

# HIGHLAND LITERACY PROJECT



## PHASE 2 EVALUATION



**Summary Evaluation of the Schools involved in Phase 2  
of the Highland Literacy Project**

**December 2007**

# HIGHLAND LITERACY PROJECT

## Introduction

Phase 2 [from August 2005- December 2006]

### Selection criterion

A number of schools were invited by the quality development team to apply on the basis of recent HMIe reports and QA visits where Literacy was highlighted as an action point. The remaining schools had identified Literacy as a development and requested inclusion. As a result this directly targeted:

- 12 schools
- 62 teaching staff
- 12 Head Teachers
- 3 Depute Head Teachers
- a number of Additional Support Needs teachers.
- A number of support staff
- approximately 1200 pupils

## 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.

## **Methodologies used<sup>1</sup>**

To maximise impact, the literacy officers focused on four main areas:

- **Reading for Information**
- **Writer's Craft through reading.**
- **Core reading**
- **Reading for enjoyment**

*Suggestions of how to include **phonics and spelling** were made. Schools were not expected to implement these until year 2 of their involvement on the Highland Literacy Project [HLP]*

## **Key principles promoted in all aspects of the project:**

- The connections between reading, writing, talking and listening are made and promoted
- *All* pupils are included.
- Lessons are stimulating and move at a brisk pace
- Pupils should be active, not passive learners.
- Collaborative strategies are used to support learning in *all* reading lessons
- Skills are taught which lead to pupils becoming more independent readers
- Through interrogation of the text, pupils are taught comprehension, authors/writer's craft, grammar, punctuation, spelling and research skills.
- There is a development of skills from p1-7, which can permeate into other areas of the curriculum
- Teachers *and* pupils develop questioning skills that promote deeper thinking.
- There is a greater use of self and peer assessment that informs next steps in learning

## **<sup>2</sup>Primary/Secondary Link**

During the session 05-06, two of the phase 2 schools were involved in an additional literacy project through Learning and Teaching, Scotland. The aim was to share the project strategies used in reading for information into two secondary schools and across the curriculum.

The LOs modelled lessons in the two secondary schools in Geography and Religious studies and thereafter the teachers in both sectors shared their practice. At a later date they shared their practice with other authorities on the LTS website.

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/buildingbridges/casestudies/highland.asp>

---

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Highland Literacy Project booklets on the virtual Library website at [www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk](http://www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> For details please refer to LTS project on the virtual Library website at [www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk](http://www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk)

## Meeting the criteria for success

### *An improvement in attainment in Reading across the school.*

Standardised testing of a sample of pupils across all schools indicated that:

- All schools showed an increase in their average reading score from 97.3 to 102.9. This resulted in the average score being 2.9 above the norm. Both the boys' scores and girl's scores had increased by the same amount of 5.6.
- Gender differences were still apparent in the same number of schools, with boys now averaging a score of 100.2 and girls at 105.0 (norm 100).

For those attaining appropriate 5-14 levels or better, statistics (June 2005 - June 2007) indicate that:

- for reading,
  - ✓ Almost all schools improved their aggregate scores with an average score gain of 12.4% compared to the Highland gain of 0.1%,
  - ✓ All but two of the schools now exceeded the Highland average being an average 10.2% above, compared to 1.7% below.
  - ✓ <sup>3</sup>In the majority of schools (73%), boys had achieved a higher % gain (14.4%) than girls (5.6%). In project schools, boys' attainment increased from 3.1% below Highland in 2005 to 10.8% above in 2007.
  - ✓ The girls increased the difference between the project schools and Highland average by 5.9%.
- for writing,
  - × There was no overall pattern apparent but action is required to support best practice in writing as performance was very variable with a range of between -14.1% and +23.1% with the average being -0.3% compared to Highland average of -0.8%.
  - ✓ 76% of schools now exceed the Highland average with the average difference increasing over the two years from +5.95% to +6.48%
  - ✓ In more than half (55%) of the schools, the gender gap narrowed with one school now showing the boys attaining a higher % than the girls in 2007.

For those exceeding appropriate 5-14 levels, statistics (June 2005 - June 2007) show:

- for reading,
  - ✓ Almost all (92%) improved their aggregate scores (a range of 1.9% to 33.3%): averaging 8.6% with the average Highland change being -0.2%,
  - ✓ <sup>4</sup>The average overall gain for boys was 4.9% (Highland -0.5%) and for girls was 7.2% (Highland 0%)
  - ✓ Overall, two thirds of schools (66%) display positive trends in numbers of pupils exceeding, with the remaining third going down in the first year and then back up in the second.
- for writing,
  - ✓ More than half of the schools (58.3%) improved their aggregate scores, with 1 school staying the same and 33.3% (two schools) going down. The aggregate was +4.3% compared to the average Highland percentage (-2.3%).
  - ✓ the number of schools performing better than the Highland average shows an improving trend
  - × The gender gap followed the same widening trend as Highland over the two years. This was the opposite trend than for those in phase 1.

---

<sup>3</sup> One school's results was not included as the number of pupils was too small to split by gender

<sup>4</sup> One school's results was not included as the number of pupils was too small to split by gender

***Direct and interactive strategies in the teaching of reading are adopted and taken forward by staff.***

- ✓ The majority (68%) of teachers said that they *always* shared learning intentions with pupils in reading lessons.
- ✓ Most (84%) believed that the pace of learning in their class had increased and almost all (98%) felt that they gave pupils opportunities to build on previous levels of independence.
- ✓ All teachers timetabled reading in their classes.
- ✓ Most teachers (86%) gave their highest attaining pupils challenging texts and/or activities All HTs feel that there is now *more* quality teaching of reading throughout the school.
- ✓ The majority (61%) always gave the lowest attaining pupils additional reading sessions with their peers.
- ✓ Almost all (98%) gave pupils opportunities to work collaboratively in their core reading.
- ✗ Less than half of teachers (48%) felt that self and peer evaluation was established within the context of reading.
- ✓ The majority (78%) of support staff stated that as a result of the project, they were now more involved in supporting the teaching of reading.
- ✓ The majority (70%) of head teachers stated that the HLP strategies had been fully adopted fully by their staff. Most HTs (80%) felt that staff had developed the strategies even further in their own setting.

***An increase in staff confidence to apply these strategies in the teaching of reading.***

- ✓ The majority (68%) of teachers and support staff were confident in applying the strategies. Head Teachers felt that half of their staff were confident and the others mostly were.
- ✓ The majority of teachers (73%) and HTs (70%) stated that staff were more reflective about their own practices and 63% of teachers and 75% of support staff had begun to share practice with colleagues through peer observation and discussion.
- ✓ *All* Head Teachers stated that reading had been given a higher profile and the majority (70%) of teachers said they now spend more quality time on teaching reading.
- ✗ 18% of teaching staff reported that they did not participate in collaborative CPD about reading although all HTs reported that they had organised or delivered some.

***Pupils can apply skills and collaborative strategies across the curriculum, which enable them to become more independent learners.***

- ✓ Overall, the majority of teachers (61%) and 70% of HTs reported that pupils were more independent when working on reading and reading activities. The remaining teachers and HTs felt that *most* pupils had.
- ✓ Most head teachers (80%) and two thirds of teachers (66%) stated that pupils can apply collaborative strategies in other curriculum areas. Almost all (94%) indicated that they worked collaboratively at least once a week. Of this most (82%) enjoyed working collaboratively at least some of the time. The remaining 18% did not enjoy working this way.
- ✗ Only a fifth (20%) of HTs and a quarter (27%) of teachers were confident that pupils were able to evaluate and discuss strategies for improvement.

- ✓ Most pupils (84%) stated that they preferred the 'new' way of reading in school.
- ✓ All schools evaluated pupils' learning experiences as being good or very good. This compares favourably to October 2005.

***An increase in confidence that allows pupils of all abilities to be able to, and to enjoy engaging with texts.***

- ✓ <sup>5</sup>All head teachers (100%) and the majority of support staff (66%) reported that all or most pupils were more confident in their approach to reading. All Head teachers reported through classroom observation, that all or most pupils were more motivated *and* more active learners.
- ✓ Most pupils (82%) stated they could understand almost everything that they read. Almost all teachers said that pupils could locate evidence, interrogate text and justify their opinions.
- ✓ Almost all less able pupils were included in whole class (98%) reading lessons and (91%) were included in a peer group for core reading. Three quarters of teachers and support staff, and all Head teachers reported that this has had a positive impact on these pupils' attitude towards reading and their self-esteem.
- ✓ About 60% of both HTs and teachers said that highest attaining pupils were given opportunities to engage with very challenging texts.
- ✓ All head teachers and most teachers (81%) felt that overall, pupils attitudes towards reading had improved. Most pupils (88%) stated that they enjoyed reading at school with 65% indicating that they would like *more* reading at school.

***An increase in the number of pupils actively involved in reading for enjoyment.***

- ✓ All head teachers and teachers reported that reading for enjoyment had been promoted throughout the school and most (80%) HTs organised whole school reading events. In contrast, fewer pupils (75%) said that they had opportunities to read for enjoyment in school.
- ✓ Reading for enjoyment was timetable in 91% of classes and most teachers (82%) regularly read to their pupils. Less than half (44%) of support staff had increased opportunities to read to groups of pupils.
- ✓ Two thirds of teachers afford their pupils opportunities to share books with a partner/buddy.
- ✗ Only half the schools had attractive school or class libraries
- ✓ Most pupils (88%) surveyed enjoyed reading at home and 76% read at home to find out about things.

***Parents actively involved in supporting Reading at home***

- ✓ By June 2006, almost all schools (90%) had informed parents about the project, notified them about changes to reading methodologies and given them guidance as to how to help their child at home. The school board in 60% of the schools had been actively involved in supporting the project. Most (80%) schools had offered information evenings and afternoons, with half of HTs stating that there had been a good turnout.
- ✓ The majority of HTs (60%) had sought parents' views about reading at school and at home.
- ✓ Half (50%) of HTs stated that they intend to increase home/school partnerships over the following session.
- ✗ Less than half of pupils (31%) said that their parents read to them at home.

---

<sup>5</sup> This question was omitted from the teacher questionnaire by mistake.

Summary of issues from PHASE 2

Issue	Action
Decline in <b>writing</b> for those <u>attaining</u> the appropriate 5-14 levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further advice to be issued to Phase 2 schools, and incorporated in future training.</li> <li>• Separate writing training to be arranged.</li> <li>• Schools to keep a close focus on progress through tracking/predicting systems and staff discussion.</li> <li>• Bring any specific attainment issues to the attention of relevant link QIO</li> </ul>
Improvements in staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training to include P1-P7 and to take place over two days. <b>The change to three authority areas impacted on the ability of the team to offer sufficient local training in November 2007.</b></li> </ul>
Sharing best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy Officers to offer a generic policy that may be adapted and adopted by schools</li> <li>• LOs to establish a sharing web page on Virtual Library</li> <li>• Staff to continue to be encouraged to set up informal peer support systems to improve self-evaluation and classroom practice</li> </ul>
Sustaining best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key person to be named in all project schools</li> <li>• Training will be continue to be offered by Literacy Officers to those who missed initial training.</li> <li>• Schools encouraged to include literacy in as a continued development until such times as the SMT and staff feel confident that it should move to maintenance.</li> </ul>
Self and peer evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools encouraged to make further links with AifL development officer</li> <li>• Advantages of self/peer evaluation to be further emphasised at future inset and training.</li> </ul>
Reading for enjoyment Lack of school libraries in half of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to be made directly with Highland library staff to further promote reading for enjoyment. Details to be included in reading for enjoyment booklet.</li> <li>• Advantages of having a stimulating school library to be promoted.</li> </ul>
Encouraging parents to read to their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QDO to lead separate training and sharing of practice in supporting the role of parents for Head Teachers</li> </ul>
Resource building in subsequent years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LOs to continue to update schools with advice on appropriate resources.</li> </ul>
Phonics and spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be promoted as a key focus in later phases</li> </ul>
Project evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff and pupil questionnaires to be developed further to provide more evaluative feedback</li> </ul>
Making links with secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future open training to be available to secondary staff</li> <li>• Schools will be encouraged to share practices with secondary colleagues</li> </ul>