



English Policy

At NETNS we believe that literacy and communication are key life skills and that through the English curriculum we should help children develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them to communicate effectively and creatively with the world at large, through spoken and written language. We also intend to help children to enjoy and appreciate literature and its rich variety.

Aims and objectives

As a school we aim:

- To provide a rich and stimulating language environment, where speaking and listening, reading and writing are integrated
- To provide an environment where pupils are encouraged to construct and convey meaning both in speech and writing, of factual, imaginary and personal experiences
- To provide opportunities for pupils to become confident, competent and expressive users of language with a developing knowledge of how it works
- To provide opportunities for pupils to be reflective users of language, able to analyse and evaluate its main features
- To foster an enthusiasm for and a love of reading for life
- To encourage pupils to have fluent and legible handwriting
- To provide opportunities for pupils to communicate ideas through the use of ICT
- To provide opportunities for role play and drama

We hope that pupils will:

- Be able to participate in a conversation, listen to others, respond appropriately and take turns to speak
- Develop the confidence and ability to speak appropriately and perform in front of varying sizes of audience
- Be able to sustain concentration in a range of listening situations
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of fiction and non-fiction genres and structure text in a style suited to its purpose

- Use grammar and punctuation accurately
- Have an interest in words and their meanings
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing
- Understand the phonic system and spelling conventions and use them to read and spell accurately
- Be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes
- Have a suitable technical vocabulary through which to understand and discuss their reading and writing
- Express opinions, articulate feelings and formulate responses to a range of texts
- Be interested in a range of texts, read for enjoyment and evaluate and justify their preferences
- Be able to work confidently and increasingly independently in all areas

Curriculum planning

We recognise that oral language, reading and writing are not discrete language activities in the language learning process and we will endeavour to ensure that, in practice, there will be opportunities for integration.

Through attendance at in-service/pre-service training and the possession of the curriculum documents the teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units and content levels for their classes. In multi class situations teachers are aware that they must refer to a number of strands and strand units rather than one.

Language Programmes

To assist the staff to teach the English curriculum in school a number of language resources are used. The following is a list of specific English programmes which are drawn on:

- Infants:

Jolly phonics, Songbirds reading scheme, Sounds in Action –Infants, Burger’s Book of Sounds, Exercise Your English B

- 1st and 2nd classes:

Jolly Grammar, Oxford Reading Tree scheme, Sounds in Action A and B, Folens Spellbound A and B, Exercise Your English 1 and 2

- 3rd and 4th classes:

Oxford Reading Tree scheme, Sounds in Action C, Folens Spellbound C and D, Exercise Your English 3 and 4, My Read at Home Book 3 and 4

- 5th and 6th classes:

Folens Spellbound E and F, Exercise Your English 5 and 6, My Read at Home Book 5 and 6

Oral Language

Our children come to school with a rich variety of language experiences; a large number of children speak, or have experience of additional languages. Some children have special needs resulting in specific requirements for oral language development. Our school recognises the central role which language plays in the social, thinking and learning processes of all of our children.

Oral language across the curriculum

Our school integrates English across many of the curriculum areas. For example:

Maths:	Use of problem solving and reporting back. Development and use of mathematical vocabulary. Children working in pairs and groups.
SESE:	<i>History</i> : Drama, debate, analysis, prediction <i>Geography</i> : Comparing, contrasting, discussing, giving reports and presentations <i>Science</i> : Use of terminology, process of finding out and reporting on findings PE: Use of terminology in games such as basketball, football, athletics etc.
Visual Arts:	Opportunities to describe the process and responding verbally to pieces of art
Drama:	Opportunities to explore and develop language Use
Music:	Terminology, words of songs, instrument Names
SPHE:	Exploring relevant themes through the medium of talk and discussion
Learn Together:	Use of discussion and dramatisation of situations.

Oral language in the English language Curriculum

The oral language skills which we hope to develop through the children's reading and writing instruction are:

Reading:

- Rhyming games and riddles
- Re-telling
- Sequencing
- Describing characters, events and details from stories
- Show understanding of text
- Focus on descriptive detail
- Experiment with elaborate vocabulary
- Read, discuss and predict possible story outcomes
- Explore sentence structure
- Discuss ideas, concepts, images encountered in literature

- Take part in personal reading activities
- Express individual responses to literature and explore different interpretations of text

Writing:

- Brainstorming
- Sentence and paragraph extension
- Conferencing with peers and teacher
- Summarising
- Prioritising ideas
- Arguing and justifying points of view
- Experiment with sentence structure and word order
- Present relevant logical ideas
- Synonym/antonym ideas
- Give detailed instructions and directions
- Explore parts of speech, properties of nouns and verbs
- Explore compound and complex sentences
- Explore sentence structure
- Take part in personal writing activities
- Express individual responses to poems and literature and explore different interpretations of a text

Discrete oral language

Discrete oral language time takes place daily at each class level. In order to facilitate integration our school is adopting an approach in which the various curriculum areas are integrated as far as possible.

Children will work in pairs, groups, and as a whole class in formal and informal settings. They will present their work to a variety of audiences, class/es, teachers, parents etc.

Reading

The ability to read effectively is an essential requirement if the child is to benefit fully from the educational process, to develop his/her potential and to participate appropriately as a citizen in society. **This is a crucial element in the child's language learning.** We aim to ensure that each child is given the opportunity to develop his/her literacy skills, with a view to becoming an effective reader.

Our approach to the teaching of reading will involve:

- Fostering an approach that is based on children's general language development, by

providing ability-appropriate reading/outcomes materials, activities and resources

- Recognising the central role of phonological and phonemic awareness in acquisition of word identification strategies
- Use of reading schemes
- Development of class libraries and visits to the local library
- Planned book related events e.g. book fair, International Book Week
- The use of alternative reading materials e.g. computer programmes, magazines, comics, newspapers, catalogues etc.
- The involvement of parents in children's reading through shared reading programme, reading homework and reading class novels.

Print rich environment

We provide a print-rich environment by labelling, flashcards, charts, interactive charts, class library, IT literacy resources, notice-boards, wall displays, dictionaries thesauri, newsletters.

Basic sight vocabulary

Basic sight vocabulary is acquired from

- Language experience materials e.g. Vocabulary associated with posters etc.
- Large format books
- School environment print
- Labelling
- Flashcards/word packs
- Library books

At NETNS children also acquire sight vocabulary by learning high frequency words from the Dolch List. A separate list is made up for children from J.I. to third class although the child's ability determines which list they learn.

Sight words A:

A and away big blue can come down find for funny go he here I in is it jump little look make me my not one play red run said see the three to two up we where yellow you

Sight words B:

All am are at ate be black brown but came did do eat four get good have he into like must new no now on our out please pretty ran ride saw say she so soon that there they this too under want was well went what white who will with yes

Sight words C:

After again an any as ask by could every fly from give giving had has her him his how just know let live may of old once open over put round some stop take thank them then think walk were when

Sight words D:

Always around because been before best both buy call cold does don't fast first five found gave goes green its made many off or pull read right sing sit sleep tell their these those upon us use very wash which why wish work would write your

Sight words E:

About better bring carry clean cut done draw drink eight fall far full got grow hold hot hurt if keep kind laugh light long much myself never only own pick seven shall show six small start ten today together try warm

Additional words from the Jolly Phonics Tricky Words can also be used to supplement the above list.

Phonological awareness

Our approach to the teaching of reading and spelling will be grounded firmly in the child's general language experience. Building on a base of general language competence, phonological and phonemic awareness will be fostered and the children will be encouraged to use a range of word identification strategies in learning to extract meaning from the text. This awareness will be developed by experience of oral language activities, including rhymes, riddles, games, saying and hearing nursery rhymes and rhymed stories, reproducing rhymes, clapping, dancing to syllabic rhythms, playing "I spy" games involving onsets and rimes, segmenting sentences into individual words, words into syllables and matching length of a word to its utterance. Children will work on word families and written activities will include word lists, written exercises and dictionaries.

The phonics programme at NETNS will draw principally from the Jolly Phonics scheme and will be supplemented where necessary with materials from the Songbirds Reading scheme and

homework materials from the NETNS in-house phonics pack.

Phonics learned in NETNS:

Jolly Phonics and the Sounds in Action scheme were introduced to the school during the 2008-9 school year. The following phonics lists demonstrate the content covered in each year group in accordance with these schemes:

Junior infants:

s, a, t, i, p, n, c, k, e, h, r, m, d, g, o, u, l, f, b, j, z, w, b, ch, sh, th, wh

Senior infants:

Revision of the above and cvc words,

word families: op, og, ot, od, ap, an, at, ad, ed, en, et, eg, un, um, ug, ut,

word endings: and, ck, ll, ff, ss, zz

Jolly Phonics: ai, oa, ie, ee, or, ng, oo, qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar

First and second class:

Revision of the above and magic e words

initial blends: gr, cr, dr, pl, st,

final blends: t, d, p, k, mp, st, nk

word endings: ing, ong, ung, ang, all, y, tch, le

Digraphs: ai, ay, oa, ow, ee, ea, oo, ew

Third class

Revision of the above and soft c and g

word endings: old, ild, ind, er, sion, tion

Digraphs: ou, aw, au, oy, oi, ph

Words with: or, ar, ir, ur

Silent: d, l, w, u, k, gh, h, g, b, t

3 letter blends: str, scr, shr, thr, squ, spl, spr

Fourth to Sixth Class:

In these year groups, phonetic awareness is developed in conjunction with the Folens Spellbound scheme and the Exercise Your English scheme.

Examples of teaching points for phonics for each year group

Infants:

- consonants in initial sounds
- short vowels in initial and medial position
- consonants in final position
- recognising and naming letters of alphabet
- developing awareness of some letter-sound relationships
- isolating beginning sound of a word or syllable
- isolating beginning and final sounds in written words

- isolating part of word or syllable which allows it to rhyme with another word or syllable
- using knowledge of word order, illustration, context and initial letters to identify unknown words.

First and second class

Whilst reading children will develop strategies and:

- Engage in activities designed to increase awareness of sounds e.g. Focus on sounds associated with letters and letter clusters
- Learn about sounds associated with the part of a word or syllable that allows it to rhyme with another word or syllable
- Learn about sounds associated with beginning of a word or syllable
- Learn to connect beginnings of words and syllables with their rhyming parts e.g. onset and rime, single consonants, consonant blends, digraphs, different rimes, vowel digraphs, vowel consonant combinations
- Learn about common word endings, word families and roots of words

Whilst writing children will attempt to spell words in a recognisable way based on awareness of the most common spelling strings and patterns

- Simple words with short vowel rimes (e.g. dog, mill, rock)
- Simple words with regular patterns (e.g. street, came, float)
- Two syllable words with regular patterns (e.g. robber, happen)
- Words with common prefixes and suffixes (e.g. display, wonderful)

Third – sixth classes

Children will continue to develop their phonetic awareness at an increasingly advanced level in conjunction with spellings found in the Folens Spellbound scheme and the Exercise Your English scheme.

Comprehension strategies

Scanning, skimming, search-reading and reflective reading strategies will be employed across the range of classes incorporating an oral element in the infant classes and, in the higher grades, more formally depending on the reading ability of the children concerned.

We will endeavour to enhance comprehension skills through discussion of the text under the guidance and prompting of the teacher, mainly through oral language activity and written response to texts.

Comprehension skills will be fostered in accordance with the class group requirements of the reading, writing (e.g. summarisation) and oral language (e.g. listening to stories and responding to them) objectives of the revised English curriculum.

From the third class upwards we will endeavour to further develop the children's higher order comprehension skills of understanding, analysis, deduction, summarisation, inference, prediction, confirmation, synthesis, evaluation, correlation, analysis, synthesis, deduction, inference, interpretation of figurative language and imagery, reacting to author's use of language, and identification with characters, events and issues.

School and class libraries

In our class libraries we will try to ensure that there is a selection of fiction, non-fiction and poetry which reflects the interests, cultures and languages of our children. Each teacher may choose the method of recording the books chosen by their pupils and will guide the pupils choice of book when necessary.

Book related events

Each year NETNS celebrates International Book Week which culminates with a dressing up day and with book tokens for the most creatively dressed up characters from a book.

A Book Fair is held annually at our school enabling children and their parents to choose competitively priced titles and associated merchandise.

Children make regular trips to utilise the resources in Navan Public library for both enjoyment and research. Book loans are issued by the library for use in the mainstream classrooms.

Author/Storyteller visits

Authors and journalists have visited our school to read and discuss their work. Children also have the opportunities to meet authors regularly at events organised by Navan Library.

Reading Time

Children take part in “reading time” activities daily involving children reading for pleasure, teacher reading stories to the class and listening to story cds.

ICT

Children may use CD rom reading games e.g. Jolly Phonics, Oxford Reading Tree.

Parental Involvement

Our school recognises that parents play an irreplaceable and crucial role in the reading development of their children. We wish to ensure maximum parental involvement by encouraging and acknowledging their contribution. We aim to achieve this by conveying the expectation of parents assisting their children with their reading homework, reading library books and word packs etc.

WRITING

The child's writing experience at school can contribute to his/her cognitive, emotional and imaginative development. Our aim is that each child can be provided with the opportunity to develop skills to enable her/him to write clearly, clarify concepts and express emotions through the writing process.

In our approach to writing, emphasis is placed on the following areas:

Handwriting

We will encourage the children to develop a legible and attractive handwriting style in both print and cursive writing.

Handwriting scheme used in NETNS:

Junior and Senior Infants: Just Write A – Script Writing, Just Handwriting – Senior Infants

First and Second Class: Just Handwriting 1st and 2nd Class

Third – Sixth Class: Just Handwriting 3rd – 6th Class. Children start to use joined up writing and develop their own styles.

The process of writing

At NETNS we endeavour to promote writing as a way of communication e.g. Infants –drawing, scribbling, use of marla, textured letters, painting and handwriting, teacher as scribe, language experience, children writing their names, words, phrases, sentences to accompany pictures.

Older classes are provided with a writing stimulus and opportunities for discussion, brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

The importance of oral language

We appreciate that oral language is central to the writing process before, during and after the writing process and we will include an oral language element in all writing activities.

Different audiences for writing

We will attempt to provide the children with a range of audiences for their writing:

Peers - copies and writing displays, reading aloud own material in class, other classes and teachers, notice-boards, displays, children in more senior classes making books for younger children

Whole school - composition of reports, diaries, readings for school assemblies

Parents - viewing child's own writing in the classroom, and on displays around our school

Wider community - children are encouraged to participate in writing competitions, write to the local and national press and participate in the EBS handwriting competition.

Genres

We will ensure that children experience writing in a variety of genres including stories, descriptions, explanations, argument, letters, notes, diaries, recipes, complete books etc. We will encourage the children to select and explore their own experiences through using a variety of genres and enable them to become familiar with the structures of these texts and the typical vocabulary located within them.

Spelling

At NETNS we use a multi-dimensional approach to the teaching of spelling. This approach includes

- Accepting approximate spelling
- Linking spelling with development of phonological and phonemic awareness
- Linking it with onset and rime
- Compiling personal dictionaries e.g. lists of words
- Building up a classroom bank of commonly used words
- Having rich experience of environmental print
- Using dictionaries and thesauri
- Using strategies such as look, say, cover, write and check
- Becoming familiar with common spelling rules
- Games such as 'hang man', crosswords and word searches

Resources for spelling:

Folens Spellbound scheme is used from Senior Infants - 6th class

Assessment

Spelling is assessed weekly from 1st – 6th class. Tests are given each Friday using the Folens Spellbound scheme. Parents are encouraged to help their children learn their spellings for homework.

Standardised assessment in spelling is carried out each spring through the Drumcondra Spelling Test.

Punctuation

The main features of punctuation taught at each level are:

Infants: becoming aware of lower case and capital letters and full stop

1st and 2nd: using full stops and capital letters with confidence while developing an awareness of question marks, speech marks, commas, and exclamation marks

3rd and 4th: using a wider range of punctuation marks as part of the revision and editing process including brackets, apostrophe, ellipses, writing questions and complex sentences,

5th and 6th: observe conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling in his/her writing exploring syntax and sentence structure in reading and writing and exploring compound and complex sentences in expressing thought.

Resources to assist the punctuation lessons: Jolly Phonics and Exercise Your English

Grammar

By the end of the senior classes, we hope to ensure that the children are able to recognise and name the principal parts of speech and their more common properties, and to be aware of

their functions. Where possible, the ability to use the parts of speech accurately and to observe the conventions of grammar, will be developed **in the context of children's general language development** e.g. in process of writing, editing and re-drafting and in oral work.

The main features of grammar taught at each level is as follows:

Infants: talk about past and present experiences and plan, predict and speculate about future and imaginary experiences. Choose appropriate words to name and describe things and events. Experiment with descriptive words to add elaborative detail. Combine simple sentences through the use of connecting words (all oral language).

Ask questions about a story to satisfy curiosity.

Write naming words and add descriptive words.

Rewrite sentences to make the message clearer.

1st and 2nd: talk about and reflect on past and present experiences, and plan, predict, anticipate and speculate about future and imaginary experiences.

Experiment with more elaborate vocabulary and sentence structure in order to extend and explore meaning e.g. experimenting with descriptive words, combining simple sentences, elaborating simple sentences.

Experiment with word order and examine its implications for meaning and clarity.

Understand that the conventions of punctuation help to make meaning clearer in writing.

Ask questions.

Perform alphabetical order tasks.

3rd and 4th: discuss the meanings and origins of words, phrases and expressions with the teacher

play synonym and antonym games

become aware of the functions of words without necessarily using technical grammatical terms (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition)

Learn to use questions as a mechanism for expanding and developing a story (who? why? etc)

Learn to write with increasing grammatical accuracy through the process of revision and editing.

5th and 6th: Understand the functions and know the names of the parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, conjunction, preposition, article).

Learn about the basic properties of nouns and verbs (common, proper, gender, tense, voice, person, number, case).

Become familiar with compound and complex sentences and know and understand the terms phrase and clause.

Explore the possibilities of language and sentence structure in expressing increasingly complex thoughts.

ICT

In the lower school (ji – 2nd) children will be given the opportunities to use information technology to increase motivation to read and to enhance reading development.

In the upper school (3rd – 6th) our children will develop the ability to word process, and find information relevant to his/her purpose through the use of the internet, CD roms etc. Children may also use commercial software

Group work

Children will be given opportunities to work in groups e.g. Work on co-operative writing, class anthologies, project work, peer editing etc.

Equality of Participation and Access

At NETNS we strive to ensure that equal opportunities are given to girls, boys and minority ethnic children. Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls with regard to reading materials available to them ensuring that characters/subjects reflect both a gender balance and reflect the ethnic groups which make up our school community.

Children with E.A.L. and special educational needs receive specific support in order that they may engage more fully in activities through English across the curriculum.

Children with differing needs

At NETNS provision is made for children with special needs by

- Providing them with ability appropriate tasks which can be differentiated either by outcome or expectation
- Use may be made of supplementary or alternative materials
- The implementation of individual profile and learning programmes in conjunction with Learning Support, Resource Teacher and the Language support teacher and SNA
- Adapting teaching methods in school
- Additional help either in-class or out of class from learning support, resource/language support teacher
- Communication with parents and appropriate agencies
- Regular meetings take place between all parties to monitor progress of each child with differing needs

Time

As far as possible, the time allocated to English is in keeping with Curriculum Guidelines. See individual timetables.

Assessment

Assessments will be made to inform planning and teaching. These will take the form of:
Screening tests: Mist

Diagnostic tests: Belfield

Standardised tests: Drumcondra

Illt English language assessment test

Teacher observation assessing general ability, teacher designed tasks and tests (to check grasp of covered materials)

Evaluation of individual programmes, examples of work in exercise books and folders

Records

Records of standardised assessment tests are located in the resource room.

Classroom teachers keep their own records of **children's progress in English** and may take many forms depending on the stages of the students.

Reporting

Teachers report to parents regarding their children's work if:

There is a cause for concern about their child's performance or if the child is working particularly well.

There is a parent/teacher meeting once per year in the autumn term in which children's performance is conveyed to parents along with examples of work that the child has accomplished to date.

Parents also receive two short written reports throughout the school year, at the end of the autumn and spring terms. This is followed by a detailed report at the end of the summer term following the Drumcondra standardised tests.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

At NETNS we will be making provisions for the requirements set out in circular 0056/2011 relating to implementing The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

The strategy includes a broad range of actions. These include measures to: improve the curriculum, to build the capacity of school leaders, to enhance teaching skills through the provision of continuing professional development, to strengthen and extend the duration of initial teacher education, and to promote a greater awareness among parents and the wider community of the importance of literacy and numeracy.

Appendix 1

Overview of Teaching Points for Infant Classes

Class	Books used	Phonics	Punctuation	Dolch Words
Junior Infants	Songbirds, Sounds in Action II, Burger's Book of Sounds , Just Write A	s, a, t, i, p, n, c, k, e, h, r, m, d, g, o, u, l, f, b, j, z, w, b, ch, sh, th, wh	lower case and capital letters and full stops	A and away big blue can come down find for funny go he here I in is it jump little look make me my not one play red run said see the three to two up we where yellow you
Senior Infants	Songbirds, ORT, Sounds in Action SI, Just Handwriting, Spellbound, Exercise Your English B	Revision of the Junior Infant sounds and cvc words, word families: op, og, ot, od, ap, an, at, ad, ed, en, et, eg, un, um, ug, ut, word endings: and, ck, ll, ff, ss, zz Jolly Phonics: ai, oa, ie, ee, or, ng, oo, qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar	lower case and capital letters and full stops	All am are at ate be black brown but came did do eat four get good have he into like must new no now on our out please pretty ran ride saw say she so soon that there they this too under want was well went what white who will with yes

Overview of Teaching Points for 1st and 2nd Classes

Class	Books used	Punctuation	Phonics	Dolch Words
1 st Class	ORT, Sounds in Action A, Folens Spellbound A, Just Handwriting 1, Exercise Your English 1	full stops and capital letters, question marks, speech marks, commas, and exclamation marks	Revision of the previous sounds and magic e words initial blends: gr, cr, dr, pl, st, final blends: t, d, p, k, mp, st, nk word endings: ing, ong, ung, ang, all, y, tch, le Digraphs: ai, ay, oa, ow, ee, ea, oo, ew	After again an any as ask by could every fly from give giving had has her him his how just know let live may of old once open over put round some stop take thank them then think walk were when
2 nd Class	ORT, Sounds in Action B, Folens Spellbound B, Just Handwriting 2, Exercise Your English 2			Always around because been before best both buy call cold does don't fast first five found gave goes green its made many off or pull read right sing sit sleep tell their these those upon us use very wash which why wish work would write your

Overview of Teaching Points for 3rd and 4th Classes

Class	Books used	Punctuation/grammar	Phonics	Dolch Words
3 rd Class	ORT, Sounds in Action C, Folens Spellbound C, Just Handwriting 3, Exercise Your English 3, My Read at Home Book 3	Revision of previous work and editing work, using brackets, apostrophe ellipses, writing questions and complex sentences	Revision of the previous work and soft c and g word endings: old, ild, ind, er, sion, tion Digraphs: ou, aw, au, oy, oi, ph Words with: or, ar, ir, ur Silent: d, l, w, u, k, gh, h, g, b, t 3 letter blends: str, scr, shr, thr, squ, spl, spr	About better bring carry clean cut done draw drink eight fall far full got grow hold hot hurt if keep kind laugh light long much myself never only own pick seven shall show six small start ten today together try warm
4 th Class	ORT, Folens Spellbound D, Just Handwriting 4, Exercise Your English 4, My Read at Home Book 4		In these year groups, phonetic awareness is developed in conjunction with the Folens Spellbound scheme.	

Overview of Teaching Points for 5th and 6th Classes

Class	Books used	Punctuation/grammar	Phonics	Dolch Words
5 th Class	ORT, Assorted class novels, Folens Spellbound E, Just Handwriting 5, Exercise Your English 5, My Read at Home Book 5	observe conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling in writing, exploring syntax and sentence structure in reading and writing, compound and complex sentences	In these year groups, phonetic awareness is developed in conjunction with the Folens Spellbound scheme.	
6 th Class	ORT, Assorted class novels, Folens Spellbound F, Just Handwriting 6, Exercise Your English 6, My Read at Home Book 6			