

Report

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| Report to: | Education Resources Committee |
| Date of report: | 2 May 2023 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Education Resources) |

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| Subject: | Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service Literacy Improvement Plan 2022/2023 |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide an update on the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) Literacy Improvement Strategy 2022/2023

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s)-:

- (1) that the CQIS Literacy Improvement Plan 2022/2023 be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. Literacy continues to be a key priority within the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework with a specific focus on raising attainment overall and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 3.2. Excellence and equity in literacy continues to be a key priority in South Lanarkshire; this is encapsulated in its priority to *'provide a rich and stimulating curriculum that helps to raise standards in literacy'* (Education Resources Plan 2022-2023).
- 3.3. South Lanarkshire has a collective responsibility to contribute to the Scottish Government stretch aims for literacy.
- 3.4. In order to attain their age and stage national expectations (A Curriculum for Excellence Levels) in literacy, a learner must achieve the national expectations in *all three* literacy organisers, namely, Listening and Talking, Reading, and Writing.

4. Current Performance

- 4.1. Young people leaving South Lanarkshire Council schools' attainment in Literacy at SCQF levels 3 and 4 is at a consistently high level and is broadly in line with the virtual comparator. Between 2018 and 2021 there was an improving trend with SCQF level 5 data. SCQF level 6 attainment remains at a consistently high level, outperforming the virtual comparator for the past 5 years.
- 4.2. S3 Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) Data
At 90% in 2021/2022, S3 (Third level) Literacy, South Lanarkshire Council is above the national average. The S3 (Third level) Literacy gap in 2021/2022 has widened to 9% points from 8% points in 2018/2019.

At 59% in 2021/2022 S3, (Fourth level) Literacy, South Lanarkshire Council is above the national average. The S3 (Fourth level) Literacy gap has narrowed in 2021/2022 to 23.5%points from 29.3%points in 2018/19; this is the smallest gap since 2016/2017.

- 4.3. P1/4/7 Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) Data – Literacy
In 2021/2022, at 71.3%, achievement of primary Literacy levels (P1,4 and 7 combined) in South Lanarkshire Council is just above the national average of 70.5%.

Primary Literacy levels in South Lanarkshire Council have improved by 1.1% points between 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

In South Lanarkshire in 2018-19, the overall combined P1/4/7 Literacy attainment gap between our most deprived, Quintile 1, and our least deprived, Quintile 5 learners, was 19.4% points. Following a significant period of Covid-related disruption, the gap was 33.6% points in 2020-21, an increase of 14.2% points. The gap has reduced in 2021-22 from 33.6% points to 24.4% points, a reduction of 9.2% points. Whilst this is a positive sign, the continued, relentless focus on closing the poverty-related literacy gap remains a high priority in South Lanarkshire.

- 4.4. P1/4/7 Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) Data – Writing
Primary Writing attainment (P1,4 and 7 combined) in South Lanarkshire has broadly equalled or exceeded national attainment since 2016-17.
In South Lanarkshire there was an increase of 0.7% points between 2020-21 and 2021-22.

In 2021-22, P7 writing attainment was 72.65%, almost matching the highest attainment in Writing in South Lanarkshire in P7 since A Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data has been gathered nationally (2026-17).

In South Lanarkshire, the trend since 2016-17 has been that levels of attainment in Writing at Early level (P1) are not sustained into First Level (P4); this mirrors the national picture. Analysis, therefore, suggests a focused lens on progress within First level (P2-P4) in Writing, as a South Lanarkshire Council priority.

5. Strategy

5.1. Talk for Writing

To address areas of improvement identified by data analysis, the South Lanarkshire Council strategy details the roll out of a programme called Talk for Writing. Talk for Writing is a systematic, evidence-based approach to the teaching of Writing. The most up-to-date evidence of impact of the approach can be found [here](#).

CQIS continues to procure high quality, stage-specific Talk for Writing introductory training on the teaching sequence and pedagogy. This session, 188 teachers across 50 primary schools have participated in introductory training. Feedback has been very positive.

This session, 18 primary schools are undertaking Talk for Writing Leadership training, supporting school leadership groups to develop, maintain and embed a whole school Talk for Writing curriculum and approach. Schools involved are working alongside expert Talk for Writing trainers to identify key strategic actions which will have maximum impact on children's writing experiences and improve the quality of their writing.

5.2. Reading for Pleasure

In South Lanarkshire, developing skilled readers who love reading has always been a priority and, as a result, children's reading for pleasure habits continue to strengthen.

Curriculum Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) supports schools and staff to develop and enhance reading for pleasure pedagogy via the Scottish Book Trusts Reading Schools Framework (2022) and our South Lanarkshire Teachers Readers' Groups (2019). 51 South Lanarkshire schools are currently working towards Scottish Book Trust Reading Schools accreditation which equates to 10% of all Scottish schools working towards this accreditation. In total so far, 39 schools have received Core Reading Schools status, 16 Silver Reading Schools status and 4 Gold Reading Schools status.

South Lanarkshire Teachers' Reading groups continue to flourish. In December 2022, 26 more teachers received General Teaching Council (Scotland) Professional Recognition for the impact of the professional learning they have undertaken through taking part in a South Lanarkshire Teachers Reading Group, which increases the total number to 37.

Primary 1 Book Bug Family Bags and Primary 2 and 3 Read Write Count Family Bags (Scottish Book Trust) were delivered to all South Lanarkshire primary schools in November/December 2022.

Education Resources is currently working in partnership with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture to develop and implement impactful routes and mitigate unnecessary barriers in order to drive forward the Scottish Government ambition (November 2022) to have 'Every Child A Library Member'.

5.3. Active Literacy

An active approach to learning, teaching and assessment in phonics, spelling and reading is advocated in South Lanarkshire and staff can access online modules via the South Lanarkshire Literacy Hub to support stage-related knowledge, understanding and classroom practice.

5.4. Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)

Scottish Equity Funding is supporting the rollout of an oral language intervention, Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), across Primary 1 and 2. The NELI is a 20-week intervention package which includes high quality staff training, pre and post learner assessments, and teaching resources. This session (2022-23), 216 staff have undertaken training and 32 schools have identified target learners to participate in NELI February to June 2023. In addition, so far, a further 37 schools have indicated their involvement for session 2023-2024.

5.5. Writing Unwrapped

Scottish Equity Funding is supporting the rollout of exemplar Writing programmes for primary schools to use. Writing Unwrapped is a two-year project (2022-2024) and will encompass curricular guidance for Early through to First and Second Levels alongside relevant staff professional development in learning, teaching and assessment in Writing.

In year one (2022-2023) of the Writing Unwrapped project, the focus is on two key areas:-

- ◆ Foundational Literacy in Primary 1 - The South Lanarkshire Foundations of Literacy in Primary 1 Pack (FLIPP) is a comprehensive, research-informed, Literacy programme for use in the first 6 weeks of Primary 1. Associated staff professional development (2 days) will take place in June 2023 with the expectation that the pack is implemented in all primary schools from August 2023.
- ◆ Tools for Writing: Early Level-Second Level - Analysis of Writing attainment 2020-21 in tandem with Primary Literacy survey feedback (August 2022), highlighted the need for progressive curriculum plans for Tools for Writing. Research-informed South Lanarkshire exemplar programmes for handwriting and grammar will be available for schools to use by May 2023.

5.6. Secondary Literacy Project

Three Secondary schools were identified to receive targeted support to develop strategies to improve Third and Fourth level CfE Literacy. The strategy aims to ensure that, in addition to improving attainment across all secondary schools in SLC, a particular focus and accelerated approach is being provided to schools with most young people affected by Poverty, to close the Poverty-Related Attainment Gap.

The three schools received input from South Lanarkshire Council Officers and an Officer from the West Partnership with a view to focussing on building capacity in teacher professional judgment and tracking data from the Broad General Education into the Senior Phase.

In 2021/2022, the aggregated Third Level data for the target schools was 81.4% for Reading, 79.5% for Writing and 77.8% for Listening and Talking. These are below the SLC Literacy average of 90.5% and the national average of 85.5%.

In 2021/2022, the aggregated Fourth Level data for the target schools was 47.0% for Reading, 44.5% for Writing and 42.5% for Listening and Talking. These are below the SLC Literacy average of 59.2% and the national average of 47.7%.

5.7. Progress

In the three targeted schools, the ACEL Third and Fourth Level predictions for 2022-23 show an improving picture with the aggregated attainment now expected to be in the region of 93.6% (+12.2% points) for Reading, 91.8% (+14% points) for Writing and 93.2% (+15.4% points) for Listening and Talking.

Fourth level attainment is now expected to be 54.7% (+7.7% points) for Reading, 49.8% (+5.3% points) for Writing, and 57.0% (+14.5% points) for Listening and Talking. This is a significant improvement for the target schools and will influence aggregated Local Authority data.

Within these schools, there is targeted support for learners not currently on track for Literacy prior to the final ACEL collections for 2022-23.

In April 2023, Literacy representatives from all South Lanarkshire Secondary schools met to discuss the work carried out so far in the target schools and share approaches to moderation and data collection across the authority.

6. **Next Steps**

- 6.1. Education Resources will continue to take forward its priority to *'provide a rich and stimulating curriculum that helps to raise standards in literacy'*. It will also continue to provide support for schools to continue to raise attainment in Literacy through the work of the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service.

- 6.2. South Lanarkshire CQIS will continue to evaluate its literacy strategy, within the context of the wider Education Resources Literacy strategy to ensure it is dynamic and responding to evolving need.
- 6.3. South Lanarkshire CQIS will continue to analyse the range of national and local data about children's progress in Literacy, ensuring a robust rationale for improvement priorities.
- 6.4. Ensuring a robust rationale for improvement priorities in Literacy, South Lanarkshire aims to support schools to improve attainment in Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking for all, including those facing poverty-related barriers.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. None

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. None

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. There are no significant implications for climate change, sustainability and the environment arising from the recommendations in this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. There are no implications for risk in terms of the information contained within this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 11.2. Consultation, dialogue and engagement has taken place with schools, headteachers, teachers and the trade unions on achievement of attainment levels. Support has been provided through professional learning at school and learning community level.

Tony McDaid

Executive Director (Education Resources)

4 April 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ♦ Education and learning: inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

Previous References

- ♦ Education Resources Committee – 25 January 2023

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Carole McKenzie, Head of Education

Ext:4468 (Tel: 01698 454468)

E-mail: carole.mckenzie@southlanarkshire.gov.uk