



## Hillhead Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Centre

### Literacy Strategy



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This whole school literacy strategy should be read in conjunction with *East Dunbartonshire Council Education Service - Literacy for Learning and Life: Strategy to Improve Literacy* and the associated appendix- *Effective Learning and Teaching Approaches*.

#### **1. Introduction and Aims**

*'Literacy development starts from birth. The early years are where foundations for literacy are established and where we can make the biggest difference to outcomes. As our learners move through their various learning environments: home, nursery, school and beyond, each must develop the skills necessary to become an active and responsible member of society. The core skills of critical thinking, creativity, leadership, collaboration and communication are all underpinned by literacy skills. In addition, the acquisition of digital literacy skills is a crucial component to twenty-first century communication. Our vision therefore incorporates high expectations that by working together with parents, each of our learners will develop the appropriate skills to flourish in a continually developing society.'* (EDC Literacy and Learning for Life: Strategy to Improve Literacy)

Achieving equity and excellence for all learners in Hillhead Primary School is a whole school priority. This strategy provides a clear framework to enable all staff to raise attainment in literacy and close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children by supporting class teachers to ensure appropriate teaching and learning literacy experiences are in place at all stages. It provides a clear rationale and expectation for the development of literacy skills as a responsibility of all staff and that these core skills for learning and life should be progressively developed across a range of meaningful and motivating contexts from early to second level.

In Hillhead Primary literacy is planned to enable all children to develop the four capacities and become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors through use of the four contexts for learning as described in the Curriculum for Excellence. These contexts are life and ethos of the school, opportunities for personal achievement, learning experiences planned from literacy experiences and outcomes and interdisciplinary learning.

This strategy aims to support practitioners-

- To raise attainment in literacy for all learners
- To provide an effective framework for the delivery of high quality learning and teaching in literacy across the four contexts for learning.
- Ensure that all staff and stakeholders understand their role in raising attainment in literacy and increase their skills and confidence in teaching literacy.
- To ensure all learners are provided with planned curricular experiences to acquire the essential literacy skills, knowledge and understandings and are given opportunities to apply these skills effectively across the curriculum.
- To ensure progression and continuity at all stages and across areas of transition to ensure a coherent and relevant literacy curriculum for all learners.

## **2. Planning and Assessment**

### **Planning**

- Whole school literacy planners are in place for all stages from early to second level with individual planners for the progressive development of reading, writing and talking and listening skills.
- Each planner contains the experiences and outcomes for the level alongside the key skills to be developed from each experience and outcome.
- The associated national benchmarks are incorporated into each planner to support with class teacher planning and assessment.
- Class teachers will plan for the literacy skills development for children using a differentiated plan.
- Children's prior learning and next steps will play a key role in specific skills to be developed.
- Class teachers plan termly for the specific skills to be developed for each group and groups/ individual pupils will progress through the planners at an appropriate pace.
- Class teachers will record termly the following information on each planner :
  1. Identify the overarching experiences and outcomes to be developed and the related skills and highlight these skills on the planner.
  2. Plan the key learning experiences to be delivered to effectively develop these skills and detail on the planner.
  3. Plan for the appropriate resources and teaching approaches required to effectively develop these skills and detail on the planner.
  4. Identify the appropriate benchmarks for assessment of these skills and highlight on the planner.
  5. Plan and record on the planner the appropriate assessment activities which will allow evidence of progress to be gathered in relation to the specific skills.

### **Target Setting**

A school wide target setting system operates in every class weekly where at the beginning of the week each child records their literacy target. Targets will be identified meaningfully from the class planned literacy work and class teachers ensure that children understand their target and how they will achieve it during the course of the week –this should be reflected in individual target setting

booklets through the use of success criteria. At the end of the week children evaluate their progress in discussion with their class teacher.

### **Assessment**

*For specific details of the assessment cycle and expectations for literacy assessment staff should consult the school assessment policy.*

All class teachers will gather a wide range of evidence from a variety of contexts to provide evidence of progress within all four aspects of literacy – reading, writing, talking and listening.

Assessment of learners' ability to apply literacy skills and knowledge across the four contexts of the curriculum should be planned by class teachers which will include individual, group and class presentation skills at assemblies, responding to IDL tasks as part of focus weeks, outdoor learning experiences and any class curriculum trips etc.

Ongoing evaluations of daily and weekly pupil progress will be carried out by class teachers by referring to success criteria set at planning stages; this will inform ongoing changes to planned lesson delivery.

Key elements of the school assessment policy are the following -

- A range of formative assessment strategies are used in all literacy activities with learning intentions and success criteria the focus for pupil and teacher assessment discussions and judgements during every lesson.
- Assessment in reading and listening and talking is carried out at agreed assessment blocks to assess progress in key skills- see planners for details of key skills and related assessments.
- Writing is assessed by class teachers termly using all completed writing pieces from each child and using this evidence a judgement is made as to the progress of each child.
- All assessment data for a term is recorded by the class teacher on the whole school tracking spreadsheet at the agreed dates to form the agenda for the tracking progress meetings.
- Weekly spelling assessments should be carried out according to North Lanarkshire spelling programme.
- Baseline assessments are carried out at the P1 stage in August to provide an individual baseline and next steps for each child.
- Scottish Standardised National Assessments are used at the P1, 4 and 7 stage to provide additional assessment information to support teacher judgment around achievement of a level.
- Assessment tasks and activities are collated in individual pupil assessment folders and each child should update their profile of achievement termly.

### **3. Curriculum and Learning and Teaching**

#### **Curriculum**

*Effective skills for learning, life and work are underpinned by strong literacy skills. Each of the four contexts for learning: ethos and life of the school, curricular areas, inter-disciplinary learning and opportunities for personal achievement provide a range of opportunities for the development of literacy skills. (EDC Literacy Strategy)*

## **Listening and Talking**

The first literacy skills acquired by children are those of listening and talking and these skills should be built upon to support the development of reading and writing skills.

The planned class listening and talking curriculum should

- provide opportunities for children to participate in discussions through listening and sharing ideas
- develop skills in listening and talking to others, clarifying their ideas and understanding
- develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to create and develop arguments, opinions and viewpoints linked to a wide variety of texts and situations
- develop the skills which will allow them to listen attentively, talk clearly and coherently and respond appropriately in different contexts and situations

The vocabulary gap is addressed throughout the school, using the Word Aware approach –see appendix

## **Reading**

Every child should be given a wide range of reading opportunities which should be differentiated to meet the needs of the child. Class teachers should ensure that texts are appropriately challenging and enjoyable for all children at all stages with appropriate pace to maintain interest as well as encourage progression. Every session each reading group should cover a range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and play scripts.

The main fiction resource to use for planning in the early stages is ORT which is introduced at the beginning of P1, and children progress as appropriate to stage 7 by P2 when they transfer to novels.

The main non-fiction resource to use for planning in the early stages is Star Quest which is introduced when appropriate to P3.

Teacher judgement and assessment and pupil voice is used to decide the most relevant text children will move onto as they progress through 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level. The key resources available are the following -

- Literacy World (non-fiction)
- Literacy Evolve (novels, short stories, spoken texts and poetry)
- Novel Studies
- I AM READING novels (suitable for 1<sup>st</sup> level)
- Plays
- Texts which support interdisciplinary learning.

Group reading sessions should be detailed in daily planners ensuring teachers are supporting all children as appropriate.

Specific weekly programmes for targeted support for learning groups are planned in collaboration with support for learning staff. All class teachers are responsible for ensuring children following these plans are well supported during literacy sessions daily and are making appropriate progress.

Reading for enjoyment is promoted throughout the school and encouraged as much as possible. Each class should have a class library and access to the Book Bus for children to choose to read for enjoyment. Time should be planned for children to use these reading resources as part of their weekly literacy programme.

Every class has access to ipads, laptops and desktops and teachers must ensure planned literacy activities are enhanced by the use of ICT resources.

Specific initiatives to develop reading for enjoyment include Book Week Scotland, Book Bug Bags, Read, Write, Count Bags, World Book Day and shared reading. These enable children to make connections in their literacy learning to the wider world, apply skills and knowledge across a variety of experiences and take part in special planned events.

### **Writing**

Writing is a major part of the literacy curriculum and along with reading, listening and talking, makes a significant contribution to the development of children as thinkers and learners.

Class teachers from P2-P7 will use the whole school strategic overview of writing to plan a balance of all genres over the course of a school session.

Writing is planned using a genre approach, in blocks of 8 weeks. Two genre should be covered during this block. When planning for writing, stimuli should be relevant, and include real life contexts as well as interdisciplinary learning.

At the early level P1 stage writing activities should be planned from pupil curricular personal experiences using the 'draw and talk' / emergent writing approach which involves the teacher annotating and over/under writing to demonstrate writing for meaning.

### **Curricular Programmes**

The literacy programme in Hillhead consists of the following key elements-

- North Lanarkshire progressive, structured programme to teach phonics and spelling, reading and writing from P1-7
- Word Aware Programme from nursery to Primary 7 to work towards closing the vocabulary gap.
- Access to a wide range of texts appropriately differentiated eg novels, short stories, plays, poems, reference texts, the spoken word; charts, maps, graphs and timetables; advertisements, promotional leaflets, comics, newspapers and magazines; CVs, letters and emails; films, games and TV programmes; labels, signs and posters; recipes, manuals and instructions; reports and reviews; texts messages, blogs and social networking sites; web pages, catalogues and directions.

- These texts can form part of a range of commercially published materials and should be used by class teachers to support the delivery of lessons and activities and not to drive the learning.
- A curricular framework that outlines a variety of whole school focus weeks to provide opportunities for literacy across learning.

Staff should plan learning activities which utilise a wide range of texts including spoken, written and digital texts and encourage the use of creative approaches and which harness the imagination. Connections between listening, talking, reading and writing should be made explicit to learners.

Planned curricular experiences should take account of the Curriculum for Excellence design principles at all stages of curriculum planning.

- *Challenge and enjoyment,*
- *Breadth*
- *Progression*
- *Depth*
- *Personalisation and choice*
- *Coherence*
- *Relevance.*

### **Interdisciplinary Learning**

In addition to the opportunities to develop literacy in all aspects of learning, there are strong connections between learning in literacy and English and learning in other areas of the curriculum eg the expressive arts and the development of early language through play activities. There are also important links between the expressive arts and creative writing and social studies and critical literacy. Interdisciplinary learning through planned focus weeks provides valuable opportunities to extend language skills by children engaging in talking together to deepen their learning and thinking and working together to prepare for reading unfamiliar texts, reading a wide range of texts to gather and analyse information for a range of purposes and writing clear explanations , communicating information or opinions.

### **Learning and Teaching**

Children should experience a school and class environment which is rich in language and where class teachers set high expectations for literacy and the use of language. Children need to spend time with stories, literature and other texts which will enrich their learning, develop their language skills and encourage enjoyment. Spoken language has particular importance in the early years and teachers will balance play-based learning with more systematic development and learning of skills and techniques for reading.

Effective learning and teaching in literacy and English will involve a skilful mix of appropriate approaches including:

- *the use of relevant, real-life and enjoyable contexts which build upon children and young people's own experiences;*
- *effective direct and interactive teaching;*
- *a balance of spontaneous play and planned activities;*

- *harnessing the motivational benefits of following children and young people's interests through responsive planning;*
- *collaborative working and independent thinking and learning;*
- *making meaningful links for learners across different curriculum areas;*
- *building on the principles of Assessment is for Learning;*
- *frequent opportunities to communicate in a wide range of contexts, for relevant purposes and for real audiences within and beyond places of learning;*
- *the development of problem-solving skills and approaches;*
- *the appropriate and effective use of ICT.*
- *developing metacognition skills so that learners from the earliest stages are aware of what and how they are learning, to support the development of higher order thinking skills and the ability to think critically. (EDC Literacy Strategy)*

#### **4. Monitoring and Tracking Attainment and Moderation**

Assessment of progress in Literacy and English will focus on judgements about the success of children and young people in developing key Literacy and English language skills and their ability to apply their skills in their learning, in their daily lives and in preparing for the world of work.

Evidence of progress in literacy should be gathered as part of day-to-day learning as well as across the curriculum and it should complement the evidence gathered in discrete literacy or English lessons. To achieve this, a shared understanding of expectations in literacy across all curriculum areas is essential. This will ensure consistency of approach in sharing standards.

The national benchmarks outline the standards and expectations which will enable schools to allow teachers to identify how children are performing at each year stage and a range of moderation activities take place to ensure shared understanding of standards to achieve a level.

Attainment in literacy is robustly tracked on an ongoing basis with assessment data gathered by class teachers and recorded electronically to provide a profile for each child ; monitoring and tracking progress meetings take place 3 times a year with individual class teachers and SMT to discuss progress of all pupils in literacy. Discussion is based on the progress of each child towards their individual CfE target and takes account of all data eg assessment results, teacher professional judgement, class work etc.

Literacy jotters are monitored by SMT regularly and literacy focussed learning visits take place annually.

#### **5. Universal and Targeted Support**

It is the entitlement of every child to be supported throughout their early education, formal education and onwards to adulthood. Curricular experiences are planned by staff using the Curriculum for Excellence design principles.

Using these principles, teachers plan experiences and assess progress in literacy, and for most children this is sufficient. From time to time, however, some learners may experience developmental or environmental difficulties which impact on their ability to learn. For most, modifications can minimise the impact of such difficulties and learning can proceed. These

modifications are described as differentiation and in most cases teachers will differentiate as part of normal teaching and learning, without the need for intervention from promoted staff.

### Differentiation

- Modifying Content – use of learning materials at different levels
- Modifying Process – varying the length of time children take to complete a task
- Modifying Product – giving children choice in how to express ideas or required learning
- Modifying Learning Environment – giving children areas to work which suit their learning styles

Staff record differentiated approaches in their short and long term plans and ensure that the results of differentiation are clearly documented within evaluations of teaching and learning. Support for Learning staff engage in formal and informal professional dialogue with all staff to ensure that this aspect of universal support is well managed and may coordinate consultation, professional learning or access to specialist support in consultation with SMT.

Where intended progress does not take place, an underlying wellbeing concern must be considered.

### Targeted Support and Early Intervention

When a well being concern is identified the needs of the child are considered within the next stage of the Wellbeing Pathway. Ethos, relationships, nurture and other universal supports must be reviewed before children are assessed to determine whether they need targeted support.

All pupils who are considered for targeted support in literacy, access this through the multi-agency Pupil Support Group who are responsible for planning a range of strategies to meet the need of children with targeted support.

## **6. Family and Home Learning Approaches**

At Hillhead Primary an open door policy operates where teaching staff are available to parents at scheduled times of the year as well as through informal meetings as required.

### Home Learning

As well as reinforcing concepts, effective home learning should have a clear purpose, promote active learner engagement and provide opportunities for parents and children to talk about learning in literacy and see real life connections. Literacy home learning tasks should enhance and compliment literacy work being completed in school.

### Family Learning Worker

A family learning worker operates in the school weekly and leads a range of family learning activities to support parents in helping to improve their skills to support children's literacy progress at home. This includes family sessions using the 'Read Write Count book bags' to model activities children and parents can do together at home.



All children should receive 2 pieces of literacy homework per week. One piece should be reading, writing or talking and listening, and this can be from their literacy programme or class IDL work. The second literacy homework task should be taken from the Word Aware programme.

## **7. Staff Responsibilities**

### **Head Teacher**

The head teacher will monitor the progress in literacy and the delivery of the curriculum by undertaking the following tasks :

- Leading planning meetings termly to discuss planned learning, coverage of the curriculum and progress of children.
- Monitoring through the whole school quality assurance calendar class literacy work and discussing learning and teaching with selected focus groups of pupils.
- Carrying out literacy learning class visits
- Carrying out informal literacy learning class visits
- Leading self- evaluation to review the school's progress against national literacy standards

### **Senior Management Team**

All members of the SMT will assist the Head teacher in the tasks detailed above as appropriate with the DHT having overall responsibility for managing all aspects of whole school universal and targeted support.

Principal Teachers are responsible for modelling good practice, supporting staff with planning, resourcing and assessment in literacy across a range of needs and working with children and teachers in classes to effectively raise attainment in literacy.

Additionally the DHT will lead the 3 FTE support for learning teachers in their key tasks of assessing pupil needs, planning and delivering additional support for learning and building capacity of staff to raise attainment in literacy for children with barriers to learning in literacy.

### **Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that expectations in school policies are effectively delivered in the classroom. Additionally, all staff have a responsibility to update professional skills and knowledge annually. Through self-evaluation, they should reflect on their ability to develop learners' literacy skills and seek opportunities to further develop their own skills. Annual PRD meetings provide an opportunity for teachers to engage in this self-evaluation to identify targets and agree professional learning opportunities to ensure they are able to meet literacy needs of children effectively.

