



Policy: English Language Policy - 5-14

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AIMS OF THE POLICY

To provide a common framework for English Language 5-14, policy and practice within West Lothian schools.

To support staff in providing quality teaching and learning opportunities for all pupils within West Lothian Council.

To seek to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of learning and teaching and of pupils' attainment in English Language throughout our schools

ADOPTING THE POLICY

All of the recommendations made within this policy are built upon pertinent national guidelines and advice and provide opportunities at local level for audit and evaluation against best practice. They should also be read in conjunction with WLC's Early Intervention Policy. Initially, the quality of the English Language education across the stages within a school should be the subject of a review against the key aspects of practice contained within this policy. The views of staff, parents and pupils will form part of the review. Regularly thereafter, the Headteacher, or the teacher with responsibility for English Language, should audit the programmes to ensure that practice within the school continues to reflect the West Lothian Education and Cultural Services Policy for English Language 5-14.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

"Language is at the heart of children's learning. Through language they receive much of their knowledge and acquire many of their skills. Language enables children both to communicate with others effectively for a variety of purposes, and to examine their own and others' experiences, feelings and ideas, giving them order and meaning. Because language is central to children's intellectual, emotional and social development it has an essential role across the curriculum and helps pupils' learning to be coherent and progressive." (National Guidelines: English Language 5-14)

'Literacy and numeracy are the foundation stones of education. Without acquiring a sound basis of knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy, children will not be able to benefit fully from school education and will face serious difficulties in reaching their full potential.' (Ministerial Foreword, Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy in Schools, 2002)

West Lothian Council is committed to providing highest quality learning and teaching in English Language education and therefore endorses the recommendations included within important national documents, including:

- Improving Reading at the Early Stages (SEED 1998)
- Improving Writing 5-14 (SEED 1999)
- Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy in Schools (SEED 2002)
- Improving Achievement in English Language in Primary and Secondary Schools (SEED 2003)

Since 1991, the National Guidelines 5-14 have shaped what is taught in English Language programmes in primary schools and in S1/S2 of secondary school. The Framework 3-5 Curriculum now influences English Language education pre-school.

Aims of English Language education are to help pupils:

- communicate, think, feel and carry out practical activities through language across all curricular areas
- develop confidence and pleasure in their own use of language
- develop progressive skills to ensure the understanding of the nature, structures and conventions of language
- access books and literature appropriate to age and stage of development
- empathise with and understand cultural and ethnic diversity
- be aware of the importance of language
- become equipped to face the challenges of a technological society

CURRICULUM

Time for Teaching

The Structure and Balance of the 5-14 Curriculum recommends that a minimum of 25% of the pupil week be dedicated to the teaching of English Language. Other curricular areas have a recommendation of 15% each, allowing a flexibility factor of 15%. Schools should structure timetables to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to the development of English Language and of English Language skills across the curriculum. Early Intervention may require the use of an element of the flexibility factor, as will the teaching of Modern Language.

ATTAINMENT, ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

West Lothian Council is committed to the provision of a high quality education service and to the raising of attainment for all children. Annual school targets for areas within English Language are agreed and set in consultation with Education Officers through the use of performance information as provided by West Lothian Council. It is expected that schools will review pupil performance at regular intervals throughout the year, providing additional support and challenge where necessary. Individual pupils should be involved in setting targets and in reviewing progress against these targets.

Assessment, formal as well as informal, must be integral to learning and teaching and fully incorporated into programmes of study and planned pupil experiences. In line with national advice as specified in Assessment for Learning, due attention should be given to the importance of formative assessment in which teachers seek to:

- understand, through assessment, an individual's strengths and weaknesses
- use this assessment to identify next steps in a pupil's learning in discussion with the pupil
- provide appropriate learning and teaching to help pupils resolve their weaknesses and become active learners
- review individual targets regularly
- provide opportunities for self and peer-assessment as part of the learning experience.

An attainment record should be maintained for each pupil and should form the basis for effective transfer of quality assessment information between stages and at points of transition, and for effective reporting to and communication with parents and carers. Headteachers and senior promoted staff are expected to maintain regularly updated performance information on pupil progress in Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking. Quality reports to parents should indicate clearly:

- the child's progress through the level at which she/he is working across all four outcomes
- next steps in the child's learning.

Appropriately realistic and challenging attainment targets for English Language should be identified for individuals within Personal Learning Planning. Such targets should:

- engage the pupils in the determination of targets and their review
- inform the programmes to work
- be monitored and reviewed regularly
- take appropriate account of national attainment targets to provide additional learning and teaching time for English Language where required.

West Lothian Council also expects that schools will make use of curriculum flexibility and apply appropriate methods of accelerated learning in English Language.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Planning for English Language

Planning should be well-established in all schools. Plans should be comprehensive, reflect national guidance and be monitored regularly by teachers and senior managers. Schools should ensure that pupils experience planned programmes of study in Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking. It is expected that plans will include an evaluation section, used by the teacher to highlight next steps in learning for groups and individual pupils.

Organising for Effective Teaching and Learning

Pupils should experience a range of learning and teaching styles and classroom organisation. This should include:

- direct interactive teaching.
- individual work, including researching, and reporting.
- working in a variety of groups for a variety of purposes.
- opportunities for collaborative learning.
- appropriate differentiation through outcome, support and resource.
- opportunities to present to a variety of audiences.
- Teachers should consider the physical layout of the classroom in order to facilitate effective learning. Resources to support language teaching should be readily available for pupil use.

English Language Programmes

The programme of study for English Language should cover the four outcomes of Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking and feature the strands within each outcome. Features of effective programmes of study include:

- breadth, balance and coherence across and within the elements of the English Language curriculum
- continuity and progression for all pupils, including pupils with additional learning needs and English as a second language
- identified opportunities across the curriculum for reading, writing, listening and talking
- an enriched language environment which stimulates pupils' imaginations and their interest in and enjoyment of language in all its aspects
- integrated assessment.

Schools should have effective programmes of work in place for all teaching groups. It should be emphasised that an effective language programme requires more than the use of a single dominant resource. Quality programmes require a variety of resources and activities to be used. In all cases, due account should be taken of prior learning and support needs when programmes of work are being designed for individuals or groups.

Good use should also be made of appropriate, modern ICT to support the programme of study for English Language. A good ICT programme will support pupils to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, enhance communication skills, allow them to acquire specific knowledge about language and will aid the development of research and reporting skills. The West Lothian Learning and Teaching website also contains numerous references to quality software and useful websites, see <http://edweb.westlothian.org.uk/teaching/>

Key features of effective planning for English Language: **Appendix 1.**

Key features of effective learning and teaching in English Language: **Appendix 2.**

Key features of very good programmes of work for English Language: **Appendix 3.**

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

Clear and robust procedures should be in place for the early identification of children who are experiencing barriers to learning in English Language. Targeted additional support, based on the identified needs of the child and next steps in learning, should be provided to help the child achieve his/her potential. The programmes of work should indicate also, at all stages, appropriately challenging activities for high-attaining children. To gain greatest benefit from the provision of Learning Support staff and Classroom Assistants, they should be fully involved in planning pupils' support with the class teacher.

MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

West Lothian Council values the ability and experience of class teachers. As autonomous professionals, they are expected to be continuously involved in self evaluation to improve practice, in the classroom and the school.

The role of promoted post holders is to:

- involve the staff in reflecting on their approaches to teaching English Language
- encourage the staff and children to recognise the value and importance of English Language
- lead quality development of the English Language curriculum
- maximise pupils' attainment and achievement through the provision of appropriate support and challenge
- ensure that the school continues to improve through the implementation of West Lothian Council's Quality Assurance Policy

They will lead teachers in the review of their own practice in relation to this policy and the production of very good programmes of work. They will ensure the provision of advice on learning and teaching, and supply a wide range of appropriate good quality resources. Additionally, managers must provide robust quality assurance processes, which should incorporate good practice as identified in **Appendix 4** and [West Lothian Council's Quality Assurance Policy](#)

AUDIT

On a regular basis, the quality of the English Language programmes should be audited to ensure alignment with the key expectations and exemplars of best practice contained within this policy. Most of the recommendations and exemplars are drawn from key national documents and guidelines, which are clearly identified on page 1 and which can be used to provide further evidence for an audit.

AN APPROACH TO AUDIT AND EVALUATION

Appendix 1: Key Features of Plans for English Language

Key features of very good plans for English Language:

- set out clearly what teachers expect pupils to learn, matched appropriately to 5-14 Guidelines including each of the four elements of reading, writing, listening and talking.
- indicate learning and teaching approaches and resources to be used.
- ascribe levels of attainment to each pupil.
- where appropriate, include group plans, IEPs and support mechanisms.
- identify priorities for assessment.
- contain periodic evaluations by teachers of the effectiveness of the work covered.

Appendix 2 :Key Features of Effective Teaching & Learning in English Language

Key features of very good teaching and learning of English Language:

- the number of groups for English Language is manageable and suited to the learning outcomes. Appropriate additional support should be provided, based on the needs of the children and their next steps in learning.
- pupils work in groups of differing sizes and structures for a variety of purposes.
- lessons which have clear objectives and specific learning outcomes shared with pupils from the outset.
- pupils are encouraged to select and apply skills and processes pertaining to language.
- skilled explanations and questioning, in which pupils' are given time to think before responding and their responses are used to test for understanding and to identify areas of weakness.
- pupils are encouraged to demonstrate and explain their thinking.
- a brisk pace of learning is evident, within which high expectations are set.
- account is taken of pupils' prior learning.
- high standards of listening, oracy, accuracy and presentation.
- pupils are regularly given opportunities to develop language skills across the curriculum.
- assessment, including pupils' self-assessment, is regular, well recorded, used to identify further needs in learning and transferred to teachers of next stage. It is used to inform parents.
- regular, relevant and varied homework which allows pupils to practice skills, extend knowledge and develop independent study habits.
- good use is made of resources, including ICT, wordmasters, dictionaries, wordbanks, thesaurus, school and class libraries and appropriate resources to support children at the early years or with additional learning needs.
- pupils are praised effectively to encourage and motivate them, and they are well supported according to their needs. Pupil work is valued and success celebrated.
- examples of good quality pupils' language work for all pupils, recently completed, are displayed in a manner that aims to promote a positive language culture.
- pupils are regularly reminded of the relevance and importance of language to every day life.

Appendix 3: Key Features of Very Good Programmes of Work for English Language

Key features of very good programmes of work for English Language:

- have well-balanced coverage of the key aspects of language over a planning block.
- use a variety of meaningful and relevant contexts across the curriculum and resources for pupils to apply skills and consolidate learning.
- take account of prior learning and provide continuity and progression through the stages, particularly at the transition stages.
- ensure a good pace of progress through the attainment levels.
- incorporate advice for teachers on learning and teaching and on meeting pupils' needs across the elements of reading, writing, listening and talking.
- make effective use of modern ICT.
- provide regular and progressive opportunities for children to present to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.

Appendix 4: Key Features of Effective Quality Assurance Processes for English Language

Key features of effective quality assurance processes for English Language:

- the school has implemented West Lothian Council's Quality Assurance Policy.
- all staff self-evaluate their teaching of reading, writing, listening and talking.
- regular reviews of plans, programmes and pupils' experiences are conducted.
- strategies for monitoring learning and teaching should include focused, constructive and supportive feedback to staff to inform improvements in learning and teaching.
- samples of pupils' work, assessments and learning targets are regularly reviewed.
- the school makes good use of performance information as supplied by West Lothian Council and informed by internal assessment procedures.

Schools are also referred to [West Lothian Council's Quality Assurance Policy \(2004\)](#).

Appendix 5: A Curriculum for Excellence

It is expected that schools within West Lothian Council will make good use of the programme of study for English Language to enable them to meet the aims and aspirations set out in 'A Curriculum for Excellence' (SEED 2004). The learning experiences of pupils should also be structured in a manner to promote cross curricular working, exploit opportunities for independent learning and enable choice and enjoyment.

Key features of a 'Curriculum for Excellence' pertaining to English Language are:

Listening and Talking

- paired and group work across the curriculum. (Physical Education, Environmental Studies, Drama, Music, Religious and Moral Education)
- individual or group presentations from other curricular areas to a variety of audiences, including class, school and parents.
- opportunities to report back to group or class.
- the adoption of formal roles within a group (secretary, chair, reporter) to carry out a specified/agreed task in different curricular areas.
- talking in pairs or groups to come to an agreed solution.
- talking in pairs or groups to plan.
- working together in pairs or groups to implement the plan.
- talking in pairs or groups to evaluate success.

Reading:

- research from given texts for a variety of purposes.
- research from a range of texts for a variety of purposes.
- research from a range of resources including ICT for a variety of purposes.

Writing:

- presenting information gathered through research as above.
- personal response within a curricular area, for instance Religious and Moral Education, Health, Music, Drama, Art and Design.
- recording and presenting information, for instance report writing in science or the production of an illustrated diagram.
- evaluating environmental issues.
- offering a written response to opposing points of view.
- taking action on an issue, for instance parking problems near the school.
- responding to a visit or visitor through a business or personal letter.

Through progressive development of such skills, pupils will become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

HGIOS – How Good Is Our School (2002 Edition), HMle

HMle – HM Inspectorate of Education

PLP – Personal Learning Plan

SEED – Scottish Executive Education Department

IEP – Individualised Education Programme