



Languages Policy

Literacy and English

Modern Languages

Article 29 (goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Rationale

“Language is at the core of thinking. We reflect, communicate and develop our ideas through language. Literacy offers an essential passport to learning, helping children and young people to achieve to the full and be ready for active involvement in society and work.”

Literacy is an over-arching subject that is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Every teacher in each area of the curriculum needs to find opportunities to encourage our pupils to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which help them to develop their language skills further.

Building the Curriculum 1

Aims

As a whole school we aim:

- To provide children with a coherent, balanced and motivating programme of study developing the knowledge and skills required.
- To provide the children with a wealth of motivating learning opportunities within real life contexts with cross-curricular links.
- To promote the development of critical and creative thinking as well as competence in listening and talking, reading, writing and the personal, interpersonal and team working skills which are so important in life and in the world of work.
- To promote pupils' success through training in self and peer assessment and in partnership identifying their next steps in learning.

For every pupil we aim:

- To teach children the skills necessary to become independent and competent in using literacy across the wider curriculum.
- To value and to build on each pupil's prior learning.
- To raise pupils' levels of attainment/achievement in every aspect of literacy.
- To encourage pupils to make and utilise the link between reading, writing, talking and listening.

In partnership with parents we aim:

- To value and promote parental involvement in supporting their children in identifying next steps in learning.
- To value and promote parental involvement in supporting their children in achieving their potential.

Building the Languages Curriculum:

BREADTH, DEPTH & PROGRESSION

Experiences and outcomes provide the basis for both lateral (broadening) and vertical (more challenging) progression; they offer opportunities for teachers to plan for development, consolidation and challenge at the secure stage within each level.

At all stages, children will be offered a range of contexts through which they will experience and develop language skills. Designated core materials will be used to promote continuity and progression in the development of skills in reading, writing, listening and talking. The rich and motivating resources within themes, topics and real-life situations will enable children to practice applying these skills within new and unfamiliar contexts and form the basis for assessing achievement within and across outcomes.

CHALLENGE & ENJOYMENT:

Experiences and outcomes are designed to open up opportunities for active, challenging and enjoyable learning; repeated low level activities such as worksheets or copying from whiteboard are unlikely to provide effective tools in learning. The planned development of literacy links across the curriculum through interdisciplinary studies will give pupils the opportunity to develop and apply their literacy skills in enjoyable and motivating contexts.

Effective use of ICT, active learning, planned purposeful play and critical skills challenges which encourage collaborative learning will have a high profile throughout all stages of the school, thus providing rich and exciting learning environments.

COHERENCE & RELEVANCE:

Language and literacy activities permeate all areas of the curriculum: teachers help children to see the links between different aspects of their learning within and across all curriculum areas and interdisciplinary studies.

The content of the curriculum will be relevant to the children's experience, learning and interests in and beyond the school environment (entitlements). Teachers engage with learners to make explicit the relevance and to ensure the outcomes and success criteria in language are age appropriate and easily understood.

PERSONALISATION & CHOICE

Teachers will build personalisation and choice into the children's literacy development through individualised, achievable target setting. They will provide choice of activities and resources as well as space to pursue aspects of their own learning at an independent level.

A Framework for Learning and Teaching of Literacy and English

The Life and Ethos of the school

The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the whole school community. All members of staff should:

- contribute through open, positive, supportive relationships where children and young people will feel that they are listened to;
- promote a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure;
- model behaviour that promotes effective learning and wellbeing within the school community;
- Be sensitive and responsive to each young person's wellbeing.

Children and young people should be encouraged to contribute to the life and work of the school and, from the earliest stages, to exercise their responsibilities as members of a community. This includes opportunities to participate responsibly in decision-making, to contribute as leaders and role models, offer support and service to others and play an active part in putting the values of the school community into practice.

Home/School link.

Parents/Carers are valued contributors and as such they are kept fully informed of the strategies the school uses to teach Literacy and English. Information is shared through newsletters, leaflets, online profiling tools and open afternoons. Parents/Carers are actively encouraged to support their child in reading for learning and reading for pleasure.

Parents/Carers are invited to attend curricular evenings and pupil progress meetings twice yearly. Any parent/carer who is concerned about their child's progress in literacy is encouraged to contact the school. An appointment will then be offered to discuss this further with their child's class teacher and/or a member of the Additional Support for Learning team.

Dunnottar School operates an open-door policy. Any parent/carer who would like further guidance on additional ways to support learning at home should contact the school who will arrange a meeting.

Literacy and English Curriculum

Talking & Listening

Listening and talking is at the heart of all learning and will take place daily throughout the whole curriculum. A specific lesson on listening and talking will take place regularly and provide the opportunity for the development of specific skills and assessment.

	Early	First	First	First	Second	Second	Second
Listening Skills							
Skills of Social Conventions							
Recounting							
Description/Explanation							
Giving/Responding to Instructions							
Classification							
Questioning and Enquiry							
Negotiation							
Persuasion							

All children will be given the opportunity to build upon previously learned skills thus encouraging continuity and progression. They will self/peer-evaluate their own performance. Children will be given the opportunity to talk and listen in pairs, trios, groups and to the whole class for a variety of purposes. Activities will include; presenting ideas to others, class talks and school presentations e.g. school shows, curricular evening, showcase assemblies to all stakeholders etc.

Reading

In the infant classes, pupils are taught comprehension and word attack skills using a guided reading approach. All books, both fiction and non-fiction, are organised by text banding. Children are encouraged to read a wide variety of texts matched specifically to their ability.

Guided reading involves:

- Introduction/walkthrough (teacher encourages pupils to predict the content and goes through each page, drawing attention to new or tricky vocabulary).
- Independent reading (pupils read text aloud at their own pace, monitored by teacher).
- Returning to the text (discussion of the story linked to characters, events, setting, significant vocabulary, authors choice of words).
- Follow up activities (range of active integrated literacy tasks e.g. sequencing, strip books etc).

Children are taught specific word attack strategies including:

- Visual cues (word shape, pictures).
- Re-reading (context, grammatical clues).
- Visual/Auditory Clues (initial/final letter, phonemes, syllables).
- Sound out all the letters and blend them together.
- Read the sentence again.

Comprehension strategies taught will include:

- Monitoring understanding – skimming and scanning text, make predictions, ask and answer questions, identifying key words which give information.
- Summarising – main events, scan for specific information, evaluate text.
- Recognising story structure – setting, events, and plot.

- Using pictures/diagrams as clues – identifying pictures, diagrams, headings, illustrations that make information clear.
- Answering questions – ‘Find it, prove it, and talk about it’.

In primaries four to seven children are offered a rich and varied reading experience with texts that offer stimulation and motivation using the novel study approach. Novels have been carefully selected to provide quality and challenge. All novels have been levelled to ensure that they are carefully matched to the children’s ability. Our novels have been graded according to their Lexile. The Lexile scale runs from below 0L (Lexile) to above 2000L.

Title	Author	Lexile
<i>The Cat in the Hat</i>	Dr. Seuss	260L
<i>Clifford the Big Red Dog</i>	Norman Bridwell	330L
<i>Judy Moody</i>	Megan McDonald	530L
<i>Holes</i>	Louis Sachar	660L
<i>Charlotte’s Web</i>	E. B. White	680L
<i>Twilight</i>	Stephenie Meyer	720L
<i>Flour Babies</i>	Anne Fine	790L
<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone (novel)</i>	J. K. Rowling	880L
<i>The Golden Compass</i>	Philip Pullman	930L
<i>The Hobbit</i>	J. R. R. Tolkien	1000L

The score is based on word difficulty and grammar but not content. We will deliberately reclassify some novels based on their content. Teachers will choose novels they believe the pupils have the maturity to understand. If you have any concern about the content or language used by an author please contact the school at the earliest opportunity to discuss the best course of action.

Children progress from the banded books to novels when they demonstrate good levels of comprehension, fluency and independence. Developing fluency moves from reading aloud to being encouraged to read for longer periods of time either independently or with a partner.

Higher order thinking skills and comprehension strategies taught will include:

- Using active thinking about prior knowledge (metacognition) – what do I already know?
- Using active thinking about words and phrases (metalinguistic) – developing their vocabulary, word building and knowledge of writer’s craft.
- Using active thinking about sensory images (visualisation) – creating images/pictures in the mind, abstract ideas, elaborating/comparing/discussing, mind mapping.
- Using active thinking to draw inferences (metacognition) – using stated and implied messages to find out about characters, settings, main events, etc.
- Using active thinking to find main ideas (metacognition) – using stated and implied messages, reading between the lines.
- Using active thinking to summarise the text (metacognition) – condensing the key message, summarising the essence of meaning, etc.

In order to develop skills in reading and understanding, children will be encouraged to:

- Read, think, question and take notes.
- Discuss, share and question.
- Draw conclusions and clarify understanding.

In addition to the teaching of fiction using novels, pupils are provided the opportunities to read a wide range of non-fiction texts. Teachers select appropriate texts to match the children's ability, books have been sourced to provide challenge, variety and choice and have also taken into account pupil interests. When teaching non-fiction, teachers provide opportunities for learners to:

- Identify and read sections/topics that are of interest.
- Record their prior knowledge of the topic.
- Make notes as they read to clarify understanding and allow them to share their thoughts with others.
- Use their notes to produce high quality writing.
- Present their knowledge to others.
- Discuss how their knowledge/opinion has been changed/affected.
- Carry out further research on the topic using other sources.

Books will be sent home weekly with set pages to be read at home, supported by an adult or older sibling. Children will also be offered the opportunity to take home and enjoy a book from our school lending service each week.

Writing

Children will experience a weekly taught writing lesson during which they will be explicitly taught using the features of genres as detailed in CFE. The six main genres for writing are **instructional/procedural, narrative, explanations, information reports, persuasion and recounts**. Pupil targets and success criteria for each genre are shared with pupils and a list of core targets across all genres will be inside the front cover of their taught writing jotter.

Children should be encouraged to make use of their skills in writing across all areas of the curriculum. They should consistently demonstrate the same high standards in writing that they have shown during the taught writing lesson.

Success in writing is dependent on the development of the following skills:

- Accuracy in spelling a range of words.
- Grammatical knowledge and use of punctuation.
- Understanding of and an ability to write in a variety of forms.
- Ability to appreciate the writer's craft.
- Neat, legible handwriting.

These will be taught specifically through direct teaching, modelling and through discussions relating to different types of text. Children will be given the opportunity to practice these skills

on a daily basis through independent writing contexts. All children will experience weekly spelling and handwriting lessons.

What is 'Big Writing'?

Roz Wilson is the creator of the 'Big Writing' concept. She developed a way of teaching writing to children which focuses on four main aspects of writing – Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation (VCOP). Through weekly writing sessions (known as 'Big Writing'), children will develop their skills in these areas, as well as learning about and revising several different writing genres, therefore improving their overall writing ability.

The Four Elements of Big Writing

Vocabulary:

Every class has a 'Wow Words' board where new and impressive words that the children have used and have found in good quality texts, are shared with everyone.

The children are encouraged to use these words where appropriate in their writing.

Connectives:

Every class displays examples of powerful connectives (joining words). The children are encouraged to use these in their writing to join sentences and paragraphs, therefore improving the organisation of their writing.

Openers:

Every class displays and discusses good sentence 'openers' (sentence starters) that the children can use in their writing to make their sentences and overall texts more interesting.

Punctuation:

Every class has a 'Punctuation Pyramid' displayed, showing the levels of punctuation. Children are taught the names of the higher level punctuation from Primary One onwards and learn to use them in their writing.

Planning - Writing - Editing

Planning sessions can take place on a day leading up to the writing or on the same day.

Depending on the stage and ability of the pupils, planning can take many different forms;

- Spider-grams
- Sticky notes
- Mind Map
- Flow/Vertical Chart
- Writing Frame
- Bullet Points

We aim to emphasise to our pupils that planning is an empowering task and should not be laborious or disengaging.

Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are shared with children prior to writing lessons and regularly revisited. Success Criteria will be differentiated to meet childrens' needs.

During writing sessions children will be supported by the Class Teacher and in some cases a Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) or Additional Support for Learning Teacher. As children's understanding of the written language progresses, they are encouraged to write independently.

At the editing stage children are encouraged to read over their work, check spelling, add detail and make improvements.

Peer and Self Assessment

Pupils at each stage will regularly have the opportunity to participate in self-assessment and peer-assessment.

Formative and Summative Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process. A balance between Formative and Summative assessment will be used to:

- Provide pupils with clear and regular feedback
- Assist learners and teachers to plan next steps
- Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching.

To determine the level that children are working within, writing is formally assessed using genre specific target grids. Each class teacher will use a weekly 'Taught Writing Lesson' rotation planner. One third of the class will use peer or self-assessment processes, one third of the class will be given detailed verbal feedback during the lesson, one third will be formal assessed against the criteria.

Phonics & Spelling

In the infant classes spelling and phonics are taught separately. In phonics, children are taught the initial sounds before moving on to phonemes. The Jolly Phonics resource is used at this stage. Sounds and phonemes are taught using a wide range of strategies and activities.

Pupils are quickly encouraged to blend their taught sounds together to make words. Using magnetic boards children are encouraged to **say, make/break, blend, read and write** words using their magnetic letters. Children are encouraged to cover the word before they write it.

Common words form the basis of the spelling programme. Pupils are introduced to the words appropriate for their stage and are encouraged to read and write these words correctly through focused lessons and in their daily writing activities. Children will receive regular input on specific spelling patterns, rules and strategies. A set of active-learning approaches, which enable pupils to practise their spelling on a daily basis in a wide variety of ways, includes the use of Elkonin boxes and diacritical marking to identify individual phonemes.

A Framework for Learning and Teaching Modern Languages (French)

Introduction

Dunnottar School recognises the importance of learning a foreign language and embraces the Principles and Practice as outlined in the Curriculum for Excellence: Modern Languages document. Learning a new language encourages children and young people to broaden their horizons as they explore the language and its associated culture.

At Dunnottar School, French is taught to all pupils from Primary One to Seven. As encouraged by Education Scotland 'Language Learning in Scotland, A 1+2 Approach' we incorporate French into our daily lessons in a variety of ways.

Programs of study in Modern Languages are based on the Curriculum for Excellence outcomes:

- listening and talking
- reading
- writing

At Early and First levels, children will be developing skills in their first language. These include taking part in conversations, developing listening, reading and writing skills and knowledge about language. All of these are relevant to learning other languages. Within Modern Languages at these stages teachers will be able to build on children's natural curiosity for sounds and words, and their strong desire to communicate. Activities will include playing games, singing songs, carrying out simple instructions, and playing with simple poetry and rhyme. In this way they can begin to be enthusiastic, confident language learners from the outset.

Whenever they start their learning of another language, children need to experience success by taking part in practical activities that they can enjoy. Language learning is greatly enhanced where it is linked to or embedded in the wider curriculum so that children and young people can enjoy exploring and using language in meaningful contexts. Very importantly, teachers can make great use of opportunities to link language learning with progress in English and with other languages used by people in the school community, enabling children to explore and experiment with sound patterns and make links and comparisons between languages.

Learning other languages enables children and young people to make connections with different people and their cultures and to play a fuller part as global citizens. Learning through the languages area of the curriculum enables **children and young people to:**

- Develop their ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings and respond to those of other people.
- Develop the high level of skills in listening, talking, reading and writing which are essential for learning, work and life.

- Use different media effectively for learning and communication.
- Develop a secure understanding of how language works, and use language well to communicate ideas and information in English and other languages.
- Enhance their enjoyment and their understanding of their own and other cultures through literature and other forms of language.
- Develop competence in different languages so that they can understand and communicate including, for some, in work settings.

The study of a modern language has a unique contribution to make to the development of cultural awareness as it provides children and young people with a means of communicating directly with people from different cultures, enhancing their understanding and enjoyment of other cultures and of their own. They gain insights into other ways of thinking and other views of the world and therefore develop a much richer understanding of active citizenship.

Through the use of the experiences and outcomes to support planning, by the end of Primary Seven, the majority of children will have learned the skills necessary to:

- Give a short presentation about themselves
- Take part in simple conversations and transactions
- Understand classroom instructions and personal information
- Enjoy listening to a story, song or poem
- Read aloud a simple text
- Read and understand a short text
- Write a few sentences about themselves and others.