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 Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
 na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin
 Galway and Roscommon
 Education and Training Board

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS - a Steiner education



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English Curriculum Policy for Infants to 6th Class

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Section A

1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning English at Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS. This school plan was worked on and discussed by staff during March/April 2020 School Closure. It was formulated in order to ensure a whole school approach to teaching and learning in our school. It aims to outline how we conform to the principles of learning outlined in the Primary Language Curriculum through the use of Steiner themes and methodologies. It will form the basis for teacher's long and short-term planning. It will also inform new or temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in our school.

1.1 ENGLISH IN THE CURRICULUM

Language is at the heart of children's learning. Through language they receive much of their skills. Language enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes, and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving them order and meaning.

Language also has an important bearing on the mental, emotional and social development of the child: it is the base on which successful teaching and learning in other areas must stand, not only at primary, but at all levels.

Our School attaches a high priority to giving pupils a command of the English language and the ability to use it appropriately and concisely to convey meanings.

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 their own environments and relationships which are supportive, engaging and inclusive.

2 VISION AND AIMS

2.1 OUR VISION

We aim to provide a caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed, assessing the whole child. The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching and learning processes, teaching the whole child – head, hands and heart.

2.2 OUR AIM

“The goal of the Waldorf approach to language arts is to inspire in every child a love for the powers of language”.

We believe that this goal can be achieved through endorsing the aims of the Primary Language Curriculum which are:

Children and their lives

- enable children to build on prior knowledge and experience of language and language learning to enhance their language learning
- encourage children to embrace Irish positively, and promote our cultural identity through the use of the Irish language
- encourage children of different languages and cultures to be proud of and to share their heritage
- recognise the wide variation in experience and 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.

All teachers are familiar with the strands, elements and learning outcomes in the Primary Language Curriculum and refer to them regularly when planning for their classes ensuring all strands, elements and learning outcomes are covered.

Teachers are also familiar with the three Progression Continua, one for each of the three strands—oral language, reading and writing. From time to time, children may move forwards and backwards across the Progression Continua and not always in a linear step-by-step manner. The continua support teachers to make decisions based on the evidence available to them at a point-in-time. The evidence may indicate the need to reinforce, revisit or extend a particular concept or skill. It is not generally expected that classroom teachers would assess the progress of individual children using progression milestones. Rather they provide information to support periodic planning as well as holistic assessment of children’s and young people’s learning.

3 THE ELEMENTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF ORAL LANGUAGE, READING AND WRITING

Strand	Element	Learning Outcome
Oral Language	Communication	Engagement, listening and attention
		Motivation and Choice
		Social conventions and awareness of others
	Understanding	Sentence structure and grammar
		Vocabulary
		Demonstration of understanding
	Exploring and Using	Requests and questions
		Categorisation
		Retelling and elaboration
		Playful and creative use of language
		Information giving, explanation and justification
		Description, prediction and reflection

Strand	Element	Learning Outcome
Reading	Communication	Engagement
		Motivation and choice
	Understanding	Conventions of print and sentence structure
		Phonological and phonemic awareness
		Phonics, word recognition and word study
		Vocabulary
	Exploring and Using	Purpose, genre and voice
		Response and author's intent
		Comprehension
		Fluency and self-correction

Strand	Element	Learning Outcome
Writing	Communication	Engagement
		Motivation and choice
	Understanding	Conventions of print and sentence structure
		Spelling and word study
		Vocabulary
	Exploring and Using	Purpose, genre and voice
		Writing process and creating text
		Response and author's intent
		Handwriting and presentation

4 ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF OUR ENGLISH PLAN

4.1 RESOURCES

In our school, we have the following resources to facilitate the implementation of our plan:

- Hardcopy and online copy of The Primary Language Curriculum used as a working document – strands, elements and progression milestones for each class.
- Ancillary materials from language scheme which include resource books, posters, worksheets, flashcards, tapes and CDs;
- PDST Manuals - 5 Components of effective oral language instruction.
 - Guiding Comprehension.
 - The Reading Process.
 - Writing Genres.
- Building Bridges of Understanding.
- Speaking & Listening - Prim Ed
- The Comprehension Box3 – Prim Ed.
- Newell Literacy Programme
- Well stocked classroom libraries
- Prim-Ed Copymasters etc.;
- Drama / dressing up box;
- Selection of toys, phones etc.;
- Digital Cameras;
- Games

Non classroom-based resources are currently stored in the Staffroom. New resources will be purchased annually until we reach 6th class and then as needed.

Different textbooks will be trialed in the first few years of the school until a scheme that best suits the school is chosen.

5 LEARNING SUPPORT AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Children with learning difficulties and special educational needs are helped to achieve their potential in the core skills of oral language, reading and writing. Assessment is ongoing and an Individual Education Programme / Plan (IEP) is drawn up and co-ordinated by the SET Teacher in consultation with the class teacher, the pupil and the parents and the SNA. Specific short-term targets are agreed between all concerned e.g. in relation to oral language, reading and handwriting. Regular consultation also takes place with external professionals e.g. Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, NEPS Psychologist. The class teacher maintains first line responsibility for the welfare of the child. Suitable resources are provided to meet the learning needs of individual children.

6 TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Class Work for non-English speaking pupils

- Differentiation is essential.
- Emphasis should be on the Learning of English as a second language
- Newly arrived pupils may listen in to Irish being taught but should not be required to read Irish, to write in Irish, or to learn Irish grammar or vocabulary in any systematic sense.
- English speaking pupils should be encouraged to assist their non-English speaking class mates in learning of new vocabulary, simple phonics etc (peer to peer tutoring)

6.1 HOMEWORK FOR NON ENGLISH SPEAKING PUPILS

- Spellings should not be given.
- Pupils should be asked to learn vocabulary instead of spellings.
- Written work should be confined to English exercises until the child is able to read and understand English to a reasonable degree.
- Pupils could be encouraged to draw pictures, write simple sentences, words, about their native country and customs, etc.

7 LINKAGE AND INTEGRATION

While our English Plan is presented under the three strand unit headings of oral language, reading and writing, the practice in this school is that all three strand units are interlinked along with the integration of Irish as part of the Primary Language Curriculum. The manner in which our plan is organised also provides significant opportunities for its integration with all other curricular areas.

8 GENDER EQUALITY

We are committed to the provision of equal opportunities to all our pupils in the implementation of our English Plan. Equal opportunities are provided to all pupils to participate in discussions, debates, reading and writing opportunities etc. The use of language and textbooks deemed to be sexist is avoided. Attention is afforded to developmental differences and remedial action is taken where appropriate. 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.

9 CLASS LIBRARIES

In our school, a library is located in each classroom. Each library is organised by the respective class teacher. Junior libraries are well stocked with a wide range of books with the senior libraries extending this range to include factual and reference books. From 1st to 6th class pupils can change their books as often as required and a record is kept of books read to ensure they experience reading in different genres. A reading culture is promoted in the school by participation for World Book Day, a reading buddy system with older classes and infant classes and trips to the library.

10 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is an integral element of our schools ethos. We ensure that parents are kept informed through parent information evenings, parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, weekly emails, texts and annual report cards. In addition to this, any concerns during the school year are quickly brought to parent's attention. The class teacher and parents then work together to support the child in the most effective way possible.

Parents are invited to the school at different times of the year including festivals and performances by the children.

There are weekly emails to inform parents of upcoming events, interesting articles and relevant courses. We also have a parent's library in the school where parents can borrow books regarding their child's education, parenting and Steiner approach to teaching and learning.

11 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As a growing school we are developing active links with our local community to promote pupils' learning. We have a wonderful Steiner community who are at the heart of our pupils' learning. Through festivals we encourage visitors to our school in the shape of storytellers, musicians, poets, artists and craftsmen. We encourage the children to talk with their grandparents and others in the locality regarding its history and folklore. Contributions from the children are encouraged and welcomed to the School Newsletters.

12 INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS' PLANNING AND REPORTING.

All teachers long term planning is based on the curriculum planning documents and the schools plan for English. Teachers take their main lesson topics from the Waldorf curriculum and use them to deliver the English primary curriculum objectives in an artistic and creative way. The artistic element is an integral part of the English class. Lessons are presented in artistic ways by the teacher so as to fully involve and develop the creative sensibilities and capabilities of the child.

The teacher's long term plans inform their short term plans. The cuntas miosúil ensures teachers can review their planning on a monthly basis. The cuntas miosúil is also reviewed monthly by the school principal who provides feedback to the teachers. Teachers also have the opportunity to look at colleague's cuntas miosúil for development purposes. It is also the policy of our school to include a personal reflection at the end of our cuntas miosúil. Teachers are also asked to highlight the area of SSE focus in their cuntas miosúil.

Teachers are responsible for their own weekly and daily planning informed by their fortnightly plans.

13 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Staff development is considered a key to the success of our school. Staff are encouraged to avail of all relevant training opportunities as provided by the Galway Education Centre.
- The school also encourages its staff members to avail of Waldorf training courses at home and abroad during the year.
- Staff development needs are identified through review and discussion at staff meetings. When needs are identified, an action plan is devised to ensure that such needs are adequately addressed. Responses 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.
- Notices of upcoming courses are circulated to each staff member.
- Staff members who have attended courses are given opportunities to report back to other staff members during time allocated at staff meetings or a staff development day.
- Care is given to ensure each staff member is supported in their role in the school by other staff members, the principal, the board of management and the parent body.

14 ENGLISH & ICT

We have a digital school camera and a school computer located in the office. We have six laptops used by staff and a projector and screen used for workshops or events within the school. The school is currently in the process of purchasing other ICT equipment to support learning.

14.1 ENGLISH AND ICT FOR 5TH AND 6TH CLASSES

An ICT programme is currently being developed for use in 5th and 6th class. It is planned that:

- The software is stored in the learning support room and borrowed by teachers for use in classrooms.
- ICT is used to assist children with special needs in their own classrooms and in learning support room.
- Our pupils use word processors and presentation packages to write in a variety of genres, to edit, to revise and to present their work.
- Our pupils use the internet as a tool for research.
- Our pupils use computers to engage in shared writing and shared editing exercises (working in pairs and in small groups).
- We are currently establishing a code of practice to ensure safe Internet usage. Teachers familiarise themselves with material on websites prior to use by the children.

(Digital Strategy plan and Internet Acceptable Use Policy to be developed)

15 HOMEWORK

- Formal homework begins in First Class.
- Homework begins with shared English reading and progresses to include spellings, research and project work.
- Children have a homework journal from 3rd class which is signed by parents to confirm homework is done.
- Homework is differentiated based on ability and circumstances of the child.
- Homework is supported by the school where necessary-e.g. Children who do not have English as a first language in the home will have their reading listened to by the teacher/SNA/interns in school.
- Children attending learning support will have homework set by the learning support teacher in consultation with the class teacher.

16 TIMETABLING

A weekly minimum of four hours is allocated for English in the Infant Classes and five hours from 1st to 6th Classes. Extra discretionary curricular time is allocated to English as appropriate. A significant emphasis is placed on the provision of discrete time for oral language in the Junior to Middle Classes with a greater focus on integrated oral language time in the Middle to Senior Classes.

17 WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH – TERMLY/SEASONAL THEMES/STORIES AND FESTIVALS

Autumn:	Winter:	Spring:	Summer:
Autumn Harvest Planting Michaelmas Martinmas Lantern walk Martinmas play	Winter Advent Spiral Christmas St. Nicolas Christmas play Christmas Concert	Spring Growth Light Pancake Tuesday St. Brigit Candlemas St. Patrick Easter	Summer Maypole Mayfair St. John's
September, October, November Ring times, rhymes, riddles, stories, poems, verses, crafts, activities.	December, January Ring times, rhymes, riddles, stories, poems, verses, crafts, activities.	February, March, April Ring times, rhymes, riddles, stories, poems, verses, crafts, activities.	May, June Ring times, rhymes, riddles, stories, poems, verses, crafts, activities.

Section B

1 TERMLY LEARNING OUTCOMES – ORAL LANGUAGE

Element		Learning Outcome	Termly	Resources
Communicating	1.	Engagement, listening and attention	TERM 1	PDST Manual Pg 26 Turn taking
	2.	Motivation and Choice	TERM 3	
	3.	Social conventions and awareness of others	TERM 2	
Understanding	4.	Sentence structure and grammar	TERM 1	
	5.	Vocabulary	TERM 3	PDST Manual Pg 31,34 Vocab / Conceptual knowledge
	6.	Demonstration of understanding	TERM 2	
Exploring and Using Language	7.	Requests and questions	TERM 1	PDST Manual Pg 19 Questioning Interviews
	8	Categorisation	TERM 2	PDST Manual Pg 7 Oral Report
	9.	Retelling and elaboration	TERM 2	PDST Manual Pg 10 Storytelling Anecdotes
	10.	Playful and creative use of language	TERM 1	PDST Manual Pg 16 Conversations
	11.	Information giving, explanation and justification	TERM 3	PDST Manual Pg 22 /33 Arguments & Debates
	12.	Description, prediction and reflection	TERM 3	PDST Manual Pg 24 Instructions & Procedures

Approaches used to develop these topics will include a combination of the five principal contexts for oral language development.

Talk and Discussion

Play and Games

Story

improvisational Drama

Poetry and Rhyme

Genres

Classes	Reading / Writing	Oral
All classes	Report	Oral Report
All classes	Narrative	Storytelling
All classes	Recount	Anecdotes
All classes	Procedural	Instructions & Procedures
Senior classes	Persuasive	Argument & Debate
Senior classes	Explanatory	

1.1 ORAL LANGUAGE: METHODOLOGIES FOR INFANT CLASSES

- Talk and discussion- meal times, walks to the woods, story time, birthday stories
- Active learning e.g. Circle Time, baking, craft making,
- Listening games e.g. Chinese whispers, Simon Says, clapping games.
- Skills through content e.g.-Story telling – rich and varied selection of stories, games, making of crafts
- Collaborative learning e.g.- sharing stories, playtime
- Problem solving-e.g. playtime with blocks, activities/ tasks in the woods.
- Using the environment- e.g. woods, baking, cooking, crafts, gardening
- Making and doing-crafts, decorations,
- Hands on Approach-all subject areas.
- Use of concrete materials-playtime
- Looking and responding-art, crafts, story time, photographs, exhibitions

1.2 ORAL LANGUAGE: METHODOLOGIES FOR 1ST/2ND CLASS

- Talk and discussion- news time, listener/ speaker games.
- Active learning e.g. kinaesthetic learning in circle time.
- Skills through content e.g.-Story telling – rich and varied selection of stories, circle time, roleplay
- Collaborative learning e.g.- sharing stories, maths activities, co-operative games
- Problem solving-e.g. riddles, maths problems, co-operative games
- Using the environment- e.g. woods, baking, cooking, crafts, gardening
- Making and doing-crafts, decorations,
- Hands on Approach-all subject areas.
- Use of concrete materials-conkers for counting,
- Looking and responding-art, crafts, story time, photographs, exhibitions
- Cross-age tutoring and sharing stories
- Vocabulary development-through stories, rhymes and poems.

1.3 ORAL LANGUAGE: METHODOLOGIES FOR 3RD & 4TH CLASSES

- Talk and discussion-e.g. general classroom conversation in all subject areas, life experiences, news, current affairs.
- Collaborative learning e.g. pass on a story – each child adds on.
- Skills through content e.g. describing a process e.g. how to make Brigit's cross, class play
- Problem solving e.g. listening to and completing tasks e.g. in PE lesson.
- Using the environment-learning about the local town, county, natural surroundings through exploring them.
- Use of ICT-e.g. photographs, presentations
- Group work-e.g. brainstorming adjectives to describe a character, project work
- Investigative approach-e.g. predicting what will happen in science experiments

- Integrated approach-use of main lesson themes to deliver lessons.
- Looking and responding-own work, work of others, exhibitions, class trips.
- Vocabulary development- e.g. Use of alternative words, phrases, sentence structures, main lesson vocabulary.
- Guest speakers e.g. local storytellers.
- Active learning e.g. role playing to explore different emotions, class trips
- Listening and responding e.g. listen to a piece of music, select words to describe it, make up a story behind it.
- Drill and practice e.g. Reciting poetry and tongue twisters

1.4 ORAL LANGUAGE: METHODOLOGIES FOR 5TH & 6TH CLASSES

- Talk and discussion- – local, national and global issues, sport, pupils’ concerns and social issues.
- Use of ICT-e.g. photographs, power point presentations, research tool.
- Investigative approach-e.g. Questioning and logic.
- Problem solving e.g. using sets of picture sequences, groups of pupils put the pictures into a logical sequence and practice retelling the story around the circle.
- Collaborative learning e.g. brainstorming and building knowledge.
- Active learning-Circle Time, role playing
- Skills through content e.g. class play
- Integrated approach-use of main lesson themes to deliver lessons.
- Looking and responding-own work, work of others, exhibitions, class trips
- Vocabulary development- e.g. Use of alternative words, phrases, sentence structures, main lesson vocabulary.
- Guest speakers e.g. local and national storytellers.
- Drill and practice e.g. Reciting poetry and tongue twisters
- Guided discussion-e.g. building communication skills

2 TERMLY LEARNING OUTCOMES – READING

Element		Learning Outcome	Termly
Communicating	1.	Engagement	TERM 1, TERM 2
	2.	Motivation and Choice	TERM 3
Understanding	3.	Conventions of print and sentence structure	TERM 2
	4.	Phonological and phonemic awareness	TERM 1
	5.	Phonics, word study and word recognition	TERM 3
	6.	Reading vocabulary	TERM 3
Exploring and Using Language	7.	Purpose, genre and voice	TERM 1
	8.	Response and author’s intent	TERM 3
	9.	Comprehension	TERM 2
	10.	Fluency and self-correction	TERM 3

2.1 READING: METHODOLOGIES FOR INFANT CLASSES

- Talk and discussion- meal times, walks to the woods, story time, birthday stories
- Active learning e.g. Circle Time, baking, craft making,
- Listening games e.g. Chinese whispers, Simon Says, clapping games.
- Talk and discussion- e.g. predicting a story, recalling a story
- Active learning- e.g. making letters with clay, library visits, circle time activities
- Collaborative learning- e.g. shared reading, big books
- Problem solving- e.g. riddles
- Skills through content-e.g. following a recipe, read own writing
- Using the environment-starting with print which is already in the environment, gradually building up to a meaningful print rich environment
- Children's ideas-e.g. dressing up for World Book Day
- Play and games-e.g. riddles and rhymes in circle time
- Vocabulary development e.g. Read to children a rich variety of stories, facts and poetry.
- Whole class teaching

2.2 READING: METHODOLOGIES FOR 1ST/2ND CLASS

- Talk and discussion
- Active learning e.g. read own writing , library visits ,personal dictionary, real life situations
- Collaborative learning e.g. Big Book reading, Drama activities
- Pair work-e.g. Think Pair Share, paired reading
- Problem solving- e.g. riddles, predicting
- Skills through content e.g. Quiet reading time, DEAR time
- Using the environment e.g. Language experience chart e.g. Print-rich environment e.g. labels, captions, displays of simple sentences / stories, reading corner. World Book Day
- Children's ideas e.g. Write own book
- Play and games
- Vocabulary development e.g. Read to children a rich variety of stories, facts and poetry, well stocked library.
- Individual -Reading schemes
- Whole class teaching-e.g. spelling and phonics

2.3 READING: METHODOLOGIES FOR 3RD & 4TH CLASSES

- Talk and discussion e.g. discussion of the illustrations, comparisons of style etc,
- Recalling, retelling, predicting.
- Active learning e.g. distribute poetry books, pupils read and select their favourite poem
- Encouraging use of class / local library
- Collaborative learning e.g. Group read same material. Pupils in group have different roles to discuss material. Read other pupils' work
- Problem solving e.g. Teacher provides questions first and pupils read passage to find answers. Analysis, explanation, mood, issues, theme. Inference, Deduction, Summarising, Evaluation, Correlation, Classification.
- Skills through content e.g. Class novel. Reading of brochures, fliers, leaflets, circulars Project work, reading class play
- Using the environment-e.g. print rich environment, visits to the library

- Children’s ideas e.g. Personalise the story, Pupils select which poem to learn. Book reviews and recommendations for other pupils to read.
- Whole class e.g. modelled reading by teacher / pupil
- Reading strategies – scanning, skimming, research reading, reflective reading.
- Making and doing-e.g. designing book covers
- Play and games-treasure hunts, orienteering
- Vocabulary development e.g. Use of class set of dictionaries. Research reading.
- Use of ICT-research tool
- Guided reading.
- Shared reading e.g. with parents/ peers
- Performance reading e.g. birthday verses, poems
- Paired-reading e.g. reading the class novel
- Guest speaker-visit of author/poet

2.4 READING: METHODOLOGIES FOR 5TH & 6TH CLASSES

- Talk and discussion e.g. discussion of the illustrations, comparisons of style etc
- Recalling, retelling, predicting.
- Active learning e.g. distribute poetry books, pupils read and select their favourite poem
- Encouraging use of class / local library
- Collaborative learning e.g. Group read same material. Pupils in group have different roles to discuss material. Read other pupils’ work
- Problem solving e.g. Teacher provides questions first and pupils read passage to find answers. Analysis, explanation, mood, issues, theme. Inference, Deduction, Summarising, Evaluation, Correlation, Classification.
- Skills through content e.g. Class novel. Reading of brochures, fliers, leaflets, circulars Project work, reading class play
- Using the environment-e.g. print rich environment, visits to the library
- Children’s ideas e.g. Personalise the story, Pupils select which poem will be learned. Book reviews and recommendations for other pupils to read.
- Whole class e.g. modelled reading by teacher / pupil
- Reading strategies – scanning, skimming, research reading, reflective reading.
- Making and doing-e.g. designing book covers
- Play and games-treasure hunts, orienteering
- Vocabulary development e.g. Use of class set of dictionaries. Research reading.
- Use of ICT-research tool
- Guided reading.
- Shared reading e.g. with parents/ peers
- Performance reading e.g. birthday verses, poems
- Paired-reading e.g. reading the class novel
- Guest speaker-visit of author/poet

2.5 USE OF DICTIONARIES

Dictionaries will be used from 3rd Class up. Formal time will be devoted to teaching the children how to use a dictionary correctly. For this purpose, a child friendly dictionary will be selected, and all pupils will be encouraged to obtain the same publication. The dictionary selected for use is:

- Chambers School Dictionary.

Rang 5 and Rang 6 will also have some class copies of a more sophisticated dictionary and an appropriate thesaurus, and pupils will be encouraged to use these.

2.5.1 DICTIONARY SKILLS

- Train children in alphabet order. Start with words with different initial letter (car, bus, animal) and progress to words with the same initial letter (car, crisp, cousin) and then on to words with the same two letters at start ,etc. (car, can, cap).
- Dictionaries can be divided into quartiles i.e. A-D , E-L, M-R, S-Z. and colour coded for ease of use.
- Teach children the conventions of a dictionary e.g. the use of head words at the top of each page.
- Dictionaries should be used in conjunction with other sources e.g. word charts, word boxes, personal dictionaries, alphabetical spelling lists, etc.

3 TERMLY LEARNING OUTCOMES – WRITING

Element		Learning Outcome	Termly
Communicating	1.	Engagement	TERM 1, TERM 2
	2.	Motivation and choice	TERM 3
Understanding	3.	Conventions of print and sentence structure	TERM 3
	4.	Spelling and word study	TERM 3 – (excluding infants)
	5.	Vocabulary	TERM 1, TERM 2
Exploring and Using	6.	Purpose, genre and voice	TERM 2
	7.	Writing process and creating text	TERM 3
	8.	Response and author’s intent	TERM 1
	9.	Handwriting and presentation	TERM 3 – (excluding infants)
Communicating	1.	Engagement	TERM 1, TERM 2
	2.	Motivation and choice	TERM 3

3.1 WRITING PROCESS:

Children learn to write through the process of writing. The basis of the approach to writing contained in the English curriculum incorporates a number of significant principles:

- The teacher will act as mentor and guide in this process of drafting, editing and redrafting, helping children to develop expressive abilities and accuracy.
- Through this interactive process children will gradually develop the ability to self-correct their writing and so become independent writers.

3.2 GENRES:

Junior & Senior Infants	Senior Classes
Recount	Explanatory
Narrative	Persuasive
Procedural	
Report	

Overview of Content – Even Year	English Genres	Revision/ Consolidation
Term 1	Explanatory	Persuasive
Term 2	Narrative	Recount
Term 3	Procedural	Report
Overview of Content – Odd Year	English Genres	Revision/ Consolidation
Term 1	Persuasive	Explanatory
Term 2	Recount	Narrative
Term 3	Report	Procedural

3.3 APPROACHES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW GENRE:

Reference: PDST Booklet 7 step writing genre approach

- Familiarisation – showing the children lots of examples of this genre
- Discovery (direct model) – engaging in focussed talk and discussion, questioning, etc. (analysing text) - breaking down the text into its various subheadings, etc.
- Modelled writing
- Shared writing – teacher writes the children’s ideas
- Guided writing - using frameworks devised by teacher or the resource book
- Independent construction
- Presentation to audience (reading it for different classes, hall display, school website, class book, parish newsletter, competition entry, bringing it home, etc)

3.4 WRITING: METHODOLOGIES FOR INFANT CLASSES

- Talk and discussion- Oral preparation for all written work.
- Active learning-e.g. Kinaesthetic learning-writing in sand, clay letters etc
- Collaborative learning-recalling story together, teacher acting as a scribe to model writing process
- Skills through content e.g. development of fine motor skills through crafts and play activities.
- Using the environment e.g. print-rich environment e.g. labels, captions, displays of simple sentences/stories, writing corner
- Play and games-circle time to explore letters
- Vocabulary development-through stories, vocabulary related to letters being learned
- Whole class-e.g. Teacher as scribe, modelling story structure.
- Drill and practice-use of blackboards and chalk to practice letter formation

3.5 WRITING: METHODOLOGIES FOR 1ST AND 2ND CLASS

- Talk and discussion-oral preparation for all written work.
- Active learning e.g. mnemonic rhymes
- Whole class-e.g. teacher as a scribe to model correct letter formation and story structure.
- Collaborative learning e.g. Class story – each pupil writes 5 – 10 sentences
- Pair work e.g. Writing pairs / groups for editing and re-drafting. Cross-age tutoring – older pupil as scribe for younger pupil.
- Skills through content e.g. lists, messages, reminders, letters, invitations. Express feelings in print, write about experiences, write about senses.
- Using the environment e.g. Print-rich environment e.g. labels, captions, displays of simple sentences / stories, writing corner. Include pupils' writing in class library. Displays of writing in class.
- Children's ideas e.g. free-writing in personal journal, own choice of topics, personal writing collections
- Making and doing-cards, crafts
- Vocabulary development-e.g. oral preparation, Teacher as scribe, modelling story structure.
- Drill and practice-use of blackboards and chalk to practice letter formation

3.6 WRITING: METHODOLOGIES FOR 3RD & 4TH CLASSES

- Talk and discussion –oral work in preparation for written activity
- Active learning e.g. visit to farm before writing about it. Create boxes of facts etc. for projects, Create book covers
- Collaborative learning e.g. Brainstorm for story writing and use questions to expand. Sequence events. Discuss different beginnings and endings. Collate class rules.
- Problem solving e.g. Provide middle of story – tease out beginning and conclusion.
- Skills through content e.g. Pupils write to one another for a specific purpose. Letters of thanks, complaint, invitation.
- Using the environment e.g. Display pupils' written work – writing corner.
- Children's ideas- e.g. Write-a-Book project, Personal diary.
- Making and doing-e.g. making cards, posters
- Play and games-e.g. writing riddles and tongue twisters
- Vocabulary development e.g. use of dictionaries in writing activities
- Poetry writing.
- Paired / group writing.
- Drafting, editing and redrafting-e.g. with the teacher, in pairs, own work

3.7 WRITING: METHODOLOGIES FOR 5TH & 6TH CLASSES

- Talk and discussion- oral preparation for all written work
- Active learning e.g. writing activities based on real experience, Write-a-book
- Poetry writing
- Collaborative learning e.g. working on projects in pairs/ groups
- Problem solving-e.g. persuasive text.
- Skills through content e.g. history of writing to introduce writing with fountain pen
- Using the environment e.g. print rich environment, dictionaries, reference books.
- Children's ideas e.g. own topics, write a book project, Diary writing.
- Vocabulary development e.g. oral preparation, challenging texts, use of dictionary and thesaurus.
- Pair work e.g. brainstorming, webbing, research, conferencing.
- Drafting editing, drafting and publishing e.g. Spelling, grammar, punctuation and layout, correction, self-correction, use of dictionary, thesaurus.

3.8 GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION:

- By the end of the senior classes children will be expected to recognise and name the principal parts of speech and their more common properties, and to be aware of their functions.
- The ability to use the parts of speech accurately and to observe the conventions of grammar can be developed in the context of children's general language development. In particular, the process of writing, editing and redrafting gives the teacher opportunities to guide pupils towards an appreciation of the functions of the parts of speech and a control of the conventions of grammar and punctuation.

	<i>Sentence construction</i>	<i>Parts of Speech</i>
<u>Rang 1</u>	Use of capital letters at beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences	The children will be introduced to the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns, without use of formal terminology. 'Special' names such as John, Rex and Mallow get capital letters, while 'ordinary' words such as boy, girl, dog and town get lower case letters
<u>Rang 2</u>	Revise above Use of capital letters : I, name, places Use of the question mark. Awareness of inverted commas for direct speech	Revise above Masculine and Feminine nouns, e.g. bull/cow; king/queen; prince/princess.
<u>Rang 3</u>	Revise above Use of commas in lists. Use of apostrophe	Revise above Use of collective nouns, e.g. herd of cattle, school of dolphins etc Plural of nouns
<u>Rang 4</u>	Revise above Use of direct speech and indirect speech. Use of apostrophe	Revise above Verbs. Verbs have tense. Past/present/future tense.
<u>Rang 5</u>	Revise above	Revise above Abstract nouns Conjunctions
<u>Rang 6</u>	Revise above	Revision and extension of the concept of Proper Nouns and Common Nouns. Masculine and Feminine nouns Collective nouns / Abstract nouns Plural of nouns Adjectives Verbs - Past, Present and Future Tense Verbs Conjunctions Adverbs Prepositions Definite and Indefinite Article Spellings

3.9 SPELLING POLICY

Our Spelling Policy is informed by the following research findings:

- Spellings are ONLY needed for the act of WRITING. Therefore all assessment and practice should be as part of written work.
- Spelling is not a matter of memorising words and being able to reproduce them on demand. Many other skills and strategies are needed.
- Spelling instruction and word study must be a part of our daily literacy instruction.
- Children must write daily in order to learn how to spell.
- The more writing children do, the more they learn about spelling.
- Spelling is a skill of constructing words, not of memorising words.
- The more children read, the more they will see standard spellings.
- Spelling is visual and phonetic.
- Children need to be taught spellings from their own mistakes, where possible.
- There is a proven connection between fluid handwriting and good spellings.
- The strategy of testing a **spelling list** on Friday is a very limited one and generally does nothing to improve spellings in independent writing.

3.9.1 GENERAL

- Good teaching skills involve observing, diagnosing, planning, teaching, and motivating.
- A variety of teaching methods should be adopted according to the child's area of difficulty.
- Children learn not only from the teacher but from each other. Therefore, learning environments, which promote pair and collaborative group activity, are recommended.
- Every class has diverse ability levels. In particular this school has experienced a high intake of new pupils at all class levels since its inception. Therefore, children are frequently grouped for spelling.

3.9.2 STRATEGIES:

- Not just teach spellings every day but repeatedly practice the spelling of words – orally, visually, kinaesthetically and in writing.
- Using a wide range of strategies including Music, Mnemonics, Rhythm and rhyme, Creation of word searches, Aide memoires, Spelling buddies, Breaking words into syllables. Exaggeration of the word
- Help children develop an understanding of the structure of words and of the visual and sound patterns in words.
- Help children learn how a word is used (e.g. past tense adds –ed to a word, even if it sounds like 'it')
- Explicitly teach spelling rules (see next section)
- Encourage the application of Spelling Rules in daily writing.
- Help children to consider the meaning of a word (e.g. 'please' and 'pleasant' have the same vowel combinations, even though they are pronounced differently. **It is the meaning that gives the correct spelling, not the sound.**
- Teach children to employ the strategies used by writers: spell, proof-read, edit. Encourage children to identify their own errors.
- Teach children the 'Look, Say, Copy, Cover, Write, Check Method' of learning spellings.
- Children should be taught dictionary skills in a formal way. From 2nd to 6th class, each class should have a set of suitable dictionaries.
- Teach children alphabet order and continue to check that children know the alphabet, even in senior classes. Letter names and letter sounds.
- Spell checkers on computers need to be taught to senior class groups.

- When teaching letter strings, teach one new word and find lots more with the same string.
- Teach spellings through topics: A snowy day, etc.
- Highlight mistakes and insert the correct letter string over the mistake.
- Each pupil to have a spelling journal of individualised spellings on the basis of their own writing needs.
- Teach phonics. Each class should follow a phonics scheme. School is currently using Newell phonics program.
- Practice joined handwriting skills daily.
- Use spelling games to create interest and fun in learning and to practice skills.
- Use of computer software.

3.9.3 LEARNING SPELLINGS

The Look, Say, Copy, Cover, Write, Check Method.

- Pupil looks carefully at the first word on his list.
- The pupil says the word.
- The pupil copies the word
- The pupil covers the word completely and doesn't peek again until he has attempted to write the word.
- The pupil writes the word.
- The pupil uncovers the word and compares his effort with the correct spelling.
- If the pupil gets the word right, he proceeds to the next word and uses the same system to learn it.
- If a pupil gets the word wrong, he goes back to step one and repeats the entire process. It is important at this stage that he looks carefully at the parts of the word he got right and the parts he got wrong.

IMPORTANT

- Never allow children to attempt learning spellings by saying the spelling over and over.
- Spellings are used for writing, not talking, so it's important that the pupil tests himself by writing out the word.
- Writing out the words takes a little longer but produces better results.

Remember: We learn by **DOING**.

3.9.4 ASSESSMENT OF SPELLINGS

- Spellings should be assessed through the writing of sentences, not through the testing of spelling lists.
- Poor spellers should not have words marked wrong but should have the parts of the word they got wrong highlighted and should be encouraged for the parts of the word they got right. e.g. 'bilding' instead of 'building' is **nearly right** as opposed to being a 'wrong spelling'.
- Where a pupil gets a letter string correct in a misspelt word, the string should be marked as correct. e.g. -ight felight (flight) . The string -ight is correct.

3.9.4.1 WHAT WORDS DO WE TEACH

- High Frequency Words
- Common errors from children's own writing- bick/bike ; thay/they ; frend/friend.
- Common letter strings : e.g. ight, ould .

3.9.4.2 SPELLING GAMES

- Dictation cards
- Hangman
- Staircases
- Word Searches (computer software available in the school for creating your own)
- Media Search
- Mnemonics
- Word Chain
- Word Families

3.10 PENMANSHIP

Our aim is for pupils to achieve legible, flexible and efficient handwriting at an early stage and to hone this skill through primary school.

3.10.1 DEVELOPMENT OF HANDWRITING IN OUR SCHOOL

We begin by enabling children to develop their gross and fine motor skills in junior infants through handling and manipulating many materials throughout their day. In senior infants children are introduced to letters in capital form. When children are confident and competent in writing all letters in capital form they move to writing cursively. Cursive writing assists the children in developing a flowing style and has been proven to assist children to retain spellings.

There is a gradual introduction of writing implements to aid with grip and control, developing from block crayon and stick crayon in the infant classes, coloured pencils and lead pencils from 1st and 2nd class and introduction of a fountain pen in the senior classes, linked to lessons on the history of writing.

3.10.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF HANDWRITING AND PRESENTATION

Children are encouraged to present their work to the best of their ability. They are shown in a progressive manner, how to prepare their main lesson books for writing. The teacher ensures that children have time and instruction to prepare for a writing activity. Careful presentation enhances the content of written work, and pride in well-presented work can be a powerful incentive to overall learning. Clear writing also helps retention and recall of words in reading and spelling. It is the aim of the School to raise the standards of handwriting and thus improve the self-esteem of all the pupils whom we teach.

3.10.3 CONNECTION BETWEEN GOOD HANDWRITING AND GOOD SPELLING

The development of flowing, connected handwriting is related to success in spelling. Poor spellers tend to write in a hesitant, disconnected and non-rhythmical way.

3.10.4 ESSENTIAL SKILLS TAUGHT

1. How to write from left to right and top to bottom
2. Using correct and consistent shape and size of letters
3. The importance of using appropriate and consistent spacing of letters and words.
4. How to write in a printed style
5. How to form and join each letter of the alphabet and to write in a legible cursive script
6. How to use different forms of handwriting for different purposes.

3.10.4.1 TEACHERS SHOULD OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- a. posture;
- b. position in relation to desk;
- c. positioning of the paper;
- d. noticing whether the writing is relaxed;
- e. noticing whether the pressure is correct - not too much or too little;
- f. the pen should be held lightly, about an inch from the point between the thumb and first finger with the middle finger giving support;
- g. the formation of letters should be in the correct direction, e.g. clockwise or anti-clockwise;
- h. noticing whether the methods of joining are appropriate or inappropriate.
- i. pupils begin with large size unlined books for writing in the junior classes, with the emphasis being on correct letter formation. From 3rd classes there is a mix of lined and unlined copies.

3.10.5 EARLY WRITING STAGE

In Infant classes the emphasis is on development of prewriting skills. Children are given lots of opportunity to write and draw using block crayons. In senior infants children are formally introduced to the letters in capital form using a variety of approaches. This enables them to move onto cursive writing in 1st class. This is an approach advocated in “Handwriting without Tears” and “Improving Children's Spelling”.

3.10.6 HANDWRITING SCHEME

The style of cursive writing used in our school is consistent with the Write Here (Folens) script style handwriting scheme.

3.10.7 PROGRESSION TO CURSIVE

- Pupils move from capital to cursive in 2nd class. Print writing is used for suitable genre writing in senior classes.
- The use of a handwriting pen is introduced in fourth class (e.g. Mercurius handwriting pen).

3.10.8 GENERAL

- Handwriting book will be used from 1st class onwards. Children will copy poems/ riddles/ rhymes modelled by the teacher into their handwriting book. This book will act as a record of progression of the child's handwriting as he/she moves through the school. It will also record some of the poetry encountered by the child in each class.
- From 2nd class onward, handwriting workbooks will be issued to new pupils to the school, who have not learned cursive writing.
- Handwriting workbooks will also be issued to pupils who may need additional practice, to encourage parental involvement in the practice of these handwriting skills.
- Teachers must insist on a high degree of care, attention, tidiness and cleanliness in all written work.

3.10.9 LEFT HANDED PUPILS

- The school recognises that left-handers have different needs from right-handers. Care should be taken in lighting, seating and correct writing tools. Allowance needs to be made for appropriate space and for the paper to be placed to the left side of the writer.
- Children's hand dominance will not be influenced.
- Children will be encouraged to find a pencil grip that is comfortable, and allows good writing.
- In senior classes, ball point pens may be more suitable for left handed children than ink pens.

4 ASSESSMENT, RECORD KEEPING & SUCCESS CRITERIA

The school wide implementation of this plan will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways:

4.1 ORAL LANGUAGE

Oral language is assessed informally by each class teacher.

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

4.2 READING

Reading is assessed through a combination of teacher observation and standardised testing (Micra-T and Middle Infant Screening Test).

- Improved standards in reading.
- Increased involvement in voluntary reading.
- Involvement of parents in shared reading activities.
- Experiencing of reading as an enjoyable pursuit.

4.3 WRITING

Writing is assessed informally by each class teacher.

- Greater fluency and explicitness in communicating ideas and experiences.
- Enhanced experience of writing and sharing stories and poems.
- Improved presentation of written work.

Diagnostic assessment is administered as required by SET. Informal assessment by the class teacher is conducted on an ongoing basis. Standardised assessment is administered on an annual basis during the final term. Test results are used to establish the needs of individual pupils and to inform future planning. A portfolio of individual pupils is kept as a record of his / her performance in different areas over the period of a school year. Results of formal assessments are collated over the period of a child's attendance at our school.

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

Section C

1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The implementation of our plan will be supported as follows:

Roles	Responsibilities
Development of schemes of work	Class Teacher
Assessment (Standardised / Diagnostic)	Class Teacher / SET
Co-ordination of Class Libraries	Principal / Class Teacher
Purchasing of Resources	Principal / Class Teacher/SET teacher
Parental Involvement	Class Teacher
Co-ordination of monitoring and evaluation of plan	Principal / SET Teacher/ All staff

2 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. The criteria that will indicate success are as follows:

How do we know that the plan has been implemented?

- Teachers' planning preparation based on this plan.
- Content and methodologies outlined in this plan consistently followed.

How do we know that the plan has achieved its aims? What are the indicators?

- Feedback from teachers/parents/pupils/community in SSE surveys
- Inspectors' suggestions/report
- Children's assessments: Each child's proficiency in English Language will be assessed both formally and informally on an ongoing basis.

3 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the teaching staff, principal and BOM that this plan is implemented. The English Plan will be introduced from September 2020. The plan will be reviewed as part of our School Self-Evaluation process and it is intended that it will be implemented in all classes during the school year 2021/2022. It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the mathematics curriculum in the school.

4 RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

Cuan na Gaillimhe - CNS believes that the school community must be involved to successfully implement the English Primary Curriculum. Therefore, the teaching staff will implement this plan with the support of the Board of Management, Parents and the Local Community.

This school plan was worked on and discussed by staff during March/April 2020 School Closure and presented to the Board of Management of Cuan na Gaillimhe –CNS on 27th April 2020. Once it has been ratified by Board of Management, it will be issued to all teaching staff and copies will be made available for inspection by parents/inspectors and other interested parties on request from school office.

Chairperson of the Board of Management



Next review will be in June 2021.