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een goede basisschool brengt je verder!

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Engels als tweede taal bij o.b.s. Jan Ligthart.

Waarom?

In bijna alle Europese landen is Engels op de basisschool ingevoerd. De lidstaten van de EU voeren hiermee het 'Verdrag van Barcelona' uit. Daarin is afgesproken om zo vroeg mogelijk één of meerdere vreemde talen in het basisonderwijs aan te bieden. Veel landen zijn daar overigens al voor 2002 mee begonnen. Dat is om twee redenen logisch:

- jonge kinderen hebben het vermogen spelenderwijs talen te leren. Uit wetenschappelijk onderzoek en vele praktijkervaringen blijkt telkens weer dat het vermogen om 'spontaan' taal te leren juist bij jonge kinderen uitzonderlijk goed ontwikkeld is. Of het nu gaat om woordjes, het gebruik van onderliggende taalregels of uitspraak: jonge kinderen maken zich letterlijk spelenderwijs de talen eigen die ze om zich heen horen. Bovendien krijgen ze een uitspraak waar menig talendocent jaloers op is.
- Engels is dé communicatietaal van Europa geworden en natuurlijk reageert het onderwijs daarop. Van Estland tot Spanje, van Griekenland tot Finland: de eerste keuze voor een vreemde taal valt op Engels.

In Nederland is Engels sinds 1985 een verplicht vak in het basisonderwijs. Officieel wordt het pas vanaf groep 7 aangeboden. De minister heeft geen beleid ontwikkeld om eerder te beginnen. Dat hebben scholen en besturen de laatste vijf jaar zelf gedaan. Zij zijn met vroeg vreemdetalenonderwijs Engels (vvto E) begonnen. EarlyBird is daar een uitgesproken voorbeeld van.

O.b.s. Jan Ligthart heeft besloten zich te profileren met **Engels als tweede taal in alle groepen**. We hebben een contract getekend met Early Bird (<http://www.earlybirdie.nl>), een native speaker aangesteld (Fiona Slager-Clarke) en ontwikkelingen dit schooljaar 2009-2010 een meerjarenbeleid waarin we onze ideeën nader omschrijven.

Het werk van miss Fiona erg succesvol. We hebben haar gevraagd een tekst voor onze website te schrijven. Uiteraard heeft ze dat met veel plezier gedaan.

Op de volgende pagina treft u haar bijdrage aan:

ENGLISH AT JAN LIGTHART

Why?

Linguistic research has shown that children learn languages easiest at an early age without "overloading" and so "damaging" their ability to learn the other essential skills of reading and writing etc etc.

Learning a second language at a young age also increases the ability of the child to learn additional languages later. In our increasingly international world fluent use of the English language is becoming an essential skill for employment (and leisure) in the future.

When?

Every group has a weekly lesson of between 40 to 60 minutes of English from an English native speaker. Groups 7 and 8 have an additional 30 minute lesson in English from their class teacher each week. Gradually the school is working towards all of the teachers working alongside the native speaker in working with the children using the language English to give instructions. So in the future an art, music or geography lesson will be given in English.

How?

Years 1 and 2

In the first 2 years in groups 1 and 2 the English language is presented in a playful way by the native speaker and class teacher singing songs and rhymes in English. The native speaker also plays games and reads stories to build up the common basic English vocabulary.

Years 3, 4 and 5

Year 3 children are presented with games to extend their vocabulary and revise the vocabulary of the first 2 years. Reading in English is not part of the lesson. It is essential in this year that the children concentrate on learning to establish good reading skills in the Dutch language. Research has found that the learning of English in this playful way at this age does not interfere with the child's ability to learn to read in Dutch.



Year 4

Children in year 4 are given "exposure" to words in the English language via card games. From January of that year short very simple texts in English will be introduced to the children for them to "read" if they would like to try. These will all be words and phrases which they will have learnt in the previous years. There will also be games to further increase vocabulary. Use of TV programmes, computer games and songs also provide a fun way to learn in the lessons.

Year 5.

Children start to read a simple level of graded reader especially developed for young second language learners of English. Simple speaking exercises are also used. And of course the lessons still include vocabulary games and activities in English. And again special TV programmes and computer games are used too.

Year 6.

An extended vocabulary picture dictionary type story book is used in group 6 to take the children's vocabulary knowledge to the next level. The next level of speaking exercises are used too and of course more complicated language games, TV and computer programmes. Simple writing exercises may also be introduced now.

Years 7 and 8.

Special story books for second language learners of English are now used. These stories are aimed at the children's interest level, (adventure stories for example). The speaking exercises are a little more difficult and writing skills will be further developed. In addition to the use of TV and computer programmes there will be an opportunity for the children to e-mail with other children in Europe who are also learning English.

As the children's ability to understand and use English increases so will in the years to come we will have to adapt the English lessons to the needs and interest of the children. This means that our English programme will to some extent will always be evolving to meet the requirements of the child.

Dutch Children Reading in English. Some Remarkable Research.

Children at our school are now reading in my lessons in English every week. I start this from half way through the school year in group 4 till group 8 where some children are now reading independently. Specially selected books for second language learners of English are being used for this. Why?

Well, here is some interesting background information about reading skills and Dutch learners of English. I recently attended a conference where Ans van Berkel linguist at the Vrije University Amsterdam presented her latest research findings. She looked at the English reading abilities of three groups of Dutch children. Children at the end of their first year at VMBO/HAVO, children who had had lessons in English in groups 7 and 8 of the primary school and the English reading abilities of Dutch children in groups 4 and 5 who had had "lessons" in English from entry into the primary school from group 1.

Her conclusions showed that Dutch children are able to transfer reading skills learnt when being taught to read in Dutch and use these skills to read in English with little difficulty and no extra reading instruction for how to read in English! So Dutch children do not need to be taught the English *teken-klankkoppelingen* (phonics) in order to read in English. Instead they use analogy, that is they group words together ie *day, play, say, may, way* that they have heard spoken.

What appears essential from her research is the quantity and quality of education the Dutch children receive in reading in Dutch - something which our school is very committed to. This combined with the fact that the children are "exposed" from group one to a great many English words will enable our children to attain good reading skills in English – something in fact that is already happening in the older groups. And don't forget that having good skills in one second language helps you obtain a third (or more) language easier, which will be useful when your child starts to learn French for example at secondary school.

Ok, but what about the weak readers and dyslexic children? Dyslexia is the area of research Ans van Berkel is best known for of course. She had weak readers also read the words list she used for the average reading ability children and found: "*Bij het oplezen van bekende Engelse*

woorden blijven zwakke lezers wel achter bij de gemiddelde en goede lezers, maar scoren niet slecht". Her research suggests that these children are also able to develop reasonable reading skills in English when the emphasis is put on auditory skills – so story books with simple spellings and listening cd's are best for these children – and I have such books which will be provided for these children when appropriate.

Fiona Slager- Clarke.

Heeft u vragen over deze bijdrage van miss Fiona, neemt u dan per e-mail contact met haar op: fijanligthart@xs4all.nl.

Weeks 1,2 and 3 (2010-2011).Groups 1 and 2 English with Miss Fiona.

I will be singing the following songs with groups 1 and 2 for the first 3 weeks of the school year. Our theme is colours.

Good afternoon children, how are you? (was good morning)

What will the weather be?

Days of the week.

Sing a Rainbow

One elephant came out to play.

The words to these songs are on the notice board as you come into school at Plein Emaus.

They are also in the song book of course. More song books (will all of the songs)

and CDs will be made soon if you want to buy one.

Happy new school year to you all.

Fiona