

Castlehill Primary School and ELR



Literacy and English Position Statement

This Literacy and English Position Statement should be read in conjunction with East Dunbartonshire Council's Literacy for Learning and Life: Strategy to Improve Literacy.

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: Literacy and English: Principles and Practice, Scottish Government, 2009

Rationale

At Castlehill, 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 staff 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 position statement are to:

- Provide an effective framework for the delivery of high quality learning and teaching in Literacy and English;
- Maintain 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 their stage of learning;
- Cooperative, paired, group and independent learning;
- Revisiting prior learning to build on skills and knowledge;
- Direct, interactive teaching, using a wide range of resources and approaches.
- Providing regular opportunities for a range of feedback approaches to: discuss, communicate, explain and extend thinking; including the development of higher order thinking skills;
- Contextualised learning, with links to real life contexts or experiences that are familiar to pupils;
- 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;
- Skilled use of 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. Staff engage termly with the benchmarks to reflect on pupil progress across a level.

Assessment

The principles of Curriculum Design 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 learning intentions and 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 National Standardised Assessments at P1, P4 and P7 to assess progress and development in literacy and writing skills;
- Annual use of the NGRT reading assessment to assess individual reading skills in P2, P5 and P6;
- Use of the Edinburgh Baseline assessment at the beginning of P1 to establish current levels of attainment and plan next steps;
- Once a year, staff use of the SWST spelling assessment to assess progress of individual spelling skills from P3. There may be occasion where staff feel this should be done again within the session;
- The use of Cold and Hot piece writing assessments termly, in line with the school's Talk for Writing approaches;
- Use of QUEST reading assessment at the beginning of P3

It should be noted that at Castlehill, standardised assessments are used diagnostically to identify areas of strength, areas of difficulty, gaps in learning, identify any trends and/or resources and approaches moving forward.

Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening

Reading

- In the Early Years Centre, children are immersed in a literacy rich environment, and are supported in developing their literacy skills through a balance of child led, adult led and adult initiated play and as they engage in continuous free flow play provision across indoor and outdoor learning spaces.
- In our younger classes, we develop Early Level literacy skills through the North Lanarkshire Active Literacy approach. We also teach reading through environmental print, oral storytelling and the use of a wide variety of texts in different genres.
- Staff encourage our children to read a mixture of fiction and non-fiction books as well as other forms of texts.
- Reading is taught in ability groups and these groups are reviewed regularly to ensure pace and challenge.
- Storyworld is used at Early Level and the beginning of First Level.
- Literacy World is used at the end of First Level and throughout Second Level.
- These core readers are supplemented with novels covering a range of genres and a contemporary authors.
- As an accredited Reading School, we celebrate a culture of reading for our learners and community.

- For children requiring additional support with reading, other texts can be used to support learning such as Rapid Readers, Nessy, Clicker and Barrington Stoke.
- BUG CLUB is online platform which can be used to support or challenge individuals or be used with a group as a shared text.
- Teachers also have access to Intervention Resources which can be used for whole class/group work.
- Effective questioning is used during reading sessions to further children's critical thinking skills.
- Each class has its own library, allowing the opportunity for children to access a variety of texts.
- Classes are timetabled to use the school library at different times across the school year.
- Active reading approaches are used throughout the school. 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 see appendix 1

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.
- Extended 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 pupils' skills through engaging approaches.
- The Talk for Writing approach is used in all classes across all contexts of writing. Each class will engage in one Talk for Writing focus a term.

Spelling

- We use a progression of spelling from P4-P7 by using levelled lists of spelling patterns and rules.
- A common approach to the development of spelling is used by all staff. See appendix 2.
- 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 staff 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. Teachers may carry out further assessments throughout the session.
- Spelling homework will usually be set each week.
- Details of the whole school approach can be found on the staff shared area.

Handwriting

- In our younger classes, time is spent developing skills in letter formation.
- As children progress through the school, teachers will set expectations for handwriting, but this may be done through a range of curricular approaches.

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.

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.

Section 4

Meeting Learners' Needs

At Castlehill Primary School and ELR, 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 Senior Leadership Team to identify any specific literacy 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.

Equal Opportunities

Castlehill Primary School and ELR 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.

As a Gold Rights Respecting School children, staff and parents value diversity, children's rights and sustainability. As Duty Bearers, staff will support children to question and explore issues relating to stereotypes, discrimination, equality, equity and children's rights through a range of texts and media platforms.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Approaches to Teaching Reading

Reading Schools	Session 2022-23 Castlehill Primary and ELR were successful in gaining bronze accreditation as a Reading School. This is an accreditation programme for schools that are committed to building a culture of reading for their learners and communities. It is brought to you by Scottish Book Trust.
Literature Circles	In literature circles, small groups of pupils gather together 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
Guided Reading	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: <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.• 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 Reading	Reciprocal Teaching is a method for teaching understanding in reading. Reciprocal Teaching improves understanding in reading by teaching children about 4 strategies. These strategies are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Predicting• Clarifying• Questioning• Summarising 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. http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ReciprocalReadingGuide_tcm4-812956.pdf

Synthetic Phonics	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 (synthesising) the sounds together to make a word.
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