

Extending Opportunities for Success with Literacy – A Strategic Approach

Education, Children and Families Committee

13 September 2011

Purpose of report

- 1 This report informs members of the City of Edinburgh Council's strategy towards improving literacy skills in all of our young people.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Our Literacy Strategy is a key priority within the City of Edinburgh Council's schools and communities. A Literacy Strategy group has been formed (appendix 1) to bring the following workstreams together in a single common framework:
 - Literacy Across Learning
 - The Integrated Literacy Strategy
 - Community Literacy and Numeracy
 - The Parenting Framework
- 2.2 This report outlines strategies to improve literacy within early years establishments and primary and secondary schools. It also outlines specific intervention approaches contained within our Integrated Literacy strategy and makes reference to the work of Community Learning and Development in developing adult literacies.
- 2.3 Attainment and achievement in literacy across all sectors is not included in this report but will be reported on as part of the annual attainment report in November 2011.
- 2.4 The Education Authority's approach to improving outcomes in literacy, in particular the reading and writing levels of the lowest attaining 20% of learners, involves three approaches.
 - Generic improvements in learning and teaching and attainment and achievement in literacy and English within the 0-3 and 3-18 curriculum frameworks.

- Targeted intervention to address the needs of learners who require additional opportunities and support to address a range of barriers to success in reading and writing (the lowest attaining 20%). This is known as the Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy
- A framework for effective monitoring of progress for individual learners, for school effectiveness and best value.

2.5 Improvements in developing secure literacy skills also contribute to a number of the wider priorities for Children and Families in Edinburgh including:

- improving support in the early years so that problems are identified and addressed early;
- improving outcomes and life chances for looked after children;
- increasing the number of young people in positive destinations;
- ensuring successful implementation of Curriculum for Excellence; and
- implementing the key principles of Getting it Right in Edinburgh.

3 Main report

Improvements and consistent approaches to the learning and teaching of literacy, and in particular, reading and writing.

- 3.1 Building the capacity of teachers at all stages to deliver effective learning and teaching in reading and writing and engage children and young people in their literacy learning is a key element of our core literacy strategy. This is achieved through the provision of high quality continuous professional development (CPD) for practitioners, the development of high quality learning and teaching resources and support and challenge in all schools from both Quality Improvement Officers and the Integrated Literacy team.
- 3.2 Literacy across learning is a key element of Curriculum for Excellence and is the responsibility of all staff across all subject areas. Comprehensive advice and support has been made available to schools including Literacy across Learning implementation plans for each sector, the *Edinburgh Literacy and English Progressions Pathways* resource from nursery to S3, literacy coordinators in each school and extensive opportunities for CPD for practitioners.
- 3.3 Learning and teaching approaches in teaching literacy include active and collaborative approaches to learning, teaching phonics and developing thinking skills. The *“Edinburgh Thinks” 3-18 toolkit of resources to develop higher order questioning and thinking skills* was developed in 2010-2011 to improve reading across learning. This resource was supported by extensive CPD to all literacy coordinators, probationer teachers, early years’ practitioners, including partner providers and a range of staff from the secondary sector. A number of parental workshops were also held. *“Edinburgh Thinks” 3-18 toolkit* and our work in developing thinking skills has been recognised nationally by Learning and Teaching Scotland (now Education Scotland) and our materials are on their literacy web-site. These materials were also showcased at national conferences including the Scottish

Learning Festival. The Edinburgh Literacy and English Glow site supports effective learning and teaching in reading, writing, talking and listening.

- 3.4 The Edinburgh Integrated Literacy strategy reflects the vision outlined in the national Literacy Action Plan. It was developed in recognition that, against a background of success, a significant minority of learners, some 20%, were being left behind. A range of resources have been developed and the following outlines key workstreams:

- a common literacy assessment framework;
- the implementation of the Edinburgh Literacy and Dyslexia Guidelines in all schools;
- the development of a programme of intervention for children (0-5) at greatest risk;
- the development of consistent and sustained reading interventions using structured phonics programmes; and
- a rolling programme of interventions for improving reading in S1 and S2 in secondary schools.

- 3.5 Standardised Tests in reading at the beginning and end of P1, end of P4 and P7 and end of S2 provide schools with data to identify those pupils who require additional support in developing their literacy skills. Schools then use the guidance contained within the Literacy and Dyslexia guidelines to support young people with additional needs including learners with English with an Additional Language (EAL) and learners with a disability. Schools also work in partnership with Speech and Language therapists and Educational Psychologists to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.

Specific strategies to improve literacy skills

- 3.6 Literacy coordinators are established in all nursery, primary, secondary and special schools. They coordinate literacy work within their schools and lead the identification and dissemination of good practice.
- 3.7 There is close working between schools and the Information, Learning Resource service to maximise partnership working between school librarians, central libraries and the Scottish Book Trust to develop improved literacy outcomes for young people.
- 3.8 Improving writing skills is a key priority. *Big Writing*, which is a coherent programme and consistent approaches for teaching writing from P1 to S2, was implemented in some schools in session 2010-2011. *Big Writing* will continue to be rolled out across all primary schools in 2011-2012 and promoted as an effective approach to developing writing across learning in secondary schools.
- 3.9 Children & Families fund a Literacy Champion for Looked after children and young people. The focus of this work is to develop reading programmes with looked after children, carers, library staff and other partners and provide training to care staff.

Early Years

- 3.10 In 2010-11, a literacy survey was carried out in early years settings in positive action areas to audit existing programmes, approaches and practices. Findings and good practice were shared with Head Teachers at a briefing event with a view to sharing successful approaches across all settings. A new resource for practitioners and carers, working with children from 0-5, was launched in 2011. The *Circle Collaboration (City of Edinburgh Council, Queen Margaret University and NHS Lothian) Up, Up and Away* resource provides strategies to help practitioners in early identification of potential barriers to language development. The resource provides clear guidance on early literacy development for all children and includes strategies to engage with parents to promote literacy and learning at home. A training programme has been planned to disseminate *Up, Up and Away* to all early years establishments, including partner providers.

Primary Schools

- 3.11 The development of a new phonics reading programme for P1 learners – *Literacy Rich Edinburgh: a P1 phonics programme* has been completed. This new, inclusive programme reflects the best practice in early years active learning and has been developed by a group of lead practitioners. It provides a consistent approach to the teaching of reading in P1. This new programme is being launched in all primary schools in September 2011 with comprehensive training for all P1 teachers. Progress with its implementation will be monitored throughout 2011-2012. It is planned to develop this programme up to P3.
- 3.12 In all schools, the delivery of active learning approaches supports the delivery of the literacy and English curriculum as described for Early, First and Second level within Curriculum for Excellence.

Secondary Schools

- 3.13 In all schools, the delivery of active learning approaches supports the delivery of the literacy and English curriculum as described for Third and Fourth level within CfE.
- 3.14 All staff in four secondary schools have been involved in specific literacy CPD activities supported and delivered by the Integrated Literacy Team: Castlebrae, Broughton, Craigroyston, Wester Hailes Education Centre. The Literacy and English Quality Improvement Officer, an Educational Psychologist, a Speech and Language Therapist and a Support for Learning teacher then work with key staff and pupils in each school to raise attainment in literacy for the bottom 20% of the cohort. In the two schools involved in 2010-2011, attainment in reading has improved significantly.

Partnership Working

- 3.15 A wider range of partners are represented on the Literacy Reference Group. Partnership working includes ECLIS (Edinburgh City Libraries and Information Services), the Scottish Book Trust (SBT), the National Health Service and

universities. In addition to partnership working already outlined, further successful initiatives to improve literacy include:

- the pilot of Bookbug for 4 year olds which targeted the lowest 20% of children in their pre school year involving SBT, ECLIS and a range of colleagues across the Children and Families department including Family Learning Workers and Information and Learning Resources.
- Teen Titles, the department's teen literacy magazine continues to promote reading for enjoyment across the city and beyond.

Framework for effective monitoring of progress in Literacy

- 3.16 All schools and establishments are required to self-evaluate their progress in Literacy, specifically reading and writing, using CfE levels and standardised testing in reading. Quality Improvement officers, as part of the support and challenge agenda to schools, confirm these evaluations and work with the school to target areas of underachievement and agree and implement improvements.

Adult Literacies

- 3.17 CLD provide a range of community based learning opportunities to adults needing to improve their literacy and numeracy skills levels as outlined in the Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) plan.
- 3.18 The first strand of this provision is to work with learners to improve their own and their families' life chances through learning around Employability, Financial Literacy, Youth Literacy and Core Skills.
- 3.19 The second strand is to provide adult learning to improve the literacy levels of their children through specific family learning and social practice approaches and other learning work with parents.
- 3.20 CLD is the lead partner in the Edinburgh Literacies Partnership (ELP), a forum of providers including CLD, ECLIS, colleges, NHS, Criminal Justice Authority and voluntary organisations. There are regular opportunities for staff, including volunteer tutors, to participate in literacy CPD activities, some of which are accredited.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Fairer Scotland Funding of £100K has been used to develop the Early Years resource for 0-5 aged children *Up Up and Away*.
- 4.2 Improving Literacy outcomes continues to be a priority to be delivered within existing resources.
- 4.3 A reduction in class sizes in 16% of primary schools, targeted in areas of multiple deprivation, provides a significant additional resource.

5 Equalities Impact

5.1 No negative impact anticipated as a result of this report.

6 Environmental Impact

6.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

7 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- a) note this report;
- b) note that attainment in literacy will be included as part of the overall attainment report; and
- c) agree to receive an annual report on progress in securing improvements in literacy from the Director of Children and Families.

Gillian Tee
Director Children and Families

Appendices	Appendix: Strategic Framework for Improving Literacy – organisational chart
Contact/tel/Email	Karen Prophet 0131 469 3048
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	
Background Papers	

City of Edinburgh Strategic Framework for Improving Literacy

