

# National Literacy and Numeracy Programme – a strategic action plan

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# National Literacy and Numeracy Programme – a strategic action plan

## Audience

Lead members for education; regional consortia; local authorities' directors of education; local authorities' advisers; headteachers and schools' senior management; literacy and numeracy stakeholder organisations; initial teacher education and training institutions; non-maintained settings; arts, culture and heritage organisations; and other organisations working with schools.

## Overview

This document provides an updated overview of the Welsh Government's clear, shared vision for literacy and numeracy that is supported by local authorities, regional consortia and teachers to improve standards of literacy and numeracy in Wales.

## Action required

This document may be used by regional consortia, headteachers and senior school leaders to plan literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

## Further information

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

Curriculum Division  
Infrastructure, Curriculum, Qualifications and Learner Support Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ  
e-mail: [curriculumdivision@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:curriculumdivision@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

## Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at [www.gov.wales/educationandskills](http://www.gov.wales/educationandskills)

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

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## Ministerial foreword



I hold the firm belief that every young person in Wales should reach their full potential and be supported to acquire excellent literacy and numeracy skills during their time in school.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes, introduced in 2012, set out actions to support teachers to focus more on developing literacy and numeracy skills, and support learners by equipping them with the vital skills they need to succeed and ensuring that these are securely embedded and central to school planning. I am delighted that since introducing the Programmes there have been significant changes in Wales around the development of literacy and numeracy skills. We have made great progress!

*Qualified for life* reaffirmed these priorities. Literacy and numeracy are the fundamental and essential building blocks that allow us to extend our ambitions for the curriculum. If children and young people are not secure in the basics of literacy and numeracy they cannot access the breadth of the curriculum and the wealth of opportunities and choices it offers. So building on these foundations we have now set out our plans for a new curriculum for Wales, a curriculum for life.

But the challenge of securing excellence in literacy and numeracy for all children in all schools remains and our plan for the new curriculum makes clear that there is more to do to embed literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

I am committed to our shared priorities for literacy and numeracy. Being a literate and numerate person means much more than having a basic ability in these skills. We know that robust literacy and numeracy skills are essential for our young people to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives. That challenge remains with us. I firmly believe that through further joint working on this common purpose, taking forward the actions set out in this document, we can make this vision a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Huw Lewis".

**Huw Lewis AM**  
**Minister for Education and Skills**

# Introduction

“

Learners in Wales will enjoy teaching and learning that inspires them to succeed, in an education community that works cooperatively and aspires to be great, where the potential of every child and young person is actively developed.”

*Qualified for life (Welsh Government, 2014)*

The National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes published in 2012 set out our plans to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of learners across Wales. The plans set out a number of policy measures which aimed for real and lasting change in the way we approach these essential skills. The programmes set out our intentions to:

- › introduce the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF)
- › begin national reading and numeracy testing
- › support all teachers to be effective teachers of literacy and numeracy
- › promote the importance of literacy and numeracy as essential life skills for all learners.

Schools throughout Wales have been instrumental in driving forward changes to improve outcomes.

Schools have embraced the LNF, used the outcomes of tests to inform teaching and further developed the expertise of practitioners.

**This document, drawing on the evidence gathered, recognises the central role that schools have played in making these improvements and celebrates all that has been achieved.**

This update reaffirms our commitment to literacy and numeracy and signals our dedication to maintaining momentum in our improvement journey. It also looks forward to the next phase of development for literacy and numeracy and sets a clear direction of travel. **This phase is more important than ever** as it will:

- › build upon the progress made so far
- › see the creation of the new Curriculum for life. Along with digital competence, literacy and numeracy will be cross-curricular responsibilities in Curriculum for life.

## What are our priorities?

The National Literacy Programme and the National Numeracy Programmes (NLNP) are both presented in this single document. This reflects **our joined up approach to developing literacy and numeracy across the curriculum**. Our priorities for moving forward are based on evidence gathered from Estyn and the interim report of the ongoing Evaluative Study of the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes by SQW, as well as conclusions drawn from the delivery of the National Support Programme (NSP).

**Priority 1 – Ensuring progression in literacy and numeracy for all**

**Priority 2 – Supporting all teachers and practitioners to be excellent teachers of literacy and numeracy**

**Priority 3 – Focusing on the learner**

**Priority 4 – Literacy and numeracy for life**

## A new curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life

- › The new curriculum will be broad, balanced, inclusive and challenging with the four purposes at its heart to ensure that children and young people develop as:
  - **ambitious, capable learners** ready to learn throughout their lives
  - **enterprising, creative contributors** ready to play a full part in life and work
  - **healthy, confident individuals** ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society
  - **ethical, informed citizens** ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.
- › It will be structured around six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs).
  - Expressive arts.
  - Health and well-being.
  - Humanities.
  - Languages, literacy and communication.
  - Mathematics and numeracy.
  - Science and technology.
- › Three cross-curriculum responsibilities (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) along with the wider skills will be embedded within the AoLEs.
- › Expectations about progression in literacy and numeracy within the new curriculum will be based upon the existing National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and the recently developed Areas of Learning for Language, Literacy and Communication and Mathematical Development and programmes of study for English, Welsh and mathematics.

- › Working with Welsh and international experts, 106 Pioneer Schools focusing on curriculum design and development will have a leading role in shaping and defining the new curriculum structure, the content of the individual AoLEs and the manner in which the cross-curriculum responsibilities, along with the wider skills, are embedded within the AoLEs.
- › The aim is that the new curriculum for Wales, developed by education professionals across Wales, will be available to schools and settings by September 2018.
- › Our ambition is from September by 2021 schools and settings will be using the new curriculum to underpin learning and teaching for children and young people aged 3–16.
- › An update on the work of Pioneer Schools on the cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy and numeracy will be published during 2017.
- › For more information please visit [www.gov.wales/curriculum](http://www.gov.wales/curriculum)

# Priority 1 – Ensuring progression in literacy and numeracy for all

“ We want our curriculum to embody high expectations so that students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and are able to apply their knowledge to solve problems and think creatively. ”

*Qualified for life (Welsh Government, 2014)*



## The LNF

The LNF was developed to help achieve our aim that all learners develop excellent literacy and numeracy skills during their time at school. It provides a continuum of development, clearly setting out annual expected outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

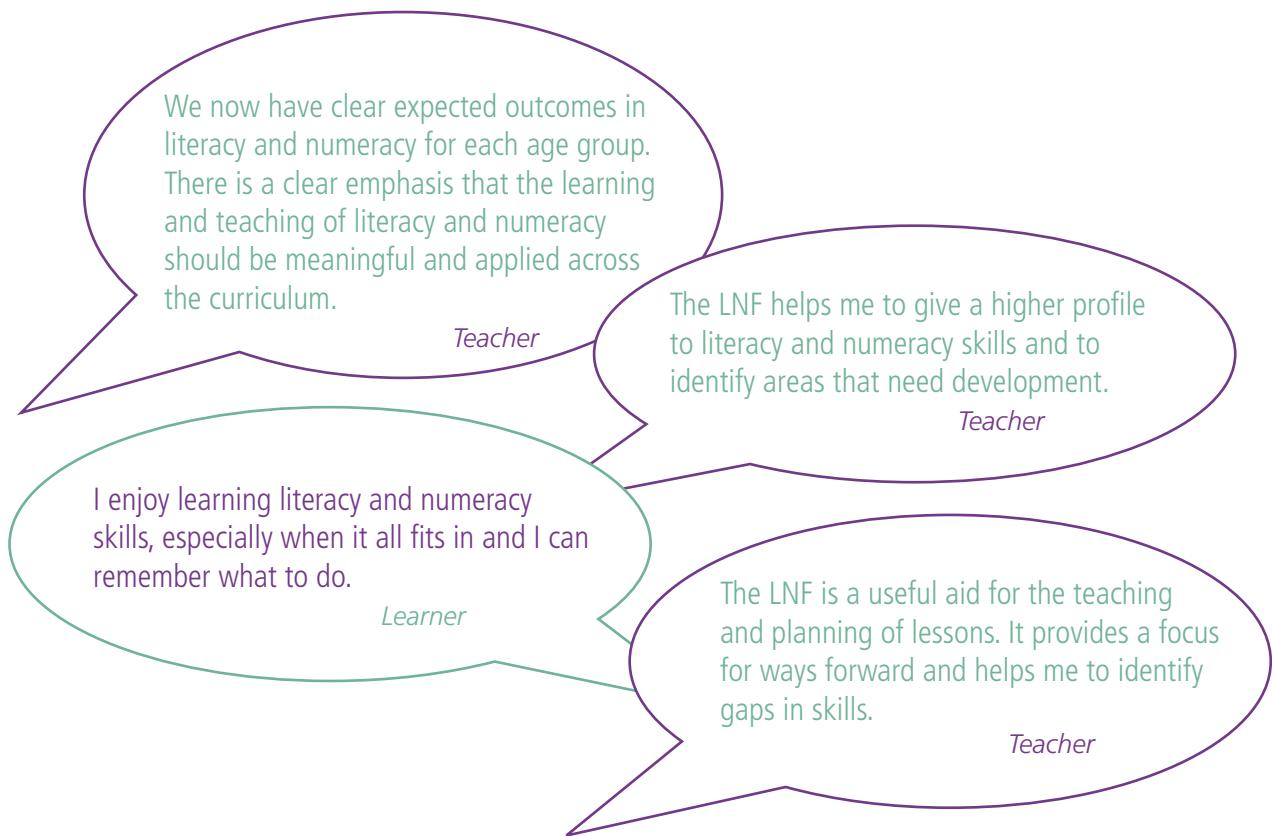
The **LNF became a statutory curriculum requirement in September 2013. Formative assessment against the LNF became a statutory requirement in September 2014 giving schools a full academic year** to focus on embedding the LNF into their curriculum planning and their learning and teaching before being required to assess learners' progress against it.

**The LNF was extended to cover three to four years and 14 to 16-year-olds** (on a non-statutory basis) and **made available in September 2015.**

## What have we done?

- › An approach that focuses on the development of literacy and numeracy skills must have the LNF at the heart. **We have introduced revised Areas of Learning for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development; and programmes of study for English, Welsh and mathematics in order to ensure alignment with the skills identified in the LNF.**
- › Knowing the literacy and numeracy skills of our children from the very start of their education is vital in planning their learning. **We have introduced the Foundation Phase Profile, which provides a nationally consistent baseline of children as they enter school which is fully aligned with the skills identified in the LNF.**
- › Assessment for learning is essential for supporting progression in the LNF. **We have reinforced this key message through the guidance we have made available on Learning Wales.**
- › The appropriate implementation of the LNF is a national priority. **We have put in place direct support to schools via the National Support Programme (NSP) and worked with the four regional consortia to establish ongoing support to schools, funded by the Education Improvement Grant (EIG).**

## What's the evidence?



Estyn's 2014–2015 annual report stated that in good secondary schools "the Literacy and Numeracy Framework has encouraged staff to see the links between subject areas and prompted them to share good practice across departments within and between schools".



Arolygieth El Mawrhyd dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Estyn's 2014–15 annual report stated, "the two-thirds of [primary] schools where the curriculum is good, teachers recognise the importance of ensuring that pupils have strong literacy and numeracy skills and use the LNF to ensure that pupils build on their previous learning as they move through the school".



Arolygieth El Mawrhyd dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Estyn's 2013–14 annual report stated, "Since the introduction of the LNF we have witnessed more appropriate plans for improving pupils' literacy across the curriculum".



Arolygieth El Mawrhyd dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

The SQW interim report on the NLNP published in December 2015 made clear that "school leaders in secondary schools acknowledged the importance of the LNF and many had taken active steps to incorporate literacy and numeracy more widely".



## What can we conclude based on the evidence?

- As a nation, we have made a major step forward in how learners are expected to develop their literacy and numeracy skills within the specific subjects of English/Welsh and mathematics but also in subjects, areas or themes across the curriculum.
- We can be confident that practitioners throughout Wales are supportive of the principles behind the LNF and that most schools have now taken steps to place literacy and numeracy at the heart of the curriculum.

## What next?

- › We need to help schools ensure that planning and assessment of the LNF actively contribute to planning for provision. **We will collaborate with schools and regional consortia to identify best practice in maximising progression for an individual learner. We will publish case studies and film footage of how schools are effectively implementing the LNF.**
- › We know further support is needed to help teachers' understand the skills represented in the LNF annual expectations and the required skill level when learners' work is being assessed. **To support a better understanding of this, we will expand and re-organise exemplification materials to support teacher understanding of skills and progression in the development of literacy and numeracy skills.**
- › Progression in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is intrinsic in *A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life*. **We will reinforce this expectation, working with the Pioneer Schools network.**

### Did you know...?

- › The development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is a key priority that has been well embraced by schools. Subjects, areas or themes across the curriculum are the vehicle for embedding and enhancing learners' literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts.
- › The literacy and numeracy skills should always be explicitly taught in English/Welsh/Language, Literacy and Communication and mathematics/Mathematical Development prior to application across the curriculum. This allows learners the opportunity to become more independent in how they are used over time and across a range of contexts. Schools are supported to implement the LNF by a range of guidance and support materials available on Learning Wales, including an interactive LNF with exemplification materials and classroom tasks. To see the full range of guidance and support materials available please visit [learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/lnf?lang=en](http://learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/lnf?lang=en)

## National Reading and Numeracy Tests

The National Reading and Numeracy Tests were introduced over two years, with **Reading and Procedural Numeracy introduced in 2013** followed by **Numerical Reasoning in 2014**. Schools have always used tests to monitor and assess how well children are doing, but having national tests means that teachers in all schools have information on the reading and numeracy skills of their learners, based on the same measures. By assessing learners against nationally determined criteria, the tests supply practitioners with diagnostic data which can be used to provide support at an individual learner level. When test data is used effectively, alongside other forms of assessment, it can shape schemes of work and facilitate constructive dialogue between parents/carers and teachers regarding the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills.

## What have we done?

- › Effective implementation of the national tests is essential. **We have supported schools with this through the production of extensive guidance and information and through a supported marking service.**
- › Parents/carers need to understand what the national tests are, why they are used and what they can tell us. **In order to supplement the reports that parents/carers receive on their child's test results, we have produced a guide to the National Reading and Numeracy Tests in Wales in various languages, as well as an animated explainer for parents/carers.**

## What's the evidence?

"...most of the case study schools we visited were using national test data to support teaching and learning."

*SQW interim report, December 2015*

**SQW**

I definitely feel more confident as a teacher, having the data that we've got now, because of the detailed analysis that we did of learners' responses to each of the questions.

*Teacher*

I like the tests as they are an independent external assessment providing meaningful attainment and progress data.

*Deputy Headteacher*

The results from the tests will certainly enhance the whole school's numeracy and literacy curriculum map because we will be able to take the results from the tests and use these to inform areas that really need to be supported and developed across the curriculum.

*Teacher*

## What can we conclude based on the evidence?

Evidence is emerging that schools are:

- › using the national test data to support learning and teaching
- › using the scores to identify learners who have fallen behind and providing them with additional support
- › identifying learners with high scores and developing more challenging activities for them.

## Did you know...?

- › The Welsh Government does not use national test data to assess the performance of schools. Alongside teacher assessment, tests provide valuable diagnostic information which can be used by schools to challenge and support learners to progress.
- › Schools have asked for tests which are more dynamic, which can differentiate according to ability and which can provide more timely diagnostic data. We have undertaken evaluative work on the possibility of introducing computer-based adaptive testing and have found that a move to online testing in Wales is feasible. Schools will have an important role in helping us shape the new tests and specifying the diagnostic information they need to help learners progress.

## What next?

- › To enhance the formative and diagnostic benefits of the national tests for all learners, as set out in ***A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life, we will introduce adaptive, computer-based testing from 2018.***

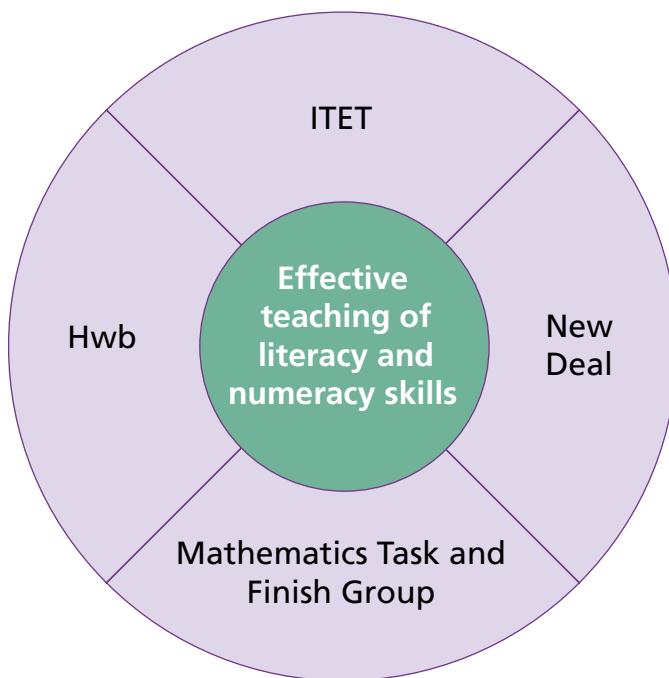
## Priority 2 – Supporting all teachers and practitioners to be excellent teachers of literacy and numeracy

“

Excellent teaching and learning comes from motivated, committed, excellent practitioners, who are highly skilled, who combine expert subject knowledge with a deep understanding of the learning process and who continually seek to improve their skills.”

*Qualified for life* (Welsh Government, 2014)

***Qualified for life makes clear that the quality of teaching matters above all other factors in our school improvement journey.*** Developing an excellent professional workforce is an underlying principle of the 2012 literacy and numeracy programmes and remains an essential part of our education improvement plan.



## What have we done?

- › Literacy and numeracy are essential life skills. **The teachers of the future need to understand the importance of this. As a result of this, we have required Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) centres to place literacy and numeracy at the heart of their programme.**
- › Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) deserve and at times need support. **We have delivered specific modules on literacy and numeracy within the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) to support them.**
- › Professional, ongoing learning is vital for our development at all ages. **We have supported professional learning for all educational practitioners through our published interactive Literacy and Numeracy e-learning packs on Learning Wales.**
- › The sharing of good practice and effective learning and teaching strategies and methodologies is a core aim for us in Wales. **We have created the Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and Numeracy programme to support this and, in conjunction with regional consortia, developed the school-to-school working approach.**
- › Teachers must have the personal functional literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge they need to develop the skills of learners. **We have made statutory requirements for entry to ITET training programmes (2013/14) to ensure that prospective teachers are equipped with appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy skills.**
- › We needed to consider what can be done to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in Wales. **To drive this forward we established the Mathematics Task and Finish Group. Their report was published in December 2015.**
- › **The New Deal for the Education Workforce** was launched in 2014 to enable practitioners to reflect upon their own practice and to identify the professional learning that will enable them to better support their learners including in literacy and numeracy.

## What's the evidence?

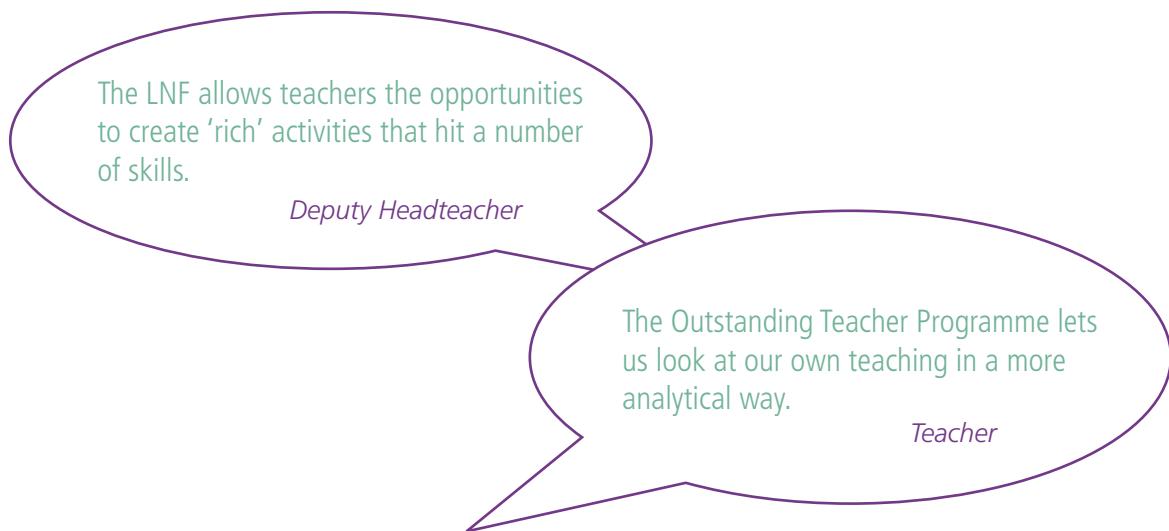
Estyn's Annual Report 2014–15 stated that in good schools, teachers "... appreciate the contribution their subject can make to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and develop specific aspects of literacy and numeracy that relate to their particular subject".


Ardysegiedigol o'r Bwrdd yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

"It was evident that the introduction of the NLNP (particularly the LNF) has had considerable impact on strategic planning within Wales' three ITET Centres."

*SQW interim report, December 2015*

**SQW**



## What can we conclude based on the evidence?

- Where schools face challenges to delivering literacy and numeracy, these are often based on teachers not clearly understanding how subjects can create valuable and genuine contexts in which to apply and improve their skills.
- The evaluation of the literacy and numeracy programmes has pointed to the importance practitioners and school leaders place on clear guidance and exemplification to support them to plan and teach.
- The Estyn Annual Report (2014–15) points to excellent teaching of literacy and numeracy in primary schools as that which provides learners with interesting experiences in which to apply their learning.

## What next?

- › The Hwb platform is a key resource for practitioners. **We will support schools, local authorities and regional consortia to maximise their use of the digital tools and resources for literacy and numeracy provided through Hwb.**
- › ITET provision must reflect our national focus on literacy and numeracy skills. **We will ensure that the revised ITET accreditation arrangements under development for all new programmes of study retain the teaching of literacy and numeracy to support the LNF.**
- › The Mathematics Task and Finish Group has identified clear ways forward to improve our practice and provision. **We will establish school-to-school working to support learning and teaching of mathematics, working with regional consortia and Pioneer Schools network acting as hubs.**

### Did you know...?

- › **The introduction of the LNF was accompanied by a national programme of support – the first time that a programme of this size and scope had been undertaken in Wales.** The NSP supported schools with initial implementation of the LNF and provided over 13,000 support visits and workshops to schools throughout Wales between June 2013 and July 2015.

### Did you know...?

- › **The Hwb and Hwb+ platform provides access to a wide range of digital tools and resources that will support schools in transforming classroom practices.** It is particularly aimed at supporting learners' learning experiences by allowing them to engage in multiple technologies.

[hwb.wales.gov.uk](http://hwb.wales.gov.uk)

### Did you know...?

- › As part of the New Deal, we are developing revised Professional Standards that will support the most effective teaching practice and a professional learning passport so that all practitioners are able to record and reflect on their professional learning and identify their next steps.

For more information on the New Deal please visit:

[learning.gov.wales/yourcareer/newdeal/?ts=4&lang=en](http://learning.gov.wales/yourcareer/newdeal/?ts=4&lang=en)

New Deal professional learning resources to support literacy and numeracy:

[learning.gov.wales/resources/learningpacks/mep/literacy/?lang=en](http://learning.gov.wales/resources/learningpacks/mep/literacy/?lang=en)

[learning.gov.wales/resources/learningpacks/mep/numeracy/?lang=en](http://learning.gov.wales/resources/learningpacks/mep/numeracy/?lang=en)

## Did you know...?

- › **A national network of 60+ New Deal Pioneer Schools have been appointed.** Their role will be to work closely with schools and regional consortia across Wales to develop and deliver high-quality professional learning provision. The provision will exemplify effective classroom practice and will ensure that all practitioners are able to develop the skills in pedagogy and leadership to successfully deliver the requirements of the new curriculum.

# Priority 3 – Focusing on the learner

“

Every child and young person benefits from personalised learning. Valuing diversity and inclusivity means all children and young people should benefit from learning that meets their needs.”

*Qualified for life (Welsh Government, 2014)*

Our strategies to improve standards of literacy and numeracy on a national level are underpinned by the core beliefs that:

- there must always be a focus on the needs of the individual learner
- learners are at the heart of everything we do
- we must have high aspirations for all our learners
- a child or young person's background must never limit their achievements.

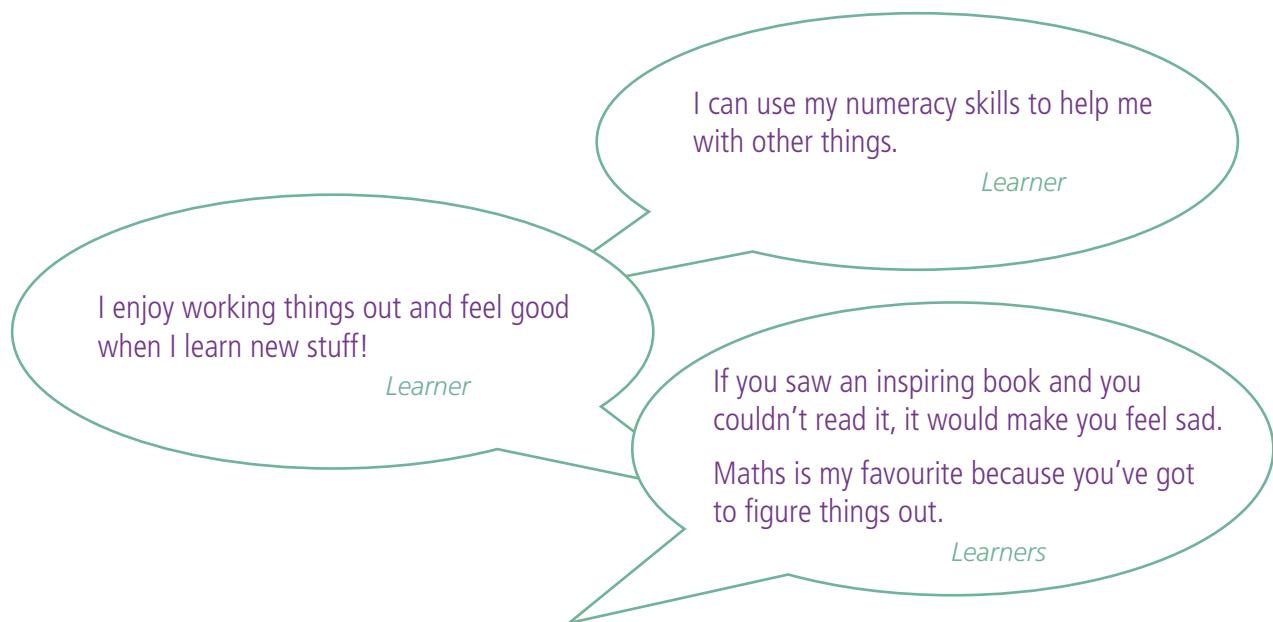
**Ensuring that all learners receive the specific support they need to develop excellent literacy and numeracy skills has been a priority of the literacy and numeracy programmes so far.**

## What have we done?

- In order to ensure effective provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN), **we have established and funded school to school support led by special schools to other special schools and mainstream schools.**
- Most schools run a series of literacy and numeracy interventions. **We have produced guidance for schools on literacy and numeracy catch-up programmes so that there is clarity on the most effective approaches.**
- Supporting learners from deprived backgrounds to reach their potential at school is a national priority. **Our publication, *Rewriting the future: Raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools* (2014) focused on ways in which we can reinforce this key aim.**
- Placed additional emphasis of the educational performance of children who are looked after through our new strategy **Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales.**
- In order to allow schools to better support those with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) **we have developed a Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Framework.**
- In order to help schools provide additional support for learners eligible for free school meals and for looked after children (LAC) **we have introduced the Pupil Deprivation Grant, with supporting *What Really Works?* good practice guidance.**

## What's the evidence?

Educational statistics published in December 2015 indicate that the attainment of learners who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) is at an all time high in all key stages ([gov.wales/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-free-school-meals/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-free-school-meals/?lang=en)). Analysis of the published figures on eFSM attainment of the Level 2 inclusive threshold show that the rate of improvement has more than doubled since the introduction of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG).



## What can we conclude based on the evidence?

- While we have seen improvement, poverty has an enormous influence on children's literacy and numeracy.
- Learners who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) are already **on average** a year behind in their vocabulary skills when they **start** school, and are also significantly behind in their early literacy and numeracy skills. eFSM learners are also much more likely to start secondary school with low literacy and numeracy skills and this limits their attainment later on.
- The attainment of other groups of learners, such as children who are looked after and those who are adopted from care, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners is also far too low.
- While labels such as eFSM, looked after child or English as an Additional Language (EAL) can sometimes be helpful, we need to ensure that our focus is identifying and providing the right kind of support tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the individual learner. By employing this more discriminating approach we will strengthen our desire to ensure a more equitable education system that supports **all** learners.

- All the evidence shows that good quality early childhood education and care is essential. Most teachers and practitioners across Wales have implemented the LNF in ways that take account of individual progress and the different ways in which children learn. The evaluation of the Foundation Phase published in 2015 reported that where the principles of the Foundation Phase were not fully understood or adopted, this could lead to a decline in educational achievement in literacy and numeracy and a return to a more formal competency-based approach to the teaching of these skills.

## What next?

- All learners are entitled to receive effective formative assessment to give them the very best chance of making progress. **As set out in A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life, we will work with Pioneer Schools to produce an Assessment and Evaluation Framework to promote the wide range of assessment techniques that make a constructive contribution to all young people's learning.**
- Special schools/ALN mainstream schools are continuing to embed the LNF. **We will ensure that they are fully supported to achieve this through a programme of funded school to school working.**
- The development of early language is an essential building block. **We will scope the range of provision on early language development in order to ensure that provision for this area meets the needs of all learners and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will renew the supply of Flying Start Book Bags to Flying Start teams across Wales to ensure all Flying Start two year olds continue to receive this resource until the end of the current Flying Start funding period (2016/17).**
- Effective and consistent pedagogy in the Foundation Phase is a priority. **The Foundation Phase Expert Group will develop and publish an action plan for the Foundation Phase in March 2016.**
- We need to maximise the development of the literacy skills of our disadvantaged learners. **We will put literacy at the centre of our refreshed Rewriting the future programme from summer 2016.**

## Did you know...?

- The LNF is a continuum of learning for all learners including our youngest learners in the Foundation Phase and those with special educational needs. It has been designed to be inclusive and to support progression for all our learners. It is not intended to be used rigidly but should be used to identify the skills that individual learners need to develop, or are able to demonstrate across a range of situations and contexts.
- The LNF and the Foundation Phase are part of the same holistic curriculum and the LNF should be delivered in the Foundation Phase using the principles and pedagogy of the Foundation Phase.

## Did you know...?

- Formative assessment is the key to making our provision the match the needs of our learners. It ensures that we actively respond to what a learner **can do . . .** what they **can't yet do . . .** and how we can support them to get there. The LNF is designed to be assessed formatively; it supports the planning of meaningful learning and teaching opportunities so that skills are developed and applied that are appropriate to the learner.

## Did you know...?

- Through our introduction of the Pupil Deprivation Grant, we have:
  - increased the amount per eligible pupil from £450 in 2012–13 to £1,150 in 2016–17
  - extended the grant from 2015 so that learners are eligible from ages 3 and 4 at a rate of £300 per learner.

**For more information on the Pupil Deprivation Grant please visit:**

[gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/deprivation/rewriting-the-future-schools/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/deprivation/rewriting-the-future-schools/?lang=en)

[gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/deprivation/pdg-and-early-years-pdg/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/deprivation/pdg-and-early-years-pdg/?lang=en)

## Priority 4 – Literacy and numeracy for life

“ ...Improving literacy and numeracy ... remain our priorities ”  
and underpin the strategic objectives of Qualified for life.

*Qualified for life (Welsh Government, 2014)*

The 2012 Literacy and Numeracy programmes set out the importance of developing a culture in Wales in which the vital importance of being literate and numerate is championed by all.

Community partners play a very important role in helping our children and young people to develop the literacy and numeracy skills they need.

We also recognise the very powerful role that families play. The majority of learners with low literacy skills have parents who also struggle with literacy. Many schools are already successfully working to help families learn how to read with their children, practice their numeracy, and support their learning in other simple ways.

A continued, sustained and evolving approach is needed at a national level that will really work to boost the literacy and numeracy skills of our children and young people, and also of their parents/carers.

We have used television, radio and social media to share the key message that literacy and numeracy are vital skills for life. The ‘Education begins at home’ campaign highlights how parents/carers can help their children by doing the little things at home that will help them do better at school.

‘Make Time to Read’

‘What you say Counts’

### What have we done?

- Reading is a key life skill and flourishes best when it is developed across a full range of opportunities, both at home and at school. **We have led the Summer Reading Challenge with the Welsh Books Council to increase focus on supporting the reading skills of learners.** Through the Education begins at home campaign we have promoted the importance of reading and numeracy to parents/carers – providing them with hints and tips for everyday use ([www.facebook.com/beginsathome](http://www.facebook.com/beginsathome)).

- › Literacy and numeracy in the Foundation Phase should fit with its ethos and encourage good links between practitioners and home. We have introduced the Pori Drwy Stori programme to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of Reception aged children. The programme provides learners with exciting and high quality resources to use at school and at home.
- › Schools regularly engage with parents/carers and community groups as partners in children's learning. **We have published FaCE the challenge together – a family and community engagement toolkit.** [learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/family-and-community-engagement-toolkit/?lang=en](http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/family-and-community-engagement-toolkit/?lang=en)
- › A broad and balanced curriculum and approach is essential. **We have set out the way in which schools can use the Pupil Deprivation Grant to help raise attainment, including literacy and numeracy attainment, through arts and cultural activities.** [learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/pdg-in-support-of-arts/?lang=en](http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/pdg-in-support-of-arts/?lang=en)
- › Nurturing creativity in children and using the arts and culture as rich learning contexts can lead to improved engagement and attainment. **We have published Creative learning through the arts – an action plan for Wales**, which supports the use of creative approaches in learning and teaching to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. **We have also funded and led an education programme for schools in support of the Dylan Thomas centenary, including new resources on Hwb.**
- › In order to communicate the benefits of reading, we **have supported a wide range of World Book Day events and activities, through grant funding to Welsh Books Council.**
- › Being financially literate is an essential life skill. **To support this aim we have developed a financial education teaching pack, and ensured financial education features strongly in the LNF and the 2015 mathematics programme of study.**



## What's the evidence?

'...the arts often provide a stimulating context for pupils to use and to develop their literacy skills', and 'in the best practice (schools), leaders find ways to ensure that the creative arts enhance pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy, for example by providing experiences to talk and write about.'

*Best practice in teaching and learning in the creative arts at key stage 2 (Estyn, May 2015)*

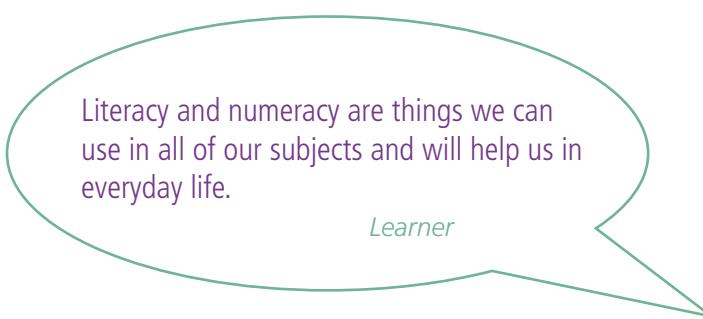


Ardygraeth Elu Mawrhyd dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Research studies in summary publications titled 'This Much We Know' (Creative Partnerships, 2007) and 'Changing Young Lives', (CCE, 2009, 2012) suggest that there is a positive correlation between participation in creative partnership programmes and improvements in both learners attitudes to learning and attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Research shows that at age seven, the degree to which families engage with their child's learning has six times more influence over the child's educational attainment than the quality of the school.

*The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment* (Desforges and Abouchaar (2003)



## What can we conclude based on the evidence?

- Families can, and do, play an extremely important role in the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills, and there is a lot that schools can do to help them, for example by showing them how best to read to their child or how to play simple number games.
- Supporting children and young people to acquire creativity skills across the curriculum can provide a range of benefits, including both learners' attitudes to learning and attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4.

## What next?

- Family engagement in learning makes a difference. **We will encourage all schools to use the *Family and community engagement toolkit* to deepen the way they work with families and with community partners in order to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills and also encourage them to use their PDG for family learning projects that work with families with low levels of literacy and numeracy.**

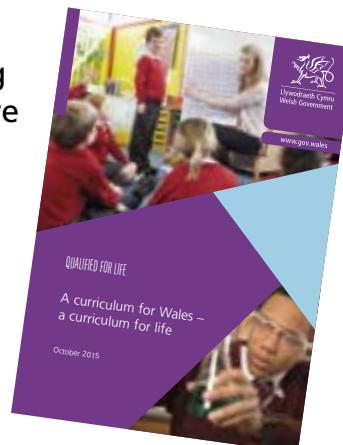
- › Rich learning experiences strengthen literacy and numeracy skills. **We will encourage schools to develop authentic contexts for learning as part of Curriculum for Wales.**
- › The little things parents/carers do at home make a difference to children literacy and numeracy skills. **We will continue to maximise campaigns to encourage families to do the simple things that support children's literacy and numeracy, including the importance of supporting early language development.**
- › Arts and culture provide an engaging context for learning and developing creativity. **We will work in partnership with the Arts Council of Wales, schools and the arts sector to help develop creativity and literacy and numeracy skills, as part of our 5-year Creative Learning Plan. We will also deliver a Roald Dahl Centenary education programme, including writing competitions linked to the Year of Adventure 2016.**

## Did you know...?

- › We know that the most:

- effective approaches involve learners exploring and using literacy and numeracy in lessons where there is a real context rather than in ways that can appear contrived.
- exciting and innovative approaches inspire learners to value literacy and numeracy as skills for life.

The development of a Curriculum for Wales will create opportunities and space for these approaches to be developed. We will continue to share examples of good practice that embrace a creative approach. We will also be exploring further ways in which literacy and numeracy can be delivered in other meaningful, interesting ways across the curriculum.



## Did you know...?

- › Creativity matters. We know that the arts and creative learning provide ways to stimulate and enhance the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The Creative Learning through the Arts action plan is being taken forward in partnership with the Arts Council of Wales, working with schools and regional consortia. This work will help pave the way for a Curriculum for Wales.

