

# Report

Report to:	<b>Equal Opportunities Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>14 June 2023</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Education Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Implementation of British Sign Language (BSL) across Education Resources</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Equal Opportunities Forum of the current work being undertaken and planned by Education Resources to contribute towards the long-term goals within the Shared British Sign Language Plan for Lanarkshire 2018 to 2024.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the work being undertaken by Education Resources in terms of support for British Sign Language (BSL) be noted.

## 3. Background

3.1. South Lanarkshire Council currently offers provision for Deaf Education in Hamilton School for the Deaf (primary) and Calderside Academy (secondary). The work of both schools can be set within the framework of identified long-term goals in the BSL Plan for Lanarkshire 2018 to 2024 as follows:-

- ◆ offer D/deaf and Deafblind children and their families the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL
- ◆ support children and young people to:-
  - reach their full potential at every stage of their learning
  - offer parents who use BSL the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their children's education
  - enable more pupils to learn BSL at school
- ◆ support BSL users to develop skills for work and to progress in their chosen career
- ◆ enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals and they too can share their culture

## 4. Offer D/deaf and Deafblind children and their families the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL

4.1. In Hamilton School for the Deaf, families who choose BSL as a mode of communication for their child are given information on how to access BSL support e.g. National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Family Sign Language or free BSL classes run in Hamilton School for the Deaf. During times of transition, staff work collegiately with families and ensure BSL interpreters are present.

- 4.2. The school also provides access to BSL Tutor for free BSL classes for pupils, staff, parents and other professionals.
- 4.3. At Calderside Academy, parents can access Parent Information Events and activities like the school show through Teacher of the Deaf or Interpreter support.
- 4.4. School policies are being produced in BSL. The Communication Policy is publicly available in the School Handbook.
- 4.5. Transition planning begins when pupils are in P6. Staff produce a transition video in BSL for P6/7 pupils in the form of a tour of the school. Google Classrooms are created for the pupils so that they and their families can communicate with teaching staff via virtual 'meets' and ask any questions or raise relevant issues.

## **5. Support children and young people to reach their full potential at every stage of their learning**

- 5.1. Calderside Academy currently supports three Deaf/BSL pupils and 8 outreach pupils. They are supported by five fully qualified Teachers of the Deaf. One teacher is deaf and is an inspirational role model to everyone at Calderside Academy and the extended community.
- 5.2. Pupils receive full time support with full access to the curriculum in BSL and have access to all elements of school life including accessing lunchtime clubs, after school clubs, supported study and participation in the school show.
- 5.3. In Calderside Academy, all fully qualified Teachers of the Deaf and the Communication Support Worker have achieved Level 6 BSL. This ensures that Deaf/BSL users can access every lesson.
- 5.4. In 2022, Calderside Academy became an approved centre to deliver SQA BSL SCQF Levels 3 to 6. This was a very proud achievement. Pupils develop their BSL skills and also examine deaf identify, culture and history.
- 5.5. In Hamilton School for the Deaf, all teaching staff have a BSL qualification. The school also employs a specialist early years practitioner with a BSL qualification. A BSL tutor upskills staff across the campus, including support staff and those who work in the office. The aim of the school is that all staff upskill to BSL Level 6.

## **6. Supporting parents who use BSL by offering the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their children's education.**

- 6.1. In Hamilton School for the Deaf, the school website delivers information in BSL giving families who are BSL users, equal access to information about the school.
- 6.2. British Sign Language Interpreters are booked for every meeting with BSL families to ensure information and strategies of support are shared in their preferred mode of communication. All written reports are translated into British Sign Language by an Interpreter and given to parents. This is then followed up by a Parent/Teacher meeting.

## **7. Enabling more pupils to learn BSL at school**

- 7.1. Hamilton School for the Deaf is located on shared campus with Glenlee Primary School and Nursery. British Sign Language is respected and visible across the main campus. The Headteacher at Hamilton School for the Deaf works in close relationship with Glenlee Primary School Senior Leadership Team to ensure BSL is present at all assemblies, whole school gatherings, community events etc. Pupils and staff in

Glenlee Primary School are taught BSL through 'BSL Signs of the Week' and the children sign/sing songs together.

- 7.2. The school promotes BSL in the local community through the annual Christmas Sign-a-long event which takes place in local supermarkets. QR Codes are used to share and promote BSL and provide the public with more information on BSL.
- 7.3. Learners and staff ensure Deaf Awareness is delivered to each class in Glenlee Nursery and Primary School to support effective inclusion.
- 7.4. The school has a British Sign Language co-ordinator, who shares resources and ideas on ways to promote BSL with those who are interested in learning more and is responsible for promoting BSL across the campus. This work includes the production of videos.
- 7.5. Calderside Academy has a 3 year plan (2022 to 2024) to roll out BSL to the whole school:-

**Year 1:** deliver SQA Level 4 to senior Deaf pupils – achieved May 2022.

**Year 2:** deliver SQA Level qualification to hearing pupils with additional support needs. Pupils are currently on track to achieve Level 3 BSL.

**Year 3:** BSL will become a subject option for all Calderside Academy pupils from S3-S6 and will be available on the option form. The outcome of collaborative working between the Depute Head Teacher who has responsibility for timetabling and Faculty Head of Languages, aims to ensure that all S1 and S2 pupils will have a 6-week block of BSL in their timetable from August 2023.

- 7.6. Further BSL developments within the school include offering lunchtime BSL classes to all school staff. Lunchtime classes for pupils are also available. Previously, senior pupils have delivered these classes as part of their SQA Personal Development Award.
- 7.7. A 6-week block of BSL is offered to Senior Phase pupils. This opportunity is normally accepted by pupils who plan a career in Medicine and equips them with skills and basic knowledge of how to communicate with Deaf people. Pupils further develop their BSL awareness through 'Friday Points Assemblies'.

## **8. Support BSL users to develop skill for work and progress in their chosen career.**

- 8.1. Transition meetings take place in the final year of school to identify an appropriate career pathway for the pupil and to ensure a multi -agency team of support.
- 8.2. Deaf/Hearing Impaired pupils have a specialist Skills Development Scotland (SDS) worker who will examine potential routes for the pupil and the supports which that would be available. At this point, information will be shared about the pupil's needs and communication methods so that this support can be replicated wherever the pupil goes. Support will be provided by the Teachers of the Deaf and SDS worker to make applications and prepare for interviews.
- 8.3. Within the Deaf Education Base, training is also offered on booking an interpreter, learning about Access to Work, Deaf Rights and support within the Deaf Community e.g. Lanarkshire Deaf Club. Senior pupils attend British Deaf Association (BDA) workshops on Children's Rights and access Education Scotland information webinars.

**9. Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals and they too can share their culture.**

9.1. In Hamilton school for the Deaf, native BSL users deliver drama lessons. The school works in partnership with Solar Bear Theatre Company who deliver taster sessions and welcome BSL users into their company.

9.2. Last session, learners worked in collaboration with CBeebies on the JoJo Gnome's Story Podcast. The fantastic programme was put together over 2 days and in preparation for Deaf Awareness Week last year. There is also a BSL signed version of the story, supported by Creative Scotland.

**10. Next steps and priorities**

10.1. Primary stage pupils will be offered the opportunity to achieve BSL Level 1 before they move on to secondary school.

10.2. The Highland Council British Sign Language pack will be promoted as a resource to teach BSL across education settings in South Lanarkshire. South Lanarkshire Council has invested in the Highland Council British Sign Language Resource. This will allow all schools in South Lanarkshire the opportunity to deliver British Sign Language within the curriculum without the need for a signing tutor to be present. The unique digital pack is flexible, affordable and meets the needs of pupils and staff by including lesson plans, signed video clips, resources, activities, games, and more. South Lanarkshire's 1 + 2 Language Lead is aware of the resource and can support schools who wish to develop BSL through advising them on how to purchase and use the Highland Council pack.

10.3. Information on the Highland Council BSL pack was promoted to schools at recent learning community meetings to raise awareness of the resource.

**11. Employee Implications**

11.1. Mainstreaming equalities are met from within existing employee resources.

**12. Financial Implications**

12.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**13. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

13.1. There are no climate change or environmental implications as a result of this report.

**14. Other Implications**

14.1. There is a risk to the Council if the Resource does not comply with the relevant equalities duty and legislation

**15. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

15.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy and, therefore, there is no requirement for an impact assessment to be carried out.

15.2. There was no requirement to undertake consultation in terms of the content of this report.

**Tony McDaid**  
**Executive Director (Education Resources)**

23 May 2023

**Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

Values

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ Excellent employer

Priorities

- ◆ We will work to put people first and reduce inequality
- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ◆ We will work to recover, progress and improve

Outcomes

- ◆ Our children and young people thrive
- ◆ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live
- ◆ Thriving business, fair jobs and vibrant town centres
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ People live the healthiest lives possible
- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

**Previous References**

- ◆ None

**List of Background Papers**

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Working for You: Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2019 to 2021 and Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2021 to 2025
- ◆ A Shared British Sign Language Plan for Lanarkshire 2018 to 2024.

**Contact for Further Information**

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

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