



Westerton Primary School

Literacy Policy

Rationale

Improving the literacy skills of all children and young people is a national priority aimed at raising attainment, reducing inequality, and enhancing life opportunities.

Language and literacy are central to personal, social and economic wellbeing. They shape our thinking, our emotions, and identity while providing access to culture and learning. Literacy is fundamental to all areas of the curriculum, unlocking wider learning, supporting lifelong skills, and contributing to the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

By developing literacy skills in our young people we empower children to communicate effectively, think critically and engage confidently in all aspects of life.

Aim

We aim for each child to: -

- have a positive attitude towards literacy
- have self-confidence in their ability
- be able to work enthusiastically, co-operatively and with perseverance
- be able to think independently
- experience a sense of achievement regardless of age or ability
- be able to apply previously acquired concepts, skills, knowledge and understanding to new situations both in and out of school
- be able to communicate with peers and adults, ideas and experiences
- ask and answer questions clearly and fluently, using appropriate language
- have equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, or ability
- be aware of the uses of literacy beyond the classroom
- be effective, competent communicators and good listeners

Effective Learning and Teaching Approaches

In broad terms, within Westerton Primary, effective learning and teaching in Literacy and English will involve a variety of teaching strategies, in line with a Curriculum for Excellence 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
- learning through play, 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 and digital resources

In addition to the above, literacy learning should:

- develop metacognition so that learners from the earliest stages are aware of what and how they are learning
- develop higher order thinking skills and the ability to think critically

- use a wide range of texts including spoken, written, Scots Language and digital texts to promote literacy development
- be well planned and demonstrate progression, breadth and depth in learning across all stages
- provide opportunities for literacy learning to take place across the four contexts
- promote creative approaches and the imagination
- ensure that children are actively engaged in their own learning
- make connections between listening, talking, reading and writing
- provide opportunities for children to apply knowledge and skills they have learned in literacy to other curricular areas
- ensure that appropriate support and challenge is provided for learners in order to meet their needs and ensure equity for all

At Westerton Primary we use a variety of teaching strategies and learning contexts to develop skills for learning, life and work. All areas of literacy and English are taught coherently and, wherever possible, are linked to other subject areas. We recognise that children are motivated by a range of contexts and that literacy skills can be developed by interdisciplinary learning.

Early Primary (Play Pedagogy)

A Literacy Rich Environment

Children in the early stages of primary should have continued opportunity to experience a literacy rich environment. They should develop their emerging literacy skills through their interaction with both children and adults. Play, investigation, exploration and the development of curiosity and creativity remain crucial as children make the transition from pre-school to primary education.

There should be:

- a mix of opportunities for both child-led and adult-led activities to promote learning
- explicit links between play and learning
- effective and skilled questioning by staff to promote learners' early literacy skills
- consultation with children on their learning
- learning activities which build on what is already known
- a range of meaningful contexts offered to link literacy to real life

Talking and listening

- children must have opportunity to both listen and talk for a range of purposes
- they should have opportunities to listen to and follow instructions for a variety of purposes
- they should be supported to listen and take turns in a conversation

Reading

- children must have opportunities to listen to and hear a range of texts as well as having favourite and familiar texts read to them on a regular basis
- children should have opportunities to experience an exciting and well-resourced book area (including quality fiction, non-fiction, poetry and rhyme)
- children should have opportunities to read and share books they have made themselves. This includes recordings of experiences and stories they want to share with their peer group and adults

Writing

- children should have access to a range of mark making tools across play contexts. They should have opportunities to use their mark making and drawings to express their thoughts and ideas.
- staff should have a clear understanding of the stages of early writing development. Staff will support children to develop emerging writing skills according to the needs and stage of the child's development.

- children should be provided with a range of meaningful and relevant activities to practise their writing skills e.g. self-registration, making shopping lists, writing notes and plans.
- staff should share writing for everyday purposes, explaining why and pointing out signs and symbols and what they mean.

Primary 2-7

Listening and Talking

Children will develop skills within Listening and Talking in a variety of contexts, for different purposes. They will use Listening and Talking skills to gain information, understand what they have heard and respond appropriately to speakers and texts. Teachers plan for these activities through specific Literacy activities or in an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Listening and Talking skills are also developed as part of school routines. Children are given opportunities to apply talking and listening skills across the curriculum aimed at a different audience, e.g. participating in committees, events, assemblies, sharing learning with parents/carers.

Listening and Talking Skills will involve the following:

- contributions to class and group discussions and debates
- asking and answering questions
- responding to texts including written, digital and Scots Language
- listening and talking with confidence across curricular areas
- having opportunities to develop pupil voice through committees, class meetings and assemblies
- addressing different audiences
- respecting the contributions of others
- summarising and clarifying key learning points
- using appropriate tone, pace, language and register to engage the audience

Reading

Children in Westerton Primary are encouraged to read a mixture of fiction and non-fiction books as well as other forms of texts. Reading is taught in groups and these groups are reviewed regularly to ensure pace and challenge. Opportunities to read with peers, for pleasure and with reading buddies is facilitated by school staff.

Oxford Reading Tree is used at Early Level and the beginning of First Level. Class novels are used towards the end of First Level and throughout Second Level. A range of decodable texts can be used to support learning (Phonics books).

Teachers have access to Intervention Resources (P1-7) which are used for whole class/group work.

Effective questioning (using HOTS) is used during reading sessions to further children's critical thinking skills.

Each class has its own library area with a choice of fiction and non-fiction texts for children to access. The school library may also be accessed by children.

Links with the local library provide children with access to a wider range of texts. All children are encouraged to take visit the library and borrow books. Class library visits are arranged by the school each year.

Reading skills will involve the following:

- developing awareness of rhyme and patterns in language
- developing awareness of common features of books and asking questions to help understand what they have read
- sharing ideas and opinions regarding texts they have read
- locating information from a range of sources and select / sort information to support their views
- using a range of reading tools and become aware of what would be the most appropriate strategy to use when
- having real life opportunities to skim to ascertain the meaning of a text or to scan for a specific piece of information

- ability to read texts with increasing fluency, expression and accuracy
- opportunities to read between and beyond the lines of text in order to comprehend texts more fully;
- opportunities to apply their reading skills across a range of curriculum areas
- opportunities to experience a range of texts which offer appropriate levels of challenge and increase in complexity
- links between reading and writing is made explicit to learners so that they can begin to use some of the techniques and effective figurative language in their own writing

Writing

Children are encouraged to write for a purpose in different genres. PM Writing is used as a core resource throughout the school, allowing for the explicit teaching of skills within each genre and for children to explore model examples, including texts from well-known authors, teacher created exemplars, or peer-reviewed work. Whole school approaches to writing are used in order to ensure children are developing skills in a coherent and consistent way. This ensures children are learning skills in a planned and progressive way, building on their prior learning.

Writing has close links with other areas of the curriculum, for example Expressive Arts, Science and Social Studies. Where possible, teachers will make links across the curriculum, developing relevant reasons for writing.

Writing skills will be developed through opportunities to:

- write for a range of different purposes and audiences
- write relating to real and relevant contexts
- plan, make notes and write at length with increasing confidence
- experience high quality texts and consider, at their own level, what makes a good text
- write at length for a range of purposes across the four contexts of learning
- become familiar with a range of writing styles and genres and have opportunity to deconstruct these and use such strategies in their own writing
- be exposed to new vocabulary and apply in their own writing in way that is engaging to the reader
- experience a range of figurative language, vocabulary, punctuation, effective sentence starters and conjunctions and know how to use these to make their writing interesting
- engage with modelled writing texts to support their own development
- receive feedback about their writing and understand their own next steps
- read own writing and self-reflect against learning benchmarks
- engage in peer and self-assessment to improve writing
- learn technical writing skills including punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing
- develop good standards of presentation
- embed and apply literacy learning across other curriculum areas

Teachers use their professional judgement to select appropriate stimuli and topics for writing. The genre approach teaches children the skills involved in writing for a specific purpose and audience, using a range of stimulating contexts, linked to real life contexts wherever possible. Tools for writing are taught discretely and feed into pieces of writing. Teachers use an overview planner to ensure six key writing genres are taught over a level. These are:

- narrative
- procedural
- information texts
- persuasive/discursive
- recount
- poetry

Moderation sessions are carried out regularly by staff within stages and across the school to ensure staff have a

shared understanding and confidence in assigning a level to a piece of writing. A member of our teaching staff is a Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) and their expertise is drawn upon to support teachers assigning levels. A bank of writing exemplars from Early to Second Level is available to further inform moderation. Writing is completed in a writing jotter and all other written literacy work, e.g. comprehension, grammar, spelling, etc. is completed in a Literacy jotter, or curricular jotter, depending on the context.

Grammar

Nelson Grammar and Jolly Grammar are introduced and used as the main resources between Primary 2 and 7. Grammar is explicitly taught weekly, it is also taught through writing lessons.

Phonics and Spelling in Primary 1

Jolly Phonics is the core resource used for the teaching of phonics and spelling in Primary 1. This is used alongside the teaching of common words through the East Dunbartonshire Common Words lists. Individual pupil progress is tracked through ongoing phonics assessments, common words check-ups, P1 Literacy SNSA and the Single Word Spelling Test. Teachers use an active spelling approach to teach spelling in Primary one and beyond.

Spelling in Primary 2 and 3

Spelling is taught with one main focused lesson in the week, followed by shorter daily consolidation activities to reinforce learning throughout the remainder of the week. Common words are words which children will use most often in their writing and come across in their reading, and these are regularly revisited alongside focused phonic word sets.

When learning their spelling words, children are taught 'Strategy Spelling'. This approach teaches children to problem solve and use taught strategies to spell tricky words. Tricky words are words that don't follow regular patterns or rules.

Spelling in Primary 4 and 5

In Stage 4 and 5, Spelling and Phonics are taught together. Children will continue to develop their phonemic awareness and understanding of Spelling Rules and Strategies. Phoneme families, spelling rules and common words will be learned over the course of a four-week programme:

- Week 1 and 2: Phoneme families
- Week 3: Common words
- Week 4: Spelling rules

Spelling in Primary 6 and 7

Once children have covered all of the phoneme families in Primary 4 and 5 and are secure in them, they will move onto the word lists in Primary 6 and 7. The programme consists of:

- Week 1: Affixes
- Week 2: Homophones/confusions
- Week 3: Common words
- Week 4: Spelling rule

At Primary 6 and 7, the focus is very much on 'Word Building' and 'Spelling Strategies'.

At all stages, partnership with parents is encouraged and family learning approaches to support learning and ensure equity are highlighted to parents throughout the session, relevant to children's needs. Our parent guides to support spelling can be found on our website <http://www.westerton.e-dunbarton.sch.uk/learning/>

Handwriting

We aim to encourage a high standard of presentation in written work. In Primary 1 all lower and upper case letter

formations are taught and these are reinforced in Primary 2. Linked script is introduced in Primary 3 and all children are encouraged to use this.

Planning

Termly planning includes details of experiences and outcomes to be met, and skills taught in each area of Literacy and English. Benchmarks are used by staff to plan teaching and learning across early to third level and these are used to support assessment, in the form of genre focused 'writing tickets'. Teacher's planning will reflect the steps take to support and challenge learners as appropriate and the focus of the learning will be highlighted in the forward plan each term.

Weekly Planning

This includes details of specific, differentiated activities to be carried out for whole class or groups to develop key skills in Listening and Talking, Reading and Writing across the 4 contexts of learning.

Family Learning and Parental Engagement

Parental involvement and engagement are key factors in securing successful outcomes for children. Research shows that when parents support learning and when children live in a stimulating home learning environment, attainment and achievement are improved. Seesaw allows a partnership between staff, pupils and parents to share examples of literacy from school and home and build the children's skills in these different contexts and environments.

Home Learning

Each week, children will be set literacy tasks to complete at home. This may include tasks on Seesaw relating to grammar or spelling. All children will be asked to read at home with P1-3 provided with a reading book and P4-7 encouraged to read for pleasure. Whilst optional, home learning will be designed to consolidate learning that is taking place in class.

Inclusive and Differentiated Learning

At Westerton we are committed to inclusivity. Teachers are equipped with the professional skills and abilities to differentiate learning within their classroom, ensuring learners are supported appropriately. This may consist of scaffolding for EAL learners, interventions such as Phonic reading books, Toe by Toe, Spellcheckers/ special phonic dictionaries, C-Pens and the use of digital technology. Teachers will also ensure challenge activities and extension tasks are available for able learners.

How this policy links to the UNCRC

Article 2 – Non-discrimination: Committed to providing equal learning opportunities regardless of race, gender, or ability.

Article 12 – Right to be Heard: By encouraging children to share their ideas, participate in discussions, and contribute to their learning environment.

Article 23 – Children with Disabilities: The focus on adapting learning to meet individual needs, including for children with disabilities.

Article 28 – Right to Education: The aim to improve literacy and English skills for all children guarantees every child the right to a quality education that enables them to reach their full potential.

Article 29 – Goals of Education: The emphasis on developing critical thinking, creativity, effective communication, and lifelong learning. Education supports the full development of the child's personality and prepares them for a responsible life in a diverse society.

