ENGLISH CURRICULUM

A. Introductory Statement:

This policy was reviewed in 2015 in conjunction with School Self-Evaluation in Literacy and our DEIS plan. The plan was formulated by the school staff after due consultation with relevant document and attendance at in-service and other relevant courses.

B. Rationale:

- To benefit teaching and learning in our school.
- To conform to principles outlined in the primary curriculum
- To review the existing plan for English in light of changed emphasis and new methodologies outlined in the primary curriculum.

C. Vision:

Our school cherishes all children equally and to that end the school's plan on English will endeavour to help each child to reach his potential. We are committed to the holistic development of all pupils in order to assist them in playing a fulfilling role in their own community. It is our vision that all of the aspects of literacy will be addressed in the school English Policy and in teacher planning and evaluation

D. Aims & Objectives (Page 10 of Primary Curriculum).

We endorse the aims and objectives of the primary curriculum for English:
- To promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language – spoken, read, written.
- To create, foster and maintain the children's interest in expression and communication.
- To develop the child's ability to engage appropriately in listener – speaker relationships.
- To develop confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- To develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through oral language, writing and reading.
- To enable the child to read and write independently.
- To enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experiences.

We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the English curriculum, to set out our approach to language learning. This plan will form the basis for teachers' long and short term planning. It will also inform new and temporary teachers of the approaches and methodologies used in our school.

OVERVIEW.

Structure of the English Curriculum
Organisation of Content

The Strands are

Oral Language	Reading	Writing

The former strands now fulfil the role of strand units and are briefly described below:

Receptiveness to language is concerned with the child's willingness and ability to listen, to be aware of the nuances of language and to understand what he/she hears and reads.

Confidence and competence in using language is concerned with the child's ability to use and experience language with confidence and success as a speaker, as a writer and as a reader.

Developing cognitive abilities through language is concerned with the child's use of language to learn. It encapsulates the curriculum principal that the child not only learns language but also learns through usage and experiencing language.

Emotional and imaginative development through language is concerned with the child's emotional and imaginative response to the world he/she encounters through talk, writing, play and drama. Reading and listening also help the child to come to a better understanding of him/herself and his/her relationship with others.

ORAL LANGUAGE.

Oral language shall be addressed under the following three headings:

(a) Oral language across the Curriculum
(b) Through the English Programme
(c) Discrete oral language time.
(d) In 2015 Review – Staff decision to have an Oral Language focus each year.

   Children will be enabled to develop their oral language in various contexts
   as follows:

- Talk, discussion and questioning
- Play and games
- Story
- Improvisational drama
- Poetry and rhyme
- Debating

c.f. Teacher's Guidelines pp. 38 - 49

Children will be helped to develop their oral language and conversation skills by giving them opportunities to practise the following activities:

- Use of Wonderland Oral Language programme Jun Infs – 2nd and Magic Emerald 3rd – 6th.
- Use of First Steps Programme
- Listening attentively
- Taking turns to speak
- Offering the information most essential to the listener
- Making appropriate responses
- Arguing a point of view and trying to persuade others to support it
- Expressing individual responses to poems, stories, play, and television programmes
- In September 2014 the Aistear Programme was introduced at Junior Infant Level. This programme promotes language development through structured play.

READING.
Broad Objective.

The aim of this plan is to provide a structured and sequential programme for teachers to enable children to:
- Develop print awareness, phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and sight vocabulary.
- Develop their comprehension and analytical strategies at all three levels ranging from the lower order literal type to the higher order evaluative type.
- Expand their understanding and usage of grammar, syntax and punctuation.
- Expose them to and develop their appreciation of the richness and diversity of reading material.
- Experience the pleasure and fulfilment to be gained from reading.

Reading culture will be fostered among the children in class by giving them opportunities to:

- Share their own personally-created story books with peers
- Use, and help to administer, a class/school library
- Help to update charts, e.g. job charts, weather charts
- Share responses to books, e.g. writing reviews, presenting dramatic adaptations
- Participate in book events, e.g. visits by authors, book fairs, write-a-book projects
- Use of Jolly Phonics scheme in Infant Classes
- Retain a formal Reading Scheme in each class as well as a variety of books
- Share reading activities with their parents
- Collaborate on reading activities e.g. paired reading
- Listen to the teacher or other children reading e.g., serial reading of class novel
- Model the reading process
- Read widely as an independent reader from a range of reading material etc.
- Establishment of formal library system – Sept 2015

Creation of a Print Rich Environment
The following list is used to create a varied print rich environment throughout the school:
- Big Books
- Word Walls
- Job Charts
- Song Charts
- Poetry Charts
- Timetables
- Children's writing on Display
- Rules Charts
- Grammar Charts
- Calendars

Development of a Basic Sight Vocabulary
This is acquired from a number of sources for example
- Big Books
- Labelling
- Flash Cards
- Dolch list
- First words in writing
- High Frequency words
- Tricky words from the Jolly Phonics Programme
- School Reading Schemes

Development of Reading Fluency
Strategies to develop reading Fluency include;
- Reading aloud in class
- School Reading Schemes
- Paired reading

- Development of word identification strategies
- Class novels
- Supplementary/Parallel Readers

Development of Comprehension skills

As stated in the Teacher Guidelines (TG) of the English Curriculum the ultimate objective of reading is comprehension or the reconstruction of meaning. Strategies to develop comprehension skills ranging from the lower order literal type to the higher order evaluative type will be explicitly taught throughout the school and include:
Synthesising- Determining Importance, summarising, paraphrasing and self-questioning. **Inferential** - Connecting, comparing, inferring and predicting.
Literal - Creating Images, skimming, scanning and self-questioning.

Phonics.

- Use of a Phonological Awareness Training Programme from Infants to 3rd class to include
  a. Phonemic awareness
  b. Syllabication
  c. Onset and Rime
- Use of Jolly Phonics Scheme in the Infant Classes – Revised and updated 2015.
- The PAT programme is used from 1st – 3rd classes.

Spelling

It is the policy of Ss. Peter & Paul's to implement a consistent structured spelling programme throughout the school. The objective of this programme is to assist the children in the writing process and to improve spelling standards in the school on an ongoing basis. In Ss. Peter & Paul's it is our policy to emphasise the use of contextual spelling.

- The Jolly Phonics spelling lists are used in 1st class
- Spellbound is in use from 2nd – 6th class.

Strategies to Promote Spelling Development

The following strategies are used in the school to promote the development of spelling:

- Have a go
- Look, say, cover, write
- Dictation
- Correction of spellings in the context in which they are written
- Editing and rewriting
- Spelling Games
- P.A.T. Programme
- Nessy IT Programme
- Dolch Lists
- Toe-by-Toe
- Spellbound

WRITING.

Broad Objectives
The aim of this plan is to provide a structured and sequential programme for teachers to enable children to:
1. Write clearly, neatly correctly and fluently.
2. Use a wide range of vocabulary.
3. Use grammar and punctuation appropriately.
4. Write in a wide variety of genres encompassing differing styles, purposes, audiences and level of formality.
5. Experience opportunities to develop presentation, editing and publishing skills.
6. Engage in collaborative writing experiences through a writing Buddy system between senior and junior classes e.g. Personalised Books.
7. Develop a high standard of penmanship.
8. To develop a consistent writing programme throughout the school.

Process of writing
Children will learn to write through the process of writing. The process is as important as the product. Children will have opportunities for writing in a variety of genres and for different audiences. Page 76, Teacher Guidelines.
Writing Genres
- Narrative
- Persuasive
- Procedural
- Report
- Recount
- Explanatory

Steps to Teaching the Writing Genres used in Ss. Peter & Paul's
1. Familiarisation with the genre.
2. Use an example to devise a framework.
3. Teacher (only) modelling.
4. Teacher and children share writing process.
5. Children plan their writing in pairs/groups/using the framework.
6. Child writes independently.
7. Presentation to audience.

Handwriting/Penmanship
It is the policy of Ss. Peter & Paul's C.B.S to implement a consistent and structured programme of penmanship throughout the school. The main objectives of this programme are:
- To promote clarity of presentation.
- To consistently produce neat and legible handwriting.
- To establish correct formation of letters.
- To establish a high standard of penmanship throughout the school.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES.

The following organisational settings in the teaching of English will be used:

Organisational setting

- Whole class teaching
- Pair work
- Group work
- Individual work.
- In class support – leave up to individual teachers - guided/shared reading
- Access to School Library

Children in class(es) will present their work in English as follows:

Type of presentation.

- Play scenarios (roll play)
- Oral presentation, e.g., talk, drama, poetry, oral reading
- Hand-written, e.g., copy, poster, scrap book
- ICT-based presentation, e.g., using PowerPoint, Word etc.

ICT will be used to support the English curriculum in the following way(s):

Use of ICT in the English Curriculum

- Reading
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Phonics
- Poetry
- Projects
- Letter writing
- Essays

Type of ICT used

- Internet
- C.D.'s
- WORD (Microsoft)

Assessment.

Children's progress in English will be assessed in some or all of the following ways:

Assessment tools

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Work samples, portfolios and projects
- Formal standardised tests
- Diagnostic test
- Standardised tests

General.

Parents/guardians will be involved in supporting their children in English by:

- Parent/Teacher meetings
- Signed homework
- Forward Together programme
- Supplying Library Books
- Reading Books

Children with learning difficulties (c.f. Learning Support Policy Resource Policy).

Children with exceptional ability.
The school will support children of exceptional ability by:

- Differentiated programme within the classroom and/or homework
- Accelerated reading programmes
- Use of I.C.T.
- Independent Research projects
- Working with parents
- Use of local library.
- Use of new school Library

Equality of participation and access:

- Non-sexist reading materials, will as far as feasible be provided to children.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that children whose first language is not English will be facilitated to progress in the mastery of the English language.
- Children with disabilities will be given priority where resources permit (c.f. Learning Support/Resource Policies).
- Children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds will be identified with a view to accommodating them in 'After School Homework Classes'

Homework.

- Homework in English will be given at the teacher's discretion.
- Homework to seek to reflect the active learning approach as described in the Curriculum.
- Teachers will seek to maintain a balance in homework assignments between oral, reading and writing assignments.
- Teachers will as, far as is feasible, allocate homework appropriate to children with specific learning requirements.
- Co-ordination between class teacher and Special Education teachers, in assigning homework, will be a consideration.

Library

- The Library Committee has responsibility for the maintenance and up dating of the school library services.
- Each class has its own class library.
- There is also a general school library – Reviewed and updated in Sept 2015.
- 4th class pupils are trained as Liberians.
- Books in the school library will as far is possible, meet the wide ranging needs and abilities of children.
- Books cover a wide interest level – fiction, factual, reference, poetry, joke books, puzzle books, books suitable for different reading ages, books written by children.
- Children are encouraged to write their own books/poems and display them
- Children are encouraged to bring their own reading materials to school
- A Book Fair is held annually in the school.
- Provision is made to provide suitable reading materials to the special education teachers.
- Appropriate records will be kept of what children have read.
- Class/individual pupils visit the public library.
- Classes attend literary presentations in the library.
- On occasions local library personnel visit the school and address classes.
- A strong reading culture is encouraged in the school by:
  - providing wide range of reading materials to children
  - involving parents in reading schemes (c.f. Junior/Senior classes)
  - encouraging children to join local library
  - Authors invited to visit the school
  - children encouraged to write their own books
  - library corners in class rooms
  - use of ICT etc.

Resources.

Resources such as the following are used to promote English:
- Schemes, programme, posters/charts, flash cards, resource books, ICT.
- Resources are kept in classrooms, library, teachers room.
- Clothes for drama/role-play.

- Technology such as tape recorders, video cameras, digital cameras are used as resources to further the curriculum:

I.C.T.

- Software is available in the school – Nessy, Writing is Fun, Scratch
- The software is stored in the computer room and individual classes.
- Demonstrations of new software are arranged from time to time.
- ICT can be used to help children with special needs.
- Computers are used to help children to present their work and help develop writing in different genres e.g. project-work, displays, make a book, newsletter, poetry writing etc.
- The school's policy on Internet usage will be followed at all times.

Individual teachers' planning and reporting.

- The whole school plan and curriculum documents for English will be available for consultation by staff members in the staff room.
- This plan and documents will guide teachers in their short/medium/long-term planning
- Summer courses will be advertised in the staff room.
- Teachers will have access to resource materials, reference books, websites.
- A member of staff may be appointed to monitor developments.
- Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss literacy issues, language development, specific language disorders.
- The Teachers Centre in Waterford will be used a resource in helping to up-date teachers' skills.

Parental Involvement

- Every year the Junior Infant teachers arrange a meeting with parents to outline the approaches used to develop oral language and literacy skills.
- This meeting aims to equip parents with skills/competence to develop their children basic literacy skills.
- Children from Infants to 3rd class are provided with books to take home to read with their parent. (School book Club).
- Award Certificates are awarded to the child at the completion of this reading programme.
- Clubs: 'Read Aloud Club' – 'Infants book Club'.
- Parents are encouraged to provide a rich reading environment for their children at home.
- All pupils have access to the school library.
- Monies from the DEIS grant will be used to purchase books.
- Certificates are awarded at the various stages of the reading programme.
- Parents are encouraged to work with their children in developing oral language by participation in:
  - homework assignments
  - attending courses
  - materials and books etc.

- Information is shared with parents through:
  - Induction meetings for Junior Infants
  - A.G.M. of Parents' Council
  - Parent/teacher meetings
  - Newsletter
  - Website

- The school will seek to provide courses for parents in the use of ICT in order to help them with their children's progress.

Community Links:

- Local storytellers, song writers, poets etc are invited to speak to the children.
- Children will be encouraged to use the local library.
- E-mail may be used to contact other school and/or community groups.
- Children are encouraged to write articles for the newsletter.
- Children will be encouraged to interview local people as a basis for writing their own books, e.g. collecting ghost stories, local sporting hero, history of local G.A.A. Club etc..
- Children's work can be displayed in the classroom, hall, local library/museum.
- The school will endeavour to liase with groups such as the homework/after school club to discuss ways of supporting language development!

Success Criteria.

Implementation.

- Teachers' preparations based on this plan.
- Procedures outlined in this plan will be followed as far as is feasible.

Indicators of success.

- Reference will be made to the aims
- Teacher/parent/pupil/community feed back
- Inspector's suggestions/report
- Second level feed back
- Staff discussions (Formal/Informal).
- Assessment (Formal/Informal) will be used as indicators of enhanced pupil learning.

Implementation.

- Each teacher will be responsible for the implementation of the plan in her/his class.
- The principal/delegated teacher will monitor the implementation of the plan.
- Report on findings will be given to staff.

Review.

Those involved in the review as are as follows.
- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents

This English plan will be reviewed annually as part of our School Self-Evaluation process.

Ratification.

This policy is ratified by the BOM on June '15

Siobhan Ambrose
Signed: _____   Date: June '15
    Chairperson.

Yvonne Moran
Signed: _____ Date: June '15
    Principal.