Northern Alliance
Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication
2017/2018 – Interim Report: March 2018

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Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication
2017/2018 – Interim Report: March 2018

This report summarises the progress made in the Northern Alliance Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication workstream as of March 2018.

Interim Report Summary – Key Points:

From the data collection of a sample of Primary 1 pupils across the Northern Alliance (Sample size: N=2,088 in English Phonological Awareness; N=2,009 in Fine Motor Skills and N=2,035 in Pencil Control/ Pre-writing Skills) in January 2018, it would be reasonable to summarise:

- Practitioners are paying attention to children’s strengths and gaps in their foundational skills, using the assess-plan-teach cycle to differentiate their teaching and learning to children’s needs. This is evident in the security of earlier skills in phonological awareness and pre-handwriting, as a base to build later skills:
  - In Phonological Awareness, with a score of a possible twelve, only 32% of children from the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) had a score of six or more, compared with 54% of children from the least deprived areas (SIMD 8-10), a gap of 22%. By January 2018, there is evidence that the gap is closing in those children scoring six or more out of a possible twelve. In January 80% of children from the most deprived and 94% from the least deprived areas had a score of six or more, a gap of 14%.
  - In Pre-Handwriting, by the end of January almost all children in Primary 1, across each SIMD category linked to deprivation, now have a secure tripod grasp which is foundational to the manipulation of writing implements and are secure in the pencil control concepts which are foundational to handwriting instruction.
From the evaluations of Class Teachers (N=94) and Senior Managers (N=27) during the Emerging Literacy Networks in January 2018, it would be reasonable to summarise:

- Almost all Class Teachers and Senior Managers have reported that using the Emerging Literacy assessment and planning tools has provided them with information that they would not have had about their children.

- Almost all Class Teachers and Senior Managers have reported the positive impact of taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy on their children's early literacy, language and communication.

- Almost all Class Teachers and Senior Managers reported that their knowledge and understanding of the content in the networks was high following the networks, a significant rise from their measure of knowledge and understanding prior to the networks.

From the analysis of the ‘Achievement of CfE Levels’ data for Early Level Literacy in Highland (P1 in 2016/2017), it would be reasonable to summarise:

- Children in Highland Emerging Literacy Network (ELN) schools outperformed those in non-network (Non-ELN) Highland schools in all three organisers of Literacy – Listening & Talking, Reading and Writing:
  - Children in ELN schools were 30% more likely to attain at least Early Level in all 3 areas, 50% more likely in Listening and Talking, 60% in Reading and 40% in Writing than children in Non-ELN schools.

- Taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is closing the poverty related gap between children living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) and children living in the least deprived areas (SIMD 8-10):
  - The most deprived children (SIMD Deciles 1-3) were twice as likely in Emerging Literacy Network schools in Highland to achieve at least Early Level in each area.
  - In the Highland Emerging Literacy network schools, deprived children were much more likely to achieve Early Level in at least one of the three organisers than in non-ELN schools. Overall, 19% of children in ELN schools achieved no level in any organiser as opposed to 46% of children in non-ELN schools.
  - Children in the least deprived deciles did as well or better in Highland Emerging Literacy Network schools, showing that the approach did not “hold them back” in any way.
Interim Report Summary – Future Recommendations:

1. Now that the *Northern Alliance Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication* workstream has been identified as a key workstream in the draft Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) plan, an action plan to enable sustainability through the 2018/2019 session and beyond should be created as part of the workstream’s Partnership Group. This should clearly detail the measures which are going to be used to monitor progress over time.

2. The data published within this report linked to ‘Achievement of CfE Levels’ should be shared to demonstrate the positive outcomes for children. The data is linked to the Scottish Government’s measures within the National Improvement Framework. Due to the sample size of schools who were part of the workstream during the 2016/2017 session, only data from Highland Council could be used within this report. When reporting on ‘Achievement of CfE Levels’ in future reports, data from local authorities across the Northern Alliance should be analysed to support reporting.

3. To support practitioners, a clear statement as part of the practice guidance should be created to define what it means in practice to effectively take a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy; this should be created with practitioners, for practitioners.

4. Practitioner collaboration is at the heart of the workstream. The 2018/2019 plan should detail how practitioner collaboration will be strengthened to support those not yet and those at an early stage of taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy, whilst continuing to empower those who are confident in their approach.

5. There are identified resource gaps in Oral Language, Pre-Handwriting and Working Memory/Executive Functions. As is current practice and as is planned, resources should continue to be created with practitioners for practitioners and delivered through collaborative networks.

James Cook –
Quality Improvement Officer: Northern Alliance
March 2018
1. Background to 2017/2018 Interim Report – March 2018

The **National Improvement Framework** has set out the following priorities for Scottish Education:

- to improve attainment for all, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- to improve the learning progress of every child, by reducing inequality in education
- to improve children and young people’s health and wellbeing
- to improve employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

**Figure 1.1 - National Improvement Framework: Drivers; Scottish Government (2016)**

The Northern Alliance, the Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) of eight local authorities across the north of Scotland (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar [Western Isles], Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands), has identified ‘Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication’ as a workstream within the Northern Alliance Improvement Plan.

**The 2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan** was published in December 2017. Within the plan the Scottish Government detailed the key measures which will be used to measure the improvements to raise attainment for all and close the poverty related attainment gap.

The Literacy measures have been set out in the Scottish Government’s Stretch Aims for 2019/2020 and 2024/2025 (**Figure 1.2**).

The ‘Achievement of a Level’ judgements for Literacy will be a key measure for the ‘Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication’ workstream, assisting the workstream’s driver diagram which will be published ahead of the 2018/2019 session.

**Figure 1.2 – National Improvement Framework: Key Measures; Scottish Government (2018)**
The previous report published in November 2017 outlined the workstream’s overview, including its rationale, implementation, pupil level data and the support framework. The previous reports for the workstream can be accessed on the following links:

2016/2017 reports:
- December 2016 Interim Report
- March 2017 Interim Report
- July 2017 End of Year Report

2017/2018 reports:
- November 2017 Interim Report

The purpose of this interim report (March 2018) is to:
- provide an analysis of the P1 pupil data from January 2018 for Phonological Awareness and Pre-Handwriting, comparing that with September 2017
- provide an analysis of teacher impact data collected through the local authority networks
- provide outcome data for children linked to ‘Achievement of a Level’ from Highland schools involved in the workstream during the 2016/2017 session
- set out the recommendations for the remainder of the 2017/2018 session and beyond.
2. Bespoke Support for Practitioners (November 2017 – February 2018)

In addition to the core support for all practitioners, delivered through local authority and buddy networks, online resources and online collaboration through YAMMER, to support the local needs of each local authority the Lead Officer has worked with individual local authorities to provide bespoke support, linked to local authority improvement planning.

The following details the bespoke support which has been provided between November 2017 and February 2018 across the Northern Alliance local authorities.

**Aberdeen City Council**
The Lead Officer has worked with staff within Aberdeen City Council between November 2017 and February 2018 to:

- in direct collaboration with the Aberdeen City Education Key Link, continue to provide guidance and materials to support the provision of the Year 1 parallel schools
- alongside the Aberdeen City Key Link and Senior Manager of Early Years, use the 3 Step Model for Improvement to carry out an improvement project with a selection of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings on early child development.

**Aberdeenshire Council**
The Lead Officer has worked with staff within Aberdeenshire Council between November 2017 and February 2018 to:

- in direct collaboration with the Aberdeenshire Education Key Link, continue to provide guidance and materials to support the provision of the Year 1 and Year 2 parallel schools
- develop Emerging Literacy within and across the Early Level through delivering training to 65 practitioners within 36 Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to support them in taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy through developmental pedagogical knowledge and practical strategies. This included the local authority Early Years Principal Teachers who will be developing their approaches to Emerging Literacy in the Early Years across the local authority.
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Argyll and Bute Council
The Lead Officer has worked with staff within Argyll and Bute Council between November 2017 and February 2018 to:

- provide introductory whole-day training to 23 practitioners across 13 schools in the local authority, including the local authority Literacy Principal Teacher and Education Officer with the responsibility for Literacy. This training was designed to complement the local authority’s current priorities in early literacy through their local authority service plan.

Highland Council
Emerging Literacy is a development which has continued to grow in Highland between 2013 and 2018. The Lead Officer, who is also the Highland Education Key Link, works as part of the Highland Emerging Literacy Group with representation from education, educational psychology, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy to:

- support the Year 1 and Year 2 parallel schools through the ten local Emerging Literacy networks
- develop a draft of an ‘Early Level Literacy Progression’, linked to the CfE Benchmarks, which will be brought to Emerging Literacy Networks between March and May for consultation
- support the development of resources for Oral Language, as part of the authority’s Oral Language development group
- support the development of Pre-Handwriting and Working Memory resources, as part of the Emerging Literacy Networks.

Western Isles
The Lead Officer has worked with staff within the Western Isles Islands Council between November 2017 and February 2018 to:

- support the delivery of ‘Words Up! Early’ training for 56 practitioners working in the Early Level across the Western Isles
- provide an update on the outcomes and impact of Emerging Literacy for headteachers at the Head Teacher conference.

The Lead Officer has liaised with the Education Key Links across the Northern Alliance local authorities to plan for bespoke input during the remainder of the 2017/2018 session. Further information will follow in the July 2018 report.
3. Outcome data – Measuring Foundational Skills

Teachers across the Northern Alliance who are part of the Emerging Literacy Networks are supported to assess and plan for children’s strengths and gaps in the foundational literacy skills which research shows have the greatest impact on later outcomes.

Data collection and analysis: Outcomes for Children and Young People

In September 2017, Primary 1 practitioners from each of the schools used the Phonological Awareness Screen and Continuum and the Pre-Handwriting Continuum to identify a baseline of their children’s foundational skills in reading and writing. Data was submitted in September 2017. Following this, practitioners were supported to analyse their data and plan for children’s learning, matched to their stage in development.

Between September 2017 and January 2018, practitioners planned for children’s strengths and gaps in foundational literacy skills as part of their school’s literacy framework. As children’s skills developed through learning and teaching, practitioners used the tracking tools to monitor children’s progress. In January 2018, practitioners submitted updated Phonological Awareness and Pre-Handwriting information for their children.

This report also details the outcomes for children linked to deprivation. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) information has been submitted by schools (where available). The ten deciles have been categorised as: SIMD 1-3: most deprived, SIMD 4-7: middle and SIMD 8-10: least deprived.

The breakdown of responses from January 2018:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission</th>
<th>Breakdown: September 2017</th>
<th>Breakdown by deprivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>SIMD 1-3 (most dep)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonological Awareness English</td>
<td>2,088</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonological Awareness Gaelic</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Handwriting: Fine Motor English and Gaelic combined</td>
<td>2,009</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Handwriting: Scissor English and Gaelic combined</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Handwriting: Pencil Control English and Gaelic combined</td>
<td>2,035</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 – Overview of Data Collection – January 2018
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Phonological Awareness Skills: English Medium

The collated English Medium phonological awareness data (Figure 3.2) has indicated that:

- By the end of January more than three quarters of those Primary 1 children assessed had secure Word Boundaries (79%), a foundational skill of reading and writing. This is an increase of 41% since September 2017.

- By the end of January more than four in five children in Primary 1 (86%) had secure rhyme awareness and detection, an increase of 28% since September 2017, and almost half of the children (49%) now have secure rhyme production, an increase of 34% since September.

- In phonological awareness, with a score of a possible twelve, over three in five children (64%) now have a score of nine or more. This is an increase of 53% since September.

- By the end of January almost half (49%) of Primary 1 children now have fully secure phoneme discrimination, phoneme segmentation and phoneme blending, the phonemic awareness skills which underpin reading and spelling words using phonics. This is an increase of 42% since September.
Phonological Awareness Skills: Gaelic Medium

The collated Gaelic Medium phonological awareness data (Figure 3.3) has indicated that:

- By the end of January almost three quarters of those Primary 1 children assessed had secure Word Boundaries (73%), a foundational skill of reading and writing. This is an increase of 29% since September 2017.

- By the end of January almost all children in Primary 1 (92%) had secure rhyme awareness and detection, an increase of 33% since September 2017, and more than two fifths of the children (43%) now have secure rhyme production, an increase of 35% since September.

- In phonological awareness, with a score of a possible twelve, almost three in five children (57%) now have a score of nine or more. This is an increase of 46% since September.

- By the end of January more than two in five (44%) of Primary 1 children now have fully secure phoneme discrimination, phoneme segmentation and phoneme blending, the phonemic awareness skills which underpin reading and spelling words using phonics. This is an increase of 39% since September.

There is less research published around Gaelic Phonological Awareness than there is for English Phonological Awareness. It should be noted that rhyme is less prevalent in Gaelic than in English.
Phonological Awareness Skills: Comparison by Deprivation

![Graph](image)

**Figure 3.4 – Phonological Awareness: Comparison by deprivation – September 2017**

![Graph](image)

**Figure 3.5 – Phonological Awareness: Comparison by deprivation – January 2018**

The collated phonological awareness data, linked to deprivation, above (Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5) has indicated that:

- In the foundational skill of auditory memory, a building block to later phonological awareness skills, the gap between the most and least deprived children is closing. In September only two thirds of children (66%) living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) had secure auditory memory skills, compared with that of more than four in five children (82%) living in the least deprived areas (SIMD 8-10), a gap of 16%. By January 86% of children in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) and 96% of children in the least deprived areas (SIMD 8-10) now have secure auditory memory skills, a gap of 10%.
The collated phonological awareness data, linked to deprivation, above (Figure 3.6) has indicated that:

- In September 2017, children from the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) had an average score of 4.3 out of 12; the children from the middle (SIMD 4 – 7) had an average score of 5.2; and the children from the least deprived areas (SIMD 8-10) had an average score of 5.5 out of 12. On Primary 1 entry there is a gap of 1.2.

- By January 2018, children from the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) had an average score of 8.1 out of 12; the children from the middle (SIMD 4 – 7) had an average score of 9; and the children from the least deprived areas (SIMD 8-10) had an average score of 9.3 out of 12. By January 2018, there remains a gap of 1.2 in the average scores linked to deprivation. This overall average conceals a more complex picture of strong comparative progress for more deprived children.

- With a score of a possible twelve, only 32% of children from the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-3) had a score of six or more, compared with 54% of children from the least deprived areas (SIMD 8-10), a gap of 22%. By January 2018 there is evidence that the gap is closing in those children scoring six or more out of a possible twelve. In January, 80% of children from the most deprived and 94% from the least deprived areas had a score of six or more, a gap of 14%.
Pre-Handwriting Skills

Figure 3.7 – Pre-Handwriting – Fine Motor Skills
Comparison: September 2017/ January 2018

Figure 3.8 – Pre-Handwriting – Scissor Skills
Comparison: September 2017/ January 2018

Figure 3.9 – Pre-Handwriting – Pencil Control/ Pre-writing Skills
Comparison: September 2017/ January 2018
The collation of pre-handwriting data (Figure 3.7, Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9) has indicated that:

- By the end of January almost all children in Primary 1 (96%) now have a secure tripod grasp which is foundational to the manipulation of writing implements. This is an increase of 15% from 81% in September.

- By the end of January almost all children in Primary 1 (96%) now demonstrate secure pencil control/ pre-writing skills which included copying shapes which involved one movement, e.g. a circle, and copying shapes which involved multiple movements, e.g. an ‘x’, – these skills foundational to the formation of letters. This is an increase of 17% from 79% in September.

Pre-Handwriting: Comparison by Deprivation

![Graph](image)

**Figure 3.10 – Tripod Grasp: Comparison by deprivation over time (September 2017/ January 2018)**

![Graph](image)

**Figure 3.11 – Pencil Control Movements: Comparison by deprivation over time (Sep17/Jan18)**

The pre-handwriting data linked to deprivation (Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11) has indicated that:

- By the end of January almost all children in Primary 1, across each SIMD category linked to deprivation, now have a secure tripod grasp which is foundational to the manipulation of writing implements and are secure in the pencil control concepts which are foundational to handwriting instruction.
4. Practitioner Evaluations – January 2018

As part of the Northern Alliance Emerging Literacy Networks in January 2018, evaluations were undertaken to collect data on the impact which being a part of the Northern Alliance Emerging Literacy Workstream is having on practice, leading to improved outcomes for children. A five point Likert scale was used to collect responses.

Year 1 – Class Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 Strongly disagree</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Screening the children’s Phonological Awareness and Pre-Handwriting skills has provided useful information for learning, teaching and assessment which I would not have had had I not screened.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attending the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving my subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attending the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving planning for learning, teaching and assessment by enabling me to match the teaching and learning to the needs of the children.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collaborating with other practitioners through the Emerging Literacy training and networks is having a positive impact on my professional learning.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a positive impact on the children.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am confident in using the emerging literacy data alongside the CfE Benchmarks for Early Level to support my judgements of ‘Achievement of a Level’.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.1 – Y1 Emerging Literacy Networks (beginning June 2017) – Class Teacher (N=61)*

**Key points (From Figure 4.1):**
- Almost all Year 1 Class Teacher (98%) agreed that using the Emerging Literacy screening and assessment tools provided them with information they wouldn’t have otherwise had.
- Almost all Year 1 Class Teachers (95%) agreed that the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving their subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.
- Almost all Year 1 Class Teachers (94%) agreed that the Emerging Literacy training and networks are having a positive impact on their practice.
- Nine in ten Year 1 Class Teachers (90%) agreed that collaboration with other practitioners is impacting positively on their professional learning.
- All Year 1 Class Teachers (100%) agreed that taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a positive impact on their children.
- The large majority of Year 1 Class Teachers (86%) felt confident in using the emerging literacy data alongside the CfE Early Level Benchmarks to support ‘Achievement of a Level’ judgements.
Year 2 – Class Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 Strongly disagree</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Screening the children’s Phonological Awareness and Pre-Handwriting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills has provided useful information for learning, teaching and</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment which I would not have had I not screened.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attending the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attending the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning for learning, teaching and assessment by enabling me to match</td>
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<tr>
<td>the teaching and learning to the needs of the children.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collaborating with other practitioners through the Emerging Literacy</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training and networks is having a positive impact on my professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive impact on the children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am confident in using the emerging literacy data alongside the</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CfE Benchmarks for Early Level to support my judgements of ‘Achievement</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>of a Level’.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2 – Y2 Emerging Literacy Networks (beginning September 2016) – Class Teacher (N=17)

Key points (From Figure 4.2):
- Almost all Year 2 Class Teacher (94%) agreed that using the Emerging Literacy screening and assessment tools provided them with information they wouldn’t have otherwise had.
- Almost all Year 2 Class Teachers (94%) agreed that the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving their subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.
- Almost all Year 2 Class Teachers (94%) agreed that the Emerging Literacy training and networks are having a positive impact on their practice.
- Almost all Year 2 Class Teachers (94%) agreed that collaboration with other practitioners is impacting positively on their professional learning.
- All Year 2 Class Teachers (100%) agreed that taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a positive impact on their children.
- Over three quarters of Year 2 Class Teachers (76%) felt confident in using the emerging literacy data alongside the CfE Early Level Benchmarks to support ‘Achievement of a Level’ judgements.
Year 1 – Senior Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 Strongly disagree</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Screening the children’s Phonological Awareness and Pre-Handwriting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>skills has provided useful information for learning, teaching and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment which I would not have had had I not screened.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attending the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have an overview of the children’s development in foundational</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literacy skills across P1 and I know how class teachers are planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for learning, teaching and assessment to support strengths and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addressing gaps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collaborating with other practitioners through the Emerging Literacy</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training and networks is having a positive impact on my professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive impact on the children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.3 – Y1 Emerging Literacy Networks (beginning June 2017) – Senior Managers (N=33)**

**Key points (From Figure 4.3):**
- Almost all Year 1 Senior Managers (94%) agreed that using the Emerging Literacy screening and assessment tools provided the school with information they wouldn’t have otherwise had.
- Almost all Year 1 Senior Managers (94%) agreed that the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving their subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.
- All Year 1 Senior Managers (100%) agreed that they had an overview of children’s development in foundational literacy skills across P1.
- Over three quarters of Year 1 Senior Managers (79%) agreed that collaboration with other practitioners is impacting positively on their professional learning.
- Almost all Year 1 Senior Managers (94%) agreed that taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a positive impact on their children.
Year 2 – Senior Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 Strongly disagree</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Screening the children’s Phonological Awareness and Pre-Handwriting skills has provided useful information for learning, teaching and assessment which I would not have had had I not screened.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attending the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving my subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have an overview of the children’s development in foundational literacy skills across P1 and I know how class teachers are planning for learning, teaching and assessment to support strengths and addressing gaps.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collaborating with other practitioners through the Emerging Literacy training and networks is having a positive impact on my professional learning.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a positive impact on the children.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.4 – Y2 Emerging Literacy Networks (beginning September 2016) – Senior Managers (N=10)**

**Key points (From Figure 4.4):**

- All Year 2 Senior Managers (100%) agreed that using the Emerging Literacy screening and assessment tools provided the school with information they wouldn’t have otherwise had.
- All Year 2 Senior Managers (100%) agreed that the Emerging Literacy training and networks is improving their subject knowledge of early literacy, language and communication.
- All Year 2 Senior Managers (100%) agreed that they had an overview of children’s development in foundational literacy skills across P1.
- All Year 2 Senior Managers (100%) agreed that collaboration with other practitioners is impacting positively on their professional learning.
- All Year 2 Senior Managers (100%) agreed that taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy is having a positive impact on their children.

The data from Year 1 and Year 2 (*Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4*) has identified that almost all practitioners, class teachers and senior managers, have information to support learning, teaching and assessment which they would not have had had they not been part of the workstream. Almost all practitioners also report the positive impact on children of taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy. Efforts to strengthen practitioners’ reflections on collaboration will be planned for through increased sharing of practice through networks and online through Yammer. Support to strengthen practitioners’ use of emerging literacy data alongside CfE Early Level Benchmarks has been planned for Emerging Literacy Networks between March 2018 and May 2018.
Northern Alliance
Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication
2017/2018 – Interim Report: March 2018

As part of the Northern Alliance Emerging Literacy Networks in January 2018, evaluations were undertaken to collect data on practitioners’ knowledge, understanding and confidence of the content explored within the Emerging Literacy Networks. A typical five point Likert scale was used pre and post network to allow for comparisons to be made following input.

**Year 1 – Class Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-assessment of Knowledge and Understanding</th>
<th>Before Workshop Average Score</th>
<th>After Workshop Average Score</th>
<th>Average Increase (+) or Decrease (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand the difference between concrete and abstract questions.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>+1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I know how to match my questions to the developmental needs of each child.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the signs of working memory overload.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>+2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand the impact of working memory on early literacy skills.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 4.5 – Year 1 Class Teachers: January 2018 Networks – Pre/post average knowledge/understanding scores / 5](image-url)

**Year 1 – Senior Managers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-assessment of Knowledge and Understanding</th>
<th>Before Workshop Average Score</th>
<th>After Workshop Average Score</th>
<th>Average Increase (+) or Decrease (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand the difference between concrete and abstract questions.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>+1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I know how to match my questions to the developmental needs of each child.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the signs of working memory overload.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>+2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand the impact of working memory on early literacy skills.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>+1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 4.6 – Year 1 Senior Managers: January 2018 Networks – Pre/post average knowledge/understanding scores / 5](image-url)
Year 2 – Class Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING</th>
<th>BEFORE WORKSHOP AVERAGE SCORE</th>
<th>AFTER WORKSHOP AVERAGE SCORE</th>
<th>AVERAGE INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know the pencil control skills which underpin handwriting.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>+1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I understand the links between pencil control and handwriting.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>+1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the signs of working memory overload.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>+2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand the impact of working memory on early literacy skills.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>+1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.7 – Year 2 Class Teachers: January 2018 Networks – Pre/post average knowledge/understanding scores / 5

Year 2 – Senior Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING</th>
<th>BEFORE WORKSHOP AVERAGE SCORE</th>
<th>AFTER WORKSHOP AVERAGE SCORE</th>
<th>AVERAGE INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know the pencil control skills which underpin handwriting.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I understand the links between pencil control and handwriting.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the signs of working memory overload.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>+1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand the impact of working memory on early literacy skills.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>+1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8 – Year 2 Senior Managers: January 2018 Networks – Pre/post average knowledge/understanding scores / 5

The data from Year 1 and Year 2 (Figure 4.5, Figure 4.6, Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8) has identified that the average knowledge and understanding has increased for each group – Class Teachers and Senior Managers – in both Year 1 and Year 2.

Before the network, class teachers in both Year 1 and Year 2 averagely rated their knowledge and understanding between 2.5 and 3.4, considered low to medium knowledge and understanding. Following the network class teachers in both Year 1 and Year 2 averagely rated their knowledge and understanding between 4.1 and 4.9, considered high knowledge and understanding.

The tables overleaf (Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10) detail this further.
Year 1 – Class Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING</th>
<th>BEFORE WORKSHOP % OF 4 OR 5</th>
<th>AFTER WORKSHOP % OF 4 OR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand the difference between concrete and abstract questions.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I know how to match my questions to the developmental needs of each child.</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the signs of working memory overload.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand the impact of working memory on early literacy skills.</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.9 – Year 1 Class Teachers: January 2018 Networks – Pre/post average knowledge/understanding, % with scores of 4 or 5 (High)

Year 2 – Class Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING</th>
<th>BEFORE WORKSHOP % OF 4 OR 5</th>
<th>AFTER WORKSHOP % OF 4 OR 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know the pencil control skills which underpin handwriting.</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I understand the links between pencil control and handwriting.</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the signs of working memory overload.</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand the impact of working memory on early literacy skills.</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.10 – Year 2 Class Teachers: January 2018 Networks – Pre/post average knowledge/understanding, % with scores of 4 or 5 (High)

Key points (From Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10):
- Before the network less than a third of Year 1 teachers rated themselves as having high levels of knowledge and understanding in developmentally appropriate questioning. Almost all Year 1 teachers rated their knowledge and understanding highly by the end of the network.
- Before the network just over half of Year 2 teachers rated themselves as having high levels of knowledge and understanding in pencil control concepts. By the end of the network all Year 2 teachers rated themselves as having high levels of knowledge and understanding.
- In identifying the signs of working memory overload less than a fifth of teachers in Year 1 and Year 2 rated themselves as having high levels of knowledge and understanding before the network. This rose to all Year 1 and Year 2 teachers rating their confidence as high by the end of the network.
5. Outcome data – ‘Achievement of a Level’ 2016/2017

During the 2016/2017 session Highland Council supported schools across the local authority who had identified ‘Taking a Developmental Approach to Emerging Literacy’ as a priority within their school improvement plan through seven local networks across the local authority.

The support consisted of five twilight network sessions. The network sessions aimed to:
- support practitioners in taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy with theory, assessments, support materials and rollout models
- build collaborative working partnerships with colleagues within and across settings.

Each of the Emerging Literacy Networks were created by a multiagency team including an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist, a speech and language therapist and a teacher. The content of each of the network sessions from 2016/2017 in Highland is detailed below:

**Session 1 (August 2016)**
This was an introduction session to Emerging Literacy which included the theory and rationale, the assessment tools and the resources to support learning and teaching.

**Session 2 (September 2016)**
This session supported practitioners to analyse their assessment data to match the teaching and learning to the developmental needs of the children within their school.

**Session 3 (November 2016)**
This session, as well as providing time for reflection, explored oral language development through the ‘Pre-Teaching Vocabulary’ approach to vocabulary instruction and the ‘Blanks Level Language’ theory to supporting the development of concrete to abstract thinking.

**Session 4 (February 2017)**
This session provided practitioners with the opportunity to reflect on the outcomes for children and the impact on their professional learning. The network also supported the generation of the now published [Practice Guidance](#) and [Northern Alliance Phonics Principles](#).

**Session 5 (May 2017)**
This session explored the links between oral language, pre-handwriting and concepts of print through developing practitioners’ knowledge, understanding and skills in early writing development. The session also explored how to best support their children through the P1 – P2 transition and provided the forum for end of year evaluations.
In December 2017, the Scottish Government published the ‘Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels’ experimental statistics for local authorities across Scotland. Due to the sample size of children available, whose teachers and schools were supported through the Emerging Literacy Networks in Highland, it was possible to analyse the Primary 1 Early Level Literacy CfE Achievement of a Level information for the schools in Highland who were not part of the Emerging Literacy Networks in Highland (Non-ELN Schools = 1,384 children) in comparison with the schools in Highland who were part of an Emerging Literacy Network in Highland (ELN Schools = 870 children).

Thanks to James McTaggart, Educational Psychologist, Highland Council, who authored the following note on Highland’s ‘Achievement of CfE Levels’ data.

**Background**

Emerging Literacy is a research-based approach to literacy in the Early Level, and particularly in P1. It consists of assessment tools and classroom activities to enable teachers to identify and address gaps in foundational literacy skills. Developing it has involved a unique collaboration between teachers and specialists such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists and speech & language therapists.

The model supports teacher judgements in differentiating the pace and methods of “formal” literacy instruction so as to attempt to meet the long-term needs of all learners. As such an Emerging Literacy classroom will look different in different schools and different cohorts. The materials, rationale and evidence-base can be found at [www.highlandliteracy.com](http://www.highlandliteracy.com).

This note presents some evaluative outcome data based on the Scottish Government benchmarks for the attainment of Early Level in literacy (Listening & Talking, Reading and Writing) for the cohort finishing P1 in summer 2017.

![Emerging Literacy Key Components](image)

**Figure 5.1 – Emerging Literacy Key Components; Highland Council (2018)**
Main points

- Children in Emerging Literacy Network schools outperformed those in non-network schools in all three organisers of Literacy: Listening & Talking, Reading and Writing.
- This is particularly evident for the children living in the most deprived SIMD deciles.
- Children in the least deprived deciles did as well or better in Emerging Literacy Network schools, showing that the approach did not “hold them back” in any way.
- There are unavoidable measurement issues with the Level Judgements and with potential bias in intervention/comparison groups, but these are unlikely to be sufficient to offset the effect sizes seen here.

These findings are illustrated in detail in the graphs below. Where differences are statistically significant, differences are marked with a * and effect size estimates are given in the form of odds ratios.

Overall performance

Whole year group

The percentages of children attaining at least Early Level in the three literacy areas are shown in Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3. It can be seen that children in Emerging Literacy schools were more likely to achieve at least Early Level in every aspect of literacy. They were 30% more likely to attain at least Early Level in all 3 areas, 50% more likely in Listening and Talking, 60% in Reading and 40% in Writing.

![Graph showing achievement of Early Level comparison between ELN schools and non-ELN schools in Highland](image-url)
The importance of developmental foundations for literacy attainment can be seen in the fact that of the children who attained Early Level in both Reading and Writing, only 3% did not also achieve Early Level in Listening & Talking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% pupils at Early Level or higher</th>
<th>Listening &amp; Talking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>All three</th>
<th>Reading &amp; Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELN schools</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ELN schools</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% difference</td>
<td>8*</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>8*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5.3 – Achievement of Early Level – comparison between ELN schools and non-ELN schools in Highland*

**Results by level of deprivation**

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) provides an estimate for the levels of socio-economic disadvantage for individual pupils. It can be divided for convenience into deciles, with 1 being the most deprived and 10 the least deprived.

Our results show strong effects of Emerging Literacy for the most deprived young people, with no detrimental effect for the least deprived – suggesting that the approach does not hold children back. This is to be expected for an approach that is aimed to enable differentiation for all children, including additional challenge and consolidation for the higher performing.

The most deprived children (SIMD Deciles 1-3) were twice as likely in Emerging Literacy Network schools to achieve at least Early Level in each area.

The percentages of children attaining at least Early Level in the literacy organisers of Listening & Talking, Reading and Writing, linked to deprivation, are detailed in Figure 5.4, Figure 5.5, Figure 5.6, Figure 5.7, Figure 5.8 and Figure 5.9.

Those that are statistically significant are marked *.
Figure 5.4 – Achievement of Early Level – Decile 1-3
Comparison between ELN schools and non-ELN schools in Highland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Listening &amp; Talking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELN schools</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ELN schools</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% difference</td>
<td>14*</td>
<td>18*</td>
<td>22*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.5 – Achievement of Early Level – Decile 1-3
Comparison between ELN schools and non-ELN schools in Highland

Figure 5.6 – Achievement of Early Level – Decile 4-7
Comparison between ELN schools and non-ELN schools in Highland
% pupils at Early Level or higher, Deciles 4-7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Listening &amp; Talking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELN schools</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ELN schools</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% difference</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.7 – Achievement of Early Level – Decile 4-7
Comparison between ELN schools and non-ELN schools in Highland

% pupils at Early Level or higher, Deciles 8-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Listening &amp; Talking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELN schools</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ELN schools</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% difference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.8 – Achievement of Early Level – Decile 8-10
Comparison between ELN schools and non-ELN schools in Highland

For children in deciles 8-10 there are no significant differences in results for ELN and non-ELN schools.
Looking instead at the numbers of relatively deprived children (SIMD 1-3) who achieved at least Early Level in *none* of the three areas, we have 19% of children in ELN schools not achieving any, as opposed to 46% in non-ELN schools. It can be seen that in the schools taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy, the most deprived children were far less likely not to succeed in any area.

![Children achieving NO levels](image)

*Figure 5.10 – Children not achieving Early Level in any of the three organisers of Listening & Talking, Reading and Writing: Comparison between ELN and non-ELN schools (SIMD 1-3) in Highland*

There is a deprivation-related gap in numbers of children achieving no level, as shown in the following graph (*Figure 5.11*), but much less for children in ELN schools. If we take the differences in percentages of children attaining NO early level, the deprivation gap is significantly reduced.

![Deprivation gap for children achieving early level in NO area](image)

*Figure 5.11 – Gap between SIMD 1-3 and SIMD 8-10 in children achieving not achieving any organiser of Early Level: Comparison between ELN and non-ELN schools in Highland*
“Closing the gap”

Putting all this together, we see that the additional benefit of Emerging Literacy comes not from a general increase in results, but from closing the gap between more deprived and less deprived children. At the same time, there is no detriment to the results for less deprived children.

The closing of the gap can be seen in the following graph. It shows the differences between deciles 1-3 and deciles 8-10 in percentages of children achieving Early Level for each organiser within Literacy for both ELN and non-ELN schools:

![Graph showing the gap between SIMD 1-3 and SIMD 8-10 in the % of children achieving Early Level in each Literacy organiser: Comparison between ELN and non-ELN schools in Highland Council](image)

**Figure 5.12 – Gap between SIMD 1-3 and SIMD 8-10 in the % of children achieving Early Level in each Literacy organiser: Comparison between ELN and non-ELN schools in Highland Council**
Caveats

There are three potential sources of measurement error or bias in these results. Each is unlikely to have a serious effect on the overall picture for reasons given below. Given the impracticality of so-called gold-standard matched or cluster controls in this project, the results remain indicative – however the size of the effects seen are likely to be larger than any bias.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher level judgements may not be reliable.</td>
<td>This would be an issue for both ELN and non-ELN schools. In this sample size (2,300) unduly harsh/lenient judgements are likely to cancel out. Unreliability of measurement can be an issue through making small effects harder to detect – the effects here are likely to be larger than measurement error.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ELN group may contain schools that are “better” at literacy or have more able pupils.</td>
<td>There is no possibility of matching controls in this project. However, schools were recruited to the project who had written literacy into their School Improvement Plans, mostly because their data showed improvement was needed. Not all teachers attending networks were initially enthusiastic or in support of the approach. Qualitative and quantitative data from network evaluations suggest an initial wide spread of knowledge or confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELN teachers may be unconsciously inflating judgements because they want EL to “work”.</td>
<td>Teachers had no knowledge that Level judgements would be used for evaluation. Bias, if any, is likely to be two-way since making people more aware of issues tends also to make judgements finer and more searching. Between group differences may also be bidirectional in that some teachers in the non-ELN schools were using Emerging Literacy resources without coming to networks – thus reducing the apparent effect size.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.13 – Description of three potential sources of measurement error or bias in results.

Summary

Taking a developmentally sensitive approach to early literacy works. To do so requires the pooling of expertise and collaboration across traditional professional boundaries and practices, and considerable input in support networks and materials.

While the results are encouraging, it should be emphasised that many children have remaining gaps in foundational skills and that continued intervention beyond P1 will be needed for some. The “deprivation gap” cannot be eliminated in a year, and sustained input is needed so that early progress does not “wash out”. However, to have such large effects in a relatively short time, with do-able and sustainable changes in teaching practice is remarkable.
Interim Report Summary – Future Recommendations:

1. Now that the *Northern Alliance Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication* workstream has been identified as a key workstream in the draft Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) plan, an action plan to enable sustainability through the 2018/2019 session and beyond should be created as part of the workstream’s Partnership Group. This should clearly detail the measures which are going to be used to monitor progress over time.

2. The data published within this report linked to ‘Achievement of CfE Levels’ should be shared to demonstrate the positive outcomes for children. The data is linked to the Scottish Government’s measures within the National Improvement Framework. Due to the sample size of schools who were part of the workstream during the 2016/2017 session, only data from Highland Council could be used within this report. When reporting on ‘Achievement of CfE Levels’ in future reports, data from local authorities across the Northern Alliance should be analysed to support reporting.

3. To support practitioners, a clear statement as part of the practice guidance should be created to define what it means in practice to effectively take a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy; this should be created with practitioners, for practitioners.

4. Practitioner collaboration is at the heart of the workstream. The 2018/2019 plan should detail how practitioner collaboration will be strengthened to support those not yet and those at an early stage of taking a developmental approach to Emerging Literacy, whilst continuing to empower those who are confident in their approach.

5. There are identified resource gaps in Oral Language, Pre-Handwriting and Working Memory/Executive Functions. As is current practice and as is planned, resources should continue to be created with practitioners for practitioners and delivered through collaborative networks.

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March 2018