**St. Ita's and St. Joseph's
Primary and Post-Primary School**

English Plan

Introductory Statement and Rationale

St. Ita's and St. Joseph's is a special school which, caters for pupils with Mild General Learning Disability. We endeavour to cater for the holistic needs of each pupil through Individual Education Planning. Life skills are a central element to the curriculum in our school. It is in this context that the teaching and learning of English takes place in our school. We have written this school plan to ensure an approach which supports transition from class to class throughout the school. Our school advocates a whole school approach to the planning process and all relevant parties were part of the development, of our school plan for English. As a staff we are cognisant that our pupils have alternative needs and we have to adapt the alternative curricula and syllabi according to the needs of the pupils. With this in mind, while we plan to cover the syllabi and curricula as outlined by the Department and Education and Skills we may have to vary the content and methodologies according to the needs of our pupils.

Characteristic Spirit of St. Ita's and St. Joseph's

Our school has a Catholic Ethos. The characteristic spirit of the school is encapsulated in our motto "Through Perseverance we Succeed". We as a staff are cognisant of supporting pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. As our school is a special school, we understand that both pupils and staff need to persevere so that each pupil succeeds to the best of their ability.

School Vision

St. Ita's and St. Joseph's endeavours to nourish the educational, social, emotional, spiritual and physical development of each student to his/her potential with the future expectation of active participation in his/her local community. Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media. (*The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-*

2020). Our vision for this subject encompasses all of these components of literacy. By engaging with this subject, we hope that all pupils will become active citizens in the community and achieve a level of literacy in order to participate in their role in society. This school ideally hopes to achieve the following by introducing this plan, to promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language: spoken, read and written. To create, foster and maintain the child's interest in expression and communication and develop the child's ability to engage appropriately in listener-speaker relationships. To develop confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing and to develop their potential according to their strengths and needs. We also seek to develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through oral language, writing and reading and to develop their potential according to their strengths and needs. As a staff we wish to enable the child to read and write independently and to develop their potential according to their strengths and needs. To enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experiences. To develop programmes in relation to the special needs of the pupils and to enable them to communicate in different ways. As a staff we feel it is important to develop student's language, literature and writing skills. In this way we seek to deepen the range and quality of educational experiences in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies. We want our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards English as an interesting and valuable subject. To encourage students to participate in class and to develop and apply the knowledge and skills they have learned to other areas of the curriculum.

English Mission Statement

As teachers of English we aspire to create and foster a lifelong love of all aspects of literature. We aim to develop in students a mature and critical literacy, which will equip them for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life. We recognise that students need to develop a cultural, social and personal literacy, and the range of textbooks, resources, activities and assessments reflect this reality. Our core aim is to create a positive

experience for students of both language and literature, which will remain with them long after their time in the classroom has ended.

Overall Aims of the English Programmes in Our School

English aims to develop students' knowledge of language and literature, to consolidate and deepen their literacy skills and make them more self-aware as learners.

More specifically we encourage all students to:

- ✓ communicate either verbally or non-verbally in a way that is conducive with their ability
- ✓ to be creative through language and to gain enjoyment and continuing personal growth from English in all its forms
- ✓ to use the English language and respond to it with purpose and effect through the interconnected literacy skills of oral language, reading and writing
- ✓ to engage personally with and think critically about an increasingly broad range of spoken, written and multimodal texts
- ✓ to develop an informed appreciation of literature through personal encounters with a variety of literary texts
- ✓ to use their literacy skills to manage information needs, and find, use, synthesise, evaluate and communicate information using a variety of media
- ✓ to gain an understanding of the grammar and conventions of English and how they might be used to promote clear and effective communication
- ✓ to use their knowledge of the English language to support their learning in other subjects and languages where applicable.

Curricula and Syllabi in our School

In St. Ita's and St. Joseph's we cover the *Primary School Curriculum* in the primary classes at the level of ability of the pupils in the alternative classes. We accommodate the alternative needs of the pupils as assessed. In the post-primary section of the school we complete Junior Cycle Level 1 and 2 and the Leaving Certificate Applied. Specific aims/objectives/outcomes are outlined for each curricula/syllabi that we teach in our school. Please see the relevant links where these are outlined in detail:

- https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary
- https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-1-Learning-Programmes
- https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-2-LPs
- https://www.ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/programmes-and-key-skills/leaving-certificate-applied.

Alternative Language Components in the English Language
The Language of Information

Students should encounter a range of texts composed for the dominant purpose of communicating information, e.g. Reports, records, memos, bulletins, abstracts, media accounts, documentary films.

In relation to comprehending students should be able to:

- ✓ Give an account of the gist of a text.
- ✓ Specify appropriate details for relevant purposes.
- ✓ Summarise the information they obtained from a text.
- ✓ Comment on the selection of facts given: evaluate the adequacy of the information and indicate omissions. * Identify the point of view of an author.
- ✓ Outline the values assumed in a text. * Indicate the genre of a text.
- ✓ Comment on the language use, structure and lay-out.

In relation to composing students should be able to:

- ✓ Compose accurately in a range of information genres: e.g. Records: memos, minutes, notices, Letters of all kinds, Reports and research projects and various media scripts and newspaper reports.

The Language of Argument

In relation to comprehension students should be able to:

- ✓ Outline the stages of an argument and identify the conclusion.
- ✓ Identify the reasoning structure evidenced in key words or phrases e.g. therefore, because, nevertheless, etc.
- ✓ Distinguish between statements/propositions and examples.
- ✓ Distinguish between opinion, anecdote and evidence.
- ✓ Evaluate the validity of an argument.
- ✓ Attempt to identify assumptions present.
- ✓ Outline the values being asserted.

Composing Students should be able to:

- ✓ Put forward a theory or hypothesis
- ✓ Justify a decision
- ✓ Attempt an overview.

Language of Persuasion

Students should encounter a range of texts which have a persuasive function, e.g. Political speeches, advertising in all media, satiric texts, some forms of journalism.

Comprehending: Students should be able to:

- ✓ Identify the techniques being used to persuade e.g. tone, image, rhythm, choice of words, etc.
- ✓ Evaluate the impact of a passage in achieving its desired effect. Indicate to which audience it is addressed.
- ✓ Analyse the value-system advocated and/or implied by the text.
- ✓ Outline whose interests it serves.

Composing Students should be able to compose in a range of contexts:

- ✓ Newspaper articles, advertising copy, Public relations/propaganda/political statements.

The Language of Narration

Students should encounter a wide range of texts which have predominately a narrative function. This should involve students in encountering narratives of all kinds, e.g. short stories, novels, drama texts, autobiographies, biographies, travel books and films

Comprehending Students should be able to:

- ✓ Develop an awareness of their own response to texts and analyse and justify that response.
- ✓ Indicate aspects of the narrative which they found significant and attempt to explain fully the meaning thus generated.
- ✓ Outline the structure of the narrative and how it achieves coherence within its genre.
- ✓ Develop an awareness of narrative characteristics of different genres and how the language in these genres is chosen and shaped to achieve certain effects.
- ✓ Approach narrative texts from a variety of critical viewpoints e.g. analyse and compare texts under such categories as gender, power and class and relate texts from different periods and cultures.
- ✓ Compare texts in different genres on the same theme
- ✓ Compose in a range of contexts: Anecdote, Parable, Fable, Short Story, Autobiographical sketch, Scripts, Dialogues

The Aesthetic Use of Language

Students should encounter a wide range of texts in a variety of literary genres for personal recreation and aesthetic pleasure. This would include engaging with fiction, drama, essay, poetry and film in an imaginative, responsive and critical manner.

Comprehending students should be able to:

- ✓ Develop appropriate stances for reading and/or viewing in all literary genres. This means students should approach drama scripts from a theatrical perspective, view films as complex amalgams of images and words and read poetry conscious of its specific mode of using language as an artistic medium.
- ✓ Engage in interpretative performance of texts.
- ✓ Develop an awareness of their own responses, affective, imaginative, and intellectual, to aesthetic texts. Explore these responses relative to the texts read, generate and justify meanings and build coherent interpretations.
- ✓ Re-read texts for encountering rich and diverse levels of suggestion, inference and meaning.
- ✓ Attempt to compare and evaluate texts for the quality of the imaginative experience being presented.

Composing Students should be able to:

- ✓ Compose within the aesthetic forms encountered.
- ✓ Compose "interventions", i.e. alternative scenarios based on texts studied.
- ✓ Keep Response Journals - expressive of their growing acquaintance with a text over a period of time.
- ✓ Compose analytical and coherent essays relative to a text.

Key Elements of Emergent Reading and Writing

The school supports the emergent reader by providing a varied selection of age appropriate reading material through the use of formal reading schemes and informal reading time. The school encourages functional and non-functional reading. The school has a variety of resources which include, Class readers, Workbooks, School/Class library, array of posters and signs. Through the development of a sight vocabulary of common words, the children then progress to the appropriate reading scheme. The phonics programme is integrated with their reading scheme in order to develop their word attack skills.

Key elements of Instructional Reading and Writing in the School

Key elements in developing independent reading and writing in the school include:

- one to one reading in class each day
- reading aloud the texts of their particular workbooks
- Independent; guided and shared reading/writing in class either with class novel or own reading scheme
- Reading/writing their news and other stories aloud from the board
- Quiet reading of library books
- A class novel may be used as a reading aloud and listening exercise for the children's pleasure
- Spellings taught using tactile kinaesthetic methods.

The Development of Spelling Skills

The focus of planning is on the child's acquisition of spelling skills and his/her progress with spelling. Teachers generally follow specific spelling programmes that progress through the classes. Profiles are transferred by the class teacher as the pupil transfers annually. Spellings are generally examined through oral work and weekly spelling tests. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the learning process. Tactile kinaesthetic methods are advocated in the teaching of spelling in our school.

Linkage and Integration

The English curriculum is closely linked and integrated with all other subjects. Every teacher is encouraged to develop literacy in their classes. Our school has a school server where the teacher's plans are available and are updated regularly. In this way teachers can collaborate their planning to ensure the best education for every individual pupil.

Timetable

Primary school pupils are taught all subjects by their class teachers. Post-primary pupils are taught by a variety of teachers. School time tables are available on our server and are updated annually but are subject to change throughout the school year.

The Role of Parents/Guardians in Supporting Students

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children and thus are encouraged to provide supports for their children at home to develop the English language as well as other languages that may be spoken in the home. It is important for parents to arrange a place where their son/daughter can complete homework.

Effective Teaching Methodologies and Strategies

Individual class teachers tailor teaching methods to suit the needs of their students, while following a general departmental programme and alternative methodologies. Teachers teach through a variety of the following methods and may use a differential approach to address the needs of any individual class.

Effective strategies and differentiation include:

- Learning Outcomes identified at beginning of lesson
- Success Criteria identified and explained
- Print-rich environment – posters, keywords
- Keyword display and discussion – pre-teaching important, difficult concepts or vocabulary
- Dictionary work
- Graphic organisers
- Active learning: experiential learning; workshops; visit to theatres etc

- Book shelves in all classrooms, books in a variety of formats are readily available to students

- Group work

- Questioning using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Tiered assignments: core, modified and extended tasks available for students

- Use of KWL charts

- Varied questioning: higher and lower order

- Socratic dialogue

- Wait time

- ICT as a tool for differentiation and varied presentation

- Question Planning – scaffolding/structuring -model answers

Approaches and Methodologies for all Levels

The Gradual Release of Responsibility which is advocated by First Steps is also recommended to teach literacy in St. Ita's and St. Joseph's. This strategy advocates that the teacher will base learning in the personal experience or interests of the pupils and will use the following steps when teaching reading and writing however this methodology should be used for teaching any new content or curricular objective.

Gradual Release of Responsibility in Reading		
Process	Actions of the teacher/pupil	Example
Real Life Experience	Teacher reading from the big book/novel	Models aloud for the pupil the 'chunking strategy' to break up a word so that it can be read
Scaffolding: Whole class	The teacher gets the pupils to try this with him/her together	Whole Class support
Scaffolding: Independent	The pupil practices doing this with the support of the SNA or a peer while they read together	SNA/Peer support
Independent Reading	The pupil practices the skill independently	The pupil uses the skill independently and can teach it to others. The pupil can read for an audience.

Gradual Release of Responsibility for Writing		
Process	Actions for the Teacher/pupil	Example
Real Life Experience	The pupils make a ham sandwich and the teacher takes photos of each step	Making a Ham Sandwich
Scaffolding: Whole class	The teacher writes the procedure aloud while observing the photos taken to recall each step	The teacher uses the photos to demonstrate to the pupil how to write a procedure
Scaffolding: Independent	The pupil writes the procedure with the visuals and a cloze procedure for support	Scaffold writing with support materials
Independent Writing	The pupil writes independently	The pupil writes independently and can teach others. The pupil can write for an audience

Assessment

Teachers employ a range of formative and summative assessment. Assessment for Learning in addition to Assessment of Learning is integral to the delivery of the curriculum.

Assessment for Learning Strategies include:

- ✓ Making aims clear – Lesson target setting: sharing success criteria for assignments

- ✓ Comment-only marking

- ✓ 2 Stars and a Wish

- ✓ Traffic Lights

- ✓ Peer and Self – Assessment: teachers point students to errors in their work and ask students to identify and correct the error (one to one basis)

- ✓ Questioning: designing questions to generate discussion, open versus closed questioning, starting questions with Why – How – and inserting Might rather than is

- ✓ Exemplar work – creative modelling.

The primary teachers utilise a variety of assessments when assessing the primary school curriculum. The variety of assessments which can be utilised can be found on: https://www.ncca.ie/en/primary/assessment. These can also be used for the post-primary classes in our school. Pupil profile checklists in alternative areas including literacy, are completed for each pupil and are forwarded to relevant teachers, at the end of each school year (see appendix for details). Please see our Assessment Policy for further details on assessment. State examinations are completed in the alternative post-primary syllabi. Please see the relevant links for assessment in the alternative curricula and syllabi that we provide:

- https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary
- https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-1-Learning-Programmes

- https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-2-LPs
- https://www.ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/programmes-and-key-skills/leaving-certificate-applied.

Homework

Homework is to be completed each week night Homework is prepared in class and is similar to work covered and discussed so that pupils can complete it themselves. All pupils are usually assigned the same homework however special consideration is given
to some pupils with specific needs. Please see the Homework Policy for further details.

Leading Teaching and Learning

Our school has a coordinator for literacy whereby an agreed intervention is completed annually in relation to one curricular area in literacy which has been identified as an area of need for our students. This is based on assessments undertaken to identify the need as well as assessments after the intervention, to check the progress of pupils. e.g. 10 min oral language exercises focusing on vocabulary, expressive receptive language/ D.E.A.R. Drop everything and read / write. The Assistant Principal for this post also:

- Updates our school reading scheme: co-ordinates a school type reading passport for each class based on school resources
- Keeps account of library and school reading resources where a reading inventory is compiled and graded for alternative ability and levels.
- Liaises with staff and devises a literacy plan for the whole school e.g. what literacy skills should be taught at each level and liaises with the deputy principal to ensure the English Plan is updated in relation to same.
- Disseminates information: CPD, events, weeks of focus and competitions related to curricular area to teachers.
- Liaises with staff to develop and update suitable planning documentation/report cards/IEPS and PPPs.

Range and Variety of Resources

We have a variety of resources available in our school, some of which include:

- Textbooks

- ICT as a resource for:

- Extended tasks, further resources through Edmodo

- Clips of speeches

- Poetry readings

- Film clips

- Biography clips

- Stimulus for creative writing

- Images to generate discussion

- Advertising

- Newspaper Articles

- Music

- Interactive projects

- Power-point presentations

- Mind Maps

- Posters

- Classroom Library

- Book Club – Library

- Collections of teacher resources including hand-outs, notes etc.

- Chief examiner reports, marking schemes.

Library

There are class libraries and a central library in the school where there is a wide range of books available including variety of fiction, non-fiction and

poetry. A range of abilities catered for at all levels. For juniors pupils we have a variety of: big books, books with graded levels of difficulty; books covering a wide range of interests; audio books; books based on favourite television programmes; poetry books; supplementary readers; books with ICT software For seniors pupils we have: books covering a wide interest level; fiction; factual; reference; poetry; joke books; puzzle books; books suitable for different reading ages; books written by children. There is a reading corner in most classrooms. There is also a local library in or area which some classes visit on occasion.

ICT Resources

There is an IWB or projector system in the classrooms. There are a number of PCs available in the classrooms. Staff can research new software and arrange for demonstrations, opportunities to try out material and assess whether or not it should be purchased. Teachers encourage interaction and dialogue during use of computers in the classroom. ICT is used to help students present their work ICT is used to develop writing in differing genres, e.g. project-work; displays; poetry; make presentation etc. Student's research famous authors; poets, scientists, others, using the internet. No unsupervised internet access is recommended in our school and we also have a filtering system in operation.

Community Links

Because of the school's widespread catchment area attention is paid to the different communities of the children. The pupils' own local events are discussed in class and the children are encouraged to speak and write about events in their local area. If available, pupils are encouraged to attend homework or after school clubs as a way of supporting their language development.

Communication and Ratification

This draft plan discussed at a staff meeting on the 15-01-19. All recommendations have been included. The plan was sent to the Board of Management and was ratified on the 01-02-19. All plans and policies are published on our website once ratified.

Appendix

Literacy Checklists for Alternative Levels

St. Ita's and St. Joseph's Primary and Post-Primary School
Literacy - Writing Checklist Primary

Name :	Primary Junior	Primary Senior	JC Level 1	JC Level 2	Transition	LCA
Can the child write his/her name?	/					
Can the child write the letters of the alphabet correctly?						
Can the child write his/her address?						
Can the child write the date?						
Can the child write the school address?						
Can the child write the name of the principal?						
Can the child write about hobbies and interests?						
Can the child write a short note/telephone message to parent?						
Can the child write a postcard?						
Can the child write an informal letter?						
Can the child write the address on an envelope?						

St. Ita's and St. Joseph's Primary and Post-Primary School
Literacy - Writing Checklist JC Level 1

Name :	Primary Junior	Primary Senior	JC Level 1	JC Level 2	Transition	LCA
	/					
Can the child show enjoyment while making marks and or texts, and use gestures, sounds or words to focus attention on these?						
Can the child use signs, symbols or text to share experiences, thoughts, opinions?						
Can the child place marks, signs, symbols or texts in the correct sequence?						
Can the child engage in/with mechanics of mark-making exercises to create a form of text according to ability?						
Can the child illustrate signs of engagement and enjoyment with stories, texts, poetry, funny or favourite reading material?						
Can the child choose and handle books, demonstrating familiarity with book handling skills?						
Can the child recall a story read or personal experience using objects, marks, gestures or vocalisations?						
Can the child read a book, magazine or other text with understanding?						
Can the child seek meaning from combinations of signs, symbols or text for						

enjoyment or practical purposes?						
Can the child show recognition and understanding of symbols, signs, logos, familiar words, letters or visual representations of items?						
Can the child clearly indicate preferred objects and/or activities and refuse non preferred items?						
Can the child request repetition and/or more of and/or change of objects or events?						
Can the child communicate to express feelings verbally or non-verbally?						
Can the child express interests and opinions through a range of verbal or non verbal communication methods?						
Can the child make a request and/or express a need, verbally or non-verbally?						
Can the child participate in the sharing of a familiar or personal story, activity or event?						
Can the child respond to verbal and non-verbal cues related to familiar communicative routines?						
Can the child show recognition of personal and/or standardised objects of reference?						
Can the child consistently respond to familiar factual questions?						

Can the child attend and respond to increased vocabulary in text?						
Can the child show signs of anticipating next steps in a familiar activity when presented with a stimulus?						
Can the child predict outcomes for a familiar or unfamiliar story or event choosing from a range of possible outcomes?						
Can the child engage in a meaningful exchange with a communicative partner?						
Can the child initiate communication with a familiar adult and peers?						
Can the child show awareness of and/or use tone, body language, gestures, pace, vocalisations and volume to impact communication?						
Can the child demonstrate turn-taking with a communicative partner?						
Can the child engage in an activity requiring joint attention with one or more people?						
Can the child establish consistent patterns of attending to stimuli /personnel /activities in the immediate environment?						
Can the child indicate awareness of sensory stimuli in the learning environment?						

St. Ita's and St. Joseph's Primary and Post-Primary School
Literacy - Writing Checklist JC Level 2

Name :	Primary Junior	Primary Senior	JC Level 1	JC Level 2	Transition	LCA
	/					
Can the child read familiar words that are commonly used and personally relevant, e.g. read a list of items relating to a personal interest/hobby/sport?						
Can the child use a range of reading strategies e.g., clues, context, sound, prediction and decoding?						
Can the child find key information from different forms of writing, e.g. locate factual information in forms/bills, times and dates of appointments?						
Can the child interpret different forms of writing and text, including social sight signs and symbols, e.g. common formats of bills?						
Can the child use simple rules and text conventions that support meaning, e.g. pause at a full stop?						
Can the child write/type at least five sentences using capital letters and full stops?						

Can the child use a range of different forms of writing to suit purpose and audience, e.g. write a cheque, fill a simple form, and complete a diary entry?						
Can the child use a range of spelling patterns? e. g. add ing to a word – drop, double or nothing?						
Can the child participate in a performance or a presentation, e.g. presentation of a short drama piece to members of the class?						
Can the child create a range of images using a variety of materials?						
Can the child produce a piece of work for display?						
Can the child listen to a range of music and respond by discussing thoughts and feelings, e.g. favourite singer and say why they like their music						
Can the child ask questions to obtain information, e.g. to check dates/prices?						
Can the child listen to obtain information relating to more than one option?						

Can the child express personal opinions, facts and feelings appropriately, e.g. expressing an opinion on a television programme?						
Can the child follow a series of spoken instructions under supervision, e.g. go to local shop or post office?						
Can the child participate in practical formal and informal communications, e.g. an interview with peers on interest related topics?						
Can the child listen to and respond to a range of stories?						
Can the child identify a range of non-verbal communications methods, e.g. facial expression or tones of voice?						
Can the child follow the sequence of non-verbal instructions or directions for a frequent activity, e.g. finding safety exits/following fire-drill?						
Can the child respond to non-verbal signals and signs encountered in daily life, e.g. road signs?						
Can the child use appropriate non-verbal behaviour in communicating a simple idea, e.g. disappointment or joy?						

Can the child relay a response or request non-verbally, e.g. signalling a phone call?						

St. Ita's and St. Joseph's Primary and Post-Primary School
Phonological Awareness / Phonics Checklist

Name :	Primary Junior	Primary Senior	JC Level 1	JC Level 2	Transition	LCA
Can the child blend syllables? e.g. Doc/tor						
Can the child segment syllables? e.g. car+rot						
Can the child count syllables, using clapping or foot stamping?						
Can the child isolate syllables?						
Can the child recite nursery rhymes and poems?						
Can the child tell if a words rhymes?						
Can the child generate rhyming words?						
Can the child blend 2 phonemes? e.g. a/t						
Can the child blend 3 phonemes? e.g. p/e/t						
Can the child blend 4 phonemes? e.g. f/a/s/t						
Can the child identify initial sounds?						
Can the child final sounds?						
Can the child identify medial sounds? (sounds in the middle of the word)						
Can the child delete the initial sound of a word to produce another word? e.g. gold/ old						
Can the child delete the final sound of a word to produce another word? e.g. fork/ for						

Can the child substitute the initial sound with another sound? e.g. say the word goat but change the /g/ to a /b/						
Can the child substitute the final sound with another sound? e.g. say the word kiss but change the /ss/ to a /k/						