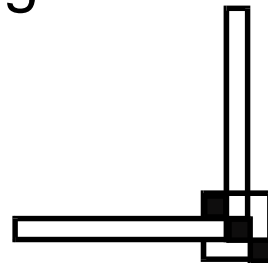


# Improving Writing 5-14



## ***Introduction***

The implementation of the 5-14 National Guidelines in English Language has been facilitated within school in Argyll and Bute by the inclusion of a variety of teacher training courses within the Development Service course calendar. These included several staff development opportunities for writing including developing writing, using national criteria for assessment, and emergent writing courses.

A great deal of work has been done in schools in Argyll and Bute to implement the content of these courses and this has been endorsed by the Inspectorate in recent inspections. However, the wider national picture is of a need for 'significant improvement' in this area. Indeed, within this authority improving writing has been and is still a major priority as part of the general raising attainment initiative.

The recommendations contained in 'Improving Writing 5-14' provide a useful framework against which to review and refine current practice. Staff development on this document began in January 2000 within weeks of its publication and will continue as long as required. Support material on teaching writing 'First Steps to Writing' has also been issued to all primary and special schools.

The following paper will support schools in responding to the guidance contained in the 'Improving Writing' document and in enabling teachers and managers to implement advice gained on inservice courses.

This paper is designed to complement guidance contained in:

Improving Writing 5-14

Achievement for All – HMI SOEID 1996

Achieving Success in S1/S2 – HMI SOEID 1997

Setting Targets: A Strategy to Raise Standards – 1997

Structure and Balance in the Curriculum 5-14 – SCCC 2000

***Aim:***

The aim of this document is to provide guidance for improving the teaching and learning of writing for pupils aged 5-14 and hence to raise attainment levels.

***Key Issues and Action Points***

The following key issues and action points have been identified on the basis of an analysis of 'Improving Writing 5-14'.

Prior to the publication of 'Improving Writing 5-14' much work had been done in educational establishments to promote writing 5-14. The following is a list of the main development initiatives within the authority. The use of this audit tool will indicate the level of current practice and help prioritise areas for development. Further guidance on each aspect is contained in 'Improving Writing 5-14' and is summarised in the following pages for ease of access.

| The Programme  | Not Yet Considered | Planned Development | Partly Implemented | Fully Implemented |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Are you actively promoting a writing culture?  |                    |                     |                    |                   |
| Do you have a current whole school policy on writing which reflects the recommendations of Improving Writing 5-14? |                    |                     |                    |                   |
| Do you include integrated cross curricular writing opportunities aligned to 5-14 writing criteria?                 |                    |                     |                    |                   |
| Do you employ whole class interactive teaching strategies?   |                    |                     |                    |                   |
| Do you actively promote the writing process?   |                    |                     |                    |                   |
| Do you promote use of conferencing techniques (teacher led/peer) to assist with the writing process?               |                    |                     |                    |                   |
| Do you assess writing using the National Test 5-14 criteria?   |                    |                     |                    |                   |

## ***Agenda for Action***

### ***The Programme for Writing***

#### ***Organisation of the Programme***

When organising a programme for the development of writing each establishment should consider the following requirements:

- An effective literacy programme in P1, P2 – learning to read and write simultaneously
- A whole school policy for teaching of writing
- Liaison amongst sectors – pre school/primary/secondary to produce cohesive programmes of study
- The existence of planned programmes of writing which block types of writing to be taught over an extended period
- The adequate coverage of all three types of writing within the programme
- The need to extend the S1/S2 writing curriculum beyond English to other subject areas
- Engender a culture which acknowledges successful writing is challenging but worthwhile
- Consideration of the use of homework to develop the writing process

## ***Content of the Programme***

The programme should include opportunities:

- To provide motivating contexts and purposeful tasks drawn from across the curriculum
- To provide models of genre through the reading programme
- Using the criteria for national tests as a basis for planning and assessment within the programme of writing
- To develop the systematic teaching of spelling as part of a whole school writing process
- To progress the development of punctuation and knowledge about language strands in an appropriate context

The tasks in the programme should:

- Promote purposeful teaching of and judicious use of exercises such as diary, news and book reviews
- Highlight purposes of tasks and audience prior to pupils writing
- Allow opportunities where pupils choose the purpose or form of writing
- Allow teachers to use the same contexts to teach to a variety of 5-14 levels within the same class

The methodology promoted within the programme should:

- Provide models of good writing which form a routine part of the teaching process
- Allow for suitable interactive teaching
- Identify genre characteristics as a strategy for teaching writing for a specific purpose
- Provide support for pupils to assist them with:
  - The details of the content and ideas outlined in the text
  - Organisation of ideas and content and the links between individual sections of writing
  - The choice of language suitable to the task
  - The accuracy and correctness of expression, grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Link the teaching of the knowledge about language strand to the reading programme avoiding the overuse of decontextualised commercially produced exercises
- Ensure that the time spent on composition far outweighs the time spent on any language exercises
- Allow for the teaching of the writing process

The assessment process in the programme should allow for:

- Opportunities to assess pupils' work to the 5-14 levels at regular intervals to identify progress and next steps
- Discussion of progress and next steps with the pupil
- The ongoing collation of pupils' work into folios which represent an appropriate range of writing tasks marked to 5-14 criteria for the level the pupil is currently working in
- Sharing the 5-14 criteria with pupils to promote self-assessment where it is likely to increase motivation and improvement

### ***Learning and Teaching***

#### ***Organisation of Learning and Teaching***

A careful blend of class, group and individual approaches in organising writing allows teachers to provide effective teaching which recognises the different needs of pupils. Teachers should take account of the following points in teaching writing:

- Set tasks to the whole class, or year group(s), and differentiate support and expectations as appropriate
- The promotion of a writing community will be enhanced when effective whole class teaching has taken place
- The provision of varying levels of support and expectation for individual pupils as required

- The teacher's role in supporting the writing process is to:
  - Stimulate discussion and reflection
  - Conference with pupils to identify next steps and to evaluate work produced
  - Facilitate sharing of ideas and models of good writing

### Promoting an Ethos in which Writing is Valued

The following strategies will encourage an ethos in which writing is valued by all in the school community:

- The appropriate provision of a writing area in the early stages
- Liaison with parents to provide good writing opportunities at home
- The provision of a variety of presentation opportunities, for example the production of a newspaper or review magazine, reading unfinished work to other pupils or compiling a class anthology
- Inviting writers to school to perform from, or discuss, their work
- The sharing of teachers' own writing with pupils
- Displaying finished work in a meaningful way
- The judicious use of competitions as a stimulus
- The promotion of the idea that writing is an interesting and satisfying activity

### ***Feeding back to Pupils on the Completed Work***

As part of the learning and teaching process teachers should be aware of the value of constructive feedback through:

- Praising and rewarding effort
- Displaying work
- Sharing finished work
- Celebrating achievement
- Providing pupils with opportunities for self-assessment
- Assisting pupils to target next steps, eg personal action plans
- Discussing criteria for 5-14 levels with pupils

### ***The Writing Process***

#### ***The Structure of the Process***

- Teachers should consider the inclusion of the following elements of the writing process in teaching and learning
- Ensure pupils are thoroughly familiar with all elements of the writing process ie plan/draft/redraft
- Select carefully draft writing which will be taken on to publication level (final copy) on occasion pupils may be involved in the selection process
- Provide thinking and planning time as this is crucial to the success of the process
- Encourage effective planning through discussion of the task
- Teach note-taking opportunities for pupils to expand orally

- Encourage an individual approach to planning by providing a range of formats with flexibility for pupils to develop individual styles
- Incorporate awareness of spelling, grammar and punctuation as early in the process as possible for each pupil
- Use conferencing for example (child/children and teacher/child) to suggest improvements at various points in the writing process
- Ensure final copy demonstrates as high a level of accuracy as possible using ICT as appropriate

### ***Marking and Assessment***

Teachers should consider the inclusion of the following elements of the writing process in teaching and learning:

- Use conferencing as a strategy for marking
- Ensure focus of marking is relevant to the aims of the lesson. This will mean that on some occasions it will not be necessary to formally mark all of the elements of the written task
- Ensure that 5-14 criteria for assessment, as part of teaching, is fully integrated into the process of writing
- Use internal/external moderation from time to time to ensure consistency of approach

### ***An Integrated approach to Collecting Evidence***

Teachers should consider the inclusion of the following elements of the writing process in teaching and learning:

- Ensure the examples of writing in each child's folio reflects breadth and balance of 5-14 guidelines
- Mark examples to 5-14 criteria to inform timing of the national test
- Include writing from cross-curricular tasks in both primary and secondary folios. Agreement should be reached amongst departments on the collation of this evidence
- Take account of the 5-14 criteria to improve writing within subject areas in secondary schools

**This policy will be reviewed and subsumed within the authority's Literacy Strategy in 2007/08**