



# CARSTAIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Literacy & English and Literacy Across Learning Position Statement

August 2022

## **Rationale**

Carstairs Primary School endorses the Principles and Practice ideals within the Curriculum for Excellence, where literacy is defined as:

*'the set of skills which allow an individual to engage fully in society and in learning, through the different forms of language, and the range of texts, which society values and finds useful.'*

We strongly agree that:

*'Language and literacy are of personal, social and economic importance...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.'*

*(Curriculum for Excellence, Building the Curriculum 1 p.20)*

Research evidence provides clear links between literacy proficiency and deprivation, unemployment, health, quality of life and even life expectancy (National Literacy Trust, 2018).

At Carstairs Primary School the learner is firmly at the centre of all we do. We are committed to achieving the highly proficient literacy skills in our learners, overcoming impacts of the global Covid-19 pandemic and we are committed to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Developing, nurturing, and extending learners' literacy skills an essential part of our daily work. We are committed to fostering a 'zero tolerance' approach to illiteracy, with long, successful, happy and fulfilled lives our deepest wish for our learners.

## **Aims**

- To provide high quality teaching and learning experiences for all learners.
- To provide a stimulating (including visually), text rich teaching and learning environment for all learners.
- To provide challenge, enjoyment, breadth, depth, relevance, coherence, personalisation, and choice in all aspects of literacy.
- To make meaningful links between literacy skills and the application of these across the curriculum, in all aspect of school life.
- To promote high standards in the acquisition and use of all literacy skills.
- To improve standards of comprehension and higher order literacy skills, moving beyond basic literacy.
- To provide opportunities for learners to collaborate through interdisciplinary learning and extend their literacy skills.
- To engage parents in supporting their child/ren's literacy development.
- To work collaboratively with partner agencies and other establishments to help ensure the best possible provision and sharing of best practice.
- To provide high quality CLPL opportunities to ensure that the teaching of literacy is maintained at the highest possible level.

## **Aims into Action**

Literacy Across Learning means that the development of literacy should never be exclusive to single slots in a class timetable. It is imperative that learners are immersed in high quality teaching

and learning that develops core literacy and English skills, as well as opportunities to develop literacy throughout the curriculum.

Literacy and English skills must be taught in an explicit manner if pupils are to be expected to effectively develop and extend these skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, learners cannot be expected to undertake research within a social subjects theme, without having been effectively taught a range of strategies that will support them in this, just as children cannot be expected to read words without understanding single sounds. Specific literacy skills do not however need to be taught in isolation. For example, a talking and listening activity where the children are evaluating and building on the ideas of others may then be the basis for the development and creation of a persuasive writing piece.

Our staff must be focused on developing strong core literacy skills and also on giving our pupils many and varied opportunities to use and further develop these skills across the curriculum.

As with all curricular areas, lesson intentions and success criteria must be explicit and consistently shared effectively so that our pupils are in no doubt what they need to do in order to succeed.

In keeping with Curriculum for Excellence and the Refreshed Curriculum Narrative (2019), we are guided in our actions by, and committed to, the Four Capacities and Four Contexts for our children's learner journeys:

Four Capacities – <i>we wish all children to be</i>	Four Contexts – <i>we wish all children to learn within</i>
Successful Learners	Curriculum Areas & Subjects
Responsible Citizens	Interdisciplinary Learning
Effective Contributors	Ethos & Life of the School as a Community
Confident Individuals	Opportunities for Personal Achievement

We take full cognisance of curriculum Benchmarks and Experiences & Outcomes in our planning for progression across all aspects of learning.

Staff at Carstairs Primary School must employ a skilful mix of appropriate approaches tailored to the needs of their pupils including:

- Effective direct and interactive teaching.
- The use of relevant, real-life and enjoyable contexts which build upon pupils' experiences.
- Following children and young people's interests through responsive planning in order to increase motivation.
- Collaborative working and independent thinking and learning as appropriate.
- Making meaningful links for learners across different curriculum areas through interdisciplinary teaching and 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.
- A balance of spontaneous play and planned activities.
- Use of digital technologies to support both teaching and learning.

This approach permeates all aspects of literacy teaching and learning, and literacy across learning. The following provides further information on our position within each core area of literacy.

## **Writing**

In line with the refreshed Curriculum Narrative, Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks and E/Os, our progression planning linked to the writing organisers - *Enjoyment and Choice, Tools for Writing, Organising and Using Information, Creating Texts* – high standards of writing for all are striven for.

Teachers should ensure that best use is made of the school's progression planners, along with core resources, to support the teaching of writing. Resources include: Phonics International, Jolly Phonics, Big Writing, Talk for Writing, Nelson Grammar, Nelson Handwriting. Our core pedagogy throughout the school for the teaching of extended writing is based on the Talk for Writing framework.

Keeping progression planning firmly in mind, teachers are able to use materials of their own choosing and to adapt resources, ideas and approaches, as the needs of learners dictate. Staff should regularly seek pupil views day to day in class, and seek to use pupil voice, as well as assessment outcomes, to support lesson planning. Staff need to ensure that the calibre of any self-selected materials is high, that close attention is paid to best impact for learners and that appropriate differentiation takes place, in accordance with learner need.

Teachers must explicitly teach the tools of writing meaning that Grammar, Spelling and Handwriting features in all classes, with the balance between each discipline being determined by the needs of the pupils. These tools for writing are used across the curriculum and all staff must encourage, expect and reinforce, the correct use of these across the curriculum.

At all stages, teacher modelling is a key feature of effective teaching and learning; enabling learners need to know what 'good' writing looks like across the range of writing genre and learners need to be guided through the steps to achieving it.

## **Listening and Talking**

Working in line with the Four Capacities, the Four Contexts, CfE Experiences / Outcomes and Benchmarks, and making best use of our planning for progression, teachers should make effective use of our school's Talking and Listening Toolkit (used across the Learning Community), alongside other relevant materials available, and self-selected innovative ideas to effectively teach high levels of skill in Listening and Talking. Teachers are expected to ensure that *Enjoyment and Choice, Tools for Listening and Talking, Finding and Using Information, Understanding, Analysing and Evaluating, Creating Texts* are taught across each level.

Teacher modelling must feature as a strong, key teaching tool in Listening and Talking, as in Writing. Explicit teaching of the tools for Listening and Talking must be carefully planned and used to support all curriculum areas. Listening and Talking activities permeate every curricular area and staff must endeavour to exploit interdisciplinary opportunities.

## **Reading**

In keeping with the Refreshed Curriculum Narrative, as per other areas, our progression planning, along with an appropriate range of core resources for reading, supports teaching and learning under the following reading organisers: *Enjoyment & Choice, Tools for Reading, Finding & Using Information, Understanding, Analysing & Evaluating*. It is essential that learners are provided with opportunities to revisit knowledge, understanding and skills to enhance their reading aptitudes through plentiful opportunities to apply learning in a variety of contexts, using a variety of texts.

The school's core reading resources support a consistent approach to the development of reading skills. These are centrally stored and include the following: Phonics International (*digitally stored*), Jolly Phonics, Oxford Reading Tree books at all stages (fiction and non-fiction), Dandelion Launchers and Readers, Pie Corbett Reading Spine, Totem and Talisman Readers and class sets of novels.

Teachers must provide opportunities for learners to engage in quality discussion of texts they are immersed in, developing prediction, clarification, summarising, and questioning skills. Our 'Curriculum for Excellence Reading Strategies, A Tool for Reading' materials support the teachers' help ensure consistent pedagogy to deliver progressive teaching of higher order reading skills, however, staff are afforded opportunities to be innovative and creative in their practice, using different approaches and activities to develop higher order reading skills, as long as progression is kept at the heart of planning for success.

High quality opportunities for children to acquire the relevant phonological, grammatical and graphological awareness must be provided progressively and at an appropriate pace, in order to support children to build effective skills in reading comprehension. Direct and explicit attention must be given to the development of reading comprehension skills and use should be made of multimodal texts.

Active approaches, which have clear links to collaboration, listening, talking and writing opportunities that promote higher order thinking and meaning making, must be encouraged and nurtured in all classes.

Hearing children read aloud is an important part of the development of reading skills and should be utilised at all stages. Reading aloud supports children to understand story structure and the use of punctuation, tone and expression to aid the comprehension of texts. Reading aloud develops children's vocabulary and encourages them to engage with new and unfamiliar language. We offer the following as a guideline for teachers, to supporting the development of children's reading:

P1 / P2 (Early / First Level) – Daily

P3 (First Level) – A minimum of three times per week

P4 / P5 (First / Second Level) – A minimum of twice per week

P5 / P6 (Second Level) – Once per week

P7 (Second Level) – Once per week

This guideline should be given careful consideration, as part of teachers' professional judgement when planning to support learners to attain highly in reading.

Reading aloud to children allows for modelling of good habits, sharing enthusiasm for reading and helps promote a love of reading. Reading aloud to children helps make stories and poems come alive, immerses children in texts and allows us to help children make connections, to extend comprehension, to develop their listening and their thinking. We can support the extension of children's vocabulary, tackle a wide range of subjects and find 'ways in' to critical thinking about important issues. Reading aloud to children also helps build a sense of community within our class and school. As far as possible, all classes should also be read to by their teacher, daily.

## Whole School Reading Culture

We believe that the acquisition of positive attitudes towards reading and the development of a lifelong love of reading are vital and contribute to learner success. In order to help us achieve this, all staff are committed to upholding a positive whole school reading culture.

Our school library is a bright, inviting space at the heart of our school. Classes have twice weekly slots to allow pupils to enjoy reading for pleasure, borrow books of their choosing, and participate in lessons using the library. Fiction books are book banded to allow the children to make suitable choices, guided by their teacher.

Our school librarians are P7 pupils support the school in developing its reading culture by holding book surgeries, making recommendations, and generally managing and organising the books and equipment.

Each classroom has its own 'book nook' with a small selection of books that are rotated on a regular basis. To foster a love of books each class teachers will read aloud to their classes as well as planning for personal reading time.

In addition, we develop our reading culture through our termly reading challenges, having pupil run book clubs, parent and child Book and Biccie sessions, use of interactive story sacks for young learners, taking part in authors live events, and arranging visits from authors and storytellers, and whole school participation in Book Week Scotland.

## **Literacy Across Learning**

Pupils should be provided with plentiful opportunities to apply and further extend their reading, writing, listening and talking skills, to support and enhance their learning in all curricular areas. High levels of commitment from teacher in planning for the provision of both support and challenge, is expected.

Staff should seek to harness the motivation that inter-disciplinary learning and collaborative approaches provide. Staff should provide opportunities for pupils to share their learning with other classes, with parents and with the wider community, where appropriate.

All teachers should ensure that their learners have plentiful opportunities, *across the curriculum*, to:

- **Listen and Talk for learning:**
  - o Engage in group and class discussions of appropriate complexity.
  - o Learn collaboratively.
  - o Explaining their thinking to others.
  - o Explore factors of influence and persuasion and consider the reliability of information.
- **Read for learning:**
  - o Find, select, sort, summarise and linking information from a variety of sources.
  - o Consider the purpose and main concerns in a text and understand the difference between fact and opinion.
  - o Discuss similarities and differences between texts.
- **Write for learning:**
  - o Making notes, develop ideas and acknowledge sources in written work, as appropriate.

- Developing and using vocabulary, effectively, including specialist vocabulary.
- Create texts in a wide range of contexts, e.g. Presentations which allow learners to persuade, argue and explore ideas, writing up a science investigation or writing a newspaper article recounting a historical event.

### **Teacher Agency and Professionalism**

While progressive resources and ideas banks are available within the school to support all aspects of literacy, these are in no way exhaustive. Rote completion of ideas contained within spelling or comprehension photocopiable masters will not allow learners to experience enjoyment, breadth, depth, relevance, coherence, personalisation and choice – all of which are learner entitlements. Any such photocopiable materials must be utilised skilfully, in partnership with teacher agency to derive best impact on learning and the specific skills and knowledge being taught.

Teachers must be critical of any materials sourced online for classroom / homework use and ensure that those selected are chosen for the best impact on pupils' learning outcomes. Teachers must ensure accuracy in any materials selected and feel confident in justifying their selection, from the point of view of learners' curriculum entitlements.

### **Assessment & Moderation**

Assessment must be integral to the planning for teaching and learning process. Pupils should be assessed in a variety of contexts and evidence in support of children's attainment and achievements should be gathered from a range of sources (Building the Curriculum 5). Opportunities for learners to apply their learning, including through the use of digital technologies, should be used to provide staff with a true assessment of how well pupils can transfer their learning, proving mastery.

It is important that assessment outcomes are used to inform day to day learning and that at classroom level, staff are pro-active in analysing and acting upon assessment data available. Assessment must be considered and set at the point of planning learning in listening and talking, writing and reading and should be noted as part of teachers' forward planning.

Recording of assessment outcomes within forward plans helps teachers to track progress over time and make adjustments, as necessary. To this end, clear record keeping is expected within teachers' forward planning documents.

Staff are expected to make regular use of both formative and summative assessments in helping make judgements about learners' next steps and take positive action to support children to achieve these.

### **Formative assessment**

AifL strategies must be common practice in all classes.

All learners should:

- Experience the sharing of criteria for success in literacy lessons - As with all teaching and learning, learning intentions and success criteria must explicit and shared clearly, so that pupils are in no doubt what they need to do to succeed.
- Be questioned throughout literacy lessons in a way which promotes higher order thinking
- Be provided with useful feedback that helps move their learning forward

- Be provided with opportunities to engage in self and peer assessment

The impact of the quality of the dialogue learners engage in with their teacher and each other cannot be underestimated. Self and peer assessment, in addition to quality dialogue between teacher and pupil, should support the setting of next steps, as far as possible.

Just as with oral feedback, written feedback should provide guidance on what has been successfully achieved, what can be improved and what a child should aim for next.

Children's extended writing should be marked using '2 stars and a wish' / Green for Great, Pink for Think. A marking code created as part of Learning Community moderation activity, is also available for use with P4 to 7 pupils. For consistency, this marking code is the only code in use and may be used at the teacher's discretion, alongside 2 stars and a wish' / Green for Great, Pink for Think.

Staff should adopt similar approaches to marking written work in other curricular areas, where applicable. While not every piece of written work must be marked in its entirety, staff are expected to acknowledge all jotter / workbook efforts and note that their acknowledgement of what has been done, as an absolute minimum, on each piece of work. Noting where verbal feedback has been given on a piece of written work is strongly encouraged at all stages. All children's efforts should be acknowledged.

Children are expected to receive feedback on all that they do – the way in which feedback is presented will vary, context dependant.

### Summative Assessment

Standardised assessments are used in support of progress in reading and spelling. From P2-P7 children undertake a standardised reading assessment in October and in May. Presently, this continues to be the Burt Reading Assessment. Annually, children from P2-P7 undertake NGRT reading assessments, assessing a wider range of reading skills.

From P2-P7 children undertake a standardised spelling assessment in October and in May. Weekly spelling assessments are a standard feature in our classes.

Throughout the year in P1 and P2 standardised SLC assessments are used to support the assessment of reading and phonological awareness, in addition to teachers' own weekly and termly summative assessments.

Where appropriate, SNSAs (Scottish National Standardised Assessments) are undertaken in term four of the school session.

Rigorous tracking of assessment results means that results are used to plan next steps, both at class and whole school level, as required. Results are also shared to support effective transitions.

### Pupil Learning Journeys

Target setting, reviewing, and evaluating occurs termly. At the start of each term each pupil and their teacher set literacy targets to be achieved in the following term and these are sent home to be discussed with parents and carers. Pupils actively work towards these targets over the course of the term before evaluating their progress. Teachers also comment on progress with each target and this is reviewed by families when the new targets are sent home. Owing to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are in the process of updating our Learning Journey approach to use



digital rather than paper methods to support continued *pupil – parent – teacher* engagement with these.

### Holistic Assessment

As a result of quality Learning Community collaboration, we use a standardised approach across the school (and Learning Community) to holistic assessment.

Teachers understand the need to plan a balance of different types of assessment, ongoing and periodic, across the school year and fully recognise the need to incorporate a balance of make / say / write / do in their planning for assessment.

The range of assessment and approaches to assessment used helps to ensure that breadth, challenge and application can be demonstrated in learner outcomes.

### Moderation

Staff are committed to the Moderation Cycle and engage in termly collaborative activities in support of this. We actively seek to engage with others beyond our own establishment to support effective moderation, where practicable.

### **Role of School Support Staff**

Where appropriate, support staff are expected to reinforce the work of the classroom teacher. Staff should support children in developing and applying their literacy skills, in line with the class teachers' requests.

The core priority for use of school support assistant time is to derive best impact on pupil learning at all times. It is important that teaching staff ensure that support assistants are aware of children's learning targets and that appropriate guidance is given to enable support given by SSAs to be most effective.

There is a clear and shared understanding that school support assistant time must have best impact on the learning of the children who need help the most. At times, this will mean supporting groups of children who do not experience difficulties in their literacy development, in order to facilitate the class teacher providing further direct teaching and / or intervention. At other times, School support assistants will deliver direct support and deliver interventions within the class. Aside from time allocated to school support assistants on the whole school ASN timetable, where time is designated for specific literacy interventions, class-based allocations can be decided at the teachers' discretion, with closing the poverty related attainment gap and supporting additional needs in learning being given highest priority, at all times.

In some cases, where appropriate, support staff may be requested to make resources or support other organisational tasks that support the delivery of high-quality literacy lessons. Where this is the case, must be mindful of the fact that support time allocation must consistently best serve learner need.

It is the responsibility of school support assistants to ask for clarification on aspects of learning or running of the class / ASN timetables that they are not sure of and to keep an open dialogue with

teaching staff overseeing these. Where any concerns about lack of progress exist, these should be discussed with teaching staff / SLT.

It is the responsibility of all staff to model good skills in literacy and English and school support assistants, like teaching staff, are expected to uphold this when using both the spoken and written word.

## **Pupils**

Our pupils are strongly encouraged to be active participants in the acquisition of their literacy skills. The needs, interests and motivation of pupils are at the heart of the literacy teaching and learning at Carstairs Primary School.

Pupils are expected and encouraged to work hard, with an appropriate level of support, to achieve their learning targets and to act on feedback given in order to progress their skills.

Pupil voice should be promoted and valued from P1 through to P7, in class and at whole school level, including in consideration of the co-creation of learning targets and in evaluating the quality of their learning experiences.

## **Parents**

We are wholeheartedly committed to parental engagement and involvement in our school, recognising the benefits for our learners of strong partnerships and close links with our parents. The importance of these partnerships and our desire for strong, parental engagement and involvement is a key element of our school culture.

In conjunction with our open-door policy and welcoming ethos, at Carstairs Primary School we seek to engage and involve parents in children's learning by:

- Keeping parents regularly informed of their child's progress throughout the year: parents' evenings, communication through diaries, phone calls and other face to face meetings, interim and end of year reports, via pupil learning journeys, additional support plans and reviews.
- Inviting parents to work alongside their child, and their class teacher, during literacy open mornings and showcase events.
- Adopting a 'Families Connect' model to working with families to engage them in children's learning, where appropriate.
- Inviting parents to attend events to support them in supporting literacy skills development at home.
- Providing useful hints and tips in a variety of formats.
- Actively promoting local events and services that support the development of children's literacy.
- Inviting families to participate in reading challenges, and the activities of special literacy weeks.
- Involving parents in decision making – for example, the acquisition and organisation of new resources.
- Including parents as partners in whole school evaluation processes, as appropriate.
- Consulting with parents school policy, as appropriate.

## **Additional Support, Getting It Right For Every Child**

Our pursuit of developing, nurturing, and extending all learners' literacy skills means that differentiation, in all its forms, is and must be a routine part of teaching and learning at Carstairs Primary School.

We are committed to early intervention with any additional support needs arising, seeking to act promptly and monitor closely where any concerns arise. Our school system of staged intervention is in line with SLC recommendations, which fully encompass the GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) agenda. ASN and staged intervention guidance is adhered to in relation to Literacy as it would be for any curricular area.

Our school's quality assurance procedures support regular and quality dialogue around this theme, and staff can approach SLT at any time with concerns, for discussion, advice and support with action. Formal opportunities to discuss pupil needs are set in our annual calendar and informal opportunities are frequent and helpful.

Additional support timetables which incorporate the deployment of school support staff and non class committed teaching staff, are targeted to support literacy based needs across the school, on a priority basis, arising from our quality assurance processes, rigorous tracking and monitoring and ongoing professional dialogue. These timetables are reviewed termly, however, amendments can be made before a new term commences, if ongoing assessment or professional dialogue suggests that this is necessary. Flexibility exists, in order to support the greatest need.

We make use of a variety of teaching approaches, targeted interventions and additional teaching materials to target support for small groups and individuals. These include Toe by Toe, Hornets, Totem and Talisman readers, Project X readers and the 5 Minute Box (Literacy).

Through our work with the West Partnership's Improving Our Classrooms models (whole school and individual models), staff have a clear awareness of targeted intervention approaches at classroom level and the need benefits of small-scale action research and practitioner enquiry. All current teaching staff have experience of these and seek to build on skills developed, for the benefit of our learners. A clear and strong focus on removal of barriers to learning exists as part of our school culture.

*(See also our school Additional Support Needs Position Statement for further detail around this theme)*

## **Leadership and Management**

### Ethos

It is incumbent on the school senior leadership team to create, nurture and sustain a collaborative and collegiate ethos for continuous improvement, which supports all stakeholders to strive for shared goals, that are informed by high quality self-evaluation. Our children will thrive most in their literacy development, when the adults that support them to do so work within conditions that support and encourage their agency and encourage and nurture shared leadership. Our senior leadership are wholeheartedly committed to doing so.

### Quality Assurance

Our school quality assurance calendar includes:

- Regular forward plan reviews – which includes full review of all aspects of the delivery of the literacy curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and additional support planning
- Termly tracking and monitoring meetings – these incorporate attainment projections and professional dialogue, they include a focus on children’s needs and the removal of barriers to learning
- Sharing classroom practice / class visits and feedback
- Jotter monitoring, homework / diary monitoring, learning journey monitoring and feedback

Professional dialogue around impact of actions on learner outcomes must rigorous and valuable. Appropriate challenge, as well as support, around impact on learners, with a team of the same mind that our children deserve the highest standards, is both expected and appreciated.

### Commitment to Continuous School Improvement

Senior leaders must interrogate whole school data and appropriately analyse this to effectively support continuous improvement. Staff must be well supported by the senior leadership team to develop high quality skills in this area at classroom level.

Senior leaders must effectively support and effectively facilitate staff career long professional learning (CLPL) and support rigour in the evaluation of the impact of this.

Senior leaders must lead by example in the development of children leading learning.

Senior leaders must develop clear and well informed strategic plans that drive forward ambitious outcomes for our children’s literacy achievement and keep these under close review. The importance of partnerships and shared ownership to drive forward our shared goals and plans for the highest possible standards in children’s literacy is imperative. The actions of our senior leaders must cultivate, promote and nurture quality partnerships and relationships.

The needs of all staff as well as pupil must be carefully supported and resources kept under review and well managed well to ensure our school continues to be well placed to meet the needs of all learners.

Relationships at all levels, within and amongst all stakeholders, are the greatest asset within our team. It is incumbent on our school leadership team to continue to uphold and warmly nurture these, in order to achieve and sustain a literacy rich school and the best outcomes for our learners’ literacy development. Keeping community at the heart of all we do is an vital part of this and our senior leadership team must lead by example in nurturing and facilitating this. Our senior leadership team are relentlessly committed to doing so.

This position statement will be revised biennially and as and when self evaluation highlights that particular action is necessary.

Supporting Information:

### Text types

The following are examples of what is referred to as ‘texts’:

Novels, short stories, plays, poems reference texts the spoken word charts, maps, graphs and timetables advertisements, promotional leaflets comics, newspapers and magazines CVs, letters and emails films, games and TV programmes labels, signs and posters recipes, manuals and instructions reports and reviews text messages, blogs and social networking sites web pages, catalogues and directories.

### Moderation Cycle

