

The Highland Literacy Strategy

For Leaders of Learning

“Working together to inspire learning and achievement in
Highland Communities”



2013

Introduction

The Highland Literacy Strategy aims to raise standards in reading, writing, talking and listening. To equip our learners for life in the 21st century, it is vital that, as leaders of learning, teachers recognise the fundamental importance of literacy and its place in the curriculum. All teachers have a responsibility to promote and develop reading, writing, talking and listening skills.

The purposes of this document are to:

- highlight the 'essential elements' which are required to support the development of literacy
- provide links to resources which will help staff to establish these 'essential elements'.

The Journey to Excellence <http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/> highlights five broad areas of excellence:

- vision and leadership
- learning and teaching
- culture and ethos
- people
- partnership.

These five broad areas of excellence provide an overarching structure for our strategy. Adopting this structure should help schools and centres to take action in these areas, enabling learners to develop lifelong capacities, attitudes, capabilities and skills in literacy.

By scrolling to the bottom of each section of the strategy, you will find a list of attachments. These provide you with resources produced by schools in Highland and beyond. We are most grateful to these schools for being willing to share their work. Some of these resources are 'works in progress' and are intended to prompt discussion. Practitioners are encouraged to explore and use these resources to support the development of literacy across the curriculum in their own schools.

Vision and Leadership

Vision and Leadership focuses on developing a common vision and fostering high quality leadership at all levels. [Journey to Excellence]

Essential elements for every school in Highland

- Establish a policy for literacy which aligns with the school's vision and values, is contributed to and understood by all staff and clearly details expectations in achievement, learning and the curriculum.
- Formulate a plan of action, as part of the school's improvement plan, which details how this policy will be implemented across the school.
- Establish a literacy group [and, if possible, appoint a literacy coordinator] to lead developments. Within the secondary sector, give appropriate consideration to the composition of this group.
- Where possible, ring-fence time for this literacy group and / or literacy coordinator to undertake development work.
- Ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the importance of literacy and of their responsibility for ensuring that learners acquire literacy skills for life, learning and work.
- Ensure that every teacher has a clear understanding of how literacy is being promoted and developed within the school's curriculum.
- Ensure that appropriate systems are in place to track pupil progress and achievement in literacy.

Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching is the core business of schools. [Journey to Excellence]

Essential elements for every school in Highland

- Promote the fundamental importance of literacy to learners at all stages of their lives.
- Ensure consistent implementation of the Highland Council *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy* in relation to all lessons across the school.
- Share standards in literacy – within the school, across the Associated School Group and beyond school to FE, HE and employment -- to develop effective transitions at all stages (See Highland Sharing Standards Policy).
- Ensure that quality time is given to the teaching and learning of core skills in literacy.
- Ensure that learners have opportunities to learn in relevant and rewarding contexts.
- Ensure that staff use the Literacy Experiences and Outcomes to plan learning throughout broad general education and that particular literacy outcomes are the focus of learning in the Senior Phase.
- Ensure that tasks and activities over time provide appropriate breadth, challenge and application.
- Ensure that technology plays a key role in teaching e.g. through use of computer programmes, word processing tools, interactive software, interactive presentation devices etc.
- Ensure that technology used by young people in their daily lives plays a significant role in learning
- Ensure that staff provide learners over time with a balance of literacy activities in reading, writing, talking and listening.
- Ensure that staff take account of prior learning so that learners can make choices about what to do, how to do it and who is going to do it.
- Ensure that staff agree at least one literacy success criterion with learners for each learning activity and that feedback concentrates on that criterion.

Culture and Ethos

All schools need a vibrant and progressive culture and climate of continuous innovation. [Journey to Excellence]

Essential elements for every school in Highland

- Promote a positive attitude to literacy amongst all staff, learners and parents.
- Make literacy learning fun.
- Ensure literacy has a high profile throughout the school e.g. displays which show examples of high quality writing from learners, quotes from learners, graphics.
- Ensure learners experience regular success in literacy and that this is celebrated in class / school.
- Raise the bar in literacy --- set and share appropriately high standards for all.
- Give learners responsibility for their literacy learning – making choices about which texts to read and view, peer assessing each others' writing, maintaining a portfolio of their best work . . .
- Encourage risk---taking for learners and teachers to inspire innovation and creativity --- errors are learning opportunities.

People

Excellent schools involve their whole school community in reflecting on their life and work, and in seeking challenges for the future. [Journey to Excellence]

Essential elements for every school in Highland

Staff

- Give clear consideration to each person's role in leading literacy learning i.e.:
 - each member of Senior Management and Extended Management Team
 - each member of School Literacy Group
 - each teacher
 - all other staff working within the classroom environment.
- Provide opportunities for staff to engage in quality continuing professional development which focuses on improving their own confidence and competence in teaching literacy.
- Involve staff within the school and the wider ASG in professional dialogue where they share and reflect on practice, including methodology and the language of literacy.

Young people

- Encourage young people to reflect about their learning in literacy through dialogue and writing.
- Take account of the views of young people when planning learning opportunities / activities – text, task and outcome.
- Take account of the tastes and interests of young people when choosing relevant texts to study – fiction / non-fiction; print / audio-visual

Partnership

**Partnership makes most of the opportunities for schools to work with other agencies, the community and parents to improve learning and teaching.
[Journey to Excellence]**

Essential elements for every school in Highland

Parents

- Keep parents informed of literacy developments.
- Consider how best to report each pupil's progress in literacy to parents e.g. in secondary, how best to summarise information from various departments.
- Encourage parents to contribute and take an active role in promoting literacy at home e.g. reading with their child, talking about TV programmes and films.
- Improve parental confidence in literacy in order to help support their children's learning e.g. by leading support sessions where parents' skills can be refreshed.

Other agencies

- Make all partners aware of the school literacy policy.
- Engage partners in dialogue to ensure activities and experiences are appropriate.

Wider community

- Be proactive in looking for opportunities within the local community to develop literacy e.g. using local newspaper for print texts to analyse and as vehicle for publication.
- Promote real-life contexts for learning by involving different community members and businesses e.g. invite local media staff to school to reinforce key education messages.
- Make use of the outdoor environment to enhance literacy skills e.g. using landmarks to produce a walk brochure for tourists in local hotels.

Support

Essential information and resources for every school in Highland

The Highland Council --- The Highland Literacy Project on Glow

<https://portal.glowscotland.org.uk/establishments/thehighlandcouncil/Highland%20Literacy%20Group/default.aspx>

The Highland Council – Highland Literacy Blog

<http://highlandliteracy.com>

Education Scotland

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/languages/litandenglish/index.asp>

NAR

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/assessment/supportmaterials/nar/index.asp>

WHAT WE THINK ABOUT LITERACY

Class teacher

*Talking about language
and why words matter in our everyday life
should become our routine....*

Parent/Carer

I hope that my children will learn to express their thoughts and ideas through writing and speaking, and also to develop their skills in reading and listening to increase their potential to learn and understand . . .

Ruaridh, P1

Writing is fun.
It calms you down in a
tantrum.

Kirsty, Pre School

I learn new from
books.

Head Teacher

*Literacy lies at the
forefront of every lesson
we teach.*

Employer

Literacy has become MORE, not less important in recent years. We need young people who can communicate well with a variety of people and groups in a variety of contexts and situations.

Connor, S5

It's not just about getting your qualifications in English. I wish I had realized earlier how important literacy is in ALL subjects.