



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

# Strategy for inspecting literacy for learners in further education and work-based learning

## October 2011



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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Before the inspection</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Specific evidence for skills 1.1.4 and 2.1.2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Question prompts for interview about literacy support programmes</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Question prompts for listening to specific learners – focus on literacy</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Questions to ask in relation to English for speakers of other languages</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Interview prompts for the senior manager overseeing literacy/literacy co-ordinator</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Specific questions on literacy for interviews with middle managers of learning areas</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Question prompts for portfolio scrutiny</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Question prompts for FEI and WBL lesson observation – focus on literacy</b>	<b>13</b>

## **Introduction**

This document contains a strategy and approaches to inspecting literacy in further education and work-based learning. It is an internal document that brings together all the separate bits of guidance and support from previous surveys on reading and writing skills as well as guidance on inspecting skills.

Sections in this document will inevitably change as the result of our experiences and there will be new sections that need to be added. The latest version will always be stored in the FE and WBL sites in SharePoint. There will also be separate versions of the individual documents that are included here.

## **Before the inspection**

### **Methodology for inspecting literacy**

#### **FE and WBL**

#### **Analysis of data during RI prep days**

Consider the results from initial assessments:

- How many learners are there at each of the six levels: entry 1; entry 2; entry 3; level 1; level 2; and level 3?
- How many learners are there at either the lower or higher end of the scale?
- Is there a predominance of learners at one particular level?

Consider the profile of ESW enrolments:

- Does the initial data match, relatively well, the outcomes from the initial assessments?
- Are there lower numbers than expected at level 3?
- Are there higher numbers than expected at level 1 or level 2?

Start writing the PIC for 1.1 using the performance data.

#### **Evidence from the SER during RI prep days**

From an analysis of 1.1.4, make comments in the Evaluation section of the PIC on:

- evidence of the percentage of learners who have been identified for literacy support programmes;
- evidence of the numbers who have taken up literacy support;
- evidence provided by the provider about standards in literacy;
- evidence of how learners are supported in their literacy learning; and
- evidence of how learners' progress in literacy skills is tracked and recorded.

From an analysis of 2.1.2, make comments in the Evaluation section of the PIC on:

- the provider's systematic tracking and monitoring of progress in literacy;
- the effectiveness of literacy support programmes;
- how well the provider co-ordinates skills provision to plan for progression;
- whether the provider has evidence of learners applying higher-order reading and writing skills across their main course of study;
- how well schemes of work address all learners' needs, particularly those working below expected levels and those more able learners; and
- how well the provider develops dual-literacy skills and makes links with other languages.

### **Guidance for inspecting literacy**

#### **Before the inspection: During RI prep**

##### **Team responsibilities**

- In most cases the RI will lead on 1.1, including 1.1.4; or
- allocate a team inspector to 1.1.4 and 2.1.2; or
- allocate a team inspector to 1.1.4 and 2.1.2 with overall responsibility for Key Question 2; or
- allocate a team inspector to 1.1.4, 2.1.2 and 2.3.4.

##### **Team inspector responsibilities for 1.1.4 and 2.1.2**

The team inspector for 1.1.4 and 2.1.2 should normally observe no more than three sessions to allow time for talking to individual learners and tracking their skills development.

The inspector should normally arrange six 15 minute interviews with groups of no more than two or three learners from a range of learning areas and levels. **See 'During the Inspection Week' – Monday**

##### **Phone call to provider – normally carried out by the IC**

Ask for any high-level analysis of literacy identification, development or progression, e.g:

- analysis of initial assessment by courses;
- analysis of diagnostic assessments; and
- data for any re-assessment of groups of learners.

Arrange with the nominee for a range of **current** portfolios to be available in the base room for work scrutiny by the team.

##### **Selecting portfolios for scrutiny: Methods of selection**

- RI identifies six classes from six different learning areas;

- IC requests registers for these classes;
- IC selects six learners from each register and advises the nominee of the selection; and
- IC asks nominee to ensure the portfolios for **any four** of the selected learners from each class are available in the base room for the Tuesday and Wednesday of inspection week.

### **RI selection of learning areas and classes**

- Allow approximately four portfolios for each inspector on the team;
- no more than two portfolios from any one class;
- portfolios to be available Tuesday and Wednesday only;
- must cover a range of learning areas;
- must cover a range of course levels;
- must include Welsh Baccalaureate and non-Welsh Baccalaureate classes; and
- where relevant include one-year and two-year courses.

### **Arranging timetables for the team**

Allow work scrutiny time for all team members on the Tuesday and/or Wednesday of the inspection.

<b>During the inspection week</b>
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### **Monday team meeting**

- Nominee to provide information about learning support: how many learners have been identified for support and how many have accepted.
- RI and TI responsible for 2.1 select learners from across the learning areas for interview.
- Nominee to arrange interviews with these learners at a convenient time on Tuesday/Wednesday. Nominee to ask learners to have their portfolios with them.
- RI to allocate portfolios to inspectors for scrutiny.

### **Selecting learners for interview: Methods of selection**

- **Select** six learning areas;
- select a class from each learning area, making sure that the selection covers a suitable range of course levels;
- request class register and initial assessment results for each class; and
- select 2 or 3 learners from each class.

### **Tuesday/Wednesday**

- TI responsible for skills to interview identified learners using the prompt sheets for book scrutiny and learner skills interviews.
- Observation of lessons to include one support session.
- All TIs to ensure that skills are covered in all classroom observations.

- All TIs to carry out work scrutiny using prompt sheets. (Evidence form for portfolio scrutiny – attached below.)

### **Tuesday – Thursday morning**

- TI leading on skills to interview essential skills manager/co-ordinator.
- TI leading on skills to evaluate strategic documents and action plans for learners' skills development.
- All TIs to include literacy questions in their interviews with middle managers.
- TI leading on skills or TI leading on 2.3.4 to interview teacher in charge of learner support.

### **Wednesday afternoon/Thursday morning**

- TI responsible for skills to evaluate work scrutiny sheets from all TIs and note main findings on Input JF.

## **Specific evidence for skills 1.1.4 and 2.1.2**

### **Specific evidence to be scrutinised by the inspector with responsibility for 1.1.4**

#### **Support Programmes**

- Number/Percentage of learners who have been screened on entry. (All learners on courses of five hours or more a week are required by DfES to have an initial assessment. Therefore this number should be close to 100%. However, we do have to allow for those learners who start courses later in the term and who miss the initial assessment through illness etc. Percentages below 80% will be unsatisfactory.) Check the provider policy for capturing those who have missed out on initial assessment and pass details to Key Question 3 lead if necessary.
- Number/Percentage of learners who have been identified as having low skills in literacy (ie those who have an initial assessment result below the level of their main course and in particular those learners who are assessed below level 1).
- Numbers/percentages attending out-of-class and in-class support (see support for learners data table below).
- Numbers/percentage of learners remaining in out-of-class support provision beyond the first term. If learners have dropped out or completed out-of-class support then we need to explore the outcomes for that learner and what alternative support, if relevant, has been put in place.
- Outcomes for support provision, including progress data and data reflecting the impact of the support provision on the learner's main course of study.
- Analysis of results for any re-assessment of learners. (Current DfES guidance asks for a reassessment of any learner with an initial assessment below L1 who **has** taken up learner support provision but who has **not** attained a communication/literacy qualification at one level above their initial assessment result.)

If the percentage of learners taking up support and making progress (and you need to sample the files of some of these) is over 50% it is 'adequate'; if it is over 65% it can be 'good'. Over 80% it can be 'excellent'. (Calibration of these bands may change and questions are to be considered in relation to where they constrain judgements.)

### **Essential Skills Wales – Communication**

- Current year number/percentage of learners who have been screened on entry (see first bullet point above).
- Current year analysis by the provider of data from initial assessment.
- Current year number/percentage of learners enrolled at each of the levels from entry to L3.
- Initial assessment data for the previous year.
- ESW enrolment data for the previous year.
- Number/percentages for completion, attainment and success rates for ESW communication compared to national data.

**NB! This data should be recorded on the relevant ESW form below and should be passed after the inspection to the lead officer for post-16 English/literacy/communication for cross-Wales data analysis and comparison.**

- The provider should know these percentages. If not then they cannot be monitoring the skills levels of their students.

### **Samples of work**

Look at a sample of work to judge:

- how well learners apply their literacy skills within the context of their vocational area;
- whether learners are over-reliant on support (writing frameworks, worksheets, too much copying of information), without helping to develop their independent writing skill; and
- how well learners make progress in developing their literacy skills.

### **Tracking and monitoring progress in literacy**

- How well does the provider identify those learners who need support for skills and track their progress?
- How well does the provider track the progress of individual learners as well as groups of learners at course and learning area/department level?
- How well do the provider and learner negotiate targets for improvement and record them on Individual learning plans?
- How well do learners know their targets?
- How well do learners understand the measure of successful achievement of their targets?
- How well do learners track their targets?

## **Specific evidence to be scrutinised by the inspector with responsibility for literacy 2.1.2**

### **Policies**

- Does the provider have a comprehensive and robust literacy policy and strategies?
- Is the development of literacy/raising literacy standards a high priority in the provider improvement plan?
- How well has the provider included the monitoring and evaluation of learners' levels of literacy skills, and their successful development by staff, within its monitoring and planning for improvement policies and procedures?
- Does this monitoring and evaluation include an analysis of the standards of learners' literacy skills in lessons and in scrutiny of books/folders/portfolios?
- How well does the provider's marking and assessment policy and procedures help learners to develop their reading and writing skills, reflect on their work and make progress?

Liaise with the lead on aspect 2.2.2 to consider the coherence and consistency of the approach to developing learners' reading and writing skills across all subject areas.

### **Samples of schemes of work**

- How well staff have embedded literacy skills into learning experiences across all learning areas.
- How well developed links are between subject schemes of work and specific literacy support (where relevant) in developing progression in learners' reading and writing skills.
- How well literacy skills gained in ESW specific classes are reinforced, enhanced and developed further in other areas of work.
- How well vocational learning areas adapt learning/programmes of study when learners are working significantly below expected levels of reading/writing skills.
- How well subject areas adapt programmes of study to provide MAT learners with work at significantly higher levels in reading and writing skills, in response to a greater degree of challenge (for older and more able learners extending the breadth and depth of studies as well as providing opportunities for independent learning).

### **Samples of short term planning, such as lesson plans**

- How well staff exploit opportunities to develop literacy skills.
- How well staff differentiate in sessions for those who need more support and those who are MAT.

### **Learning support**

#### **Consider how well:**

- information about learners' reading and writing skills is shared between staff;
- information relating to learners' progress on support programmes is shared with

staff;

- information influences the teaching and learning strategies used by staff (liaise with lead on QI for 2.2);
- information about assessment is used to provide work that is well matched to learners' literacy needs; and
- information about assessment is used to inform decisions about whether learners remain in support programmes.

### **Question prompts for interviews about literacy support programmes**

#### **Evidence to be recorded on a judgement form**

- How is support delivered? Is there a good range of strategies and options for learner support provision, eg in-class; out-of-class; learning assistant support; one to one support; group support?
- How do you identify the learners who need support to improve their literacy skills?
- How are you collating the data for support provision? Is there suitable tracking of the learners who opt out of support as well as those who accept? Do learners have the opportunity to join support programmes at any time during the year?
- How effective are your intervention strategies in helping learners catch up with their peers?
- Do teaching assistants and learning assistants who deliver the support programmes receive appropriate training?
- How is the progress of learners on the support programmes communicated to managers and other staff?
- How do you ensure that classroom teachers are aware of the teaching and learning strategies and the resources used in the support programmes? What strategies does the provider use to make sure they use similar strategies and resources in their lessons?
- How is best practice about support provision shared with all tutors across the provider?

## **Question prompts for listening to specific learners – focus on literacy**

### **Evidence to be recorded on a judgement form**

- Did you have an assessment of your literacy skills at the start of your course? Were the results discussed with you?
- Did you also complete a diagnostic assessment? Were the results used to identify targets on your ILP?
- Can you remember what your targets are? How often are they reviewed?
- Are you making progress in your skills? How do you know when you've met a target?
- How does the college/training provider help you to improve your skills?
- Do you know what you have to do to improve your reading and writing skills further?
- Can you tell me something in literacy, reading or writing, that you can now do which you couldn't do when you started the course?
- Have you been able to use new skills in literacy across other areas of your course? Can you think of examples?
- How well do tutors mark your work? Do they correct spellings and punctuation for you and explain where you've gone wrong?

### **For those on support programmes**

- How were your needs identified at the start of the course? Were you given a good range of support options?
- How well does the support programme fit in with your main course of study? Are you able to access the provision at suitable times? Are the resources used in support linked to your main course subject?
- How has the programme helped you to improve your reading and/or writing skills? Can you give an example of where it has really helped you to get a better mark or made the work easier to understand?
- Do you have targets for the support sessions? How do you know what you are going to learn and how do you know when you've learnt it?
- Do you think you have made good progress since being involved in the programme?
- How well does the programme meet all of your needs and expectations?

## Questions to ask in relation to English for speakers of other languages

### IF this is a line of enquiry

#### Evidence to be recorded on a judgement form

- Is there a whole provider policy for supporting learners who do not have English or Welsh as a first language?
- Is the environment welcoming for ESOL learners?
- How well do staff adapt lessons for ESOL learners?
- Do ESOL learners have access to all of the provision on offer by provider? What options do ESOL learners have if they do not meet the entry criteria for their chosen course?

## Interview prompts for the senior manager overseeing literacy/the literacy co-ordinator

#### Evidence to be recorded on a judgement form

#### Select the most appropriate questions:

- How many staff working in discrete literacy classes have relevant literacy qualifications at level 3 and/or 4?
- What steps have been taken to ensure that all tutors have an understanding of how to support literacy learning within a class?
- How is information about initial and diagnostic assessment shared between staff?
- How well do tutors use the information for differentiation in lessons?
- How is this monitored and tracked across the whole institution?
- Is there an action plan for developing learners' literacy skills systematically across all of their classes?
- How well are learners' initial assessment results and prior learning matched to the level of their ESW qualification?
- How is this monitored and tracked?
- Is there a policy for ensuring that skills lessons are an embedded or contextualised part of a learner's course?
- How is the progress learners make in their skills development recorded and tracked?
- How is information about a learner's progress in skills communicated to all their course tutors?
- Do you know how well learners are progressing, including those receiving targeted support or extension?
- Do staff work as a team in supporting the development of literacy skills?
- Have you audited literacy skills across courses of study/learning areas to ensure

that subjects identify and provide opportunities for learners to develop their literacy skills?

- Are there agreed common approaches to the development of learners' literacy skills? If so, what are they?
- How effective are your action plans and evaluations of progress in learners' literacy skills?
- What professional training have staff undertaken to develop learners' literacy skills?
- Do you have a well-planned programme to review and evaluate the impact of literacy initiatives/the literacy policy? Do you seek learners' views on literacy as part of this review?
- How do you use information from target-setting to produce timely additional support for learners who do not make progress in line with expectation?
- How do you involve staff and learners in tracking progress and planning for improvement in the short and longer term?
- What training do you provide for support staff and learning coaches so that they have a sound knowledge of literacy initiatives in helping to support learners?

### **Specific questions on literacy for interviews with middle managers of learning areas**

#### **Evidence to be recorded on a judgement form**

#### **Select the most appropriate questions:**

- How well do you work with the literacy co-ordinator to plan opportunities for learners to apply and improve their skills in reading and writing?
- How well do you work with the literacy co-ordinator and/or English or Welsh subject leader to agree common teaching and learning strategies for literacy?
- Do staff in your subject area understand how best to support those with low literacy skills?
- How effective is the provider literacy policy in improving learners' literacy skills in your subject area?
- How do you ensure that your staff teach the conventions of different kinds of writing that are used in your subject?
- How do you reinforce and enhance the literacy skills gained in English or Welsh lessons in your subject?
- How well do you adapt programmes of study when learners are working significantly below expected levels of reading/writing skills?
- How well do you adapt programmes of study to provide MAT learners with work at significantly higher levels in reading/writing skills, in response to a greater degree of challenge (extending the breadth and depth of studies as well as providing opportunities for independent learning)?
- Are you aware of the teaching and learning strategies and the resources used in the literacy support programmes? Do you use similar strategies and resources in your lessons?

**Question prompts for portfolio scrutiny**

**Evidence to be recorded on a judgement form**

<b>Reading and thinking skills</b>	
<b>Evidence of a good range of reading materials</b>	<b>Is there evidence of:</b>  different sources and formats, Texts of different complexities?
<b>Complex reading/thinking skills</b>	<b>Is there evidence of:</b>  moving up from literal comprehension, locating facts; analysing, synthesising and reorganising explicit ideas or information in a passage, identifying patterns; using inference and deduction, making hypotheses, reading behind the lines, drawing conclusions; movement towards more higher-order reading skills of evaluating a passage or group of texts, linking with experience/prior knowledge, considering evidence and reliability; appreciation and analysis of content and style, an argument/debate, writers' techniques?
<b>A range of information retrieval strategies</b>	<b>Is there evidence of:</b>  highlighting, summarising, sequencing text by reordering paragraphs or creating a flow chart/storyboard, using reference books, using index, bibliography, note-making grids to select and organise information?
<b>A range of strategies to read for different purposes</b>	e.g. skimming, scanning – marking the text, highlighting, making alternative interpretations?
<b>Apply understanding to wider contexts, everyday life, new situation</b>	
<b>Writing skills</b>	
<b>Spelling</b>	<b>Is there evidence of:</b>  spelling errors being picked up through marking; incorrect words being learnt and used correctly in future writing; acknowledgement of differences between spelling errors in common words and spelling errors in course level technical words; strategies for improving spelling; a reducing number of errors as course progresses?
<b>Punctuation</b>	Errors should be appropriate to the level of the learner.  At entry 3 and all higher levels: capital letters and full stops, question marks and exclamation marks are accurate. At L1 and all higher levels: commas and apostrophes are accurate.

	<p>At level 2 and above: higher level punctuation such as dashes, semi colons and colons are accurate.</p> <p><b>Is there evidence of:</b></p> <p>punctuation errors being corrected; the number of errors reducing through the portfolio; work demonstrating a good use and range of punctuation?</p>
<b>Grammar</b>	<p>Errors should be appropriate to the level of the learner.</p> <p>At entry 3 and all higher levels: writing is in complete sentences and subject-verb agreement is correct.</p> <p>At L1 and all higher levels: verb tense, word order, a range of conjunctions and longer sentences are correct.</p> <p>At L2 and above: pronouns and complex sentences are used correctly to make writing interesting and accurate.</p> <p><b>Is there evidence of:</b></p> <p>grammatical errors being corrected; the number of errors reducing through the portfolio and work showing a developing and range of grammar?</p>
<b>Range and quality of extended writing tasks for different purposes and audiences</b>	<p><b>Is there evidence of:</b></p> <p>a variety of forms of writing through accurate use of the six main non-fiction text types (recount; instruction; non-chronological report; explanation; persuasion; discussion)?</p>
<b>Good use of language to present material appropriately</b>	<p><b>Is there evidence of:</b></p> <p>A good range of word choices used appropriately for the purpose and audience of the text; an extensive and varied vocabulary?</p>
<b>Other general communication Skills prompts</b>	
<p>Is there an increasing level of challenge in texts given for learners to read, and a choice of writing tasks?</p> <p>Work is presented neatly and uses an appropriate format.</p>	
<b>Marking and assessment</b>	
<p>Is marking up-to-date?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there are many gaps in learners' books, or missing work? Does the tutor notice this?</li> </ul>	

- Is there a common marking policy within and between subjects, not just in grading but with regard to correcting spelling, improving presentation etc?
- Are comments on learners' work diagnostic and do they show learners how to improve?
- Do learners follow up tutors' comments e.g. to redraft, correct or complete work?
- Is there self or peer marking and self or peer assessment?

### **Question prompts for FEIs and WBL lesson observation – focus on literacy**

#### **Evidence to be recorded on a judgement form**

##### **How well do learners...?**

- listen and respond to others (making significant contributions to discussion, and communicating clearly and effectively in a way that suits the subject, audience and purpose)?
- ask questions and think questions through for themselves?
- have a depth and breadth of understanding (understanding key concepts and ideas, making connections between different aspects of the work, and understanding the big picture)?
- apply understanding to wider contexts, everyday life, and new situations?
- locate, select and use information (selecting, summarising, identifying key points, and synthesising information)?
- respond to ideas and information using complex reading skills, orally and in writing (identifying patterns, making inferences or prediction, drawing conclusions, discussing and considering a range of interpretations)?
- research answers from a range of sources, considering evidence and its reliability, and weighing up pros and cons?
- cope with the demands of reading and writing tasks/activities?
- organise and present ideas and information clearly/effectively in their writing (planning, proof-reading and editing/revising work)?
- write accurately (with correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary, and matching style to purpose and audience)?
- demonstrate a range of good extended writing, creative work, different non-fiction text types and problem-solving?

##### **How well does the teaching...?**

- demonstrate good use of language to help the development of learners' reading and writing skills?
- use role-play, drama and collaborative group work before writing to extend learners' thinking?
- provide opportunities for discussion?
- use probing questions to improve learners' understanding?

- help learners to elaborate on their answers and make learning connections?
- develop learners' higher-order reading skills (in helping learners to use their comprehension and information retrieval skills to gain and synthesise information from a range of texts, charts, tables, graphs etc, skimming, scanning, and using inference, deduction and prediction)?
- directly teach reading and writing skills (for example developing learners' proof-reading and re-drafting skills; helping in spelling subject-specific terminology; using scaffolding/modelling to support development of writing skills; and giving specific guidance on how to develop and apply dual literacy skills)?
- encourage paired and group reading, which helps 'active' participation in reading activities?

Is there an increasing level of challenge in texts given for learners to read, and a choice of writing tasks?

### **Other literacy points**

- How well does the environment of the classroom celebrate and promote literacy skills (eg displays of subject-specific vocabulary, model responses for writing tasks)?
- Does teaching make use of suitable opportunities to develop reading and writing skills across the curriculum?
- How well have the reading and writing skills required for particular tasks been taught?