



Literacy and English Policy

Review: November 2018

November 2016

Portlethen Primary is a Rights Respecting School. Article 29 of UNCRC states that "the education of the child should be directed to: the development of the child's mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential".

"Language and literacy are of personal, social and economic importance. Our ability to use language lies at the centre of the development and expression of our emotions, our thinking, our learning and our sense of personal identity. Language is itself a key aspect of our culture." *A Curriculum for Excellence.*

The Literacy Framework is structured into three **Significant Aspects of Learning (SAL)**:

- **Listening and Talking**
- **Reading**
- **Writing**

Within these organisers there are subdivisions.

- ***Enjoyment and choice* experiences and outcomes highlight the importance of providing opportunities for children to make increasingly informed choices.**
- **The *tools* experiences and outcomes include important skills and knowledge; for example, in reading it includes reading strategies, spelling and grammar.**
- **The *finding and using information* strand includes, in reading, critical literacy skills; whilst the *understanding, analysing and evaluating* strand encourages progression in understanding texts, developing literal understanding and higher order skills.**
- **The *creating texts* experiences and outcomes include opportunities which facilitate pupils in developing their ability to communicate effectively, for example, by writing clear, concise and well-structured summaries.**

The experiences and outcomes allow teachers to interpret them to meet the needs of any child with whom they work. For example, "engaging with others" and "interacting" within the listening and talking outcomes, could include the use of Makaton, Widget, Braille and other forms of communication to ensure that the approach is inclusive. A whole school approach in using Widget symbols has been adopted and Makaton signing is employed where appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teaching Staff

- **To plan experiences taking account of prior learning.**
- **To create real life contexts which are relevant to the curricular levels at which children are working.**
- **To recognise and seize on opportunities where children can have joint ownership and guide their own learning.**
- **To employ a variety of teaching tools including active, cooperative and outdoor learning.**
- **To provide opportunities for children to work collaboratively.**
- **To incorporate high quality ICT encounters where appropriate.**
- **To recognise and seize on opportunities for learning across the curriculum and raise awareness of the relevance of literacy within other curricular areas by applying skills learnt to new situations.**
- **To promote a positive attitude to literacy by developing the children's skills, knowledge and understanding.**
- **To consistently monitor children's written literacy skills and promote a high standard of presentation, ensuring work is laid out in line with the *Presentation of Written Work* policy.**
- **To monitor pupils, identify those who require additional challenge and support and address these needs appropriately.**

Senior Leadership Team

- **To be responsible for Literacy across the school.**
- **To ensure that training opportunities are facilitated and resources are available.**
- **To be responsible for monitoring and evaluating literacy practice across the school to ensure that it is in accordance with this policy.**

Pupil Support Assistants

- To support teaching staff and work with pupils as guided by the teacher.
- To work with groups of pupils to scaffold and extend learning as guided by the teacher.
- To support groups of pupils during practical activities.

Parents

- To be partners in their child(ren)'s learning through literacy homework.
- To encourage a positive attitude towards literacy and encourage children to use their literacy skills in real life contexts (eg reading labels when shopping, direction signs when on a trip).
- To encourage their child(ren) to produce literacy work to the highest standard of which they are capable.
- To alert the school of any difficulties that they notice with their child(ren)'s learning.

Pupils

- Pupils should work to the best of their ability at all times.
- Pupils should aim to complete the tasks set.
- Pupils should be able to set targets for their own learning.
- Pupils should be able to talk in an informed manner about their learning.

Whilst these guidelines should be followed for the majority of the class, teachers' professional judgement should be used when planning learning encounters to meet the needs of all children within the class.

Nursery-Primary1; Early Level

Nursery Staff should follow the Early Level of a Curriculum for Excellence and should:

Listening and Talking

- Provide a stimulating environment for children to listen, talk and ask questions during social routines.
- Encourage children to retell, compose or invent stories.
- Provide good models of language by listening to children, taking the time to talk in one to one and group conversations.
- Provide role play, singing, reciting opportunities on a daily basis.
- Read stories, either by an adult or from a CD.
- Engage with the activities in "Talk the Big Talk" as a precursor/alternative/support to "Big Writing". (See "Talk the Big Talk- The Role of The EYFS" pages 26-35)

Reading

- Encourage children to develop curiosity for language, letters, words and print.
- Demonstrate and encourage children how to hold a book, to explore the front cover and text where appropriate.
- Children should be encouraged to read their names and environmental print (eg toilet, exit etc).
- Incorporate the use of ICT within children's imaginative play where appropriate eg telephones, digital cameras, keyboards, barcodes.

Writing

- Children should be encouraged to mark make and draw through daily routines and role play and experiment with their drawings.

Primary 1-3; Early/First Level

In reading, the focus is on teaching Active Literacy strategies through ORT (Oxford Reading Tree), PM books and a range of other books. All of these books have been book banded, a method of grading books across different reading schemes/publishers.

Reading Guidelines

Stage	CFE Level	Frequency	Number of Books
P1	Early Level	daily	2 books per week
P2/3	First Level	3 times per week	2 books per week/1 book for enjoyment and choice

Some children may require additional reading sessions to support their learning. Read and Write Gold literacy software may be used to support everyday tasks such as reading text out loud.

Teachers may use the Active Literacy Benchmarking Kit to assess children's book band levels. This should **not** be a whole class approach to assessment but used to assess/confirm levels of specific children.

Children should be exposed to a wide variety of different types of texts. As they progress through the curricular levels, pupils will encounter increasingly complex texts in relation to vocabulary, structure, length and complexity of concepts.

Examples of texts

Poems, plays, short stories, novels, maps, graphs, timetables, advertisement, comics, leaflets, adverts, magazines, reports, reviews, posters, instructions, CVs, letters, emails, blogs, tweets.

Phonics

Children will learn 2 phonemes per week following the order of the Active Literacy Programme.

Spelling

Children will learn spelling in line with the Active Literacy Programme, ensuring consolidation weeks are built in. Teachers should determine the starting point at the start of session based on handover information, analysis of the Single Word Spelling Test administered at the start of each school session and professional judgement. Teachers differentiate by using the same phoneme but varying the complexity of words to provide support and challenge.

The weekly structure should be:

Day 1 Introduce spelling words. Build words using magnetic letters and boards or using Stage 3 letter packs. (Packs made up in Room 1)

Day 2 Reciprocal teaching task with caller/writer eg using Elkonin boxes

Day 3 Reciprocal teaching task with caller/writer eg spelling hand (say/make/break/blend/read/write)

Day 4 Reciprocal teaching task with caller/writer eg use spelling story to dictate a sentence.

Day 5 Teacher assessment eg "show me" boards, "beat the teacher"

Teachers may choose other tasks that reinforce spelling of the words taught on day 1 and are expected to include a multi-sensory approach. From P2, dictation should form part of the programme.

Pupils should be assessed weekly in a variety of ways. Day 2-5 activities should be short (around 15 minutes). During consolidation weeks, pupils should be assessed to include previously taught phonemes and strategies for tricky/common words. If progress is not as expected, teachers should plan appropriate next steps for those pupils involved. Advice/support may be sought from ASL staff.

Red word books should be used to scaffold learning in spelling. The "Have a Go" Active Literacy support for spelling strategy (using whiteboards, teacher and peer support) should begin to replace word books when the teachers' professional judgement deems it appropriate for each individual.

Handwriting

Handwriting should initially be taught as part of phonics and spelling and, based on teachers' professional judgement, joining of the taught phonemes may be included as children progress through P2. Letter formation, size and position should be focussed on, beginning with lower case letters. Capital letters should initially be introduced for the first letter of names. Joined script, through weekly taught lessons using Nelson Handwriting, will be introduced at a point during P3 based on teachers' professional judgement. Weekly lessons should last approximately 20 minutes. Children should progress to joined script only when they are able to form letters correctly.

Primary 4-7; First/Second Level

Reading

In reading, the focus is on teaching Active Literacy strategies through a variety of texts with a particular emphasis on novels. A range of other resources are available including ORT (Oxford Reading Tree) fiction and non-fiction texts, poetry, environmental texts eg newspaper articles, extracts of texts.

Pupils will complete at least 2 novels, including a whole class novel incorporating a modelling block to teach the 6 reading strategies **at the start of session**, followed by group novels to consolidate (approximately 6 weeks x 2 novels, duration will vary according to length of novel and activities planned). The 6 strategies should be displayed on classroom walls for reference. Appendix B outlines the strategies, a display version of which is located on Staff shared documents. Teachers may prefer to create their own displays.

Pupils must also read 2 non-fiction texts, one whole class piece to again model the strategies and how they may be used with non-fiction texts, followed by group non-fiction texts to consolidate. (approximately 2 weeks x 2 texts). Teachers may choose when to do these.

Children should experience a wide variety of texts, examples of which are listed earlier in this policy.

Modelling Block Novels

P4	Through The Cat Flap (Whybrow)	or	The Invisible Dog (King Smith)
P5	The Demon Headmaster (Cross)	or	The Last Wolf (Morpurgo)
P6	The Eleventh Orphan (Lingard)	or	Danny The Champion of the World (Dahl)
P7	The Highwayman's Footsteps (Morgan)	or	Goodnight Mr Tom (Magorian)

Each of the first novels listed for each stage have already been written up to include activities across the 6 reading strategies and can be found on Staff shared documents and on hard copy in the staffroom. Staff are expected to share their contributions when embarking on a novel that has not yet been written up with a view to extending school resources and sharing workload. Teachers of composite classes should discuss appropriate novels with a member of SLT. **The novels earmarked for the whole class modelling block should be not be used at any other time.**

All novels should remain in school and an additional book should be chosen to read at home for enjoyment and choice. Generic homework tasks related to the chosen enjoyment and choice book should be given.

Reading Guidelines

Stage	CFE Level	Frequency
P4	First Level	Twice/3 times per week
P5/7	Second Level	Twice per week

Some children may require additional reading sessions to support their learning. Read and Write Gold literacy software may be used to support everyday tasks such as reading text out loud.

Spelling

Children will learn spelling in line with the Active Literacy Programme, ensuring consolidation weeks are built in. Teachers should determine the starting point at the start of session based on handover information, analysis of the Single Word Spelling Test administered at the start of each school session and professional judgement. Teachers differentiate by using the same phoneme but varying the complexity of words to provide support and challenge. Children need to understand *how* they are learning to spell words, particularly those strategies used for tricky words. Once strategies are taught, pupils should be able to identify the strategy they are using to help them spell words. A list of strategies can be found on Staff shared documents. (Appendix C) An increased focus on investigating the different meanings of words takes place as children progress through the stages.

The weekly structure should be:

Day 1 Introduce spelling words. Use “look, think, investigate” as outlined in the Active Literacy manuals.

Day 2 Reciprocal teaching task with caller/writer eg using Elkonin boxes.

Day 3 Reciprocal teaching task with caller/writer eg Diacritical marking using school packs.

Day 4 Reciprocal teaching task with caller/writer eg use spelling story/extended story (Stage 4 and 5 packs made up in Room 8) for a variety of tasks eg dictate a number of sentences.

Day 5 Teacher assessment

Teachers may choose other tasks that reinforce spelling of the words taught on day 1 eg “Sparkle”, “Treasure Hunt” game. From P2, dictation should form part of the programme and should become more challenging as children progress through the stages. Note that this school diacritically marks below the spelling words.

At Stages 6 and 7 (P6 and 7), an increased focus on subject specific, topic and tricky words takes place. Consult the Active Literacy manual for word lists. **An additional word bank, focussing on phonemes and expanding vocabulary is in the process of being prepared and will be appended to this policy on completion.**

Pupils should be assessed weekly via a written spelling test. Day 2-5 activities should be short (around 15 minutes). During consolidation weeks, pupils should be assessed to include previously taught phonemes and strategies for tricky/common words. If progress is not as expected, teachers should plan appropriate next steps for those pupils involved. Advice/support may be sought from ASL staff.

Red word books are available to scaffold learning in spelling. The “Have a Go” Active Literacy support for spelling strategy (using whiteboards, teacher and peer support) should replace word books when the teachers’ professional judgement deems it appropriate for each individual.

Handwriting

Joined script, through weekly lessons using Nelson Handwriting will be introduced at a point during P3 based on teachers’ professional judgement. Children should progress to joined script only when they are able to form letters correctly. The weekly handwriting lesson should last approximately 20 minutes. Pupils should transfer the use of joined script to their daily writing activities. At P6/7, the emphasis should shift from formal handwriting lessons to expectations of consistently high standards of handwriting across all curricular areas.

P1-P7 Writing; Early/Second Level

Portlethen Primary School has undertaken to improve standards of children's writing as a main priority within the School Improvement Plan. The school has decided to adopt the Big Writing approach to proactively teach writing skills and improve attainment.

The Senior Leadership team and staff have participated in formal In-Service training, follow up in-house training and professional dialogue to discuss how to implement Big Writing so there is a consistent and clear approach and to convey high expectations of all. Through pupil focus groups, the children's understanding of and attitude towards the Big Writing approach has been gauged. All classes from P2-P7 experienced between 3 and 6 Big Writing lessons from "Lesson Plans for Big Writing" in term 4 of session 2015/16 in order to provide a platform from which to launch it as a whole school approach from August 2016. Big Writing will be facilitated in session 2016/17 as outlined below.

Two 'Whats' and two 'Hows'

Ros Wilson identifies that there are two 'Whats' and two 'Hows' that are central to the writing challenges that children face. The 'Whats' are already embedded through the Literacy and English curriculum and children are exposed to many text types through their reading. **The 'Hows' are critical to providing learners with tools and strategies to enable them to become confident writers able to write in different genre and to a range of stimuli.** Big Writing centres on proactively teaching children the strategies and steps they need to develop from emerging writers into confident mature writers who can apply their skills.

The Whats:

- 1) Text type and characteristics
- 2) Purpose of writing / stimulus

The Hows:

- 1) Skills – grammar, handwriting, spelling and punctuation (GHaSP)
- 2) The writing voice and use of VCOP

VCOP – Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers, Punctuation

Proactively teaching VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation) will equip learners with the understanding and skills to write increasingly sophisticated texts.

Each teacher can choose how they wish to teach and deliver these four generic targets of Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation but they should be taught systematically and in lively fun ways. Proactive teaching will enable children to have the tools to grow into confident writers with a range of strategies at their disposal.

Key VCOP Aspects for Portlethen Primary

Vocabulary – Children's vocabulary constantly needs to be extended and reinforced through patterning (repeated use of spoken language to enable a child to use it in their writing).

"Wow" words (interesting and ambitious vocabulary) should be avidly collected – stolen from texts, from authors and from each other. Each class will build a collection of wow words. A large collection should build up which is consistently added to. **These should be in children's own handwriting.** Old wow words can be stored and revisited as a 5 minute recap. The collection should be an evolving and changing display. Wow words are age and stage related and **the teacher's definition of ambitious is crucial.** A wow word should not be a word which is normally used by a child of this age or stage of development prior to proactively teaching it. For example age 5/6 – exciting, interesting, age 9/10 – aggressively, anxiety, (See pages 21 of "Writing Voice and Basic Skills" for more examples).

Connectives – Every class should have a display of possible connectives to support the children in their writing.

Openers – The use of openers helps children to construct interesting and complex sentences. Each class should have a range of opener words on display and make reference to them regularly in paired, shared and guided writing.

Punctuation – The Big Writing lesson uses the punctuation pyramid. The punctuation pyramid should be displayed in each classroom and referred to regularly in lessons. (See "Writing Voice and Basic Skills" book for ways of encouraging children to engage with the punctuation pyramid). Class teachers should decide how to present the punctuation pyramid within their classroom and children should be able to talk about their learning in relation to it. **Kung Fu punctuation is a fun, active way of teaching punctuation. Teachers should use this as a teaching tool through short tasks on one or two occasions per week (See "Writing Voice and Basic Skills", page 106).**

Appropriate grammar and punctuation taught should continue to be recorded via the school's skills ladder (Appendix A)

All staff should have high expectations for all children's writing:

Ros Wilson's Big Writing approach advocates:

"Write less but write best!"

"No sloppy writing"

Basic Skills

Basic skills advocated in Big Writing are taught through the Big Writing philosophy at Portlethen Primary as well as within the Active Literacy Programme, Collins Primary Focus G&P, Nelson Handwriting and through teacher facilitated active learning. The basic skills are: grammar, handwriting, spelling and punctuation (GHaSP).

Big Writing Session

At Portlethen Primary learners will have the opportunity to engage in a Big Writing session most weeks. It will be at the discretion of each individual teacher to plan and decide when the sessions are appropriate. **For children who are not yet ready or able to write, Big Talk, the modified version of Big Writing (referred to in page 2 of this policy) should be utilised. This will normally be within nursery and primary 1.**

At CFE second level the session should be long enough to allow a talk, planning and writing session (Pages 66-69 of "Writing Voice and Basic Skills" offers a range of suggestions for forms of planning), Planning sessions should be short.

In line with the principles of Active Literacy, writing tasks based on reading, traditional tales, interdisciplinary topics or real life contexts will continue to take place. The specific skills taught in relation to the weekly taught lesson should be transferred to all writing activities.

Arrangements for the Big Writing session:

Resources:

Big Writing pieces of work will be in the taught writing jotters. Teachers may choose to use special pencils that are given out only for Big Writing lessons. P6/7 teachers may opt for pens or pencils. **Read and Write Gold literacy software may be used to support writing, its intuitive toolbar aids proof reading for children with dyslexia and other learning challenges.**

Environment:

A positive writing environment should be created for the children. This could involve the use of a focus candle or subdued lighting. The children should be silent and music can be played to enhance concentration.

Ethos:

Ros Wilson identifies 5 elements of a positive ethos:

- 1) Creating a positive atmosphere**
- 2) Creating a secure atmosphere**
- 3) Creating an ethos where children feel they have some control**
- 4) Creating an atmosphere within which children feel successful**
- 5) Creating a framework for children to work towards known, achievable goals**

Teacher input – During the Big Writing session the teacher may wish to model writing themselves or move from child to child quietly reminding them of personal targets. The teacher should also give children time targets and reminders about the use of connectives, openers, and punctuation as appropriate. Brain breaks should be factored in (child's age plus one minute) where the teacher can encourage sharing and reflection eg "who has 3 wow words")

Assessment of Big Writing

Writing may be assessed as per the school's marking code. However, **twice per term** it should be assessed against either the Scottish Criterion Scale or the Scottish Pupil Friendly Criterion Scale. **The baseline writing assessment in August and those pieces used at tracking periods of October, February and May should be entered into the children's display book used from P2-7.** This will allow progress to be tracked throughout each child's primary school career.

As children progress through the school, they should gain an increased understanding of the levels, be able to discuss what they **can** do and articulate the next steps they need to take. Big Writing suggests ways in which learners can look analytically at their work and improve in a motivating way – **uplevelling**, Spot the Difference, Goal Scores etc. **It is recognised that the Big Writing Criterion Scale does not dovetail with Aberdeenshire's new progression frameworks and work is being undertaken to produce an appropriate criterion scale.**

In August the child's last piece of work from the previous year should be revisited by the child and the teacher to show the quality and success that has already been achieved and marks expectations prior to the first baseline writing assessment of the session.

All children should know what they need to do next in order to improve their writing. This may be as an individual target or a group target. Children should be able to talk about their writing with an adult.

Listening and Talking

It is vital that children develop a "writing voice" as well as their community voice. This is based on the principle that **'If a child can't say it, they can't write it'**

Talk Assemblies

Following a pilot of whole school talk homework from August 2016, talk assemblies will now form part of the weekly homework regime at Portlethen Primary School. Children are expected to discuss the topic at home and report back to the following assembly.

Literacy Across The Curriculum

Pupils require to employ their literacy skills across the curriculum. Skills already learnt should be practised, reinforced and revisited in order to maintain progression. Teachers should plan development and progression of skills using the Aberdeenshire Progression Frameworks and Benchmarks.

They should ensure there is no ceiling on learning, by facilitating more challenging contexts in which to use and demonstrate pupils' skills. Collaboration with colleagues will promote a shared understanding of expectations of standards as well as effective learning and teaching within literacy. In jotter sampling, the SLT will expect evidence of skills taught within the taught writing lesson, to be transferred to daily writing activities. At the end of each session, literacy planners should be passed to receiving colleagues as part of the handover process, as a record of skills and topics covered in the session.

The Learning Environment

A literacy rich and supportive learning environment is imperative and should include:

- **Sharing of learning intentions and success criteria at the start, during and at the plenary of a lesson.**
- **Active, cooperative and outdoor learning opportunities to promote enthusiasm for literacy.**
- **Contextualised and relevant experiences.**
- **Exposure to high quality ICT experiences, where appropriate.**
- **Effective use of AifL techniques, including an understanding of the purpose and relevance of the learning encounters.**
- **Support and challenge techniques, such as mixed ability pairings, independent challenges.**
- **Access to a wide range of texts for different purposes.**
- **Making links across the curriculum to ensure skills are frequently applied in different, relevant contexts.**
- **Literacy rich displays to scaffold learning and generate interest, enthusiasm and ideas.**

Assessment of Literacy

Assessment is a continual process so that teachers can take appropriate, timely next steps on a daily basis to maximise pupils' learning potential.

Teachers will use a range of summative materials eg standardised InCAS and EPiPs, Single Word Spelling Tests. Formative assessments should be ongoing and should be in line with the school's marking code as well as additional strategies such as traffic lights, self, peer and teacher comment based assessment, fist of five, thumbs up/down, 2 stars and a wish.

It is vital that teachers use this information together with their professional judgement to plan next steps in learning so that each child is challenged and supported to the level required for each individual.



Appendix A

Grammar and Punctuation Skills Ladder

Punctuation and Structure	Early	1st dev	1st con
Use capital letters and full stops in one sentence			
Answer in sentences			
Join sentences (and, but, because, so)			
Use question marks			
Use exclamation marks			
Introduce apostrophe as possession			
Introduce apostrophe as contraction			
Knowledge about Language			
Vowels and consonants			
Letter/sound			
Full stop			
Capital letter/lower case			
Question mark			
Common nouns			
Proper nouns			
Verbs (doing words)			
Adjectives (describing words)			
a or an (a dog/an apple)			
Alphabetical order (by 1 st letter)			
Conjunctions/connectives			
Use of a comma within a list			
Singular/plural			
Introduction to part and present tense			
Subject/verb agreement (is/are)			
Use of alliteration			
Dictionary skills			

Shaded area shows at which level the language feature is introduced



Grammar Skills Ladder – 1st Secure

Punctuation and Structure	Date
Use capital letters and full stops in more than one sentence	
Use paragraphs	
Planning – beginning, middle, end in a continuous piece of writing	
Use exclamation marks	
Use conjunctions/connectives – and, but, so, therefore	
Use apostrophes as possession	
Use apostrophes as contraction	
Knowledge about Language	
Consistent use of capital letters	
Consistent use of full stops	
Use and understand the impact of a variety of sentence starters	
Consistent use of common and proper nouns, adjectives and verbs	
Consistent use of question marks/exclamation marks	
Introduction to speech marks	
Singular/plural - endings	
Prepositions	
Tense (past and present)	
Our, are	
Of, off	
There, their, they're	
To, too, two	
Introduce additional homophones	
Subject/verb agreement (was/were)	
Alphabetical order (2 nd , 3 rd letter)	
Use of a dictionary to check spelling/meaning	
Use of a thesaurus to find alternatives words	
Introduce onomatopoeia	
Introduce similes	
Introduce homonyms	



Grammar Skills Ladder – 2nd Developing

Punctuation and Structure	Date
Use conjunctions/connectives – if, then, until, when, besides	
Use commas to pause/show time lapse	
Use speech marks correctly in complex sentences (split speech)	
Use apostrophes as possession, contraction and plural	
Consistent use of paragraphs – change of time, place or subject	
Consistent use of alternatives to “said”	
Knowledge about Language	
Consistent use of a variety of sentence starters (adj/adv etc)	
Consistent use of common and proper nouns	
Use of collective nouns (herd - sheep, fleet – ships)	
Consistent use of interesting verbs	
Use of comparative/superlative adjectives	
Use adverbs (-ly) to describe verbs	
Singular/plural – endings (ves/ies and irregular words)	
Consistent use of speech marks	
Tense (past, present, future and irregular)	
Use homophones in correct context – to, too, two	
- There, their, they're	
- Where, were, wear (local dialect)	
- Here, hear	
- Of, off	
- Which, witch	
Subject/verb agreement (has/have)	
Alphabetical order (reinforce 2 nd , 3 rd letter)	
Consolidate use of a dictionary to check spelling/meaning	
Consolidate use of a thesaurus to find alternatives words	
Consolidate use of onomatopoeia to improve writing	
Relevant use of similes	
Revisit homonyms	



Grammar Skills Ladder – 2nd Consolidating

Punctuation and Structure	Date
Use conjunctions/connectives – if, then, until, when, besides	
Use commas to pause/show time lapse	
Use speech marks correctly in complex sentences (split speech)	
Use apostrophes as possession, contraction and plural	
Consistent use of paragraphs – change of time, place or subject	
Consistent use of alternatives to “said”	
Knowledge about Language	
Consistent use of a variety of sentence starters (adj/adv etc)	
Consistent use of common and proper nouns	
Use of collective nouns (herd - sheep, fleet – ships)	
Consistent use of interesting verbs	
Use of comparative/superlative adjectives	
Use adverbs (-ly) to describe verbs	
Singular/plural – endings (ves/ies and irregular words)	
Consistent use of speech marks	
Tense (past, present, future and irregular)	
Use homophones in correct context – to, too, two	
- There, their, they're	
- Where, were, wear (local dialect)	
- Here, hear	
- Of, off	
- Which, witch	
Subject/verb agreement (has/have)	
Alphabetical order (reinforce 2 nd , 3 rd letter)	
Consolidate use of a dictionary to check spelling/meaning	
Consolidate use of a thesaurus to find alternative words	
Consolidate use of onomatopoeia to improve writing	
Relevant use of similes	
Revisit homonyms	



Grammar Skills Ladder – 2nd Secure

Punctuation and Structure	Date
Use an extended and varied range of conjunctions/connectives	
Use commas to pause/show time lapse	
Use speech marks correctly in complex sentences (split speech)	
Use apostrophes as possession, contraction and plural	
Consistent and appropriate use of paragraphs –change of time, place or subject	
Consistent use of a wide variety of alternatives to “said”	
Knowledge about Language	
Consistent use of a variety of sentence starters (adj/adv etc)	
Consistent use of common and proper nouns	
Use of collective nouns (herd - sheep, fleet – ships)	
Consistent use of interesting verbs	
Use of comparative/superlative adjectives	
Use adverbs (-ly) to describe verbs	
Singular/plural – endings (ves/ies and irregular words)	
Consistent use of speech marks	
Tense (past, present, future and irregular)	
Use homophones in correct context – to,too, two	
- There, their, they’re	
- Where, were, wear (local dialect)	
- Here, hear	
- Of, off	
- Which, witch	
Consistency of subject/verb agreement (has/have)	
Alphabetical order (reinforce 2 nd , 3 rd letter)	
Confidently use a dictionary to check spelling/meaning	
Confidently use a thesaurus to find alternative words	
Confidently use onomatopoeia to improve writing	
Relevant use of similes, metaphors and personification	
Revisit homonyms	

Appendix B

Active Reading Strategies

Stage 4 – 7

By the end of first level/early second level, pupils should be showing use of:

- **Prior knowledge**
- **Metalinguistics**
- **Visualisation**
- **Inference**
- **Main Ideas**
- **Summarising**

For pupils to be successful readers, teachers need to teach these strategies through demonstrating the use of **'think aloud'**.

Metacognition (Prior Knowledge) Strategy 1

To enable pupils to make links between learning from other parts of the curriculum and from life experiences. By allowing them to identify what they already know, it takes the fear of a new text/section away from less motivated readers.

- This can be explored through:
 - Questioning as a whole class or individually
 - Using group discussion
 - Creating lists or mind maps
 - Making direct links to previous teaching...

Metalinguistics (focus on language) Strategy 2

To teach how to learn/break down/use/identify new vocabulary or language features from the text. This can be to broaden their vocabulary, develop their understanding of setting, characters or events or to highlight writing features for them to develop in their own writing.

- This can be facilitated through:
 - discussion in groups/class
 - tables/graphs to complete
 - encouraging pupils to create quizzes (Call my Bluff)
 - Pupils completing or creating Cloze Reading exercises
 - Pupils having to think of other words that could replace certain words in the text.

Visualisations (sensory images) Strategy 3

The reasoning behind using visualisation is so pupils are:

'able to use mental pictures to extend and deepen their comprehension. ... provided with an opportunity to draw in different ways, a picture created by the text (giving concrete forms to abstract ideas or information).' *Active Literacy Reading Manual*

- This can be achieved through modelling how to display information in different forms and how to select the most suitable form for the purpose set (graphs, pictures, timelines, mindmaps etc). This is the first stage of teaching information handling skills and how to use visuals to help organise information to learn/memorise.

Inferences Strategy 4

It is important that children learn to read beyond the words on the page. The ability to identify inferences in a text is high level reading and needs to be modelled by teachers.

This can be practised through written questions, oral questioning and discussion as a whole class, group discussion, highlighting certain parts of the text, identifying clues...

Main Ideas (themes) Strategy 5

The main idea is *NOT* the information obtained during the reading of the synopsis nor is it anything suggested by the cover or illustrations. It is not merely what the book or text is about. Readers need to explore the text at a deeper level.

It is important that teachers know the texts before they teach them so they have knowledge of what themes will arise throughout the text.

Most work around main idea/themes will be through discussion that then leads to written work or some sort of visual image like a mindmap. If possible, themes should be tracked through a text so children can see the development of them. For example, if a key idea/theme is relationships, you may want to track regularly how a certain relationship changes/develops as the story goes on.

Summariser Strategy 6

To develop the ability to be able to identify key information and to summarise only the main ideas of a text. A summary should be short, precise and show a clear understanding of the original text.

This can be done in a variety of ways including using Post It notes to limit space available, ask the pupils to summarise the story in a tweet (140 characters) or a text message (160 characters), using storyboards so they only have a certain amount of squares to re-tell the story etc.

Paraphrasing and Summarising Strategy 6 (P6/7)

Paraphrasing – maintain meaning but use our own words.

- Replace difficult words/phrases (modelled from Strategy 2)
- Vary sentence length and structure
- Clear and concise words to explain inferential information
- Express ideas/information in own words –showing meaning

The whole-class text (novel, short stories, poetry, non-fiction, short films...) is an opportunity for the teacher to model how to do different tasks/skills around the 6 reading strategies. If the time is taken to teach those key strategies, the children should then be able to complete similar tasks in their ability set reading groups following the whole-class text.

Appendix C

Spelling

When writing out your spelling words I would like you to show me what strategy you have used to learn how to spell them correctly. Your strategy will most probably change with each word.

Strategy	Explanation
1. Knowledge of phonics	Can you use the Elkonin boxes or diacritical marking?
2. Syllabification	Break words into syllables. Going = go ing Yesterday = yes ter day
3. Words within words	For example: Country = count try Example = exam ample
4. Compound words	For example: Breakfast = break fast Strawberry = straw berry
5. Knowledge of spelling patterns	Do you know how to spell similar sounding words? For example, you know light so you know bright, fright, sight, etc
6. Mnemonic	This is a memory aid to help spell correctly. For example: Necessary = one Collar, two Sleeves Separate = there is a rat in separate
7. Spelling Rules	Use these when appropriate. For example, 'Q' + 'u' e.g. queen, quash