

Glaitness School  
Writing Policy  
May 2008



# Glaitness School

## Writing Policy

### Rationale

Language and literacy, of which writing forms a major part along with reading, listening and talking, are of personal, social and economic importance to an individual and their community.

The ability to use language lies at the centre of a child or young person's development and expression of their emotions, of their thinking and of their sense of personal identity.

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. It increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life and lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work. It contributes strongly to the empowerment of children and young people to become

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

In Glaitness School the children use a wide variety of texts and experiences to build upon the language that they encounter, enjoy, and bring with them from the home, the community, the media and their peers. Within the school we recognise that writing involves a set of complex skills that develop best through effective, structured teaching using a child centred, active learning approach.

## Aims

In Glaitness School we aim to:

- Have a most positive writing ethos throughout the school so that all pupils develop a confidence and pleasure in writing
- Teach writing through a structured programme with agreed targets and lesson aims from Pre-school - P.7
- Teach writing in a structured way to ensure progression, continuity and consistency
- Provide all pupils with relevant, meaningful contexts for writing
- Ensure the teaching of the appropriate writing skills throughout all curricular areas
- Provide all pupils with multisensory learning experiences
- Provide opportunities for appropriate and effective use of ICT
- Link responsive planning, direct and interactive teaching and assessment in every writing lesson in order to
  - meet the needs of individual pupils
  - ensure pace, challenge and enjoyment
  - raise levels of achievement and attainment in writing throughout the school

## Time allocation

The time allocated to English Language 5-14 in primary should be in line with advice contained *in Structure and Balance of the Curriculum 5-14 National Guidelines (2000)*.

In Primary 1 - 3 the suggested time spent on writing per week as part of the language allocation is 1 hour. In primary 4 - 7 this is increased to 1.5 hours per week. However, as writing is an integral part of most areas of the curriculum, this time is flexible.

## Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching is based on the best of current practice, including early intervention strategies, *Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5, 5-14 Guidelines* and the latest guidance from the *Curriculum for Excellence* draft literacy outcomes and experiences in writing from emergent writing through to level E and beyond.

During their time in (Glaitness School children will experience an environment which is rich in language and which sets high expectations in writing and the use of language. Throughout their education at Glaitness School, effective learning and teaching in writing will involve a skilful mix of approaches including :

- Effective direct and interactive teaching
- A balance of spontaneous play and planned activities
- Multisensory learning experiences
- The use of relevant, real life and enjoyable contexts which build upon the children's own experience
- Collaborative working and independent thinking and learning
- The principles of Assessment is for Learning
- Frequent opportunities to communicate in a wide range of contexts, for meaningful purposes and for real audiences within and outwith the school
- The appropriate and effective use of *ICT*

## Resources

Resources in the school for writing are wide and varied, and encompass most areas of the curriculum. They range from those purchased from educational suppliers to experiences created and contexts offered within and outwith the school by members of staff and other related professionals e.g Outdoor Education . A list of available writing resources and suggested contexts for each stage is contained within the Glaitness Writing Pack.

## Frequency and Range of Writing

Children should have *experience* of a balanced programme of Personal, Imaginative and Functional writing throughout the year dependent on age and stage. Sample contexts for writing across the curricular areas and stages are contained in the Glaitness Writing Pack.

Each child should have their own writing portfolio/learning log which should contain at least one example of each type of writing from that year. The examples should be levelled and updated when appropriate. All levels and next steps are discussed and shared with pupils.

## Forward Planning

Our short, medium and long term planning cover all the English Language 5-14 outcomes and indicates learning intentions, success criteria and assessment. Our responsive planning contributes strongly to the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

## Classroom Organisation and Methodology

Classes and areas of the school will display examples of quality children's writing in the 3 key areas

- Personal
- Imaginative
- Functional

Classes will display writing resources appropriate to the age and stage of the children. Writing resources on display might include

- Context wordwall or wordbank
- Ambitious vocabulary
- Punctuation pyramids
- Power openers for sentences

Writing targets will be shared with pupils *before* and during writing lessons and appropriate verbal and written feedback given to match the needs of the individual child to aid the planning of next steps.

Staff will use a wide variety of stimuli to encourage children to write. These stimuli might include

- Opportunities for listening and talking
- Contextualised active learning experiences
- Critical thinking skill tasks
- Sensory experiences
- Modelled examples of different genres
- Visitors to the school e.g Arctic Explorer, Fireman,
- Cross curricular contexts e.g. Environmental studies investigations
- Real life experiences e.g. Visit to the Police Station, Outdoor Education trips
- Creative use of ICT
- Stories from authors
- Visual stimuli such as art work
- Aural stimuli such as music extracts
- Opportunities for discussion and debate

- The balance between these approaches will vary at different stages and across different sectors and areas of the curriculum. Continuing dialogue about learning and teaching approaches within and across sectors will help to ensure continuity and progression.

Grammar, spelling and handwriting are important technical skills and when and where appropriate to the needs of the child, are developed through specifically taught lessons. During writing lessons the children will be expected to demonstrate their ability and understanding of these skills.

### Assessment

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

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

Formative assessment can be carried out in the pupil's writing folder, workbook, jotter or Learning Log. Summative assessment is carefully selected, dated and kept in the Learning Log. National test results, once marked, are kept in the pupil's individual record.

Strategies for assessment are shown in the forward planners for writing.

Seed Circular No.02 - June 2005 states clearly that "*.../70 decision about a child's attainment or future learning should be made or reported on the basis of a single assessment or test score, as it will not, on its own, be sufficiently reliable for that purpose...*"

## Monitoring and Tracking

Monitoring will be carried out by the management team who will termly sample pupils work from each class and discuss children's progress with the teaching staff.

All staff are encouraged to *engage* in regular professional dialogue to ensure there is a shared understanding of standards. There are regular opportunities for staff to take part in cross marking of pupils' work in school and we are working collaboratively with colleagues across the sectors within the authority to ensure a shared standard. These opportunities to share the standard will lead to increased teacher confidence in the teaching and assessment of writing and better progression for pupils from one level /stage to the next.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Management Team will be to

- Create and support an ethos of achievement in literacy
- Develop effective partnerships with parents and develop ways of working which are supportive and inclusive
- In consultation with staff provide a clear policy for skills development in writing across the school
- In consultation with staff provide a clear progression of skills in writing across the school
- Ensure rigorous assessment and monitoring takes place
- Ensure appropriate support is in place to meet the needs of all pupils
- Promote writing across the curriculum
- Ensure all staff access appropriate training opportunities



The role of the teaching staff will be to

- Take account of pupil's prior learning when planning next steps
- Employ a variety of teaching strategies to take account of different learning styles
- Plan appropriate to the needs of the child
- Create a literate environment
- Engage with parents in a variety of ways on a day-to-day basis in order to build a positive relationship
- Share criteria and aims of lessons with children
- Use effective questioning techniques
- Be an effective role model in promoting writing and literacy
- Use a variety of resources, including ICT
- Set the pace of learning to ensure challenge
- Encourage and promote independent learning

The role of the parent or caregiver will be

- Support the work of the school through encouraging children in homework tasks
- Provide language enriching experiences in daily life
- Engage with teachers and staff regularly in support of their child's development and learning

The role of the pupils will be

- Participate fully in all classroom and homework activities
- With support, set targets and have high expectations of the writing they can produce
- To take responsibility for listening to and reading formative assessment comments and use them to improve their writing in the future

*Curriculum for Excellence*

*" Literacy: a shared responsibility*

*...allpractitioners - from early years, through primary ...are in a position to make important contributions to developing and reinforcing young peoples literacy skills through the learning experiences which they plan and through their interaction with children... finding opportunities to encourage children and young people to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which will, where appropriate, help them develop."*

*"Schools and their partners need to ensure a shared understanding of these responsibilities and that approaches to learning and teaching will enable each young person, appropriate to their needs, to make good progress on developing their literacy and language skills."*

Learn as One, live as One