

# Highland Literacy Project



## Literacy Strategy 2008 – 2011

April 2008

<http://www.hvlc.org.uk/hlp/>

## **Introduction**

The Highland Literacy Project was initiated in January 2005, with the aim of raising attainment in reading in twelve identified schools across the region.

The project proposal stated:

“ Both schools and the authority have identified the need to support attainment in reading through a focussed approach to the teaching of reading skills at all 5-14 levels. Highland Council’s recent programme of study emphasised this approach. The aim of this proposal is to identify and support Highland schools where reading is an area of concern, and improve attainment of pupils”.

This was in the context of

- a gradual decline in reading attainment in Highland schools
- an improving trend for writing attainment due to an authority focus on this aspect

As a result, the gap between reading and writing attainment was widening in favour of writing.

What began as a reading project quickly evolved to become a literacy project as it was apparent that the four key areas of literacy were intrinsically linked.

### **A rationale**

‘To work with staff in identified primary schools to raise attainment through the development of whole school best practice in the teaching of reading.’

The work was informed by;

- HMI advice
- Good practice in other authorities, including North Lanarkshire Council
- Current research
- Highland Council’s Learning and Teaching Toolkit
- The National Priorities for Education
- HC Programmes of Study for Reading, Writing, Talking & Listening.

HMI advice and research findings on the teaching of reading indicated that staff should;

- Improve questioning and discussion skills to improve comprehension
- Develop reflective questioning strategies for children
- Spend time teaching whole class reading as well as group reading
- Provide more thoughtful, focused reading activities
- Provide uninterrupted teaching time with each group
- Teach children to use information texts more frequently
- Teach children to make their own notes
- Provide lesson aims which should be clear and shared with the children
- Provide a wide selection of texts and genre which children use effectively to develop a reading habit
- Teach children how authors use language (Writer’s Craft)

The methodology, support and practical advice remain firmly based on these findings, but the project has evolved to reflect national and local initiatives such as A Curriculum for Excellence and Assessment is for Learning.

## **Project Priorities**

### Targets

- To teach Reading using a direct, interactive approach.
- To develop and promote a whole school approach to the teaching of reading through the use of collaborative learning strategies.
- To encourage children to make the link between Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening.
- To promote pupils success through training in self and peer assessment.
- To provide training for staff to enable them to teach Reading using a wide variety of strategies.
- To promote parental involvement in supporting their children in reading at home.
- To identify and provide any additional resources to further support the reading project.

### Criteria for Success

- An improvement in attainment in reading across the school.
- Direct and interactive strategies in the teaching of reading are adopted and taken forward by staff.
- An increase in staff confidence to apply these strategies in the teaching of Reading.
- Pupils can apply skills and collaborative strategies across the curriculum, which enable them to become more independent learners.
- An increase in confidence that allows pupils of all abilities to be able to and to enjoy engaging with texts.
- An increase in the number of pupils actively involved in reading for enjoyment.
- Parents actively involved in supporting reading at home.

## **Supporting schools to succeed**

Key features of the authority's strategy to date include:

- a focus on core reading, reading for information, writer's craft and reading for enjoyment,
- a very clear methodology to be adopted by all staff in each school for each of these aspects,
- the teaching of reading using a variety of levelled materials and genre,
- the explicit adoption of collaborative learning approaches to ensure that all learners are engaged, active and increasingly independent in their learning,
- making clear the connections between listening & talking, reading and writing,
- training for all teaching staff, and support staff
- additional training for Literacy Coordinators (from Phase 4)

- modelling of best practice by Literacy Officers and (from Phase 4) school's own Literacy Coordinators
- regularly updated, practical advice on the authority's website,
- extensive "open training" events for staff whose schools are not within the direct scope of the project
- additional advice to staff on phonics, spelling, literacy through play, literacy through media, Scots language, supporting parents and Gaelic learning.
- support for the sharing of best practice within, and across schools
- the enhancement of each primary school's capacity for Literacy improvement (from Phase 3)
- regular evaluation of project experiences and learning and making improvements based on evaluation evidence.

### **The current situation**

Three Literacy Officers (2.8FTE) plan for, and drive the authority's Literacy strategy. Additional support is also received from two previous Literacy Officers (some 40 days total per year) and a classroom practitioner with very good practice in Gaelic language.

Phase 4 developments include:

- engagement with almost all the authority's Gaelic provision, including Bunscoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis,
- full engagement with 50 primary schools, agreed partial engagement with three schools and engagement with one Associated School Group (secondary with 8 rural primaries),
- match funding for agreed reading resources for both core and associated schools,
- training for core school Literacy Coordinators (2 days) and for associated schools Literacy Coordinator (4 days)
- training for all core Phase 4 teaching staff (1 day) and support staff (0.5 day)
- planned support visits by Literacy officers to core and associate school classrooms
- the provision of collegiate activity sessions (CAT),
- "open training" events for teaching staff not directly involved with the project
- "catch up training" for those new to Phase 1-3 schools,
- literacy training for the authority's probationers (2 days), and
- additional support for Phase 3 schools designed to support parents with reading for information activities as part of their children's homework.

### **Future Phases**

It is the authority's intention that there will a further two phases of this development which will be a main driver to ensure that the authority meets key national objectives. Thereafter, the development will move to a position where appropriate central support will be provided to assist schools and other centres maintain best practice, and to develop specific aspects of literacy.

## **Phases 5 & 6 rationale**

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate is central to an individual's development and wellbeing.

The authors of the Key Learning Outcomes, define literacy as “the set of skills which allows 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.”

On this premise, all those supporting children and young people have a role in developing literacy at every stage in their learning. In these next phases the project will engage more with early years and secondary colleagues to promote this.

Using the model of engagement for Phase 4 schools, this model will widen the scope of development to contribute to the authority's commitment to improving experiences for all through:

- A Curriculum for Excellence
  - transition at early stages and primary/secondary and
  - Key learning Outcomes for Literacy and Gaelic (Learners)
- More Choices, More Chances
  - improved literacy skills for all learners at P2 and secondary
  - exploring links with Adult Basic Literacy developments
- Taking account of the development of vocational education
  - to support pupils to learn the appropriate language and industry terminology for the courses they are taking.
- Assessment is for Learning
  - integration of best practice in literacy modelling and advice
- Getting It Right For Every Child
  - taking account of inclusion issues for learning & teaching
- Initial Teacher Education Courses – taking account of:
  - current training and advice in literacy given to student teachers
  - The Standard for Initial Teacher Education Courses
- taking account of the advice in a range of national documents, including:
  - The Standard for Full Registration (2006) & Guidance (2007)
  - “How Good is Our School 3” (2007) and “Child at the Centre 2” (2007)
  - “Improving Scottish Education” (HMIE 2008)
  - “English: A portrait of current practice in Scottish schools and pre-school centres” (HMIE 2008)
  - “Leadership for Learning: The challenges of leading in a time of change” (2007)
  - “How Good is Our School: Evaluating Educational provision for Bilingual Learners” (2006)
  - Education & Training: “Group Work: Transition into Secondary” (2007)
  - “Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy” (2007) and “Preparing for Work: Skills for work pilot programme” (2007)

## **Phase 5 model of engagement**

This level of engagement is based upon the existing capacity described on page 4.

Engagement	Costs/capacity
<p>Work with half of remaining schools who have identified the need to develop aspects of literacy or who have not engaged with previous “open training” in sufficient staff numbers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approximately 35 schools including 9 previous applicants</li> <li>• match funding for agreed resources (£30,000)</li> <li>• evaluation process as Phase 4</li> <li>• similar support package to Phase 4 Core schools:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HT info. day</li> <li>○ Literacy coordinator – 2 days training</li> <li>○ all teaching staff – 2 days @ 4 venues</li> <li>○ open training for support staff – ½ day</li> <li>○ class observation visits &amp; CAT sessions</li> <li>○ HT/ Literacy coordinators recall day</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Funding (previously Leadership Programme) for Literacy Coordinators for class cover for training, modelling &amp; support to own/other staff</li> <li>• making links with Determined to Succeed initiatives</li> </ul>
<p>Work to support literacy developments within ASGs. Currently, 4 main categories of ASGs:  <i>Category 1:</i><sup>1</sup>            7 ASGs where all primaries are HLP trained,  <i>Category 2:</i><sup>2</sup>            8 ASGs with all but one/two not HLP trained  <i>Category 3</i><sup>3</sup>            12 ASGs with 3 or more schools not HLP trained, and  <i>Category 4:</i><sup>4</sup>            2 ASG with no primaries trained.</p>	<p>It is recommended that we target <i>Category 1</i> ASGs during Phase 5 as these secondary schools will be receiving pupils who have all been involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASG secondary support package to include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ training for ASN staff in inclusion through core reading (1 day + possible recall day)</li> <li>○ reading for information &amp; writing for information training for agreed departmental staff (possibly using some primary school Literacy Coordinators (LCs) to deliver on ASG inset day?) (1 day + possible recall day)</li> <li>○ ASG agreed secondary staff visits to primary classes to observe practice</li> <li>○ Generic support for ASG Literacy development planning</li> <li>○ Literacy Officer support for ASG coordinator meetings (each secondary and some primaries will need to nominate LCs)</li> <li>○ awareness raising training of primary Writer’s Craft and writing for English subject teachers (1 day)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All Subject Supporters               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ training for reading for information across the curriculum (1 day)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• HLP INSET pack on reading, for ASGs not engaged with directly with the team.</li> </ul>
<p>Closed training for new, or returning members of staff to Phase 1-4 primary schools <i>only</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highland Literacy for teachers (2 days)</li> <li>• Highland Literacy for support staff (0.5 day @ 5 areas)</li> </ul>
<p>Probationer training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Strategies (2 days)</li> <li>• Writing strategies (1 day)</li> <li>• Developing reading &amp; writing across the curriculum (secondary) (1</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Thurso, Dornoch, Farr, Lochaber, Mallaig, Millburn, Kinlochleven

<sup>2</sup> Wick, Dingwall, Culloden, Glenurquhart, Grantown, Kingussie, Nairn, Kilchuimen

<sup>3</sup> Golspie, Kinlochberrie, Alness, Invergordon, Tain, Gairloch, Fortrose, Plockton, Portree, Charleston, Inverness High, Inverness Royal Academy

<sup>4</sup> Ardnamurchan & Ullapool

Engagement	Costs/capacity
	day)
Open training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Literacy through Play” – preschool/infants (1 day)<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• “Motivating Learning through Active learning (multi-media)” – P6 – S2 teachers, SMT &amp; ASN staff (1 day)</li> <li>• “HLP Strategies” – secondary ASN teachers and support staff</li> <li>• “Reading for Information across the curriculum” – secondary staff</li> <li>• “Getting started with Writing” – primary teachers (2 days)</li> <li>• “Developing Writing” – primary teachers (2 days)</li> <li>• input to authority’s “Return to Teaching” programme</li> <li>• “Scots language” – primary/secondary</li> </ul>
Phase 1 – 3 schools - “Hop On” reading intervention programme for identified P2 pupils struggling with reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If NO additional staffing available, trial with 6 schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SMT/ASN teacher/SfLA trained by Literacy Officer (1 day)</li> <li>○ LO visits to school (2)</li> <li>○ additional books per school/ASN teacher £180</li> <li>○ each school becomes self-sustaining in process thereafter</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If additional staffing available through Early Years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ training for identified Early Years staff by Literacy Officer (1 day + possible recall day)</li> <li>○ modelling of approaches &amp; support within a larger number of schools over 2 terms</li> <li>○ additional books per school, £180</li> <li>○ e-mail/telephone support from Literacy Officers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Phase 1 & 2 schools Supporting the role of parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• joint working with Early Years</li> <li>• joint working with Psychological Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ role for pre-school teachers in training, parental work and sharing best practice</li> <li>○ connections to/with existing work on reading, motivation, emotional literacy and behaviour</li> <li>○ support for the “why” of the project’s methodology</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="http://www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk/heps/">http://www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk/heps/</a></li> <li>• explore links with Adult Basic Education <a href="http://www.halweb.co.uk/">http://www.halweb.co.uk/</a></li> <li>• explore links with Highland’s Parenting Services <a href="http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/htm/parenting/parenting.php">http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/htm/parenting/parenting.php</a></li> <li>• develop links with “Getting It Right” <a href="http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/">http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>options to be explored with relevant service providers</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Phase 4 associate schools “Question Quest” – Supporting the role of parents with “reading for information” homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as per Phase 3 provision (£9000 inc. 20 days cover for training and school visits) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>costs to be finalised when target group agreed</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Phase 1 schools “Reading for enjoyment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of “Live Literature Scotland” (LLS) authors’ events <a href="http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/">http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ authors’ travel and subsistence costs paid by LLS</li> <li>○ half the performance costs paid by LLS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> input from early years staff

Engagement	Costs/capacity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ re-energise approaches to reading for enjoyment</li> <li>○ <i>costs to be finalised when target group agreed</i></li> </ul>

### **Phase 6 model of engagement**

It is envisaged that this phases will be modelled on Phase 5, being reviewed in the context of issues arising during Phase 5. By the close of Phase 6, all primary schools should have engaged with the project either as a project school or as a school which has used open training to develop practice with all staff.

### **Beyond Phase 6**

It is envisaged that the project will downsize and the emphasis will be on supporting schools to maintain and refresh good practice, and further developing aspects of literacy through CPD opportunities and targeted support for Associated School Groups. In addition to one development officer, a significant number of school literacy coordinators should be available to support practice.