3-18 Literacy and English Review

Transforming lives through learning

Contents

1 Introduction

This review is part of a series evaluating the quality of children's and young people's learning and achievements in early learning and childcare settings and schools in Scotland. It describes and evaluates current practice in learning, teaching and achievement in literacy and English, and sets out key strengths and areas for improvement. It includes examples of good practice and identifies an agenda for raising attainment, in support of the Scottish Government's current priorities.

Literacy, alongside numeracy and health and wellbeing, sits at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence, as a key element of the knowledge, skills and attributes which equip children and young people for learning, life and work. In this ever-changing, information-rich society, it is essential that our children and young people develop a broad range of literacy and communication skills to participate fully in society and the world of work. Our ability to use language is central to our thinking, our learning and our personal development. Literacy and language unlock access to the wider curriculum and lay the foundations for communication, lifelong learning and work, contributing strongly to the development of all four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. Curriculum for Excellence emphasises the fundamental role of language and literacy skills in all learning wherever it takes place. The report by the [Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce](#) underlines the increased focus in Curriculum for Excellence on employability and skills development. Literacy skills are a core element of this agenda which aims to ensure young people leave Scottish schools equipped with the skills necessary for modern employment opportunities. In February 2015, Education Scotland published [Advice on Gaelic Education](#), which contains detailed guidance on how children and young people can develop their literacy skills through Gaelic Medium Education (see Appendix 5).

In Scotland, we continue to seek ways to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Approximately 20% of Scottish children are living in poverty. We know that people with low levels of literacy are more likely to earn less and experience poverty. Improving the literacy skills of all our children and young people is a national priority with the aim of raising attainment, reducing inequity, improving life chances and employment prospects.

The Scottish Government recently announced the Scottish Attainment Challenge which will focus on primary schools and target improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. It will build on, and complement, existing activity by local authorities and the Scottish Government to address the gap in attainment between our most and least deprived communities including the Raising Attainment For All Programme, the School Improvement Partnership Programme and the Access to Education Fund. In addition, the appointment of Attainment Advisors for each local authority will support local improvement activity by creating local and national networks. A new literacy and numeracy campaign, *Read Write Count*, will benefit all children from P1 to P3, but with a specific focus on schools and parents in our most deprived communities. The findings and recommendations of this review will support these Scottish Government priorities.

The reflective questions in this report are designed to be used by individuals or staff teams to evaluate their practice and promote discussion and further improvement.

For example:

How often do we plan relevant and real-life contexts to develop children and young people's literacy skills?

Evidence that informed this report came from the following sources:

- A series of focused inspection and review visits to a number of children and early learning and childcare settings, primary, secondary and special schools during the period February 2014 to May 2014. A list of educational establishments visited for this report is in Appendix 1.
- Analysis of relevant evidence from general inspections and other professional engagement visits carried out by Education Scotland over the past three years.
- Analysis of the patterns of uptake and performance by school students in English in SQA national qualifications. Statistical data are contained in Appendix 3.
- A review of relevant documents to take account of key messages relevant to literacy and English.
- Engagement in professional dialogue with practitioners, specialists across Education Scotland and members of the literacy and English education community across Scotland.

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2 Context

Within Curriculum for Excellence, literacy is defined as:

'the set of skills which allow an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful.'

(Literacy and English: principles and practice paper, p3)

The English and Literacy Experiences and Outcomes have been written in an inclusive way which allows teachers to interpret them for the needs of individual children and young people, for example those who use Braille, sign language and other forms of communication. For the purpose of this report, any reference to literacy includes all forms of communication.

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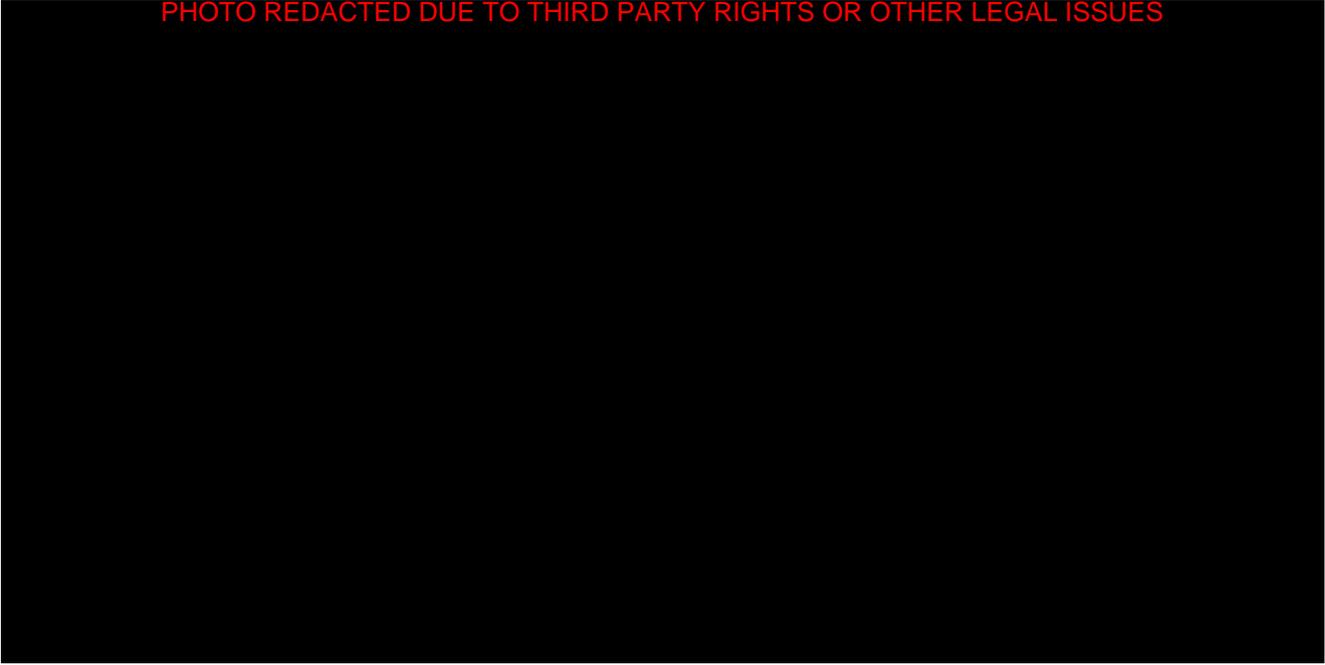
Building the Curriculum 1 emphasises the key role language and literacy skills have in gaining access to all learning and the need for these skills to be developed across all contexts and by every teacher in each curriculum area.

'Language is at the core of thinking. We reflect, communicate and develop our ideas through language. Literacy offers an essential passport to learning, helping young people to achieve to the full and be ready for active involvement in society and work. Literature opens up new horizons, and a love of reading can be an important starting point for lifelong learning. As we communicate increasingly through digital technologies, we need to be able to interpret and convey information in new ways and to apply discernment.'

(Building the Curriculum 1, 2006, p13)

All staff have a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend learning in literacy. The statements in the Literacy Experiences and Outcomes are the responsibility of all. They promote the development of critical and creative thinking as well as competence in listening and talking, reading, writing and the personal, interpersonal and team-working skills which are so important in life and in the world of work. Literacy in Curriculum for Excellence is more than a set of functional skills. Children and young people not only need to be able to

read for information, they also need to be able to analyse and evaluate texts, work out what trust they should place in the information and identify when and how people are aiming to persuade or influence them. A solid understanding of the structures and features of English language supports the development of literacy by giving children and young people the tools and vocabulary needed to understand texts and express themselves fluently. Literacy and English language enable children and young people to communicate their thoughts and opinions effectively, explain their learning, synthesise ideas and debate their thinking. They are essential for developing higher-order thinking skills leading to deep learning; learning which goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge and embraces understanding and the application of knowledge.

The Literacy across learning: principles and practice paper highlights the importance of having a clear picture of the progress each child and young person is making in developing and applying essential skills in listening and talking, reading and writing. Evidence of progress in literacy should be gathered across the curriculum and should complement the evidence gathered in discrete literacy or English lessons. To achieve this, a shared understanding of expectations in literacy across all curriculum areas is essential.

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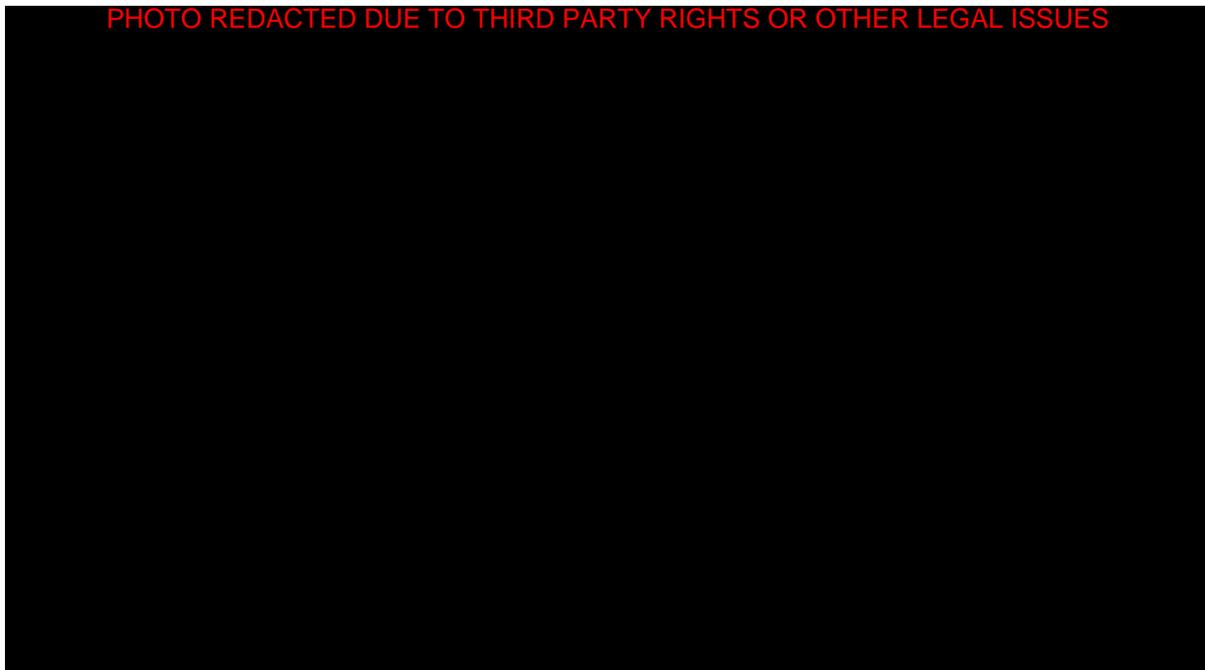
What is the difference between English and literacy?

The English Excellence Group defined the relationship between English and literacy as follows:

'*The Experiences and Outcomes of literacy across learning involve skills which will be learned in English as well as in all curricular areas. In English, however, there are particular skills which are focused on, such as the features of spoken language, including Scots, the ability to understand and to create characterisation, setting, structure and appropriate style. Learners will also have opportunities to write and talk imaginatively and to explore personal and reflective ideas…Above all, English encourages the appreciation of literature in all its forms and provides an engaging and motivating experience for those who study it. It is the surest route to lifelong learning and a continuously enriching experience of personal, social, professional and intellectual development for the individual.*'

(English Excellence Group Report, 2011, p4)

Within Curriculum for Excellence, the Literacy and English Experiences and Outcomes include both literacy and English statements. In those outcomes specifically identified as English, the focus is on the development of English language skills through exploring word patterns, text structures and engaging with a wide range of texts including Scottish literature, spoken language and media texts. In the specific study of English, children and young people learn about structure, characterisation, setting, theme and aspects of style and genre. They also learn about language and its effects including the features of spoken language and apply this learning creatively through talking and writing.

Assessment of progress in English should take account of more than how well children and young people are developing and applying literacy skills in reading, writing, listening and talking. It should include learners' ability to engage and respond to stories, poetry and prose of increasing depth and complexity, and their ability to share experiences through talking and writing using increasingly creative and sophisticated structures and language.
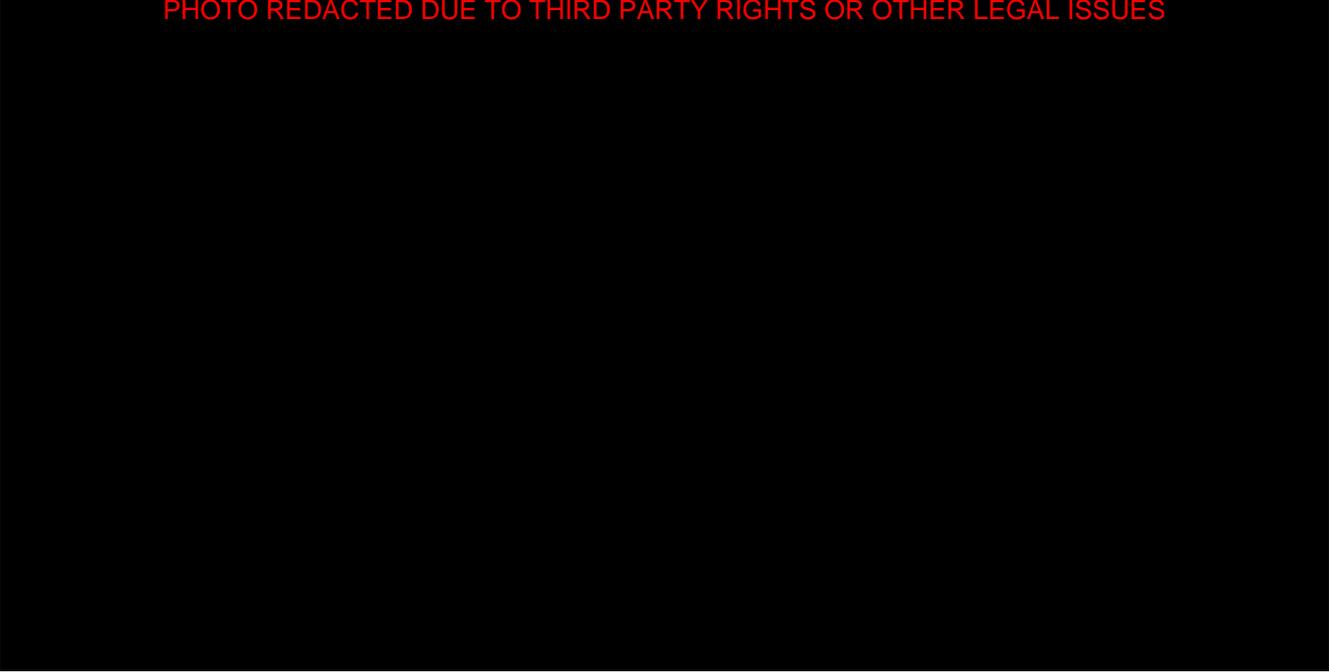
3 Executive summary

3-18 Literacy and English Review
Summary of Key Strengths and Aspects for Development

This report evaluates current practice in learning, teaching and achievement in literacy and English in early learning and childcare settings and schools in Scotland. It highlights good practice and important areas for further development. It identifies an agenda for raising attainment, in support of the Scottish Government's current priorities. It is intended to be used as a reflective tool to help staff identify their own next steps in raising standards of literacy, reducing inequity and closing the attainment gap. Through this review we have found these strengths and make the following recommendations.

Strengths

- Across sectors, most children and young people are enjoying their learning in literacy and English as a result of the range of relevant and stimulating contexts.
- Across sectors, children and young people are engaging well with a wider range of texts.
- Overall, there is increasing confidence among staff in using Literacy and English Experiences and Outcomes to ensure learners make continuous progress in literacy and English.
- There is evidence that, where there is strong leadership for literacy, this is leading to improvements in performance and in the quality of learners' experiences in literacy and English.
- Across sectors, early interventions and partnership working are being used effectively to support literacy development.

Recommendations

- Raising attainment in literacy should continue to be a priority across all sectors to drive up standards, reduce inequity and close the attainment gap.
- Across all sectors, ensure literacy is being developed across all aspects of learning as a tool to improve progress and achievement.
- Improve transitions at all stages to build on prior learning and ensure that there is appropriate challenge and support for all.
- Schools should ensure they are tracking and monitoring children's and young people's progress in literacy across all areas of learning and continuing to plan assessment as part of learning and teaching.
- All staff should develop the advanced literacy skills of children and young people in order to challenge their thinking and actively involve them in their learning.
- Local Authorities should continue to support schools through strategic approaches that enable schools to drive up standards in literacy.

4 Learning and achievement in literacy and English 3-18

4.1 Learning and achievement in literacy and English across the sectors

Early Learning and Childcare Settings

In the majority of early learning and childcare settings, staff are planning and providing a literacy-rich learning environment to support children's learning in literacy. Children have opportunities to develop their early literacy skills through their interactions with adults and other children, through play, exploration and investigation. When planning literacy experiences and contexts, most staff ensure an appropriate balance between child-led and adult-initiated learning. Most staff provide children with opportunities to develop literacy skills in relevant play contexts, linking learning and play effectively. Children also have opportunities to learn independently and in pairs and groups. Fundamental to this is the role of staff and how they interact with children and support their learning. In many centres, skilled use of questioning by staff is enabling children to build their vocabulary and help them explore texts. Staff are becoming increasingly skilled in their use of higher-order questions. Younger children naturally ask questions to make sense of the world around them. Supporting young children to ask searching questions promotes this lifelong literacy skill.

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Most young children enjoy a child-centred curriculum that is relevant and based on play. Staff are planning a broad general education with an appropriate focus on literacy. Increasingly, children are consulted about learning through a range of approaches such as discussion, mind-maps and talking and thinking books. All of these approaches support children well to develop early literacy skills. Well-planned learning environments in early learning and childcare settings offer many enjoyable and stimulating opportunities for young children to develop their literacy skills, such as through role play and outdoor learning. Some settings make very good use of contexts such as baking to develop children's early reading skills and encourage them to listen to instructions. More early learning and childcare settings should take advantage of the rich opportunities that present themselves daily in the playroom and outdoors to develop children's literacy skills.

In most settings, children **listen and talk** well in a range of different contexts and for a variety of purposes. Children regularly engage in conversations and discussions with each other and familiar adults. Most are able to follow instructions and respond appropriately to questions. In the majority of settings, staff support children well to learn and use new vocabulary in interesting contexts. In a few settings, children need support to listen and take turns in discussions. We have also found that, in some settings, children are expected to listen for overly-lengthy periods of times or in overly-large groups and, as a result, become disengaged.

In most early learning and childcare settings, children are making good progress in developing their early **reading** skills in their play. Most are able to recognise their name in different contexts and as part of daily routines such as registration and labelling of art work. Overall, children are engaging well with environmental print. In most settings, children display a keen interest in books and enjoy sharing books with adults. This is most evident in settings where staff prioritise regular storytelling sessions and children have been involved in developing an exciting, well-resourced book area. Increasingly, staff are using interesting approaches, such as actions, puppets and props, to encourage children to become familiar with particular stories. By regularly re-visiting the same books, children are more able to comment on the writer's craft, sequence the story, discuss characters and the specific features of the book. In a significant number of settings, children can identify their favourite author and books. Most older children can identify the initial sound in their name. In many settings, staff make very good use of songs and nursery rhymes to develop children's awareness of patterns and sounds of language.

In most settings, children are developing their early **writing** skills well in a variety of play contexts. Children use their drawings and written marks to express their thoughts and feelings. In the most positive practice, we see children develop their early writing skills across the playrooms and outdoors in relevant contexts such as self-registration, writing shopping lists, making labels and making notes and plans. In a few settings, children are encouraged to copy words before they are ready to do so. It is important that staff in early learning and childcare settings have a clear understanding of the different stages of early writing development so they can support children to develop their writing according to their needs.

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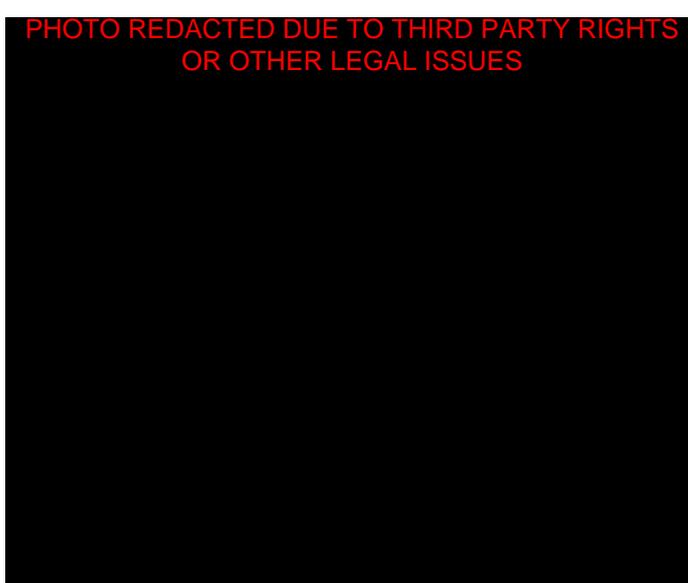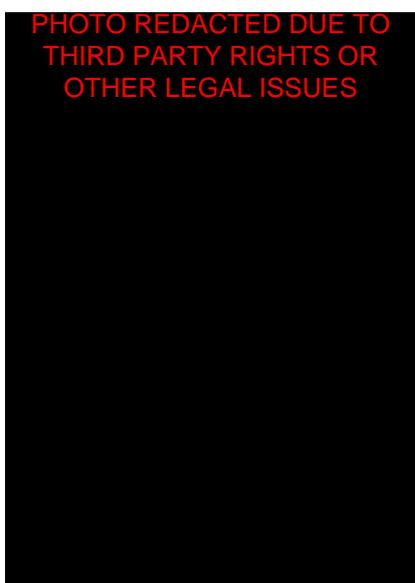
Primary Schools

In primary schools, most children are developing their literacy and English skills in a range of stimulating and relevant contexts. Overall, children are benefitting from literacy-rich environments where they can work collaboratively, contribute to group and class discussions, ask questions and access a variety of texts. This is helping them to develop their thinking and apply their literacy skills in increasingly more challenging and creative contexts across the curriculum. We have found that, where the contexts are real and meaningful, children are highly motivated in their learning.

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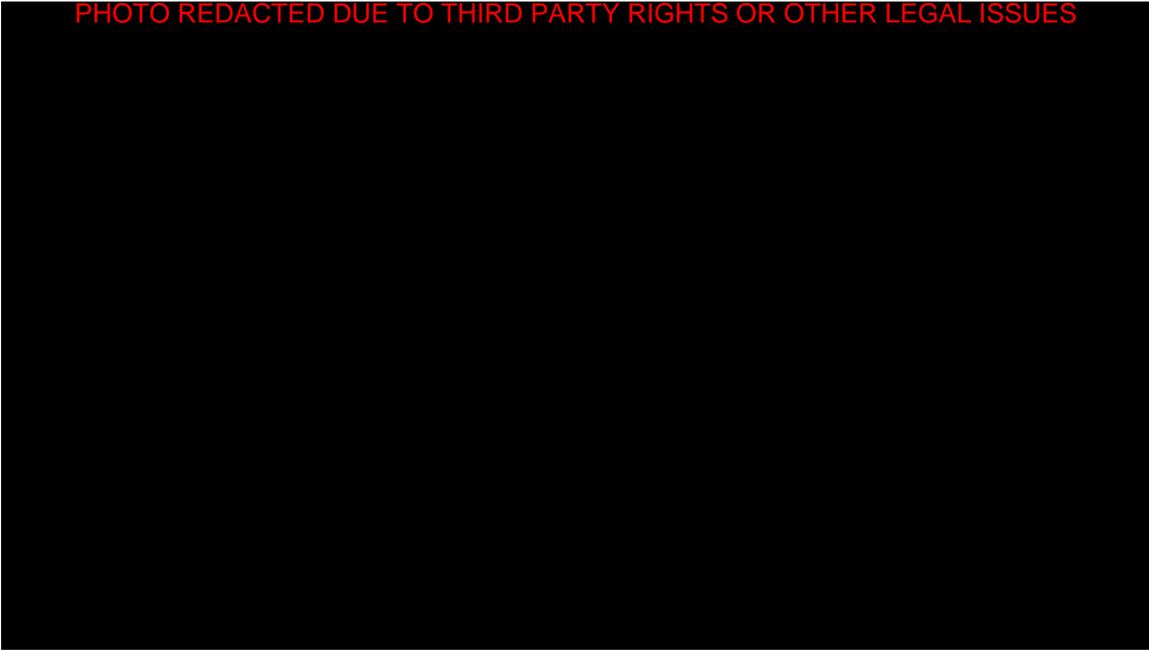
Across primary schools, the majority of children are making good progress in **listening and talking**. Overall, children listen and talk with confidence in a range of different contexts and for a variety of purposes. As they progress in their learning, children are more able to explain their views and give an opinion. Across the primary stages, children have the opportunity to talk and listen to others in a range of contexts such as focused group discussions, debates and presentations. Schools are also making very good use of pupil voice committees and assemblies to build children's confidence and awareness of different audiences. Where schools ensure talking and listening skills are taught in a progressive way, children are building on prior learning and are given opportunities to develop and use a wider range of skills. This helps them develop key skills such as encouraging and respecting the contributions of others, clarifying and summarising points, building on what others say and using appropriate tone, pace and language to engage an audience.

At the primary stages, most children are developing their **reading** skills well. By the time children start P1, the majority have a good awareness of rhyme and patterns in language. They are aware of the common features of books and are beginning to ask questions to help their understanding. As they progress through the stages, they are developing fluency and understanding of what they read. They are becoming more independent in choosing texts and can increasingly share their opinions about texts they have read. Children can find information from a variety of sources, and select and sort information to support their views. Almost all schools have structured programmes to support progression in reading. These programmes are most effective when they are supported by effective learning and teaching approaches which focus on developing specific reading strategies such as contextual clues, prediction and inference. In general, children require more opportunities

to develop further their advanced reading skills through the use of suitably challenging texts. Greater opportunities should be provided for children to discuss a range of literary features, for example, the writer's style and the effect this has on the reader. In most schools, staff are increasingly using a variety of texts to motivate children to read. Where there is a strong focus on reading for enjoyment, children are more interested in books and choose to read independently.

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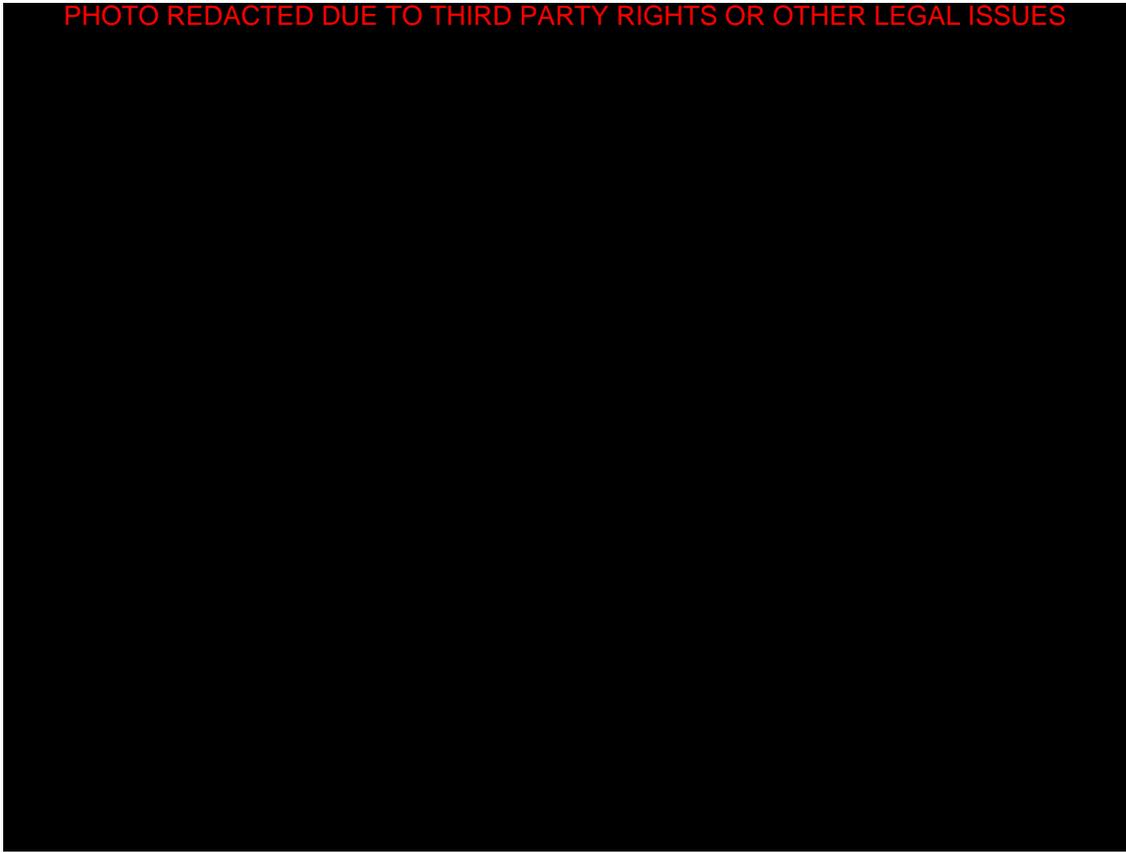
The majority of children continue to make good progress in **writing** across the primary stages. They are able to write well for a variety of different purposes and audiences. As they progress through the school, children can make notes, plan, research and write at length with increasing independence. Increasingly, whole-school approaches to writing are ensuring children develop skills in a planned and progressive way which builds continuously on their prior learning. This is helping children to use a better range of vocabulary and improve the structure of their writing. As children make use of more complex vocabulary, there is a need to ensure that they understand the language they are using and apply it appropriately to engage the reader. Most schools provide children with opportunities to write in a range of real contexts. This is increasing their understanding of the style and structure of different types of writing, while providing purposeful and motivating opportunities to apply their literacy skills across their learning. Where staff have a clear understanding of the specific skills and features of writing to be taught and share these explicitly with children, we have found that children make better progress and know what they need to do to improve. Children should be given many opportunities to write at length for a range of purposes across the four contexts of the curriculum to continue to improve attainment in writing. It is also important that schools continue to give a high priority to technical accuracy, presentation and developing children's understanding and use of punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing.

Livingston Village Primary School, West Lothian

Case Study Focus: Improving writing

In order to raise attainment in writing, staff in Livingston Village Primary School developed a whole school, structured approach to the organisation of writing lessons. After a whole class learning and teaching focus, the children are organised into three groups to begin their individual pieces of writing. One group works independently without any further teacher input, one group is provided with additional support from a pupil support worker and the final group is fully supported by the teacher during the lesson. In this third group, the teacher provides focused support for individual children based on their prior learning and on-going formative feedback. The groups then rotate on a weekly basis so that every three weeks, the children are producing a piece of unsupported writing. Teachers focus their written formative feedback on these unsupported pieces of work and this group then becomes the teacher focus group the following week. This approach enables staff to continue to improve the quality of pupils' writing through robust formative assessment, regular opportunities to track progression of individuals, and on-going opportunities to engage in purposeful dialogue with learners to support target setting and next steps.

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Secondary Schools

In most secondary English departments, stimulating, relevant contexts for learning are providing motivating and enjoyable experiences for young people. Most staff plan across a breadth of experiences and outcomes and young people have very good opportunities to revisit and consolidate or extend learning in different contexts. In the best examples, young people are benefitting from a range of imaginative tasks and activities that enable them to develop critical and creative thinking such as imaginative writing and debating. They experience a wide range of challenging and enriching texts including classic and contemporary fiction, media texts including film and print media, Scots and Scottish texts, and the spoken word, for example in the study of persuasive speeches. This is enriching their learning and supporting them to develop their language skills in challenging and enjoyable contexts. Across subjects and curriculum areas, there are examples of young

people applying their literacy skills well. In some schools, teachers provide challenging contexts for learners to develop and extend these literacy skills. We return to the importance of embedding literacy across all learning to deepen learning and raise attainment later in this report.

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In a few English departments, choice is offered through electives or short courses. Young people can choose from a range of options to deepen their learning, for example, debating, drama, journalism, media or courses that look at the work of a particular genre or author in more detail. In a few schools, these choices are well planned with clearly identified outcomes. They offer depth and challenge, extending knowledge and skills in an area that interests and motivates the young person. An increased focus on skills development when planning courses is supporting progression in knowledge and skills into the senior phase. This is ensuring young people are building on prior learning and are aware of the skills they are developing and how they can apply them in a range of contexts. It is also enabling them to make links across their learning in English, for example how analysis and evaluation of writer's techniques in texts they have read can be applied in their own writing.

The majority of young people in secondary schools make good progress in **listening and talking**. They are able to articulate and present ideas and information well in a variety of contexts. In discussion, they express views and opinions confidently and listen actively, showing respect when responding. There is a need to develop talking and listening skills in a progressive way, supporting young people to improve skills such as asking relevant questions, clarifying and summarising points, and building on the contributions of others. In talks and presentations, they can find and organise information well and use a tone and register appropriate to the purpose and audience. A more explicit focus on the analysis of the features of spoken language and the effect these have on the listener will support young people to develop their critical listening skills further (for example, pace, expression, emphasis, register and rhetorical devices such a hyperbole, repetition and rhetorical questions). Where talking activities have a relevant and real-life context such as campaign speeches, enterprise pitches or persuasive talks, young people are applying their learning about language to give effective speeches and talks.

In **reading** young people are making good progress in developing critical literacy skills. In general, they can analyse texts and recognise techniques used to influence the reader. They are increasingly able to identify sources independently, find information relevant to their requirements and make notes, synthesising information from different sources. They are developing their abilities to respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions through a range of opportunities such as the analysis of literature and the close reading of non-fiction texts. A continued focus on challenge and the development of higher-order reading skills will develop young people's ability to think critically and be more analytical and evaluative when engaging with texts. This will ensure effective progression to the senior phase. There is also a need to ensure that young people engage with texts of appropriate complexity and challenge, particularly when developing higher-order reading skills.

Young people continue to develop their **writing** skills in their English lessons and extend their understanding of the style and structure of different genres. In general, by the end of S2, the majority of young people are able to write appropriately for the purpose and audience, select and organise ideas well, convey information clearly and describe events or personal experiences in detail. Where the links between reading and writing are made clear, young people can apply their learning about language and literary techniques in their own writing. In general, they do this with increasing independence from S3. Many English departments have progressive approaches to teaching writing. This is helping young people to use more engaging vocabulary, a more sophisticated range of language and improve the content, structure and organisation of their ideas. There should be a continued focus on technical accuracy, presentation and developing children's and young people's understanding and use of punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing. There is also a need for young people to be given opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills more effectively across other areas of the curriculum. Schools should ensure that enough opportunities are provided across learning for extended writing within a range of relevant, rich contexts. It is important that staff have a shared understanding of standards and consistent expectations of what young people should achieve, to support improvement in writing.

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In the **Senior Phase**, almost all young people study English in S4 and it is among the most popular courses in S5 and S6. In 2014, Higher English had the highest uptake of all Highers with 31,589 entries, an increase from 30,436 in 2013. The percentage of young people progressing from SCQF level 5 courses in English to Higher is amongst the highest, along with mathematics and the sciences. However, relatively few pupils progress from Higher to Advanced Higher in English. At Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher, the pass rate at A-C and the percentage of young people achieving a course award at A-D in English are in line with other popular subjects. At National 5, the A-C and A-D rates are higher than any other top-15 subject apart from PE and Music. The proportion of resulted entries awarded an A in Higher English is lower than most other popular subjects and the average across all subjects, however entries are significantly higher than in all other subjects. In general, young people attain more highly in literacy than numeracy. Further information on attainment in National Qualifications in English can be found in Appendix 3.

Special Schools

Children's and young people's progress in communication and literacy is a key strength in many special schools. In most special schools, staff ensure that children and young people are developing communication skills matched to their individual needs. They provide good opportunities for pupils to communicate with others in the local and wider community, and to develop reading and writing through practical experiences such as shopping, emailing and writing letters.
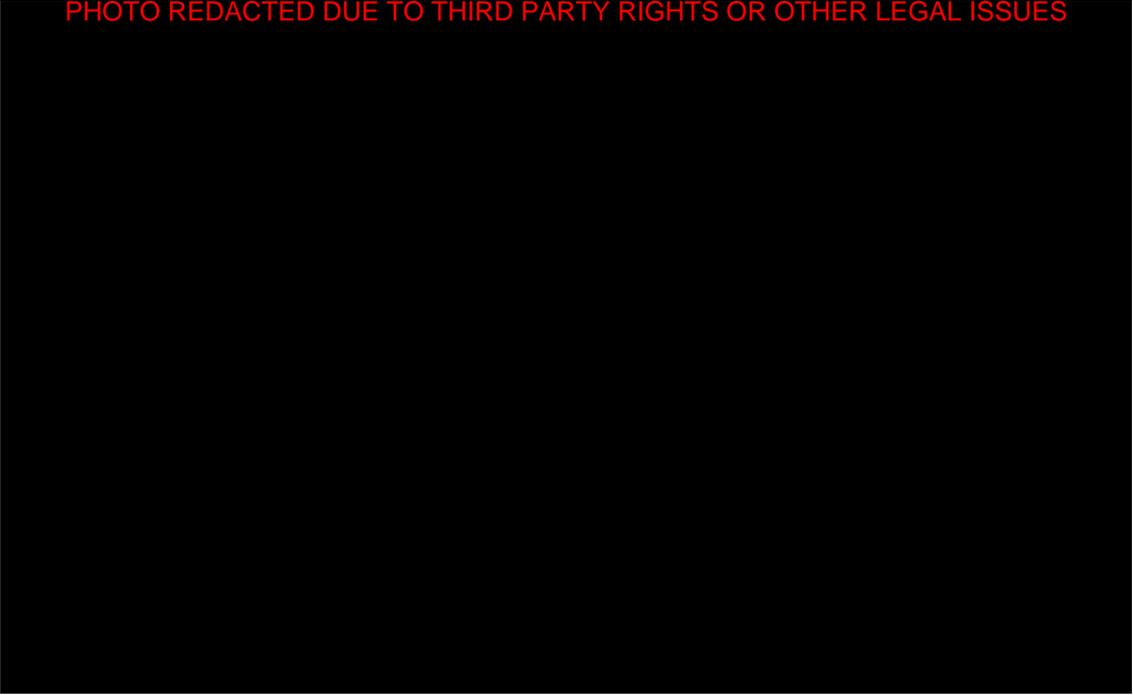
In almost all special schools, staff develop children's and young people's communication skills using a very wide range of communication aids and alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) approaches and resources such as Makaton, symbols and switches. Children and young people use technological aids such as eye tracking technology and tablet applications to communicate with others and access the curriculum. Many special schools use a 'total communication approach' and recognise that communication for some pupils will require specialised strategies. Picture exchange communication systems (PECS), signing, switches and photographs/symbols are used widely in schools to help children develop communication skills. Some schools need to recognise that children and young people have very specific and individual communication needs, and will develop skills best when the approach or resource used is matched to these needs. In group activities, teachers need to ensure that all children and young people are fully included and are able to understand and communicate using their primary and preferred approach.
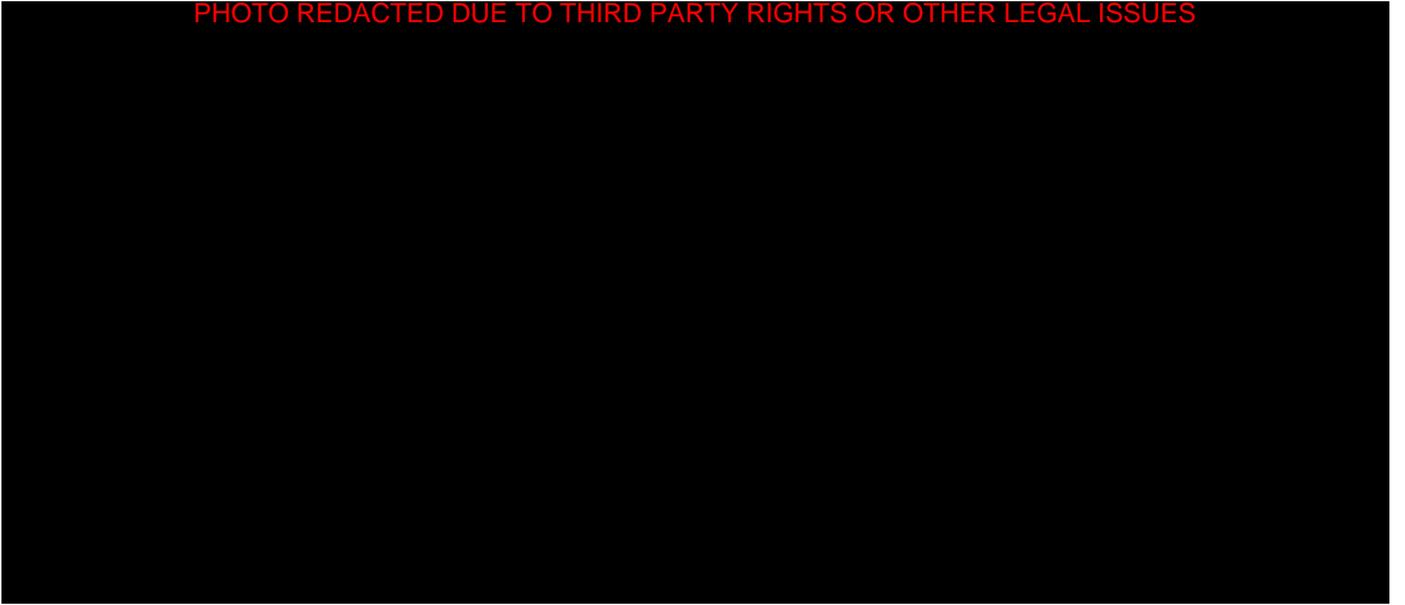
Children and young people in special schools are making good progress in reading and writing, where this is appropriate. Almost all children and young people work towards

literacy targets which are often detailed in their individual plans. In most schools, staff provide enjoyable and stimulating opportunities for learners to develop their reading and writing skills in meaningful contexts such as shopping and cooking. Most children and young people are able to read or listen to a range of texts. Staff use creative and stimulating approaches such as story sacks to help children with additional support needs understand and enjoy books and other stories.

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Some deaf children and young people require access to sign language in addition to, or instead of, oral language. Where deaf children have opportunities to become bilingual, this increases their access to the curriculum, and leads to improved social, cognitive and linguistic capabilities.

Victoria Park School, South Lanarkshire

Case study: Developing literacy skills through relevant contexts

Victoria Park School provides children with opportunities to develop literacy skills through relevant contexts. Their whole-school project about the chemist engages and motivates children to develop a range of relevant skills. The school has made very good use of their environment to create their own pharmacy shops and displays. Children use these areas very effectively for role play which is supporting their skills in talking and listening very well. Some children visit the pharmacist in their local community and have opportunities to talk about the different types of products they can buy. They use lists they have created to find items in the shop. Children read and listen to stories related to their topic such as George's Marvellous Medicine and make their own potions by following recipes and instructions, and labelling diagrams. This approach in Victoria Park School results in children developing literacy skills within a highly stimulating and creative context.

How well do you plan relevant contexts for developing literacy that engage and motivate learners?

The curriculum in special schools takes good account of the Literacy and English Experiences and Outcomes and ensures that the individual needs of children and young people are met. In addition, schools are good at ensuring children develop their literacy skills through specialist programmes and courses. There is still a need to ensure appropriate challenge and progression by taking account of experiences and outcomes beyond early and first level. This will improve transition to senior phase and will help young

people develop skills for life, learning and work. Almost all special schools have a well-developed senior phase curriculum. In some schools, there are very good opportunities for young people to continue to develop their literacy skills through National Qualifications. Special schools should ensure that all young people have opportunities to make choices about their courses and programmes in the senior phase, and to further develop their literacy skills through National Qualifications.

> **Hamilton School for the Deaf, South Lanarkshire**
>
> **Case Study Focus: Personalised approaches to literacy and communication**
>
> Hamilton School for the Deaf adopts a total communication approach to language and communication. There is a strong focus on British Sign Language (BSL) and oral communication. Good account is taken of the home/family background of children and how this impacts on their acquisition of language. Some children are from deaf families and BSL is used at home, whilst others who attend the school do not have a signing environment at home and a few children have access to both English and BSL. In determining the starting point for language and the approaches used at home, the school is able to provide a differentiated and personalised approach to literacy and communication. Children are provided with good opportunities to explore language and, in particular, differences in aspects of BSL and English.

How well do you plan to improve the language acquisition of all learners to improve literacy and communication?

4.2 Transitions to ensure progression in literacy and English

Schools are increasingly improving their approaches to transition to ensure that children and young people build progressively on prior learning in literacy and English. Curricular transitions that take good account of prior attainment and individual learning needs play a vital role in improving outcomes for children and young people. Encouragingly, almost all schools have established cluster working across sectors to improve the progression and consistency of approach in literacy. Many of these are well established and serve as a model of practice for other curricular areas.

At the **early level**, transitions are still not of a consistently high enough standard, particularly in relation to progression in children's literacy skills. While many primary schools have developed pastoral transitions very successfully, children's prior learning is not always being built upon effectively as they enter P1. Staff working across the early level should continue to share methodologies and clear, relevant information about children's individual progress. There is scope for better sharing of children's profiles or learning journeys amongst all relevant staff when children move on to P1.

Staff in **primary schools** are improving how they organise transitions from stage to stage. In the best examples, clear information about children's progress in literacy and English is shared between staff. Most **primary schools** and **secondary school English departments** have developed close links. In the best practice, this supports professional development in both agreeing assessment standards and planning learning, teaching and assessment. Generally, there is still a need for staff across sectors to work together to develop a shared understanding of what progress in literacy and English looks like at different levels. This will enable them to build more effectively on prior learning.

Dumbarton Academy, West Dunbartonshire

Case Study Focus: Transition project that supports progression in analysis and evaluation of texts

The English Department at Dumbarton Academy and cluster primary schools have developed a transition project with a focus on analysis and evaluation of texts. Children in P7 attend lessons in Dumbarton Academy for a period of six weeks with the aim of developing their skills in critical essay writing. This challenged the higher-attaining pupils and improved the transition process. P7 teachers also undertook professional learning in critical essay writing, delivered by the principal teacher of English, allowing them to plan progressive experiences for children and develop advanced literacy skills through increased challenge and a focus on analysis and evaluation of texts.
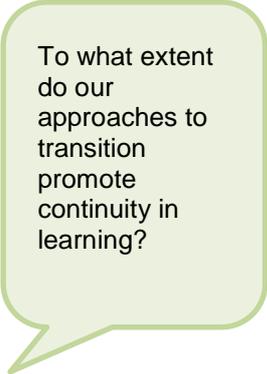
To what extent do our approaches to transition promote continuity in learning?

In almost all **secondary schools**, transitions in English from the broad general education to the senior phase are strong. Courses and programmes build well on young people's prior learning and provide progression to appropriate levels of qualifications in English. Many schools are identifying flexible pathways that offer breadth as well as depth to meet the needs of different learners. Such pathways include literacy units combined with skills for life courses or personal development units, awards in Scottish Studies and qualifications in media. In the best practice, secondary schools have developed strong partnership working with local **colleges**. This provides young people with flexible pathways and meaningful ways of continuing to develop their literacy skills in their chosen area of study. Where young people are experiencing difficulties with literacy, it is important that these are shared with the college to ensure progression and appropriate support is provided.

Special schools and units and bases in mainstream schools are now developing the senior phase and starting to make effective use of courses and units at National 1 and National 2. Many schools have developed a range of opportunities for young people to accredit their skills in literacy and communication through programmes such as John Muir Award, Dynamic Youth and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Special schools should continue to increase opportunities for accreditation in literacy and English. This will ensure young people have a range of options in the senior phase which meet their individual needs and interests.

4.3 Learners' understanding of their progress in literacy and English

Increasingly, in **early learning and childcare settings**, staff are providing opportunities for children to talk about their learning in regular and natural ways. In the best examples, we find staff using children's profiles well as a stimulus to encourage them to reflect appropriately on their learning.

Overall, in **primary schools**, children can talk about their learning experiences in literacy and English but many are less confident discussing their progress. Where children are involved in setting personalised literacy targets and are supported to reflect on them regularly, we find they have a better understanding of what they are good at and what they need to improve. Self and peer-assessment are well established in most literacy and English language lessons. Where the skills involved in effective assessment have been modelled for children and they are given opportunities to practise and refine these skills, they have a much clearer picture of their progress. This is particularly strong in writing

where helpful feedback from teachers is focused on supporting children to achieve their individual targets. In general, children are not sufficiently involved in reflecting on their progress in literacy through other areas of their learning. Teachers should make more explicit reference to literacy skills when children are developing and applying these skills in contexts across the curriculum.

Woodmuir Primary School, West Lothian

Case Study Focus: Opportunities for children to share their learning

At Woodmuir Primary School, staff believe it is essential that all children understand the purpose of their learning and why it is important for future success in and beyond school. This shared belief is central to the school's approach to literacy and English language.

'*Children are now active participants rather than passive learners which has increased motivation and engagement considerably. Developments in the curriculum have allowed staff to plan challenge-based learning where the emphasis is on depth of understanding and developing skills. Staff are now more able to use and adapt meaningful contexts ensuring learning is up-to-date and relevant to the children and their families.*'

Headteacher

Across the school, all children are engaged in planning their learning. They collaborate with their peers to identify what they will learn and how they will learn it. Assessment is planned as part of learning and used to identify children's next steps. All children have regular opportunities to discuss their learning with peers and their teacher and are very clear about what they need to do to improve and how they will go about it. Children are enthusiastic about reviewing and editing their work and thrive on producing high-quality examples to share with peers and their families. All children have regular opportunities to share their work with parents, peers and younger children. **'Learning Walks'** have successfully involved parents in their children's learning. Children take their parents on a guided tour around the school using displays of work to explain what has been learned with a focus on their personal contribution and achievements. This approach has contributed to a shared sense of pride in learning and achievement across the school. Children can express their views more confidently and are able to articulate their progress in learning. Staff take time during lessons to encourage children to talk about how skills can be used across the curriculum and to link tasks and activities to the world of work. A key feature of success at Woodmuir Primary is the shared high expectations for children and consistently-applied methodology across the school.

> How well do we plan opportunities for children and young people to discuss their learning with:
> - peers
> - staff
> - parents/ carers?

From **S1 to S3**, most young people are given opportunities in their English lessons to reflect on their learning. This is supporting them to understand their progress and helping them to identify their next steps. They participate regularly in self and peer-assessment activities which are also helping them to improve. Young people speak positively about the feedback that they receive from their English teachers. In particular, written feedback on their writing is helping them to understand their strengths and next steps. There is scope for teachers to improve the quality of feedback they give to young people on their reading and group discussion skills. At the **senior phase**, most young people are clear about their progress in English and set targets for improvement within the context of National Qualifications. Young people are less clear about the progress they are making in literacy across other areas of the curriculum. There is a need for staff across all subject areas to highlight literacy skills more clearly to young people. When appropriate, staff should highlight for

young people the literacy skills being developed, and provide feedback. Currently, this is still not being done in a consistent way across secondary school curricular areas.

> What strategies do we use to involve young people in identifying their learning targets and discussing how they will achieve these targets?

> Do you involve young people in planning learning and agreeing how you will gather evidence of learning for assessment?

Hazlehead Academy, Aberdeen City

Focus: Involving young people in discussing their own learning and progress

Hazlehead Academy in Aberdeen City has developed a range of approaches to involve young people in talking about their learning. These are having a positive impact on young people's ability to understand where they are in their learning. The use of assessment sheets in S1 to S3 encourages young people to engage in and evaluate their learning. They identify their learning targets, consider class activities to aid them in achieving their targets, identify success criteria and record feedback from self, peer and teacher assessment. These assessment sheets become the basis for teachers' learning conversations with young people and the focus of discussion at parents' evenings. Young people talk positively about how they are benefiting from the process. They are more aware of the purpose of their learning and how it relates to the skills they are developing. When young people come to complete their termly pupil learning plan, they can do so in a more meaningful way because they understand what they have achieved that term and are developing the language required to discuss and evaluate their own learning. The personal learning plans have been incorporated into the school diaries to encourage young people's ownership of them.

'The impact of the assessment sheets has been significant in ensuring pupils can see where they have come from and where they are going with basic skills. Pupils are able to colour code their success criteria on the assessment sheet and use this to track their progress. They can use the sheet to predict their next steps in learning and to assist them in completing their personal learning plans or S3 profile. Pupils certainly seem more aware of their strengths and areas for development than before we used this system; it has enabled more focused learning conversations.'

Faculty Head of English and Literacy

> Hazlehead Academy have developed learning charts in S1-S3 (in the pictorial form of a rocket, mountain or tree) to reinforce young people's progress in learning. Young people mark on the chart how well they understand a concept or add a question or point of information about the topic to show where they are in their learning. These charts stimulate discussion and are referred to throughout a block of learning by both teacher and pupils.
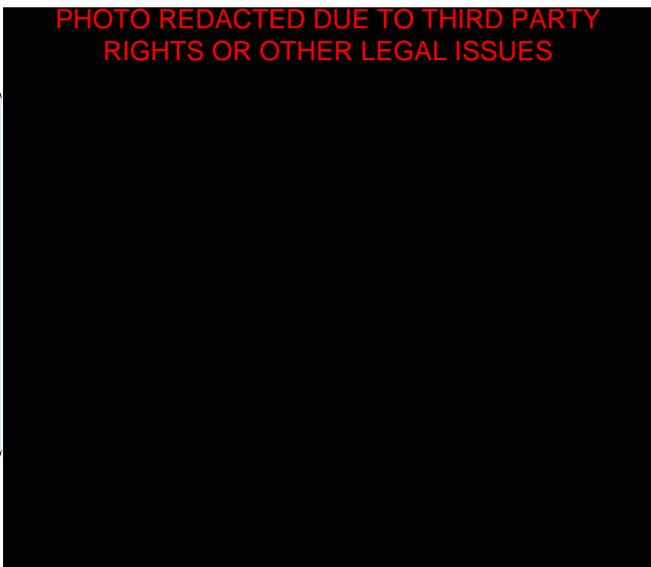
Many children and young people in **special schools** work towards specific literacy outcomes. In many schools, these outcomes are developed in partnership with learners and they have a good understanding of their progress. In some schools, these outcomes

are not shared or discussed with children and young people. All schools should provide opportunities for children and young people to be fully included in planning for literacy so that they are better involved in reviewing progress through high quality discussions with relevant staff.

Across all sectors, schools are developing processes to collate evidence of children's and young people's progress. Approaches such as the use of learning logs, portfolios or personal learning plans are being used to record progress over time. In some schools, these learning profiles support children and young people to reflect on the skills they are developing and make connections across their learning. Staff need to ensure that children and young people take more responsibility for their learning and become more fully involved in discussing their progress with their teachers, peers and parents. This will ensure target-setting and profiling processes are more meaningful and move learning forward, rather than becoming cumbersome, bureaucratic processes with little impact.

What practical steps do we need to take to ensure learners have the skills they need to take more responsibility for their own learning?

How effective are our arrangements to ensure that learners have opportunities for regular discussions to review learning and plan next steps?

What arrangements do we have in place to fully involve parents in their child's learning and progress?
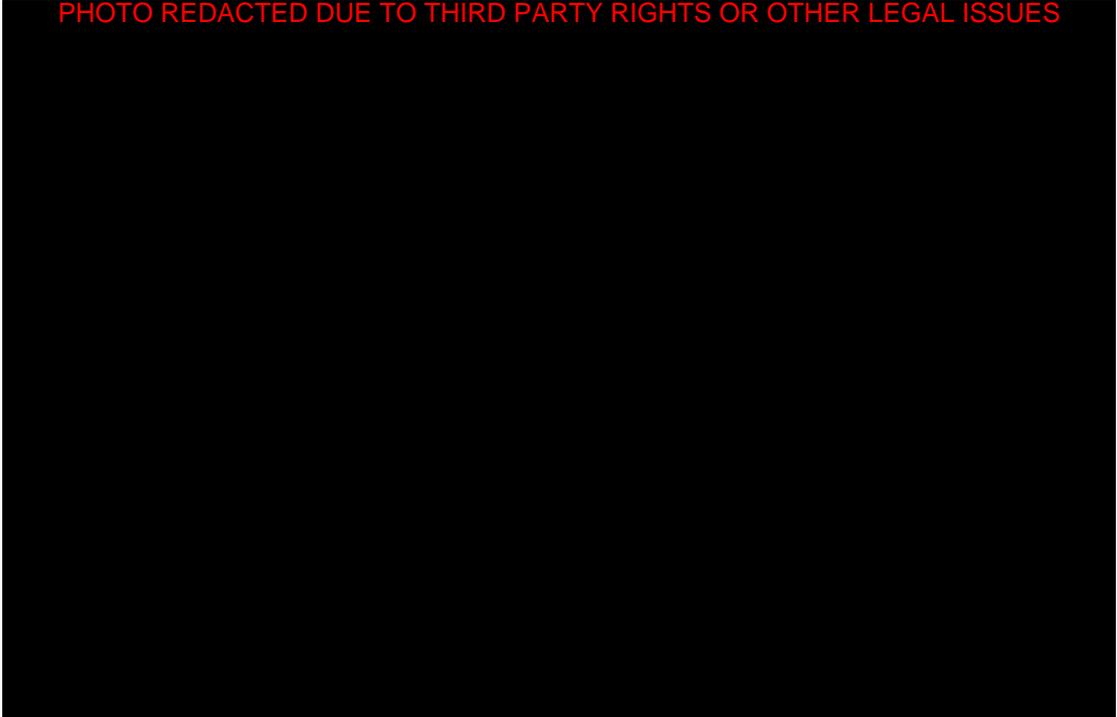
4.4 Enhancing learning and achievement in literacy and English through Scots and Scottish texts

'The languages, dialects and literature of Scotland provide a rich resource for children and young people to learn about Scotland's culture, identity and language. Through engaging with a wide range of texts they will develop an appreciation of Scotland's vibrant literary and

linguistic heritage and its indigenous languages and dialects. This principle suffuses the Experiences and Outcomes and it is expected that practitioners will build upon the diversity of language represented within the communities of Scotland, valuing the languages which children and young people bring to school.'

(Literacy and English: principles and practice paper, p4)

Across all sectors, staff are increasingly using Scots and Scottish texts to develop children's and young people's literacy skills. The next step for many schools is to plan opportunities for children and young people to use Scots language, and Scots and Scottish texts, beyond one-off events such as for St Andrew's Day or Burns celebrations. A knowledge and understanding of Scots language and Scottish texts allows children and young people to explore and appreciate Scottish culture. Learning Scots can often improve learners' engagement in learning and their development of wider literacy skills. Through Scots, learners can explore language in more depth, making connections and comparisons with the linguistic structures and vocabularies of other languages. Scots as a context for learning can also provide an engaging platform for children and young people to explore language, register and audience. It can encourage reluctant readers and writers to become involved as texts in Scots can capture the imagination and speak to them in a familiar voice.

Scots language can be used to particularly good effect in **early learning and childcare** settings, encouraging the development of listening and talking skills as well as an awareness of rhythm and rhyme.

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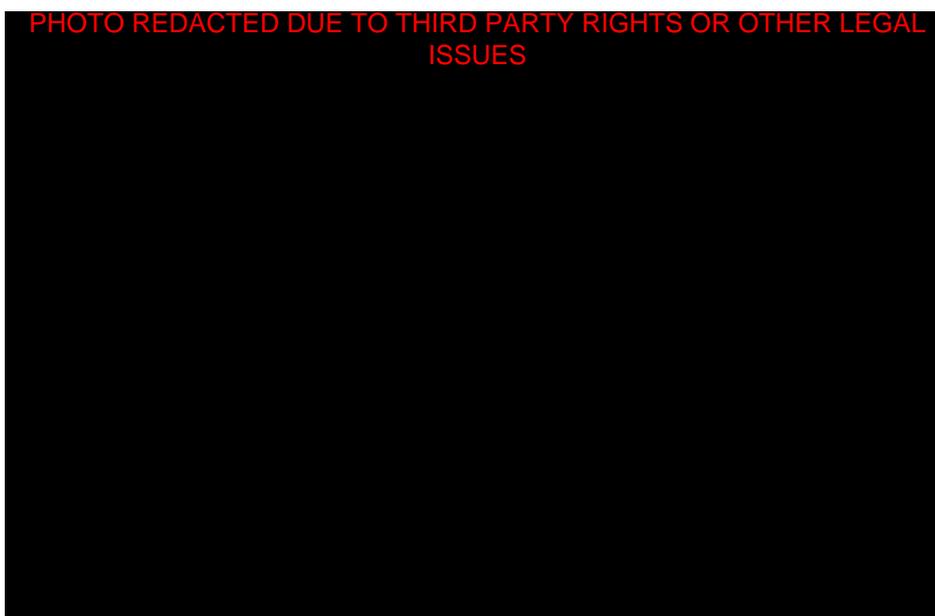
Fortrose Nursery School, Glasgow City Council

Case Study Focus: Raising children's awareness of Scots through stories and rhymes

Children are enthusiastic and active in exploring stories and songs in imaginative ways, using a variety of resources including puppets, figures and natural materials. They learn about the sounds and patterns of spoken language through the sharing of rhymes and songs. There is a strong focus on Scots and Gaelic at particular points of the year. Children are made fully aware of their Scottish identity with exposure to a variety of Scottish books and texts, which include 'The Gruffalo' in Scots, 'Jordan's New Jaiket', and the Katie-Morag series. As the headteacher is a native Gaelic speaker, children benefit and enjoy introduction to Gaelic sessions.

In the **primary** sector, Scots is a stimulating learning context. A few schools have taken effective steps to embed Scots in the curriculum throughout the year. This includes providing children with a range of texts in Scots and opportunities to read, write, listen and talk in Scots across a range of curricular areas.

Auchtertool Primary School, Fife

Case Study Focus: Well-planned progressive activities to develop knowledge and skills in Scots

Auchtertool Primary School places Scotland at the heart of its curriculum, and the children develop skills and knowledge through a range of rich and relevant contexts. Scots is embedded in the life of the school and valued by the whole school community. Across all stages, children have regular opportunities to talk, listen, read and write using Scots. This extends well beyond the traditional annual celebration of Robert Burns' birthday. An important feature of the school calendar is an annual whole school production, which is planned by children and staff as an integral feature of learning about Scotland. For example, a recent production of 'The Broons – A Wartime Christmas' was devised and written by older children and every child in the school participated. The production tells the story of a Scots family as they lived through World War 2, in the village of Auchtertool. Using *weel kent* characters, the drama presents aspects of local history at the time and illustrates children's learning through a creative and often amusing script. The drama, which includes music and dance covers a range of themes, including the Broons' feelings at the outbreak of war, and about gas masks and shelters, evacuees and rationing. The Broons provided a motivating context for literacy and English language skills, with children applying their skills and knowledge across a range of activities. The children explored the use of appropriate Scots and even provided a glossary in the show's programme for visitors. As well as producing a detailed script, the children used their skills to communicate with parents and the wider community to raise funds for the show and to borrow props and costumes. They did all their own publicity and sought support for lighting and sound. As well as producing a high quality show and having considerable opportunity to speak in their own local Scots dialect, children gained confidence in themselves as learners and were highly motivated in all aspects of their work in school. Children who find reading a challenge benefitted and gained confidence from opportunities to listen, talk and perform in character.

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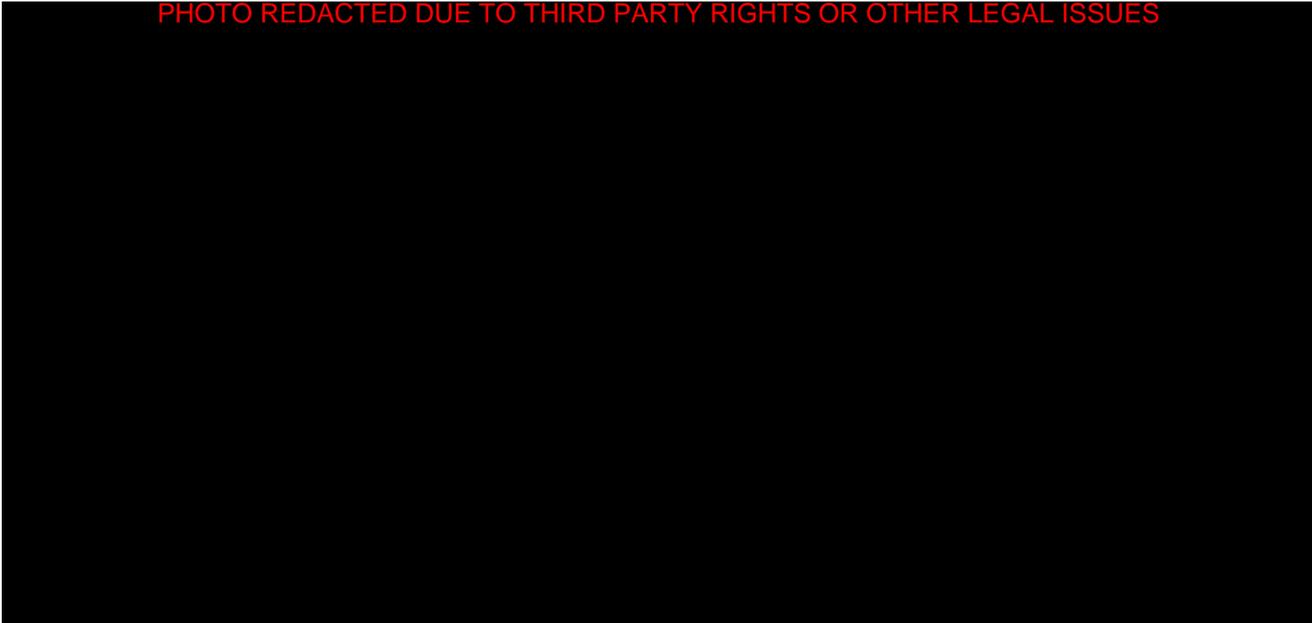
In the **secondary** sector, Scots and Scottish texts can continue to provide a productive connection between the classroom and the learner's home, community and cultural background. In the senior phase, Scottish texts are widely used at Higher in all the main areas of the critical essay paper. Since the reintroduction of the writing portfolio, there has been a small number of submissions of imaginative writing either partly or wholly in Scots, often of impressive quality. The Scottish text element of the new qualifications has ensured Scots and Scottish texts are being studied by all pupils in the senior phase. However, Scots is less prevalent from S1 to S3. In a few schools, young people are working in Scots and giving presentations to others, as well as engaging with classic and contemporary Scots and Scottish texts. Overall, there is a need for increased opportunities for children and young people at all stages to engage with and create Scots language and Scottish texts.

Stromness Academy, Orkney

Case Study Focus: Interdisciplinary learning/literacy across learning project using Scots song

Stromness Academy Choir was offered the opportunity to sing a set of Scots songs at the Scottish Learning Festival 2014. The music department worked with a Scots Language Coordinator from Education Scotland to select an appropriate group of six songs, each containing progressively more challenging Scots. Some of the songs, such as the Orkney ballad 'Hamars O Syradale' and 'Loch Lomond', included occasional Scots words, while others such as 'Song of the Fishgutters' and 'Freedom Come-All-Ye' included more complex Scots vocabulary and grammar, providing challenge and depth of learning.

Active and collaborative learning techniques recommended by a modern languages specialist were used to teach vocabulary. Learners worked in pairs, with one partner studying words and definitions before sharing the learning with the other partner. Rehearsals focused on the accurate pronunciation of Scots. This was assisted by recordings of the songs, as well as practitioners speaking and singing the lyrics. Some of the young singers were Scots speakers and others were not, but all of the young people were comfortable singing in Scots.

The project also provided opportunities for breadth of learning through learning about Scotland, and learning about Scotland's place in the world. Learners researched the background to 'Freedom Come-All-Ye', and explored Hamish Henderson and the Corries' role in campaigning for the release of Nelson Mandela, and the end of Apartheid. They discovered that a cassette tape of the Corries' song 'Rivonia' was smuggled into Mandela's prison cell on Robben Island, and that Nelson Mandela visited Glasgow after his release. Some of them had heard the song being performed by a South African singer at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014.

The school has now embarked on the new Scottish Qualifications Authority Award in Scots Language. A mixed age range class is studying for the award, including learners from S3 to S6, most of whom are members of the choir. The course is being delivered by a teacher from the modern languages department. The Scots song and Scots language studied prior to the choir performance has contributed substantially to learning for the Understanding and Communicating Unit of the Scots Language Award. Scots language acquired whilst learning the songs is being applied in assessment work for the communicating outcome.

Kirkwall Grammar School, Orkney

Case Study Focus: Studying poetry written in the local variety of Scots

A group of S3 learners in Kirkwall Grammar School study a twentieth century Scots/Orcadian poem called 'Speech', written by the Kirkwall Poet Christina Costie. Learners recite the poem together, and those in the class who are less familiar with Scots join in and hear the language as it should sound.

Prior knowledge or learning of Scots among the school community means that most learners are familiar with the commoner Scots/Orcadian words in the poem. Drawing on this prior learning, the class work together towards a full understanding of the text. This involves the acquisition of some new Scots vocabulary.

Depth of learning is provided as the main ideas of the text become clear. In the poem, a teacher punishes a boy for using Orcadian language in the classroom. Learners are encouraged to think about language, context and register, and learn that many Orkney words are of Scandinavian origin.

They learn that the familiar 'ku' and 'noo' forms (that the teacher in the poem would replace with 'cow' and 'now') are older European forms, similar to modern Norwegian, and are certainly not incorrect. The poem raises interesting socio-linguistic questions, and prompts classroom discussion about changing attitudes to Scots language over time.

Further challenge and depth is provided for some learners. The poem can be read in conjunction with materials from Orkney Heritage Society which introduce more challenging linguistic concepts such as vowels/dipthongs, the Great Vowel Shift, present participles as used in Orkney, and the influence of Scandinavian language on Scots/Orcadian.

As is often the case when studying Scotland, this poem in Scots motivates the learners because it is directly relevant to their own community and prior learning.

Appendix 4 outlines some practical next steps for developing practice in the use of Scots across sectors.

> How well do we use Scots Language and texts outwith the context of one-off events such as St Andrew's day and Burns celebrations?
>
> How relevant are the Scots and Scottish texts we use to the context of our school and the lives of the young people we teach?

5 Raising attainment in literacy and English

'Although Scotland's economic performance is improving, poverty remains an issue for too many people. In order to tackle this, we must ensure not only that we are getting more people into work which is fairly paid, but also that we are tackling the underlying causes of poverty, by, for example, raising educational attainment.'

<div align="right">(Programme for Government, 2014)</div>

Raising attainment and closing the attainment gap represent a key priority for Scottish Government, local authorities, early learning settings and schools. There continues to be a strong commitment in Scotland to address the difference in attainment between children from the most and least deprived areas. We know that levels of literacy are closely linked to children's and young people's overall achievement in school and their life chances. As a result, improving children's and young people's literacy is a crucial part of the raising attainment agenda. In this section, we explore how early learning and childcare settings, schools and local authorities are raising attainment in literacy and English and how they can continue to improve.

5.1 Raising attainment: early intervention and targeted support

In most **early learning and childcare settings**, staff recognise the importance of intervening early to support children who may have difficulties developing their communication skills. Many settings have developed their own approaches to achieve this, for example, targeted group work to support the development of children's listening and talking skills. Through strong multi-agency working, staff in early learning and childcare settings provide effective support for children who require additional support in developing their communication skills. Speech and language therapy continues to be a valuable and important support for some children in early learning and childcare settings. Staff report that there is an increasing number of children starting nursery with limited expressive language. Overall, staff take good account of this and plan an environment full of rich opportunities for language development. Staff also recognise the importance of developing strong partnerships with parents to support children's early communication skills. Examples of this include sharing practical ideas with parents as part of 'stay and play' sessions, information leaflets to promote literacy skills at home or focused support group sessions.

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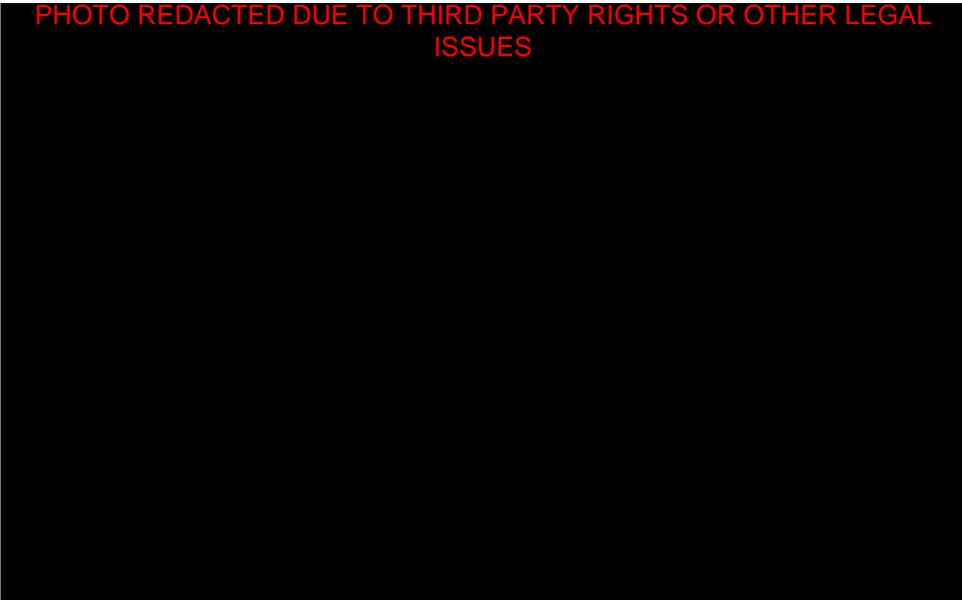
Hailesland Early Years Centre, Edinburgh City Council

Focus: Parental engagement

Hailesland Early Years Centre has a very clear strategy to engage parents and carers in family learning activities and to support children's literacy skills. Parents/carers and children take part together in activities which are designed to enable them to learn together. For example, they run **Parents Early Education Partnership** (PEEP) groups which support parents/carers to make the most of everyday learning opportunities, sharing stories and books, listening, talking, playing and singing.

A member of staff has developed a very popular parent/child group, 'Journey of Discovery', to promote emotional attachment between child and parent. The programme supports the development of positive interactions between children and parents, highlighting the importance of making eye contact and sharing rhymes and stories together. Parents are also able to borrow resources to use at home with their children. Staff and parents are very positive about the impact this is having on promoting children's early literacy skills.

> How do we support parents to help the development of their children's literacy skills?

> How do we communicate to parents the importance of talking, reading stories, singing songs and rhymes to their child?

> How do we ensure all children and families have regular access to a wide variety of texts for use at home?

Many **primary schools** successfully build on these early intervention approaches to support children who may have literacy difficulties. Where these are well planned and targeted, it is having a positive effect on raising attainment. The Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource (POLAAR) is an online resource published on the Education Scotland website in August 2014. It was developed to support teachers in identifying and addressing any literacy difficulties emerging in P1. By continuing to identify, support and closely monitor children who may be at risk of not achieving an appropriate standard of literacy, schools will raise levels of literacy and reduce the attainment gap.

Almost all **primary** and **secondary schools** have targeted support or literacy intervention programmes to improve the literacy skills of individuals and groups of children and young people. In recent years, schools have developed a number of ways to identify children and

young people who may have dyslexia. A few local authorities have embedded approaches to identification of dyslexia within their literacy strategy. As a result, effective strategies are in place to meet the needs of children and young people with dyslexia-type difficulties. The online Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit resource provides information and helpful guidance for staff, parents and children and young people. In addition, the Education Scotland report Making Sense: Education for Children and Young People with Dyslexia in Scotland includes helpful practical strategies to support learners with dyslexia.

South Ayrshire Council

Case Study Focus: Dyslexia friendly schools project

South Ayrshire Council has developed a dyslexia friendly school (DFS) model which aims to improve attainment in literacy and reduce the emotional impact literacy difficulties can have on children and young people. The model evolved from South Ayrshire Council's existing strategy on dyslexia identification and intervention.   It promotes whole-school accountability and closely involves pupils and parents. Each dyslexia friendly school completes a process of self-evaluation with a focus on whole school commitment, early identification, dyslexia friendly strategies, pupil perspectives and partnership with parents. Each key area has objectives at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels which provide a framework for improvement for schools.

After an initial successful pilot, all primary and secondary schools in South Ayrshire Council are now working towards DFS accreditation. Initial evaluation has been highly positive. Dyslexia-aware class teachers, supported through effective school pupil support systems, have increased responsibility for early identification of children at risk of not achieving in literacy. Dyslexia friendly strategies are becoming embedded in everyday classroom practice and resources while individual needs continue to be prioritised and addressed through staged intervention processes. Commendably, children and parents are fully involved in the process through steering groups, assemblies and workshops. Key factors in success have been high quality leadership from DFS key link teachers, strong support from senior leadership teams, the quality of training for staff, and the opportunity to link DFS with other school priorities such as literacy across learning. Successes have included increased pupil voice, improved self-esteem and empowerment of pupils who have acted as effective and enthusiastic DFS ambassadors. Early indications suggest that this model is having a positive impact on the literacy skills of all children and young people including learners with dyslexia.

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Isobel Mair School, East Renfrewshire

Case Study Focus: Differentiated and imaginative approaches to meeting the needs of all learners

At Isobel Mair School, there is a very strong focus on developing communication and literacy skills using differentiated and imaginative approaches. Staff use enjoyable, relevant and real life contexts to help children and young people develop skills to which they can relate and which are often based on their own experiences. Approaches to developing literacy and communication are centred on the individual needs of children and young people and the school uses a wide range of resources and ICT to meet these needs. Storytelling and multi-sensory resources, such as story sacks, are used with pupils who are developing early literacy skills. ICT, including specialist software, tablets and apps are used very well to help pupils communicate, make choices and present their work. As pupils progress to the senior phase, they build on and expand their skills through well-chosen national qualification pathways which continue to provide challenge and allow young people to transfer skills to real life contexts. The school's success in literacy and communication is based on its in-depth knowledge of the individual needs of its pupils and the highly differentiated approaches they employ in meeting these needs.

How effective are our approaches to meeting the needs of all learners?

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Increasingly, Scotland is becoming a more diverse country with a range of different languages. Many schools support children with English as an additional language (EAL) well through additional support needs processes and strategies such as targeted support and strong partnerships with parents. Young people in secondary schools, for whom English is an additional language, have the opportunity in many schools to gain national qualifications in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Woodside Nursery School, Glasgow City Council

Case Study Focus: Supporting children with EAL

Woodside Nursery School is situated in the north west area of Glasgow. 91% of children attending the nursery do not have English as their first language and 60% are from a Chinese background. An inclusive ethos and strong partnership working with parents underpin the work of the nursery and this is improving outcomes for children.

All children with English as an additional language (EAL) have provision tailored to meet their specific needs. Chinese children and their families receive additional support from the visiting bilingual Chinese EAL teacher. This starts from the very first day they place an application in the nursery. The centre has a very supportive transition process in place to engage children and families. Parents contribute to this process by providing valuable information in relation to their child's communication and language skills in their mother tongue. Parental participation is highly valued and staff encourage parents to be actively involved in all aspects of nursery life. Families who access the service feel welcome and included and through skilful encouragement from staff become joint partners in their child's learning.

When children start nursery they have their first language assessed by the EAL teacher and this provides invaluable information about their language and communication skills. It enables staff to be aware of any possible language delays or concerns when it comes to monitoring their English acquisition. Staff are highly skilled at listening to children and provide a stimulating literacy rich environment which is carefully planned to enable children from a wide range of cultures to explore and consolidate prior learning. Staff provide children with daily access to a wide range of resources which reflect different cultures such as texts in different languages, dual-language books and multi-cultural stories. In the centre's lending library, staff have developed a range of Chinese resources which they encourage parents to borrow enabling them to support first language acquisition at home. As a result of high quality professional learning activities, all staff have an understanding of Chinese language and culture and are able to support individual children appropriately. Staff are aware of individual cultural traits and are able to provide very specific support for children from a Chinese background. Two members of staff have participated in the Confucius programme and visited China on immersion trips.

Partnership working to support children with EAL is a strong feature of the nursery's success in meeting the needs of EAL learners. The nursery has close links with the Community Music Department at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland which provides children with opportunities to explore literacy through music and helps to develop their phonological awareness. Children also benefit from the nursery's close affiliation with Glasgow University. Students from a Chinese background volunteer in the school supporting the Chinese speaking children. They explore language and stories with the children and also support the staff team to increase their understanding of Chinese culture.

In what ways do we ensure that all staff have a common understanding of the barriers faced by children and young people with EAL?

What strategies do we have in place to support this group of learners?

What approaches have we explored to listen to children's voices when we cannot understand their home language?

St Bride's Primary School, Glasgow

Focus: Supporting learners with EAL

St Bride's Primary School in Glasgow has welcomed an increasing number of Roma families over the last five years. Currently, almost 25% of the school roll are Roma and of these, almost all are new to English. The school has developed a range of successful approaches to support this group of learners and other children who have EAL. They have created two language bases in the school where children receive daily English lessons. Children are assessed when they arrive at the school and this helps shape the level and amount of support they then receive. There is a strong focus on using resources in the local area to support children's development in English. Trips to local parks and museums are very popular with children and the parents and carers who go along too. Staff work very hard to foster close respectful relationships with parents and carers. Parents are naturally anxious when enrolling their children in a new school so staff have introduced a range of strategies to build parents' confidence and encourage their involvement in the school. Events such as open mornings in the language base are very well attended. The school has established an East European Parents Liaison Group which meet fortnightly to provide parents with an opportunity to meet other parents and staff. Interpreters come along to these meetings to support parents and help them find out more about the school and their child's progress. Strong leadership in the school ensures that children's progress is closely tracked and monitored. The senior leadership team in the school meet regularly with EAL staff to discuss children's progress. As a result of the intensive and skilful support, most children are making very good progress in English.

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5.2 Raising attainment: higher-order thinking skills

'In the early years of schooling the focus is on acquiring basic literacy skills but our objective is to ensure more of our young people develop their advanced literacy skills. Many pupils cope well with functional literacy development, but the skills of understanding, interpreting and analysing texts are more challenging. The development of these advanced literacy skills which will assist learning across a range of curricular areas is a key focus within Curriculum for Excellence.'

(Literacy Action Plan, 2010, p9)

We know that literacy and language facilitate more complex thinking and learning processes. Literacy is a tool for learning and a vehicle for developing higher-order thinking skills leading to deep learning and improved attainment across all areas of the curriculum. Increasingly, schools are recognising the need to develop advanced literacy skills and higher-order thinking skills to challenge children's and young people's thinking and actively involve them in their learning. Activities that enable children and young people to explain and justify their thinking, analyse texts, evaluate sources, synthesise ideas and create new texts increase challenge, lead to deeper understanding and thus raise attainment.

Across primary schools, there is an increased focus on supporting children to develop higher-order thinking skills. In general, these skills are taught within literacy lessons and children are given opportunities to apply them across learning in a range of contexts. In too many cases, these are not yet taught in a progressive way and therefore are not leading sufficiently to improvements in attainment. Where there has been a strong focus on the systematic teaching of higher-order thinking skills, we find children are able to explain and justify their thinking, are more analytical and evaluative and are able to apply skills to create new texts. They are able to analyse critically a range of texts and apply advanced literacy skills to tackle more challenging learning tasks.

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Livingston Village Primary School, West Lothian

Case Study Focus: The use of higher-order thinking skills to improve children's learning in literacy.

Livingston Village Primary School has a strong focus on developing advanced literacy skills through higher-order thinking. The school's aim is that children become literate citizens, able to read and write, and also able to analyse texts critically, evaluate the reliability of information and enjoy a wide range of literature. The curriculum and teaching approaches support children to transfer skills across learning and beyond. This has been achieved through a structured whole-school approach to developing higher-order thinking skills. This approach teaches higher-order thinking skills explicitly from nursery to P7, enabling children to build upon and apply their skills in a progressive way. The introduction of question stems linked to Bloom's Taxonomy supported staff and children to ask a range of questions that promote thinking. Staff took responsibility for trialling and implementing new ideas, reflecting on their practice together and engaging in rich dialogue about learning. This has resulted in a shared language and common approach. The introduction of 'De Bono's Thinking Hats' provided a focus for teaching thinking and reflection. Initially, these skills were taught through specific lessons and, as children became more skilled, it is now embedded in learning across the curriculum providing opportunities to use literacy skills in a range of contexts. At the upper stages, children make effective use of Barrett's Taxonomy to improve their comprehension skills in reading. This helps them develop skills of analysis and appreciation, evaluative thinking and demonstrate inferential comprehension as well as the ability to synthesise and order their ideas. This, in turn, has improved the quality of children's writing as they have a better understanding of the writer's craft. The development of higher-order thinking has significantly improved attainment in literacy and English and, in turn, has improved learning across the curriculum.

To what extent do we have a shared understanding and whole-school approach to developing higher-order thinking skills?

How well are we planning opportunities for children and young people to apply these skills in other areas of their learning?

In almost all **secondary** English classes, young people are improving their advanced literacy skills through teachers' effective questioning and activities that require them to analyse and evaluate texts, explore language and literary techniques and explain their effects. These tasks become increasingly challenging in the upper stages of secondary. There is scope for a few secondary schools to ensure that literacy and English tasks are appropriately challenging and expectations appropriately high from S1 to S3. This will ensure that advanced literacy skills are developed progressively and young people are prepared for the demands of the Senior Phase qualifications. For example, knowledge and understanding of linguistic terminology, grammatical structures and literary techniques provide young people with the tools and language to analyse texts with accuracy.

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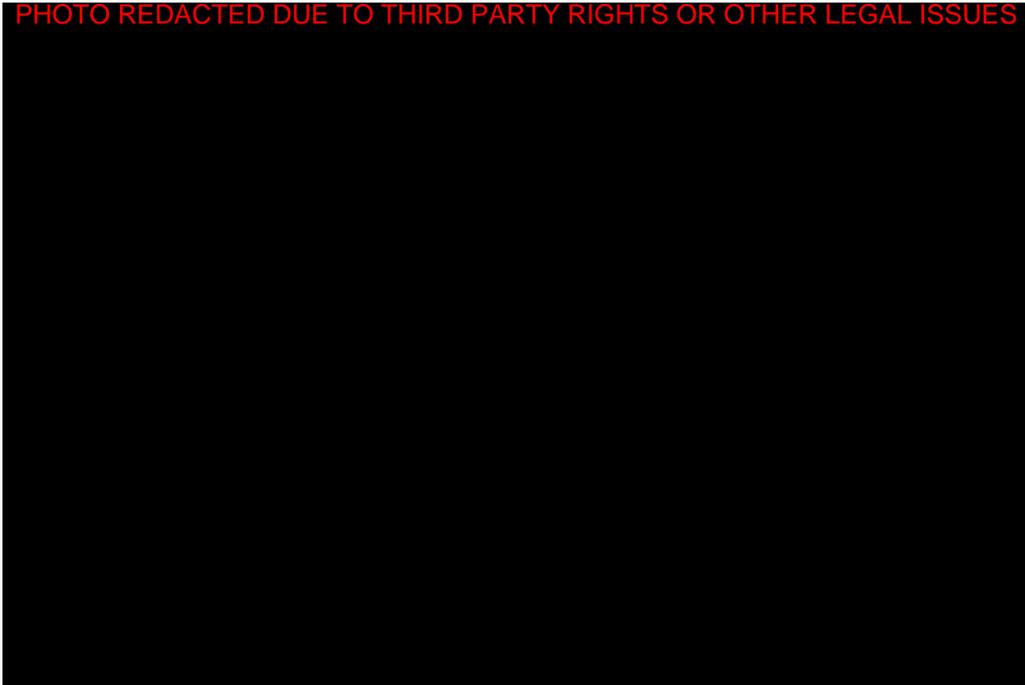
Across the curriculum in secondary schools, young people deepen their learning when given opportunities to ask questions, test their thinking, solve problems or lead learning by sharing their thinking with others. For example, debating ideas or concepts such as genetic engineering in science encourages young people to apply and deepen their learning by explaining their thinking and considering different viewpoints and perspectives. Extended writing tasks require young people to reflect on their learning, clarify and refine their thinking and demonstrate their understanding and progress. In order to raise attainment further, teachers should plan more frequent opportunities for young people to develop higher-order thinking and advanced literacy skills in relevant contexts across subject all areas of the curriculum.
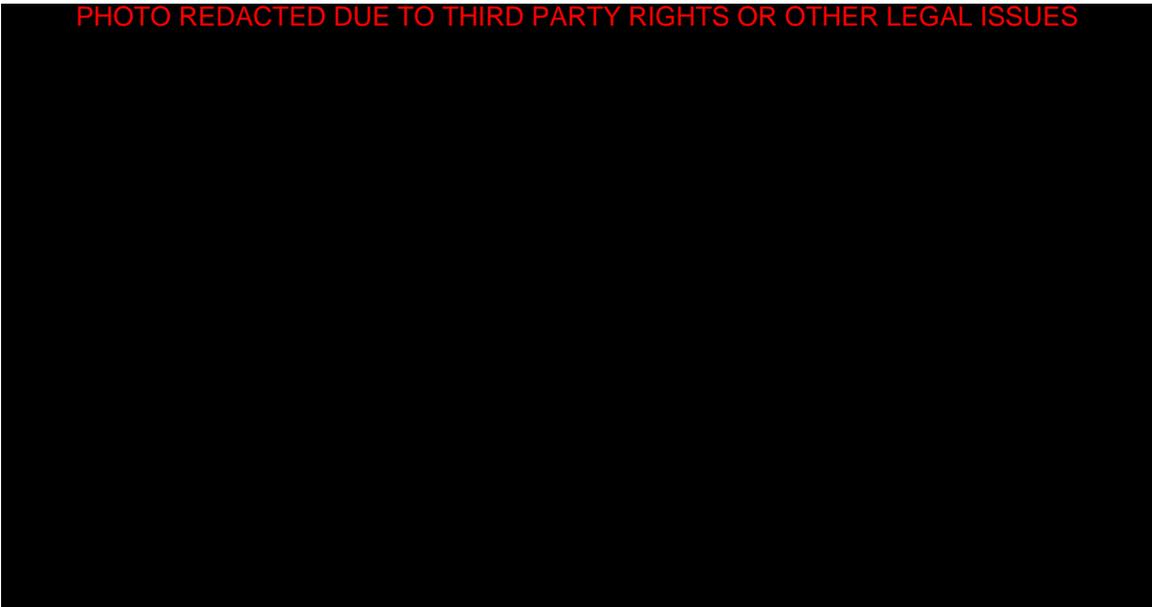
Douglas Academy, East Dunbartonshire

Case Study Focus: Debating as a context for developing higher order thinking skills

Young people at Douglas Academy are developing their skills in literacy and higher-order thinking through debating. The school offers debating and public speaking as an elective option in S1 and S2 and debate is embedded across curricular areas. Young people engage with a range of topics such as nuclear weapons in modern studies and ethical issues in religious and moral education. This approach is developing critical thinking, research skills, the ability to analyse and evaluate information, prioritise and synthesise evidence and structure a developed argument. Audience members are actively involved in the process by questioning speakers and supporting and challenging arguments through points of information. Peer assessment is also built in to the learning, allowing young people to feed back to each other on both the content of their arguments and their use of spoken language. The school also provides opportunities for wider achievement in the area of debating. Its Debating and Public Speaking Society has enjoyed significant success in local and national competitions. A European Youth Parliament event held in the school gave pupils the opportunity to act as peer mentors to P7 pupils, helping them to prepare for five different debates covering challenging and relevant topics. Relevant and real-life contexts for debating help young people explore the way they use their literacy skills to understand the world around them. Young people feel that debating is increasing their confidence in listening and talking, and that they are developing their research skills and the ability to structure arguments effectively. They are increasingly aware of how these skills can be applied in other contexts, such as when preparing discursive essays or coming to informed viewpoints in science or social studies.

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How often are we planning tasks and activities that require children or young people to explain or justify their thinking, debate ideas, analyse texts, evaluate sources, synthesise ideas or create new texts?

How can we ensure that these activities increase challenge and deepen learning?

Cambusnethan Primary School, North Lanarkshire

Case Study Focus: Children actively involved in their learning through a collaborative approach to the novel study

Cambusnethan Primary School has developed its approaches to reading in P4-P7 through the novel study approach. Children choose from a range of appropriately challenging novels. They work collaboratively to explore aspects of the novel, developing both their literacy skills and their English language skills in relation to characterisation, setting, theme and aspects of language and style. Children take it in turns to take on the role of group leader and lead the rest of the group in analysis and discussion of the text. Discussion is structured with a clear focus on progressing children's reading and higher-order thinking skills. For example, an activity on inference might look at the writer's word choice or imagery and how it develops character; or a focus on theme might require children to find evidence from key points in the novel that develop their understanding of the writer's message. Children work together to share their thinking, evaluate their responses and record their analysis individually. In this way, children are learning with and from each other but have an individual responsibility to reflect on and articulate what they have learned. The carefully-planned structure and focus of the discussion ensures that children are building on their prior learning and enhancing their reading and critical analysis skills. In addition, children are developing the talking and listening skills required to work productively with others and lead a discussion.

Lundin Mill Primary School, Fife

Case Study Focus: Using listening and talking to deepen learning

At Lundin Mill Primary School, there is a strong emphasis on teaching key skills in **listening and talking**. Children work well in pairs and groups. They are articulate and eager to express their views on a range of subjects. They benefit from regular opportunities to practise formal debating skills in a structured setting and enter debating competitions. Children select relevant topics for debate, usually linked to a current area of study. They explore the format of formal debating and the expectations of the different roles. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of spoken language by investigating techniques to engage an audience and convey a structured argument. During school debates, children apply this learning by creating and delivering persuasive speeches and by questioning and challenging their peers. This approach is effectively promoting higher order thinking skills and supporting deeper learning.

5.3 Raising attainment: engaging with texts

'Throughout their education, children and young people should experience an environment which is rich in language and which sets high expectations for literacy and the use of language. Children and young people need to spend time with stories, literature and other texts which will enrich their learning, develop their language skills and enable them to find enjoyment. Spoken language has particular importance in the early years. Teachers will balance play-based learning with more systematic development and learning of skills and techniques for reading, including phonics.'

(Literacy and English: principles and practice paper, p2)

We know that in Scotland, reading for enjoyment has a significant impact on children's and young people's performance in reading[1]. Children who choose to read for enjoyment and regularly engage with texts make better progress in reading. The link between reading for enjoyment and levels deprivation is stronger in Scotland than almost every other country[2]. It is, therefore, vital that children and families are encouraged to engage regularly with books and texts from the earliest age. This was highlighted in the National Literacy Action Plan which identified the need to develop a strong reading culture in Scotland.

'*Sharing books in a family environment and the love of reading it creates enriches the family experience immeasurably, is likely to be passed from generation to generation and has a major beneficial impact on individual outcomes.*'

(Literacy Action Plan, 2010, p14)

Young children and their families have benefitted from Scottish Government's *Play Talk Read* campaign and the Scottish Book Trust's Bookbug programme which have led to families engaging more regularly with books. As part of Scottish Government's Programme for Government, a new literacy and numeracy campaign, *Read Write Count*, has been announced. This will be aimed at children from P1 to P3 and their families, building on the success of the *Play Talk Read* campaign.

'Literacy and numeracy form the basis for all learning, and through this campaign, every child in Scotland will have access to a library of suitable books and educational materials which will, in turn, impact on their literacy and numeracy development. Sessions to support parents will be run locally to build a bridge between school and home. There will be a particular focus on investment in our most deprived communities.'

(Programme for Government, 2014)

Most **early learning and childcare settings** are encouraging children to develop a keen interest in books. They have attractive, stimulating book areas that encourage children to engage well with a wide variety of books. Where this is most effective, children and staff have worked together to organise book areas ensuring a wide range of texts are available, with puppets and props. These areas need to be regularly refreshed and updated to promote children's interest in texts. Many settings have also developed home lending libraries which help to ensure all children have access to a range of books. There are very good examples of settings which develop this further by the provision of interesting resources such as story sacks, board games and other activities. These all help develop children's literacy skills in partnership with parents. Provision of free access to resources such as these helps to redress the balance for children who do not have books at home.

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[1] PISA 2009
[2] PISA 2009

Many **early learning and childcare settings** also make good use of local libraries to increase children's opportunities to engage with books.

Most **primary** and **secondary schools** offer children and young people very good opportunities to read for pleasure as part of their broad general education. Well-planned approaches to reading for enjoyment are resulting in increased confidence in reading and greater motivation including more reading at home. Approaches such as paired reading, literature circles and schemes that reward progress in reading are enhancing children's and young people's engagement with texts. Many of these approaches also provide children and young people with opportunities to engage with others to discuss their reading. This is deepening their thinking, supporting them to develop a personal response and increasingly justify their views and opinions.

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Northmuir Primary School, Angus

Case Study Focus: Pupil voice contributing to children's engagement with reading for enjoyment

The school community at Northmuir Primary School have developed a clear strategy for the promotion of reading for enjoyment. Children are at the heart of the strategy and have ownership of its outcomes at several levels. They were fully involved in identifying reading for enjoyment as a priority for the school improvement plan. A child-friendly school improvement plan is displayed in each classroom and in the school's reception area. Progress in improving children's engagement with reading is illustrated with photographs and children's own comments. Children are systematically involved in evaluating progress the school is making and how this is impacting on their own personal reading habits. Children in P5 are trained to support those in P3 with their reading skills through the school's paired reading scheme, helping the younger pupils to cope with routine difficulties in reading, but also acting as reading role models. This leadership role is extended to the school library where children work as helpers. Each week, children have designated private reading time and can choose where this will take place. In consultation with children, a variety of attractive and comfortable areas such as a reading tent have been created for this purpose. Through the provision of reading workshops, families have also been supported to encourage reading at home with children at the early level. Partnership with the local library has helped to motivate learners to read for their own enjoyment through the school's participation in the 'Rocket through Reading' challenge. Older children also volunteer as helpers in the local library. This combination of approaches has helped to engage more reluctant readers as well as challenging confident readers.

What opportunities do children and young people have to lead learning in literacy and to support other learners?

How well do we involve children and young people when planning improvements in literacy?
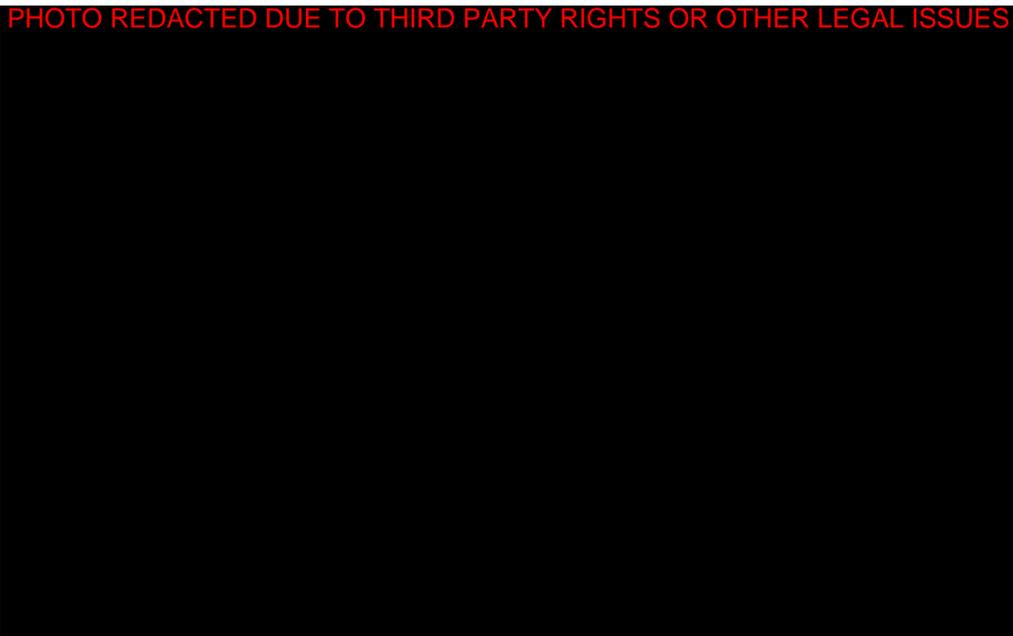
Where a reading culture has been successfully developed across the school, there are consistently high expectations about the frequency and quality of reading. Engaging events such as author visits and celebrations of World Book Day and Scottish Book Week contribute to a culture where reading is enjoyed and valued. In **primary schools**, the quality of libraries can have an impact on children's reading habits. In the most effective settings, libraries now serve as learning hubs at the centre of the school offering a broad range of texts, fiction and non-fiction, printed and multi-media, spoken and written, including Scottish texts. Schools often involve children in improving libraries and in choosing materials. In the most effective settings, children have roles of responsibility in the library, acting as library assistants, reading with younger peers, designing displays, participating in book clubs and writing book recommendations for others. Many primary schools also make very good use of local library services and librarians in promoting reading. Where **secondary schools** have a librarian, s/he often plays a key role in the promotion of a reading culture and many run information literacy courses and support the development of research skills. Secondary schools could do more to develop an ethos where reading is valued beyond S3.

Liberton High School, Edinburgh City

Case Study Focus: the role of the librarian in supporting literacy and English

Liberton High School places a strong emphasis on promoting a reading culture across the school. The school librarian plays a key role in this. She works closely with young people to organise a wide range of stimulating and motivating events. For example they organise author visits, plan trips to the Edinburgh Book Festival, shadow the Carnegie Prize, participate in the voting for the Scottish Children's Book Awards and plan themed events like Harry Potter Night. The annual Liberton High School (LHS) Book Week is a highly anticipated and successful event. Each year there is a different theme and young people work closely with the librarian and school staff to decide the theme and organise events that run throughout the week. These include visiting authors, writing workshops, lunchtime reading sessions and competitions. Each year, during LHS Book Week, all young people in S1 participate in the book challenge which involves writing and illustrating their own book.

The school participates in the Patron of Reading scheme working in partnership with a published author to promote reading for enjoyment. The school's Patron of Reading visits regularly, supports reading events taking place, judges writing competitions and helps instil the belief that success in reading and writing is achievable for all. Young people in Liberton High School also contribute regularly to Edinburgh City Council's book review magazine *Teen Titles* which provides a relevant context for sharing their views on the books they have read.

The librarian works closely with staff across the school to develop literacy-rich contexts for learning. Literature circles in S2 were developed with the English department. These use a book group approach to engage young people in reflecting on what they have read and develop their understanding of character, theme, structure and style. A consistent approach to research has been developed with a focus on key skills such as planning, locating, organising and re-presenting information. This is promoted across the curriculum and highlighted in the library where young people access a range of non-fiction and web-based information. This year the librarian has also been working closely with a few departments to support young people to apply these skills and source information for assignments in the new qualifications.

By taking account of the wider definition of texts, staff can provide motivating and challenging learning and this raises attainment. The Literacy and English: principles and practice paper defines text as 'the medium through which ideas, experiences, opinions and information can be communicated' and highlights the wider definition of texts.

How well do we engage children and young people with a wide range of texts?

Examples of texts
novels, short stories, plays, poems
reference texts
the spoken word
charts, maps, graphs and timetables
advertisements, promotional leaflets
comics, newspapers and magazines
CVs, letters and emails
films, games and TV programmes
labels, signs and posters
recipes, manuals and instructions
reports and reviews
text messages, blogs and social networking sites
web pages, catalogues and directories

Our evidence demonstrates that, from the early years onwards, many settings and schools are encouraging young people to think creatively and explore different types of text, for example, web texts, blogs, podcasts, multi-modal texts and moving image texts such as animation, film and computer games. It is important that children and young people develop the knowledge and skills required to analyse and evaluate digital and media texts. This will allow them to develop their understanding of the techniques and language used and become more aware of how texts influence their audience. These skills are also essential for progression to the senior phase where analysis and evaluation of film and media texts as well as spoken texts and non-fiction works are included in National Qualifications in English and media.

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In what way have we involved the whole school in developing a reading culture?

Rosshall Academy, Glasgow

Case Study Focus: Involving young people in promoting a reading culture across the school

Young people in S4 studying media at National 4 and 5 were given the brief to promote the benefits of the recent drive in literacy across the school. Their campaign slogan was drawn from the National Literacy Trust – 'Get Caught Reading'. The young people designed films and blogs to generate awareness of the school's literacy policy. Other young people in the school were also involved. For example, S1 pupils were interviewed and market research involved a range of year groups. The media texts the class created were used across the school community to promote awareness of the importance of literacy. This has provided a real and relevant context for learning that has encouraged the young people involved to think critically about the texts they encounter. In particular it has caused them to question the reliability and credibility of texts and become more aware of the techniques used to influence and persuade. This has resulted in an increased awareness of the influence of texts such as social, advertising and gaming.

5.4 Raising attainment: literacy across learning

Schools are still not yet fully recognising the impact literacy has on learning and achievement across all curricular areas. In 2008, the HMIE report *English - a portrait of current practice* emphasised the potential of language and literacy skills to unlock learning across the curriculum and develop critical thinking skills.

'Pupils' success across the curriculum is often founded on their strengths in literacy and communication skills. But all too often schools do not take sufficient account of pupils' language competence when planning and delivering courses and programmes across the curriculum. Connections across subject boundaries have been recognised in many effective schools, particularly at the primary stages. In secondary, however, all too often subject departments do not take account of the complementary nature of learning across the curriculum when they plan pupils' learning experiences. As a result, learning remains too fragmented and opportunities for pupils to contribute learning from one area to enrich another are lost.'

(English – a portrait of current practice in Scottish schools and pre-school centres, 2008, p16)

Since this report was published, and as a result of the strong emphasis on literacy in Curriculum for Excellence, opportunities for learners to develop and apply their literacy skills in relevant contexts across curricular areas have increased. Staff are aware of their responsibility to promote literacy across all areas of learning. However, across all sectors, there are still too many missed opportunities to develop and extend children's and young people's literacy skills and deepen learning.

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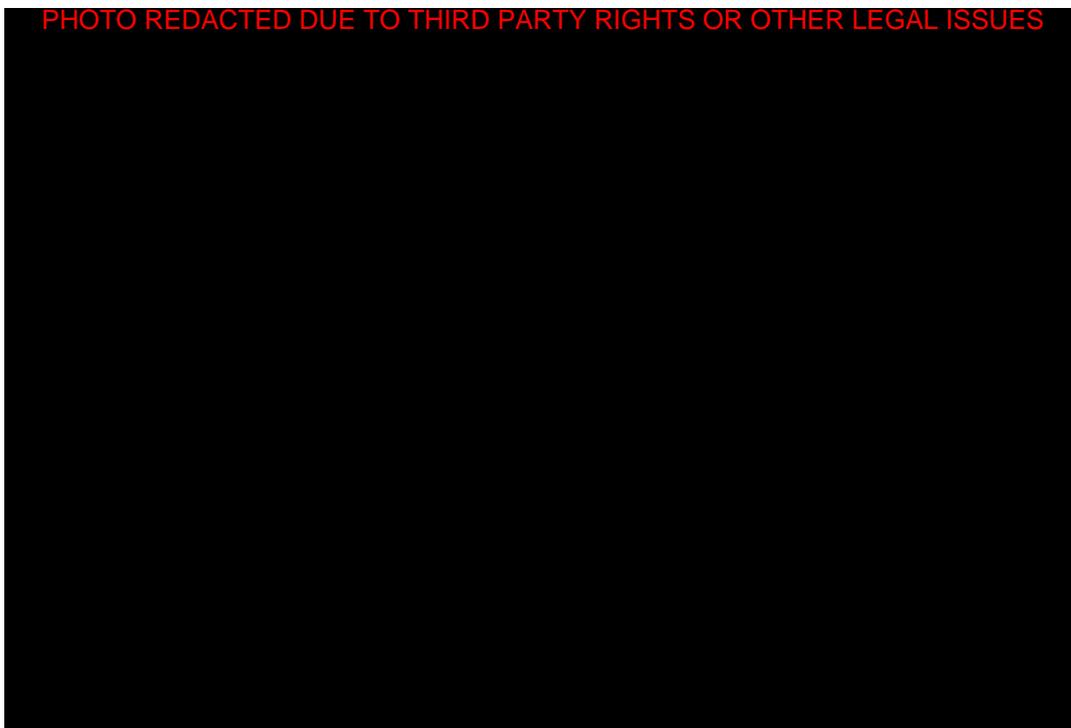
In most **primary schools**, there are opportunities to extend and develop children's literacy skills across all curricular areas, interdisciplinary learning and topic work. These aspects of the curriculum provide relevant and stimulating contexts, for example, making notes from a digital media text about the rainforest and using these for a debate on deforestation. Although these opportunities are increasing, there is a need to ensure that teachers are

explicitly planning to extend children's literacy skills through these contexts. Teachers need to highlight the opportunities which arise for children to transfer their learning from their discrete literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. It is important that there is appropriate challenge and consistent expectations of standards when children are applying their literacy skills across their learning. At the upper stages, a clearer focus on the types and conventions of texts particular to specific curricular areas, for example writing scientific reports, will increase challenge and move beyond a focus on functional literacy.

In the majority of **secondary schools**, consistency in developing the literacy skills of young people across the school is being encouraged through the development of shared language and common approaches and resources. Where the strategies are well-developed, staff plan to develop literacy in their subject areas, highlighting literacy in their learning intentions and discussing success criteria to ensure pupils transfer and develop their skills. Many secondary schools have developed common success criteria for talking, writing and, to a lesser extent, reading and research skills to encourage a consistent approach across the curriculum. This is supporting young people to transfer and develop their skills, and reflect on their progress in these skills in all areas of their learning. Teachers across subject areas are benefitting from these shared standards and expectations. Schools should consider the challenge in the literacy tasks being set across subject areas. Challenge should increase as young people progress from S1 to S3. For example, in research tasks, they should be using increasingly complex texts and synthesising information from a range of sources. Simple presentations conveying information should develop into presenting an informed view point, justifying stance and debating ideas. There is a need for more staff from across the curriculum to engage in moderation activities. A shared understanding of standards across curriculum levels in reading, writing, listening and talking will enable all staff to support young people to make better progress in literacy.

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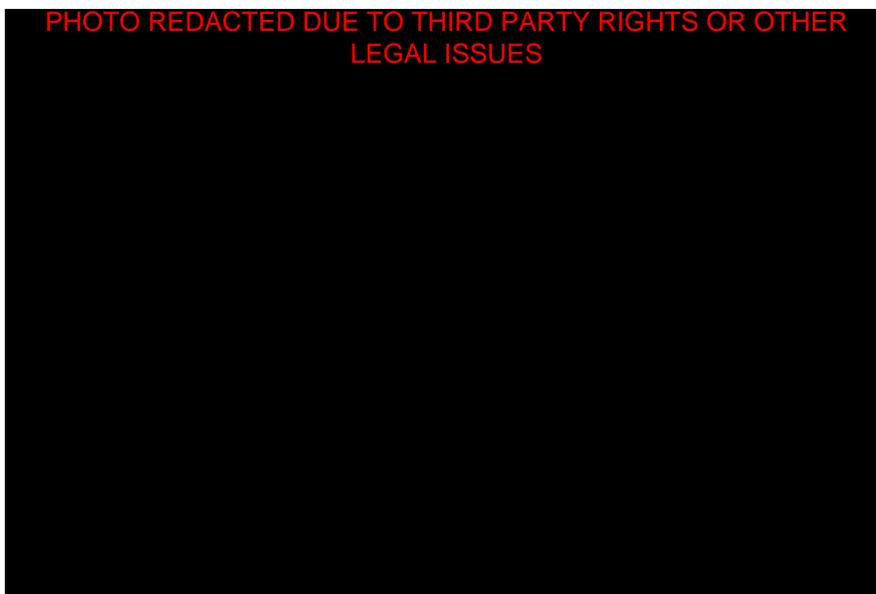
A few secondary schools have developed criteria for talking and listening in groups to be used across all subject areas. This has ensured that teachers distinguish between working *in* a group and working *as* a group and plan to develop young people's skills accordingly. It supports the development of more structured and effective group work, enhances young peoples' understanding of quality discussion including effective contributions, active listening and the need to respect and value the views of others.

Kyle Academy, South Ayrshire

Case Study Focus: developing listening and talking skills through a whole school approach

Kyle Academy's literacy group used the literacy and health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes to define the key skills required to work well with others. This has supported a consistent and coherent approach to developing talking and listening skills across the school. The skills are displayed in posters (see below) in every classroom and teachers use them to explicitly highlight to young people the skills they should be applying and developing when engaging in group discussions or collaborative tasks. It has supported the development of more structured group work across the school and enhanced young peoples' understanding of quality discussion.

Working with Others

I can make a contribution by:
- contributing my ideas, knowledge, opinions or skills
- communicating in a clear expressive way
- offering supporting evidence for my points or opinions
- contributing to group decision-making and problem solving by:
  - offering suggestions or solutions
  - evaluating some of the ideas or opinions raised
  - building on what others say
  - compromising
- fulfilling my assigned role in the group

Make a contribution, encourage others, acknowledge different opinions, listen and learn from others LIT 3-02a
Talking and listening with others, communicating clearly LIT 3-09a/3-10a

I can show I am actively listening by:
- letting others speak
- using positive body language like nodding, leaning forward, eye contact
- asking relevant questions and answering appropriately
- analysing suggestions or ideas from the group to evaluate which are most appropriate
- adapting my viewpoint to take account of new information I have discovered from listening to others
- clarifying and summarising points

Express my feelings HWB 3-01a
Be part of a group HWB 3-04a

I can value and respect others and their opinions and ideas by:
- respecting the feelings of others in my group
- recognising people have opinions and viewpoints different to my own
- encouraging others to contribute by asking them a question or inviting their opinion
- responding positively and displaying positive body language to make others feel respected and included
- challenging points or disagreeing in a positive way and explaining why I have a different viewpoint or idea
- checking others understand points to ensure they feel supported, included and confident within the group

Show respect for others HWB 3-05a
Support others HWB 3-08a
Help and encourage learning and confidence in others HWB 3-11a

Kyle Academy Literacy Skills

> What roles do young people take on when working collaboratively in groups and how clear are they about the success criteria for fulfilling their assigned role?
>
> How often do we allow time for children and young people to reflect on the listening and talking skills they are developing in group work or give them feedback on their strengths and next steps?

Across curricular areas, staff need to have a clearer understanding of not only how they should be extending young people's literacy, but also how literacy will deepen learning in their particular subject. For example, in a few secondary schools, young people are being provided with opportunities for extended writing that is effectively developing their skills in structuring a coherent argument, expressing informed views and drawing conclusions.

These opportunities are also supporting young people to develop important subject-specific skills and developing their higher-order thinking. There is a need to ensure these opportunities are developed from S1 onwards to allow young people to build their skills progressively.

Opportunities for children and young people to develop and apply their literacy skills outwith the classroom across the four contexts of the curriculum provide relevant, real-life contexts for learning. Building the Curriculum 3 (2008) defines the curriculum as the totality of planned learning experienced. This includes the ethos and life of the school, curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, and opportunities for personal achievement. Most **primary and secondary schools** offer a wide range of opportunities for children and young people to develop and apply their literacy skills across the four contexts. These include: contributing to school newspapers or magazines; debating and public speaking; membership of pupil voice committees such as the pupil council, eco committee or Rights Respecting Schools group; presenting to peers during assembly; enterprise groups and charities projects; clubs such as book groups, creative writing groups, film clubs and drama clubs; and participation in Burns Competitions and drama performances. Many senior pupils in secondary schools are developing their literacy and communication skills through enterprise activities, charity work, community involvement and volunteering. They also support younger pupils in developing their literacy skills, for example through paired reading, lunchtime support clubs and by acting as peer tutors in class. Secondary schools are increasingly using these opportunities for senior pupils to accredit personal achievement through awards such as Saltire and SQA Leadership or Volunteering Awards. These rich contexts should be used to gather evidence of learners' progress in literacy. At present, only a few schools are engaging children and young people in reflecting on how these experiences are extending and improving their literacy skills. In addition, in most schools, these activities are voluntary and, as a result, not all children and young people are benefitting. There is a need for schools to plan and track opportunities for achievement more explicitly across the four contexts of the curriculum. This will ensure that all children and young people develop a range of skills and attributes in a progressive way and that there is equality of access to these contexts for learning.

In what ways can we provide opportunities for children and young people to lead learning in literacy by supporting others?

Braes High School, Falkirk

Case Study Focus: Senior pupils acting as literacy ambassadors

Senior pupils at Braes High School in Falkirk can achieve a Literacy Leader award through the Sports Leader UK accreditation. This involves supporting younger pupils to develop their literacy skills through planned activities. Young people have planned and delivered an S1 event aimed at developing reading, writing, listening and talking skills of young people at this stage in a range of cross curricular activities. The literacy ambassadors created a character called 'Malefisentence', the enemy of literacy. Younger pupils had to tackle and defeat the villain. This involved reading information about the character to establish her weaknesses and devising a plan of action which they presented to their peers. Younger learners have already responded very positively to having older peers as literacy role models. They have found the activities led by the senior pupils highly engaging and productive. In addition, senior pupils have had the opportunity to progress their own literacy skills within a relevant and rewarding context.

> To what extent do we plan opportunities for children and young people to develop and apply their literacy skills in a range of contexts and curricular areas?
>
> How do we ensure these contexts provide appropriate challenge and build progressively on children's and young people's skills?

Currently, a few schools have a strategic approach to working with **partners** over the school year to ensure a broad, balanced and relevant approach to literacy across the curriculum. Schools should work with partners to build literacy skills across a range of contexts. This will enable partners to target their support more effectively to ensure young people build on existing skills and become more secure in using their literacy skills across contexts.

> How well do we work with partners to provide relevant, purposeful contexts for children and young people to develop and apply their literacy skills?

Inverclyde Academy, Inverclyde

Case Study Focus: Developing literacy skills beyond the classroom

Learners at Inverclyde Academy have developed and applied their literacy skills in rich learning contexts beyond the classroom setting. Young people in S2 applied their writing skills to contribute to a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in partnership with Heritage Inverclyde which aimed to enhance the signage along a local coastal path. They created pieces of writing inspired by the surroundings which illustrate points along the path. QR codes printed on new signposts lead visitors to the Heritage Inverclyde website and the pupils' writing. Young people have developed a range of literacy skills through this project by researching their local area, meeting with local historians and interviewing local people in order to produce written work in different genres.

Young people in S4 have also been highly engaged with their work with the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). Their objective was to identify local charities which deal with social issues that they felt strongly about within their local area with a view to securing a grant of £3,000 for their chosen charity. In order to persuade a committee of the worthiness of their cause, young people had to research their charity, a process which involved writing letters, meeting with charity representatives to discuss the project and reading a range of sources of information. They used their findings to prepare a persuasive presentation which they took through a process of class heats. The groups shortlisted for the final delivered their presentations to a large audience which included representatives of their chosen charities. The literacy skills they demonstrated through this work were used as evidence for SQA unit assessments at National 4 and National 5 Literacy and the added value unit for National 4 English.

Literacy is an essential life skill central to almost all the skills for learning, life and work identified in Building the Curriculum 4. Children and young people require literacy and communication skills to engage fully as active members of society. They need these important skills as they enter the world of work, access higher education and in their everyday lives. The report by the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce underlines the increased focus in Curriculum for Excellence on employability and skills development. Literacy skills are a core element of this agenda which aims to ensure young people leave Scottish schools equipped with the skills necessary relevant to modern employment opportunities. Most schools have made a positive start in identifying and

including skills for learning, life and work across learning. In the best examples, children know what they are learning, why and how it will help them now and in the future. In these cases, children are confident in linking their learning to the world beyond schools, and are beginning to understand the place of effective literacy skills in the world of work. Children can talk about their progress in literacy, can identify where they are applying their literacy skills across their learning and know what they need to do to improve. Assessment processes should help children and young people to reflect on how well they are developing these skills and support them to identify next steps in their skills development.

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5.5 Raising attainment: leadership

At school level

In recent years, literacy has featured on many school's improvement plans and has been a main focus of development. When there is a clear strategy at whole-school level and literacy is given a high priority by all staff, we have seen significant improvements. Across all sectors, many schools now have designated literacy leaders or coordinators who are helping to drive forward literacy strategies. This includes taking on responsibility for developing aspects of the curriculum, learning and teaching methodologies or leading literacy at whole-school level. This is leading to a clearer understanding of every practitioner's responsibility for developing children and young people's literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Almost all secondary schools have evaluated how well the Literacy Experiences and Outcomes are being delivered across the curriculum. In the best practice, young people have been asked their views about how to make learning better through pupil focus groups or pupil council consultations. A few schools have used the information effectively to identify where young people will be developing similar skills across their learning so that subject departments can work together to assess learning and share standards.

Across all sectors, most schools are developing approaches to monitoring and tracking learners' progress and achievement in literacy and English. This has the potential to provide them with valuable information about standards of achievement and trends over time. Where effective approaches to assessment and moderation are used, staff have developed a clear picture of individual learners' progress. This ensures staff have high expectations of what young people can achieve and are able to plan appropriate support and challenge to raise standards of attainment. This should remain a key priority for schools. Schools should ensure they have a clear understanding of the difference between literacy and English. This will provide robust evidence of children's and young people's progress in essential literacy skills developed across all contexts for learning, as well as their progress in specific English Experiences and Outcomes. Where secondary schools assess and track children and young people's literacy skills as they move through the levels of the broad general education into the senior phase, they can plan appropriate pathways to ensure young people leave school with the highest level of achievement in literacy.

Staff across all sectors should continue to develop their understanding of what progress looks like as children and young people progress through the Curriculum for Excellence levels. Education Scotland has provided advice on assessing progress and achievement in literacy and English to support professional development. The literacy and English: assessing progress and achievement professional learning resource gives guidance on assessing progress and achievement in the broad general education. The progression framework is a guide intended to support practitioners as they consider a range of evidence demonstrating the learner's knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities as they progress through and achieve a level. Annotated exemplars in the professional learning resource provide examples of approaches used to develop and evidence progress in significant aspects of learning and provide a focus for professional dialogue for staff. The Literacy SSLN professional learning resource also provides guidance and exemplification to support the teaching, learning and assessment of reading, writing and group discussion.

> How effective are our approaches to monitoring and tracking learners' progress and achievement in literacy and English?
>
> To what extent do we have a shared understanding of standards within and across Curriculum for Excellence levels in relation to literacy and English?
>
> What are our approaches to assessment and moderation? How effective are they?
>
> Do we have a shared understanding of the difference between literacy and English?

At local authority and national level

Almost all local authorities have a literacy strategy and are supporting schools to improve standards in literacy. The National Literacy Action Plan highlighted the need for local authorities to develop strategies for literacy improvement which take account of their own local priorities. The Scottish Government has supported five local authorities (Edinburgh, Fife, Highland, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire) recognised for sustaining particularly proactive and authority-wide approaches to raising literacy levels. Each of the five authorities has shared its expertise with a group of partner councils who, in turn, have developed their own literacy strategies. The resulting literacy hubs now involve over two-thirds of local authorities. They are pro-actively sharing effective strategies for

improving literacy outcomes in a systematic way. The main outcomes of the literacy hubs are: improved focus on literacy; improved learning and teaching; more robust evaluation; and increased inter-authority working, including the sharing of good practice. A full review of the literacy hub approach was published jointly by the Scottish Government and the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) in March 2014.

The Scottish Government's recently announced Scottish Attainment Challenge will continue to build capacity for improvement in our schools. It will focus on primary schools and target improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. It will build on, and complement, existing activity by local authorities and the Scottish Government to address the gap in attainment between our most and least deprived communities including the Raising Attainment For All Programme, the School Improvement Partnership Programme and the Access to Education Fund. In addition, the appointment of Attainment Advisors for each local authority will support local improvement activity by creating local and national networks.

'These Advisors will be aligned with local improvement activity, creating local and national networks in agreement with local partners and an agile model of system led improvement. This will build on the work already underway but represents a step change in terms of increased intensity and priority.'

(Programme for Government, 2014)

Improving our playrooms - Glasgow City Council

Case Study Focus: Professional learning for Early Years Staff to support improvements in practice and outcomes for learners in literacy across learning.

Glasgow City Council has a strategic approach to improving the quality of learning and teaching in literacy in early learning and childcare settings. This involves promoting a consistent approach which takes into account early years pedagogy and expectations in early years literacy. It is aimed at supporting senior early years staff to take on leadership for literacy. So far, 90 early learning and childcare settings have been involved. The programme was developed and is led by practitioners for practitioners with support from a Quality Improvement Officer. The programme adopts a professional enquiry model. Participants have to identify an area of practice in literacy, which they would like to improve in their own school. They plan, implement and evaluate their chosen project. Participants work in trios with peers from other early learning and childcare settings. This approach is resulting in improved professional capabilities and has potential to ensure sustained improvements over time. Participants report positively about the impact this has had on their professional learning and that of their colleagues. They have also noted a significant improvement in children's engagement activities such as phonological awareness and interest in writing.

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Literacy Toolkit - Highland Council

Case Study Focus: Supporting professional learning in literacy

Highland Council's Literacy Toolkit is an online career long professional learning (CLPL) resource to support schools in shaping their literacy curriculum. It is part of the Highland Literacy Blog which is a hub where practitioners can find ideas, resources and engage with current practice. The Toolkit itself is a sequence of PowerPoint resources which can be used to support workshop activities for staff professional learning in schools. Each set of materials follows a similar structure, opening with a starter activity focussed on the theme of the session. A 'New Learning' section asks participants to consider new information from key education documents and other sources. Time is also built in for staff to share feedback on their progress since their last learning session as well as to create an action plan for the new topic. The resource has been designed with comprehensive notes which can be used by a facilitator to lead the session. A number of these resources are available on the website already, and a total of sixteen are planned, covering topics such as thinking skills, spelling and how to provide high quality feedback on writing. The content has been prepared by the Development Officer (DO) for Literacy, in conjunction with the Highland Literacy Working Group, and can be easily adapted and supplemented for use in specific school contexts. The material has been promoted through twilight awareness raising sessions, at which the DO has shared the rationale of the materials and demonstrated the approach to be taken when using for collegiate professional learning activities. Since then, two primary school clusters have worked through the sessions and implemented new approaches. The Literacy Toolkit is one approach to providing consistent provision of high quality professional learning across a large and geographically disparate local authority. It is an effective way of disseminating the most up to date local and national messages. At the same time, clusters and schools are able to adapt the learning to suit their own needs and contexts.

Dundee City Council

Case Study Focus: Improving literacy in primary schools

Dundee City Council has adopted a strong strategic approach to tackling low levels of attainment in literacy in its primary schools. There is a strong emphasis on intensive early intervention approaches. The authority's Education Psychological Services carried out extensive research to identify a literacy improvement programme that would provide schools with a strong structure to meet the needs of all learners. This was rolled out to all primary 1 and 2 classes over a two-year period. Staff training has been a key priority to ensure consistency and drive the initiative forward. In the first year of implementation, the authority organised an intensive programme of training for all of their Primary 1 and 2 teachers, as well as classroom support staff. To ensure the sustainability of the programme, 'reading leaders' were appointed in each school and met once a month to discuss progress. Twilight sessions for additional training were also organised to support staff with implementation. The authority recognised the need to engage parents and held an information event for the chairs of all parent councils. The chairs were then able to share information with their own school's parent council. Information leaflets were also distributed to all parents. A sense of collective responsibility for raising attainment in reading has emerged across all staff in the authority. Teachers have become more skilled in the teaching of reading skills and report that this is already impacting positively on attainment. A key feature has been the strong lead from the authority that has provided consistency in the teaching of reading across all primary schools in Dundee. While this whole school approach is still in its infancy, schools are already beginning to gather clear evidence that this strong strategic lead is helping to secure improved levels of literacy for their learners.

5.6 Raising attainment: career-long professional learning

'The most successful education systems do more than seek to attain particular standards of competence and to achieve change through prescription. They invest in developing their teachers as reflective, accomplished and enquiring professionals who have the capacity to engage fully with the complexities of education and to be key actors in shaping and leading educational change.'

(Teaching Scotland's Future, 2011, p 4)

Professional learning focusing on the use of active and engaging methodologies, for example co-operative learning strategies, has led to improved experiences for many children and young people in literacy and English. Opportunities to engage in enquiry-based approaches where staff research, trial and discuss practice are leading to sustained improvements in practice. Examples include teacher learning communities with a focus on feedback to improve literacy, and staff partners acting as critical friends as they implement reciprocal reading strategies in the classroom. There is a need for these enquiry-based approaches to become more widespread across schools to support teachers to develop and share practice in a collegiate and collaborative context. This will support greater consistency in learning and teaching and improved attainment.

Education Scotland's online professional learning communities aim to support professional learning in literacy and English. They provide an online space on which users can share resources and engage in dialogue and network. A glow username and password is required. A few local authorities have developed their own online communities.

Education Scotland Literacy Blether

Education Scotland English Blether
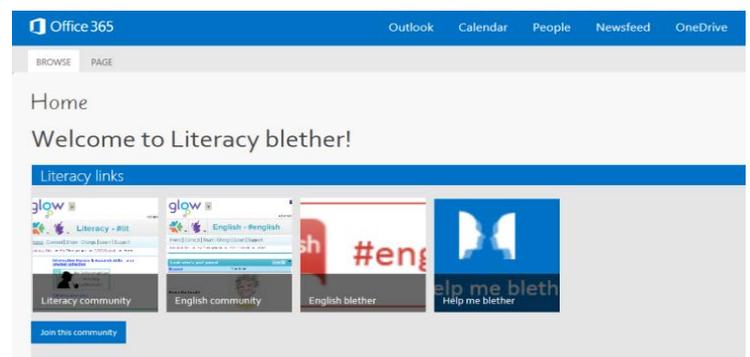
Ladybird Nursery, Fife

Case Study Focus: Supporting staff to improve their approaches to literacy

The commitment of staff to career long professional learning is a key strength in Ladybird Nursery. In recent years, this has had a significant impact on improvements in literacy within the centre. The centre's annual Professional Review and Development processes are clearly linked to improving outcomes for children and support whole nursery initiatives. Last session, nearly all staff completed a ten week 'Quality Curriculum' course, which has been a springboard for developing play provision, building staff capacity and sharing understanding. This session, staff have completed training in storytelling techniques to help increase children's engagement in storytelling sessions. The use of actions, props and puppets to support children with re-telling stories and rhymes has increased their active engagement in storytelling sessions. To further develop children's interests in stories and rhymes, the centre have recorded a series of storytelling video clips in partnership with the local secondary school. These have been uploaded to YouTube and linked to the centre's Facebook page to model oral storytelling and encourage parents to share stories with their child. All schools in the cluster are linking to this online resource so that children and parents across the Glenrothes area are benefitting from the storytelling work developed at Ladybird.

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Most secondary schools have provided opportunities for professional learning relating to literacy for their staff. These activities serve a worthwhile purpose in allowing teachers to sharing whole-school strategies and to develop good practice across the school. In the best examples, staff have regular opportunities to engage in professional dialogue and enquiry, leading to improvements in young people's experiences.

Hazlehead Academy, Aberdeen City

Case Study Focus: Supporting staff to develop their practice in developing literacy across learning

Hazlehead Academy in Aberdeen City has introduced Literacy lunches to build on initial professional learning at whole staff meetings and ensure that all staff are supported in their responsibility for literacy across the curriculum. The lunches are scheduled in the whole school calendar and are hosted by the faculty head of English and Literacy. Staff can opt in to all or some of the lunches, time and workloads permitting. The meetings, held during the lunch break on a normal school day, explore strategies to enhance practice and address professional learning needs of staff in order to support the development of literacy skills in their curricular area. From this, shared priorities have been identified and staff have worked together to develop consistent approaches. Focuses have included the development of a reading skills toolkit which consists of a variety of activities to improve reading for understanding and note-taking skills. Members of the group trialled strategies in their classes and shared evaluations at the lunches. They then selected the most effective strategies which were rolled out to the whole school. Staff who have attended have commented on how successful some of these strategies have already been and can see the direct impact on learners in their own subject. This consistent approach has enabled young people to transfer their skills across their learning. The current focus at the lunches is the development of a consistent approach to writing. The group have looked at a range of resources and methodologies such the concept of PAL (Purpose, Audience, Language and Layout) and literacy mats. They will trial and develop approaches to enhance extended writing with the aim to share the most effective ones with the whole school. The literacy lunches have been highly successful in providing support for staff and a forum for professional enquiry leading to improved practice. Literacy coordinators and head teachers from cluster schools also attend the literacy lunches to promote partnership working and shared development work.

Staff across all sectors spoke very positively about opportunities to work collegiately across clusters and within departments to moderate learning, teaching and assessment. The majority of schools have developed processes to facilitate moderation of literacy across sectors but few staff outwith English departments are involved in these activities. Teachers across the curriculum would benefit from a shared understanding of standards in literacy. Staff are not always sure if they have high enough expectations of young people's standard of literacy, in particular in writing.

In secondary English departments, good progress has been made in developing arrangements for internal verification of the new National Qualifications. Schools are making effective use of opportunities to engage with SQA professional development sessions and are using the experience of SQA nominees and verifiers within their local authority to share practice and expertise. Most staff who have engaged in these activities said they have an increased understanding of the assessment and moderation requirements of the new qualifications and would be revising and streamlining approaches as a result.

Collaborative working between staff in special schools and partners such as allied health professionals is a positive feature in many special schools. There are good opportunities for career long professional learning related to communication approaches through joint working with speech and language therapists and other agencies such as CALL Scotland.

What has been the impact of our professional learning activities in improving attainment and achievement in literacy and English?

6 The Way Ahead

This report highlights what we do well and what we need to continue to improve in literacy and English 3-18 in Scotland. The report has confirmed that there is much good practice in literacy and English in Scotland's schools. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure all children and young people leave school with the highest possible levels of attainment in literacy and English. Improving attainment is a national priority and improving literacy has an important role in improving attainment across all curricular areas. Literacy is a key theme in the Scottish Government Raising Attainment for All programme which includes as its stretch aims:

- To ensure that 85% of children within each school cluster have successfully experienced and achieved Curriculum for Excellence Second Level Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing outcomes in preparation for Secondary School by 2016.
- To ensure that 85% of children within each school cluster have successfully experienced and achieved Curriculum for Excellence Third Level Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing outcomes in preparation for the Senior Phase by 2019.

In addition to the Raising Attainment for All programme, the Scottish Government has recently launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge, a four-year programme aimed at tackling educational inequality by closing the gap in attainment between the most and least advantaged learners. The new *Read Write Count* literacy and numeracy campaign will also focus on raising attainment at the early stages of primary, building on the success of the *Play Talk Read* campaign in the early years.

We have found that almost all staff are committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for learners in their schools. We recognise that staff are working in times of significant financial constraint which is impacting on every local authority. While acknowledging this, we must also recognise the key role and responsibility we all have to shape a better future for the children and young people in our schools on whom Scotland's future relies.

Education Scotland will continue to update this report by adding further links to examples of good practice and professional learning resources, continuing to work in partnership with schools and local authorities to build capacity, and supporting schools to raise attainment for all.

'Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development… For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right.... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.'

— **Kofi Annan**

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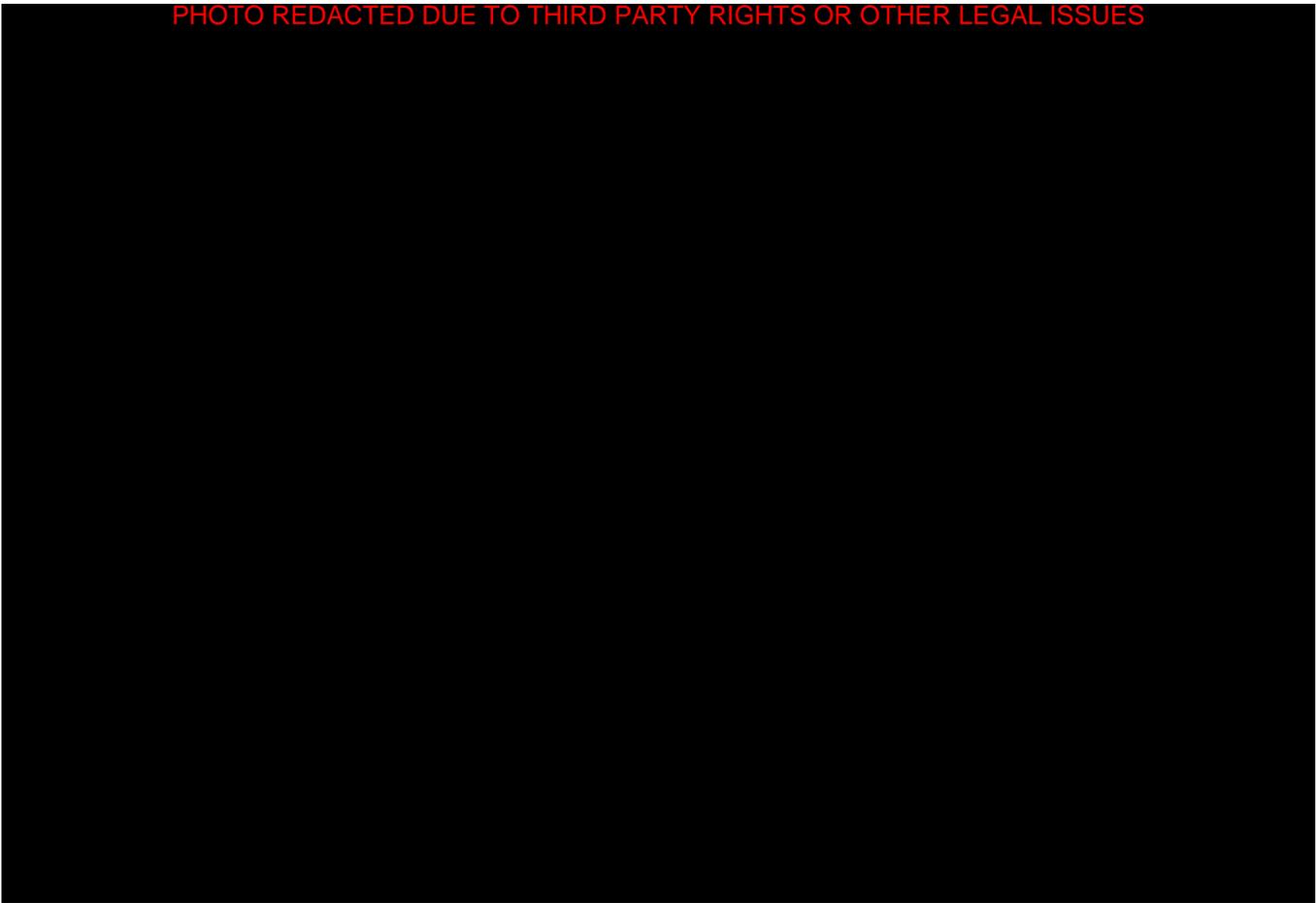
Appendix 1

List of establishments visited for report

Education Scotland would like to thank all children, young people, parents, carers and staff from the following establishments and local authorities who contributed to this report.

Early Years

Fortrose Nursery School	Glasgow City Council
Hailesland Early Years Centre	The City of Edinburgh Council
Ladybird Nursery	Fife Council
Woodside Nursery School	Glasgow City Council

Primary Schools

Auchtertool Primary School	Fife Council
Cambusnethan Primary School	North Lanarkshire Council
Kirn Primary School	Argyll and Bute Council
Livingston Village Primary School	West Lothian Council
Lundin Mill Primary School	Fife Council
Northmuir Primary School	Angus Council
Star Primary School	Fife Council
Stoneyhill Primary School	East Lothian Council
Woodmuir Primary School	West Lothian Council

Secondary Schools

Arbroath Academy	Angus Council
Bannockburn High School	Stirling Council
Bathgate Academy	West Lothian Council
Braes High School	Falkirk Council
Castle Douglas High School	Dumfries and Galloway Council
Cumnock Academy	East Ayrshire Council
Dornoch Academy	The Highland Council
Douglas Academy	East Dunbartonshire Council
Dumbarton Academy	West Dunbartonshire Council
Earlston High School	Scottish Borders Council
Hamilton Grammar School	South Lanarkshire Council
Hazlehead Academy	Aberdeen City Council
Holyrood Secondary School	Glasgow City Council
Inverclyde Academy	Inverclyde Council
Liberton High School	The City of Edinburgh Council
Rosshall Academy	Glasgow City Council
St Augustine's High School	The City of Edinburgh Council

Special Schools

Hamilton School for the Deaf	South Lanarkshire Council
Haysholm School	North Ayrshire Council
Isobel Mair School	East Renfrewshire Council
Victoria Park School	South Lanarkshire Council

Local Authorities

Dundee City Council
Glasgow City Council
South Ayrshire Council
The Highland Council

Appendix 2

Key Documents

[Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit](#)
[Advice on Gaelic Education](#)
[Building the Curriculum 1](#)
[Building the Curriculum 3](#)
[Building the Curriculum 4](#)
[Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce](#)
[English – A Portrait of Current Practice in Scottish Schools and Pre-school Centres](#)
[English Excellence Group Report](#)
[Evaluating and Improving our Curriculum – Primary](#)
[Evaluating and Improving our Curriculum S1-S3](#)
[Literacy across Learning: principles and practice paper](#)
[Literacy and English: assessing progress and achievement professional learning resource](#)
[Literacy and English: principles and practice paper](#)
[Literacy Progression framework](#)
[Literacy and English Annotated exemplars](#)
[Literacy SSLN professional learning resource](#)
[Making Sense: Education for Children and Young People with Dyslexia in Scotland](#)
[National Literacy Action Plan](#)
[National Literacy Action Plan interim progress report](#)
[Review of the literacy hub approach](#)
[Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource](#)
[Programme for Government](#)
[Raising Attainment for All](#)
[Skills in practice learning resource](#)

Appendix 3

National and International Perspective

The key national and international surveys that monitor aspects of literacy in Scotland are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), introduced in 2011 to replace the Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA).

Results of PISA 2012

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey conducted in 2012 shows that Scottish pupils aged 15 continue to perform above the OECD average in reading. There was a reduction in the performance gap between disadvantaged and less disadvantaged pupils compared with 2009. Girls tend to perform better than boys in reading. However in Scotland, as with the UK, the difference is smaller than the OECD average.

In 2000, Scotland's reading performance relative to other countries was one of the highest in the OECD, significantly below only one country (Finland). There was a drop in performance in 2003 and again in 2006 to around the OECD average. Scotland's performance has remained steady since 2006.
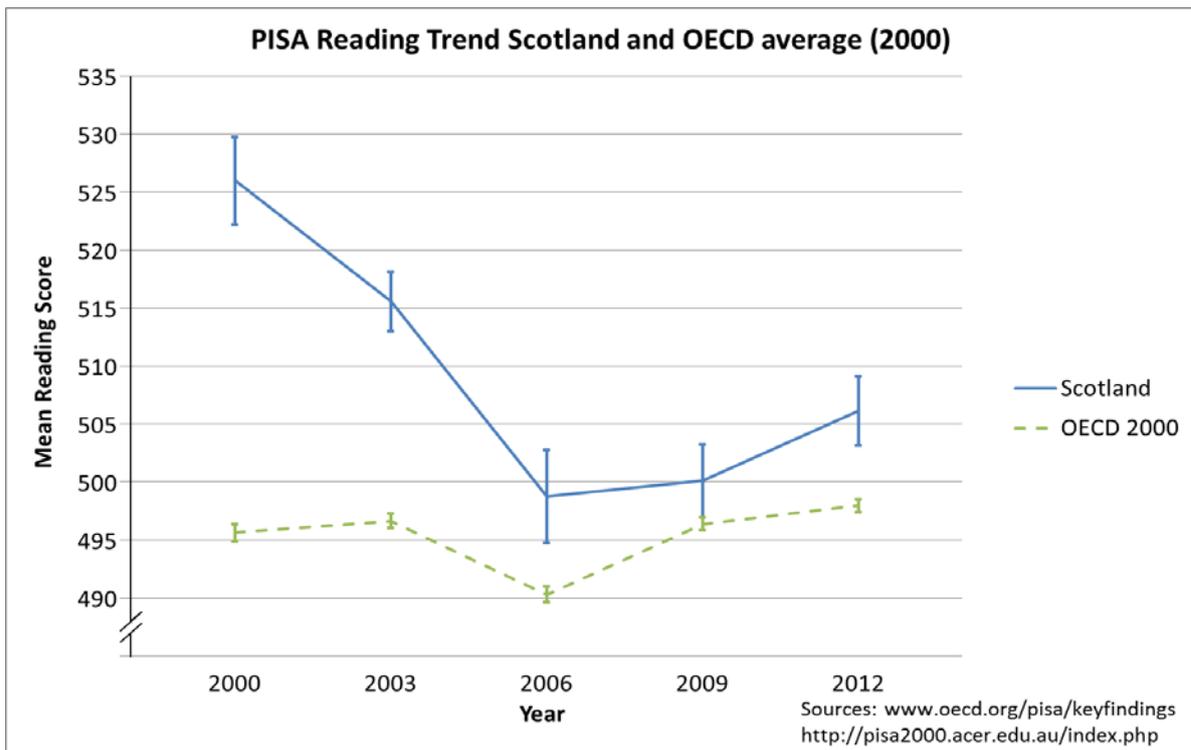

The performance of lower-achieving pupils (below level 2[3]) is the area in which Scotland is performing most strongly in relation to other countries, and in which it has shown most

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[3] The PISA achievement levels in literacy are divided into proficiency levels ranging from level 1b to level 6. Low achievers are defined as performing below level 2, and top performers as performing at level 5 or 6.

improvement. At level 4+ and 5+, Scotland has dropped from notably above the OECD average to in line with the OECD average.
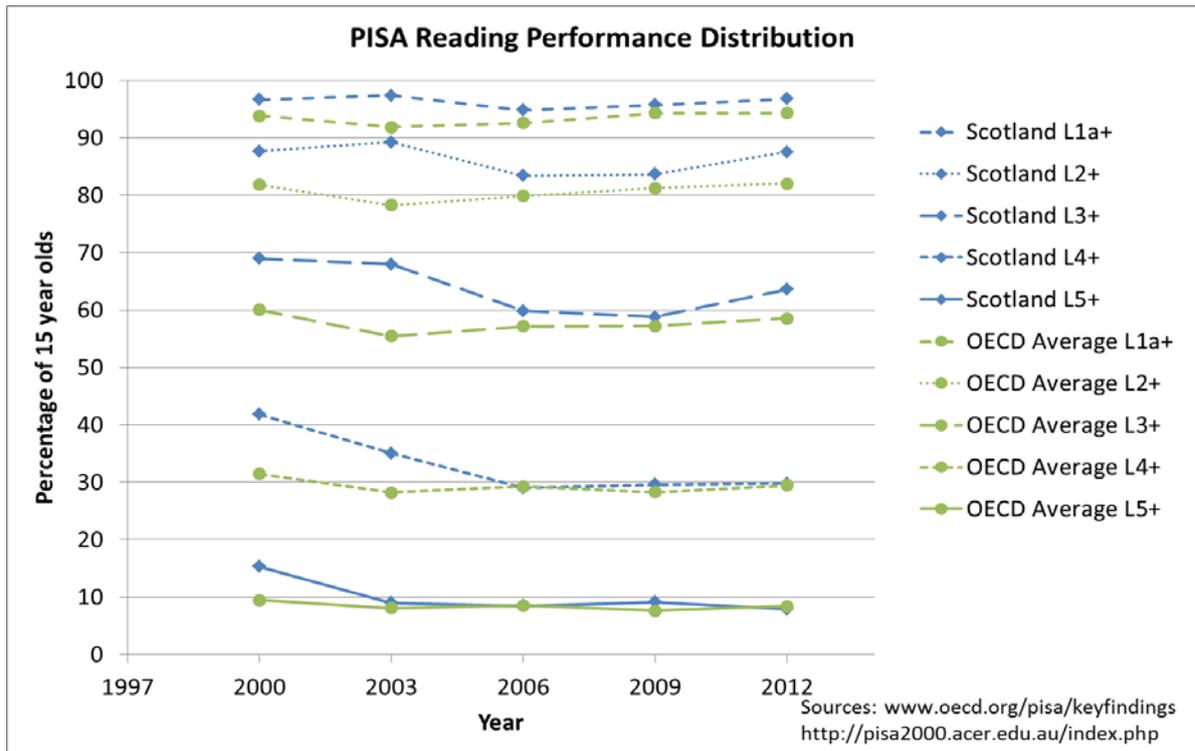
PISA reading assessments focus on three types of question: access and retrieve; integrate and interpret; reflect and evaluate. These assess the skills of finding, selecting, interpreting and evaluating information from a full range of texts associated with situations that reach beyond the classroom. Scotland performs similarly on each of the three types of questions. Scotland differs from the UK in that the UK performs significantly better on reflect and evaluate questions than on both integrate and interpret, and access and retrieve.
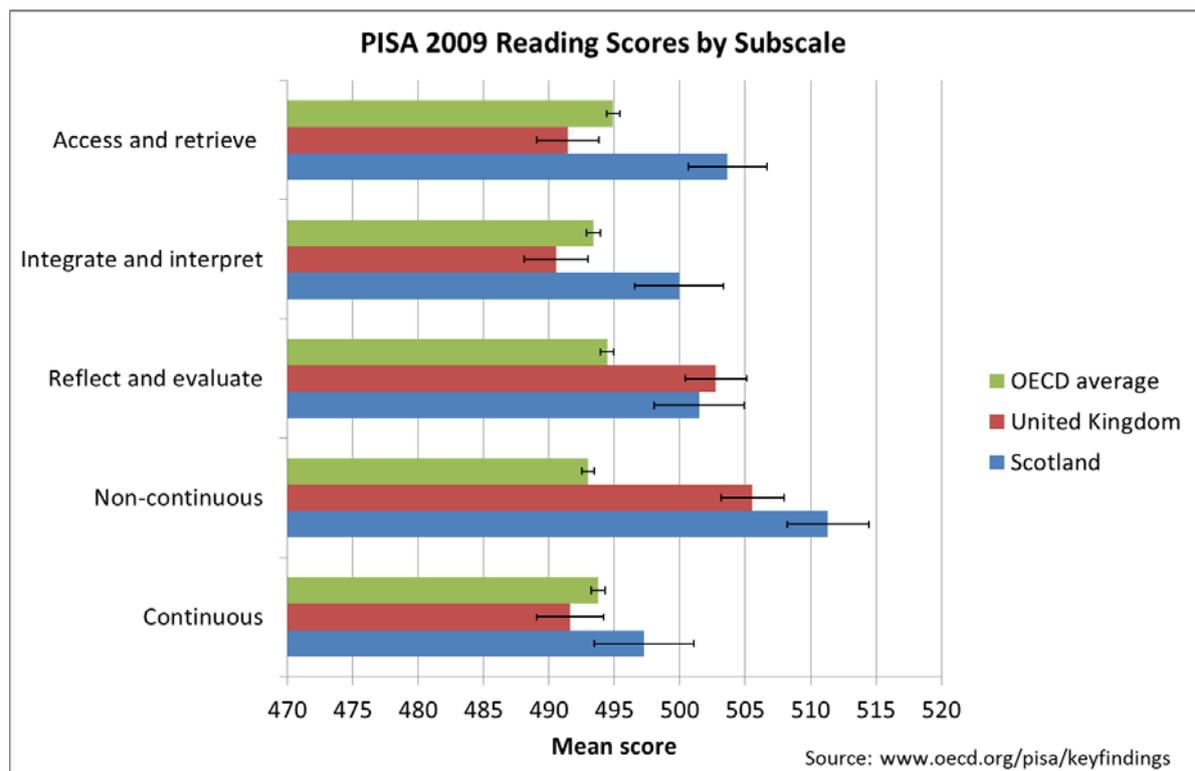
Scotland is similar to the UK in that it performs better on non-continuous texts (such as lists, tables, graphs, diagrams, advertisements, schedules and forms) than on continuous texts (typically composed of sentences organised into paragraphs).

In 2009, reading was the major focus of the PISA survey. The findings show that young people in Scotland enjoy reading less, have access to a less diverse range of reading materials and read online less than elsewhere in the OECD.   Scotland has one of the highest proportion of pupils who do not read for enjoyment however the amount pupils read for enjoyment has a particularly strong impact on reading performance in Scotland. While boys in Scotland read less than girls, boys' enjoyment of reading is similar to the OECD average. However, girls' enjoyment of reading is significantly below the OECD average. In all countries, students who enjoy reading most perform significantly better than students who enjoy reading the least.

Results of SSLN 2012

The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) is a national sample-based survey which monitors learners' performance in literacy and numeracy in alternate years at P4, P7 and S2. This provides a snapshot of Scotland's achievement in literacy and numeracy at a specific point and allows for comparisons over time. The first literacy survey took place in May 2012. The survey assessed the three literacy organisers under Curriculum for Excellence: listening and talking; reading; and writing. The key findings from the 2012 survey were:

- In reading, most pupils performed well or very well at the relevant Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level for their stage. In P7, this increased to almost all pupils performing well or very well at the second level. The percentage of pupils not yet working within their respective levels was small, but increased between P4 and S2. At P7, girls outperformed boys by 4% however there was no significant difference at P4 and S2.
- In writing, the majority of writing scripts demonstrated that pupils were performing well at, very well at or beyond the relevant level for their stage, with performance at P7 the strongest. The percentage of writing scripts demonstrating that pupils were not yet working within their respective levels increased between P4 and S2 and was higher than for reading. Girls tended to outperform boys in writing at all stages and the gap widened at S2.
- In listening and talking, the majority of P4 and P7 pupils were performing well at, very well at or beyond the relevant CfE level for their stage. The percentage of pupils not yet working within the level appropriate for their stage increased from 5% in P4 to 9% in P7 and to 17% at S2.
- Pupils from the most deprived areas performed less well than those from the least deprived areas at all stages in reading and writing (data was not available for listening and talking).

Findings from the 2014 literacy survey will be published at the end of April 2015.

**Statistical information from National Qualifications[4]**

The following provides an overview of uptake and attainment in Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) courses in English.

SCQF level 4

- In 2014, English had the second highest uptake of National 4 courses with 19,871 entries. The most popular course was Mathematics which had 22,490 entries. Attainment at National 4 English is in line with or higher than most other subjects.
- At Intermediate 1, the number of entries fell from 7,348 in 2013 to 5,188 in 2014 as a result of the introduction of the new nationals. The majority of candidates in 2014 were from S5. The pass rate at A-C and the percentage of young people achieving a course award at A-D are above the all course averages. The percentage achieving an A or A-B is below the all course average in these measures.

SCQF level 5

- In 2014, English had the highest uptake of National 5 courses with 28,798 entries. The next most popular National 5 course was Mathematics with 22,536 entries. The A-C and A-D rate is higher than any other top-15 subject apart from PE and music and the proportion achieving an A is typical of other popular subjects and in line with the average for all subjects.
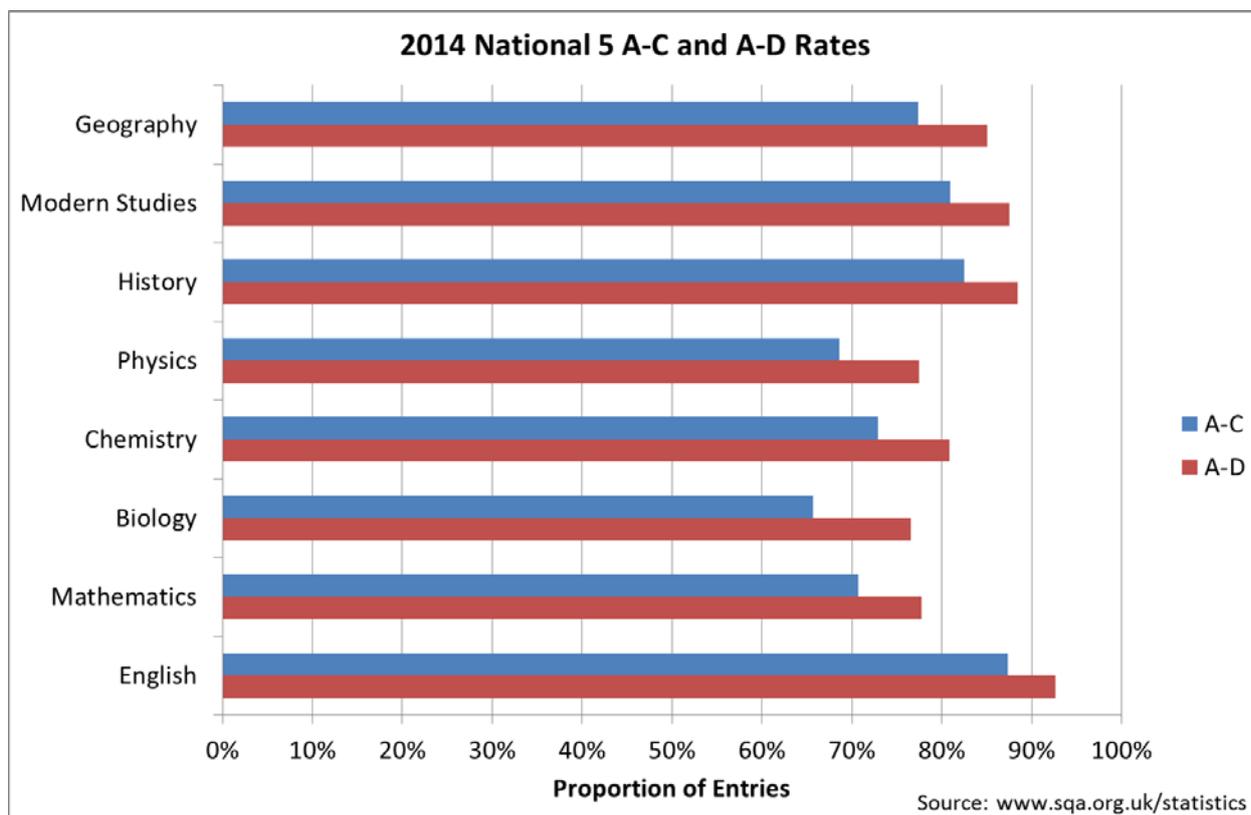
[4] These graphs are based on data from the SQA 2014 (http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/64717.4239.html) and 2012 (http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/66899.html) publications and cover all entries (including college).

- At Intermediate 2, the number of entries fell from 23,465 in 2013 to 19,453 in 2014 due to the introduction of the Nationals. Candidates from S5/6 made up most of the entries. In 2014, the A-C and A-D rates in English were above the averages for all courses. The percentage of awards at A and A-B were below the average for all courses.
- At Intermediate 2 English, performance over time has been largely consistent and is in line with or higher than a majority of other popular subjects. However, over time, the proportion of resulted entries awarded an A or (to a lesser extent) A-B is lower than most other popular subjects and the average across all subjects.

SCQF level 6

- Higher English (SCQF level 6) is the most popular Higher. In 2014 there were 31,589 entries. The next most popular Higher was Mathematics with 21,851 entries in 2014. In 2014, the pass rate at A-C and the percentage of young people achieving a course award at A-D were in line with all course averages at these measures. The percentage of awards at A and A-B were lower than the all course averages.
- Performance over time in Higher English has improved. The pass rate has increased from 70% in 2010 to 76% in 2014. The proportion of resulted entries awarded an A in Higher English is lower than most other popular subjects and the average across all subjects, however entries are significantly higher than in all other subjects.
- The percentage of young people progressing from SCQF level 5 courses in English to Higher is amongst the highest, along with Mathematics and the sciences. However, relatively few pupils progress from Higher to Advanced Higher in English.

Source: www.sqa.org.uk/statistics
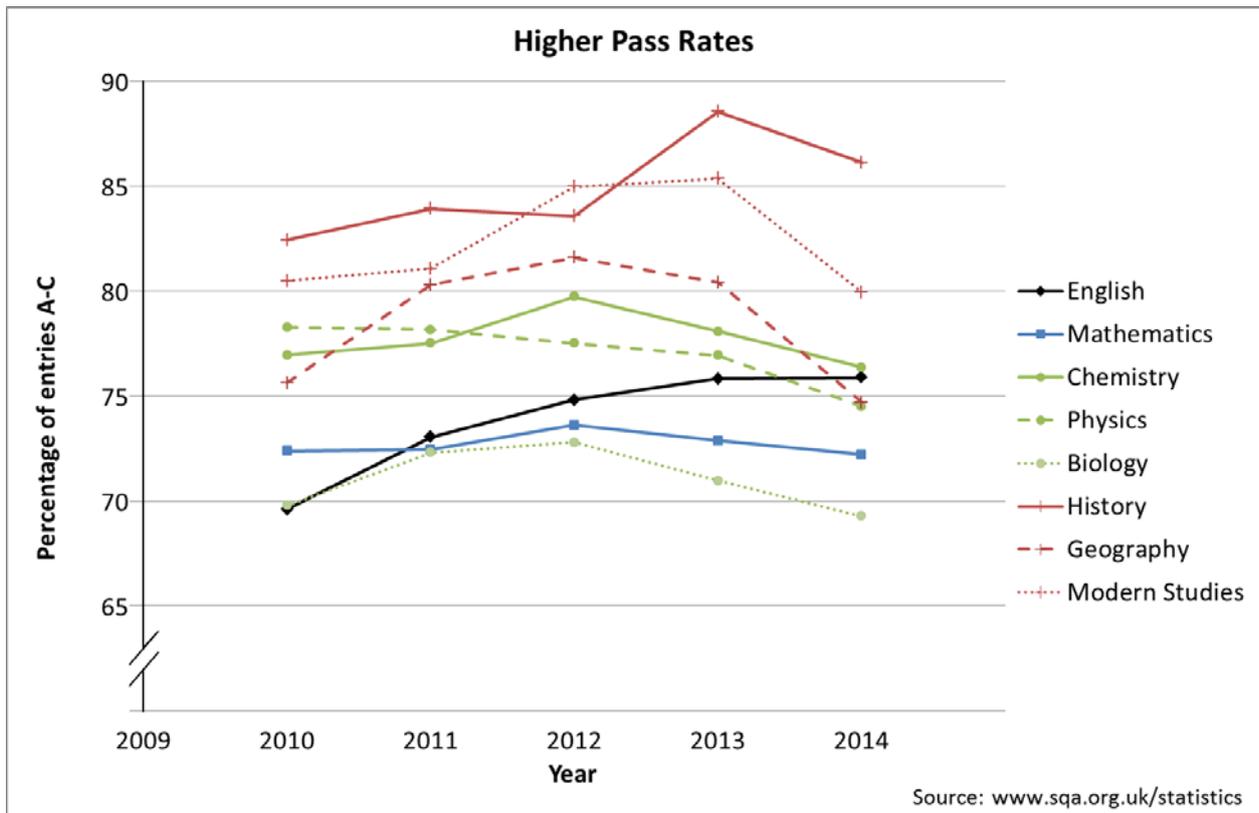
SCQF level 7

- Advanced Higher English was the fifth most popular course in 2014 behind Mathematics and the three sciences. In general, performance at Advanced Higher English is in line with these most popular Advanced Higher courses.
- Uptake of the Scottish Baccalaureate for Languages is significantly lower than for the science baccalaureate. In 2014, there were 22 candidates (down from 32 in 2013) compared with 137 candidates for sciences (down from 142 in 2013). The pass rate in 2014 was 86% compared with 84% in 2013 (pass rate for science 81%).
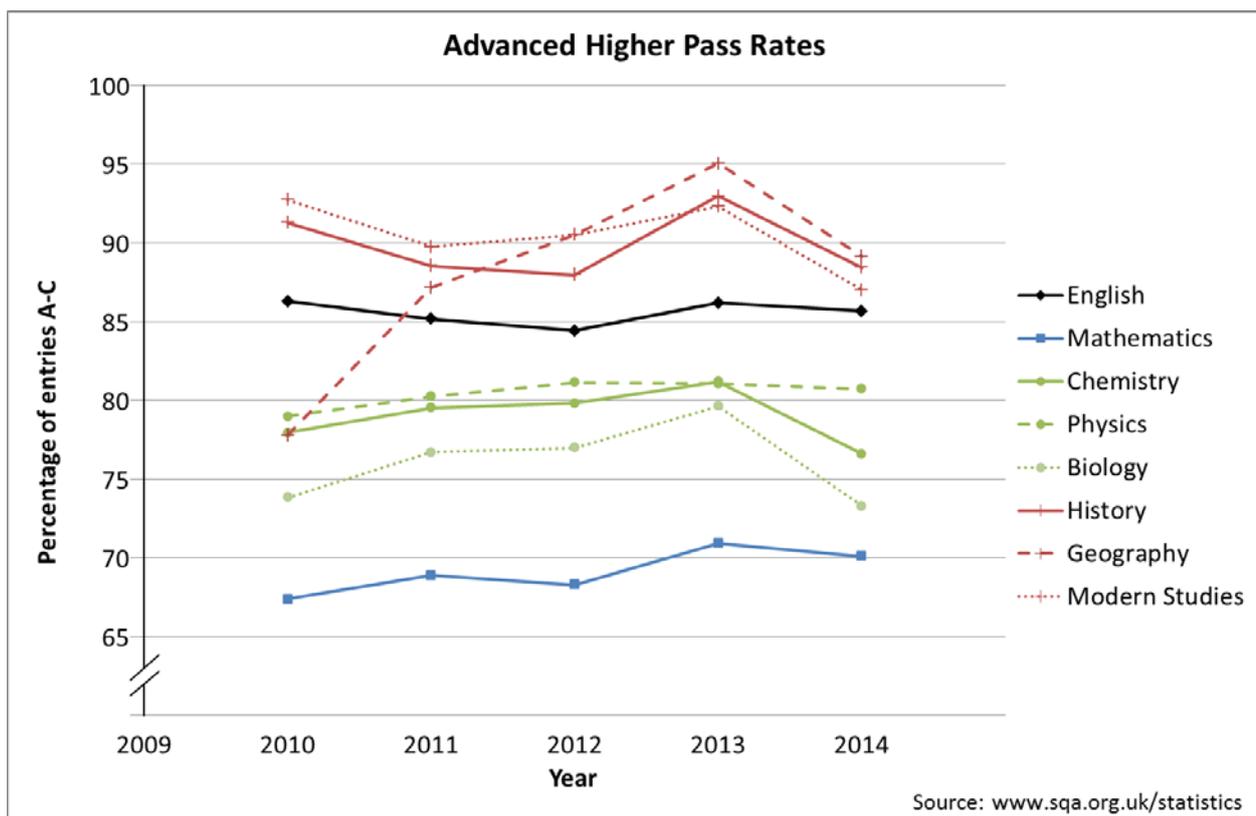
Appendix 4

Practical next steps for the development of Scots language and text

Audit current practice and provision for Scots language and text. Ask yourself such questions as:
- Do we only look at Scots Language and texts within the context of one-off events such as St Andrew's day and Burns' celebrations?
- When was the last time we introduced new Scots language texts?
- Have we thought about integrating Scots language and literature through interdisciplinary contexts?

Identify experiences and outcomes that could be delivered and achieved through the context of Scots Language and literature.
- This exercise will reassure both practitioners and parents as it will clearly illustrate the place of Scots language and literature within Curriculum for Excellence. Remember that as well as literacy, other areas of the curriculum have experiences and outcomes well suited to a Scots language context: for example, but not exclusively, expressive arts and health and wellbeing.

Investigate contemporary Scots language texts that could be used in your setting.
- The Scottish Book Trust Scots Language Book Lists are a good place to start.

Create a coherent progression of skills plan for Scots language.
- Practitioner confidence can be enhanced through this kind of exercise.

Develop a specific Scots language and literature policy, or include a Scots section in your existing literacy policy as appropriate.
- This will be useful to demonstrate the equal status that Scots enjoys alongside English and Gaelic.

Consider whether incorporating Scots into your 1 + 2 programme would be appropriate.
- Some Local Authorities may wish their primary schools to explore the possibility of Scots language as L3.

Consider whether engaging with the SQA Scots Language Award would be appropriate for your setting.
- Remember that these flexible units can be delivered by subjects such as English, languages, history, geography or music - individually or as an interdisciplinary approach.

Remember to keep spelling approaches consistent for written work in Scots.
- If in doubt, remember you can always check with the Scots Language Dictionary - but bear in mind that there may be regional differences.

Consider partnering with a Scots Language Ambassador.
- The scheme encourages a partnership between schools and confident Scots speakers. This could really help to enhance the status of Scots in your school or cluster. For details contact the Scots Language Co-ordinators.

Introduce a Scots word of the week.

- This is an easy way to set the ball rolling and have learners and practitioners begin to discuss Scots and its use.

Contact your Scots Language Co-ordinator.

- Your Literacy QIO should be able to put you in touch with the member of the team linked to your authority.

Appendix 5

Key points on developing literacy through Gaelic Medium Education

'In Gaelic Medium Education, there is a clear emphasis on developing fluency in Gaelic first and foremost within the framework of Curriculum for Excellence. There is a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and the development of active and healthy lifestyles. As children play, staff need to be working alongside and interacting with children to enable them to develop their knowledge and skills in Gaelic language and literacy while also following their interests, being creative and curious.'

Advice on Gaelic Education, Education Scotland 2015

Children and young people learning through the medium of Gaelic develop their literacy skills in both Gaelic and English as well as in other contexts across the curriculum. The initial focus on developing Gaelic language through total immersion at the early and first curricular levels through play and learning within curricular areas gives children a rich context in which literacy skills are embedded. First and foremost in total immersion, children develop fluency in the language with the development of literacy being secondary. In the immersion phase, as children embark on the literacy and English outcomes, they have skills in literacy to build on from their experiences through Gaelic. Children will continue to be exposed to the full range of literacy skills in both languages with increased opportunities to use these skills across learning. Throughout the broad general education and beyond, teachers' planning and assessment of literacy across learning needs to take account of the two language perspective of learners in Gaelic Medium Education. For this, they need to be planning suitably challenging ways to develop literacy:

Learners' understanding of their progress in literacy and Gàidhlig

Staff should continue to develop their understanding of what progress looks like as children and young people progress through the Curriculum for Excellence levels. Within the total immersion stage, assessing literacy skills comes later as learners become confident in their mastery of Gaelic. The processes involved in developing fluency in Gaelic embed literacy skills and, through time, learners will show readiness to demonstrate their progress in these skills. Education Scotland has provided advice on assessing progress and achievement in literacy and Gàidhlig to support professional development. The Literacy and Gàidhlig: assessing progress and achievement professional learning resource gives guidance on assessing progress and achievement in the broad general education. The 'significant aspects of learning' and associated progression statements for literacy and Gàidhlig have a key role in helping children to demonstrate their progress with the curricular levels for literacy and Gàidhlig.

'Teachers of Gaelic have a role in devising a strategy for the development and assessment of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing through the medium of Gaelic, which links to its development through the medium of English.'

Advice on Gaelic Education, Education Scotland 2015

Transforming lives through learning