The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Literacy – www.highlandliteracy.com
Emerging Literacy
POLAAR – Early Literacy Environment Assessment

Aspects of Literacy Development	Sept.	Feb.	June
Letter Naming and Sound Identification			
1. Do staff give all children opportunities to explore, discuss and identify letters and print in a variety of formats?			
2. Do staff explicitly teach all children letter naming?			
3. Do staff help all children to link phonemes to the written equivalent (graphemes)?			
Phonological Awareness			
4. Do staff help all children to identify and manipulate phonemes in spoken words?			
Phoneme Decoding			
5. Do teachers provide systematic progressive phonics teaching on a daily basis, where by children learn the major letter-sound correspondence using evidence-based methodologies?			
6. Do staff give all children opportunities to analyse and blend simple words?			
7. Do staff help all children to use phoneme knowledge to help them begin to spell simple words?			
Word Recognition			
8. Do staff promote accurate and fluent word reading, which includes tricky words (e.g. was, the) using a range of strategies?			
Reading and Book Availability			
9. Do staff give all children repeated opportunities for practice in reading in class using a variety or texts at the right level of challenge?			
10. Are electronic books (e-books) in use by all or the least able children?			
Assessment			
11. Do staff monitor children's progress in key skills (e.g. sound letter knowledge; blending and segmenting; vocabulary; comprehension; fluency) on a systematic and frequent basis and adjust learning goals accordingly?			
Language Comprehension			
12. Are staff able to adapt their interactions and the learning environment to take account of individual children's language? Can they support children to understand and respond to language of increasing complexity?			
13. Do staff engage all children in discussions about word and text? For example: a) By encouraging children to seek out and offer new words for discussion? b) By introducing and modelling new vocabulary relevant to the learning context? c) By encouraging all pupils to use them in spoken and written language?			
14. Do staff ask who/why/what/how questions about stories and encourage all children to respond?			
15. Through questioning, do staff explore whether all children can predict in simple stories?			
16. Do staff support children to retell simple stories within the basic elements or plot and cause/effect sequences?			
Classroom Organisation			
17. Where staff have children working in pairs or groups, is the matching done thoughtfully and appropriately for the learners' needs in different activities? Are groupings closely monitored for effectiveness and changed as required?			
18. Is the frequency with which staff change activity appropriate to individual learners' needs?			
Encouraging Motivation			
19. Do staff give enthusiastic and explicit feedback to all children on their performance by way of formative assessment?			

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Encouraging Motivation (cont.)			
20. Do staff encourage children to take risks in learning and be prepared to be wrong sometimes?			
21. Do staff have high expectations for all children and set targets appropriately?			
Inclusion, Differentiation and Support			
22. Are staff aware of the participation levels in their class and do they ensure they support all children to speak and participate as fully as they can?			
23. Do staff provide differentiated learning experiences while ensuring that all learners develop higher order language skills?			
24. Is there additional effective support available for children struggling with early literacy?			
25. Is individual or small group instruction in addition to normal whole-class instruction, operating for all children who need it?			
26. Are all or the least able children engaged in a small group direct instruction programme?			
27. Is a peer tutoring or literacy befriending scheme (probably with older children as helpers) operating in which partners are trained?			
28. Is computer assisted instruction operating for all or the least able children?			
Parental Involvement			
29. Do staff involve the parents or carers of all children in a parent involvement scheme in home or school?			
Staff Support Development and Resources			
30. Do staff (including classroom assistants) participate in adequate training on literacy?			
31. Do staff have access to appropriate resources and know how to use them appropriately?			
Review and Reflection			

September

Number of aspects staff feel confident in:

How to move this forward:

February

Number of aspects staff feel confident in:

Progress since initial assessment:

How to move things forward:

June

Number of aspects staff feel confident in:

Progress since initial assessment:

Impact on learners: