



## MOSSHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL LITERACY POLICY



### Rationale

Improving the literacy/English skills of all children and young people is a national priority with the aim of raising attainment, reducing inequality, improving life chances and employment prospects.

‘Language and literacy are of personal, social and economic importance. Our ability to use language lies at the centre of the development and expression of our emotions, our thinking, our learning and our sense of personal identity. Language is itself a key aspect of our culture.’

‘Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.’

Literacy and English Principles and practice

### Aim

Our aim is to build on children’s prior knowledge, ensuring we meet individual needs, by providing an environment which is rich in language and which sets high expectations for literacy and the use of language.

We aim for each child to:-

- have a positive attitude towards literacy.
- have self-confidence in their ability
- be able to work enthusiastically, co-operatively and with perseverance.
- be able to think independently.
- experience a sense of achievement regardless of age or ability.
- be able to apply previously acquired concepts, skills, knowledge and understanding to new situations both in and out of school.
- be able to communicate with peers and adults, ideas, experiences, questions, clearly and fluently, using appropriate language.
- have equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, or ability.
- be aware of the uses of literacy beyond the classroom.
- be effective, competent communicators and good listeners

### Effective Learning and Teaching Approaches

In broad terms, within Mosshead Primary, effective learning and teaching in Literacy and English will involve a variety of teaching strategies, in line with a Curriculum for Excellence including:

- the use of relevant, real-life and enjoyable contexts which build upon children and young people’s own experiences;
- effective direct and interactive teaching
- a balance of spontaneous play and planned activities
- Learning through play as a particular focus in Primary 1, harnessing the motivational benefits of following children and young people’s interests through responsive planning
- collaborative working and independent thinking and learning

[UNCRC article links](#)

**Article 12** (respect for the views of the child) **Article 13** (freedom of expression), **Article 14** (freedom of thought, belief and religion), **Article 28** (right to education), **Article 29** (goals of education), **Article 42** (knowledge of rights).

- making meaningful links for learners across different curriculum areas
- building on the principles of Assessment is for Learning
- frequent opportunities to communicate in a wide range of contexts, for relevant purposes and for real audiences within and beyond places of learning
- the development of problem-solving skills and approaches
- the appropriate and effective use of ICT

In addition to the above, Literacy learning should:

- develop metacognition so that learners from the earliest stages are aware of what and how they are learning
- develop higher order thinking skills and the ability to think critically
- use a wide range of texts including spoken, written, Scots Language and digital texts to promote literacy development
- be well planned and demonstrate progression, breadth and depth in learning across all stages
- provide opportunities for literacy learning to take place across the four contexts
- promote creative approaches and the imagination
- ensure that children are actively engaged in their own learning
- make connections between listening, talking, reading and writing explicit to learners
- provide opportunities for children to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in literacy to other curriculum areas
- ensure that appropriate support and challenge is provided for learners in order to meet their needs and ensure equity for all learners.

In Mosshead Primary we use a variety of teaching strategies, in line with Curriculum for Excellence, to provide a range of different learning opportunities for pupils which develop their Literacy and English skills for learning, life and work. All areas of Literacy and English are taught coherently and wherever possible linked to other subject areas. We recognise that children are motivated by a range of contexts and that literacy skills can be developed by effective cross curricular links.

## **Early Primary (Play pedagogy)**

### **A Literacy Rich Environment**

Children in the early stages of primary should have continued opportunity to experience a literacy rich environment. They should have opportunity to develop early literacy skills through their interaction with both children and adults. Play, investigation, exploration and the development of curiosity and creativity remain crucial as children make the transition from Early Years to primary education.

- There should be a mix of opportunities for both child –led and adult-led activities to promote learning.
- There should be explicit links between play and learning;
- Effective and skilled questioning by staff is essential in promoting learners' early literacy skills;
- Children should be consulted on their learning and asked their opinion – activities should build on what learners already know;
- A range of meaningful contexts should be created to link literacy development to real life.

**[UNCRC article links](#)**

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### **Talking and listening**

- Children must have opportunity to both listen and talk for a range of purposes;
- They should have opportunity to listen to and follow instructions for a range of reasons. They should be supported to listen and take turns in a conversation;

### **Reading**

- Children must have opportunity to listen to and hear a range of different texts read to them as well as having favourite and familiar texts read to them on a regular basis;
- Children should have opportunity to experience an exciting and well-resourced book area (including quality story books, fiction / non-fiction texts/ poetry / rhyme), books children have made themselves, recordings of experiences and stories they want to share and tell with their peer group and adults;
- Experience of Nursery Rhymes – we know from research that knowledge of nursery rhymes can be a predictor of later reading success. Children should have opportunity to hear and recite a range of rhymes and also have opportunity to play with the rhyming patterns in words e.g. nonsense rhymes;

### **Writing**

- Children should have access to a range of mark making tools across a range of play contexts. They should have opportunities to use their mark making and drawings to express their thoughts and ideas;
- Staff should have a clear understanding of the stages of early writing development in order that they can support children to develop such skills according to their needs and stage of development;
- Children should be provided with a range of meaningful and relevant activities to practise their writing skills e.g. self registration, making shopping lists, writing notes and plans;
- Staff should share writing for everyday purposes, explaining why and pointing out signs and symbols and what they mean;
- Encourage an interest in early writing skills and opportunities to mark make in real life contexts

*(Adapted from English Review -3-18 – Page 7, Early Years Advice – pages 8 and 9, Building the Ambition)*

## **Primary 2-7**

### **Listening and Talking**

Children will develop skills within Listening and Talking individually and in groups, in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes to gain information, understand what they have heard and respond appropriately to speakers and texts. Teachers plan for these types of activities through specific Literacy activities or in an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Listening and Talking skills are also developed as part of everyday school and class routines. Children are given opportunities to apply talking and listening skills across a range of contexts and to a variety of audiences, e.g. participating in local authority events, sharing learning with parents/carers.

### **Listening and Talking Skills will involve the following:**

- Contributions to class and group discussions/ debates;
- Asking and answering questions and access a range of texts including written, digital and Scots Language;

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- Listening and talking with confidence across a range of topics and curriculum areas;
- Having opportunities to develop Pupil Voice through Committees and assemblies;
- Talking with increasing confidence to a range of audiences;
- Respecting the contributions of others;
- Having increased ability to summarise and clarify key points;
- Using appropriate tone, pace, language and register to engage the audience.

## **Reading**

Children in Mosshead Primary are encouraged to read a mixture of fiction and non-fiction books as well as other forms of texts. Reading is taught in ability groups and these groups are reviewed regularly to ensure pace and challenge.

Oxford Reading Tree is used at Early Level and the beginning of First Level. Storyworld Bridges and class novels are used at the end of First Level and throughout Second Level. In addition, Bug Club online texts are used across all curriculum levels, from Early to Second. A range of decodable texts can be used to support learning (Phonics books).

Teachers also have access to Intervention Resources (P1-7) which can be used for whole class/group work.

Effective questioning (using HOTS) is used during reading sessions to further children's critical thinking skills.

Each class has its own library of fiction and non-fiction texts and a further library in the junior area contains all non-fiction, allowing the opportunity for children to access a variety of texts.

## **Reading skills will involve the following:**

- Developing awareness of rhyme and patterns in language;
- Developing awareness of common features of books and asking questions to help understand what they have read;
- Sharing ideas and opinions regarding texts they have read;
- Locating information from a range of sources and select / sort information to support their views.
- Using a range of reading tools and become metacognitively aware of what would be the most appropriate strategy to use when;
- Having real life opportunities to skim to ascertain the gist of a text or to scan for a specific piece of information;
- Ability to read texts with increasing fluency, expression and accuracy;
- Opportunities to read between and beyond the lines of text in order to comprehend texts more fully;
- Opportunities to apply their reading skills across a range of curriculum areas;
- Opportunities to experience a range of texts which offer appropriate levels of challenge and increase in complexity;
- Links between reading and writing is made explicit to learners so that they can begin to use some of the techniques and effective figurative language in their own writing

## **Writing**

The children are encouraged to write for a purpose in different genres. There should be a weekly writing lesson in a 'taught writing' jotter. All writing should be dated (a date stamp can be used in P1) and the learning intention and success criteria (I can) should be included with the writing. These will help children self and peer assess and will aid teachers when

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providing feedback. Traffic lighting or two stars and/or a wish are effective ways of writing feedback.

Writing has close links with other areas of the curriculum, for example Expressive Arts and Creative Writing, Science and functional writing and Social Studies and Critical Literacy.

Inter-disciplinary studies are likely to involve both research and a strong element of presentation, and provide valuable opportunities to extend language skills.

Teachers use their professional judgement to select appropriate stimuli and topics for writing.

The genre approach teaches children the skills involved in writing for a specific purpose and audience, using a range of stimulating contexts, linked to real life contexts wherever possible. Tools for writing are taught discretely and feed into pieces of writing.

We have a genre overview planner to ensure all writing genres are taught over a level These are:

- imaginative
- procedural
- information/ report
- persuasive writing
- recount
- report

Moderation sessions are carried out regularly by staff within stages, departments and across the whole school to ensure staff have a shared understanding of, and confidence in ascribing a level to a piece of writing. This also helps new members of staff to better understand the expected standard for each level. A bank of writing exemplars from Early to Second Level is available to further inform moderation.

Pieces of writing are completed in a writing jotter and all other written literacy work, e.g. comprehension, grammar, spelling, etc. is completed in the Literacy jotter.

## **Spelling**

Jolly Phonics is used for the teaching of phonics in Primary 1 and Nelson Grammar is introduced in Primary 2. Common words from the East Dunbartonshire list are taught in Primary 1 and 2 and the Single Word Spelling Test spelling ladders are used as the core resource from Primary 3 to Primary 7.

Active Spelling strategies are used to teach spelling throughout. Through regular assessment we identify key gaps in learning and targeted activities are used to 'plug the gap'. Doorway online is used to support spelling from P4-7. Partnership with parents is encouraged and family learning approaches to support learning and ensure equity are highlighted to parents throughout the session, relevant to children's needs.

## **Handwriting**

We aim to encourage a high standard of presentation in written work. In Primary 1 all lower and upper case letter formations are taught and these are reinforced in Primary 2. Nelson Handwriting is used from Primary 1 to 7. Linked script is introduced in Primary 3.

## **Writing skills will involve the following:**

- Children should have opportunities to write effectively for a range of different purposes and audiences;
- There will be opportunities to write for a range of real and relevant contexts;

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- Children will develop skills to plan, make notes and write at length with increasing confidence;
- Whole school approaches to writing are used in order to ensure children are developing skills in a coherent and consistent way;
- Children have opportunities from the early stages to experience high quality texts and encouraged to consider, at their own level, what makes a good text;
- Children should be given many opportunities to write at length for a range of purposes across the four contexts of learning
- Whole school approaches to writing are used in order to ensure children are learning skills in a planned and progressive way which builds on their prior learning;
- Opportunities are provided for learners to familiarise themselves with a range of writing styles and genres and have opportunity to deconstruct these with the teacher so that they can begin to use such strategies in their own writing;
- A wide range of vocabulary is used and children learn how to use this and apply this appropriately to engage the reader;
- Children experience a range of figurative language, vocabulary, punctuation, effective sentence starters and conjunctions and know how to use these to make their writing interesting;
- Children should be provided with quality models of writing Children should receive timely feedback about their writing and offered next steps to help improve their writing,
- Children should be encouraged on a regular basis to read their writing to ensure it makes sense and become self – reflective on the writing process;
- Peer and self-assessment approaches should be used to help children improve their writing.
- A high priority to should be given to technical accuracy and presentation and use of a variety of punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing.
- A range of opportunities to embed what they have learned about the writing process in literacy across a range of curriculum areas.

## **Planning**

### **Termly Planning**

In Mosshead Primary termly planning includes details of ability groups, experiences/outcomes to be met, and skills taught in each area of Literacy and English. Benchmarks are used by staff to plan teaching and learning across Early – Third level and these are used to support assessment. Resources to be used are detailed/highlighted and evaluations are completed termly. These provide information for teaching and future planning.

### **Weekly Planning**

In Mosshead Primary weekly planning includes details of differentiated activities to be carried out for whole class or groups to develop key skills in Listening and talking, Reading and Writing across the 4 contexts of learning.

### **Family Learning and Parental Engagement**

“Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience ad challenge educational disadvantage.” (Education Scotland)

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Parental involvement and engagement are key factors in securing successful outcomes for children. Research shows that when parents support learning and when children live in a stimulating home learning environment, attainment and achievement are improved. In Mosshead Primary we work with the Parent Council to develop and refresh parental engagement and family learning and individualise this work to meet the needs of parents and carers. Seesaw allows a partnership between staff, pupils and parents to share examples of literacy from school and home and build the children's skills in these different contexts and environments.