



Dalry Primary School

Literacy and English Policy

Curriculum for Excellence cannot be delivered without high quality learning and teaching.

Fundamental to this are good relationships within a positive ethos and a climate of mutual respect and trust based on our shared values of together we are respected, responsible, included and kind.

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Introduction

'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.'

Curriculum for Excellence defines literacy as:

"the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful"

Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English: Principles and Practice, Scottish Government, 2009

Rationale

'All practitioners are in a position to make important contributions to young people's literacy skills'

Literacy across Learning Experiences and Outcomes

At Dalry Primary, we strive to ensure that every child should become competent and confident in the use of English: able to live, work and succeed in a literate world, using the necessary ability and skills. This means being able to communicate effectively and express ideas and opinions, both orally and through various media.

Pupils will develop critical literacy skills which will enable them to understand and make informed decisions by interpreting and analysing information. They will develop the necessary tools for learning, knowledge and understanding to be creative, self-reflective, solve problems, collaborate and build positive relationships.

We recognise that by supporting children to improve their reading, writing, talking and listening skills, we are equipping them with skills for life and work.

It is the responsibility of all practitioners to ensure that we achieve these goals through a variety of learning and teaching opportunities, which effectively and successfully raise the attainment of Literacy and English amongst all learners.

Section 1

Aims

The key aims of our Literacy and English policy are to:

- Provide an effective framework for the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching in Literacy and English
- Increase staff skills and confidence in teaching Literacy and English and ensure that the whole school community understands their role in the development of literacy skills
- Ensure all learners are provided with high quality opportunities to acquire knowledge and understanding in the use of literacy skills, and can apply these skills effectively and confidently across learning with increasing independence
- Promote progression and continuity at all stages, and across areas of transition, to ensure a seamless, coherent and relevant Literacy and English curriculum for all
- Continue to raise levels of achievement and attainment in Literacy and English among all learners

Section 2

Learning and Teaching

When delivering our Literacy and English curriculum staff will use a range of learning and teaching styles and approaches to engage learners including:

- Active learning with opportunities to discuss, observe, explore, investigate, experiment and play; ensuring that each child is appropriately challenged at his or her stage of learning
- Cooperative, group and independent learning
- Revisiting prior learning to build on skills and knowledge
- Direct, interactive teaching, using a wide range of resources such as Literacy Rich Edinburgh Phonics Programme, Big Writing and a range of reading approaches.
- Providing regular opportunities to discuss, communicate, explain and extend thinking; including the development of higher order thinking skills.
- Contextualised learning, with links to a real life context or one that is familiar to pupils' experiences
- The use of a wide range of resources, including appropriate and effective use of technology

- Providing opportunities for learners to communicate in a wide range of contexts, for relevant purposes and for real audiences, for example class assemblies and school productions
- Using formative assessment approaches, including effective questioning, sharing of learning intentions and success criteria, self, teacher and peer assessment in order to identify learning targets and plan next steps

Planning

Skills are planned and taught in line with the Literacy and English progression pathways, which are linked to the Education Scotland benchmarks. These are outlined at the start of each term and planned in more detail on a weekly basis.

Assessment

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence mean that progress is defined in terms of breadth, depth, challenge and application of learning at the level for each stage. To ensure that pupils become confident and secure in their literacy and English, teachers plan opportunities for them, and with them, to demonstrate learning in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Effective assessment informs next steps in learning as well as reassurance that children have achieved the skills, knowledge and understanding required until they can demonstrate security within a level.

Assessment will be undertaken in a variety of ways, and different forms of evidence will be gathered:

- On-going evaluations of daily/weekly progress by referring to success criteria set at planning stages. This will inform changes in daily/weekly lessons to accommodate changes in pace of learning.
- On-going use of formative assessment strategies during lessons to give effective feedback and monitor pupil progress and next steps
- Use of peer/self-assessment by pupils
- Use of the Scottish National Assessments at P1, P4 and P7 to assess progress and development in literacy and writing skills.
- Annual use of the SWRT reading assessment to assess individual reading skills from P3
- Annual use of Phonic Checklist in P2
- Annual use of the SWST spelling assessment to assess progress of individual spelling skills from P3

- Twice yearly assessment stops including miscue analysis at early/first level where needed, and Big Writing assessments.

Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening

Reading:

- In the nursery children are immersed in a literacy rich environment and are supported in developing their literacy skills through small group teaching and individual support, as they engage in continuous free flow play provision across indoor and outdoor learning spaces.
- We develop Early Level reading skills through the delivery of Literacy Rich Edinburgh, a systematic planned synthetic phonics programme. We also teach reading through environmental print, oral storytelling and the use of a wide variety of texts in different genres.
- Active reading approaches are used throughout the school. A variety of levelled texts, in different genres, are used for these reading sessions, and a range of reading approaches should be used across the year with each class. (See Appendix 1 – Approaches to Reading) These approaches will develop comprehension skills, including interpreting, analysing and evaluating the text. They will also build on higher order thinking skills including questioning and forming opinions about texts and authors.
- Children at all stages should take their reading texts home for further practise each night.
- We encourage children to choose from a wide range of different genres when reading for enjoyment and for information. Texts may include novels, short stories, plays, poems, reference texts, the spoken word charts, maps, graphs, timetables, advertisements, promotional leaflets, comics, newspapers, magazines, CVs, letters, emails, films, games, TV programmes, labels, signs, posters, recipes, manuals, instructions, reports, reviews, text messages, blogs, social networking sites, web pages, catalogues and directories. Each class has access to borrowing a range of texts from our well stocked school library. We have a large reading scheme that supports our phonics and spelling programme, Collins Big Cats. We supplement this with our National Geographic readers and a selection of diverse, levelled texts.
- We provide regular opportunities to encourage all pupils to become confident individuals when reading aloud, demonstrating self-awareness by observing and reflecting on audience feedback.

- Paired reading is used throughout the school in different formats using volunteers and buddying arrangements to build up confidence, fluency and comprehension.

Writing:

- At Early Level, we develop writing skills by encouraging children to experience writing as an integral part of their learning through mark making, emergent writing, play contexts and observation of adults recording their thoughts and ideas.
- Writing will be taught through a variety of relevant contexts so that pupils can present their written work in a variety of ways using different forms of media. Children will have opportunities to create a range of texts including short stories, factual reports, poems, charts, films, recipes etc. Throughout the school we develop every pupil's skill through engaging approaches, including Big Writing. (See Appendix 2 – Big Writing)

Spelling

- We use the Edinburgh Literacy Rich phonics programme in P1, 2 and P3. This teaches the initial sounds, digraphs and beyond, which the children then use to build and blend words. The pupils are also taught the spelling of common words.
- We ensure a progression of spelling from P3-7 by using levelled lists of spelling patterns and rules. Pupils will also have the opportunity to learn the spellings of common words and words associated with their class topic or IDL as well as other curriculum vocabulary.
- From P3 pupils will be assessed at the start of each session to allow us to ascertain their level of spelling knowledge, and identify any spelling patterns, which need to be re-visited. This will then be used to group children and plan the delivery of active spelling activities.
- Spelling homework will usually be set each week.
- During the teaching of spelling, the focus will be on the rule or pattern, rather than the words themselves. Pupils will be encouraged to identify sounds and rules within the word and 'sound it out' accordingly. They will be encouraged to link reading and writing by looking for spelling patterns and rules in the texts they read, and in their written work.

- Pupils will regularly be assessed on spelling rules and patterns, and how they are able to apply this in their writing. This will be used to check progress and determine next steps.

Listening and Talking

Cooperative learning, discussion, debating and listening activities across learning are used to:

- Provide opportunities to participate in discussion 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
- Provide regular opportunities for all children to both tell and hear a wide range of stories, encouraging the development of active speaking and listening
- Extend children's vocabulary through the systematic teaching and use of specific words linked to books or topics. This is taught explicitly through the Boosting Vocabulary program in Nursery, P1 and P2.

On-going assessment of listening and talking takes place as part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle at all stages of the primary school.

Section 3

Literacy across Learning

Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- Engage in active, cooperative and individual contexts
- Link their learning across the curriculum and transfer their skills to ensure depth and breadth of knowledge
- Apply their knowledge of literacy in unfamiliar contexts
- Enrich their experience of Scots language, recognising the diversity of Scotland's culture and identity
- See themselves and their families represented through our rich and varied Pie Corbett scheme and our class libraries which strive to represent everyone in our community.

Section 4

Meeting Learners' Needs

At Dalry Primary School we consider it crucial to establish the needs of each individual learner at the earliest stage, and to identify appropriate support for those who are experiencing difficulties with literacy. Staff work closely with Support for Learning and EAL staff to identify any difficulties at an early stage and work collaboratively to effectively meet learning needs. Staff are also responsible for identifying and responding to pupils who are highly able in Literacy and English to ensure appropriate levels of challenge are in place. Consultation with the Support for Learning Teacher and SMT is available to support and challenge all learners.

All pupils are included within active reading sessions to allow everyone the opportunity to discuss and develop comprehension based around the core text. Pupils may work with the class teacher, a partner, a Pupil Support Assistant or the Support for Learning staff to support them in accessing the text during reading sessions. They may also then experience additional reading sessions if further support is required.

Read, Write Inc is available to pupils at first level who require additional support with literacy, and Fresh Start to those pupils at second level experiencing difficulties. These interventions support the transient population at Dalry and allow children entering school without a secure phonic knowledge base to have this much-needed foundation for reading and writing in English.

Some children across the school are supported by the EAL service through a number of bilingual support assistants both in and out of the classroom as required.

The Edinburgh Additional Support for Learning CIRCLE document (Inclusive Learning and Collaborative Working: Teachers' ideas in practice) and 'Up, up and Away: Building Foundations for Literacy in the Early Years' and the Edinburgh Literacy and Dyslexia Guidelines also offer staff detailed frameworks to support them at pathway one.

Please see the school's Additional Support for Learning policy for more detailed information.

Section 5

Moderation and Evaluation-measuring impact

Planned regular opportunities are provided within the school and cluster to moderate reading, writing, talking and listening. We routinely evaluate the impact of any new initiative or resource through staff discussion and feedback at staff meetings, planning meetings, Sharing Classroom Experience with SMT, colleagues and cluster staff; questionnaires, pupil focus groups, etc.

Equal Opportunities

Dalry Primary School aims to provide equal opportunities for all pupils irrespective of ability, gender, level of English acquisition and cultural background. We strive to enable each child to maximise his/her potential.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Approaches to Teaching Reading

Appendix 2 – Big Writing (Including the Scottish Writing Criterion and Scottish Pupil Friendly Writing Criterion)

Appendix 3 - Literacy Progressions for Tools for Writing, (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar and Handwriting) Reading and Talking and Listening

Appendix 1

Approaches to Teaching Reading

Book Detectives	<p>In book detectives, each child within the group or class is given a specific job to do when reading. Some of these jobs are linked to the strategies used in Reciprocal Teaching. The jobs can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summariser: The child's job is to provide a summary • Question master: Makes up some questions about the passage • Prediction checker: Checks predictions made at the start of the story • Clarifier: Looks for difficult or unknown words • Passage master: Looks for the most interesting passage in the story and has to give reasons for selecting that particular passage • Feeling finder: Finds word or parts of the story which have something to do with feelings or emotions • Word finder: Picks out interesting words used by the author <p>Link maker: Make links between this story and other stories or real life events http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_62210.html</p>
Literature Circles	<p>In literature circles, small groups of pupils gather to discuss a piece of literature in depth. The discussion is guided by pupils' response to what they have read and is led by the pupils rather than the teacher. The groups are formed by book choice, rather than reading ability, and allows pupils greater personalisation and choice in their reading materials. http://www.litcircles.org/Overview/overview.html</p>
Reflective Reading	<p>Reflective Reading is a methodology that can be used from Primary 1 to Primary 7. It correlates directly to Blooms Taxonomy, and promotes and develops Higher Order Thinking Skills when responding to text. http://www.thelearningzoo.co.uk/courses/reflective-reading/</p>
Guided Reading (Highland Literacy Project)	<p>Guided Reading is an instructional approach that involves a teacher working directly with a small group of pupils. The main features of Guided Reading are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher works with a small group of children with similar needs. • The teacher provides introductions to the text that support children's later attempts at problem solving. • Each pupil reads the whole text or a unified part of the text.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readers figure out new words while reading for meaning. • The teacher prompts, encourages, and confirms students' attempts at problem solving. • The teacher and pupil engage in meaningful conversations about what they are reading. • The teacher and pupil revisit the text to demonstrate and use a range of comprehension strategies. http://highlandliteracy.com/reading-2/guided-reading-2/
Reciprocal Teaching	<p>Reciprocal Teaching is a method for teaching understanding in reading. Reciprocal Teaching improves understanding in reading by teaching children about 4 strategies.</p> <p>These strategies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predicting • Clarifying • Questioning • Summarising <p>Good readers use these strategies all the time when they are reading. However, they use them without knowing it. Reciprocal Teaching helps make children aware of these strategies in order to improve their understanding.</p> http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ReciprocalReadingGuide_tcm4-812956.pdf
Synthetic Phonics	<p>Children are taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) they represent – so, they are taught that the letter / sounds like / / / / / when we say it. Children can then start to read words by blending (synthesizing) the sounds together to make a word.</p>

Appendix 2

Big Writing

The philosophy behind the 'Big Writing' approach is the development of the 'writing voice' through fast, fun, lively and predominantly oral activities. Big Writing is taught using the four generic targets of VCOP (vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation)

The recommended structure and time frame for Big Writing activities varies in activity and duration across the school. In nursery oral VCOP activities are incorporated little and often, with staff able to scribe pupil's ideas and promote opportunities for emergent writing. In P1 to P3 scribing and opportunities for emergent writing continue, but a more formal 'Big Writing' structure of VCOP activities and formal writing can be built up. (A suggested framework is 45 mins VCOP and 45 mins writing by summer term P3) From P4 to P7 the suggested framework is 1 hour 30 minutes writing per week. (35 mins VCOP, 10 minutes planning and 45 minutes writing time) Children will experience writing a wide variety of text types and genres in every year and will be given regular opportunities to choose the genre and text type.

All pupils from P1 to P7 are assessed in January using a baseline piece of writing against the Scottish Criterion Scale. Children's progress is tracked, and all pupils reassessed in May, using the same criterion scale, and the results recorded into a class overview sheet and in the school pupil tracking tool. The Pupil Friendly Writing Criterion can be used for effective peer and self-assessment, as well as identifying next steps in each pupils writing.

Pupils are encouraged and taught to both peer and self-assess pieces as writing, as well as responding to teacher marked pieces and comments.

The teaching of reading and writing is linked at all stages and pupils are taught about, and have experience of, reading a wide variety of genre and text types and features at all stages of the primary school.

A range of resources is available to support Big Writing sessions, including starter lessons for all stages, teacher materials and ICT activities to support VCOP tasks and writing sessions.

All classrooms should have a Big Writing display that is relevant to current learning.
<http://www.andrelleducation.com/big-writing/>

