

KILLERMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL



Early Intervention Policy

August 2004

1.0 Introduction

The 1996 Task Force report to the Secretary of State for Scotland, *Improving Achievement in Scottish Schools*, strongly recommended a comprehensive intervention strategy to strengthen education in the early years.

In recent years, research evidence has shown that children who make a poor start in literacy and numeracy tend to have continued difficulties in spite of subsequent support.

“We need to intervene as early as possible. This requires a general re-thinking as regards current policy in many areas, where resources are allocated to children who have already failed.”

(Bryant & Bradley, 1985)

As part of the Scottish Executive’s national initiative to raise standards in education, 'early intervention' has now been underway for several years, both within East Dunbartonshire Council and Killermont Primary.

2.0 Rationale and Aims

2.1 Rationale

“The early years of school are a vital stage in children’s learning. Early achievement at this stage provides a positive experience of school and helps shape children’s attitudes towards later learning.”

(SOEID, p2, 1998)

It is crucial that children have the right start in primary school and must be supported to attain the basic skills of literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy. These skills are essential to access all later stages of the 5-14 curriculum.

2.2 Aims

Within Killermont Primary, our Early Intervention programme aims to

- provide the highest standards of learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy
- raise standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy
- ensure children’s needs are recognised early on in their school life and appropriate support given
- promote the important role of parents and carers as prime educators
- provide effective staff development

3.0 Outcomes

3.1 Time Allocations

National guidance on time allocations is as follows:

| Area of the Curriculum | % | Times per week |
|------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| English Language | 20% | 5hrs = 300 mins |
| Maths | 15% | 3 hrs 45 min = 225 mins |
| Flexibility | 20% | 5 hours = 300 mins |

Within Killermont Primary, the flexibility element is used by teachers to address specific areas of the curriculum. Priorities and developments taking place within the school, as well as class stages are taken into account. The use of flexibility time is reviewed annually.

3.2 Learning and Teaching Approaches

3.21 READING

Reading is more than recognising symbols and putting them together to form words. Reading is also more than rapid word recognition. Reading is a skill concerned with gaining meaning, ideas, pleasure and purpose, skills linked to everyday life. Reading is an active and complex process, requiring a considerable amount of thinking.

Opportunities should be planned and given to develop the following concepts:

Environmental print

Teachers should ensure that classrooms are rich in print to develop the children's understanding of the visual features of words and letters. Labels, signs, notices, work programmes are used to heighten the children's awareness that print carries a message. Children should also have the opportunity to see their home language in print.

Story telling

Story telling should be a regular feature of the curriculum and children are encouraged to read for enjoyment through weekly trips to the school library and reading times in class. Children should be exposed to a variety of genres and writing styles. Children are encouraged to re-tell stories as part of the reading process. Children should be encouraged to talk about their reading experiences.

Concepts of print

Children need to understand the nature, purpose and value of print. An awareness of the basic print concepts is a very important early literacy skill, and needs to be taught. Teachers should plan to discuss the following with children:

- how a book is put together eg front, back cover, title page, title, author, illustrator, page number, different fonts etc
- text remains constant
- print tells a story
- direction of print in English – left to right in lines, top to bottom, left page first,
- words are made up of letters and spaced on the page
- vocabulary – page, word, letter, line, sentence, space
- names of languages
- punctuation – full stop, capital letter, question mark, exclamation mark, speech bubbles, speech marks, think bubbles, brackets, hyphen

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is concerned with units of sound within speech and much of the work done in class is oral. Listening skills are very important and children need to be supported in this. Listening starts to emerge even before children are encountering print. Children should have many opportunities to listen to and recite nursery rhymes. Research has shown a strong link between phonological awareness and improved reading.

Phonological awareness is developed through teaching the children about

- **developing sound/letter relationships (synthetic phonics)** – children are systematically taught to recognise letter symbols and corresponding sounds. The children are taught to blend and word build as soon as the letters **s - a - t - p - i - n** are introduced.
- **phonemes** - the smallest meaningful unit of sound in a word. Auditory discrimination is important for both reading and spelling eg **d-o-g** has 3 phonemes, **s-p-oo-n** has 4 phonemes.
- **syllables** – the easiest segment in speech to identify
- **onset and rime** – the onset is the initial consonant or consonant blend, and the rime starts at the vowel and includes any final consonants. If children connect rhyming sounds with reading, the connection will be between particular sounds and sequences of letters. This strategy also allows children to see certain spelling patterns.

| | | | | |
|----|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Eg | <i>onset</i> | <i>rime</i> | <i>onset</i> | <i>rime</i> |
| | m | an | ch | ip |
| | p | an | sh | ip |

- **alliteration** – emphasises the onset eg **Mandy made marmalade**

- **nursery rhymes** – are a useful way of developing children’s sensitivity to the sound qualities of, and within words. When using nursery rhymes you would highlight, *sound, sounds like, rhymes and rhyming word.*

Phonic Programme and Guidelines

Appendix i

Common words

Common words are high frequency words which make up the greatest percentage of all written text. It is therefore essential that children learn to read these words automatically, as soon as possible.

Common words should be taught systematically through a variety of activities and games. Common words should be linked to the children’s alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness and growing understanding of reading and writing analogy. Children should be familiar with the East Dunbartonshire’s 100 common words by the end of P2 (appendix ii)

Implementation

Reading should be **taught** daily. This does not necessarily mean using the commercial reading scheme or reading book.

Phonological awareness should be an integral part of the reading session.

Children should be taught **four letter sounds a week** and the whole alphabet taught before the October week. Previously taught sounds should be **revised daily** using flashcards.

Children will be taught in differentiated groups to best support their needs and challenge their progress. It is also recognised that there are times when reading may be taught as an individual or class activity.

Reading acquisition should also be promoted through writing activities. Reading development should be assisted by encouraging children to write as often as possible eg linking writing to talking and reading, writing in collaboration with others, choosing what to write, writing for a real purpose.

Please refer to

- *Language Policy*
- *East Dunbartonshire’s Reading Guidelines for the Early Years*

3.22 WRITING

The philosophy at Killermont Primary is to promote emergent writing, or ‘have a go’ writing. The Cambourne model supports this philosophy and is expanded in East Dunbartonshire’s ‘Key Principles of Emergent Writing’. Emergent writing comprises the variety of marks and letters young children use as their first means of written communication. Children are encouraged to experiment with their writing.

A structured writing programme is in place to develop the process of emergent writing and support the children along the writing developmental continuum. Teachers focus on the process of writing and regard errors as useful teaching and learning opportunities. All attempts at writing are valued and written work is displayed attractively.

The Three-pronged Approach

The ‘three-pronged approach’ has proved to be highly successful and is used to promote emergent writing.

- **Independent writing** – the children’s own attempts at writing using their own invented spellings/letter formation or conventional words/letters, or a combination of both stages;
- **Scribing** – teacher models the process of writing, using the children’s ideas
- **Copying/shared writing** – children interact with teacher, or use a previously taught support strategy eg word card, sentence model, to create a story which they then write and read back.

Writing may be taught through a variety of contexts and for a range of purposes and audiences.

There is a strong link between reading and writing. Children should have frequent and regular opportunities to develop this link in their own writing. This includes teaching about:

- directionality of print
- spacing between words and sentences
- awareness that print carries a message
- punctuation, words and letters
- formation and recognition of upper/lower case letters
- phonological awareness and alphabet training

Support Tools

Prior to each writing lesson, each pupil should have access to the following tool kit:

- alphabet strip
- common word list
- starter phrases eg yesterday, at the week end, during
- 'have a go' word book

Spelling

In teaching spelling, we aim to give children the confidence and skills to be able to communicate effectively and allow them to concentrate on the content and quality of their written language. Pupils should have opportunities to

- handle letters eg magnetic letters, write letters and say corresponding sound/name, remember the sequence in a word
- learn spelling using rhyme patterns eg h – at, m – at, s – at
- 'have a go' at spelling
- check for errors

Pupils should also be taught and encouraged to apply the LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK strategy. The East Dunbartonshire 100 common words are introduced in P1 and by P2, it is expected that almost all pupils know how to read and spell them accurately.

- *Please refer to East Dunbartonshire's Emergent Writing Guidelines*

Handwriting

- *Please refer to Language Policy*

3.23 MATHS

Children arrive at school with differing experiences and varied depths of knowledge about number and other mathematical concepts. Maths is taught through a variety of

- real life and everyday problems
- imaginative and simulated
- problems and investigations where the structure of mathematics itself provides the setting

It is recognised that there can be significant differences in number knowledge in an average class at the beginning of primary one. This must be considered and experiences provided to enhance and consolidate this knowledge.

Maths activities are organised to take account of various teaching and learning styles. Although pupils are mostly taught in ability groups, they are also provided with experiences of working within groups, in pairs, on an individual basis, discussing learning with peers and the teacher.

Children are encouraged to talk about their experiences and understanding of a maths session. Misconceptions can be reflected upon and corrected at this point and knowledge secured by developing further.

It is important for teachers to **model** mathematical processes.

Implementation

The structure of a maths lesson should be:

- an oral and mental starter
- main teaching activity
- differentiated group tasks
- plenary (reporting back and identifying key points of their learning)

A structured mathematics programme is in place and a balance of activities is taken into account when teachers plan the weekly programme eg

- practical activities
- games
- problem solving
- play
- how work is recorded
- increase pace
- emphasis direct interactive teaching
- support pupils in developing a range of mental strategies eg quick recall of facts, use appropriate mathematical language and to make connections between different areas of maths
- use concrete materials

Support Tools

Each pupil should have access to the following tool kit:

- number line (0 – 10 and 0 – 20)
 - hundred square
 - a set of digit cards (0 – 9)
 - counting equipment eg cubes
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- *Please refer to Mathematics Policy*
 - *East Dunbartonshire's Maths Guidelines for the Early Years*

3.24 PLAY

Structured play activities are planned to promote and develop literacy and numeracy skills. Play is regarded as an integral part of the early years' curriculum and is an effective strategy for learning. Play acts as an effective means for pupils to:

- *make sense of real life situations*
- *be actively involved in their own learning*
- *formulate and test conclusions*
- *practise skills and*
- *consolidate previous learning*
- *be challenged in new learning*

(SOEID, p4, 1999)

3.25 BILINGUALISM

Bilingualism is an asset in learning and bilingual pupils are likely to have cognitive advantages in a number of subjects if they continue to develop their home language. Bilingual learners benefit most from being taught within a context and when the composition of their group is rotated.

Please refer to specific bilingual sections in

- *East Dunbartonshire's Maths Guidelines for the Early Years*
- *East Dunbartonshire's Reading Guidelines for the Early Years*
- *East Dunbartonshire's Emergent Writing Guidelines*

3.3 Pupils with Additional Support Needs

- *Please refer to Support for Learning Policy*

3.4 Assessment

Class teachers complete P1 profiles by the October holiday in line with guidelines provided by East Dunbartonshire Council.

Assessment is a continuous process which is an integral part of learning and teaching. The process of assessing pupils' progress will be set in the context of effective learning and teaching and will influence forward planning, teaching, recording reporting and evaluating.

- *Please refer to Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy*

3.5 Recording and Reporting

- *Please refer to Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy*

3.6 Nursery/Primary Transition

Children who will be attending Killermont Primary will have an opportunity to visit the school and meet their teachers. Killermont nursery and school staff, from both Killermont Primary and other primaries, have opportunities to liaise in term 4. Where possible, school staff will visit children attending other nurseries. During these visits, information about individual pupils' progress and support needs are shared. Pre-school reports are also passed to the primary schools, as well as any assessment records.

- *Please refer to Nursery/P1 transition Policy*

3.7 ICT

ICT plays a crucial role in the delivery of all aspects of the curriculum. It is used to motivate learners and to support different kinds of learning, through a variety of software packages and hardware.

3.8 Staff Development

In order to implement this policy effectively, staff will have access to advice and staff development as necessary, within the resources available.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Senior Management Team

The senior management team will manage the implementation of the Early Intervention policy, paying due regard to effective classroom strategies, resources and staff development.

4.2 Class Teachers

Teachers will ensure that the Early Intervention policy is fully implemented to enhance learning and teaching and contribute to the raising of attainment and achievement of individual children.

4.3 Network Support Teacher

The network support teacher works collaboratively with school staff to support the needs of all learners within the school. As well as a teaching role, the network support teacher also has a consultative role. 75% of the network support teachers allocated time is focused on supporting learning within the P1-4 stages.

4.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers will be encouraged to and supported in playing an active role in their child's learning, thereby fostering the home/school partnership. Home learning activities will be organised to reinforce learning which has taken place within the classroom.

- *Please refer to the Homework Policy*

4.5 Pupils

Pupils will be encouraged to be actively involved in their learning and to develop a positive attitude to all aspects of their learning within literacy and numeracy.

5.0 Resources

- *Please refer to specific Mathematics and Language policies*

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluating Arrangements of Learning and Teaching

Self-evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching is the responsibility of all teaching staff and the senior management team. Quality indicators described in 'How Good is Our School 2' will be used to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of this policy within the school.

6.1 Monitoring and Evaluating Arrangements of Policy

The policy will be monitored and evaluated by school staff during session 2007-2008, when any necessary amendments will be made.

Killermont Primary

PHONIC TEACHING GUIDELINES

(Based on school resource, 'The Phonics Handbook' by Sue Lloyd, Jolly Learning and 'Interchange' No 57 and No 39)

Letter Sounds

Children should be introduced to letter sounds in a systematic and synthetic approach. They should be able to hear and identify single letter sounds and relate them to letters. This is a pre-reading requisite and allows children to identify and blend all sounds in words before reading words in books for themselves.

Synthesising Sounds

Children should be shown how to blend letter sounds to create words eg s - a - t = sat (encoding)
Many words can be made from the first letter group.

Much discussion should take place as to how the letters 'behave' in a word and how other words can be made. Attention should also be drawn to the fact that letters can 'move' about in words, eg **pin**, **sip**, in etc.

This should be reinforced using letter flashcard and magnetic letters for children to manipulate.

Auditory Sounds

Auditory sounds are important for reading and later writing. Auditory training involves hearing the sounds in a word and trying to think of the letters that correspond with these sounds eg cat = c - a - t = 3 sounds

Auditory training should follow this progression:

- 3 letters (some children will be able to discriminate sounds in longer and more complex words)
- initial consonant blends (eg bl, cr, fl, dr) flat = f - l - a - t = 4 sounds
- final consonant blends (eg ft, mp, nt) left = l - e - f - t = 4 sounds

Auditory training should be taught **daily** as part of a phonic lesson.

Letters Groups

Children should learn **four letters a week**. The grouping allows early letters to combine, making simple words for the children to blend and read.

The whole alphabet should be taught **before the October week**.

Previously taught sounds should be **revised daily** using flashcards, aiming for immediate recognition. The faster the children are at recognising letters and saying the sounds, the easier it becomes for them to read.

Rhyming and Alliteration Activities

Children should also be exposed to oral **rhyming and alliteration** activities.

The child who can detect **onset and rime** can use this skill to make **analogies** between words, eg fat, rat, cat or light, fight, sight.

The use of magnetic plastic letters has been shown to help develop sound-symbol relationships.

Alliteration activities = Molly **m**oved **m**y **m**essy **m**ouse.

Home Reinforcement Tasks

After the first letter group has been introduced, children will be issued with a set of these letters. These letters will go home for 'flashcard' and word making practise. As more groups of letters are introduced, these letters will subsequently be sent home (see chart).

A short letter of explanation to parents will be sent out and guides to teach the action for each sound will also be included.

Remember!

The emphasis of this method of teaching phonics is on

- instant recognition of symbols/sound
- manipulating letters and sounds to en/decode words

Assessment Ideas

When assessing the children in their knowledge of phonic sounds, attention should be given to

- Instant recognition of sounds
- Auditory recognition (hearing the word after sounds have been spoken eg r – e – d = red)
- Instant recognition of words eg red, hem, sail
- Writing sounds (or selecting magnetic letters) eg e, ai, or
- Writing/making words eg red, hem, had

Implementation

The following grids outline the anticipated pacing and progression for the majority of children in primaries 1 and 2.

Pupils should move through the progression of sounds at the suggested pace, however, some pupils will require to move through the programme at a faster pace, while others may need to progress at a modified pace.

On completion of the phonics programme, pupils should move on to *Nelson Spelling*.

- *See Language Policy*