

# ENGLISH CURRICULUM

## **SUMMARY OF MAIN CHANGES OF EMPHASIS IN ENGLISH**

**The English curriculum links oral language, reading and writing activities in order to help the children achieve more general language learning goals.**

### **Oral Language:**

- ✓ Oral language is seen as the language activity that binds all the other elements of the curriculum together.
- ✓ Talking; answering questions; responding verbally to a variety of experiences;
- ✓ Taking part regularly in discussion; discrete language time timetabled each day in every class (5-10 mins. daily)
- ✓ Develop active listening skills and appreciate the significance of tone of voice, facial expression and gesture
- ✓ Become fluent and explicit in communicating ideas and experiences
- ✓ Learn to justify and defend opinions and present a coherent argument orally and in writing
- ✓ Explore and express reactions to poetry, fiction and the arts

### **Approach to Reading:**

- ✓ The approach to reading will be **significantly different** from 1971
- ✓ Reading experiences no longer confined to a single class reader
- ✓ They will be encouraged and guided to read a wide range of different types of books eg. fictional and informational text
- ✓ Infants will experience a rich variety of emergent reading activities to prepare for formal reading\*
- ✓ Strong oral language base to precede introduction to the written word\*
- ✓ Build up their vocabulary in a number of ways of which the use of flash-card, single-word, look-and-say approach is the last and now least recommended method among several\*
- ✓ Infants to experience a print-rich environment\*
- ✓ Children should hear stories read to them regularly\*
- ✓ Involvement with reading large-format books\*
- ✓ Saying and chanting rhymes\*
- ✓ Games involving words which rhyme\*
- ✓ Awareness of different sounds in words

- ✓ Emphasis on developing the children's ability to recognise the relationship between letters and sounds\*
- ✓ As they grow older they should experience an ever-wider variety of reading matter
- ✓ They are encouraged to handle books, to browse through them and to respond to what they read in many different ways
- ✓ Develop a range of reading skills and abilities that would include phonemic awareness, word identification strategies and a growing sight vocabulary
- ✓ Develop an appropriate range of comprehension strategies
- ✓ Engage the children in activities that are directed towards extending vocabulary, developing a command of sentence structure, and mastering the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- ✓ Opportunities to regularly choose his/her own reading materials and engage in and enjoy sustained silent reading
- ✓ Reading is to be seen as an activity that is both useful and enjoyable

\*These vital emergent reading activities lay the foundation for formal reading, which will not now be introduced until sometime in the Senior Infant class.

### **Writing:**

- ✓ Starting with scribbles and pictures, the child will, with support, progress to words and phrases and then to sentences
- ✓ In conjunction with learning to read, the children are to be encouraged, from the beginning, to write for different purposes and for different audiences.
- ✓ Greater emphasis on quality rather than quantity!
- ✓ Through discussion on their writing, they will engage in a process of drafting, editing, re-drafting their work and progress to becoming more independent writers. Scope for use of ICT in this process
- ✓ Compose, relate and write his/her own stories and poems
- ✓ Become net contributors to the WWW *ie.* publishing samples of the children's work on the school web-site
- ✓ Develop a sense of appropriate presentation of written work
- ✓ Develop a personal style of writing and learn to distinguish and to use appropriate levels of formality
- ✓ Process of drafting, editing re-writing central to whole writing approach