



**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
3 APRIL 2019**

**SUBJECT: NORTHERN ALLIANCE RAISING ATTAINMENT IN LITERACY,
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION WORKSTREAM: TAKING
A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO EMERGING LITERACY**

**BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL
CARE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Committee to scrutinise and note the progress and impact of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) workstream - taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy – in Moray, reviewing last full session's data set for impact (2017/2018) and current year Implementation Plan (2018/2019).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee scrutinises and notes the content of this report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Developed in collaboration between Education and Health and originating in Highland, Emerging Literacy has been created to support practitioners across the Northern Alliance Local Authorities to effectively differentiate early literacy learning by matching the teaching and learning of literacy, language and communication to the needs of each child. The Emerging Literacy workstream is led across the Northern Alliance by a Quality Improvement Officer (Northern Alliance) and coordinated locally in Moray by a Quality Improvement Officer.
- 3.2 Informed by the developmental knowledge of Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists, Emerging Literacy has classified the many foundational reading and writing skills into four key skill areas: concepts of print, oral language, phonological awareness and pre-handwriting.

- 3.3 International research identified these foundational skill areas which predict literacy attainment, not just in the first year in school but into later primary and beyond. Children come into school with a wide range of levels and security of these key skills – some of which may be due to previous learning experience, but much is related to normal (biological) variation in development. Taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy supports practitioners to identify the strengths and gaps of each learner within these key skill areas as well as providing planning support to address the identified skill gaps.
- 3.4 Emerging Literacy is a series of supports and resources for reflective teaching so that teachers can work out what to do for a given class. Teachers are supported to use their judgements about the timing and pacing of phonics and handwriting instruction. This means that those children able to forge ahead are suitably challenged, and those children who need further support can work to secure foundational skills for strengthened future attainment.
- 3.5 Once initial Emerging Literacy assessments have been completed, these allow for teachers to plan experiences which are matched to the learning needs of each child. Assessments undertaken at mid-year point and once again at the end of the academic year, highlight progress and impact of supports and resources on children’s learning and development of the key foundation skills. Mid-year assessment allows for further intervention and changes in supports in place.
- 3.6 **Appendix 1** outlines frequently asked questions in relation to Emerging Literacy with further information, video clips and resources also contained on www.northernalliance.scot (Emerging Literacy tab).

4. EMERGING LITERACY IN MORAY SCHOOLS

- 4.1 Across Moray, 37 schools are currently participating in Emerging Literacy with the remaining schools joining the programme next session, in the final phase 4. Alongside support from the Northern Alliance lead for Emerging Literacy, Lead Practitioner Local Authority network supports are also in place. Practitioners at Keith Primary School, Hopeman Primary School and Kinloss Primary School offer this support to their colleagues and they receive training from the Northern Alliance lead. Further Buddy Networks are also in place, with schools working together in groups of three/four for further support and professional reflection.
- 4.2 Due to the increased offer of hours within Early Years, this session there is a pilot project, working in partnership with the Early Years Expansion Team. Millbank Primary School and Seafield Primary School will work on Emerging Literacy development with their respective linked Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings. This will further enable Early Years Practitioners (EYPs) to promote early literacy, language and communication skills through developmentally appropriate child initiated play experiences, allowing for early intervention on key skills for strengthened progression to Primary School. This will further support development of Emerging Literacy as a whole school approach.

4.3 **Appendix 2** contains a summary of last session's Emerging Literacy assessment collation. This is also notable with regard to the Scottish Government target set, where by 2020, at least 85% of children within each SIMD quintile will have successfully achieved early level literacy. As our most recent full academic year's data set for Emerging Literacy, assessment results by May 2018 present very positively (in comparison with this overall percentage). This comment is based on the four key areas under assessment as part of Emerging Literacy data collation for analysis of impact:

- *Phonological Awareness*: awareness of the sound structure of words, able to recognise and work with sounds in spoken language
- *Fine Motor skills*: the ability to make movements using small muscles in the fingers, hands and forearms, supporting children to get better at grasping and coordination
- *Scissor skills*: the opening and closing of cutting with scissors helps children develop small muscles in hands (fine motor skills), these muscles are crucial for holding pencils, crayons and gripping or manipulating objects
- *Pre-writing/Pencil Control skills*: the key skills children need to develop before they are able to write, contributing to a child's ability to hold and use a pencil, draw, write, copy and colour. These are the pencil strokes that most letters, numbers and early drawing are made up of, including activities such as bubble letters, dot-to-dot prewriting activities and tracing.

4.4 From analysis of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) data, it is noted that links may be made between school involvement in Emerging Literacy and positive impact on achievement of Early level literacy.

Almost all schools participating in the Emerging Literacy workstream for the past 2 and 3 academic years ("Year 2" and "Year 3" schools) show notable improvement in Early level Literacy data overall.

Most schools joining Emerging Literacy in August 2018 ("Year 1" schools) show positive data trend for Early level Literacy when comparing ACEL data (2016-2018) to early indication ACEL data provided mid-year, for session 2019. Improvement in Early level Literacy data is therefore anticipated for these schools in our 2019 return to Scottish Government with Emerging Literacy contributing to improvements in performance.

4.5 Practitioner evaluations provided, further contained within **Appendix 2**, highlight the benefits to practitioners and the positive impact of Emerging Literacy on children and schools.

4.6 **Appendix 3** provides overview of Emerging Literacy purpose, networks and support alongside the current session 2018/2019 Implementation Plan underway. As more schools join Emerging Literacy, planning for next session 2019/2020 will look towards sustainability through Lead Practitioner networks and empowerment at local level.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Policy was informed by the priorities within the Corporate Plan with specific regard to ‘Priority 3, Ambitious and Confident Children and Young People’ and 10 Year Plan (LOIP) with specific regard to Moray Priority, to “provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence”.

(b) Policy and Legal

This report relates to Section 66 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, which concerns the inspection of educational establishments.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on performance.

(h) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education and Social Care, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, Senior Solicitor, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

6. **CONCLUSION**

6.1 That Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report.

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Officer
Background Papers:
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