

During the inspection

IA1 Learning

Inspectors should report clearly on how well pupils listen, speak, read and write when evaluating the development of their knowledge, skills and achievements in literacy. They should consider to what extent pupils have the literacy skills required to access the whole curriculum and how well the wider curriculum itself develops pupils' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, appropriate to their ages and starting points.

When evaluating the progress of specific groups of pupils, for example those with Welsh/English as an additional language, those with additional learning needs and those who are more able, inspectors should consider whether they are making as much progress as they could. It is important that inspectors consider the level of challenge pupils face and their previous learning, when using their literacy skills.

Inspectors should identify situations where pupils have difficulty with their literacy skills and where this presents a barrier to their learning across the curriculum. Inspectors will need to identify the possible causes of this, for example pupils' inability to discriminate between sounds, their lack of phonemic awareness, limited vocabulary and knowledge of strategies for spelling.

Listening and speaking

Inspectors should consider how well pupils:

- listen to understand, recall, infer and interpret what they hear
- discriminate sounds, and develop and adapt their vocabulary and sentence structure when speaking (through listening)
- listen to develop their understanding of key concepts and ideas, and apply this understanding to new situations
- take turns in a conversation, following the topic, and manage their contributions and interactions appropriately
- listen to others (for example to gain different views and ideas) and use techniques to remember the main points of their talk (for example making notes, summarising)
- respond appropriately to others in a way that suits the subject, context, audience and purpose (for example challenging what is heard based on reason, evidence or argument to arrive at their own conclusions)
- ask and answer questions to clarify their understanding of what has been heard

and to respond to others with comments and suggestions (for example to build on the views of others in collaborative work)

- pronounce words correctly and speak clearly in an appropriate register
- use sentence structures accurately and make appropriate vocabulary choices
- (in Welsh-medium contexts) communicate meaning from one person to another, within the same language or from one language to another, for example by relaying, explaining or translating information or ideas?
- convey ideas and information precisely, effectively and confidently (for example emphasising key points, sequencing an explanation)
- vary the tone, the pace of their speech and their voice projection to suit the audience and purpose
- show awareness of the listener and take account of the audience's level of understanding (for example by paying attention to gesture, posture, facial expression, eye contact and the use of rhetorical techniques)
- undertake a range of responsibilities to structure and develop group talk (for example maintaining focus on task, time management, summarising)
- examine their own and others' ideas critically and sensitively
- sustain a role or a convincing point of view

Reading

Inspectors should consider how well pupils:

- develop pre-reading skills and early reading behaviours as essential foundations for reading (for example listening to a story, handling books like a reader, singing songs and rhymes, and recognising their own names)
- develop phonological understanding and phonemic awareness
- read a wide range of texts aloud with expression, pay attention to punctuation, and vary intonation, voice and pace to convey meaning
- sustain concentration to read texts independently, including complete novels
- use a range of strategies to make sense of words, sentences and whole texts (for example phonemic or phonological knowledge, word roots, word families, sentence structure, text organisation, prior knowledge)
- use their own reading, and being read to, to develop their vocabulary and sentence structures, including discipline-specific words (for example condensation, tundra, modulation) and words that occur in texts across the curriculum (for example reasoned, decline, integrate, entity), which tend not to occur as often in conversational speech
- identify the topic or theme of a text (printed or visual) and show their understanding of the text's main ideas
- use a range of strategies to find information, select and use information from a wide range of sources (for example close reading, annotation, summarising, synthesising, analysing)
- use inference and deduction to understand texts, and consider the reliability of what they read or view, distinguishing between facts, theories, opinions and bias

- read appreciatively (for example considering how effectively texts convey information, ideas and views and engage the reader)
- respond to what they read or view, asking questions, making comparisons, and expressing viewpoints and preferences
- evaluate critically different perspectives to arrive at considered conclusions
- understand and explore how texts may be interpreted, identifying how they vary in purpose and effect
- respond (verbally or in writing) confidently to ideas and information they have read, using their advanced reading skills
- (Welsh-medium contexts) use translanguaging skills when they read (for example to explain complex ideas in Welsh after researching articles written in English)
- use their reading skills to access learning across the curriculum

Writing

Inspectors should consider how well pupils:

- communicate by making marks, drawing symbols or writing letters and words in a range of contexts
- form letters, and use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent, to write words and phrases
- use a range of strategies to attempt the spelling of unknown words (for example word families, roots, letter patterns, morphology, graphic knowledge, phonemic knowledge)
- write accurately and legibly (for example, using standard forms of language and spelling, including applying mutations when appropriate in Welsh)
- use a range of punctuation accurately to vary pace, clarify meaning, avoid ambiguity and create deliberate effects
- write using an increasingly imaginative, varied and precise vocabulary and varying sentence structures for effect
- adapt their writing style to suit the audience, purpose and context
- write in a wide range of text types independently and at length, without over-reliance on adult support or scaffolds
- plan, organise and present ideas and information appropriately (for example through organising their writing into a logical sequence, structuring their writing into paragraphs)
- reflect on, redraft and edit their writing to improve its content and accuracy, responding constructively to feedback, where appropriate
- write in all areas of the curriculum and whether they write to the same standard as they do in their work in Welsh/English

IA2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

When considering pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning, inspectors should consider:

- how well pupils use their literacy skills to support and enhance their wellbeing and self-esteem, for example whether they can talk and write about their feelings and emotions, and show empathy and respect for others
- pupils' attitudes to their literacy work, for example whether they are able to sustain concentration during written tasks to refine and improve the quality of their writing
- how well pupils plan, monitor and evaluate their literacy development
- whether pupils enjoy reading and make informed choices about their reading diet
- how well pupils use self-regulation if they face difficulties when reading and writing independently

IA3 Teaching and learning experiences

Estyn has no preferred methods for teaching literacy. Teachers should be mindful of the stage of pupils' literacy development and structure sessions in the way they consider most appropriate for the pupils to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Inspectors should evaluate teaching in relation to the success of the learning and the progress pupils make, and in the context of their learning and progress over time, not on the methods used, or the type or style of teaching.

Inspectors should identify if approaches inhibit the development of pupils' skills, for example:

- where teaching is too directive because pupils have a good enough grasp of the content or skills to progress by themselves
- the unnecessary use of worksheets that limit opportunities for pupils to write independently or at length
- not providing sufficient scaffolding for long enough for pupils with weaker reading and writing skills, or
- when there is an expectation that teachers use a particular approach to planning and delivering lessons, even though it does not always allow pupils to develop their literacy skills well enough

Inspectors should evaluate whether the curriculum builds systematically and coherently on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and literacy skills to secure progression as

they move through the school.

Inspectors should consider how well the teaching of literacy:

- provides pupils with strong language role models, which influences the development of their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills
- meets pupils' developmental needs in language and literacy, for example by not introducing them to formal phonics teaching before they are at a suitable developmental stage
- ensures that pupils have an appropriate understanding of what they will be learning and how this links to previous language and literacy activities
- ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of how to be successful in their learning, for instance by providing effective models of different types of writing
- scaffolds pupils' skill development appropriately
- models thinking processes to develop pupils' metacognitive skills, for example to illustrate the choices a speaker makes when presenting an argument
- probes pupils' understanding through incisive questioning that challenges them simultaneously to develop their verbal responses, for example to discuss cause and effect, or to reason and argue
- supports pupils with weak communication skills to acquire key spoken vocabulary and sentence patterns
- helps pupils to learn 'to talk' as well as learning 'through talk' by developing the full repertoire of listening and speaking skills, such as: debating, role playing, interviewing, presenting, exploring
- supports pupils to develop their understanding of dialect, idiolect and register as part of verbal and written communication
- develops pupils' early reading skills through a systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and high frequency words
- builds on pupils' early reading skills to ensure they can apply a wide range of reading strategies when they read text independently, for example how to use clues to make sense of what they read
- develop pupils' understanding of text, their ability to retrieve and use information in their work across the curriculum, and to develop more advanced reading skills, such as synthesising and evaluating
- encourages positive pupil attitudes towards reading and supports pupils to develop reading stamina, for example so that they enjoy reading longer, more complex texts and concentrate when reading for sustained periods
- develops pupils' understanding of the purpose of and their ability to write for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting an appropriate tone and style
- challenges pupils to develop and sustain their ideas coherently and imaginatively, and to redraft and edit their writing to improve its quality
- develops pupils' planning, composition and transcription skills (for example, the structure and organisation of ideas, sentence construction, spelling, handwriting/digital print and punctuation)
- develops pupils' vocabulary knowledge as a distinct aspect of language learning in

- listening, speaking, reading and writing, for example through using etymology
- challenges pupils to develop and apply their literacy skills in meaningful contexts across the curriculum to the same standard as in their language, literacy and communication or Welsh/English sessions

Inspectors should consider how well staff:

- provide classrooms and communal areas that are language and literacy-rich learning environments
- provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop their language and literacy skills through continuous and enhanced provision indoors and outdoors, in the foundation phase
- develop-initiated activities in the foundation phase
- plan for the explicit development of pupils' listening and speaking skills, including relevant opportunities for older pupils to take part in learning experiences that focus on progressing their ability to speak confidently and appropriately in a range of contexts and settings
- (in Welsh-medium contexts) support pupils to develop their translanguaging and mediation skills
- plan carefully so that developments in one skill, for example speaking, can support and complement the development in another, such as writing
- plan for the progressive development of pupils' reading skills, including opportunities to listen to others read and to read themselves (silently and aloud)
- foster pupils' enjoyment of reading through a wide range of media, including reading images (without or in combination with text) in picture books, animations and films
- choose literary and non-literary texts with suitably challenging themes and vocabulary, to engage pupils and enhance their literacy
- ensure that pupils have stimulating and authentic contexts for writing, including imagined and real-life experiences
- build on pupils' existing knowledge of the structure, organisation and language features of text types to ensure they make progress in their writing
- support pupils to understand writing as a process and to provide worthwhile opportunities for them to think of ideas, plan and organise them and to draft and refine their writing
- identify precisely the weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills to determine the best next steps for them to know where to focus their efforts for improvement
- support pupils to plan, monitor and evaluate their literacy development
- involve pupils in the assessment of their own and their peers' learning in literacy
- provide opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of visits that enhance the literacy curriculum, for example trips to libraries and theatres
- make good use of visitors to schools to engage pupils with listening, speaking, reading and writing, for example children's authors, poets and actors
- use extra-curricular activities to promote and develop pupils' literacy skills, for example debating societies and drama, creative writing and book clubs
- adapt work when pupils have literacy skills that are significantly above or below the level expected for their age
- make links between different areas of learning and subjects to ensure that skills pupils gain in literacy and English/Welsh lessons are reinforced, developed and enhanced across the curriculum
- use digital platforms and tools effectively to support the development of pupils' literacy skills
- develop a shared understanding of progression to ensure that assessments of pupils' literacy are valid, accurate and reliable
- track and monitor pupils' progress in developing their literacy skills as they move through the school, including those pupils with additional needs, for example special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils or those with Welsh/English as an additional language
- use information obtained from assessment to set clear targets for improved standards of pupils' literacy

IA4 Care, support and guidance

Inspectors should evaluate how well:

- the school supports pupils with weak literacy skills or specific learning difficulties
- the school makes informed decisions about which intervention programmes to use
- the school uses intervention programmes to ensure that pupils make good progress from their individual starting points
- staff track the progress of pupils who receive additional support for literacy in relation to the targets in their individual plans
- information about pupils' skills and progress in literacy is shared between staff
- staff adapt teaching and learning strategies for pupils receiving intervention and provide work that is matched well to pupils' literacy needs
- assessment is used to inform decisions about whether pupils remain in support programmes or no longer need intervention work
- the school develops parents' capacity to support their children's literacy development, for example by providing information on the curriculum or workshops for parents that help them to support their children
- the school uses partnerships with other schools or agencies to provide effective literacy support for pupils with additional learning needs or those who may need extra help

Document C could be used as a prompt when considering the impact of literacy intervention programmes on pupils' learning and progress.

IA5 Leadership and management

Inspectors may hold discussions with leaders and managers to consider how well they initiate and support effective approaches to developing pupils' literacy and how they use self-evaluation findings, together with other information, to identify and address improvement priorities.

Inspectors should consider:

- whether the headteacher and senior leaders are well-informed about strengths and issues in the teaching and learning of literacy
- whether school leaders provide strong leadership and convey to learners, staff, governors, parents and other members of the school community, suitably high expectations about pupils' achievements in literacy
- whether the school has appropriate leadership structures in place to support the co-ordination and development of its provision for literacy, and if its strategy is understood clearly
- how well the school accelerates pupils' progress from their starting points, how it addresses inequalities in literacy, as a result of disadvantage, and progresses the skills of more able pupils

- whether the school involves parents and the wider community in the development of pupils' literacy
- how well leaders develop a collaborative culture where staff work together to ensure all have access to, and benefit from, the school's collective knowledge about literacy
- if leaders deploy staff with specialist knowledge to share their expertise within their own school and with others
- how well leaders work with staff to use the growing body of evidence and research on literacy to inform whole-school decision-making and planning
- whether the school's reviews and evaluations identify precisely aspects of teaching and provision that need to improve, and enable staff to share the most successful practice across the school
- if leaders target the school's resources and grants carefully, and evaluate robustly the impact of teaching on pupils' standards of and progress in literacy
- whether leaders focus closely enough on subject-specific aspects of language teaching in their monitoring activities, and identify precisely staff professional learning needs
- whether professional learning opportunities are successful in supporting staff to develop their subject knowledge and teaching skills in literacy, and how this translates into effective whole-school practice