

Kilwinning Academy

Literacy Across the Curriculum

Ambition

Inspiration

Belonging

Respect



Dedication

Responsibility

Literacy in the Secondary School

A basic premise is that any teacher is or should be, a teacher of literacy.

Literacy needs to cross the whole curriculum.

Issues

Children cannot avoid “literacy”, basic literacy skills are a requirement for all subjects across the curriculum. Every teacher in each subject area needs to find opportunities to encourage young people to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which will help them to develop their language skills further. It is every teacher’s responsibility to ensure pupils have a basic competence in literacy including, grammar, spelling and talk.

This document aims to highlight the issues we face and outlines possible whole-school strategies that should be adopted to promote literacy.

Literacy is:

“the set of skills which allows an individual to engage fully in a society and in learning, through the different forms of language and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful” (Literacy across the Curriculum: Draft Outcomes)

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



Common Assumptions

- That (most) pupil read effectively.
- That they can cope with the texts provided.
- That there is homogeneity in the class in respect of literacy and learning.
- That formal test and examination results (and the implementation of the National Curriculum) take precedence over all else.
- That a given curriculum is correct and that a year group of children will have reached a given level of understanding by a certain time.
- That homework demands will be understood and met. Parents/ Guardians will have the skills to help at home.
- Responsibility for literacy teaching belongs to specialist staff.

The implications from the above include:

- The necessity of a whole-school approach.
- Never to take for granted pupil skills.
- The range of needs that may impact upon access to the curriculum (co-ordinating skills, rapid fluency, ease of comprehension, etc.)
- The critical need to differentiate demands according to learning style.
- Never to assume that children will ask for help when they lack understanding.
- The desirability of giving an overview of the lesson, and its purpose, at the beginning, with a review at the end.

Characteristics of



A Literacy-Rich Classroom

FOCUS ON READING

What do we do when we read?

- 1) Apply alphabetic skills, names and sounds.
Recognise words as discrete units.
Match a visual, printed unit with meaning.
Apply meaning to whole words, or decode words which are unfamiliar (segmentation)
- 2) Seek to gain meaning/context from text (“surface” reading)
- 3) Seek to make inferences from the material written (“deep” reading)
- 4) Reading style will differ according to the purpose of task and style of material

Newspaper Reading	Novel Reading
Attention drawn by headlines/pictures	Start from beginning and read consistently to end
Skim paper to get general ideas	Parts cannot be omitted if meaning to be gained
Scan for specific information	Sections may be re-read
Miss out area of disinterest	

Skimming and scanning will be very significant for pupils in the secondary school and they may need to be specifically taught if pupils are to extract salient information from reading matter. One may need to ask if the pupils know that information is organised in a particular way - table of contents, chapter headings, paragraphs, particular vocabulary or jargon - and teach the specific skills of predicting, confirming, or rejecting possibilities (and demonstrating how to link existing material to previous material).

In the secondary school, one has to recognise that many pupils arrive with limited literacy skills and explicit teaching is still required which may require a range of strategies ... including ways to improve an awareness of how text is structured, how to vary reading according to purpose, how to distinguish between content-demand questions and questions that require inferences, how to skim and scan for main and subordinate ideas, how to present material for later revision (e.g. "mind-maps") with the implication that one can "read" a variety of information presentations over and above books or continuous text.

Assumptions that may apply to texts:

- That there is existing background knowledge in which to put current information into a context
- That there is familiarity with the vocabulary used.
- Pupils have a wide and varied vocabulary.
- That inference-drawing may be a skill present in all the pupils (when, actually, even a title may send the pupils on the wrong track given problems related to literalness or failure to recognise imagery or metaphor)
- That key ideas or key words will be recognised rapidly within the text (and understood).
- That pupils can extract information from graphs or diagrams or tables, and see how these aids relate to the content of the written text.
- That it is clear where answers to questions can be located in the text.
- That the question is understood
- That the same point may be covered in a number of ways (and that there is not too much information offered.)
- That the pupils fully understand the nature of the task set (and which is to be facilitated by the information contained in the text).
- That the pupil will know what to do if asked to ... “explain”, “discuss”, “describe”, “identify”, “compare”, etc..
- That the pupils will recognise differences in word meanings resulting from different contexts.

The more confident the reader (and the greater the motivation) the more effective the reading. The less confident, the more dependence on word-level skills with an impact on understanding of the text and probability of “withdrawal”



Classroom Strategies to Promote Reading

Strategies to be implemented before the use of a text

- Screening of text for complex terms (vocabulary)
- Pointing out key words
- Highlighting relevant headings or titles
- Ensuring adequate existing knowledge, and **demonstrating the link** between that and current information.
- Using a simple structure: Facts one at a time, and repeated, and with bullet points as required.
- Providing visual cues
- Describing in advance what is going to be covered in a session/lesson, and reviewing that content at the end of the session.



- Teaching new words in the context of a meaningful sentence
- Prepare questions about the meaning and content of the text ... focus comprehension
- Segment long or complex words into phonological chunks to enable pronunciation
- Teach high frequency irregular words to be learnt as a whole
- Use simultaneous oral spelling method.
- Maximise pupil self-monitoring.
(The role of the special needs or support staff is to share the responsibility for literacy teaching with all subject staff - a whole school policy is critical).

Promoting Writing in the Classroom

Differentiation is not about explaining the differences between pupils ... it is about intervening in order to take note of, and match or compensate for, these differences. **It is a matter of fitting curricular elements to the children, rather than fitting them to the curriculum.**

Writing difficulties may relate to:

- Planning the content
- Knowing how to start
- Writing at speed or under pressure
- Ensuring accuracy when writing at speed
- Inaccurate spelling
- Anxiety about the medium or neatness or spelling, rather than communicating ideas and getting across the meaning.
- Avoidance of risks (i.e. sticking to over-simple vocabulary for fear of misspelling more complex material)
- Knowledge of subject-specific vocabulary
- Ability to take notes? Ability to summarise? Ability to highlight key points or draw inferences for their written notes?

Supportive Strategies

- Teacher modelling/peer modelling- giving excellent examples
- Sharing criteria- "A good piece of writing will..."
- Using word banks- sharing new vocabulary you would like pupils to use
- *Writing Scaffolding*- giving pupils a structure to follow with clear topic headlines and starter sentences.
- Giving class feedback on a piece of work and reviewing commonly misspelt words

WRITING AND ASSESSMENT IS FOR LEARNING

Learners learn best when...

- **they understand clearly** what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them
- **they are given feedback** about the quality of their work and what they can do to make it better
- **they are given advice** about how to go about making improvements
- **they are fully involved** in deciding what needs to be done next, and who can give them help if they need it.

Literacy and Talk

Language is an integral part of learning, and oral language has a key role in classroom teaching and learning. It helps to foster creativity, understanding, and imagination; it is a means of solving problems, speculating, sharing ideas and making decisions; it builds friendships and enhances motivation through social interaction. The best way to ensure this happens is to take a systematic approach to teaching speaking and listening across the school.

Whole School Approach to Literacy and Talk

1. PowerPoint Presentations- set as homework and presented to the class.

In order to reinforce “Talk” throughout the school, every subject area should attempt to set a PowerPoint presentation as homework based on a specific curricular area.

The benefits?

1. Reinforce teaching of what is required in a presentation across the curriculum
2. Reinforce class learning
3. Different approach to setting research homework (in accordance with whole school homework policy)
4. Build on “talk” skills an essential element of basic literacy.

2. Frequent class based/ group discussions

The benefits?

1. Peer learning- pupils can differentiate to lower abilities
2. Encouraging pupils to share/ express views
3. Learn to debate/ diffuse confrontations
4. Promoting confident individuals and successful learners in developing and expressing thoughts.

To Summarise Literacy in the Secondary School

- Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and spoken word are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum
- Links between literacy and learning mean all teachers have an important role in promoting literacy.
- Developing basic Literacy skills should be as equally if not more important than exam results.
- It should not always be assumed that pupils can process information from a text book and classroom strategies should be implemented to help pupils understand text book information.
- Extending and developing pupils' vocabulary should be a focus of every curricular area.
- Spelling strategies should be adopted when and where appropriate throughout the curriculum.
- Promoting talk/ group discussion must be incorporated into all subject areas.

Literacy should prepare pupils for:

LISTENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand instructions, interpret thoughts, ideas and opinions• To acquire information in a range of situations• To participate in discussions
TALKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To convey information, thoughts, ideas, feelings and opinions• To question, hypothesise, speculate, evaluate and think critically
WRITING USING A RANGE OF MEDIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To take notes• To express a view• To write reports• To communicate in different contexts
READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To learn• To develop understanding• To select and evaluate information• For enjoyment

Literacy and Curriculum for Excellence

Literacy is essential in allowing pupils to develop the high level of skills in listening, talking, reading and writing which are essential for learning, work and life

SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS	CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS	RESPONSIBLE CITIZINS	EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTERS
<p>Gain access to all areas of learning</p> <p>Develop and communicate thoughts</p> <p>Facilitate more complex thinking and learning</p> <p>Using Literacy skills and technology to express ideas through different media</p>	<p>Relate positively to others</p> <p>Interact in different social situations</p> <p>Gain self-respect</p> <p>Through reading they can explore experiences, emotions and relationships in the safe confines of literature</p>	<p>Reflect and develop ideas and views</p> <p>Communicate thoughts and feelings through talk and writing</p> <p>Participate in discussions</p> <p>Learn to resolve conflicts</p> <p>Read to extend perspective on world</p> <p>Debate on current issues affecting society</p>	<p>Contributing to life of school and community through shared written work/ presentations/class discussions.</p> <p>Involve themselves fully in society</p> <p>Gaining skills to transfer into the working world.</p> <p>Expressing ideas and vies in written and spoken word</p>

