



Literacy & English Policy

Rationale

Language and literacy are of personal, social and economic importance. Our ability to use language lies at the centre of the development and expression of our emotions, our thinking, our learning and our sense of personal identity. Language is itself a key aspect of our culture. Through language, children and young people can gain access to the literary heritage of humanity and develop their appreciation of the richness and breadth of Scotland's literary heritage. Children and young people encounter, enjoy and learn from the diversity of language used in their homes, their communities, by the media and by their peers.

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum. Because of this, all teachers have responsibility for promoting language and literacy development.

Building the Curriculum 1

Learning in Literacy and English enables learners to:

- develop their ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings and respond to those of other people
- develop the high level of skills in listening, talking, reading and writing which are essential for learning, work and life
- use different media effectively for learning and communication
- develop a secure understanding of how language works, and use language well to communicate ideas and information in English and other languages
- exercise their intellectual curiosity by questioning and developing their understanding, and use creative and critical thinking to synthesise ideas and arguments

Aims

Pupils will develop and extend their literacy skills as they have opportunities to:

- communicate, collaborate and build relationships
- reflect on and explain their literacy and thinking skills, using feedback to help them improve and sensitively provide useful feedback for others
- engage with and create a wide range of texts
- develop their understanding of what is special, vibrant and valuable about their own and other cultures and their languages in different media, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT
- explore the richness and diversity of language, how it can affect them, and the wide range of ways in which they and others can be creative
- extend and enrich their vocabulary through listening, talking, watching and reading.

The Core Programme

The three organisers within the literacy framework are the same as those used in the literacy and English, literacy and Gàidhlig, Gaelic (learners) and modern languages frameworks:

- listening and talking
- reading
- writing

Within these organisers there are a number of subdivisions.

Enjoyment and choice experiences and outcomes highlight the importance of providing opportunities for young people to make increasingly sophisticated choices.

The *tools* sections include important skills and knowledge: for example, in reading it includes such important matters as reading strategies and spelling.

The sections on *finding and using information* include, in reading, critical literacy skills; while the *understanding, analysing and evaluating* statements encourage progression in understanding of texts, developing not only literal understanding but also the higher order skills. Finally, the *creating texts* experiences and outcomes describe the kind of opportunities which will help children and young people to develop their ability to communicate effectively, for example, by writing clear, well-structured explanations.

Through our Active Literacy approach to learning we hope to provide learners with opportunities to:

Listen and talk for learning

- engage with others in group and class discussions of appropriate complexity
- learn collaboratively - for example, when problem solving
- explain their thinking to others
- explore factors which influence them and persuade them in order to help them think about the reliability of information

Read for learning

- find, select, sort, summarise and link information from a variety of sources
- consider the purpose and main concerns in texts, and understand the differences between fact and opinion
- discuss similarities and differences between texts

Write for learning

- make notes, develop ideas and acknowledge sources in written work
- develop and use effective vocabulary
- create texts - for example, presentations - which allow learners to persuade/argue/explore ideas

Learning and Teaching Approaches

All children develop at an individual rate, therefore needs must be met by providing a variety kinds of learning and delivering them using a range of teaching approaches.

There will be occasions when whole class, group and individual teaching will occur. Literacy groupings are identified in the forward planning folder.

Teaching exhibits the following key features:

- Activities are well-structured
- There is good pace of work during lessons
- Teachers provide thorough explanation of concepts and utilise effective questioning techniques to support assessment of learning
- Teachers set high standards and explain new vocabulary
- Lessons include challenge where pupils are required to apply skills within different contexts
- Lessons end with a plenary sessions
- Current Literacy and English activities should be included in the homework programme

Reading

Primary 1-3

Children are taught to read through the process of guided reading using a variety of quality short texts, from a range of publishers. The books are organised into levels. This is known as 'banding'. Each band is represented by a different colour. Within each band there will be a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts that allow the children to experience many styles of writing.

Primary 4-7

Children are explicitly taught through a four day reading programme, that comprises of:

- 1 Fluency
- 2 Comprehension
- 3 Writing linked to reading/novel
- 4 Talking and Listening linked to reading/novel

The programme adopts a multisensory, problem solving approach which is well-structured and interactive.

The reading books selected have been identified in line with SLC as quality texts providing opportunities for reflection and discussion, rather than being from a traditional reading scheme. In this way children are exposed to a wider variety of authors, styles and contexts.

The programme also highlights the importance of developing children's higher order thinking and critical literacy skills. These skills are developed through the teaching of the six comprehension strategies:

- Prior Knowledge
- Metalinguistics (Tricky Words)
- Visualisation
- Inference
- Main Idea/Theme
- Summarisation

Spelling/Phonics

Primary 1-3

The programme takes a holistic, synthetic and integrated approach to phonics learning and it promotes daily Listening and Talking, Reading and Writing across the Curriculum.

Phonics is taught with one main focussed lesson in the week, followed by short daily activities to reinforce the learning. Initially two sounds are taught per week (Stage 1/Term 1). This is followed by one taught phoneme sound per week.

The Teacher introduces each sound in a context i.e. a story/song and then demonstrates the letter formation and word building through the use of a magnetic board and letters. The children are provided with a magnetic board to allow them to mirror the taught lesson and work independently/with a partner throughout the week.

Primary 4/5

Spelling and Phonics are taught together at this stage. The children are taught in a block of four weeks, with two weeks being focussed on teaching phonemes and their representations, one week on strategy spelling and one week on spelling rules.

The children will continue to use the structure of SAY, MAKE/BREAK, BLEND, READ and WRITE, with which they have become familiar during stages 1-3. They will also continue to work with a partner and reciprocally teach.

In the first two weeks of the programme, the focus is on teaching the different representations of a phoneme sound. For example the sound 'ee' can be made by ee, e, ea, ie, e-e. The children follow a ten day programme which involves, independent and partner tasks, to consolidate their phonological awareness.

In week three the 'Thinking Strategies Approach' is used to teach spelling and this will involve children in using the common word unit or in making their own personal spelling word banks.

In week four the children will learn to use a spelling rule.

Primary 6/7

Children are taught spelling in two main ways at stage 6 and 7. They are taught common words appropriate to their stage, interdisciplinary learning, writing genre features or current school events. Spelling strategies and spelling rules continue to be the focus for teaching these types of words. Children will work with partners to problem solve how they can remember the spelling of these words.

The second part of the spelling programme is looking at word building. Children are taught about affixes and root words and their meanings. In this way children can understand the grammatical elements of word building and deepen their understanding of words by investigating root words, adding appropriate prefixes and suffixes, and understanding how these affect the meaning of a word.

As well as affixes children are taught about homophones and confusions. Words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones e.g. ate and eight. Words that can sound or are spelled similarly and are often mixed up are called confusions e.g. conscience and conscious.

Writing

Talk for Writing approaches are used throughout the school. The Talk for Writing approach enables children to read and write independently for a variety of audiences and purposes within different subjects. A key feature is that children internalise the language structures needed to write through 'talking the text', as well as close reading. The approach moves from dependence towards independence, with the teacher using shared and guided teaching to develop the ability in children to write creatively and powerfully.

Daily writing experiences are developed within the classroom. The process has different stages and pupils work through this over a number of weeks to produce a final 'hot task'. The writing journey is illustrated within their Writing Log.

Talking and Listening

Pupils will listen individually, in groups and as a class in different situations and for a variety of purposes to gain information, understand what they have heard and respond to both speakers and texts.

Children will be given opportunities to present to different audiences and talk in a variety of situations.

Listening and talking is an integral part of the curriculum and will also be formally taught. A variety of contexts are used:

- Assemblies
- Class discussions
- Solo talks
- Paired work
- Group presentations
- School pupil groups

Modern Languages

Children have the opportunity to learn a modern language. Pupils are currently learning Spanish.

Planning

General forward planning is completed in 6 or 7 week blocks using the progression planning sheets. Specific daily plans are devised one day in advance and should be completed by the end of one day, ready for the next day's work. The daily plan must include details of group work.

Assessment

Evidence of progress and achievement will come from a variety of sources including:

- observing day-to-day learning within the classroom or working area;
- observation and feedback from learning activities that takes place in other environments, for example, outdoors, on work placements;
- coursework, including tests;
- learning conversations;
- planned periodic holistic assessment; and
- information from standardised assessment.

Benchmarks have been developed to provide clarity on the national standards expected within each curriculum area at each level. They set out clear lines of progression in numeracy and mathematics, and across all other curriculum areas from Early to Fourth Levels. Their purpose is to make clear what learners need to know and be able to do to progress through the levels, and to support consistency in teachers' and other practitioners' professional judgements.

In Literacy and English, pupils' progress is tracked and monitored through formative and summative assessment to allow for teachers to plan appropriately for the pupils.

The assessments carried out include:

- Weekly Spelling Assessments
- Termly Spelling/Phonics Assessments
- SNSA (Primary 1, Primary 4 and Primary 7)
- NGRT Reading and Spelling Assessments
- Writing Assessments
- Moderation of Writing
- SLC Phonological Awareness Assessment – Primary 1
- PM Reading Benchmarks – as appropriate
- Listening & Talking Assessments

Support for Learning

Pupils who are consistently experiencing difficulties within Literacy and English should begin the Staged Intervention Process in consultation with the management team. If appropriate, pupils will be placed on a programme of study tailored to the requirements. Parents will be kept fully informed during this process.

Reporting

We operate the following reporting systems:

- The progress of pupils is reported twice a year during Parents' Meetings
- A written report is issued once per year
- Homework diaries are used to inform communicate concepts covered each term as well as weekly target
- Pupils discuss their ongoing learning with their Class Teacher

Literacy Across the Curriculum

Staff plan to provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their literacy skills across other areas of the curriculum. Applying learning in a variety of contexts allows pupils to improve their critical thinking and comprehension skills.

Moderation of Literacy and English

Literacy and English teaching and learning is monitored through the following methods:

- Forward planning and written evaluations
- Learning conversations between class teacher and management team
- Learning conversations between pupils and management team
- Learning Walks
- Sampling of children's work by Management Team
- Tracking and monitoring of summative assessment results
- Moderation events within Learning Community Trio groups
- Tracking and monitoring of levels achieved
- Teacher reflections

Transition

Nursery pupils participate in Literacy Visits to the Primary 1 class prior to starting school as part of a programme of events.

Parent/carers are invited to attend a transition morning, which includes collaborating with their child on similar types of literacy activities that they will experience in Primary 1.