

Programme of Study for Irish (in Irish Speaking Schools) at Key Stage 2

2

KEY STAGE

Programme of Study
IRISH (in Irish Speaking Schools)

General Introduction

Language by its very nature is multifocused. All curricular areas are infused with language activities. Language is the dominant medium through which experiences and activities are presented to the pupils; pupils explore and investigate these experiences and activities; pupils record and communicate their thoughts, understanding, opinions and emotions about these experiences and activities.

Listening, understanding, talking, reading and writing should not be regarded as discrete areas which are developed separately from one another or without reference to each other. Language, oral and written, formal and informal, and as an individual and collective activity, is an essential and inevitable ingredient of all activities within the classroom situation. This natural link between the three attainment targets should be taken account of and built upon at all times. This programme of study will consolidate and extend the experiences of the Key Stage 1 programme.

LISTENING, UNDERSTANDING AND TALKING

Introduction

Oral language skills are the foundation for the development of the more formal aspects of reading and writing skills. However, the conditions in the first language situation and the second language situation are not always the same, and the school which is teaching through a second language must take account of those conditions. In Key Stage 1, the main emphasis was on the acquisition of basic language competence rather than on language enrichment and extension. Even in Key Stage 2, although there is a greater emphasis on consolidation, enrichment and extension, the teacher must still focus on certain basic aspects of language acquisition and integrate that into the planning process at all times.

To be successful, the language environment of the classroom must provide a wide range of relevant activities which stimulate the pupil's interest and motivation, take account of the stages within the second language acquisition process, consolidate and extend the pupil's increasing competence and promote an informed supportive role for parents.

By Key Stage 2, oral competence in Irish is well developed. Comprehension approaches levels which are almost as high as that of their first language. Irish has become established as the dominant medium of communication used by the pupil. The maintenance of established language, along with the implementation of extension and enrichment strategies, are the main focus of all language activities at this point. However, hands on experience in all language associated activities remains crucial. At Key Stage 2, where the curriculum frequently assumes a more teacher focused delivery or where the more formal language activities of reading and writing play an increasingly important role, the teacher must take particular care that the practical interaction of the pupil in language activities is sustained.

Presentation of the Programme of Study

While these detailed requirements have been set out under specific headings, it must be remembered that the processes and activities incorporated within the headings are not discrete but inter-relate and interact.

Progression

By the latter stages of Key Stage 1 and throughout Key Stage 2, Irish has become the dominant means of communication used by the pupil at all times. At this point, they speak Irish to the teacher who responds in Irish, and Irish to their peers who also respond in Irish. They are now functioning as listeners and speakers in relation to the target language.

The pupils' innate skills as listeners, along with their experiences and practice as listeners, have all had a significant influence on the level of Irish that the pupils have acquired at any given point. These skills will continue to influence their development. However, pupils are no longer dependent on the restricted register, frequent repetition and extensive dependence on visual aids and contextual clues which was a characteristic of language activities in Key Stage 1. With some concessions, the language used by the teacher is like that used in a first language situation. Nevertheless, while pupils' comprehension at Key Stage 2 approaches levels which are almost as high as that of their first language, pupils' competence should not be over-estimated, even at the end of the Key Stage.

By Key Stage 2, basic production skills in Irish will be well established and Irish will be used by all pupils in most situations. Nevertheless, it is possible for English to re-emerge in some spontaneous social situations or when the pupils' grasp of Irish is inadequate for what they wish to express. Issues of audience, along with facility and clarity of expression, now begin to evolve.

Within the context of this programme of study pupils should have opportunities to progress:

- **from** always conversing with the teacher in Irish and usually conversing with their peers in Irish **towards** engaging in conversations in Irish in most situations with ease and confidence;
- **from** using a variety of sentence patterns and tenses not always with linguistic accuracy **towards** using more complex grammatical sentence patterns and constructions with some degree of accuracy;
- **from** beginning to demonstrate a grasp of the most common pronunciations characteristic of Irish **towards** displaying an awareness of all the common pronunciations characteristic of Irish;
- **from** showing an awareness of audience **towards** stimulating an audience through varying speech registers.
- **from** beginning to articulate their own opinions **towards** following the arguments of others in the context of debate.

Pupils with Special Needs

It is important to recognize the particular problems of pupils with learning difficulties. They need extra encouragement, help and support at all times and language activities should be based firmly on the first-hand experiences of the pupils. At Key Stage 2, the needs of these pupils will necessitate a continuing focus on skills associated with listening, understanding and talking.

Contribution to the Educational (Cross-curricular) Themes

The Irish Curriculum should, where appropriate, provide opportunities for pupils to use Listening, Understanding and Talking to explore and reflect on the content and issues associated with the cross-curricular themes.

Pupils should have opportunities as individuals or in groups to:

- talk about how they have changed and matured from Key Stage 1, the factors which have influenced their self esteem, their awareness of their relationship with others at home, at school and in the community and the qualities and behaviour they associate with good health and good relationships (CH, EMU, HE);
- engage in role-play, simulations, decision-making and conflict situations and talk about how appropriate decisions, choices and actions should be arrived at and their consequences for others (EMU);
- develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills of information technology and, in particular, to record and listen to their own speech and that of others, *for example, on an audio tape or video tape (IT)*.

Context

Arising from the development of a classroom environment in which pupils' ideas are encouraged and stimulated, pupils should have opportunities, based on practical experiences, to develop their talking, listening and understanding as:

- individuals;
- pairs;
- members within a group;
- members within a class.

Audience

In most instances the audience will arise from the context for the task. In addition, pupils should have opportunities to talk and listen:

- to the wider school community;
- to Irish speaking visitors to the school;
- to visitors who are learning Irish;
- when visiting outside the school situation;

- when visiting within the local Irish-speaking community;
- when visiting Gaeltacht areas.

Purpose

Talking, listening and understanding are developed through the social use of language and the tasks to which language is directed. They are further extended as the pupils use language to clarify, organize, articulate and present thoughts, feelings and opinions. Pupils should have opportunities to develop and extend the target language through participation in:

- discussions and conversations;
- discussing their work and experiences with the teacher and their peers;
- discussing topics involving attitudes, opinions, beliefs and feelings;
- preparing, asking and responding to questions;
- formulating, giving and responding to directions and instructions.

Listening, Understanding and Talking Activities

The confidence and competence which pupils exhibit in their use of language is influenced by the activity in which they are engaged and the purpose for which they are using language. Pupils should have opportunities to participate in a variety of listening, understanding and talking activities. These activities should include:

- a listening to, understanding and responding to a range of fiction, poetry and drama, visual or audio-visual materials;
- b dramatising a scene based on personal experience, imagination, Irish literature, Irish programmes, when available, and curricular topics, where applicable;
- c listening to live and media presentations as a follow-up to discussions with the teacher;
- d telling or re-telling stories based on Irish mythology and folklore, folklore of other countries, Irish literature, personal memories and experiences, imagination and themes taken from curricular topics;
- e describing and discussing with empathy, events, people, places and things, real and imaginary;
- f discussing, as part of a group or within the class unit for a variety of curricular purposes, sharing, responding to and evaluating ideas, arguments and points of view;
- g preparing and giving a talk on a selected topic to a familiar group, sometimes using audio or visual clues, with help from the teacher, to enhance the audience's interest;
- h preparing and using questionnaires to seek opinions and feelings;
- i participating in activities which involve talking with Irish speakers from the local Irish-speaking Community and Ulster Gaeltacht;
- j showing an appreciation of some colloquial expressions and using them.

Within the context of these activities, pupils should develop the ability to:

- a share and co-operate in pairs or groups;
- b comment on their own talk and the talk of others;
- c observe the conventions of discussion;
- d speak clearly and audibly with reasonable phonetic skill;
- e engage audience interest.

READING

Introduction

The development of reading skills is crucial in facilitating the pupil's understanding and study of all areas of the curriculum. Pre-reading language experiences are an important and essential foundation for this programme of study. In the early stages of Irish-medium education, considerable time is required to develop basic receptive and production skills in the target language. Extended periods should be spent on a range of pre-reading activities which not only focus on the specific requirements of the pre-reading situation but also stimulate and initiate a range of oral language activities.

The value and importance of reading should be demonstrated through the creation of a positive and stimulating atmosphere in the classroom and the provision of an environment which arouses the pupils' curiosity and interest. Pupils should feel at ease during their reading activities and, as their competence increases, the pleasure associated with reading should become a significant factor in their motivation. The good example, keen interest and energy of the teacher as a reader should be major sources of encouragement for the pupils as readers.

A wide range of various types of print and reading materials should be available to the pupils in the classroom. The teacher should provide a variety of reading activities and experiences for the pupils from which they will begin to develop their own likes and preferences in their choice of reading material.

Reading is perceived as a unit composed of three interdependent elements:

- decoding skills;
- understanding;
- enjoyment.

The pupils should have frequent opportunities to:

- extend their sight vocabulary in relation to words and phrases;
- attempt words they do not recognise;
- practise the higher reading skills;
- use a range of reading strategies.

This programme of study should strengthen the link between home and school which was initiated in Key Stage 1, and the help and support of parents, which is necessary in Irish-medium education, should be continued.

Presentation of the Programme of Study

While these detailed requirements have been set out under specific headings, it must be remembered that the processes and activities incorporated within the headings are not discrete but inter-relate and interact.

Progression

Within the context of this programme of study pupils should have opportunities to progress:

- **from** using basic decoding strategies to read unfamiliar words **towards** using a range of decoding strategies in their reading.
- **from** conveying a degree of independence in their reading **towards** independent confident reading, which involves understanding, feeling and fluency.
- **from** showing inferential understanding and indicating personal opinions **towards** recognising and discussing the author's attitude across a range of texts.
- **from** beginning to understand the structure of a text **towards** recognising the effect and impact of language used by the author and expressing an opinion.
- **from** beginning to read with some degree of competence **towards** methods in reading a text to locate main points or supporting detail.
- **from** using a personal store of words or a simple dictionary **towards** locating information in a range of sources and recording it.

Pupils with Special Needs

It is important to recognize the particular problems of children with learning difficulties. They need extra encouragement, help and support at all times and language activities should be based firmly on the first-hand experiences of the pupils. At Key Stage 2, the needs of these pupils will necessitate a continuing focus on basic reading skills.

Contribution to the Educational (Cross-curricular) Themes

The Irish Curriculum should, where appropriate, provide opportunities for pupils to use Reading to explore and reflect on the content and issues associated with the cross-curricular themes.

Through reading, pupils should have opportunities to:

- read about people from other cultures, religion, race, or social backgrounds (CH, EMU, HE);
- develop, where appropriate, and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of technology, search for and find information using a computer (IT).

Context

Arising from classroom experience, pupils should have opportunities to develop their reading in a variety of contexts:

- as individuals, reading silently or aloud;
- in pairs;
- as members of a group;
- as members of the class;

- with the teacher;
- with parents and other adults.

Range

Pupils should have opportunities to read across a variety of texts, including:

- picture books and posters;
- songs and verses;
- notices and signs in both classroom and school environment;
- pupil's own composition;
- graded reading books;
- flash cards and games;
- picture dictionaries and personal dictionaries;
- suitable computer software;
- information books;
- fairy stories, mythology, folklore and contemporary literature;
- non-fiction texts, timetables, graphs and atlases;
- badges and greeting cards;
- poetry;
- encyclopaedias;
- magazines, periodicals, newspapers and comics;
- drama.

Purpose

Pupils should have opportunities to read for a variety of purposes, including:

- amusement and enjoyment;
- learning in all areas of the curriculum and in the cross-curricular themes;
- learning about themselves and life in general;
- enriching their Irish;
- locating information or following directions;
- developing study skills.

Audience

Pupils should read for a variety of audiences including:

- themselves and other pupils;
- the teacher;
- parents and other adults;
- visitors to the school;
- audiences outside the school.

Reading Activities

Pupils should have opportunities to engage in a wide range of reading activities, including:

- a reading their own compositions and the compositions of other pupils;
- b reading and discussing graded texts;
- c listening to and responding to stories, poems, jingles and songs, read live or recorded;
- d following a text while listening to it being read on tape;
- e reading a variety of literary genres in a suitable way and style;
- f summarizing or sequencing the main points in a text;
- g discussing in detail, aspects of texts, focusing on characters, places and events using both inference and deduction;
- h reading silently and independently without interruption for longer periods of time;
- i reading aloud using appropriate intonation and pausing;
- j taping themselves reading;
- k using advanced decoding strategies to read unfamiliar words and phrases;
- l using dictionary skills;
- m handling reference books and using indexes;
- n using a library;
- o keeping records of books they have read along with their opinions of them.

Within the context of these reading activities pupils should develop the ability to:

- a read a range of texts independently and respond to them in various forms;
- b use inference, deduction and evidence in a text to support their response;
- c predict what would happen or could happen if other conditions prevailed;

- d distinguish between fact and fiction;
- e improve and enrich their command of Irish;
- f widen their store of words, compound words and phrases which they readily recognise;
- g use a wide range of reading and decoding strategies in order to read text continuously;
- h locate relevant information, organize, evaluate and record it in various forms.

WRITING

Introduction

Writing should be an enjoyable experience. To foster this aspect of writing, the classroom atmosphere should be one in which pupils feel relaxed, accepted and affirmed and in which they succeed as writers.

Pupils should understand the importance of writing as a means of communication and should be given frequent and varied opportunities to write from their own experience, for an agreed purpose and for a known audience. Success depends on pupils having a clear understanding of the task. Emphasis should be on conveying thoughts intelligibly and an appeal should be made to pupils' imaginations and originality.

The process of writing involves two aspects, the compositional and the secretarial. The compositional aspect includes the selection, ordering and organisation of ideas and the expression of feelings and opinions, while the secretarial aspect involves spelling, syntax, punctuation, handwriting and grammar. Whilst the meaning may be obscured if the secretarial aspect is neglected, it is the content and the form in which the content is expressed that is at the heart of the writing process.

Pupils should begin to develop an awareness of the importance of the correct spelling and grammar and understand that good handwriting and presentation help to convey the message to the reader. Pupils should be encouraged to have a sense of pride in their work.

Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate that the writing process involves:

- decision making
 - the context, precise purpose and intended audiences established;
- planning
 - preliminary thoughts are organised and a basic outline devised;
- drafting
 - thoughts are developed, evaluated and reshaped by expansion or amendment.

Pupils should recognise that not all writing goes through all of these stages. While it is not always appropriate to rework a piece of writing, opportunities should be given for redrafting both with the teacher and independently, and on an individual basis and within groups. Successful drafting is very much dependent on the support, advice and encouragement offered by the teacher.

In redrafting, attention should be given to the form and layout of the work. Pupils should be given constructive and sensitive comments on their work and should receive the response of others to it. Pupils should be able to see their teacher writing, sharing the process and the final outcome. In redrafting, pupils should also be given opportunities to discuss and improve their style of writing and to enrich their use of language.

Teachers should be aware of the fact that oral and written skills are inter-related and that the characteristics of the pupils' spoken language will transfer to writing. This interaction is of particular concern in Irish medium education. Sensitivity should, therefore, be displayed in correcting pupils' writing. However, pupils should continue to be encouraged to enrich their

use of the target language and to extend their vocabulary. More attention should be given to improving the pupils' target language through techniques such as redrafting and working constructively on weaknesses displayed in spelling, syntax and grammar.

The classroom should actively facilitate writing. Pupils should have access to a variety of writing tools and materials including:

- word processors;
- word banks;
- personal word books;
- simple reference materials;
- dictionaries;
- thesauri.

Every opportunity should be taken to provide an audience for the pupils' work:

- on display boards in the classroom and in corridors;
- in booklets and scrapbooks;
- in class and school magazines or newspapers;
- in anthologies;
- through competitions.

Presentation of the Programme of Study

While these detailed requirements have been set out under specific headings, it must be remembered that the processes and activities incorporated within the headings are not discrete but inter-relate and interact.

Progression

Within the context of this programme of study pupils should have opportunities to progress:

- **from** writing with help where separate ideas are identified **towards** writing which is varied and interesting and which uses some supporting detail to make the meaning clear;
- **from** using basic vocabulary **towards** using more imaginative vocabulary;
- **from** writing with a sense of simple structure and organisation **towards** writing which displays an increased awareness of form and audience;
- **from** spelling most common and familiar words in a recognisable way **towards** spelling them correctly;
- **from** handwriting which is consistent in size **towards** handwriting which is fluent, legible and accurately formed – joined or unjoined;
- **from** writing sentences which show accuracy in basic punctuation **towards** increasing proficiency in the use of syntax and punctuation.

Pupils with Special Needs

It is important to recognize the particular problems of pupils with learning difficulties. They need extra encouragement, help and support at all times and language activities should be based firmly on the first-hand experiences of the pupils. At Key Stage 2, the needs of these pupils will necessitate a continuing focus on basic writing skills.

Contribution to the Educational (Cross-curricular) Themes

The Irish Curriculum should, where appropriate, provide opportunities for pupils to use Writing to explore and reflect on the content and issues associated with the cross-curricular themes.

Through writing, pupils should have opportunities to:

- discuss and write about issues of similarity and difference. Consider and write about issues arising from stereotypical images (CH, EMU);
- develop, where appropriate, and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of **information technology**, *for example, use a word-processor to create and, with help, redraft, assemble text and graphics for a variety of purposes and audiences (IT).*

Planning

Pupils should be encouraged, when it is appropriate to the task, to plan their written work. The teacher has an important role in discussing their work with the pupils, helping them to organize their ideas and thoughts and to prepare an outline. Pupils should also have opportunities to discuss their work with individuals or groups.

Purpose

Pupils should have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, including:

- their own enjoyment and amusement; and
- to express their thoughts and feelings;
- to develop their imagination;
- to inform and explain;
- to describe;
- to narrate;
- to report;
- to persuade;
- to interpret data;
- to express a point of view;
- to give instructions.

Context

Writing will arise from a variety of experiences, including:

- first-hand experiences;
- playing with language; rhymes, word games and composing poems;
- responses to their reading;
- the various areas of study and cross-curricular themes;
- drama;
- audio-visual and visual aids, television and radio;
- visitors to the classroom;
- visits and trips;
- competitions;
- software packages;
- artefacts.

Audience

Pupils should know for whom they are writing and be aware of the needs of the particular audience. Pupils should be encouraged to demonstrate a sense of readership and write for a range of audiences, including:

- themselves;
- teachers;
- parents;
- pupils in their own and other schools;
- audiences from outside the school.

Range

Pupils should have opportunities to write in different forms and to develop control of the different conventions (layout, sequencing and structure) demanded by these forms. Their writing should include the following:

- stories, based on personal experience and books they have read or stories they have heard;
- creative and imaginative writing;
- descriptions;
- diaries;
- poems;
- comic strips;

- recipes and lists;
- letters and notes;
- invitations, greeting cards, posters, notices and diagrams;
- dialogues;
- reports;
- articles in newspapers or school magazines.

Within a meaningful context or arising out of their own work, pupils should develop the ability to:

- a use a comfortable, well formed style of handwriting;
- b spell, from memory, words that they use frequently in their writing;
- c apply strategies which enable them to spell unfamiliar words;
- d use a personal or class dictionary to locate and check spelling of words that they need to use in their writing;
- e use the conventions of basic punctuation including the proper use of capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, speech marks, commas and paragraphs;
- f construct and use compound words and some familiar prefixes and suffixes;
- g use certain grammatical terms including noun, adjective and verb;
- h apply the different conventions and structures demanded by various forms of writing, *for example, letter, description, report;*
- i avoid repetition and ambiguity in their writing;
- j consolidate and improve their use of syntax in the target language and to broaden and enrich vocabulary.