

THE FINAL REPORT FROM THE STANDING LITERACY COMMISSION ON THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S LITERACY ACTION PLAN

APRIL 2015

I read...

"Because I only have one life, but infinite ways to live it... because words make maps that show me where I am... because no book ever closed its door on me."

From 'I Read (an imitable poem)', by Tom Pow

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The Scottish Government
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INTRODUCTION – THE WORK OF THE STANDING LITERACY COMMISSION AND THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

The work of the Standing Literacy Commission has its origins in the independent Literacy Commission which published its report in December 2009. This report was debated in the Scottish Parliament in January 2010. At this debate, Scottish Government Ministers made a commitment to bring forward an action plan for literacy, which was subsequently published in October 2010. The Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan (LAP) aimed to raise literacy levels for all, from the early years through to adults and lifelong learning, with a particular focus on tackling the impact of poverty and disadvantage. It also contained a commitment to establish a commission "to facilitate and oversee the delivery of the actions contained within this plan." Thus the Standing Literacy Commission (SLC) was established.

The SLC met for the first time on 18 May 2011 and for the final time at All Saints Primary School, Airdrie, North Lanarkshire on 16 December 2014. There were 12 meetings in all and Sir Harry Burns, the former Chief Medical Officer for Scotland and a committed health, anti-poverty and literacy campaigner, chaired the majority of these. He stood down in March 2014 when he left the Scottish Government, and Tim Simons, Head of Scottish Government Learning Directorate's Curriculum Unit, acted as Chair for the Commission's remaining three meetings.

The Commission published an interim progress report on the Literacy Action Plan (LAP) on 12 September 2012, at a UN International Literacy Day celebration event in Edinburgh attended by HRH Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, the UN's Special Envoy for Literacy and Chair of the EU High Level Group on Literacy. In his foreword to the report, Sir Harry highlighted the wider socio-economic and health impacts of poor literacy skills: "*Literacy supports, indeed unlocks, learning in all other areas, is crucial for developing employability skills and is a prerequisite for full, informed and responsible participation in social, economic, cultural and political life. Without literacy skills, health and well-being can be seriously impaired, or even negated.*"

The interim report captured the wide range of good, more joined-up work that was going on – from early years through school and colleges to adult literacies – to improve literacy and close the attainment gap. The report concluded that even more concerted and joined-up action was needed in order to meet our aspirations for literacy in Scotland.

This second and final report from the Standing Literacy Commission attempts to capture the impact, through the available evidence, of the good work undertaken since the interim report was published across the different sectors. The data and evidence presented is both qualitative, including up-to-date evaluative work on programmes and initiatives such as Bookbug and the inter-authority Literacy Hubs; and quantitative, with data from the early years through to adult literacies. For the early years there is data from the 27-30 month child health reviews; from school-level the data sets include the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and National Qualifications (NQs); for adults there is data from the annual Skills Profile survey which is used to measure progress with the Adult Literacies in Scotland (ALIS) 2020 strategy.

Taken together, the available data and evidence point to a generally improving picture for literacy levels in Scotland from early years, through schools and colleges to adult learning. In each of these areas literacy enjoys a higher, and ever-increasing, priority than at one time, which can only be good news for Scotland and its people, society and economy. However, the stand-out issue, where more progress needs to be made, is the gap in attainment between the most and least disadvantaged young people. School-level data (as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, SIMD) tells us that this gap has narrowed slightly in recent years but not by as much as we would like to see. [The announcement by the First Minister](#) in Dundee on 9 February 2015 of the £100m Scottish Attainment Challenge and new Attainment Scotland Fund over four years, to drive forward improvements on educational outcomes in Scotland's most disadvantaged communities, is a very welcome development in this respect. Commission members, and others, will be watching with great interest as the Scottish Attainment Challenge, and other work on raising attainment and tackling educational inequalities, develops over the coming months and years.

THE IMPACT OF THE STANDING LITERACY COMMISSION AND KEY THEMES WHICH EMERGED FROM OUR DISCUSSIONS

The Commission itself has played an important role in ensuring that action to improve literacy levels in Scotland is joined-up and co-ordinated. Commissioners' key role in scrutinising and asking questions of policy makers and implementation bodies about their ongoing commitment, work and plans for literacy has undoubtedly led to more co-ordinated links and better partnerships. Links and synergies across the key sectors with which the LAP is concerned – early years and family literacy, school-age and adult and youth literacies – are stronger now than they were four years ago. And the organisations represented around the Commission table have taken the opportunity to explore linkages and joint working in a way that would most likely not have happened had the Commission not existed.

The Commission's work and scrutiny was underpinned throughout by the four priority aims of the LAP:

- Breaking the link between poor literacy levels and deprivation.
- Improving the skills of those who have difficulties with basic literacy, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- Ensuring young people progress successfully from basic to advanced literacy skills.
- Raising advanced literacy skills for all.

However, over time it also became clear that there were certain key themes that applied across the sectors, from early years to adult learners, which were critical to the success of different interventions. These were:

- Early intervention, with support and resources focused where they were needed – as in the 27-30 month child health reviews, Early Years Collaborative bedtime reading 'tests of change', family learning initiatives, the revised Dyslexia Toolkit and school-based individual and small group literacy interventions.
- Commitment and a sustained focus – as seen through the work of Bookbug Assertive Outreach, the literacy hubs and the adult literacies 'hot-spots' projects.
- Assessment, screening, monitoring and tracking – as in the POLAAR Primary 1 resource, new SQA Literacy Units and refined literacy screening tools used by Job Centre Plus and the Scottish Prison Service.
- Co-operation, sharing and partnership working across all the key bodies and sectors, including health, justice and welfare – as in the literacy hubs and the literacy programmes used with young offenders in places like Polmont Young Offenders Institute.

As we move forward with improving literacy levels for all in Scotland, this report will seek to identify ways in which we can work together around these key themes to make the goal of raising literacy levels for all, and tackling the impact of poverty and disadvantage on people's literacy skills, a reality.

What follows is a summary of the key developments and achievements as identified by the Commission, on a sector by sector basis, since we published our interim progress report on the LAP in September 2012. These are listed under LAP key themes, followed by data and evidence of impact, where available, to show progress. There then follows next steps and finally our recommendations for further actions where the Commission considers these are needed.

EARLY YEARS LITERACY

Developments and achievements, grouped under key LAP themes

1. The importance of early learning experiences and cognitive development in providing solid foundations from which more formal literacy learning can be developed, combined with the importance of rich home environment and targeting vulnerable families.

The Scottish Government has continued to support the Bookbug programme, which encompasses book gifting and accompanying play and learning resources through Bookbug packs, interactive sessions, and outreach work using children's books as shared social, emotional learning experiences. The Scottish Book Trust's Bookbug Assertive Outreach Programme is now entering its fourth year, with all 32 local authorities involved. An evaluation of year two of the programme has been completed.

The Early Years Collaborative has undertaken a number of bedtime reading 'tests of change' in Midlothian and North Ayrshire, and has shared findings widely across the Collaborative.

The Scottish Government has continued to support the Play Talk Read (PTR) campaign, which encourages parents and carers to incorporate playing, talking and reading into their daily routines. PTR encompasses play bus road shows, staffed by trained play workers, which visit all parts of the country; age appropriate gifts; and a national social marketing campaign, including prime-time TV adverts, use of social media and poster campaigns. A more recent development is the sensory bus, which has a particular focus on supporting young people with additional support needs and their families and carers.

2. The need for early and co-ordinated intervention by agencies where and when required to meet the needs of children and their families, and a strengthening of connections with health partnerships.

27-30 month child health reviews were introduced as part of the Early Years Framework. They are carried out by health visitors, and started providing national data in December 2014 for this age group.

3. Supporting early years' practitioners through developing their professional learning opportunities and qualifications, through Curriculum for Excellence Early Level and Pre-birth to Three curriculum national guidance; and through developing and supporting assessment approaches and practices.

Building the Ambition, published in August 2014, is national practice guidance on early learning and childcare covering 0-5 years. Key areas contained within the guidance are well-being; communication; and promoting curiosity, inquiry and creativity. The guidance offers practical support to all involved and interested in the education and care of babies, toddlers and young children in Scotland. From November 2014 the Scottish Government and Education Scotland have delivered training on Building the Ambition to early learning and childcare practitioners across Scotland.

A new section of the Education Scotland website, published on 5 February 2015, provides links to the full Building the Ambition publication, as well as to individual sections of the guidance. Downloadable support materials are also available to help staff at all levels engage more deeply with the contents. These are based on case studies of real situations, which provide good contexts for further professional dialogue and discussion.

Education Scotland continued to inspect and quality assure early literacy and learning provision across the country, and analyse and share the findings (see Evidence of Impact section below). Education Scotland also produced a wealth of support resources for practitioners, including annotated exemplification material at Curriculum for Excellence Early Level (age 3 to end of Primary 1).

Evidence of Progress

Bookbug

Bookbug Sessions were named as number 23 in a list of 'top things to do' published in the summer 2014 edition of Scottish Field magazine.

The Bookbug Assertive Outreach Programme year two evaluation by Blake Stevenson, published in February 2014, covered 16 local authorities and focused on assessing:

- impact on the practice of early years professionals in their work with families;
- impact on families, in terms of parents being encouraged to sing, read, talk and play with their children, and any resulting effects of this;
- impact in terms of families' wider use of services available to them, including local authority services.

Photo courtesy of Rob McDougall/Scottish Book Trust

It found convincing evidence to show that the Assertive Outreach Programme – or “Bookbug for the Home” – equips early years professionals to support parents in vulnerable families to interact more with their children and to develop a relationship with books. Professionals and parents alike described positive changes in children’s development and family interaction as a result.

- 64% of people trained in Bookbug for the Home had used their training with families, each doing so with an average of 7.1 families.
- 81% of those who have delivered Bookbug activities in the home reported that Bookbug training has had an impact on their professional practice.
- 70% said that they would not have introduced these activities previously.
- There was increased involvement of families in public Bookbug sessions, with 30% of early years professionals accompanying families to these.
- 22% of early years professionals reported that families they work with had engaged with other services that they had not engaged with prior to Bookbug. These services included libraries, parenting support initiatives, speech and language therapy, playgroups and parent and child groups.

All of these figures show an increase from the figures in year one.

“Perhaps unexpectedly, Scottish Book Trust with its Bookbug for the Home programme has taken on an unusual and courageous societal role. They are providing conceptual leadership, helping Scotland to reframe our cultural understanding of reading. The Bookbug for the Home programme is asking us to conceive of reading in its earliest stages not as an academic capacity, but as an emotional one.

“Bookbug sessions have an impact on aspects of child development and family life that extend far beyond literacy... they impact on: affection, the ability to express one’s self, language development, and the ability of a family to engage in outings like the cinema or shopping. It is important that we take on the full import of these insights and realise that Bookbug is building relationships...”

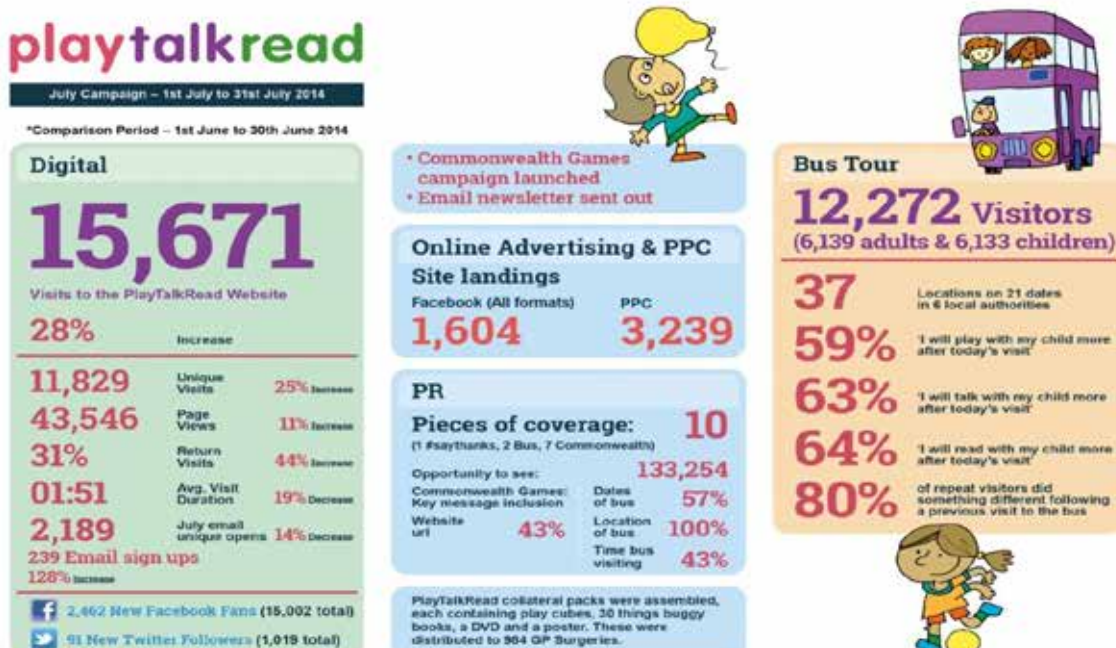
Dr Suzanne Zeedyk, University of Dundee

Early Years Collaborative

Bedtime reading ‘tests of change’ (small-scale, regular evaluations of the impact of specific interventions) in Springvale Early Years Centre, North Ayrshire and Stobhill Primary, Midlothian, have yielded positive data and results, helping to inform the Collaborative’s ongoing improvement methodology work.

Play Talk Read

Play Talk Read (PTR) continues to make a strong impact in the places where it is most needed through the PTR buses, website and social marketing campaigns. In the year to August 2014 there were over 100,000 visits to the PTR website, while almost 40,000 children and parents across Scotland visited the two PTR buses during the same period. The website had 15,671 visits during July, with 12,272 visitors that same month to the play buses, as the following graphic shows:



27-30 month child health reviews

Reporting on the 27-30 month reviews, which all children receive between 27 and 30 months old, is shared at local level within NHS Scotland. National data was collated and published for the first time in December 2014. The national data revealed that 10% of new referrals following child health reviews were for speech and language reasons, the most common reason for referral.

27-30 month child health reviews were re-introduced in 2012 as part of the Early Years Framework. The overall priorities of the reviews, which are carried out by health visitors, are promotion of strong early child development (particularly social/emotional and language/cognitive) within a context of helpful parenting and wider family well-being; and promotion of healthy child weight. The Sure Start Language Measure is used to assess children's language development and identify children who may warrant further investigation, support or referral for further support. National data based on child health reviews was published by the Scottish Government for the first time in December 2014. This shows that 10% of children reviewed had a concern newly identified about their speech, language and communication, and an additional 3% already had a known concern in this domain prior to their review.

Education Scotland inspection evidence

Education Scotland inspection evidence indicates a largely positive experience with early years provision, with early years staff in the main engaging children and young people through a wide range of stimulating contexts and purposes for learning. Good early reading and writing work is being delivered, often through play-based activities. A priority for Education Scotland staff has been supporting early years professionals with their approaches in assessing children's progress and achievement. Encouraging a focus among professionals on the 'significant aspects of learning' and on breadth, challenge and application of learning has also been a strong feature.

Inspection evidence suggests that challenges remain around improving the consistency of the quality of learning and teaching, including use of effective listening activities, to which Education Scotland staff are currently giving priority.

Next steps

- The Scottish Government has committed to increasing the amount of funded early learning and childcare to 30 hours per week by the end of the next Parliament. This will cover all 3 and 4 year olds and our most vulnerable and disadvantaged 2 year olds. Protecting and improving the quality of provision is of paramount importance in this expansion.

- Over the past four years the Play Talk Read (PTR) campaign has been successful in raising awareness and understanding of the influence parents have on their children in the first few years of life. In 2015/16 the Scottish Government will continue to build awareness of the benefits of playing, talking and reading in the early years, providing audiences with compelling reasons to believe it is of great importance. The Scottish Government will also continue to support behaviour change amongst the key target audience of parents and carers of children aged 0-3 through signposting to the website and the PTR buses.
- The Scottish Government will work with The Scottish Book Trust to ensure on-going delivery of the Bookbug initiative and accompanying Assertive Outreach Programme. The Assertive Outreach Programme applies the principles of 'targeted universalism' to the well-established Bookbug programme to ensure even the most vulnerable children in Scotland can access its benefits.

Recommendations

1. Local authorities and other providers should use the opportunities provided by the expansion of free early learning and childcare from 475 to 600 hours per annum to ensure that early literacy is a key part of that provision.
2. There should be consistent sharing of data and intelligence across national public bodies within the areas of education, health, social care, early learning and childcare. The Scottish Government and NHS Scotland should ensure that the outreach work of Play Talk Read, Bookbug and Play@Home is targeted on those most in need of extra support.
3. The Scottish Government, NHS Scotland and partners should ensure that systems and training are put in place to ensure that any speech, language and communication difficulties identified by the 27-30 month child health reviews are addressed effectively (in the first year 10% of children were newly referred for such needs). Management Information Systems at local authority level should ensure that the relevant information follows every child as they move through the system, and is acted upon appropriately.
4. Libraries are fundamental in supporting good literacy development and promoting the importance of reading for pleasure. The SLC welcomes recent commitments to pilot automatic enrolment in public libraries for young children and their families and carers. Local authorities should take automatic enrolment approaches forward in ways that best suit them, once the pilots have been assessed.

(Recommendations continue on page 26)

SCHOOL-AGED LITERACY

Developments and achievements, grouped under key LAP themes

1. Key role of Curriculum for Excellence in driving up literacy standards

Literacy has been given greater priority within the school curriculum since 2008 through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). In 2008 national guidance was issued which made all teachers and other practitioners responsible for developing young people's literacy (and numeracy) skills, across all subjects and curriculum areas and stages of learning from age 3 to 18.

The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) – an annual sample-based survey of pupil performance in Primary (Primary 4 and Primary 7) and early Secondary (Secondary 2), introduced in 2011 – reported on literacy for the first time in April 2013, and will do so again in late April 2015.

Literacy features prominently in the new arrangements for profiling young people's achievements from Primary 7 through to the senior phase (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6), and in arrangements for reporting on young people's progress to parents.

Literacy also features prominently within the new CfE National Qualifications, introduced in August 2013, and is a central element in SQA's Skills Framework which underpins all new CfE qualifications. In 2013/14 the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) created new National Literacy Units at SCQF Levels 3, 4 and 5 to confirm standards and recognise literacy achievement for young people and adults.

The Parentzone website was replaced in November 2014 with a new site, [Parentzone Scotland](#), which provides updated and new content for parents on supporting their children's learning, plus information about individual schools.

Literacy is one of five key themes of the [Raising Attainment for All \(RAfA\)](#) work launched in June 2014, as the following graphic shows. Literacy also features prominently in three out of the four [RAfA 'stretch aims'](#).

Closing the Gap
Reducing the link between deprivation and poor educational attainment in Scotland

Our Vision
Our National Performance Framework highlights our ambition for our children and young people to grow up to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
Scotland should be the best place to go to school. We want each child to enjoy an education that encourages them to be the most successful they can be and provides them with a full passport to future opportunity.
To achieve this, we need to raise attainment consistently and for all our children and young people, and progressively reduce inequality in educational outcomes.

Children living in the most deprived areas in Scotland are...

- 6.13 months behind their peers in reading attainment at age 5
- 1.18 points behind their peers in cognitive functionality at age 5
- Around two years of learning behind their peers at age 15

This inequality gap holds true for school leavers at every single decile of area deprivation – not just the bottom 20% and most of this variation exists within rather than between schools.

We have a firm foundation in our key policies:

- CIE** Curriculum for Excellence is our long-term platform for engaging learning and teaching by providing more coherent and flexible learning, aimed at raising standards, improving knowledge and developing skills for learning, life and work for every young person.
- GIRFEC** Getting it Right for Every Child is the overarching approach to all our policies and frameworks. GIRFEC is all about keeping the child at the centre, providing early intervention and co-ordinated support.
- Early Years** We know that investing in the early years of a child's life can help prevent problems developing later on. This is why we established the Early Years Framework in 2008 and introduced the Early Years Collaborative – a multi-agency local quality improvement programme to pull these principles into action.
- Teaching Scotland's Future** Will provide a stronger and more coherent early phase of teacher education, enhanced opportunities for professional learning and a greater range of leadership learning opportunities.

What is happening to support this?

- Leadership at all levels** The implementation of Teaching Scotland's Future
- Excellence in Learning and Teaching** The establishment of a Scottish College for Educational Leadership
- Effective interventions** Curriculum for Excellence empowers teachers, schools and their leaders the freedom to innovate
- Use of Evidence and Data** Encouraging collaboration and continuous self-improvement through our Self-Improving Schools Partnership Programme and Pathfinder Schools
- Engaging with Families and Communities** The establishment of literacy and numeracy hubs across Scotland to facilitate sharing of best practice

What next?

- We need to secure consistent, continuous improvement within our education system to meet the needs to every child.
- We want to enable schools to successfully manage their own local improvements that will allow them to meet the particular needs of students, families and communities.
- At the same time, we will equip teachers and professionals with the authority, resources and skills necessary to do this.

2. Important role of local authorities in raising literacy levels

The Literacy Action Plan highlighted the need for more strategic guidance for local authorities to support development of their own literacy improvement strategies. This led to the development of inter-authority literacy hubs. The Scottish Government funded four local authorities (Edinburgh, Fife, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire) who were recognised for sustained, proactive and authority-wide approaches to raising literacy levels, as literacy hubs. A fifth authority, Highland, was funded until end December 2012. The five authorities showcased their work to other authorities and national bodies at two national 'Enhancing Local Authority Literacy Strategies' events held in Stirling in April 2012 and May 2013. Overall, 22 local authorities were involved in literacy hub work.

Although Scottish Government direct funding of the hubs ended on 30 June 2014, the literacy hubs are continuing to share successful approaches and resources with other authorities. The Education Scotland-led National Literacy Network, which meets twice per year, is now providing a platform to share future developments with the hubs more widely.

To coincide with National Libraries Day (Saturday 7 February 2015), the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) announced details of a new library pilot scheme to make every child in Scotland a library member automatically. Local authorities across Scotland have signed up to support the Every Child A Library Member project, which will be funded by the Public Library Improvement Fund, provided by the Scottish Government to support improvement and innovation in public library services across Scotland. The approaches will vary across local authority areas – some services may work with local authority education departments to enrol pupils from Primary 1, while others may work with registrars to generate membership from birth.

3. Early identification and remediation of any literacy difficulties

The Primary One Literacy Assessment & Action Resource, published on the Education Scotland website in August 2014, aims to help teachers and support staff to identify Primary 1 pupils at risk of developing difficulties with their reading and writing. The resource was developed collaboratively by educational psychology professional bodies, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland, and is based on research undertaken by Professor Keith Topping, University of Dundee, on the key factors which underpin successful literacy development in young learners.

POLAAR contains a number of questionnaire-based resources to assess children's literacy ability:

- The Early Literacy Environment Assessment is the first key component and helps teachers to observe the learning environment and identify areas for action in the class environment.
- The Child Observation Assessment is designed to be used with individual children and consists of an observational schedule/questionnaire, consisting of 20 questions, which is carried out with the child first. A list of associated actions related to the 20 questions to improve each skill is suggested in the Actions section of the resource.
- The Three Minute Teacher Assessment is more detailed and is used if the child isn't making progress against the previously agreed actions. The three minute assessment provides three measures to take for the three areas - letter sounding, word recognition and phonemic blending - most predictive (according to Professor Keith Topping's research) of successful future literacy development.

"We used the resource (POLAAR) to assess our literacy environment to ensure pupils were being offered a rich variety of learning experiences aimed at developing all aspects of literacy, while catering for different learning preferences.

"One of the main benefits of this resource is that it is easy to use and assessments can be carried out quickly without putting a strain on teachers' workloads. When carried out at regular intervals the assessments provide not only a reliable and valid track of pupil progress, but highlight the pupils' next steps. In addition early intervention strategies are now 'live' on-line, giving teachers practical guidance on supporting specific difficulties. This is a valuable resource which I would recommend to newly qualified and experienced teachers alike."

Carol-Ann Campbell, Primary 1 Teacher at Holytown Primary, Holytown, North Lanarkshire.

Support for learners with dyslexia

A revised and updated Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit was published by Dyslexia Scotland in September 2012. Education Scotland recently carried out a review of dyslexia provision, following on from its report in 2008. The review led to the Making Sense: Education for Children & Young People with Dyslexia in Scotland report, published in May 2014. The report contains five recommendations, including better sharing of information on young people with dyslexia among relevant professionals, and the need to take action to improve education outcomes for young people with dyslexia. A Ministerial response was published in June 2014 setting out Ministers' intentions regarding each of the recommendations.

4. Importance of developing advanced or 'higher order' literacy skills

The Higher Order Skills Excellence Group, chaired by Keir Bloomer, was one of a series of Excellence Groups established by the Cabinet Secretary in 2010 to explore what excellence looked like in each of the different subject and curriculum areas. The Higher Order Skills Group's report, published in March 2011, led to the development of the Skills in Practice online resource in 2012 to support teachers to embed pupils' skills development within their day-to-day professional practice. The interactive resource covers a range of subjects and curriculum areas from CfE Early to Third Level (ages 3-15). There is a particular focus on higher order skills such as analysing, evaluation, synthesis and systems thinking. The West Dunbartonshire literacy hub had a particular focus on developing higher order literacy skills in Secondary school.

Evidence of Progress

Key role of Curriculum for Excellence

Education Scotland inspection evidence

Inspection evidence reveals a generally positive picture. Key strengths identified from recent inspections are:

- 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.

A detailed 3-18 Curriculum Review of Literacy and English provision in schools will be published by Education Scotland in late April 2015.

Scottish Survey of Literacy & Numeracy (SSLN)

All mainstream schools in Scotland (including independent schools) are invited to participate in the SSLN. Pupils from each participating school are randomly selected to take part. Around 4,000 pupils in each year group participate in the survey, giving around 12,000 pupils in total. The survey also includes pupil and teacher questionnaires to gather information on pupils' and teachers' attitudes and experiences of learning and teaching. All published results can be found at www.gov.scot/sslN.

Results from the first SSLN literacy survey (2012) were published in April 2013. The second literacy survey results (2014) will be published on 29 April 2015, after this report was written.

Headline findings in 2012 were:

- In reading, the majority of pupils at all stages performed well or very well at their relevant CfE level.
- In writing, three quarters of Primary 7 pupils performed at or above the expected level. For both Primary 4 and Secondary 2 the figure is two thirds. Girls outperformed boys at all stages.
- Performance was least strong in listening and talking – Primary 4 and Primary 7 were similar with 56% and 58% of pupils respectively performing at or above their expected level, whilst the figure for Secondary 2 was 46%.
- As pupils moved through school, there was a steady decline in the numbers who said they enjoyed reading – down from 92% in Primary 4 to 62% in Secondary 2.
- Over 90% of Primary and Secondary English teachers said they were confident in delivering curriculum national guidance.
- Over 95% of Primary teachers and over 80% of Secondary teachers said they were confident in teaching literacy across the curriculum.

(See Annex B for detailed SSLN performance tables).

Education Scotland has produced a number of [SSLN professional learning resources for teachers](#) based on literacy survey findings.

National Qualifications data

2013/2014 examination results were published in August 2014. (2014/15 data will be available in August 2015). New National 4 and National 5 qualifications were taken for the first time in 2014.

- Pass rates in new National 4 English (95.7%) and National 5 English (87.3%) qualifications were above the all-subject pass rates at these levels (93.9% and 81.3% respectively).
- There were 48,669 entries for National 4 and National 5 English in total (cf. 24,641 entries for Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 English), demonstrating a successful uptake of the new qualifications.
- 30,525 learners attained new Literacy Unit qualifications across SCQF Levels 3 to 5 in the first year of these new qualifications.
- A record number of Higher English passes were achieved in 2014 – 23,972.
- Higher English was again the most popular Higher with 31,589 entries in 2014 (cf. 21,851 for Higher Maths, the second most popular Higher).
- The Higher English pass rates have risen year-on-year since 2006 and stood at 75.9% in 2014.
- There's an improving picture in terms of young people who left school with no qualifications at SCQF 3 or above. In 2013 the figure was 1.5% compared to 1.7% in 2012. The figure for all 16 to 64 year olds in 2013 was 12.6% (see Skills Profile data in Appendix D).

“The ability of Higher students in written English has markedly improved, according to evidence from the Scottish Qualifications Authority, suggesting that a renewed focus on literacy from the Government is having an impact in schools.

“This year’s external assessors’ reports, published by SQA, show that... overall writing standards are improving.

“Teachers in several subjects are praised for...making a concentrated effort to iron out common writing problems from previous years.

“The reports note significant improvements in traditional essay subjects, including English and History, with candidates commended for “sophisticated vocabulary” and their ability to structure essays...

“Several experts put the change in English standards down to a sustained drive to improve literacy, which has included placing it at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence...”

‘Standard of writing in Highers wins praise’ article, Emma Seith and Henry Hepburn, TESS, 1 Nov 2013.

Tariff score

The tariff score is an overall measure of attainment used by the Scottish Government and its partners, based on all exam results of school leavers. It has increased from 341 in 2007/08 to 407 in 2012/13.

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

- Scotland's reading performance was above the OECD average in 2009 and 2012.
- Scotland's relative position in 2012 improved from 2009 when compared both to OECD and other UK countries with a greater number of countries performing significantly lower than Scotland.
- Scotland's mean score for reading dipped in 2006 but has shown signs of improvement since then: 526 in 2000, 516 in 2003, 499 in 2006, 500 in 2009 and 506 in 2012.

Attendance and exclusions rates

As absence from school restricts young people's ability to learn, it is encouraging that attendance rates were up to 93.6% in 2012/13. Exclusions from schools fell by 18% from 26,844 in 2010/11 to 21,955 in 2012/13. School exclusions are down 51% overall since 2006-07, a trend that the Commission welcomes.

Impact of deprivation on performance

Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN)

The SSLN survey data shows there is an adverse variation in performance according to level of deprivation:

In **reading**, the percentage of pupils living in areas of **least** deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) levels 8-10) and performing well or very well was 17% higher than for pupils living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) at Primary 4, 14% higher at Primary 7 and 16% higher at Secondary 2.

Writing scripts from pupils living in areas of **least** deprivation also demonstrated evidence of significantly higher attainment than those from pupils living in the most deprived areas, at Primary 4, Primary 7 and Secondary 2.

Children **not** yet reading within their expected level in Primary 7 was 1% in areas of least deprivation (SIMD 8-10) but 4% in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3). Children **not** yet writing within their expected level in Primary 7 was 2% in areas of lowest deprivation and 5% in areas of highest deprivation.

Supplementary tables where SSLN data for deprivation categories can be found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/04/8843/downloads#res-1> (table 1.4 for reading; table 1.7 for writing).

PISA

More encouragingly, the PISA 2012 data showed that the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged 15 year olds had narrowed for first time in 2012, down 10 points (44 to 34) from 2009. Scotland was the only UK country to see a significant reduction in this gap.

Tariff scores

Whilst the average tariff score of school leavers in each SIMD quintile has increased in each year since 2007/08, in 2012/13 the average score for the most deprived 20% was 277 compared with 554 for the least deprived 20%, i.e. exactly double.

National Qualification Data

More than two in every three (67.5%) school leavers from the most deprived areas left school in 2012/13 without any Highers compared to just over two in every five (44.3%) of those from the least deprived areas.

Role of local authorities

Evidence from the ADES evaluation of the literacy hubs

An ADES evaluation of the impact of literacy hubs was published in April 2014. Findings included good use of the funding allocated; evidence of raised attainment as seen through North Lanarkshire's and West Dunbartonshire's own data; better collaboration and partnership working across local authorities; innovative learning and teaching approaches; and good use of assessment and pupil monitoring and tracking data.

Headline evaluation findings:

- The main outcomes of the hub approach are improved focus on literacy; enhanced practice; more robust evaluation; and increased inter-authority working including the sharing of good practice.
- The decision of the Scottish Government to sponsor this approach was forward-looking and successful. The funding invested was well used in terms of the added value it created to all those authorities involved.
- The lead authorities had already committed a high level of investment to their literacy strategies and the hub funding allowed them to create additional capacity to share and collaborate with others. In turn the benefits to the partners varied according to their own commitment to their own literacy strategies.
- A variety of approaches to partnership working in hubs was found. There were a range of benefits for hosts and partners including increased capacity for development within a context of reducing resources, engagement with professional learning and sharing of expertise. The hub model provided a dynamic for change that could be used for other improvement activities across authorities. For the chosen model to work successfully co-ordination is required.
- The interventions were predominantly focused on improving early literacy and included improving teaching and learning, professional development, research, evaluation and consultancy. In all cases the interventions were firmly rooted in current research and their impact was being evaluated.
- Plans for implementation and dissemination were clear in lead authorities but were still at an early stage in others. Generally authorities saw literacy as a central part of a wider strategy for raising attainment and improving outcomes. They also made links between this approach and other developments such as Numeracy, Languages and Teaching Scotland's Future.
- Hosts and partners all identified the merits of working together. It is therefore more likely that they will collaborate in developments in the future. Councils ideally would have liked more time to plan for the creation of the hubs and a longer period of funding in order to see the full impact of the development.
- It is recommended that national agencies and local education authorities work together with a sense of urgency to examine options for collaborative working on key national priorities which can benefit from such approaches.

Literacy hub case studies

1) North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire introduced Active Literacy for selected Primary 1 pupils in 2005 and adopted the approach as council-wide policy two years later. The impact on a growing cohort of pupils (54 schools were involved by 2008) was measured using a standardised comprehension score. Schools not yet involved were used as a control group for comparison. There were no significant socio-economic differences between the two groups of schools.

Results

In Active Literacy schools a significant improvement in reading comprehension was evident in Primary 4:

- 52% were scoring above average compared to 28% in schools not yet involved.
- 7% were at the lowest levels of attainment in reading compared to 19% in the comparator schools.
- Gains were sustained in primaries 5 and 6 on measures of comprehension, reading accuracy and reading fluency.

Furthermore, systematic analysis of teaching and learning (using video recording) showed that teachers implementing active literacy spent less time dealing with behavioural issues and more time engaging with pupils on learning and teaching.

2) West Dunbartonshire

West Dunbartonshire, with its hub partners Inverclyde and Renfrewshire, set out to improve pupil comprehension and reading confidence through the teaching of specific strategies, improved staff knowledge and understanding of teaching reading, and open professional dialogue to encourage the sharing of good practice and collegiate working. A key outcome was also to provide increased coherence of teaching across the transition into Secondary, in the main by adopting the Reading Routes¹ approach.

Data was collected between January and June 2013 using a bespoke impact measure of reading comprehension, a standardised measure of reading comprehension – the York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC), a reading Self Concept Scale to gauge pupil confidence with reading, and focus groups with teaching staff centring on their knowledge, understanding and confidence about teaching reading and collegiate working across authorities.

Over 400 pupils from Primary 3 to Primary 7 were assessed for higher order skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation.

1 Reading Routes and Reciprocal Teaching is a framework for teaching the skills necessary for good literacy comprehension. Students work in groups, with the teacher initially modelling the use of the four key strategies – predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarising. Gradually, students begin to work independently in their groups, with the group leader deciding who will do each job and making sure everyone joins in.

Results

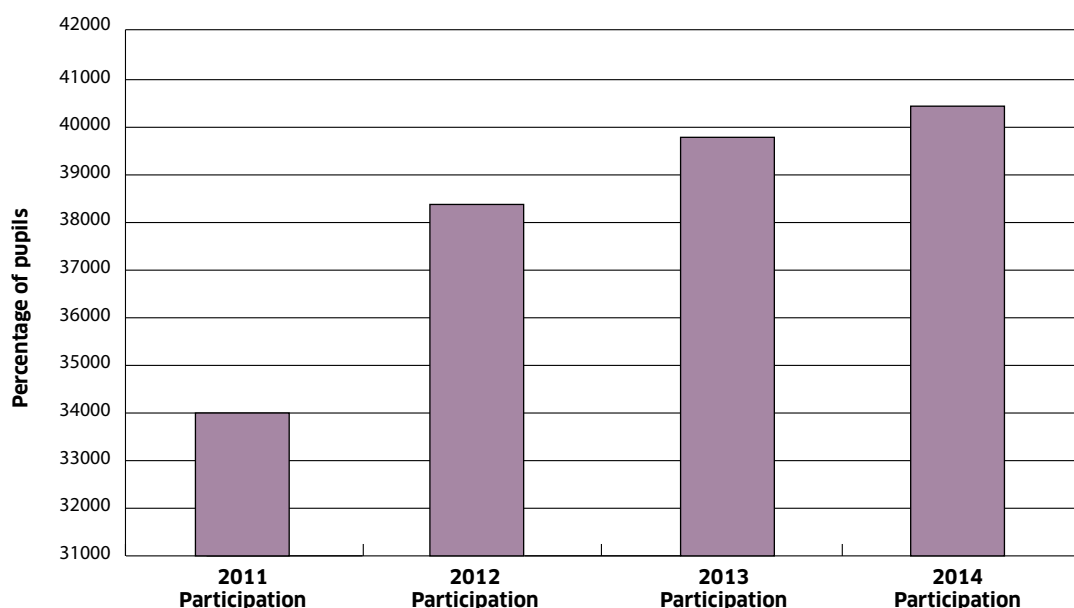
- There was an increase in comprehension scores from Primary 3 to Primary 7 with the greatest difference in Primary 3. The effect size was found to be substantial.
- Higher order skills (alongside overall comprehension) also improved following implementation of Reciprocal Teaching. This bespoke measure demonstrated greater gains in comprehension than would be expected through the typical maturation of the children involved.
- The York Assessment of Reading Comprehension was also used with a smaller sample of pupils to account for pupil age and maturation over the intervention period. There was a gain in comprehension of 11 months in the pupils' reading age whilst the ratio gain was found to be 2.7 months over the four month intervention period (ratio gain is the improvement in months for each month of Reciprocal Teaching). Reading accuracy and rate also improved by more than that of the intervention period.
- Teacher focus groups from pilot schools across all three authorities were involved in Reciprocal Teaching through training and peer visits. Teachers reported improved knowledge, understanding and confidence through collegiate working. Head teachers agreed that teacher confidence both in implementing the Reciprocal Teaching approach and in teaching reading generally had grown.

Impact of libraries

Research carried out in 2013 by Robert Gordon University, on behalf of the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), showed that school library and public library services impact positively on the educational attainment of pupils and literacy levels among communities. The [Impact of School Libraries on Learning report](#) (October 2013) found that schools with school libraries and librarians achieved higher exam scores, leading to higher academic attainment; higher quality project work; successful curriculum and learning outcomes; more positive attitudes towards learning and increased motivation and self-esteem among pupils.

In addition, statistics compiled by The Reading Agency show that increasing numbers of children in Scotland are engaging in their annual Summer Reading Challenge, which challenges children to read six books during their school summer holidays. Participation in the challenge has increased every year since 2011, with an overall increase in Scotland of 18% from 34,826 in 2011 to 41,201 in 2014, as the following graph shows. In an interesting divergence from how the challenge is supported elsewhere within the United Kingdom, the scheme in Scotland enjoys sponsorship by Tesco Bank. The funding allows each authority in Scotland to have a visit from an author, and to purchase enough materials for 300 children to join the scheme. Some local authorities say that they couldn't participate without this additional funding.

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE - NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN SCOTLAND 2011-2014



Higher order skills

Education Scotland inspection evidence shows that when there has been a strong focus on the teaching of higher order thinking skills in Primary schools, children are able to explain and justify their thinking, are more analytical and evaluative and apply these skills to create texts. Where the language of higher order thinking is made visible, for example through the use of question stems related to Bloom's Taxonomy, children are starting to develop their high order thinking skills in a progressive way, and the quality of children's work in both reading and writing is improving.

Work in the West Dunbartonshire Literacy hub found that higher order skills improved following implementation of Reciprocal Teaching. This bespoke measure demonstrated greater gains in comprehension than would be expected through the typical maturation of the children involved.

Next steps

- Literacy is very prominent in the new Scottish Government Read, Write, Count literacy and numeracy campaign for Primary 1 to Primary 3, building on the success of Bookbug and Play Talk Read in the early years.
- Literacy is one of five key themes of the Raising Attainment for All (RAfA) programme work launched across Scotland in June 2014. Literacy features prominently in three out of the four RAfA 'stretch aims'.
- The Education Scotland Literacy Team is focused on improving learning and teaching in line with SSLN findings and the recent 3-18 Literacy and English Curriculum Review.
- The National Literacy Network, which brings local authority literacy representatives and others together twice a year, is a key vehicle for sharing what works around the country.
- The Education Scotland Literacy Team is also supporting effective use of the POLAAR Primary 1 resource. A POLAAR national training event was held in Stirling in late February 2015 with a follow up event planned for next year.
- Improving teachers' skills, including their literacy skills, remains a focus of the National Implementation Board who are overseeing implementation of the Teaching Scotland's Future report.

Recommendations

5. Local authorities should ensure that the POLAAR Primary 1 resource is included in programmes of support and training for Primary 1 teachers and support staff.
6. The Scottish Government should commit appropriate funding to the Read, Write, Count campaign over its initial three-year tenure. The Scottish Government should ensure that the important role of parents and carers, and third sector partners, in encouraging and supporting children's learning is a central element of the campaign and in all associated policies and programmes. The Scottish Government should ensure that numeracy is given parity with literacy within Read, Write, Count resource packs, and in accompanying school-based and Assertive Outreach sessions with parents and carers.
7. The Scottish Government should seek to promote the value and benefits of reading for pleasure in the Read, Write, Count and all other school-age literacy activity and initiatives. The Scottish Library and Information Council and The Scottish Book Trust should be resourced adequately to promote the educational, social and economic benefits of reading for pleasure.
8. Education Scotland should disseminate learning and evidence of success from the local authority hubs' evaluation report. The relevant learning and professional support should be disseminated via awareness-raising and training activities to all geographic areas, encompassing strategic leaders as well as teachers. Education Scotland should ensure that schools in areas of greatest disadvantage receive additional support and advice as appropriate. The Scottish Government's Raising Attainment for All work and the Early Years Collaborative's Workstream 4 (covering Primary 1 to Primary 4) should disseminate learning and outcomes from the evaluation report through national and regional events.
9. Read, Write, Count and other initiatives are welcome additions to improve rates of literacy across Scotland, however they must be delivered as part of a wider strategic plan across school-age education, third sector partners, early years and adults. A comprehensive literacy strategy should be at the heart of the Government's priority aims to raise attainment and tackle the impact of educational inequalities through the new Scottish Attainment Challenge and accompanying Attainment Scotland Fund. Specific interventions and policies to reduce the attainment gap should lie at the heart of any future strategy.
10. The SLC welcomes the falling trend in use of exclusions from school (down by 51% since 2006/07). Our view is that young people's literacy development, and wider learning, is best served by being in school rather than out of it. Local authorities should take all steps necessary to explore alternatives to exclusion such as individual and small group support, plus opportunities provided through for example SQA's wider achievement awards, Skillforce and [ASDAN](#).

(Recommendations continue on page 33)

ADULT AND YOUTH LITERACIES

Developments and achievements, grouped under key LAP themes

1. Awareness, inclusion and access

The Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning established a National Adult Learning Strategic Forum which produced [Adult Learning in Scotland, a Statement of Ambition](#) in May 2014. The Statement has three core principles – that adult learning should be lifelong, life-wide and learner-centred. As such it recognises the key and distinctive role that adult learning, including literacy and numeracy, plays in helping to develop the person, the family, communities and society.

Education Scotland has policy responsibility for adult literacy and is currently preparing a report on the key achievements five years into Scottish Government's 10-year strategy for adult literacies, [Adult Literacies in Scotland \(ALIS\) 2020](#). The report will describe progress against the four overarching outcomes of ALIS 2020 – improved access to learning opportunities; high quality learning and teaching; improved infrastructure; and evidence of impact. The report will also highlight priorities for the next five years, which will be framed as an integral part of the implementation of the Statement of Ambition.

Working to the ALIS 2020 strategy, local authority and voluntary sector providers of adult literacies have offered free support across Scotland based on a 'social practice model', namely provision that is learner-centred, flexible and often delivered in partnership to secure the most appropriate progression pathways for learners. Many organisations are based in communities and develop their services to respond to local needs. Other organisations have a national remit, for example in supporting adults with disabilities or by providing work-based projects.

Following regionalisation, the college sector is now funded on the basis of meeting the needs of learners in their regions, including programmes focused on literacy and numeracy for adult learners. Colleges across Scotland have made a significant contribution to the local development and delivery of adult literacies through Community Planning Partnerships and other local partnerships. In particular, colleges have contributed to [More Choices, More Chances](#) (MCMC) strategy work and to [Opportunities for All](#), the Scottish Government's guaranteed offer of a place in education or training for every 16 to 19 year old in Scotland. Youth literacy also features in the recently published National Youth Work Strategy.

The Scottish Government has continued to support Skills Development Scotland to provide [The Big Plus](#), Scotland's national adult literacies campaign, which offers free advice and contact with local provision, mainly provided by local authorities. Skills Development Scotland and Education Scotland have worked together on a new round of filming and accompanying social media campaign for The Big Plus. The films have multiple uses, including promotion, CPD and staff development. More recent campaign activity has focused on online and social marketing routes – using a 'case study' approach to help the audience identify

with learners and promote action. Campaign language is kept simple – for instance referring to ‘brushing up your skills’ – to make it feel that this is a perfectly normal and everyday thing to do.

Inspired by the LAP, local authorities are increasingly approaching the development of literacy as a lifelong skill. A key message is that literacy as the responsibility of all does not end with leaving school. For example, the [South Lanarkshire Literacy Strategy](#) and [Falkirk Literacy Strategy](#) both involve an extended range of partners to offer a lifelong approach to literacy learning. Additionally, all local authorities now have Management Information Systems in place to report on adult literacy learning, with many local authorities sharing such information as part of Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning Partnership monitoring activity.

2. Work-based projects

A range of resources and initiatives in work-based projects have supported developments in adult literacies. For instance, [The Literacies Portal](#) is a web-based resource, developed by NHS for Education, to help to improve reading, writing, number, English language and computer skills within the NHS workforce in Scotland. The Literacies Portal provides access to a single point of information, guidance and resource, provided by a wide range of different organisations. The portal promotes inclusion of the literacy skills needed in personal development planning, and provides access to tools needed by supervisors and managers to support staff.

Scottish Union Learning has worked with trade unions and partner organisations to raise awareness of everyday skills issues in the workplace, and to improve the skills of their members. They deliver courses including communications, numeracy, basic IT and employability skills. Case studies can be found in the [‘Union Learning and Everyday Skills’](#) publication, developed in partnership with Skills Development Scotland. A major outcome in the last year was the development of a project, in partnership with Scottish Government and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), to improve the basic digital skills of workers throughout Scotland. ‘Digital Unions’ will enable Scottish Union Learning to support trade unions in improving workers’ online skills, and promote the wider benefits of digital participation.

Another interesting work-based learning initiative was run by the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), who supported the Six Book Challenge in Morrison’s stores across Scotland.

The STUC, Morrison's and the Six Book Challenge

The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (Usdaw) has been delighted to continue to support the Six Book Challenge in Morrison's stores in Scotland this year (2013).

Learners who complete the challenge continue to read outwith the challenge; are reading on average more than six books; and report better reading skills as well as more enjoyment of reading.

Learners also state the challenge has a positive impact on their future reading habits with more of them more likely to use a library, buy books and read books to their children.

Shona Wilson, the Union Learning Representative for the store, said of the Six Book Challenge, "Engaging in the Six Book Challenge has had a massive positive impact in my store. We have seen people who said learning wasn't for them transformed into people who really enjoy reading and talk about books all the time!"

3. High quality learning and teaching

In 2012, the Professional Development Framework for adult literacies' practitioners and employers was launched, following development by the ALIS 2020 Professional Development Working Group. To complement the Framework, the SQA and Education Scotland have worked together to create new Professional Development Awards in literacies at SCQF Levels 6 and 8. These have increased the professional development opportunities for practitioners. The SQA also worked with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) tutors to produce ESOL literacies level descriptors to support practitioners to undertake initial assessment with their learners.

Literacy practitioners benefit from national and local resource developments. For example, the Big Book of Literacies Training, a resource bank aimed at youth practitioners, was developed by Education Scotland and Youthlink Scotland.

Practitioners involved in the identification and support of learners with literacy difficulties can access the Dyslexia Toolkit. This resource was developed under the management of Dyslexia Scotland.

4. Leadership and infrastructure

National leadership and co-ordination for the Adult Literacies in Scotland Strategy was developed through the setting up of a Strategic Implementation Group (SIG). The SIG, led by Education Scotland but chaired independently, included representation from College Development Network, Scottish Prison Service (SPS), STUC, SQA, Health, Community Justice Authorities, Community Learning and Development, COSLA, Skills Development Scotland and the Voluntary Sector. This wide representation ensured good sharing of information and intelligence. The ALIS SIG held its last official meeting in February 2015 but the group has agreed to remain as a virtual sounding board for developments in literacies.

Education Scotland works closely with national adult learning providers through strategic funding partnerships to improve the quality of adult learning, including adult literacy and numeracy.

5. Offender Learning

A multi-agency Project Steering Group has played a key role in shaping the Scottish Prison Service vision: “That everyone in our care has the opportunity to engage in creative and flexible learning that unlocks potential, inspires change and builds individual strengths.”

This person-centred approach is entirely consistent with social practice principles and seeks to both expand and encourage participation in learning. Over the last few years SPS and their learning partners have taken forward a range of activities that have proved particularly effective in producing positive outcomes for learners. These include:

- The establishment of a learning environment at Polmont Young Offenders Institute.
- The implementation of a pilot screening programme to identify the presence of learning disabilities/difficulties within the prison population.
- Producing the award-winning STIR magazine, edited and produced by learners at Shotts Prison, through an innovative arts project in partnership with learning providers and Creative Scotland.
- A number of projects to encourage engagement in learning, including family days, reading at family visits, homework clubs, peer tutors as advocates and one-to-one support for those requiring additional support.
- Partnerships with prison libraries to take forward a number of award-winning programmes in reading and literacy development. For example a bibliotherapy programme, operating in Low Moss and Shotts prisons, is looking at using reading to improve mental health and well-being. This project is now being rolled out to Greenock Prison and Cornton Vale Prison and Young Offenders Institute.

A number of national audits have also helped inform the future direction for offender learning, including a national audit of learning and skills, a library review and an independent review of arts activity.

Community Justice Authorities (CJAS) give a co-ordinated approach to planning and monitoring the delivery of offender services. The aim is to target services to reduce reoffending and to make sure that community and prison services work closely together to aid the rehabilitation of offenders.

South West Scotland Community Justice Authorities

Literacies workers are routinely involved in the South West Scotland CJA programme of Welfare Reform events for justice practitioners. Following one of these events, a local authority literacies worker arranged to brief one of the sheriffs at Ayr Sheriff Court about the value of literacies support and the options available. He has been very complimentary about this contact, and has subsequently made engagement with literacies support a part of someone's community sentence.

Evidence of progress

Available evidence suggests that progress in tackling adult basic skills levels is being made. The latest [Skills Profile data](#) (2013), collected by the Scottish Government as part of Labour Market Trend Data, shows a further reduction in the proportion of adults aged 16 to 64 with low or no qualifications (defined as achieving a maximum of SCQF Level 4 qualifications or below), from 13.0% in 2012 to 12.6% in 2013. This fall is in line with trend data from 2004 (see Annex D).

Education Scotland continues to inspect adult literacy as part of its Learning Community inspection remit. Based on 192 Learning Community inspections, 'impact on adults' is good or better in 80% of inspections.

Individual projects can provide insight into ways in which small investments in small numbers of individuals can have large impacts on literacy acquirement. For example, Education Scotland provided funding to support targeted early intervention family learning programmes in Dundee during the period 2013-2014. The Learn with Fred family learning project emphasised the importance of a child's home life and parents' role as early educators in developing literacy skills. The project, named after the soft toy bear used as a prop, targeted a small number of families with children aged 3 and under. Delivered over a seven month period, the project had a significant impact on parents' skills and confidence to support their child's learning.

The main findings of the Learn with Fred evaluation were:

- Course participants were asked to rate their level of confidence in supporting their child to learn. At the beginning of the course, 44% rated themselves as slightly confident and at the end all rated themselves either confident (33%) or very confident (66%).
- Before the course started, 55% of the parents understood that music and singing nursery rhymes would help their child to read and spell. By the end of the course this had risen to 100%.
- 44% of participants said that they shared books with their child several times a week at the beginning of the course; by the end 88% were sharing books either once or more than once a day with their children.
- 77% of adults and 66% of children were members of the library at the beginning of the course; by the end of the course 100% of both children and adults were members.

Learn with Fred Project

The Learn with Fred family literacies project was funded by Education Scotland and built on the Dundee Adult Literacies 'Hotspot' project. The project highlighted – through interactive sessions centred on nursery rhymes, play and book sharing involving Fred the bear – the importance of the parent/carer as the child's first and Primary educator. Nine hard-to-reach families took part in the project from Sept 2013 to March 2014, with positive results in terms of both child and parent/carer engagement and confidence levels. The project is now informing wider developments in Dundee and has been highlighted on the Education Scotland website to inspire family literacies work across the country.

Next steps

Education Scotland will report on the priorities and proposed implementation of the next five years of the ALIS 2020 strategy in the context of the Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning. Priorities will include the literacy recommendations from the refresh of the ESOL strategy.

Education Scotland and the Scottish Government will continue to work across policy areas to embed literacies in other agendas such as health, justice and welfare, and ensure that youth literacy is embedded in policies that relate to young people e.g. the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce work.

Education Scotland will update the Adult Literacy and Numeracy curriculum framework to ensure synergy with Curriculum for Excellence, and support a continuum of literacy learning for all ages.

The multi-agency steering group established by the Scottish Prison Service is currently developing a new specification for learning across the prison estate. This will include implementation of a new curriculum and the expansion of project themed learning. Proposals also include further exploration of arts activity to promote engagement, develop literacy and life skills to promote employment.

The initial learning disabilities pilot will be extended across three prisons in partnership with NHS partners to establish care pathways for those requiring additional support.

All Strategic Implementation Group partners will continue to develop links to ensure that Scotland learns from adult literacy work in Europe as well as promoting successful practice across Scotland.

Recommendations

11. Innovative and creative partnerships across the public, private and third sectors to improve literacy – for young people and adults alike – should be promoted and encouraged by all the key national agencies involved in literacy development.
12. Literate adults encourage good literacy development in young people. In delivering initiatives such as Read, Write, Count, further attention should be given by the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland, plus other relevant partners, to the literacy needs of parents and carers in promoting literacy development within families and communities.
13. In keeping with the approaches adopted by Community Justice Authorities as described above, all sections of the criminal justice system should encourage the use of literacy learning as a key part of the rehabilitation process, where applicable.

CONCLUSION

In this final report on implementation of the Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan, the Standing Literacy Commission has tried to capture the journey that we have been on towards improved literacy levels across Scotland, from the early years to adults and lifelong learning. The route has been marked by major systemic developments like the 27-30 month child health reviews and Curriculum for Excellence, as well as by a myriad of small, focused projects that aimed to help a small number of people at any one time but which, cumulatively, have contributed significantly to the overall picture. One important lesson that we have learnt is that the building blocks for improved literacy come in many sizes and no project should be rejected simply because it addresses the needs of only a small number of people (for instance the Learn with Fred project in Dundee which took place with nine families initially).

In the early years section, we are very enthusiastic about the introduction of the said 27-30 month child health reviews, containing as they do early literacy elements such as speech, language and communication difficulties, and the availability of books in the home. However, the value of these reviews would be severely limited if the findings weren't acted upon. A theme we returned to time and time again is the importance of acting swiftly and robustly on assessment information in the interests of the child or person. So a key recommendation is that those identified with a speech, language or communication difficulty through these reviews should be provided with suitable support, and monitored as they grow older to assess the impact of the interventions taken on their behalf.

Another key recurring theme for the Commission was the importance of commitment and sustained focus, as highlighted in the literacy hubs, where co-operation, sharing and partnership working mattered as much as the detailed but often varied contents of the projects. Elsewhere, partnership working across key bodies and sectors, including education, early learning and childcare, health, justice and welfare, featured regularly in our work, helped in huge part by our Chair's knowledge and interests across traditional policy boundaries.

What we found during our deliberations is a largely positive picture in terms of where we were at the beginning of our journey and where we find ourselves now. Many of the key indicators of literacy development in early years, school and post-school are moving in the right direction. However, the data and evidence that we have presented in this report shows that there is still progress to be made, not least in the perennial issue of closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged young people. The tariff score data for national qualifications and the SSLN reveal a stubbornly enduring effect on literacy performance of poverty and disadvantage.

The Commission welcomes the renewed emphasis that the Scottish Government is placing on raising attainment and tackling educational inequalities, and welcomes too the central and explicit place of literacy in all of this work. The recently announced Scottish Attainment Challenge, plus other commitments such as developing a Read, Write, Count literacy and numeracy campaign for Primary 1 to Primary 3 (building on the success of Bookbug and Play Talk Read in the early years) will, we hope, make a real and lasting impact in terms of tackling the inequalities which blight some people's lives and prevent them from achieving their full potential. Additionally, the commitment to literacy explicit within the [ADES 2020 Vision](#) document and Save the Children's [Read On. Get On](#) Scotland campaign (both launched in November 2014, just before our final meeting) helps maintain the literacy focus and momentum at all levels.

We sincerely hope this report helps maintain the priority focus on raising people's literacy skills as the key, sustained intervention needed to improve people's lives and life chances in Scotland.

The Standing Literacy Commission, April 2015

RECOMMENDATIONS

Early Years and Family Literacy

1. Local authorities and other providers should use the opportunities provided by the expansion of free early learning and childcare from 475 to 600 hours per annum to ensure that early literacy is a key part of that provision.
2. There should be consistent sharing of data and intelligence across national public bodies within the areas of education, health, social care, early learning and childcare. The Scottish Government and NHS Scotland should ensure that the outreach work of Play Talk Read, Bookbug and Play@Home is targeted on those most in need of extra support.
3. The Scottish Government, NHS Scotland and partners should ensure that systems and training are put in place to ensure that any speech, language and communication difficulties identified by the 27-30 month child health reviews are addressed effectively (in the first year 10% of children were newly referred for such needs). Management Information Systems at local authority level should ensure that the relevant information follows every child as they move through the system, and is acted upon appropriately.
4. Libraries are fundamental in supporting good literacy development and promoting the importance of reading for pleasure. The SLC welcomes recent commitments to pilot automatic enrolment in public libraries for young children and their families and carers. Local authorities should take automatic enrolment approaches forward in ways that best suit them, once the pilots have been assessed.

School-age Literacy

5. Local authorities should ensure that the POLAAR Primary 1 resource is included in programmes of support and training for Primary 1 teachers and support staff.
6. The Scottish Government should commit appropriate funding to the Read, Write, Count campaign over its initial three-year tenure. The Scottish Government should ensure that the important role of parents and carers, and third sector partners, in encouraging and supporting their children's learning is a central element of the campaign and in all associated policies and programmes. The Scottish Government should ensure that numeracy is given parity with literacy within Read, Write, Count resource packs, and in accompanying school based and Assertive Outreach sessions with parents and carers.
7. The Scottish Government should seek to promote the value and benefits of reading for pleasure in the Read, Write, Count and all other school-age literacy activity and initiatives. The Scottish Library and Information Council and The Scottish Book Trust should be resourced adequately to promote the educational, social and economic benefits of reading for pleasure.

8. Education Scotland should disseminate learning and evidence of success from the local authority hubs' evaluation report. The relevant learning and professional support should be disseminated via awareness-raising and training activities to all geographic areas, encompassing strategic leaders as well as teachers. Education Scotland should ensure that schools in areas of greatest disadvantage receive additional support and advice as appropriate. The Scottish Government's Raising Attainment for All work and the Early Years Collaborative's Workstream 4 (covering Primary 1 to Primary 4) should disseminate learning and outcomes from the evaluation report through national and regional events.
9. Read, Write, Count and other initiatives are welcome additions to improve rates of literacy across Scotland, however they must be delivered as part of a wider strategic plan across school age education, third sector partners, early years and adults. A comprehensive literacy strategy should be at the heart of the Government's priority aims to raise attainment and tackle the impact of educational inequalities through the new Scottish Attainment Challenge and accompanying Attainment Scotland Fund. Specific interventions and policies to reduce the attainment gap should lie at the heart of any future strategy.
10. The SLC welcomes the falling trend in use of exclusions from school (down by 51% since 2006/07). Our view is that young people's literacy development, and wider learning, is best served by being in school rather than out of it. Local Authorities should take all steps necessary to explore alternatives to exclusion such as individual and small group support, plus opportunities provided through for example SQA's wider achievement awards, Skillforce and [ASDAN](#).

Adult and Youth Literacies

11. Innovative and creative partnerships across the public, private and third sectors to improve literacy - for young people and adults alike - should be promoted and encouraged by all the key national agencies involved in literacy development.
12. Literate adults encourage good literacy development in young people. In delivering initiatives such as Read, Write, Count, further attention should be given by the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland, plus other relevant partners, to the literacy needs of parents and carers in promoting literacy development within families and communities.
13. In keeping with the approaches adopted by Community Justice Authorities as described above, all sections of the criminal justice system should encourage the use of literacy learning as a key part of the rehabilitation process, where applicable.

APPENDIX A – CHILD HEALTH 27-30 MONTH REVIEW STATISTICS 2013/14

The 27-30 month review was introduced in Scotland in April 2013. [National guidance](#) on the purpose, content, and delivery of the reviews was published by the Scottish Government in December 2012 in order to support a consistent approach to provision of effective reviews across Scotland.

The 27-30 month review is a universal review and should be offered to every child reaching the appropriate age. One of the overall priorities identified in the national guidance document is 'promotion of strong early child development'. [National 27-30 month review statistics](#) (first published 16 December 2014) provide developmental information on review coverage i.e. the proportion of eligible children that received a review, and on the outcome of the health visitors' assessment of children's development that is an integral part of the reviews.

Key Points

- Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014 the number of 27-30 month child health reviews completed was 43,102.
- Estimated review coverage for 2013/14 was 73%. Estimated coverage gradually increased over the year and by the last quarter (January to March 2014) had reached 92%.
- In 2013/14, 72% of all children receiving a review had no concerns recorded against all of the nine developmental domains assessed as part of 27-30 month reviews.
- Speech, language and communication was the domain where most concerns were identified. 10% of children reviewed had a concern newly identified about their speech, language and communication and an additional 3% had a known difficulty in this domain prior to their review.

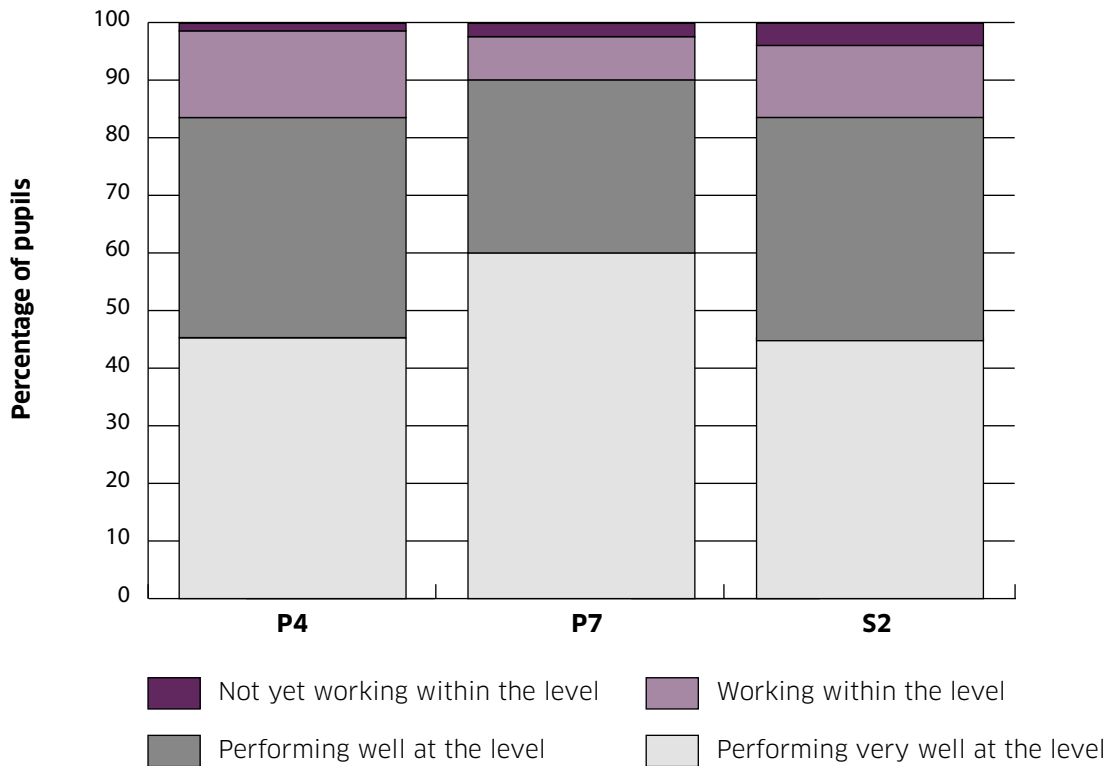
Background

NHS Scotland provides a universal health promotion programme to all children and their families known as the Child Health Programme. The programme includes various elements such as formal screening for specific medical problems, routine childhood immunisations, and a structured programme of needs assessment, health promotion, and parenting support provided through regular scheduled contacts with health visitors, school nurses and other health professionals.

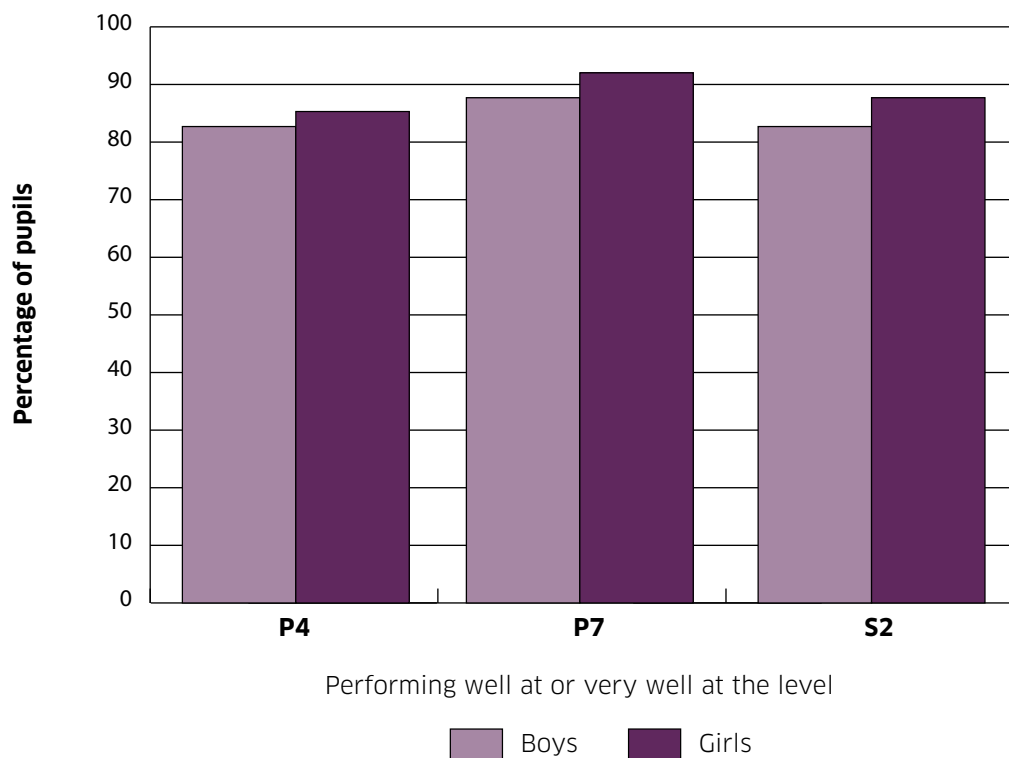
These statistics are derived from records of 27-30 month reviews provided in the financial year 2013/14 and recorded on the CHSP-PS system. During 27-30 month reviews, the health professional (normally a health visitor) assesses children's developmental status and records the outcome i.e. 'no concern', 'concern newly suspected as a result of the assessment', or 'concern or disorder already known prior to the review', against each of nine developmental domains e.g. social development, speech, language and communication.

APPENDIX B – SSLN 2012 FIRST LITERACY SURVEY (APRIL 2013): HEADLINE RESULTS

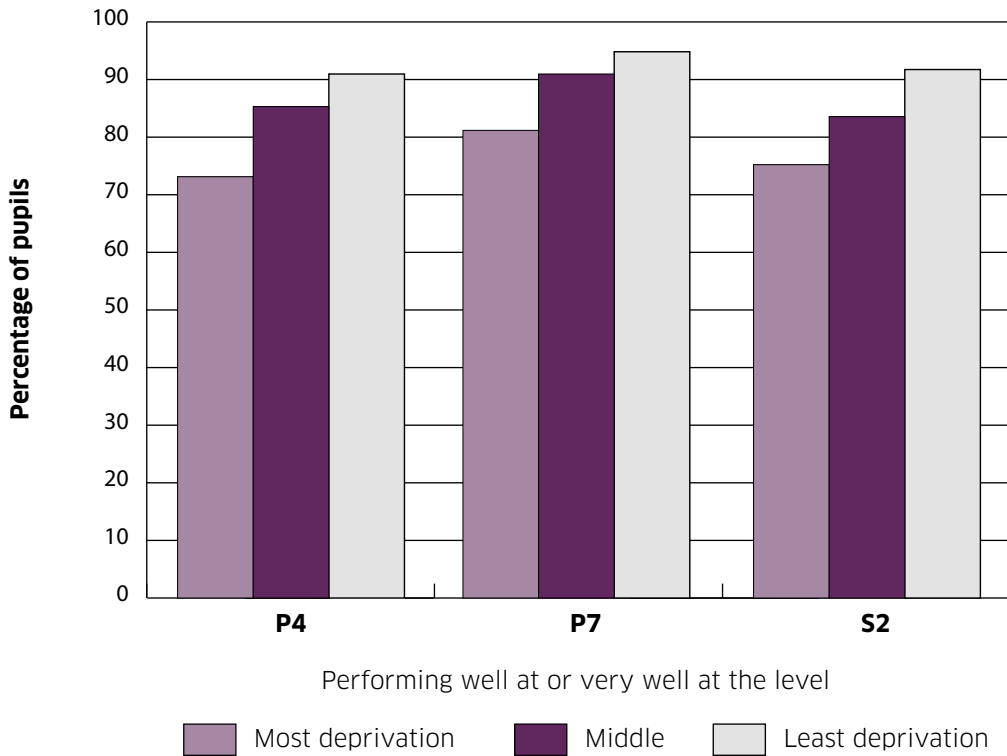
READING – OVERALL PERFORMANCE



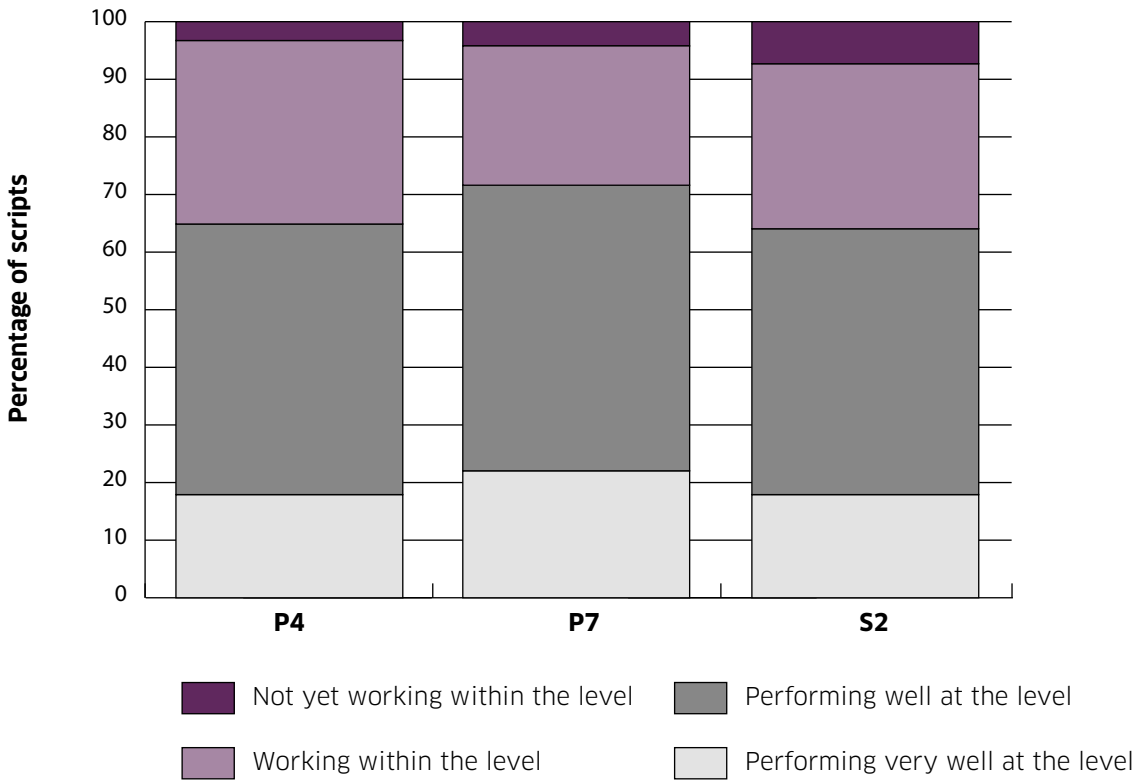
READING – PERFORMANCE BY GENDER



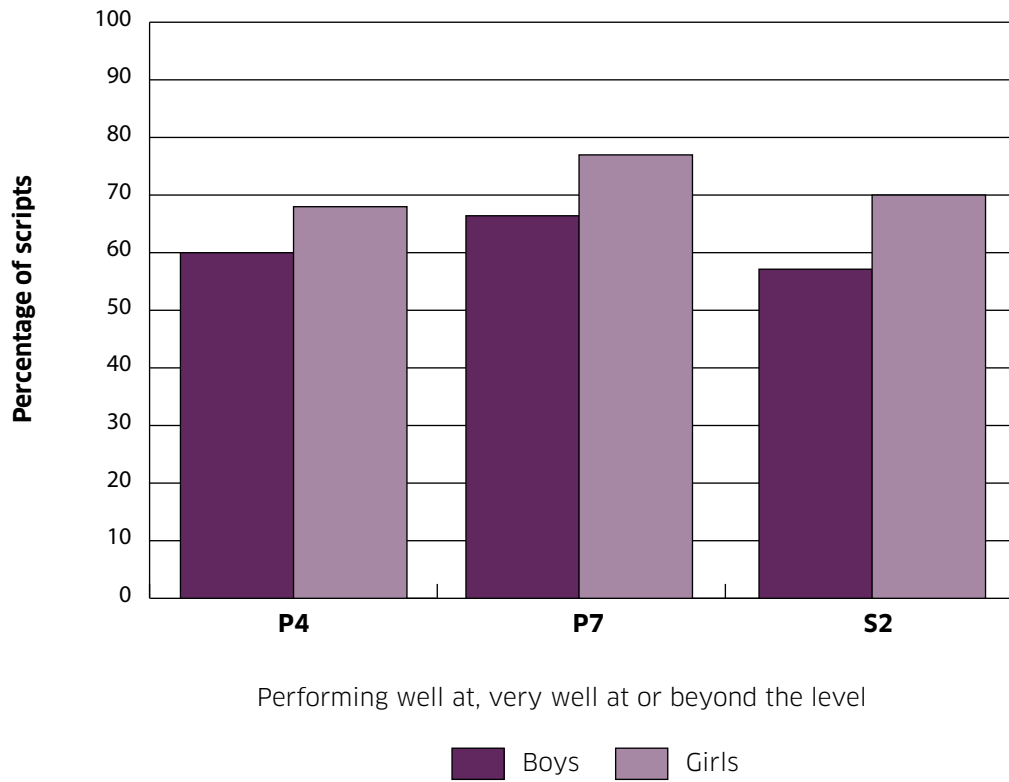
READING - PERFORMANCE BY DEPRIVATION



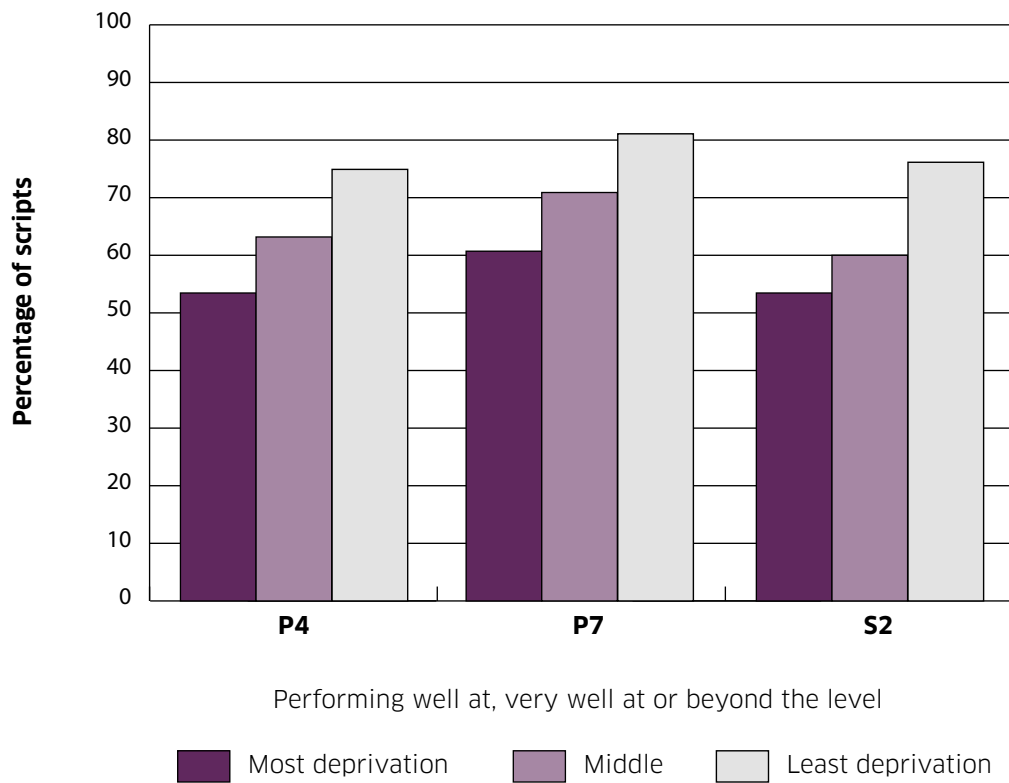
WRITING - OVERALL PERFORMANCE



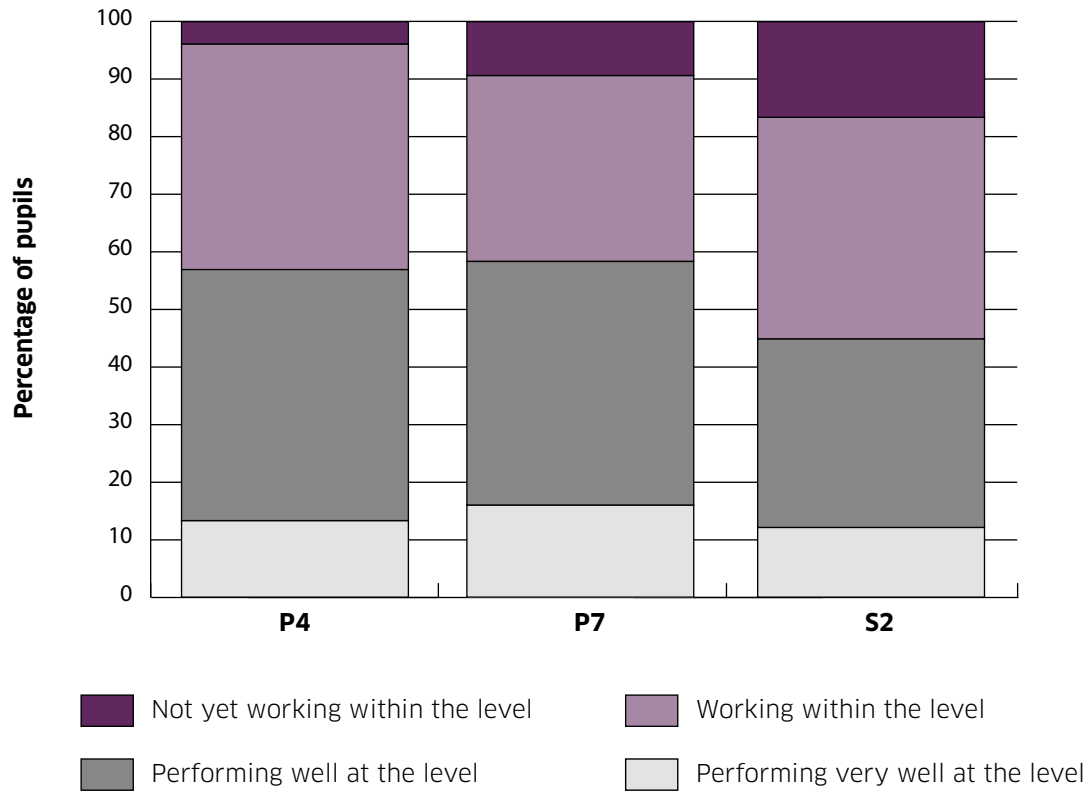
WRITING - PERFORMANCE BY GENDER



WRITING - PERFORMANCE BY DEPRIVATION

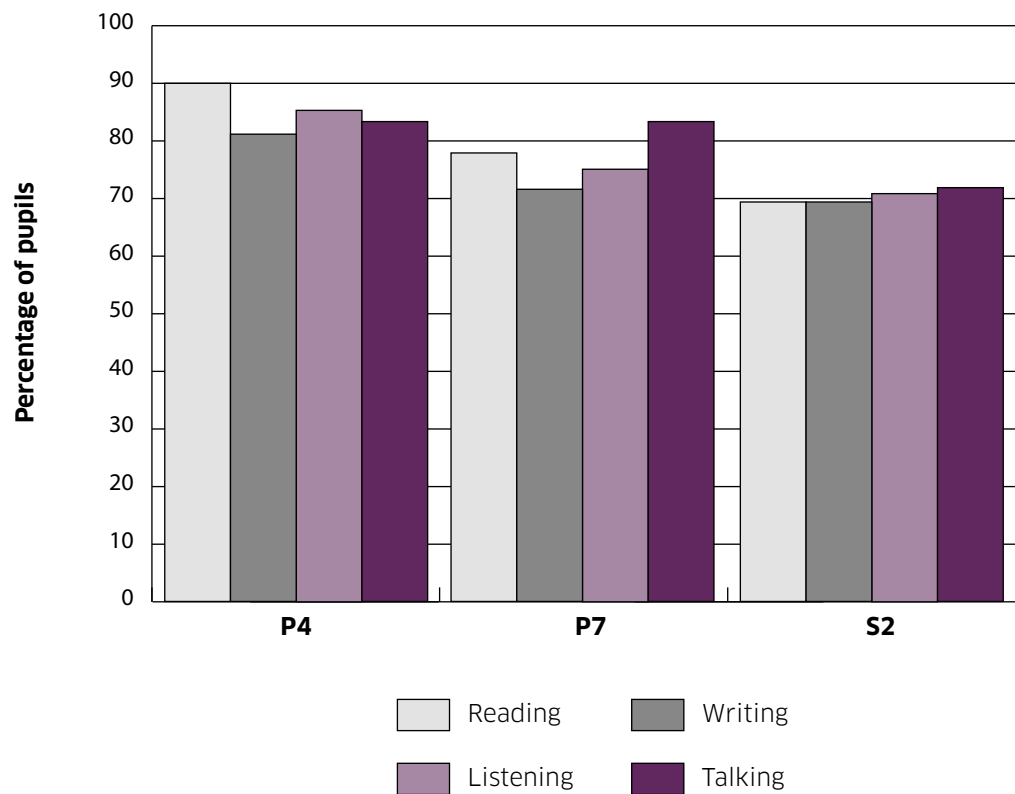


LISTENING & TALKING - OVERALL PERFORMANCE



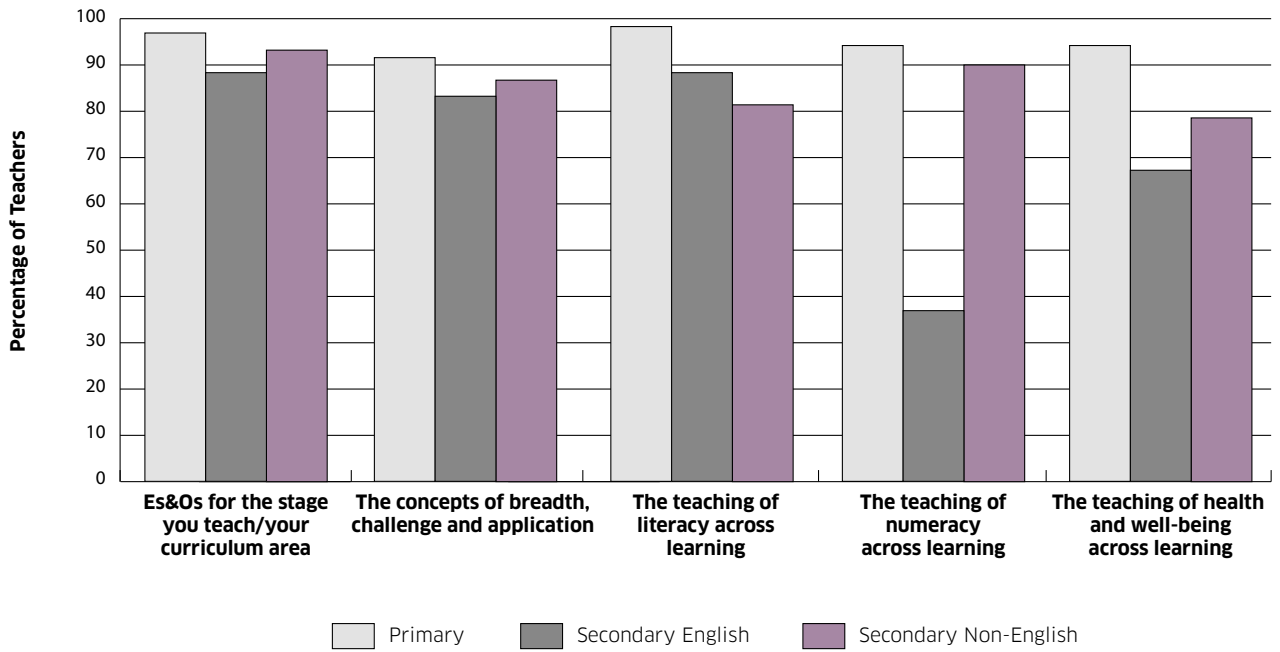
PUPILS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR ABILITIES

How good do you think you are at...? ('good' and 'very good' responses combined)



TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

How confident are you that you understand the following aspects of Curriculum for Excellence?
(‘very confident’ and ‘fairly confident’ responses combined)



APPENDIX C – NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINMENT DATA SUMMARY FOR ENGLISH & LITERACY (AND MATHS & NUMERACY FOR COMPARISON PURPOSES), 2014 – CONT

Mathematics and Numeracy

2014 Course Attainment	2014							2013						
	SCQF 1	SCQF 2	SCQF 3	SCQF 4	SCQF 5	SCQF 6	SCQF 7	SCQF 1	SCQF 2	SCQF 3	SCQF 4	SCQF 5	SCQF 6	SCQF 7
Applied Mathematics	-	-	-	-	-	-	306	-	-	-	-	-	-	298
Lifeskills Mathematics	-	246	4,674	1,479	149	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mathematics	-	59	5,592	24,507	31,721	17,906	2,747	-	278	18,710	24,828	33,065	17,147	2,664

2014 Unit Attainment	2014							2013						
	SCQF 1	SCQF 2	SCQF 3	SCQF 4	SCQF 5	SCQF 6	SCQF 7	SCQF 1	SCQF 2	SCQF 3	SCQF 4	SCQF 5	SCQF 6	SCQF 7
Numeracy	-	-	4,764	25,228	9,367	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX D – SKILLS PROFILE TREND DATA

(used for measuring impact of the Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020 strategy)

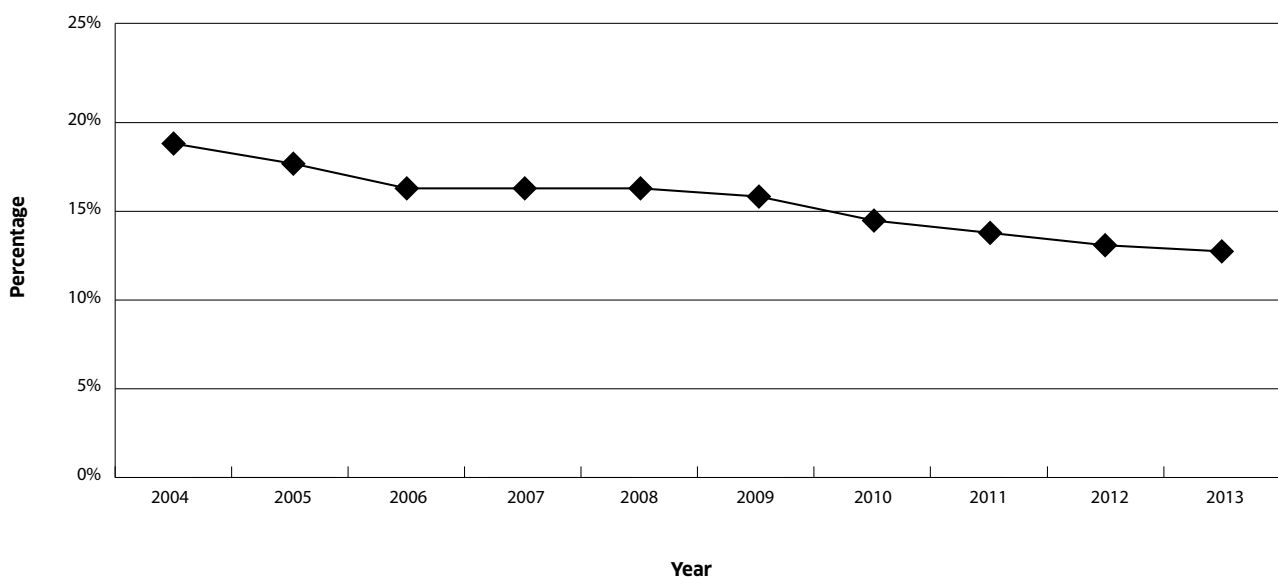
Percentage of the population aged 16 to 64 with low levels qualifications (SCQF Level 4 qualifications or below)

Year	Percentage
2004	19.1%
2005	17.7%
2006	16.6%
2007	16.4%
2008	16.3%
2009	15.7%
2010	14.7%
2011	13.9%
2012	13.0%
2013	12.6%

Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

Notes: Working age population is defined as all people aged 16-64

Graph representing the above data:



<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/TrendData>

APPENDIX E - STANDING LITERACY COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AS AT FINAL MEETING, 16 DECEMBER 2014

Tim Simons (Acting Chair)	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
Andrew Sutherland	Association of Directors of Education Scotland
Laura Burnett	Skills Development Scotland
Geraldine Ratcliffe	College Development Network
Margaret Tierney	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Louise Glen	Education Scotland (School-aged Literacy)
Cath Hamilton	Education Scotland (Adult Literacies)
Judith Gillespie	2009 Literacy Commission Chair and former Director of Scottish Parent Teacher Council
Iain McMillan	Confederation of British Industry Scotland
Kathy Cameron	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Marc Lambert	Scottish Book Trust
Jackie Howie	Learning Link Scotland
John Rice	National Parent Forum of Scotland
Amina Shah	Scottish Library and Information Council
Craig Flunkert	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
Jeff Maguire (Secretary)	Scottish Government Learning Directorate

www.gov.scot/literacyandnumeracy

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