

Literacy In West Dunbartonshire Council January 2012

The Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan signals its commitment to a heightened, more targeted focus for improving literacy skills in Scotland. The overarching vision is to raise standards of literacy for all from the early years to adulthood. To that end, the following questionnaire is aiming to gather information on local authority activity in line with the actions contained within the plan.

Can you please give details of your current policy/policies to improve literacy?

We are currently updating policy to reflect findings from recent research and to build on previous good practice developed through the nationally renowned 10 year WDC Literacy Initiative.

An audit of current practice in key areas and base line assessment measures within the Early Years Sector and in Primary Schools has recently been issued. This will be used to inform new staff development programmes and further pilot projects aimed at raising attainment.

Practice guidelines for those children and young people with Dyslexia have also been developed and a programme of staff training provided.

Please detail particular areas (if any) you are focussing activity on, and why? (ie Early Years, Adult literacies.)

In the first instance there are at least three strands of development which need to be considered;

1. Early development of literacy skills and identification / intervention with struggling readers
2. Development of higher order skills particularly in the primary schools
3. Raising attainment in secondary by supporting higher order skill development with older pupils

Research and previous experience in WDC has suggested that:

- There should continue to be a focus on early years to address the negative effects of socio-economic disadvantage on learning
- The systematic teaching of phonics within a broad based literacy curriculum continues to be an essential approach to getting the great majority of children decoding successfully.
- All intervention programmes should incorporate fundamental skills that are important for **reading comprehension** from the early stages.
- Detailed assessment and evaluation measures require to be consistently implemented in order to inform on-going interventions and identify struggling readers

Please give a short description of the approaches you have adopted to raise literacy standards.

Literacy Programmes and approaches that are being implemented in WDC include:

Jolly Phonics
Reading Routes
HearSay
Write to the Top
Toe by Toe

Pre-school: 'Learning to Listen'

Please describe how you have worked with external partners to achieve your aims. (ie Educational Psychologists, Community Learning links, Parental involvement, schools cluster working.)

'Literacy for All' short-life working group to revisit authority strategy was set up 2010 and included representatives from a number of external partners including Community Learning, Educational Psychology, Network Support, Libraries and Health.

The curriculum

We demonstrate that Literacy across the curriculum is the responsibility of all through:-

- Our Learning and teaching policy based on CfE principles
- A synthetic phonics approach from P1 – P3
- Cooperative and Active / Experiential Learning approaches within learning and teaching
- Book Bug and Rhyme Time programmes in pre-school establishments and primary schools
- Implementation and development of Reading Routes, Hearsay and Write to the Top guidelines
- Effective guidelines for transition from EE&CC to primary school
- Early Stages Teachers in all EE&CC, Partnership Nurseries and schools with Nurture Groups

The Community and Families

- Parental workshops on literacy in Early Stages
- Pupil and Family Support Workers / Early Years Outreach Workers
- Information available to parents on intranet and through leaflets
- Community literacy programme (CLAN)
- Involvement of parents in transition
- Parenting programmes: Parenting Coordinator
- Nurture Groups

Additional Support Needs

- Staged intervention system which includes;
 - ❖ Early prevention and screening
 1. Pre school Skills Checklist
 2. Screening for Understanding (Pre school)
 3. P3 Collaborative Procedure
 - ❖ Programmes of support e.g. Toe by Toe, Stride Ahead, Phonic Codecracker, Rapid Reading
- Network Support Resource teachers in all primary school
- Dyslexia Guidelines
- ASL Transition Guidelines
- Nurture groups and nurturing schools

Please describe how you have ensured the skills and knowledge of practitioners (ie teachers, volunteers, nursery assistants) are current and developed. What CPD opportunities have you provided?

Audit of current practice and needs has recently been issued and will be used to inform CPD programme.

Please give details of how you are evaluating current practices.

Moderation occurs through the curriculum and good practice programmes that have been developed e.g. Reading Routes, Write to the Top etc.

QIO and Inspection.

Current Audit

Formal assessment of reading at key stages in primary and early secondary

Any additional comments.

Literacy

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Can you please give details of your current policy/policies to improve literacy?

Literacy is a key priority for improvement in our service and school improvement plans. This has led to the establishment of a Literacy Outcomes Strategy. The first part of this strategy was to focus on improving the pedagogy of Literacy. In nurseries embedding literacy learning opportunities across all learning spaces has been a key priority; in primaries we have been developing pedagogical approaches to the teaching of Reading (Literacy Workshop) and moderating standards in Writing and literacy across learning is a feature of all secondary school improvement plans.

Please detail particular areas (if any) you are focussing activity on, and why? (ie Early Years, Adult literacies.)

The 'Literacy Workshop' is a successful, pedagogical approach to the teaching of Reading currently in the Early Years. We have a training programme which will be supported by an assessment manual for the Early and First levels of CfE. We plan to extend this to the Second level of CfE and train all teachers in this approach. This was developed in response to feedback from our newly qualified teachers lacking confidence and competence in this area. It is our view that all teachers require a deeper understanding of the teaching of Reading at all stages.

Please give a short description of the approaches you have adopted to raise literacy standards.

In addition to piloting and the forthcoming roll out of the Literacy Workshop we are also improving our evidence gathering and use of data. Schools have trend and data rich information. Our raising attainment strategy involves a rigorous, transparent analysis of this data leading to improvement targets and action plans at pupil, department and school level.

Please describe how you have worked with external partners to achieve your aims. (ie Educational Psychologists, Community Learning links, Parental involvement, schools cluster working.)

Discussions are ongoing with our partners in Health regarding baseline Communication and Literacy assessment processes in the Early Years, leading to a joined up approach to early and sustained intervention. Our Educational Psychology Service provided an evaluative framework for the 'Literacy Workshop' – this will continue for all developments. They also encourage 'new learning' and develop thinking by providing a broad reference research base which informs the Literacy Outcomes Strategy Group, who define the vision and rationale for improvement.

Fife Economic Partnership supported by top performing employers in Fife are working with us in identifying their priorities for Literacy employability skills. Our schools have all recognised the value in embedding these skills within CfE teaching and learning frameworks. There are plans to link more closely with partnership directorates to connect current Adult Literacy programmes and approaches into our Early Years Learning Communities. We are currently in discussion with schools to identify the most effective parental involvement in Literacy practice in order to establish a focus on developing activities that are evidenced to have an impact.

Please describe how you have ensured the skills and knowledge of practitioners (ie teachers, volunteers, nursery assistants) are current and developed. What CPD opportunities have you provided?

Almost all schools in Fife will have established teacher learning communities by March 2012. All of these are focussed on improving AifL which we believe will impact upon the teaching of Communication and Literacy. In session 2012 we are planning core training on the Literacy Workshop approach for all Early Years Officers and teachers at key stages. All Headteacher engagement sessions will be focussed on developing a deeper understanding of Literacy and Communication pedagogies.

Please give details of how you are evaluating current practices.

The Literacy Outcomes Strategy Group is leading:

- The evaluation of children's views on learning in Communication and Literacy
- Engagement with parents / carers – what makes a difference?
- Teacher competence and confidence – how do we make all teachers literacy strong and pedagogically confident / competent?

Any additional comments.

We would like to highlight the strength of our partnership working, particularly our Educational Psychology Service in supporting Literacy improvement. They have extensive experience in Communication, Assessment, Evaluative Frameworks and Research.