a fluency in its expression is fundamental to confidence and personal growth. We recognise that modern world literacy covers various forms of communications, including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media and digital media and address each of these within our English policy.

Aims

The aims of the English Primary Curriculum are:

- To promote positive attitudes and an appreciation of the value of language: speaking, reading and writing.
- To develop competence and confidence in listening, speaking reading and writing of English.
- To develop cognitive ability and capacity to clarify thinking through oral language, writing and reading
- To enable the children to speak, read, spell and write independently and effectively.
- To enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral language, writing and reading.
- To promote the development of comprehension skills ranging from the lower order literal type to the higher order evaluative type.

Curriculum Planning

The English curriculum is structured according to 4 main strands and 3 strand units.

The four strands are:

1. Receptiveness to language
2. Competence and confidence in using language
3. Developing cognitive abilities through language
4. Emotional and imaginative development through language

The strand units cover the three key areas of oral language, reading and writing.

Oral Language

Objectives:

- In line with the guidelines from the PDST, the objectives of the oral language programme shall focus on the 5 key components:
 - Teach a variety of spoken texts
 - Develop listening and speaking skills
 - Teach and extend vocabulary and conceptual knowledge
 - Promote auditory memory
 - Create a language learning environment

Strategies:

- Discrete Oral Language time:
 - Teach a variety of spoken texts:
 - Oral reports
 - Storytelling and anecdotes
 - Partner and small group work
 - Giving instructions and following procedures
 - Conversations
 - Questioning and interviews
 - Arguments and formal/informal debates
 - Develop listening and speaking skills:
 - Awareness of the broad rules governing social interactions such as turn taking; adjacency pairs; politeness; taking the floor
 - Use of the voice e.g. pitch; pronunciation; volume; intonation; pauses.
 - Use of non-verbal behaviours e.g. proximity; eye contact.
 - Teach and extend vocabulary and conceptual knowledge
 - Individual words e.g. synonyms; antonyms; suffixes
 - Word learning strategies e.g. definitions; word maps
 - Fostering an awareness and love of words and language e.g. word games, word of the week
 - Providing varied experiences for using words through reading, writing and oral language
 - Promoting auditory memory:
 - Repeat and use information
 - Recite poems, song and rhymes
 - Memorise and sequence songs
 - Re-tell stories
 - Play memory games

- Recount news events
 - Recall verbal messages or phone numbers
 - Use visual cues and/or mnemonics
- Create a language learning environment
 - The physical environment e.g. dress up boxes; puppets; display of poems/songs; class library
 - Classroom culture e.g. sharing classroom jobs/responsibilities; ‘have a go’ approach; teaching of taking turns; provide opportunities for speaking and listening
 - Opportunities for communication and discussion e.g. modelling good listening and retelling of information; role-play etc.
- Aistear Programme:
 - The Aistear Programme is a cross curricular play based approach to learning and is implemented in both Junior and Senior Infants. This programme promotes language development skills within each station.
 - Teachers can select from a range of topics at Infant level. Some ‘Themes’ which may be included and integrated across the curriculum are:
 - The Post Office
 - The Garden Centre
 - Winter Wonderland
 - The Creche
 - The Airport
 - The Restaurant
 - Space
 - Fairy tales
 - Santa’s Workshop
 - The Doctors Surgery
- Integration with other subjects:
 - Oral language skills will be developed across the curriculum and integrated with other subjects throughout the school day, including SPHE, circle time, listening and responding to Music and Art, debate and drama in History and recalling steps in a Science experiment.

Reading

Objectives:

- Promote positive attitudes towards and an appreciation of reading
- Develop print awareness, phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and sight vocabulary
- Develop comprehension and analytical strategies at all levels ranging from the literal lower order to the higher order evaluative type.
- Engage in and enjoy silent reading
- Develop an awareness of the richness and diversity of reading material from a variety of text genres.

Strategies:

- Formal reading will only begin in Senior Infants

- Jolly Phonics:
 - Jolly Phonics will be used in the Infant Classes. Children in Junior Infants will learn both letter sounds and letter names. (see attached)
 - The 72 sight words in the Jolly Phonics programme will be taught at the Infant levels (Junior Infants 1-36; Senior Infants 37-72)
 - From 1st – 3rd Class, children will know the appropriate Dolch List words for their level (see attached)

- Class Novels:
 - From 2nd - 6th class, a minimum of 2 class novels will be covered each year from the agreed school list of novels.
 - A small range of class novels are available for use with 1st class at the teacher's discretion.
 - Resources for each novel are available either in hard copy format or electronically on the school network.
 - Teachers must keep a record of class novels completed and forward to the following year's teacher.

- Building Bridges of Understanding:
 - Comprehension strategies will be taught across all classes from Infants-6th Class using the Building Bridges programme. Children will be taught the following strategies:
 - Prediction – Infants-6th Class
 - Visualisation - Infants-6th Class
 - Making Connections - Infants-6th Class
 - Questioning - Infants-6th Class
 - Monitoring Comprehension/Clarifying – 3rd-6th
 - Monitoring Comprehension/Declunking - 3rd-6th
 - Determining Importance – 1st-6th Class
 - Inference – 2nd-6th Class
 - Synthesis – 3rd-6th Class

- DEAR /Library time:
 - Children will be given regular opportunities for silent reading though DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time.
 - This may be done in class or integrated into Library time.
 - Each class has a class library with a variety of genres available to children.
 - Every class will be allocated a weekly slot in the School Library where children are allowed to withdraw books for reading at home.

- Parallel Readers:
 - Children from Senior Infants – 6th Class will be given formal reading homework each day and will receive a reader to facilitate this process.
 - Children will keep reading records to record their progress.

- Spelling:
 - My Spelling Workbook for Senior Infants-6th Class
 - Look-Say-Cover -Write-Check
 - Dictation
 - ICT spelling games

Writing

Objectives:

- The objective of this plan is to provide a structured and sequential programme for teachers to enable children to:
 - Write clearly, neatly, correctly and fluently using cursive script.
 - Use a wide range of vocabulary in their writing.
 - Use grammar and punctuation appropriately.
 - Write across a wide variety of genres, in differing styles, levels of formality and for differing audiences.

Strategies:

- Children will be provided with opportunities for writing in the following genres:
 - Narrative
 - Recount
 - Report
 - Persuasive
 - Explanation
 - Procedure
 - Poetry
- Whilst each class will approach the writing genre in the most suitable way for the class level, the following general steps will be followed in line with the pdst guidelines:
 - Familiarisation with and exposure to the genre being covered
 - Preparation of topic being written
 - Modelled writing (teacher only demonstration)
 - Shared Writing (teacher writing with children's suggestions)
 - Guided Writing (teacher scaffolds the children as they write)
 - Independent Writing
 - Presentation to an audience (displayed on wall, read aloud in class, corrected by teacher, read by peers)
- In addition to structured writing copies, all classes will have a free-writing copy to allow the children to engage in the writing process in an informal and creative way.
- Handwriting:
 - It is the policy of DPETNS to implement a consistent and structured programme of handwriting throughout the school.

- Cursive handwriting will be introduced in Junior Infants using a phased, multi-sensory approach.
- Cursive handwriting will be used consistently from Senior Infants – 6th Class.
- Discrete handwriting lessons will be taught from Junior Infants – 4th Class using the handwriting scheme Handwriting Today.

Parental Involvement:

At D.P.E.T.N.S. we encourage and welcome the involvement of parents in their children's education. This partnership includes:

- Acquaintance meetings with parents at the beginning of the school year to discuss approaches to teaching of reading.
- Annual parent/teacher meetings which allow for a discussion of individual children's progress in literacy.
- Informal parent/teacher meetings convened at the request of the parent or teacher.
- Written communications via the children's homework journal.
- Other written communications e.g. Home School Links and postings on the school website.
- Voluntary paired reading programmes.

Learning Support and Special Needs

Children with special educational needs are helped to achieve their potential in the core literacy skills of oral language, reading and writing. Assessment is ongoing and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a small group learning plan (IPLP) is drawn up and co-ordinated by the Support Teacher in consultation with the class teacher, the pupil, the parents and where appropriate, the Special Needs Assistant (SNA), as well as any other relevant professionals. The class teacher maintains overall responsibility for the educational development of the child. Suitable resources are provided to meet the learning needs of the child. For further information in relation to the teaching of special needs in the school, please see the Special Educational Needs Policy on our website.

Linkage and Integration

While this policy is presented under the three strand headings of oral language, reading and writing, the practice is to integrate all three strands and will often include other curricular areas also.

Equality and Inclusion

In line with our ethos, equal opportunities are provided to all pupils to participate in discussions, debates, reading and writing opportunities. The use of language or textbooks deemed to be sexist, racist, homophobic or non-inclusive are avoided.

Community Involvement

The school has active links with our local community to promote pupil's learning. Authors, storytellers and poets visit our school to read and share their work. We encourage the children to discuss the area's history with their grandparents and host an annual grandparent's day in the school to allow children to listen to stories about life in different generations.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Teachers in D.P.E.T.N.S. follow the assessment guidelines as outlined in the publication *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools*. Oral Language is assessed informally by each class teacher. Reading is assessed through a combination of standardised tests (Middle Infant Screening Test in Senior Infants and MICRA-T annually from First - Sixth class) and ongoing class assessment. Results are reported to parents in annual report cards. In compliance with Circular 0018/2012 the results from 2nd, 4th and 6th Classes are reported to the Board of Management, The Parent Association and the Department of Education and Science. Children at all levels, engage in self-assessment of their own literacy work through the SALF folders system. Diagnostic assessment is administered as required at Learning Support level.

Staff Development

Staff development needs are identified through review and discussion at staff meetings. Training may include staff development day/session, engagement of external expertise, attendance by a staff representative at specific in-service training sessions or the provision of required resource materials. Notices of relevant upcoming courses are circulated to all staff. Staff who have attended courses are given the opportunity to share learning with other staff at staff meetings.

Information and Communication Technology

Each classroom has access to a laptop, interactive whiteboard and visualiser. Children have access to 5 computers in each classroom to be used as directed by the class teacher. Software includes a variety of literacy games and activities. A laptop trolley is also available and each class is entitled to a timetabled slot each week to engage in literacy/project activities. Children attending Learning Support have access to an IPAD with apps targeting specific learning needs.