

Whole School English Plan

Scoil Ursula National School
18979F



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1. Introduction

This plan was prepared by the staff of Scoil Ursula N.S in the school year of 2022/2023. This plan is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for English and to ensure continuity and progression with regards to the teaching and learning of English. The plan follows the template as set out by the PDST/PPDS. We have benefitted from Literacy Support Visits from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), engaged with PDST PLC Webinars and discussed and reviewed our current policy and practice. A collaborative approach was adopted when writing this plan to ensure that all staff share a sense of ownership in the planning process. This policy is a working document and will be reviewed every second year.

- **Rationale**

In Scoil Ursula we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils and language is key to the development of the child as a person. 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. In developing this whole school plan for English we hope

- To benefit the teaching and learning in our school
- To develop concepts, skills and dispositions of every child
- To conform to principles of learning outlined in the Primary Language Curriculum
- To create and implement a core curriculum in the areas of reading, writing and oral language

- **Vision**

The ethos of our school has a central role in the preparation of this plan. It focuses on the development of the child in a spiritual, moral and intellectual way where a positive climate is used to motivate the pupil and every effort is made to foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere, conducive to learning. We view English language learning as happening in a spiral, each skill building on the last. Language learning does not happen in isolation but rather as integrated elements of learning focusing on the core strands of Oral Language, Reading and Writing that underpin all other subjects across the primary curriculum.

2. Aims

We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the Primary Language Curriculum, to set out our approach to language learning. The focus of this plan is knowledge of the curriculum and how we teach it. This plan will form the basis for the teachers' long and short

term planning. It will also inform new teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in our school.

We endorse the aims of the New Primary Language Curriculum, which are presented in three groups: focusing on children and their lives, children's communications and connections with others, and children's language learning and development. The more specific aims outlined within these groups, which we will strive to fulfil in Scoil Ursula National School are as follows:

Children and their lives

Through engagement with the Primary Language Curriculum we at Scoil Ursula aim to:

- Enable children to build on prior knowledge and experience of language and language learning to enhance their language learning
- Encourage children of different languages and cultures to be proud of and to share their heritage
- Recognise the wide variation in experience, ability and language style which children bring to language learning in school as a first step in enabling them to engage in relevant and meaningful communicative relationships

Children's communications and connections with others

- Embrace children's uniqueness by nurturing their appreciation of their home language, their understanding of language and diversity, and their ability to use different languages, gestures and tools to communicate with people in a variety of contexts and situations
- Encourage and enable children to communicate effectively in both the first and second language of the school and to communicate in their heritage language for a variety of purposes
- Enable children to fully engage with and enjoy a wide range of relevant and meaningful linguistic and communicative experiences with peers and adults

Children's language learning and development

- Promote a positive disposition towards communication and language by fostering within children a lifelong interest in and a love of language learning for personal enjoyment and enrichment
- Broaden children's understanding of the world through a rich variety of language experiences and through fostering an awareness and appreciation of other languages and cultures in an enriching learning environment
- Encourage children to engage personally with and think critically about a broad range of spoken, gesticulated, written and multimodal texts
- Support children to develop their literacy skills and enable them to progress at their own learning pace in oral language, reading and writing

Nurture within children an awareness of language, allowing them to appreciate and understand the content and structure of languages and acquire a basic understanding of the history of languages and other cultures.

The Primary Language Curriculum sets out an image of children as communicators, readers, writers and thinkers, and a vision and understanding of primary classrooms as places where children are enabled to progress at their own pace in environments and relationships which are supportive, engaging and inclusive.

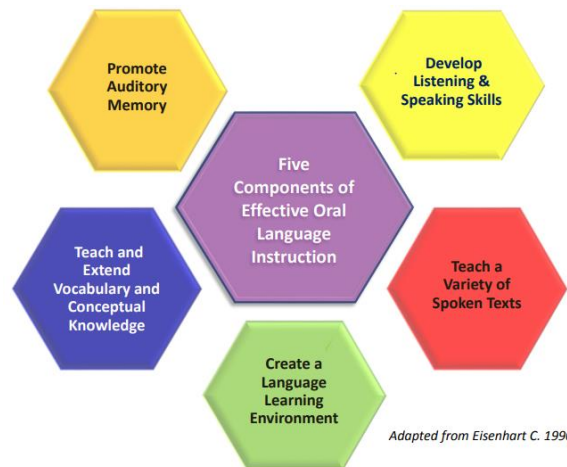
Broad Aims Content and Methodologies

The broad objectives, content and methodologies for the teaching and learning of oral language, reading and writing are detailed in this document. Each of these areas is presented under the four strand headings of the Revised English Curriculum, and reflects best current practice and pedagogy.

3. Oral Language Objectives

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

1. Gain pleasure and fulfilment from language activity e.g. Aistear theme language
2. 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.
3. Develop fluency, explicitness and confidence in communication.
4. Develop listening skills, language conventions, vocabulary, aesthetic response and language manipulation.



Oral Language Methodologies

Whole School Strategies for Oral Language

Assemblies:

- Regular whole school / year group assemblies
- Appropriate and respectful language is modelled
- Good listening and appropriate responses are encouraged
- Positive non-verbal behaviour is encouraged

Yard

Using words to communicate and solve problems

Self-maintaining language

Model positive and respectful language

Use of Restorative Practice questions

School Related Functions

Greeting as Gaeilge

Etiquette for children visiting classes

Aistear

Aistear activities daily in Junior and Senior Infant classes. We use a thematic approach for Aistear and ensure that an oral language/role play station is included in the Aistear theme.

Over the Moon Oral Language Programme

Over the moon is taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Effective use of digital resources on the Over the Moon Website using a thematic approach.

Some activities/methodologies currently used for Oral Language

The following skills will be modelled and taught in our school at all class levels

- Using words for common social functions in a polite and respectful manner (on-going, daily)
- Communicating to meet personal needs (ongoing, daily)
- Listening (rhymes, jingles, riddles, listening activities, news)
- Recalling (re-telling stories, class trips/visits, news)
- Naming (name, address, days, months, seasons, family members, things you need for/find in)
- Categorising and classifying (people, places, family, clothes, weather, animals, food, pets)
- Describing (colour, shape, feelings, character)
- Denoting position (orientation – left/right, relational – under/beside/behind/on/in)
- Sequencing (alphabet, days, months, seasons, times of day, sequencing words)
- Reasoning (relational words – because/but, problem solving-what shall I do?, proverbs)
- Giving instructions and directions (how to make a cup of tea)
- Reporting (Reporting back from a group activity or project)
- Speaking out clearly (ongoing, daily)
- Predicting (Hear part of a story, what do you think will happen next?)
- Projecting/empathising (picture/story – how do you think they are feeling)
- Imagining (a new planet, a newly discovered species of animal)
- Questioning (20 questions, the Yes/No game show)
- Interpreting and using appropriate non-verbal language

- Taking turns in speaking and listening (circle-time, news time)
- Showing tolerance for views of others

Oral Language Topics for each class level (See appendix 1)

Teachers planning for Oral Language:

- Teachers plan using learning outcomes
- English oral language and Geailge ó Bhéal are integrated thematically through Aistear and through teaching topics at the same time and discussing language.
- New vocabulary is displayed in the classrooms. Aistear words are displayed with pictorial clues (Infant classes) and word walls are displayed from 1st class upwards.
- Key vocabulary for pupils is identified for all subject areas and listed in teachers' short-term planning.

4. Reading – Broad Aims

The aim of this plan is to provide a structured and sequential programme to ensure progression and continuity in children's language learning

1. Develop reading fluency through print awareness, phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and sight vocabulary.
2. Develop their comprehension and analytical strategies. *Appendix 2: Reading Comprehension 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
6. The planning of book related events such as book fairs, visiting authors, illustrators and World Book Day Activities
7. 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.

Strategies for Reading

Dear time:

Children from all classes are given opportunities to select reading material and read for pleasure for a sustained period during the day.

Shared Reading/ Buddy Reading

Shared Reading with other classes is coordinated by the staff. Class novels are available from the library.

Literacy Lift Off/Guided Reading/Reading Stations

Literacy Lift Off takes place in Senior infants and First class for 6 weeks each year. First Class LLO takes place in the first term of each year. Senior infants LLO takes place in the second term of each year. The PM fiction and non-fiction readers are used for this. Literacy stations and guided reading takes place from 3rd – 6th class. The focus of these stations will vary depending on class needs eg: letter recognition, rhyming, reading attainment, comprehension strategies.

Print Rich Environment

We are very conscious of the importance of a print-rich environment throughout all classes. 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 the 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, noticeboards etc. Sight vocabulary will be developed through selecting common words, core words, and words from the reader, high interest words, Dolch list, and social sight vocabulary. Sight words are learned based on Over the Moon programme.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness will be developed through:

- Syllabic awareness – syllabic blending, syllable segmentation, syllable counting and 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;
- Phoneme blending
- Phoneme deletion
- Phoneme isolation
- Phoneme substitution
- Phoneme transposition

Jolly Phonics is the programme being used from Junior Infants to 2nd Class.

Heggerty Phonemic awareness programme is being piloted in Junior Infants.

A Sound Beginning For Reading is the Phonological programme used in Junior Infants.

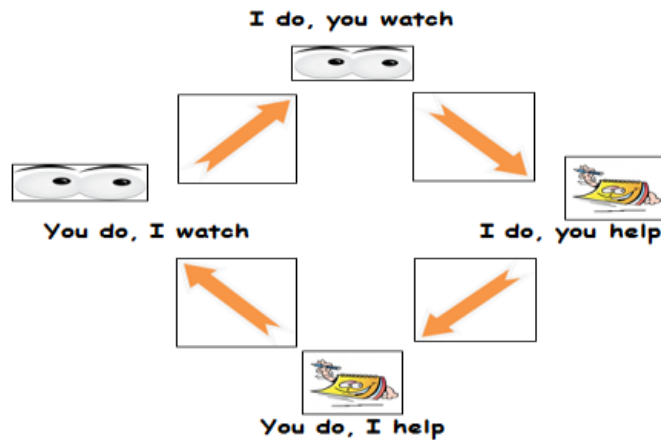
Reading Fluency

The primary strategies recognised in Scoil Ursula 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 out letters that they know, to look for little words in big words etc. The Literacy Lift Off programme is employed in blocks in Senior Infants and First Class. In order to develop reading fluency among our children, class teachers are encouraged to facilitate daily reading activities such as D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) Time. Children from First Class upwards read a page from the Read at Home books nightly for homework.

Comprehension Skills

The comprehension skills that will be developed through language activity in our school include 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. There is an emphasis on the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model – Modelled, Shared, Guided and Independent (see diagram on next page). Comprehension skills are developed through oral and written work with an emphasis on meaningful discussion. We use Martin Gleeson’s “Building Bridges of Understanding” as our reference. The strategies within the Building Bridges of Comprehension Programme may be further supported by the use of The Comprehension Strategies Box (Prim. Ed).

The Gradual Release of Responsibility



Reading Material

We aim to use a variety of reading material such as big books, class readers, parallel readers, poetry anthologies, class novels 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. 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. At least one novel is used per class from 1st -6th class. We are currently updating our selection of novels in the school. 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 S.E.T. (Special Education Team) supplements the reading programme by implementing early intervention programmes during the year where required (*Appendix 3 Class Novels, Appendix 4 Graded Readers*).

5. Writing: Broad Aims

The aim of this plan is to provide a structured and sequential programme to ensure progression and continuity in children's language learning.

1. Write clearly, correctly and fluently.
2. Use a wide range of vocabulary.
3. Use grammar and punctuation appropriately (*Appendix 5: Grammar & Punctuation*)
4. Write in a wide variety of genres encompassing differing styles, purposes, audiences and level of formality (*Appendix 6: Writing Genres*)
5. Experience opportunities to develop presentation, editing and publishing skills.
6. Engage in collaborative writing experiences

7. Edit and redraft writing.
8. Develop a high standard of penmanship. Children will be taught joined writing from 3rd/4th class. Pre- cursive to be used in infant classes.
9. Children in 4th/5th class will be given an opportunity to obtain a pen licence. Children do not use tippex, instead they cross out the word and write the correct word above or beside the error.

Writing Methodologies

The Process of 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. Teachers will go through the *PDST's Seven Steps to Teaching Writing* as they seek to develop children's writing abilities in a number of genres. (*Appendix 7: Seven Steps to Teaching Writing*)

Free Writing Copies

Children from Junior/ Senior Infants onwards will write independently in free writing copies. This will provide a record of progression throughout the school year. Children can choose their own free writing topic or write on a topic given by the teacher. Children write the date on each piece of writing. Free writing is never corrected formally by the teacher.

Writing Genres

The writing genres used in Scoil Ursula, sourced from the Primary Language Curriculum, are as follows:

- Recount: the purpose is to retell events. Main features of a recount include events in time order, linking words to do with time, simple past tense.
- Narrative: the purpose is to entertain. A narrative tells an imaginative story (some can be based on facts). Main features of a narrative include defined characters, a setting, problem or complication, descriptive language and are usually in the past tense.

- Procedure: the purpose is to tell the way to do things. Main features of a procedure include stating the goal of the procedure, materials, method, evaluation, tense is timeless and use of linking words.
- Report: the purpose is to present factual information on a person, place, animal or thing. Main features of a report include classification, description, summary, subject specific vocabulary and objective language.
- Exposition/Persuasive: the purpose is to persuade. Main features include arguments for/against, evidence, conclusion, mainly timeless present tense and use of passives.
- Explanation: the purpose is to explain how something came to be. Main features include a definition, description of various parts, how or why it works and summary.

The Writing Workshop

Pupils need repeated, explicit demonstrations of the processes involved in writing, with plenty of opportunities to practise and experiment. The Writing Workshop emphasises the importance of thinking, inquiring, imagining, creating, communicating and exploring language through writing and gives equal attention to processes of writing and the written product.

Early stages of The Writing Workshop include Shared Writing and Interactive Writing:

Shared Writing: The pupils choose what they would like to write about (the topic) and the teacher acts as their scribe. First they discuss the topic and then they work together to develop the writing. The teacher draws their attention to the focus of the lesson throughout.

Interactive Writing: The teacher and pupils share the pen. Pupils are invited to come up and write on the chart or interactive whiteboard, e.g., particular words or sounds that they are familiar with and can spell. Collaborative writing opportunities with the teacher and other pupils are an important precursor to the introduction of a writing workshop.

Structure of the Writing Workshop

1. The Mini-Lesson (approx. 10 mins.) - The Writing Workshop begins with a mini-lesson. A mini-lesson is a short lesson focused on one aspect of writing in which the teacher provides explicit instruction using a think-aloud. The mini-lesson is often linked to high-quality children's literature or a piece of the child's own writing. Whole-class mini lessons take place when all children, or the majority, need explicit instruction with one specific craft, convention, process or organisational technique.

2. Independent Writing and Conferencing (approx. 20-30 mins.) - During sustained, independent writing time, the teacher engages in conferences with individual children. Conferences are short (approx. 5 mins) and teachers should aim to conference with 3-4 children daily. A good conference involves 80% child talk and 20% teacher talk.

3. Share Session (approx. 5-10 mins.) - One pupil sits on the author's chair or a designated area in the classroom and reads his/her writing aloud to the class. Pupils in the class listen for details, ask questions and state what they like about the piece of writing. The share session

creates opportunities for teachers to discuss the key focus of the lesson, for the writer to receive positive and to set discussed goals for the next workshop.

Handwriting and Presentation

This element of our whole school policy is currently under review as we research best practice and seek guidance and expertise.

Good habits in handwriting are developed at an early stage eg. posture, paper position, pencil grip. In junior infants, pupils develop early writing skills and practise pre-writing patterns. In the second term, letters taught are based on pre-cursive writing style. This is further developed at senior infants. They will then focus on upper and lower-case letter formation. Script writing will be introduced in first class. By 4th class children will be expected to write in legible joined script and in 5th/6th classes children will be expected to develop a legible, fluent personal style of writing. Mrs. Murphy's Scheme by Edco is being used from senior infants to second class.

In Junior Infants children will write with crayons, twistables and triangular pencils. Senior Infants to 2nd class use standard pencils and 3rd - 6th classes use roller ball pens. Children in 3rd class will be given the opportunity to obtain a pen license. Children do not use tippex, instead they place an error in brackets and correct the word above or beside the error. Pupil's handwriting will be displayed in the classroom and on school corridors.

Digital Literacy

As new technologies continue to emerge and as a result of living in a society and culture increasingly influenced by digital technologies, digital literacy is an important aspect of children's learning. The curriculum supports children's abilities to engage with technology to acquire, comprehend and communicate knowledge to and with a variety of audiences and in a variety of contexts. Essential to the development of digital literacy is the child's ability to locate, select and critically analyse relevant information in multiple modes to include text, visual and audio. It also includes the capacity to engage with digital technology in creative and imaginative ways.

The curriculum recognises that technology can be used as a tool for literacy development and learning. The definition of 'text' in the curriculum refers to all products of language use including electronic and digital. Appropriate use of digital technologies in the classroom can help children to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding in accordance with the learning outcomes for all three strands of the curriculum.

We have begun the process of a more structured integration and implementation of digital learning to enhance literacy skills through our Digital Learning Plan. This plan focuses on the

use of Book Creator as a digital literacy, writing and publishing tool. By enabling them to engage with digital technologies from the start of primary school, teachers can support children to foster a positive attitude towards the use of digital technologies and to use technology responsibly and appropriately. As children become digitally literate, they can use a variety of digital technologies to develop understanding and to source, critique and manage information as engaged thinkers and active learners. (See *Appendix 9: Apps used in digital literacy*).

Spellings

We recognise that spelling must be viewed as a fun activity by the children and we acknowledge that spelling activities may be written or oral. 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 meaning
- Using pattern

We also believe that spelling must never be a barrier to children's writing. While we do not want to dampen a child's enthusiasm to write, we will endeavour to promote 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 they move through the different stages. The convention of spelling will be achieved progressively through a multidimensional approach. This will include:

- Linking spelling with the development of phonological and phonemic awareness
- Linking it with onset and rime.
- Building up a bank of commonly used words
- Having a rich experience of environmental print
- Compiling word walls and personal word banks, e.g. personal names, local place
- Names, seasonal words
- Using dictionaries and thesauruses
- Using strategies such as:
 - Predict, look, say, cover, write, check
 - Mnemonics
 - Rhythm and rhyme
 - Creation of word searches
 - Aide memoires
 - Breaking words into syllables
 - Exaggeration of the word
 - Becoming familiar with common spelling rules

- Accepting approximate spelling in creative writing

Spelling tests will occur each Friday with students in 1st – 6th class. These tests will be based upon the spelling programmes currently being used in our school Spelling For Me.

(Appendix 8: Phonics and Spelling)

Use of Dictionaries

Dictionaries will be used from first class. Formal time will be devoted to teaching the children how to use a dictionary correctly. For this purpose, we use the Jolly Phonics Dictionary in First and Second Class. Third/Fourth/Fifth and Sixth Class will have class copies of a more sophisticated dictionary and an appropriate thesaurus and pupils will be encouraged to use these.

Grammar and Punctuation

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. *Appendix 5: Conventions of Print, Grammar and Punctuation.*

Curricular Planning

1. Language programme

The two fundamental principles of the English language curriculum are:

- Children learn language and learn through language (Curriculum p. 3)
- Language learning is an integrated process in which it is difficult to separate the functions of oral language, reading and writing. For example a lesson in oral language may have related activities in reading and writing and may also address a number of strands e.g. competence and confidence in using language and developing cognitive abilities through language (Curriculum p.2)

The three strands of Oral language, Reading and Writing, as outlined in English: Additional Support Material (2005), remain unchanged as do all of the content objectives. The content objectives for each strand are represented under two categories: development and skills.

2. Strands and Elements

Across the strands of oral language, reading and writing, the elements describe essential language learning. Each element has a set of Learning Outcomes, which describe important language learning in terms of concepts, dispositions and skills.

The elements of language learning across each of the strands are:

1. Developing communicative relationships through language
2. Understanding the content and structure of language
3. Exploring and using language

	Oral Language	Reading	Writing
Communicating	Engagement, listening and attention Motivation and Choice Social conventions and awareness of others	Engagement and Motivation and choice (relevance)	Engagement (intentionality) Motivation and choice (relevance, purpose, audience)
Understanding	Sentence structure and grammar (syntax, morphology) Vocabulary (semantics, verbal memory, articulation skills) Demonstration of understanding (semantics)	Conventions of print and sentence structure (meaning and interpretation of text/illustration) Phonological and phonemic awareness Phonics and word recognition (alphabetic principle, word identification strategies) Vocabulary (semantics)	Conventions of print and sentence structure (syntax) Spelling Vocabulary (semantics)
Exploring and Using	Requests, questions and interactions Categorisation Retelling and elaborating (narrative text and response)	Purpose, genre and voice Response and author's intent Comprehension (comprehension, text organisational	Purpose, genre and voice (sense of voice, aesthetic dimension of text) Writing process and creating text (using processes, structures and language register) Response and

	<p>Playful and creative use of language (aesthetic dimension of language)</p> <p>Information giving, explanation and justification (expository text)</p> <p>Description, prediction and reflection</p>	<p>structure and fix-up strategies)</p> <p>Fluency and self-correction (accuracy, fluency and meaning)</p>	<p>author's intent (author's purpose and responding)</p> <p>Handwriting and presentation (legibility)</p>
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3. Planning, Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The Primary Language Curriculum helps teachers to support children's language learning and development through the process of planning, teaching and learning and assessment.

Four parts (components) of the Primary Language Curriculum work together to support teachers' planning, teaching and assessment for language learning: Learning Outcomes, Progression Continua, Examples of children's learning and development, and Support Material for teachers.

Together, the Learning Outcomes and the Progression Continua provide important reference points for teachers to plan for, and make judgements about, children's progression on their language learning trajectory and the continuity.

The Learning Outcomes and Progression Continua support teachers when reporting the child's learning progress to colleagues, parents and others during the school year, and to other teachers as part of the transfer process within or across primary schools.

4. Assessment

Assessment is informed by the publication Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum-Guidelines for Schools. Assessment involves building a picture over time of a child's progress in learning.

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. We consider all the different assessment tools we use very valuable:

- Teacher observation
- Self-Assessment
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Conferencing
- Running records
- Free Writing
- Work samples, reports and portfolios
- Regular test (end of week/unit)

Diagnostic Tests e.g. Early Literacy, Neale Analysis of Reading, Dolch Lists

Standardised assessment is administered on an annual basis during the final term in the school year. Test results are used to establish the need of individual pupils and to inform future planning.

- Junior Infants – Drumcondra Early Reading Test.

- **1st - 6th Classes** - Drumcondra – Reading Test is administered in May. The Drumcondra Reading Test is given to all classes from Senior Infants to 6th class at the end of May each year. The Drumcondra Spelling Test is given to all classes from 1st – 6th at the end of May each year. 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.
- Schonell Spelling Test administered from 1st to 6th class annually by class teachers

An analysis of the results of the Drumcondra is conducted each year. Results of this test are also given in the summer reports. Assessment of Learning as evidenced in test results will inform Assessment for Learning, thus ensuring that areas of weakness are given priority. Results are analysed on an individual, class and whole school basis. Results of all standardised tests are recorded on Aladdin.

5. Children with Additional Needs

- It is the policy of our school that all children will participate in English lessons and activities. The English programme will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of all the children in the class. Every attempt, with the valued assistance of additional staff (Support teachers, S.N.A.s) will be made to ensure that all children are accessing the English Curriculum at their own level.
- Teachers work in collaboration with the S.E.T. team to ensure the needs of each child is met. For those children who have a psychological report or allocation of low incidence hours, every effort is made to ensure the class teacher works to recommendations given.
- Where a child is entitled to an S.N.A., great attention is given to ensure integration into the classroom/school environment both socially and academically.
- A collaborative approach is taken in drawing up of School Support Plan
- Differentiation will be outlined in our Cúntas Míósúil each month to enable the teachers to reflect how effectively and successfully they have differentiated for children with different needs in each subject area.
- Stimulation for Exceptionally Able Pupils to include mind mapping, hypothesis and new learning opportunities. Such pupils are supported by S.E.T. team

We promote an active learning environment, with children working in groups at their level, where the class teacher is responsible for learning in the classroom and is assisted by the SET team. Team teaching and station teaching blocks are arranged throughout the year. SET teachers use the continuum of support plans to support the literacy development of these children

6. Equality of Participation and Access

A balanced English Language programme covers all areas of Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing. The introduction and development of each topic will be structured in a graded and sequential way to allow for the individual child to develop and participate at their own level and pace.

Where a child demonstrates a particular difficulty, either with a topic, strand or overall, the class teacher will provide extra support, differentiation and assistance to the child. This support will be documented in a Classroom Support Plan. Classroom Support is an intervention process coordinated by the class teacher and carried out within the regular classroom.

If the child continues to experience difficulty, the class teacher will involve the support teacher assigned to their class. While the class teacher retains overall responsibility for the pupil's learning, children with additional educational needs will receive support at School Support level. This may involve targeted team-teaching, stations or withdrawal in small groups.

Organisational Planning

1. Timetable

Time is allocated for English as laid out in the Curriculum and as amended by the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

Class Level:	Time Allocation for Language (i.e English):
Junior and Senior Infants	4 hours per week
First – Sixth Class	5 hours per week
*Discretionary Time may also be used for the teaching and learning of English	

2. Resources and ICT

Please see the relevant appendices for an outline of the programmes we use in our school. As well as the core materials used in all classes the teachers also have a range of complementary and supplementary materials in their classroom.

- Each classroom is equipped with a class library, an interactive whiteboard, a visualiser and a teacher's laptop.
- Teachers also have access to digital cameras, CD Players, iPads, DVDs, chrome books and resource books
- S.E.T. resources are located in a central location adjacent to the S.E.T. team

We are aware of the value of ICT in the teaching and learning of English by contributing to the print-rich environment, in supporting the development of word identification, spelling and other reading skills through reinforcement software, the Internet and reference books available in CD-ROM. We are very aware of the value of content-free software e.g. Microsoft Word, in enhancing the process writing approach advocated in the curriculum and children in our school are encouraged to publish their work using ICT in order to enhance the standard of presentation of their work, giving them added pride in the final product.

3. Libraries

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 as both space and resources allow. A selection of picture books, short books that can be read in one sitting, a range of information books, story books, dictionaries, suited to the interests and age levels of the children are included in the Junior Class Library as recommended by the Primary Language Curriculum. The Senior Class Library is characterised by a wide range of fiction, biography and non-fiction books that will cater for a wide variety of interest. 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 read a variety of genres

We have a selection of graded readers in Junior Infants to First Class. We also have access to a wide selection of class novels. These are available from the central library. When selecting a class novel, the following factors will be considered:

- Suitability for reading level/age of pupils
- Suitability of content/subject
- Interests of the children
- Needs of the class

Local Library

Due to the proximity of Sligo County Library all teachers and classes will be encouraged to avail of the resources and books in the library. We organise regular visits to the community library throughout the school year.

4. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

The whole school plan and the curriculum documents for English will seek to provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short term planning. Class teachers will be required to produce:

- Yearly/ Termly plans
- Fortnightly plans

The Cuntas Míosúil will be used to measure the success of the English plan and will inform teacher's preparation for the following year.

All relevant preparation material will be informed by the publication- Preparation for Teaching and Learning- Guidance for All Primary and Special Schools.

5. Staff Development

Staff needs will be assessed and identified through review, reflection and discussions. Responses to these may include the organisation of a staff development day/session, engagement of external expertise, attendance by a representative of the staff at specific in-service and or the provision of required resource materials. Details of courses and training days relevant to the PLC will be displayed on the staffroom notice board and staff will be encouraged to attend. Teachers are encouraged to attend literacy courses and share information/skills acquired at these courses with other members of staff. We endeavour to engage in best practice at all times and will explore new developments in research as appropriate.

6. Parental Involvement – Home School Links

In Scoil Ursula we recognise the parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children. They can be involved in many ways in supporting our English Plan including:

- Parents are aware of the central importance of oral language in the learning process.
- Parents are made aware of the importance of involving children in purposeful language activity. Parents could assist their child's oral language development by discussing the school day with their child, taking an interest in what they are learning and talking with their child on a nightly basis.

- Parents can support their child's reading, e.g. paired reading, shared reading, story reading, reading environmental print, ICT programmes, homework – hearing reading and talking about reading, involvement with the school library, local library, book fairs, book week.
- The school can support parents in accessing suitable reading materials by giving them information about the local library.
- Information will be shared with parents, e.g. general meetings, discussion at parent teacher meetings, the school's newsletter, website, Facebook page.

7. Community Links

The school patron and the Board of Management are committed to work in such a way as to embrace the input of children, teachers, parents and members of the community and to enable the highest level of participation and partnership.

- The following members of the community can become involved in supporting the schools language programme: Nurse, Doctor, Garda Síochanna, Fireman, Lollipop Lady, Local Coaches, St. Vincent de Paul, other local charities as well local musicians, writers etc. (where possible).
- Visits from past pupils who share their experiences.
- Visits from drama companies and story tellers who put on performances for the children in the school.

❖ Success Criteria

The success of this school plan will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Teachers' preparation has been based on this plan.
- Procedures in this plan have been consistently followed.
- Continuity in children's language learning from class to class
- Progression in children's language learning should be evident
- Suggestions and reports of DES Inspectorate

The success of this plan will be measured by teacher observation of pupil enjoyment and participation in oral language, reading and writing activities. It will also be measured on achievement of pupils in standardised tests. Feedback and reflection will be used as an informal method of measuring the success of this whole school plan.

❖ **Implementation**

(a) **Roles and Responsibilities**

Each teacher is responsible for implementing this plan within his/her own class. The plan should be monitored by all staff and any feedback duly noted to the Principal, who has overall responsibility for leading teaching and learning in this school.

(b) **Timeframe**

The plan will be implemented in September 2023 and reviewed every year thereafter. It will be amended as necessary.

❖ **Ratification and Communication**

On ratification of this plan by the staff and Board of Management this plan will be communicated to all teachers through distribution and will become part of the School Plan

Signed : _____

(Principal)

(Chairperson, B.O.M)

Appendix 1: Whole School Approach to Oral Language

Aistear Themes (Oral Language)

	Junior Infants	Senior Infants
September	Dinner Time	The School Office
October	The Farm Shop /The Witches' Den	The Witches' Den
November	The Hospital	The Busy Café
December	Santa's Workshop	The Post Office
January	The Market	The Estate Agents
February	The Vet	The Sports Shop
March	The Puppet Show	The Garden Centre
April	The Fire Station	The Zoo
May	The Airport	The Campsite

Nursery Rhymes (Oral Language)

We reinforce Nursery Rhymes taught at pre-school and here are a selection below.

Junior Infants	Senior Infants
Hey Diddle Diddle Incy Wincy Spider Humpty Dumpty Miss Polly had a Dolly Chubby Little Snowman African Animals Little Bo Peep Mary had a little lamb This little piggy Five Little Ducks/Green Giant Round and round the garden	Revision of Junior Infant Rhymes Ring a ring a roses See-saw Margery daw Peter Peter Pumpkin eater Tom Tom the piper's son Ten green bottles Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake The grand old Duke of York Little Tommy Tucker What do you suppose? Jelly on a plate

First Class – Oral Language Themes (Over the Moon Scheme)	
September	School The Weather
October	Myself Pastimes

November	Myself Special Occasions
December	Television The Weather
January	Food Myself
<u>February</u>	Home Special Occasions
<u>March</u>	Pastimes Food
<u>April</u>	Special Occasions
<u>May</u>	Myself The Weather
<u>June</u>	Myself

Second Class – Oral Language Themes (Over the Moon Scheme)	
September	Myself Pastimes
October	Pastimes Myself
November	Myself The Weather
December	Technology Special Occasions
January	The Weather Special Occasions
February	Special Occasions Myself
March	Pastimes At home
April	Food
May	School
June	At home
Poetry	A selection of poetry from Over the Moon Reader and other sources

Third Class – Oral Language Themes (Over the Moon Scheme)	
September	At home At school
October	Amazing Weather Super Science
November	Halloween Space
December	The World of Books Christmas
January	The Environment Travel
February	Famous People Art
March	Gardening Science
April	Mindfulness
May	At home Pets
June	Irish Legends

Fourth Class – Oral Language Themes (Over the Moon Scheme)	
September	Myself Pastimes
October	Pastimes Myself
November	Myself The Weather
December	Technology Special Occasions
January	The Weather Special Occasions
February	Special Occasions Myself
March	Pastimes At home
April	Food
May	School
June	At home

Fifth Class – Oral Language Themes (Over the Moon Scheme)	
September	Myself Pastimes
October	Pastimes Myself
November	Myself The Weather
December	Technology Special Occasions
January	The Weather Special Occasions
February	Special Occasions Myself
March	Pastimes At home
April	Food
May	School
June	At home

Sixth Class – Oral Language Themes (Over the Moon Scheme)	
September	Myself Pastimes
October	Pastimes Myself
November	Myself The Weather
December	Technology Special Occasions
January	The Weather Special Occasions
February	Special Occasions Myself
March	Pastimes At home
April	Food
May	School
June	At home

Appendix 2: Reading Comprehension Strategies

<u>Junior Infants</u>	<u>Senior Infants</u>
Making Connections Predicting Questioning Visualising	Making Connections Prediction Questioning Visualising

<u>First Class</u>	<u>Second Class</u>
Making Connections Questioning Visualising Predicting Determining Importance	Making Connections Predicting Questioning Visualising Determining Importance Clarifying Inferring

<u>Third Class</u>	<u>Fourth Class</u>
Predicting Connecting Visualising Questioning Determining Importance Summarising Clarifying	Predicting Connecting Visualising Questioning Determining Importance Summarising Clarifying

<u>Fifth Class</u>	<u>Sixth Class</u>
Predicting Connecting Visualising Questioning Determining Importance Summarising Clarifying Inferring Synthesising Scanning	Predicting Connecting Visualising Questioning Determining Importance Summarising Clarifying Inferring Synthesising Skimming

Appendix 3

Class Novels

Class Novels to be covered each year in 1st - 6th Class. Listed below is a selection of the novels that teachers may cover. These will vary depending on the class levels of ability and interests at the discretion of the class teacher. As well as those listed in the boxes below for each class group, we avail of the class sets of novels available to us from Sligo County Library , which can be reserved in advance. Teachers have freedom to use such novels from the library as additional texts.

Junior and Senior Classes to cover a selection of fiction and non-fiction storybooks.

1st Class	The Owl who was afraid of the dark
2nd Class	Fantastic Mr. Fox Charlottes Web
<u>3rd Class</u>	To be decided
<u>4th Class</u>	To be decided
<u>5th Class</u>	To be decided
<u>6th Class</u>	Wonder Private Peaceful

Reading Scheme: Over the Moon Reading Scheme is used in all classes.

Appendix 4: List of Parallel/Graded Readers

1. PM Readers
2. Engage Readers
3. Dandelion
4. Oxford Reading Tree
5. Jolly Phonics Readers
6. Storyworlds
7. Wonderland
8. Barrington Stoke
9. Pocket Rockets

Appendix 5: Conventions of Print, Grammar and Punctuation Topics for each Class Grouping

Junior Infants and Senior Infants

Conventions of Print	Grammar	Punctuation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print carries a message Left to right orientation Top to bottom orientation Return Sweep Appropriate spacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the correct sentence eg. I had some sweet / I had some sweets. Putting sentences into the correct order. Agreeing / Disagreeing with statements eg. The dog flew away [Yes / No] Filling in the missing words in sentences Selecting the correct word to complete a sentence eg The cat was ---- the table [up /on] Selecting the correct word to complete a sentence, using pictorial clues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw yourself and write your name Find capital letters in words Find capital letters in lists of letters 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 and Second Class

Conventions of Print	Grammar	Punctuation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of: Print carries a message Left to right orientation Top to bottom orientation Return Sweep Appropriate spacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbs Write using verbs in past, present and future tense Nouns Adjectives Constructing a sentence from a noun, a verb and an adjective. Filling the blanks using nouns/verbs/adjectives. Using a and an Writing sentences in singular / plural ~ are / is. Revision of concepts of singular /plural; past / present tense, as introduced in first class. Pronoun ~ Exercises replacing nouns with suitable pronouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of capital letters / full stops Capital letters in months, days, titles, places. Capital letter ~ 'I' Question Marks Ordering the days /months ~ capital letters Commas ~ writing lists Use of comma ~ not before 'and' Rewriting passages correctly ~ capital letters, full stops, commas. Writing addresses correctly Identify exclamation marks in text Identify speech marks in text

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preposition ~ Completion of sentences using correct prepositions Use basic connectives Rewriting sentences and putting words in the correct order Cloze Procedure activities 	
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Third Class and Fourth Class

Grammar	Punctuation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First, second or third person [singular / plural] Personal pronouns Nouns – Proper and common Collective Nouns Singular and plural Extending sentences Conjunctions Connectives Adjectives ~ Group adjectives by type eg. colours ~ dull, dark, red, scarlet, beige Adjectives ~ comparative / superlative Verbs ~ grouping into categories eg. run = dash, sprint, jog, chase, rush etc. Verbs - Further 'tense' work Am, is, are / they're, their, there / to, too, two Adverbs ~ classifying by 'where' 'when' 'how' First, second or third person [singular / plural] Sentence construction, using adverbs in the sentences. Finding a number of adverbs that can be used with a list of verbs Making sentences more interesting by changing the verb / adjective / adverb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of punctuation concepts to date Capital letters – Sentence, I, proper names and places, Days, months and festivals Commas – Lists & place names Changing sentences to questions Identifying sentences where commas should be used Speech marks Exclamation marks Use of hyphens Use of apostrophe Conjunctions – and, but, because, or Apostrophes for possession Apostrophes for contractions Apostrophe ~ use with plural nouns ending in s Negatives Introduction to paragraphs

Fifth Class and Sixth Class

Grammar	Punctuation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of past work Adding prepositions to sentences Clarifying / further practice with pronouns & prepositions Subject and Object in a sentence Correct use of formal language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of punctuation concepts to date Capital letters – Titles, relating to countries/languages, people's titles (Mr. Dr.) Contractions Paragraphs Direct and Indirect Speech Working with tenses, prepositions and clauses

<p>Agreement of singular and plural with nouns and verbs</p> <p>The use of double negatives eg. I'm not going nowhere.</p> <p>Classifying nouns by type ~ proper, common, collective, abstract.</p> <p>Further use of adverbs and conjunctions</p> <p>Clauses ~ Adding second clauses to sentences</p> <p>In all writing activities, check for the correct use of words.</p>	<p>'I' or 'me'</p> <p>Commas</p> <p>Dashes</p> <p>The Colon</p> <p>Semi – Colon</p> <p>Simple Sentences</p> <p>Compound /Complex Sentences</p> <p>The Passive Voice</p> <p>Use of Brackets in sentences</p> <p>Conditionals</p>
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Appendix 6: Writing Genres

<u>Junior Infants</u>	<u>Senior Infants</u>
Recount Writing to Socialise Report Narrative	Recount Procedure Narrative Report Writing to Socialise

<u>First Class</u>	<u>Second Class</u>
Report Recount Narrative Procedure Writing to Socialise	Explanation Recount Report Procedure Narrative

<u>Third Class</u>	<u>Fourth Class</u>
Writing to Socialise Explanation Recount Report Procedure Narrative	Writing to Socialise Persuasive Recount Report Explanation Procedure Narrative

<u>Fifth Class</u>	<u>Sixth Class</u>
Recount Writing to Socialise	Recount Narrative

Narrative Persuasive Writing Explanation Procedure Report	Explanation Report Writing to Socialise Persuasive Procedural
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Appendix 7: Seven Steps to Teaching Writing

These have been taken from the supports for the curriculum and resources from the PDST.

➤ **Gradual Release of Responsibility** ([Writing Genre: A Structured Approach - PDST](#))

Teachers will use this approach when introducing a new genre. This scheme of work should span from six to eight weeks. The initial steps are crucial as they give pupils the opportunity to become familiar with the genre and deconstruct texts to reveal the key feature of the genre.

Step 1: Familiarisation with the genre

Integration with reading and oral language, for example, comparing samples of the genre, using sample displays, reading to and reading with students.

Step 2: Use an example to devise a framework

Children analyse one effective sample of the text form. Children discover the framework of a form of a text. Create a framework with key words/prompts for the genre e.g. in Narrative: Title, Setting, Characters, Problem, Resolution Ask children to look at various examples and through teacher-questioning and paired discussion children figure out the framework

Step 3: Modelled writing (teacher only)

The teacher 'thinks aloud' as he/she writes while the class observe. The teacher justifies decisions, for example, in relation to the content or the language that is to be used, and also clarifies thoughts and ideas

Step 4: Shared writing

Teacher has the pen and continues to 'think aloud' but uses children's ideas also. Children engage in talking, writing and reading within the genre. This is an effective and non-threatening way to support children's writing and involves the teacher and the children writing together. Children make suggestions and the teacher writes these down on a flip chart, thus modelling the writing conventions.

Step 5: Guided Writing:

Children plan their writing. Children can plan their writing in pairs/groups using the framework they have devised. The teacher's role is to guide and encourage students by giving explicit feedback that refers to the structural or language features required in the text form.

Step 6: Independent writing:

Children plan and write their own piece including drafting, editing and redrafting. The teacher is always on-hand to facilitate this process through encouragement, feedback, guidance and affirmation.

Step 7: Presentation to audience: Children write for real purpose and for real audience.

Appendix 8: Phonics & Spelling:

Infants

42 Main letter sounds (including digraphs such as sh, th, ch and ck).

Forming and writing letters.

Blending sounds together to read and write new words.

Listening for the sounds in words and practising segmenting.

CVC words Learning sight words that have irregular spellings.

Junior Infants:

Group 1 – s, a, t, i, p, n

Group 2 – c/k, e, h, r, m, d

Group 3 – g, o, u, l, f, b

Group 4 – ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or

Group 5 – z, w, ng, v, oo

Group 6 – y, c, ch, sh, th

Group 7 – qu, ou, oi, ue, er, a

Senior Infants:

Group 1 – s, a, t, i, p, n

Group 2 – c/k, e, h, r, m, d

Group 3 – g, o, u, l, f, b

Group 4 – ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or

Group 5 – z, w, ng, v, oo

Group 6 – y, c, ch, sh, th

Group 7 – qu, ou, oi, ue, er, a

- The 'magic e' rule: a_e, e_e, i_e, o_e, u_e
- Blending: Initial consonant blends eg. **Stop** and **flag**
- Double letters eg duck and hill

Spelling	
First Class	Second Class
Sh, Ch Th, Ng Qu, Ar Short vowels ff, ll, ss, zz Ck, Y at end Vowels, a_e i_e, o_e u_e, wh ay, ea igh, y ow, ew ou, ow oi, oy or, al nk, er ir, ur au, aw	Silent b, Silent w Silent k, Wh Ph, ea Soft c, Soft g wa, ou air, ch ai, ee ie, oa ue, k er, oi ou, or ey, ear Silent h, Silent c are, ear ti, si ei, o ure, ie ore, le

Third Class	Fourth Class
a_e , ai, ay Ee, ea, e_e le, y, igh, i_e Oa, ow, o_e Ue, ew, u_e Homophones Gh, ph Soft c, ci, cy, ce Soft g, hard g Eer, ear, ere	ai, a_e, ay -ically Homophones Qu Ure Nch Or Ue Ant,ent El,al

Air, are -ory Tch, ch Gi, ge, gy Inter 'ex' words	Pre- Ve Gh, ough, augh -ory -ist
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Fifth Class	Sixth Class
Homophones Suffixes -age, -ege -able, -ible Negative prefixes Silent letters -tion -sion -ssion -ation -ify Ough Homonyms Rhyming words -ous, -ious -tious	Silent Letters -nge Homophones -ance, -ence -ancy, -ency multi-, mono- -ary, -ery, -ory -sure, -ture -cial, -tial Rhyming Words -ate Heteronyms y y or i Soft c, hard c Ch

Appendix 9 : Apps used for literacy

Action Words

Books

Book Creator One

Dyslexia Quest

English FEL

Epic - Kid's Books

Google Docs

Google Translate

Grammaropolis

Hairy Phonics 1

iTranslate Converse

iTranslate Keyboard

iTranslate Lingo

iTranslate Translator

iTranslate Voice

Jolly Adventure

Jolly Phonics Lessons Pro

Jolly Phonics Sounds

Lamh time

Lingo

Our Story 2

Oxford Owls

Picture Dictionary

Pocket Phonics: Stories

Reading Eggs

Say Hi

Snapshelf Text Reader

Sock Puppets Complete

Spelling City

Starfall ABC's

Starfall I'm Reading
Starfall Fun
Starfall Learn to Read
TD Snap AAC
Teach your Monster to Read
Vocabulary
Vocabulary Builder
Vocabulary Spelling City
Wet-Dry-Try Handwriting
Writing Wizard for Kids
Teach Monster: Reading for Fun
Teach Me: 1st Grade
Teach Me: 2nd Grade
Teach Me: 3rd Grade
Teach Me: Reception
Teach Me: Toddler
Topmarks