



Integrated Language Policy

Ballygiblin National School

1. Introduction and Rationale

This Integrated Language Policy sets out how Ballygiblin National School supports children's language learning in English (L1), Irish (L2) and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in line with the Primary Language Curriculum (2025) and the Primary Curriculum Framework.

Language is central to learning, identity, wellbeing and participation. Children learn language, through language, and about language. Every lesson is therefore a language lesson. This policy recognises children as communicators, readers, writers and thinkers, and reflects our commitment to inclusive, engaging and developmentally appropriate language learning experiences for all pupils.

The policy adopts an integrated, plurilingual approach, recognising that children bring rich linguistic repertoires to school and that skills, strategies and dispositions developed in one language can support learning in others. This approach values English, Irish, home languages, and emerging additional languages as assets for learning.

2. Vision for Language Learning

At Ballygiblin NS, we aim to develop children who:

- communicate confidently and respectfully for a range of purposes and audiences
- enjoy and engage with language, literature and texts in many forms
- read, write and speak with increasing independence, accuracy and creativity
- understand how language works and how languages connect
- develop positive dispositions towards language learning for life

Language learning is viewed as a developmental, social and interactive process, grounded in meaningful relationships, authentic contexts and purposeful communication.

3. Curriculum Framework | Creatlach an Churaclaim

This policy is informed by:

- The Primary Language Curriculum
- The Primary Curriculum Framework
- By the Primary Curriculum Framework and the Primary Language Curriculum. It recognises the alignment of these developments with Aistear, particularly in relation to pedagogy, including playful learning

The Primary Language Curriculum is structured around three strands:

- Oral Language | Teanga Ó Bhéal
- Reading | Léitheoireacht
- Writing | Scríbhneoireacht

These strands operate through four interrelated elements:

1. Developing communicative relationships through language
2. Understanding the content and structure of language
3. Exploring and using language
4. Building an awareness of languages and cultures

Language learning across the school is planned to ensure progression, continuity and coherence from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

4. Pedagogical Approach

4.1 Integrated and Plurilingual Learning

Language learning is planned in an integrated manner across English, Irish and MFL. Teachers explicitly support children to:

- transfer skills and strategies across languages where appropriate
- notice similarities and differences between languages
- develop language awareness and metalinguistic understanding

Children's home languages and cultural experiences are valued and, where appropriate, used as resources for learning.

4.2 Scaffolding and Progression

Teachers use purposeful scaffolding to support children's access to increasingly complex language tasks and texts. Learning experiences move along a continuum from teacher-led, to scaffolded, to increasingly child-led, with supports gradually withdrawn as independence develops.

Scaffolding strategies include:

- activating prior knowledge
- modelling and shared practice
- visual, oral and multimodal supports
- structured talk and guided questioning
- gradual release of responsibility

4.3 Playful, Engaging and Authentic Learning

Playful, engaging and meaningful learning experiences underpin language development at all stages. Children learn language through:

- talk and interaction
- storytelling, drama, poetry and song
- exploration, inquiry and problem-solving
- purposeful reading and writing for real audiences

5. Oral Language | Teanga Ó Bhéal

Oral language is prioritised across all stages of the school and forms the foundation for reading, writing and learning across the curriculum.

Children are supported to:

- listen actively and attentively
- express ideas, feelings and opinions clearly
- engage in meaningful dialogue and discussion
- adapt language for different purposes and audiences
- use language collaboratively to build understanding

Teachers explicitly model rich oral language and provide structured opportunities for talk, including pair work, group discussion, drama and oral presentations.

Children are exposed to a range of voices, registers, accents and dialects, particularly in Irish, to develop listening comprehension and language awareness.

6. Reading | Léitheoireacht

6.1 Reading Culture and Engagement

A positive reading culture is fostered throughout the school. Children are encouraged to see themselves as readers and to develop enjoyment, motivation and choice in reading.

6.2 Picturebooks and Texts

A wide range of texts is used, including novels, poetry, non-fiction, digital texts and picturebooks. Picturebooks are used across all class levels, including senior classes, as sophisticated texts that support comprehension, critical thinking and visual literacy.

Teachers explicitly model slow looking, supporting children to analyse illustrations, visual choices, layout and meaning alongside written text.

6.3 Reading Development

Reading instruction balances:

- word recognition and fluency
- vocabulary development
- comprehension strategies

- response to text and author's intent

Reading experiences are scaffolded and progressively released to support independence.

7. Writing | Scríbhneoireacht

Writing is taught as a process and a tool for thinking and communication. Children are supported to write for a wide range of purposes, audiences and genres.

Teachers provide structured opportunities for:

- shared and guided writing
- drafting, revising and editing
- explicit teaching of spelling, grammar and conventions
- creative and expressive writing

Children are encouraged to develop an individual voice and to reflect on their writing choices.

8. Irish Language | Gaeilge

Irish is taught as the school's second language in line with the Primary Language Curriculum. Emphasis is placed on:

- oral language development
- meaningful communication
- enjoyment and confidence

Teachers maximise exposure to Irish through:

- regular informal use of Irish throughout the day
- structured oral language activities
- reading, storytelling and song
- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL / FCÁT)

CLIL is used to increase authentic exposure to Irish while maintaining the integrity of curriculum content. Language learning is scaffolded without simplifying subject learning.

9. Modern Foreign Languages | Teangacha Iasachta Nua-Aimseartha

In Stages 3 and 4, children develop:

- awareness of languages and cultures
- curiosity about how languages work
- very basic communicative competence in an additional language

MFL learning builds on children's existing language knowledge and supports intercultural understanding.

10. Language Across the Curriculum | Teanga ar fud an Churaclaim

Language learning is embedded across all curriculum areas. Teachers explicitly support children to access and use subject-specific language, genres and vocabulary.

Outdoor learning is used to support language development. It is understood as a change of location rather than a change of curriculum, providing authentic contexts for talk, reading and writing.

11. Digital Technologies and Language

Digital tools are used to enhance language learning, including:

- multimodal texts
- collaborative writing tools
- audio and video recording

Voice-recording technologies are used to support oral language development, self-assessment and teacher observation of progress over time.

12. Inclusion and Diversity

An inclusive approach underpins all language learning. Teaching is responsive to:

- children with additional learning needs
- children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- children with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds

Language learning is differentiated through task design, scaffolding and assessment. All children's languages and communication methods are valued.

13. Assessment and Progression

Assessment supports learning and progression. Teachers use a range of approaches including:

- observation and teacher judgement
- discussion and conferencing
- self- and peer-assessment
- samples of children's work

Assessment information is used to identify next steps and to support progression in oral language, reading and writing.

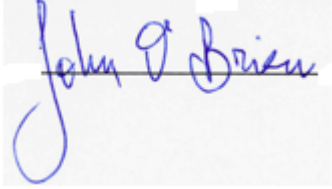
14. Partnership with Parents and Community

Parents and guardians are valued partners in children's language development. The school supports:

- positive home–school communication
- engagement with reading and language at home
- awareness of the language curriculum

15. Review and Ratification

This policy will be reviewed periodically in line with curriculum developments and school priorities.

	
<i>John O'Brien</i>	<i>David Hyland</i>
<i>Chairperson BOM</i>	<i>Principal</i>
<i>Date: 9-9-25</i>	<i>Date: 9-9-25</i>

Appendix A: English – Programme and Approaches (Ballygiblin NS)

This appendix outlines how **English (Language 1)** is implemented in Ballygiblin National School in line with the Integrated Language Policy and the Primary Language Curriculum.

A1. Organisation of English

English is taught daily in all classes through an integrated programme encompassing:

- Oral Language
- Reading
- Writing

In a multi-grade school context, planning focuses on shared language experiences, rich texts and common oral language contexts, with differentiation through task, expectation, grouping and support. Progression is achieved through increasing complexity, independence and accuracy rather than through age-based content alone.

A2. Oral Language (English)

Oral language is prioritised across all classes and underpins learning in reading, writing and across the curriculum.

Teachers:

- model rich, precise and varied vocabulary
- explicitly teach listening, turn-taking and discussion skills
- provide structured opportunities for talk, including pair and group discussion, drama, storytelling, debate and presentation
- support children to articulate thinking, reasoning and reflection

Oral rehearsal is a key feature of classroom practice and is used consistently to support comprehension and writing development.

A3. Reading (English)

The school adopts a balanced approach to reading, supporting children to become fluent, motivated and thoughtful readers.

Reading instruction includes:

- phonological and phonemic awareness
- decoding and word recognition strategies
- fluency and expressive reading
- vocabulary development
- comprehension and response to text

A wide range of texts is used, including novels, picturebooks, poetry, non-fiction and digital texts. Picturebooks are used at all class levels, including senior classes, as rich mentor texts to support comprehension, inference, visual literacy and author's craft.

Reading approaches used include:

- shared reading
- guided reading
- paired and independent reading

Early and targeted supports may include Literacy Lift Off, PM Readers, Engage Literacy and Building Bridges of Understanding, as appropriate to pupils' needs.

A4. Writing (English)

Writing is taught as a process and as a tool for communication and thinking.

Children are supported to:

- generate ideas through talk and oral rehearsal
- engage in shared and guided writing
- draft, revise and edit their work
- write for a range of purposes, audiences and genres

Explicit teaching of spelling, grammar and conventions takes place within meaningful writing contexts, with a strong emphasis on clarity of message and audience awareness.

A5. Spelling (Whole-School, Stage-Based Approach)

Spelling is taught as a whole-school, stage-based process from First to Sixth Class. Instruction takes place during a shared spelling block, with all teachers, including SET teachers, working simultaneously to support flexible grouping and targeted instruction.

Children are grouped according to their stage of spelling development rather than chronological age, while remaining within a maximum two-year age range of their class grouping. This ensures instruction is developmentally appropriate, socially appropriate and responsive to individual learning needs.

Teaching focuses on word study, with explicit instruction in spelling patterns, rules and generalisations. Spelling Shed is the agreed whole-school spelling programme and is used to support consistency, engagement and progression.

Where children are not yet at a spelling stage, instruction prioritises the development of phonological and phonemic awareness, including sound discrimination, blending, segmenting and sound-symbol correspondence. These foundational skills are developed before children engage in formal spelling instruction.

This approach supports inclusion, confidence and success in spelling and recognises that children progress through spelling development at different rates.

A6. Assessment in English

Assessment in English supports learning and progression and draws on a range of approaches, including:

- teacher observation and professional judgement
- conferencing and discussion
- samples of children's oral and written work
- standardised and diagnostic assessments, including Drumcondra Reading, where appropriate

Assessment information is used to inform planning, differentiation and support, and to identify next steps in learning.

A7. Inclusion and Support

English teaching is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all learners, including pupils with additional educational needs and pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Support is provided through:

- differentiated classroom practice
- targeted grouping
- integrated SET support
- scaffolding and explicit teaching of foundational language skills

Appendix B: Gaeilge – Programme and Approaches

This appendix outlines how Gaeilge (Language 2) is taught and promoted in Ballygiblin National School in line with the Integrated Language Policy and the Primary Language Curriculum.

Irish is viewed as a living language of communication, with emphasis placed on confidence, enjoyment, participation and meaningful use.

B1. Whole-School Approach to Gaeilge | Cur Chuige Scoile Uile

The school adopts a communicative, oral-language-first approach to the teaching of Gaeilge.

The primary aims are to:

- develop pupils' confidence and willingness to use Irish
- promote positive attitudes towards the language
- ensure progression through meaningful and achievable language experiences

Abair Liom is used as the agreed whole-school Gaeilge programme to support consistency, structure and progression across classes.

B2. Oral Language | Teanga Ó Bhéal

Oral language is the foundation of Gaeilge teaching at all class levels.

Teachers:

- maximise exposure to spoken Irish
- use Gaeilge informally throughout the school day (e.g. greetings, routines, instructions)
- provide structured oral language activities including cluichí teanga, songs, rhymes, drama and storytelling
- model natural pronunciation and sentence structures

Pupils are exposed to a range of voices and dialects to develop listening comprehension and language awareness.

B3. Reading | Léitheoireacht

Reading in Gaeilge is closely linked to oral language development, with strong emphasis on listening and understanding.

Teachers:

- provide context and explicitly teach key vocabulary before reading
- use shared reading and storytelling to develop comprehension
- encourage pupils to respond to texts orally, visually and creatively

A range of texts is used, including picturebooks, short texts, poems, songs and digital resources, appropriate to pupils' stage of development.

B4. Writing | Scríbhneoireacht

Writing in Gaeilge develops gradually from oral language.

Pupils are supported to:

- experiment with familiar words and phrases
- engage in shared and guided writing activities
- develop confidence in expressing meaning through written Irish

Accuracy and complexity develop over time through meaningful use of language, rather than through isolated written exercises.

B5. Fuaimeanna agus Focail

Fuaimeanna agus Focail is used to support:

- phonological awareness
- vocabulary development
- sound–symbol correspondence

This programme is integrated with oral language, reading and writing activities and supports pupils' overall language development in Gaeilge.

B6. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL / FCÁT)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL / Foghlaim Chomhtháite Ábhair agus Teanga – FCÁT) is used to provide authentic contexts for the use of Gaeilge.

Irish is used as the language of instruction in selected lessons, including:

- Physical Education
- Art
- Music
- aspects of SESE

Language is carefully scaffolded, while the integrity of curriculum content is maintained.

B7. Assessment in Gaeilge | Measúnú

Assessment in Gaeilge focuses on pupils':

- ability to communicate meaning
- listening and understanding
- confidence and willingness to use the language

Assessment approaches include:

- teacher observation and professional judgement
- discussion and interaction
- samples of pupils' oral, written and creative work

Progress is viewed developmentally, recognising that pupils acquire Gaeilge at different rates.

B8. Inclusion and Support | Cuimsiú agus Tacaíocht

Teaching of Gaeilge is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all learners.

Support is provided through:

- differentiated classroom practice
- targeted grouping where appropriate
- clear scaffolding and modelling of language

The school recognises that success in Gaeilge is built through positive experiences, achievable expectations and consistent exposure.