

## City of Edinburgh Literacy Strategy

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### Education, Children and Families Committee

8 March 2012

#### 1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report informs members of the City of Edinburgh Council's strategy towards improving literacy skills in all of our young people. Further to the report taken to the Education, Children and Families Committee in September 2011, our Literacy Strategy is the focus for our validated self-evaluation visit from Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMIE) from March 2012. The City of Edinburgh Council is one of 5 local authorities invited by the Scottish Government to be involved in supporting improvements in literacy at a national level.

#### 2 Summary

- 2.1 Reflecting the vision and principles of the National Literacy Action Plan, the Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy for early years and school aged children and young people delivers targeted interventions to meet 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%). It is founded on a partnership approach and driven by a number of interdisciplinary teams from Children and Families department and other partners such as Edinburgh City Libraries, NHS Lothian, universities, Book Trust Scotland.
- 2.2 This report outlines progress and developments within the following areas:
- A common assessment framework
  - Edinburgh framework for Literacy and Dyslexia 3-18
  - The development and implementation of a systematic programme of intervention for children (0-5) at greatest risk and requiring protection.
  - Primary developments including reading and writing interventions
  - Secondary interventions for improving reading in S1/S2.
  - Looked after Children - Additional Literacy Support
  - Curriculum for Excellence 3-18 - Literacy Across Learning
- 2.3 This report also outlines strategies to improve adult literacies through the work of Community Learning and Development.

- 2.4 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**

#### **A common assessment framework**

- 3.1 A standardised baseline assessment is used at the beginning of P1 to help identify pupils who would benefit from additional support and challenge. Approaches to standardised assessment at the end of P1 are currently under review.
- 3.2 Standardised tests in reading at the 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 work closely with the English as Additional Language service (EAL) to support the progress of bilingual learners. Schools also have access to further support from a wide range of additional support services including Educational Psychologists, the Literacy and Dyslexia Support Service and Speech Language Therapists.

#### **The Edinburgh framework for Literacy and Dyslexia 3-18**

- 3.3 Guidance and assessment materials were issued to all establishments in August 2010. This included the comprehensive publication, *The Edinburgh Literacy and Dyslexia Guidelines*. The Guidelines are the result of extensive collaboration between teachers, school support practitioners and health professionals and reflect best practice in literacy assessment. In particular, they represent an approved approach for schools and services when identifying and meeting additional needs in literacy. CPD on making effective use of the Guidelines is delivered by the Support Co-ordinators.

#### **The development and implementation of a systematic programme of intervention for children (0-5)**

- 3.4 The Early Years Literacy Support Group has summarised and collated information from evaluations of last session's work in Positive Action settings and has examined the baseline scores of children who have been part of intervention groups. This information is now being used to decide which interventions have had a positive impact on children's early literacy development and which therefore would be recommended for use in the future.

- 3.5 An action plan is currently being developed to help early years practitioners support children's early literacy development with an accompanying flow chart that will guide them in using and reviewing interventions.
- 3.6 Early years practitioners are continuing to be supported through the roll out of the *Up, Up and Away* resource. This resource supports early communication and literacy development from 0-5. 47 local authority early setting and 32 partnership provider nurseries have participated in the training and further plans will see all early years settings including partner provider nurseries receive training.
- 3.7 The pilot of Bookbug for 4 year olds is an initiative which targets the lowest achieving 20% of children in their pre school year. The delivery of this pilot involved the Scottish Book Trust, a range of colleagues across the Children and Families department including Family Learning Workers and Information and Learning Resource staff and staff from Edinburgh City Libraries. There is a commitment to mainstream this work in 2012-13 through a joint agreement between Edinburgh City Libraries and Children and Families.
- 3.8 PEEP is a national early learning programme which aims to support all parents and carers with children from birth to aged five years, encouraging their child's development and learning through everyday fun activities in a group or at home. Our aim is to develop a city wide PEEP programme for parents using existing resources. Practitioners from a variety of early years settings have been trained including local authority, voluntary sector and the NHS. Voluntary sector Sure Start Projects have supported this roll out and it is now included in part of their service level agreement with CEC. There are now over 50 groups running each term across all areas of the city.
- 3.9 Play@home is a parenting programme which aims to strengthen family bonds, develop parenting skills and encourage physical activity through the medium of play. Over 200 professionals in Edinburgh have been trained in play@home principles since 2010. Play@home principles are used in PEEP group work. There are currently three specific play@home groups running at North Edinburgh Arts Centre, Moffat Early Years Campus and The Prentice Centre.

**Primary School - The delivery of consistent and sustained reading interventions using structured phonics programmes to improve the decoding and comprehension skills of primary learners.**

**Literacy Rich Edinburgh: a P1 phonics programme**

- 3.10 Recall CPD sessions for P1 staff will be held on 26 and 29 of March 2012. These sessions are designed to evaluate the impact of the new P1 programme, support sharing practice and explore how assessment informs next steps in learning. Informal feedback to date on the implementation of Literacy Rich Edinburgh in P1 has been very positive.

### **Literacy Rich Edinburgh: a P2 phonics programme**

- 3.11 We are delighted to announce that the development of a new phonics reading programme for P2 learners is now under way. The new resource, supporting materials and approaches are currently in development. The work builds on the very well -received *Literacy Rich Edinburgh: a P1 phonics programme* and like the P1 resource, reflects the very latest practice in early years' active learning. It is being developed by the same group of lead practitioners, including staff from EAL and other ASL services. The new resource will be launched in October 2012 with supporting CPD.

### **Primary Reading Intervention for P6/7 children in Positive Action schools – *Fresh Start***

- 3.12 *Fresh Start* training for 45 teachers took place in November 2011. Standardised assessments were undertaken by P6 and P7 pupils in 19 schools and pupils identified for the intervention. The *Fresh Start* literacy programme is now under way in 19 schools with approximately 300 pupils taking part; early feedback is very positive with great enthusiasm being shown by staff and pupils involved. Support for schools is ongoing through school link staff, sharing practice sessions and follow- up training days in March and April.

### **Progressive Vocabulary Teaching**

- 3.13 A pilot programme on *Progressive Vocabulary* is currently being developed by Speech and Language therapists and staff in Sighthill Primary School, a positive action school. This delivers a structured approach to learning and teaching of higher order vocabulary skills. The pilot focuses on delivering and evaluating this programme with primary 1 and 2 pupils however P5/6/7 learners are also engaged in this programme through additional CPD and mentoring support for teaching staff at these stages. If the evaluation is successful, this programme will be rolled out across all positive action primary schools enhancing the *Edinburgh Rich: a P1 Phonics programme*. Initial findings show the work having a positive impact on children's literacy learning.

### ***Big Writing***

- 3.14 The *Big Writing* approach continues to be rolled out across primary schools and school support services. Our aim is to have staff trained in all our primary schools and appropriate support services by session 2012-13. Extensive CPD is delivered in *Big Writing*, supporting its implementation. A *Big Writing* CPD support package for schools was launched to primary literacy co-ordinators in February.
- 3.15 A very successful CPD session on using *Big Writing* approaches across learning in the secondary sector, led by staff at Currie CHS, was held for secondary teachers in early February. This CPD session will be offered again so look out for more information.

## **Secondary School - A rolling programme of sustainable interventions for improving reading in S1 and 2 in secondary schools.**

### **SRA Corrective Reading Programme**

- 3.16 Support for Learning and English subject staff are involved in improving the reading skills of identified groups of learners through the delivery of phonics-based reading programmes and other interventions for those who have additional needs in reading. All secondary schools have been supported to improve the reading skills of young people in S1 and S2 by the provision of the SRA Corrective Reading programme, commonly known as 'Fast Track'. Most schools now have the programme up and running with the rest planning to start soon. Schools use the Single Word Reading Test (SWRT) and Single Word Spelling Test (SWST) pre and post intervention to measure improvement and will be asked to report on progress to both the school and centrally.

### **S1/S2 Integrated Literacy Programme**

- 3.17 Established partnership work with Speech and Language Therapists is in place in 7 Edinburgh secondary schools focusing on vocabulary acquisition across learning. The S1/S2 Integrated Literacy work is based on strong evidence that word knowledge relates to both reading comprehension and wider academic success. This work involves team teaching with staff from different subject departments on subject specific and cross-curricular vocabulary and active reading strategies related to vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Schools involved to date include Broughton HS, Castlebrae CHS, Craigroyston CHS, WHEC, Tynecastle HS, Liberton HS and Gracemount HS.

### ***Big Writing* Programme**

- 3.18 Improving writing skills is a key priority. A very successful CPD session on using *Big Writing* approaches across learning in the secondary sector was held for secondary teachers in early February. Secondary schools continue to roll out *Big Writing* or an alternative structured writing programme for pupils in S1/S2.

### **Looked after Children - Additional Literacy Support**

- 3.19 Additional Literacy Support for this group aims to ensure that, where appropriate, LAC receive early effective support in school as part of wider EILS developments. A two year study by Psychological Services has shown statistically significant improvements in reading and spelling in P5 and P7 cohorts of pupils.
- 3.20 Psychologists continue to emphasise the additional support needs of LAC pupils in all schools. The creation of a Reading Record for the lowest attaining LAC pupils is being piloted. Methods are also being investigated for supporting LAC pupils in the community (e.g. through libraries or reading mentors). Information and Learning Resources staff work closely with psychologists to help source books for looked after children in primary schools while school

librarians in secondary schools help those young people now in S1 to choose books. At Christmas, all looked after children received a book of their choice purchased through donations by City of Edinburgh Council staff.

- 3.21 Children and 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.

### **Curriculum for Excellence 3-18 – Literacy across Learning**

- 3.22 Literacy co-ordinators are well-established in all primary and secondary schools, in some special schools and school support services. Network meetings focus on assessment and moderation of progress, updates on other aspects of the EILS, the launch of the new group reading resource, *Literacies Circles* and are held throughout the session.
- 3.23 The literacy and English short life working group provides extensive support and resources to schools on assessment and reporting in literacy, supporting practitioners to engage in professional dialogue and understand standards within the new CfE levels.

### **Adult Literacies**

- 3.24 CLD provide a range of community based learning opportunities to adults needing to improve their literacy and numeracy skills levels using a social practice approach as outlined in the Adult Literacies in Scotland Guidance 2020.
- 3.25 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, Core Skills, work with young adults 16-25 years, and English as a Second Language.
- 3.26 The second strand is to provide a range of family learning activity for parents and carers in positive action schools and early years establishments to enhance children's readiness for school and to support parents in the development of children's pre-literacy and literacy skills.
- 3.27 CLD is the lead partner in the Edinburgh Literacies Partnership (ELP), a forum of providers including CLD, libraries, 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 Improving Literacy outcomes continues to be a priority to be delivered within existing resources.
- 4.2 A reduction in class sizes in 16% of primary schools, targeted in areas of multiple deprivation, provides a significant additional resource.

4.3 Fairer Scotland Funding of £100K has been used to develop the Early Years resource for 0-5 aged children *Up Up and Away*.

## 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

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Appendices	None.
Contact/tel/Email	Karen Prophet 0131 469 3048
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	National Outcome 3 - We are better educated, more skilled, more successful, renowned for our research and innovation National Outcome 4 - Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens National Outcome 5 - Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
Background Papers	