Mount Anville
Montessori Junior School

Literacy Plan

Collated 2014 - 2016

Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

For the past three years, staff members have been engaged in various workshops to support and extend knowledge basis and teaching methodologies. The whole staff have agreed approaches and practices that have been documented throughout this document.

(b) Rationale

The development of MAMJ English Plan:
- To benefit teaching and learning in our school
- To conform to principles of learning outlined in the Primary School Curriculum and beyond with a focus on a Montessori approach, that is a constructivist approach.
- To review the existing practices for English in light of changed emphases and new methodologies through professional discussions, workshops and readings.

Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

Rooted in a Sacred Heart Ethos, Mount Anville Montessori Junior School aims to focus on the whole development and education of its pupils. In common with Sacred Heart schools worldwide, we have five Goals, which express our key values and aims; these are Faith, Character, Intellect, Community and Social Awareness. The teaching and learning that happens at Mount Anville Montessori Junior School reflects the principals of Montessori education and implements the aims of the NCCA Primary School Curriculum. With this in mind, we aim to promote literacy, through which the school ethos can be fostered the learning experiences of our pupils enhanced.

(b) Aims
Mount Anville Montessori Junior School intends to:

- 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
- To develop the child's ability to engage appropriately in listener-speaker relationships
- To develop confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing
- To develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through oral language, writing and reading
- To enable the child to read and write independently
- To enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experiences
- To nurture the love of reading a variety of literacy materials

Strands and strand units

Strand units	Strands The abbreviation 'C' is used to refer to the English Curriculum			
	Receptiveness to language	Competence and confidence in using language	Developing cognitive abilities through language	Emotional and imaginative development through language
Oral language	Infants: P. 16 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 24 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 36 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 48	Infants: P. 18 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 27 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 38 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 50	Infants: P. 20 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 29 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 41 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 53	Infants: P. 21 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 31 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 44 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 56
Reading	Infants: P. 16 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 25 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 36 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 48	Infants: P. 18 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 27 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 39 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 51	Infants: P. 20 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 29 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 42 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 54	Infants: P. 21 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 31 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 44 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 56
Writing	Infants: P. 17 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 26 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 37 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 49	Infants: P. 19 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 28 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 39-40 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 52	Infants: P. 20 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 30 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 43 $5^{th}/6^{th}$: P. 55	Infants: P. 21 $1^{st}/2^{nd}$: P. 32 $3^{rd}/4^{th}$: P. 45 $5^{th} 6^{th}$: P. 57

- Teachers familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for their class level, with a clear outline of the learning outcomes that preceded and follow those of the current class level are outlines in **Appendix A**

2. Language Development

Receptiveness to language:

There is a focus on the Montessori approach to Language in the younger class levels. There is a focus both a home and in MAMJ to supporting pupils language development through a rich varied oral language experience both at an informal and discrete level. A rich oral language experience supports pupils where English is not their first language.

From an early age, the teacher and parents are the role models for the pupils to experience a high standard of oral English, with a focus on responding to verbal and non-verbal cues that are used to convey meaning

Vocabulary banks are expanded in a variety of ways, such as
- The movable alphabet
- Engaging in Montessori work in pairs and small groups
- Partaking in class discussions
- Listening and in turn responding to conversations
- Expanding vocabulary banks
- Focus on activities that have a discrete aim in the development of language
- An adult reading to pupils and comprehending the storyline
- Consulting individual Montessori language folders that have been developed over an extensive period of time

Competence and confidence in using language

- The five contexts used in the teaching of oral language play a large role in daily school life. Each class level teacher will plan together –
    - Talk and discussion
    - Play and games
    - Poetry
    - Story
    - Improvisational drama
- Extensive strategies are used to develop children's social use of language throughout the school day both during structured activities and incidentally *e.g. greeting the directress each morning, giving and receiving greetings, making introductions, articulating one's needs, making an inquiry, giving directions*
- Strategies are used to improve children's expressive use of language, such as show & tell, adjectives work, describing a scene.
- Thematic approaches are adopted which are agreed a teachers' group planning however this is not the sole approach. There is continuity and progression in relation to themes through activities, link within areas and integration across a variety of subjects.
- The organisational settings in MAMJ are mainly collaborative: providing for pair work, working collaboratively, working in whole class settings, formal and informal debates, circle work and other activities
- Pupils have multiple opportunities to present their work to a variety of audiences, *e.g. presenting projects to classmates and then engaging in Q&A sessions, working with neighbouring classes, teachers, exhibiting projects and work on our exhibition table for fellow pupils to observe and discuss*
- Oral language is the basis for reading and writing and therefore plays a vital role in its acquisition and expansion
- All subjects taught in our school have a basis in oral language from comprehension on maths word problems to following the instructions of a science experiment

- **Appendix B:** A grammar programme that transcends all class levels that ensures continuity and progression of learning outcomes is outlined in Appendix B

Developing cognitive abilities through language

- It is most important to teachers in MAMJ to expose pupils to strategies that develop children's higher order thinking skills, e.g.
  - to use questions in order to gain maximum information;
  - to seek and to give explanations;
  - to discuss different possible solutions to problems;
  - to argue a point of view;
  - to persuade others;
  - to examine fact and fiction,
  - bias and objectivity
- The school use oral language to develop children's comprehension skills i.e. greater use of oral language as an alternative to written exercises, presenting work to groups, being involved in Q & A sessions

Emotional and imaginative development through language

- Children are encouraged to explore experiences and feelings through talk, writing, play and drama

Discrete oral language time:

- Discrete oral language time is allocated at each class level e.g. Montessori 3-6 class would engage in a variety of activities to enhance and reinforce language development through individual work, class discussions and pair work.
- As MAMJs focus is that of a constructivist approach, aspects of language such as form, structure and use will be addressed within oral language time

Oral language across the curriculum:

The use of talk and discussion is seen as a powerful learning strategy in every aspect of the teaching and learning day. The following examples show how the use of oral language in different subjects can also be used to address the strands of the English curriculum.
  - **Maths:** Guided discussion in developing strand units, the problem-solving process, and reporting on the process subsequently
  - **P.E.:** Use of terminology, e.g. soccer, tag-rugby or basketball terms
  - **Science:** Use of terminology, process of investigating and reporting on findings
  - **SPHE:** Exploring relevant themes through the medium of talk and discussion

Reading

The school is a rich print environment for the classroom setting to the colourful, interesting and continually changing displays on the corridors. The exhibition tables are unique to Mount Anville Montessori Junior School which celebrate the work and achievements of our pupils to the whole MAMJ community. The rich print environment also includes labels, posters, charts, library, ICT resources, dictionaries, newspapers

There is a huge emphasis on reading for pleasure throughout the school. Each class has a library and there is school library for all classes use. Teachers would have a huge grá for reading a variety of materials, from newspaper articles to novels relating to historical events.

Teachers act as role models when reading to the class to enhance and display the conventions of a book, tone, pace, fluidity and joy of reading.

Oral language is fundamental to reading and therefore reading sessions rely heavily on oral language and writing, using a holistic focus on the skills to be developed

There are many genres/procedures of reading that are integrated in all subject areas throughout the class levels which are summarized on the grid below:

Reading to students	Sharing a text for pleasure Effective reading behaviours exhibited Wide variety of texts Give an opportunity to the teacher to observe the pupils' reading behaviours to reinforce or intervene if needed
Modelling reading (teacher, student, classroom assistant)	Demonstrated reading behaviours and strategies A reading event e.g. reading a book at assembly by the DP Short modelled reading (e.g. 5/10 minutes) Students could 'have a go' following the modelled reading
Life experiences approach	The movable alphabet allows Montessori pupils to create a moment from their life experiences and transfer it to their story writing Pupils write their experience on a page/copy and an illustration may follow Inspiration to write a story may come from planning classroom activities e.g. show and tell, visit to wildlife garden
Following an event	Cultural visit e.g. St Enda's park Observing birds in Ms Hadden's Garden
Shared Reading	Teacher directs a session to blend modelled reading, choral reading followed by a focused discussion It can be paired, group or class involvement
Guided reading	Small group reading Encourage discussion and practice activities
Book discussion groups	Small groups or class meet to discuss the class reader or a chosen novel Book is read independently Teacher may facilitate discussion

Reading Schemes: see resources section of plan

In the Montessori 2 ½ to 6 year classes, the teachers blend many reading schemes and library books to create a variety of books for pupil selection to suit interests, learning outcomes and standards.

Use is made of alternative reading materials throughout the school e.g. parallel schemes, supplementary readers, textbooks from other areas of the curriculum, big books, ICT programmes, novels, novels, poetry, and class novels

There is a reading culture in the school with a variety of activities and creative work that occurs based on the reading material. Class teachers support reading through DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading) and timetable weekly sessions in the school library.

On an annual basis, there is a paired reading project between 2nd class and a Junior Department classes. The class teachers involved organised the schedule, pairings and arrangements.

The Support teachers in the school place a large focus on literacy (Learning Support Policy) from all abilities with each class ensuring the support is tailored to wards the needs in that class and year level.

There are many book related events held in the school throughout the year e.g. book fairs, book week, dress up as your favourite character

Through the library committee authors, poets, journalists or other writers tried to be invited to read and speak to the children at all class levels each year

The pupils often use reading materials to inspire the Drama sessions (weekly for 3rd class to 6th class) to foster emotional and imaginative response and development.

The class teacher is always striving for and promoting independence. Some strategies that may be promoted are:

- Use a quiet voice.

- Ask someone at your group for help.

- Ask another person at your group for help.

- Leave it blank and move on.

Suggested 6 Step Approach to a Reading Session

Menu of elements of a reading Session	Possible Foci
1. Book Introduction	➢ Prior knowledge ➢ context of the book ➢ predict using cover, title, author ➢ difficult words

	➤ Picture Walk (whole book)
2. Strategy Check	➤ Consolidating various strategies e.g. connecting ➤ word attack skills e.g. chunking
3. Independent Reading	➤ Remind children of skills they will be using ➤ Reading aloud Vs Silent reading (pace, rate, intonation, expression, fluency) ➤ Here the teacher supports the child in specific areas to drive improvement
4. Returning to the Text	➤ Comprehension ➤ effective questioning (literal, inferential and evaluative – a ménage of all)
5.Response to the Text	➤ Critical thinking through discussion ➤ giving opinions ➤ asking questions ➤ follow up activity
6. Re-reading Guided Text	➤ Where? ➤ When? ➤ Why?

Some activities for use with a novel story book or class novel

- Rewrite or retell the story or book as a play, short story, picture book, folktale, soap-opera or TV/Film script.
- Write an introduction, epilogue, different ending or an additional chapter.
- Design a bookmark, book jacket or front cover for a book using art or ICT techniques.
- Make a poster that advertises the book, depicts favourite scenes or describes a 'wanted' character from a book using art or ICT techniques.
- Keep a diary from the point of view of one character in a book.
- Write an original dialogue between two characters from a book.
- Make a diorama or frieze/mural depicting the major scene/setting in a particular book.
- Act out a favourite scene from a book using simple puppets.
- Write a letter to the author of a book asking questions about his/her work (or send an e-mail)
- Dress up as a character from a book or story and tell your story.
- Illustrate the setting for a book/story as a visual map, a travel brochure, a photo album or a travel poster.
- Look at different versions of the same story and make a comparison chart.
- Make a big book, a picture book or wordless book from a favourite story/book.
- Make a class graph of favourite books, authors or characters from books.
- Create a dictionary of words or facts learned from a particular book.
- Find and read reviews of children's books. Give a summary report. Write your own review.
- Research information about an author using ICT and search engines.
- Interview questions – who? what? when? where? what?
- Write an e-mail to a character
- Design a card (thanks you, invitation, get well) for a character

- Book review (rating)
- Predicting with evidence
- Poem – Acrostic, Limerick etc. character poem
- Character description – character brainstorm
- Setting description or draw setting and label
- Comic strip to include speech bubbles
- NewsHound activity – after reading find the language of all the Who, when, where, what and record under the appropriate heading
- How many adjectives can you find on the last page you read?
- How many commas are on the last page you read – record the rules for when commas are used.

Comprehension Strategies

Overview of Reading Strategies	Description
Predicting	- Helps activate prior knowledge - Based on clues in text (pictures, subtitles, etc.)
Connecting	Connecting prior knowledge to new information
Comparing	Thinking more specifically about connections they are making, e.g. How is this different to....?
Inferring	Taking information from a text and creating their own interpretations beyond the literal level.
Synthesising	Piecing information together as students read a text, to keep track of what is happening
Creating Images	Creating sensory images to assist with overall comprehension of a text
Self-questioning	Providing a framework for active learning as students engage with the text to find answers
Skimming	Glancing quickly through material to gain an overall view of text
Scanning	Glancing through a text to locate specific details , e.g. names, dates etc.
Determining Importance	Prioritising most important information from phrase, sentence, paragraph, chapter or whole text
Summarising and Paraphrasing	- Reducing larger texts to focus on important elements - Re-stating/re-writing text in own words using key words to capture main focus

One approach that was used during MAMJ CPD both a several staff meetings and workshops in 2013/2014 is the

Gradual Release Model
- Modelled Reading e.g.
  - Teacher 'thinks out loud'
  - Brief session
  - Demonstrates reading behaviours and strategies

- Shared Reading e.g.

- Teacher managed blend of modelling, choral reading and focused discussion
- Students observe a good model and are invited to read-along
- Language Experience Approach

- Guided Reading e.g.
  - Small group with similar need and group read a common text
  - Teacher is the guide/gives the focus
  - Encourage discussion and practice activities

- Applying/Independent Reading e.g.
  - DEAR time
  - Pupils take charge of their own reading
  - Pupils select their own texts

MAMJ Collation of Practices in Story Books and Novels	
3-6 Classes	- Teacher read story to children - The story can consolidate themes covered e.g. Autumn - Teachers encourage parents to read to their child - Teachers encourage children to read books in the class library - Teachers read with children using readers at an appropriate level - Teachers use story books to develop comprehension strategies - Teachers hear individual reading with children - Children choose reading exercise from the shelf on themes of the week - Children do group grammar exercise from books they are reading from class library - Older children read stories to younger children - Teachers can read novels to children over the course of the year
1st Class	- Teacher read story to children - The story can consolidate themes covered e.g. Autumn - Teachers encourage parents to read to their child - Teachers encourage children to read books in the class library - Reading is as part of the child's daily homework using a reading scheme designated by the class teacher - Weekly visits to the school library where pupils are surrounded by our print rich environment - Creating images - We did do reading buddies and may do again after Christmas
2nd Class	How many recommended novels on average to cover in a school year: 2 Name of novels covered each year: The worst witch James and the giant peach Supplementary class novels that <u>may</u> be covered during the year:

	Teacher may choose to read novels at the lunch time
	Children really enjoy 'The Legend of Spud Murphy' by Eoin Colfer and other book in the series, very age appropriate for 2nd class
	
	School Library: Weekly visit to school library as per school timetable
	          Pupils choose an individual library book to bring home
	          Books clubs are held intermittently
	          Author visits are arranged by librarian on an annual basis
	          Displays of pupils book reviews
	Children shown how to choose books in the library
	Children taught about different types of books/authors
	Appropriate for their age and level and how to find these in both the school and their local library

3rd Class	How many recommended novels on average to cover in a school year:
	10-20 depending on the size of the book and the reading ability of the child. They take these books from the library.
	
	Name of novels covered each year:
	Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo
	American Girls Collection
	Popular authors with 3rd class: Enid Blyton, Roald Dahl, Judi Curtin, Michael Morpugo, Cathy Cassidy, Jeff Kiney, JK Rowling, Tom Gates, Peter Clover Smith, Anne Fire, Dav Pilky, Gwyneth Rees
	
	Supplementary class novels that <u>may</u> be covered during the year:
	We don't do a class novel in 3r class
	
	School Library: Weekly visit to school library as per school timetable
	          Pupils choose an individual library book to bring home
	          Books clubs are held once a week
	          Author visits are arranged by librarian on an annual basis
	          Displays of pupils book reviews
	          Class library

4th Class	How many recommended novels on average to cover in a school year: One novel Name of novels covered each year: Novel written by Siobhan Parkinson, sisters..No Way, etc. Linked with visiting author Supplementary class novels that <u>may</u> be covered during the year: The Butterfly Lion Michael Morpugo, this novel changes every year. We borrow from Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Libraries

	School Library: Weekly visit to school library as per school timetable
	        Pupils choose an individual library book to bring home
	        Books clubs are held intermittently
	        Author visits are arranged by librarian on an annual basis
	        Displays of pupils book reviews

5th Class	How many recommended novels on average to cover in a school year:
	On average 4 per year
	
	Name of novels covered each year:
	Under the hawthorn tree by Marita Conlon McKenna
	Wonder by RJ Palacio
	Wild flower girl by Marita Conlon McKenna
	Private peaceful by Michael Morpugo
	The boy in the striped pyjamas by John Boyne
	
	Supplementary class novels that may be covered during the year:
	
	School Library: Weekly visit to school library as per school timetable
	        Pupils choose an individual library book to bring home
	        Books clubs are held intermittently
	        Author visits are arranged by librarian on an annual basis
	        Displays of pupils book reviews

6th Class	How many recommended novels on average to cover in a school year:
	2 in class
	
	Name of novels covered each year:
	I am Davi by Anne Holm
	Second class novel TBC later in the year
	
	Supplementary class novels that may be covered during the year:
	
	School Library: Weekly visit to school library as per school timetable
	        Pupils choose an individual library book to bring home
	        Books clubs are held intermittently
	        Author visits are arranged by librarian on an annual basis
	        Displays of pupils book reviews

Writing

MAMJ Suggested Conventions of Punctuation

<u>Afternooners</u>
- Draw yourself and write your name
- Find capital letters in words
- Find capital letters in lists of letters
- Matching lower case to capital letters
- Copy lower case and capital letters
- Write the correct lower case letter with the capital letter

<u>First Class</u>
- Revision of capital letters / full stops
- Capital letters in months, days, titles, places
- Capital letter – I
- Question marks
- Rewrite sentences using capital letters and full stops
- Identifying correct sentences with capital letters and full stops
- Commas
- Writing address
- Writing name

<u>Second Class</u>
- Ordering the days/months – capital letters
- Exclamation marks
- Writing addresses correctly
- Rewriting passages correctly – capital letters, full stops/sentences/short passages using correct punctuation – revision of above work
- Composing short stories from pictorial clues paying attention to correct punctuation

<u>Third Class</u>
- Revision of punctuation concepts to date
- Changing sentences to questions
- Use of comma – not before 'and' and in lists
- Identifying sentences where commas should be used
- Work on speech punctuation
- Speech marks
- Exclamation marks
- Use of exclamation marks as punctuation marks in a sentence

<u>Fourth Class</u>
- Commas to break up sentences

- Editing skills/symbols
- Using question marks
- Punctuation in letter writing for contractions
- Capitals for proper nouns
- Revise beginning of a sentence, name, person, place, date
- Use of hyphens
- Apostrophes to shorten words

Fifth Class
- Revision of punctuation concepts from 3rd and 4th class
- Maintaining capital letters
- Maintaining full stops
- Maintaining quotation marks
- Maintaining punctuation marks
- Maintaining inverted commas
- Teaching pronoun I/me
- Teaching all pronouns
- Teaching contractions – negatives developing
- Teaching direct speech
- Teaching indirect speech
- Teaching use of hyphens
- Teaching negatives
- Teaching semi colon
- Teaching apostrophe (shows ownership, abbreviates, use with plural nouns ending in s)

Sixth Class
- Teaching dashes
- Teaching the colon
- Teaching compound/complex sentences
- Teaching the passive voice
- Teaching conditionals, abbreviations
- Teaching commas, clause emphasis on giving the reader a pause for breath/grasping information in a sentence
- Simple sentences, capital letters, full stops
- Maintaining capital letters and full stops
- Maintaining direct and indirect speech
- Maintaining apostrophe (possession and contraction)
- Maintaining proofreading and editing
- Maintaining quotation marks
- Maintaining semi-colon

Grammar Suggested List of Topics per Class Level

This is a suggested list of areas / topics found relevant at the different class levels. Teachers should feel free to adjust, add, and remove items on the lists that are not suitable for their particular class needs or situation.

Senior Infants:
- o Identifying / Ticking the correct sentence e.g. I had some sweet / I had some sweets.
- o Rewriting sentences and putting the words into the correct order.
- o Agreeing / disagreeing with statements eg. The dog flew away [Yes / No]
- o Filling in the missing words in sentences
- o Selecting the correct word to complete a sentence eg The cat was ---- the table [up /on]
- o Selecting the correct word to complete a sentence, using pictorial clues.

First Class:
- o Writing a sentence about a picture
- o Rewriting sentences and putting words in the correct order
- o Verb ~ Finding the missing verb to complete a sentence
- o Identifying verbs in a sentence
- o Noun ~ Completing sentences with appropriate nouns
- o Adjectives ~ Adding adjectives to enhance a sentence
- o Constructing a sentence from a noun, a verb and an adjective.
- o Filling the blanks in short passages using nouns/verbs/adjectives.
- o Writing simple sentences to describe what is happening in the picture
- o Writing sentences using verbs in past, present and future tense
- o Writing sentences in singular / plural ~ are / is.

Second Class:
- o Revision of concepts of singular /plural; past / present tense, as introduced in first class.
- o Completion of a short story using suitable words / phrases [Cloze Procedure]
- o Rewriting instructions in the correct order
- o Pronoun ~ Exercises replacing nouns with suitable pronouns
- o Selecting correct pronouns for different sentences
- o Further exercises ~ past /present tense, singular / plural
- o Preposition ~ Completion of sentences using correct prepositions
- o Rewriting given passages / short stories in the past /present / future tense.
- o Writing about pictures, using nouns/pronouns, verbs and adjectives

Third Class:
- o Verbs ~ grouping into categories eg.run = dash, sprint, jog, chase, rush etc.
- o Making sentences more interesting by changing the verb eg. I **went** to school
- o Writing short pieces eg. newspaper reports, diary etc in the first, second or third person [singular / plural]
- o Completion of sentences using personal pronouns
- o Collective Nouns ~ writing the collective noun for different groups.
- o Find / Invent collective nouns for different groups
- o Using singular /plural or both?
- o Changing from singular to plural
- o Extending sentences
- o Conjunctions ~ rewriting sentences using conjunctions
- o Adjectives ~ Grouping adjectives by type eg. colours ~ dull, dark, red, scarlet, beige etc.
- o Changing a short written passage by replacing the adjectives

Fourth Class:
- o Changing nouns from singular to plurals 'RULES'

- List adjectives to describe a picture ~ write a short passage using the adjectives from your list
- Adjectives ~ comparative / superlative ~ Making a table
- Using comparative adjectives to describe pictures.
- Constructing sentences using comparative adjectives.
- Changing adjectives to comparative adjectives ~ spelling rules.
- Compiling lists of comparative adjectives, going from least to most eg. tiny, small, big, huge, enormous.
- Further 'tense' work
- Adverbs ~ classifying by 'where' 'when' 'how'
- Sentence construction, using adverbs in the sentences.
- Finding a number of adverbs that can be used with a list of verbs

Fifth Class
- Adding prepositions to sentences
- In all writing activities, check for the correct use of words.
- Agreement of singular and plural with nouns and verbs
- The use of double negatives eg. I'm not going nowhere.
- Classifying nouns by type ~ proper, common, collective, abstract.
- Review of personal pronouns
- Clauses ~ Adding second clauses to sentences
- Direct and Indirect speech

Sixth Class:
- Clarifying / further practice with pronouns & prepositions
- Subject and Object in a sentence
- Correct use of formal language
- Review of past work

Writing

- When students are planning writing, children are introduced to a variety of strategies, *e.g. brainstorming, webbing, and research*
- A continuity and progression handwriting plan from Montessori to Sixth Class is attached in appendix A
- Pupil's written work is valued both in the class setting and on the corridors *e.g. displayed, writer's corner and constructive comment*
- There is an agreed handwriting style is used throughout the school:

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z	Upper case	
a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h

i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p
q	r	s	t
u	v	w	x
y	z	Lower Case	

The development of spellings skills

The focus of planning is on the child's acquisition of spelling skills and his/her progress with spelling.

- There are a variety of approaches taken to Spelling throughout MAMJ. The Montessori approach relies on spelling phonetically to frequent sight words.
- Spellings are monitored through mini class assessments to observation of copy exercises
- Are a variety of approaches used to promote spellings, e.g. Spelling B, displaying work, organic word wall
- Do children engage in pre-spelling activities through phonological and phonemic awareness using the Montessori approach
- Spellings are taken from the child's own work, readers, determined list, thematic and dolch list.
- Approximate spelling accepted in early writing, however the child will be given direction or a discrete lesson if there is repetition of the mistake
- Through discussion at each level amongst the class teacher and the learning-support teacher assign spellings
- At the Welcome Meetings, at the start of each year, teachers make parents aware of how they might help their children with spellings

Assessment and Record Keeping

(Refer to school's Record Keeping Policy and Learning Support Policy)
- Teachers use a broad range of assessment tools
    - Teacher observation
    - Teacher designed tasks/tests
    - Portfolios of children's work
    - Checklists
    - Standardised test: Drumcondra from 1st to 6th class (class assess in April/May and 6th class in Set/Oct)
    - Diagnostic tests – depending on the needs/concerns of an individual
    - Screening test: MIST at Afternooner class level

- The use of the results of assessments
    - Teacher compares to see if results are commensurate with ability and general expectation
    - Achievement is annually evaluated in comparison with national norms and using a variety of graphs
    - The results inform class teaching and also identify if further assessment is needed for the whole class or specific individuals. It is important to note that any assessment is a snap shot of the child in that moment in time. It is most important to build a profile of a child through exploring a variety of assessments both formal and informal.
    - How do teachers share information with each other, with parents, with children, with other professionals?

- o Parents inform parents of their child development through homework, copy work, comments on pieces of work, parent-teacher meetings and progress/report cards.
- Teacher must keep all records of pupils in a safe and secure place. All classroom have a unit that can be locked for files, reports and assessments.
- Records Keeping Policy needs to be adhered to with regard to the length that documents will be kept and whom has access to them.

Children with different needs

Children with learning disabilities *(Refer to school's Learning-Support Policy)*
- All students are embraced in MAMJ and being unique is important. MAMJ support each pupil and try to ensure that each pupil is supported to achieve their potential
- All children enabled to make an important contribution regardless of academic achievement
- There is a collaborative approach in devising Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) for pupils who have specific needs with a psychological report. The Support teacher is responsible for the creation of the IEP in consultation with the class teacher, pupil and parents. The IEP will be communicated with parents through formal meetings twice a year.
- List the resource materials, ICT hardware and software, used by children with learning difficulties. Identify other resource materials, which the school will require.

Children with exceptional ability

- The school support children of exceptional ability by extension activities, raising achievement level, a variety of resources and further educational support
- Current good practice/proposed practice includes
  - o Differentiated programme within the classroom and/or homework
  - o Accelerated reading programmes
  - o Use of ICT
  - o Independent research projects
  - o Working with parents
  - o Consulting organisations such as *An Óige Thréitheach, Centre for Talented Youth*
  - o Collaborative projects with a group of students.

Equality of participation and access

(Refer to school's Equality Policy I Employee Booklet)

Have all children access to services, facilities or amenities in the school environment.

The school will identify provision that may be required, as and where necessary, for the following
- o Members of the Traveller community
- o Children experiencing any form of disadvantage
- o Children with specific learning or physical needs
- o Families with literacy problems
- o Families for whom English is not the first language.

Timetable

English is allocated into a session per day in every class, with a minimum of 4 hours (3 hours for the shorter day). There is a huge emphasis to integrate English throughout subject areas. Integrated activities, thematic and cross-curricular approaches.

Homework

(Refer to school's Homework Policy)

- English homework reflects the active learning approach as described in the curriculum
- There a balance in homework assignments between oral, reading and writing activities
- All pupils assigned the same homework in general however some special consideration is given to some pupils for many reasons
- There is communication between the class teacher and the Support teacher in setting homework assignments

Library

The library is fully computerised. A Step-by-Step guide to operating this package is in a green and white folder called DataBiz Solutions. The computer must be updated at the beginning of each academic year. Class lists of students' 2nd to 6th class can be obtained from the Welcome Office

Maintenance:

The library is to be kept tidy at all times.
Books when returned should be returned to their appropriate shelves.
New students using the library listen to a talk on Library Etiquette and how to use and respect the library.

Activities and Events:

- **Library Timetable:**
    o Each class from 2nd to 6th inclusive is timetabled for a 30 minute period each week to facilitate borrowing and returning books.
    o A student may borrow no more than two books at a time.
    o Students may also reserve a book which may have been borrowed by another student,
    o Students may use the non- fiction section to aid them with projects.
    o Books must be returned or renewed each week.

- **Book Club**
    o 4th 5th and 6th
    o Each class is divided into 4 smaller groups.
    o Each group reads the Book Club choice for that month and takes part in a discussion led by the librarian (who has prepared discussion questions).
    o Several students write a book review for display and future reference.

    Read To Me:
    o 1st and 2nd Class
    o Students are timetabled for 30mins each week. The Librarian reads a book over several weeks.
    o The students are encouraged to visualize the scenes in the book. Students then draw a picture of their favourite scene.

- **Suggested reading material**
  - A Recommended Reading List is compiled by reference to the books that the students have read and enjoyed from the library during the year, and by books they have recommended themselves. This list covers many topics and genres to be read for pleasure during the summer break. This list is on our website.

- **Authors' visits**

  Parents involvement/committee:
  - The Library has a parent committee who help out each week to facilitate the borrowing and returning of books. New volunteers are always welcome. Volunteers also plan such activities as Book Fairs /Book Swaps.

- **Book Fair:** The Annual Book Fair takes place towards the end of November. It is an event that both parents, children and staff look forward.

- **World Book Day:**
  We celebrate World Book Day in March each year. Usually students from 1st to 6th Classes dress up as book characters as part of our celebration of World Book Day. Older pupils read to younger pupils at various time during the World Book Day.

Resources

1st-6th class   Edco 'Just Write' series (cursive script starts in 2nd class)

2nd-3th class   Dictionary (Fallons) and 4th-6th class dictionary (Mini Oxford)

3rd-6th class   Spellbound (C.J.Fallon) and 2nd My Spelling Workbook (Prim Ed)

2nd-6th C.J. Fallon English Programme and 1st class (Gill and MacMillan)

- Teacher have many visual representations both printed and on computer. The whiteboard/apple t.v. have increased the variety of visuals that can be utilised

- There are teacher resource books available in the staffroom, in Support Room, RSA boxes in various classrooms to support a theme and extend practices

- The Welcome Office has a list of resources and their location. Ms Shelford has communal resources on display in her Support room

- Pupils would frequently use the IT Hub to create projects on topics researched, through word, i-movies and photos

ICT (See Policy)

Individual teachers' planning and reporting

- It should be borne in mind that in planning for the teaching of English in the classroom, the teacher needs to take account of the integrated nature of the subject.

- This plan should provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short-term planning. This plan is saved on the communal teacher plans and policies file on the MAMJ computer system

- Teacher plan on a fortnightly basis, as a team to outline the content of English and its integration across all subject areas

Staff development

- Teachers have access to current research, reference books, resource materials, websites dealing with language learning in the staffroom and on teacher 'p' drive where CPD documents are placed for sharing
- Courses are made available on-site and teachers are encouraged to attend
- Teachers are encouragement to share the expertise acquired at these courses at staff meetings or documents can be disseminated by internal e-mail.
- Time can be allocated at staff meetings to discuss literacy issues, language development, specific issues by identifying the issue on the staff meeting agenda
- Teachers can avail of internal and/or external expertise to support their development with certain issues
- There are opportunities for team-teaching with the Support teacher or other opportunities can be arranged

Parental involvement

- Each class level host a Welcome Meeting near the start of the school year.
- There are two parent-teacher meetings per school year and 2 progress/report cards. Parents may also request meeting with the class teacher during the school year.
- Are parent
- Parents can support their child's reading *e.g. paired reading, shared reading, story reading, reading environmental print, ICT programmes, homework – hearing reading and talking about reading, involvement with the school library, local library, book fairs, book week, other?*
- *Workshops are organised for parents at the request of the PCC or through discussion with the principal*
- The school encourage current parents to visit the school on Open Days for the pupils to show their parents their work and projects.
- The school have created an information booklet and newsletters are published every term.
- The school website have much information and have a 'latest news' section
- If the parent is anxious or concern about their child's learning, it is vital that they speak to the class teacher at the earliest possible moment to explore possible resolution and support systems.

Success criteria

Supporting teacher implementation of the English Plan
- o Teachers' preparation based on this plan
- o Procedures outlined in this plan followed
- o Feedback from staff and pupils

The plan enhances pupil learning
- o Children have a positive attitude and appreciation of the value of language-spoken, read and written
- o Children have an interest in expression and communication
- o Children have an ability to engage appropriately in listener-speaker relationships
- o Children have confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing
- o Children are engaging with a variety of genre in reading and writing
- o A process approach is evident in writing
- o Comprehension and higher order thinking skills are developed through oral language, reading and writing
- o Children's emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development is enhanced through oral, reading and writing experiences.

Implementation

- Ms Etain will co-ordinate the progress of the plan, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report to staff on findings

- The plans will be reviewed when required or as up-dating and developments occur.

Appendix A: Whole School Development of Handwriting Skills

1. Pre-Writing: What motor skills specifically related to pre writing are dealt with at this class level as appropriate	**3-6**
	Practical life, sensorial, strengthening pincer grip, hand eye coordination
	
	1st Class
	    1. Practical life exercise
	    2. insets
	We would like them to be able to hold a pencil correctly and have formations of all letters.
	
	2nd to 6th Class
	N/A

2. What penmanship skills would be expected by the time a child leaves your class level?	**3-6** N/A **1st Class** To have neat and well-spaced writing and now working with smaller lined copy books. **2nd Class** Hold pencil correctly/form letters with correct starting point/positioning. **3rd Class** Proper seated position, hand/pencil grip. should be able to join all letters using joint handwriting with pencil, good presentation. **4th Class** section not completed. **5th Class** Legibility, neatness, good handwriting style. **6th Class** Children would be expected to write (ideally) in cursive script with a fountain pen and in a relatively neat and legible fashion.
3. What specifically would a child be expected to have achieved at the end of your class in regard to penmanship? E.g formulate properly the letters, add tails to letters, join letters XXXX to letters YYYY or whatever is appropriate depending on class level	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate **3-6** Formulating letter correctly in keeping with the moveable alphabet (US script) and sand paper letters **1st Class** Capital letters(correct formation and use of) gr gx **2nd Class** As above- child has begun to write cursively using handwriting workbook and lined copy. Only some children will transfer this to their own free

	writing. **3rd Class** We would expect each child to be able to do all of the above with exceptions. **4th Class** They should be writing in joined cursive writing. The size should be big enough or small (pen) enough for 4th class copy books. **5th Class** No penmanship is currently used in fifth class. **6th Class** Cursive script, legible handwriting, using fountain pen, pencil only used for maths and drawing diagrams
4. The development of penmanship is supported by school-devised resources and/or commercial material/workbooks? 5. What resources do you find most useful e.g. plain paper, red and blue lined copies, Single lined copies, other etc.	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate **3-6** Penmanship supported by Montessori language materials and school devised resources. Montessori paper initially followed by red and blue copies. **1st Class** Red and blue lined paper & modern handwriting book. Story copybook with narrower lines for reduced size of letters. **2nd Class** 4. Some exercises available to children. Modern handwriting. (i)Capital/lower case letters. (ii) White boards 5. (i) Lined copies(red/blue), (ii) White boards, (iii) Study other styles of writing and the history of writing. (iv)Workbooks(limited way) **3rd Class** 4 Modern handwriting book is used as a guide. 5 Regular lined copy books are used otherwise **4th Class** 4 The development of penmanship is supported by school devised resources and/or commercial material/workbooks. 5 Single lined copies. **5th Class** 4 5th class do not have a designated handwriting programme. 5 Blue line copies are used. Worksheets are photocopied from previous books or from other sources. **6th Class**

	Currently no school devised resources are used officially. We do however feel that certain pupils would benefit from the use of handwriting templates/copies/resources.

6. Is there agreement on the size and formation of all lower-case and capital letters in print format, the order in which letters are introduced, if capital letters are introduced in the same order as lower case?
 	
7. Which letters should be introduced first
- lower case:
Capital:
In which order – i.e. do lower case / capitals come first
	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate
	3-6
	Yes in agreement (not traced in families)
	Families-(i) c,r,a,g,d,o,q,s
	          (ii)l,h,k,m,n,t,r,i,b,j,u
	          (iii)p
	…………….(iv)v,w,x,y
	          (v) not in any particular order
	          (vi)f
	          (vii)e
	1st Class
	6. This is dictated by the lined copybook/paper they are using.
	7. Lower case, then capital.
	2nd Class
	6.Yes in 3-6 classes
	7. Lower case first.
	8. Sound and letter formation. Introduced on families. e.g. c, a, o, d, g, q, l ,r, n ,m etc.
	3rd Class
	6 The foundation of letter formation is done with sand paper letters, this is preparation for letter formation
	7 Lower case to come first
	4th Class
	Yes we follow the workbook. However, if a pupil comes from another school with nice writing we don't change it. Pupils use more lower case in the beginning but capital letters follow quickly.
	5th Class
	Print off the alphabet or script introducing lower case and capital letters from the textbook used in 4th class as a last chance to improve and develop a good handwriting style.
	6th Class
	This would not directly affect the 6th class curriculum. We would imagine the order to be:
	• Lower case in pencil
	• Capital letters in pencil
	• Moving onto pen
	• Cursive letter formation throughout

8. At what stage should cursive writing introduced to children in this school	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate 3-6 Age 3- sandpaper letters 1st Class For some children, it is introduced at the end of first class. 2nd Class Possible introduction at 3-6 level of cursive sandpaper letters. Foundation for all later handwriting. 3rd Class 3rd class for every child. Children who are able to joint writing in younger classes should be encouraged. 4th Class Sand paper letters should be cursive (3-6 class) 5th Class 3rd class for learning support children it may be useful to start earlier. 6th Class We would imagine that as early as possible would be most beneficial.
9. What recommendations do you recommend regarding: 10. pencil grip, 11. pencil type, 12. pen type, 13. copy choice,	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate 3-6 1. Improvement of pincer grip through practical life (tweezers, peas, sponges, squeezing). Sensorial(cylinders, geometric cabinet) 2. △ pencils, tracing insets 3. N/A 4. Montessori lined paper blue and red copies. 1st Class 10. This is established in 3-6 class through use of sensorial material & practical life. Advising parents not to give pencil too early. 11. HB pencil. 12. B2, B4 writing copy. 2nd Class 10. Ensure child is using correct pincer grip as early as possible. 11. Slim triangular pencils if child has difficulty/ use of pencil grips/HB. 12. N/A/ 13. Lined red/blue in beginning.

	3rd Class

10 weak (foam pencil grip); triangular prism pencils
11 HB
12 N/A
13 Standard lined copy; squared math copy
4th Class
10 should be introduced in Montessori through the cylinder etc.
11 HB
12 Parker fountain pen introduced in 4th class
13 Good quality copy that can take ink
5th Class
10 If needed pencil grips are available are available
11 HB
12 Fountain pen recommended on booklist, left handed fountain pens are available
13 Blue line copies
6th Class
10 Pincer grip for holing pencil
11 Pencil only used for maths/diagrams so most are suitable
12 Fountain pen or ink type pen
13 Ruled with a margin (copies vary depending on subjects) |
| 14. When should pens be introduced?
When should rules regarding page layout be introduced?
What type of rules would you recommend?
margins, heading and date etc. | Opinion based on current class/other please indicate
3-6
    1.   Disagreement, 1st? 3rd? 5th?
    2.   In the 3rd year of 3-6years
    3.   Margins, word-spacing.
1st Class
As early as possible. Margin and date straight away in 1st class.
Back to formation of letters. e.g.) c, o, a, g, d, initially.
2nd Class
   15. 3rd/4th
Margins, beginning at the margin, title of work, understanding title, date etc.
3rd Class
2nd/3rd class children should be confident when laying out page.
4th Class
The pupils should be shown how to layout their |

	work from 1st class or <u>earlier</u>. Rules: title, page no, date, straight margin.
	5th Class
	4th class
	2nd class
	Margin, heading, date
	6th Class
	Pens: Approx. 9 to 10 years old but depending on handwriting and how the pupil presents their work.
	Page Layout: should be introduced as early as possible.
	Rules: Margin ruled, date, title, book, page number (maths), question numbers, diagram and labels.
15.What provision should be made for left-handed children?	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate
	3-6
	Positioning of the hand and posture
	1st Class
	Scissors
	2nd Class
	Awareness of child, turning page to one side so child can see work written, extra time perhaps.
	3rd Class
	Position left handers on the left when sitting in pairs. Ensure they have enough elbow room.
	4th Class
	They should have special pens for left handed pupils.#
	5th Class
	Sitting at the edge of a table and left handed pens if required.
	6th Class
	Difficulties using fountain pen should be considered/cursive writing might also prove challenging initially.
16.How much time should be allocated for handwriting practice at your class level	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate
	3-6
	N/A
	1st Class
	For 1st term
	modern handwriting 2/3times weekly
	2nd Class
	Increased time allocated at the beginning of the year. Also based on different children with

	different needs. **3rd Class** We use 'modern handwriting' for practice. Used for early finishers/copybook handwriting is down as a general lesson. Used as a transition. **4th Class** On average 10 minutes a day for the 1st two terms. **5th Class** No time is allocate as such but it may be important to revise these skills in the month of September. **6th Class** At 6th class level, we feel that specific time might not need to be allocated
17.What approach should be adopted to correcting handwriting?	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate **3-6** N/A **1st Class** Can be very difficult to undue bad habits **2nd Class** Gentle!! Highlight to child, give tips to self-correct, practice with writing out poem, passage etc. A decorate around the margin etc. **3rd Class** Practice formatting the letter by tracing the shape on the table as per sand paper letter. **4th Class** Individual help – should be bigger in some cases/smaller etc. **5th Class** Revise letter formation and cursive style. Revise correct posture for handwriting. **6th Class** Children would be encouraged to practice specific letters rather than rewriting an entire piece of work.
18.How are parents made aware of the school's handwriting scheme?	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate **3-6** N/A **1st Class** Copy books and homework sheets. **2nd Class** Information meeting at the beginning of the year.

	3rd Class Welcome meeting with regard to sitting position. School report. Evidence in binder and copy. 4th Class Just write 4 goes home so the parents can see the handwriting. 5th Class Parents are not made aware of our handwriting scheme in 5th class. New pupils often come into the school in 5th class and are left to continue using their own style. 6th Class 'Penmanship' features as a section of the annual school report.

19. Assessment and record keeping in regard to handwriting
20. Which assessment tools would you recommend? E.g
    Teacher observation
    Teacher designed tasks/tests
    Portfolios of children's work
    Checklists/profiles
	Opinion based on current class/other please indicate
	3-6
	N/A
	1st Class
	Teacher observation
	Teacher designed tasks/tests
	Portfolios of children's work
	Checklists/profiles
	2nd Class
	As part of child's own ring binder/folder of work. Showing patterns with letters.
	Teacher observation
	Teacher designed tasks
	3rd Class
	All of the criteria mentioned.
	4th Class
	We see the pupils writing every day in the in copy books and other written work.
	5th Class
	Teacher observation – copies
	Report card – penmanship
	Folders f children's work
	6th Class
	Teacher observation
	Portfolio of child's work e.g. best work folder
	Teacher designed tasks e.g. worksheets or activities/copy pages
	Checklist to monitor pupil progress

MAMJS Penmanship Font

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z		
Lower Case			
a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h
i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p
q	r	s	t
u	v	w	x
y	z		