

‘SPEAK FOR CHANGE’

ORACY ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND

1. Education Scotland (ES) leads on quality and improvement in Scottish education, including in early learning and childcare settings (ELC) and primary schools.
2. Education Scotland welcomes the opportunity to contribute evidence to the first inquiry of the Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group. Oracy or listening and talking, as it is defined in the Scottish education system, is one of three components of the Scottish literacy curriculum, enjoying equal status with reading and writing. Because of this the development of children’s spoken language or oracy, does not suffer from a lack of status within the Scottish education system.
3. Improving standards of literacy and numeracy is at the heart of the Scottish Government’s vision for education in Scotland, which has the twin aims of:
 - o Excellence through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
 - o Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

CfE background

4. Scottish Ministers have overall responsibility for the development and oversight of the Scottish education system. However, the provision of publicly-funded pre-school and school education is the responsibility of Scotland’s 32 local authorities.
5. All 32 local authorities are committed to the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), within a school and teacher-led system. Headteachers are enabled and supported in their decision-making at school level by their local authority. In 2017 Regional Improvement Collaboratives were also established in Scotland to facilitate collaborative working in education, including sharing best practice, across six distinct regions. Working with local authorities and Education Scotland, their role is to provide clear, practical support to headteachers in order to improve the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment.

6. The purpose of the curriculum in Scotland is encapsulated in the four capacities - to enable each child or young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.

Literacy as responsibility of all

7. Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), requires all learning professionals in all educational settings to be responsible for the development of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the whole curriculum for all learners. As one of the three components of the literacy curriculum, listening and talking is central to learning experiences planned for children and young people in all educational settings and at all stages.
8. As in all eight of CfE's curricular areas, literacy is planned using guidance for teachers commonly referred to as experiences and outcomes, which describe the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities that young people are expected to develop. These experiences and outcomes are grouped into five levels:

CfE Level	Stage at which most children will have undertaken learning	Age (years - approx.)
Early	Pre-school - P1 ¹	3-5
First	P2 - P4	6-8
Second	P5 - P7	9-11
Third and Fourth	S1 - S3 ²	12-15

9. On completion of the 'broad general education'(BGE) at the end of the third year of secondary schools, learners (aged 15) will progress to undertake a range of qualifications in the 'senior phase'.

Value of listening and talking within Curriculum for Excellence

¹ P1 is the first year of primary school. In Scotland, children start primary school at age 5.

² S1 is the first year of secondary school. In Scotland, children start secondary school at age 12.

10. Listening and talking skills are central to the development of the ‘four capacities’, the intended outcomes for learners in CfE. For example, as illustrated below, successful learners use communication skills and are able to learn as part of a group, as well as independently; confident individuals are able to relate to others and communicate their beliefs and view of the world, responsible citizens are able to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life and; effective contributors are able to communicate in different ways in different setting and work well in partnership or in teams.

successful learners	confident individuals	responsible citizens	effective contributors
<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enthusiasm and motivation for learning determination to reach high standards of achievement openness to new thinking and ideas <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use literacy, communication and numeracy skills use technology for learning think creatively and independently learn independently and as part of a group make reasoned evaluations link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-respect a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being secure values and beliefs ambition <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relate to others and manage themselves pursue a healthy and active lifestyle be self-aware develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world live as independently as they can assess risk and make informed decisions achieve success in different areas of activity. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect for others commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it understand different beliefs and cultures make informed choices and decisions evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues develop informed, ethical views of complex issues. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an enterprising attitude resilience self-reliance <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate in different ways and in different settings work in partnership and in teams take the initiative and lead apply critical thinking in new contexts create and develop solve problems

11. Literacy skills are embedded in experiences and outcomes across the eight curricular areas, allowing schools to plan for the development of literacy skills alongside subject-specific learning. Examples of the embedding of listening and talking skills include:

Sciences (second level)

I have collaborated in the design of an investigation into the effects of fertilisers on the growth of plants. I can express an informed view of the risks and benefits of their use.

Social Studies (third level)

I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since.

Mathematics and numeracy (fourth level)

I can discuss and illustrate the facts I need to consider when determining what I can afford, in order to manage credit and debt and lead a responsible lifestyle.

Progression in listening and talking within CfE

12. The [listening and talking experiences and outcomes](#) define appropriate levels of proficiency at each level but do not place a ceiling on achievement. The range of experiences allows for different rates of progression and for additional depth or breadth of study through the use of varied contexts for learning. Progression in listening and talking takes place in a range of ways, including:
- continuing the development and consolidation of the range of oracy skills
 - increasing independence in applying these skills, and the ability to use them across a widening range of contexts in learning and life
 - gradually decreasing levels of support in oracy used by the learner (for example from teachers, classroom assistants, parents or peers)
 - the ability to mediate discussions without teacher intervention
 - the increasing length, complexity and accuracy of responses in listening and talking.
13. The experiences and outcomes for listening and talking, organised across the five levels (Early to Fourth) describe progression in listening and talking skills and allow practitioners from all educational settings to plan learning for pupils at all stages.
14. The inextricable link between the skills of listening and the skills of talking is embodied within the experiences and outcomes; developing the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate a range of spoken texts allows learners to develop their own skills in spoken presentation and group discussion.

Developing listening skills

15. At all levels and stages, learners will engage with spoken texts. They will progress from briefly describing their likes and dislikes to giving, and ultimately justifying and evidencing, their personal responses. They will develop their knowledge and understanding of the features of spoken language which will increase their capacity to understand and produce more complex language and text structures. As they do so, they can increasingly apply this knowledge of language to comprehend what they hear and to support the production of more complex texts. Learners will progress from listening to a single text to comparing a variety of complex texts. They will progress from making notes under given headings and using these to create texts to independently making and organising notes from increasingly complex texts. As learners develop their ability to understand, analyse and evaluate texts they will increasingly be able to ask and answer a range of questions, such as literal, inferential and evaluative questions, to inform critical understating. They will progress from identifying the purpose and main ideas of spoken texts to exploring the impact of features of spoken language including verbal and non-verbal communication skills for example, pace, gesture, expression, emphasis, word choice and rhetorical devices.

Developing talking skills

16. Learners will demonstrate their progress in skills in using spoken language as they create texts of increasing complexity in a variety of ways, including individual talks, presentations, debates and paired and group discussions. Learners will apply verbal and non-verbal skills with greater confidence as they talk and listen for a range of purposes in a variety of contexts. As learners progress, they will present to a growing range of different and less familiar audiences. In discussion, learners will progress from turn-taking and articulating ideas, thoughts and feelings to responding, questioning, challenging, summarising and

building on the contributions of others. Learners will work more independently to research, plan, create and deliver spoken texts of increasing complexity as appropriate to purpose and audience.

17. Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks provide clarity on the national standards expected within each curriculum area at each level. Their purpose is to make clear what learners need to know and be able to do to progress through the levels, and to support consistency in teachers' and other practitioners' professional judgements.
18. Moderation processes support teachers' professional judgements and help them to decide when learners have achieved the expected BGE level, determined when the learner has:
 - Achieved a breadth of learning across the knowledge, understanding and skills as set out in the experiences and outcomes
 - Responded consistently well to the level of challenge set out in the experiences and outcomes for the level and has moved forward to learning at the next level in some aspects
 - Demonstrated application of what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations

Listening and talking and the wider skills agenda in Scotland

19. Developing skills for learning, life and work is one of six entitlements of CfE for children and young people in Scotland. Scotland's [Developing the Young Workforce Programme](#) (DYW) supports all educational settings, from early years to further education, to focus on recognising children's and young people's skills, the links between learning and positive destinations, and access to learning pathways that meets their needs and aspirations.
20. In taking forward this agenda, schools in Scotland are supporting children and young people to develop a range of skills, including oracy. Excellent listening and talking skills underpin many of the attributes that will allow children and young people to thrive in our rapidly changing society. CfE and DYW enable schools to maximise opportunities that develop the four capacities for learners, making clear links to future skills, for example meta-skills (see Fig. 2). Listening and talking skills, as described in the experiences and outcomes, are integral to these future skills, in particular communicating, collaborating, sense-making and critical thinking.



[Fig. 2](#)

Attainment in listening and talking

Attainment in the Broad General Education - how data is gathered

21. From 2015/16, following the launch of Scotland's [National Improvement Framework \(NIF\)](#) all schools across Scotland have submitted data to the Scottish Government's Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) survey, detailing teachers' professional judgements of how many children at each stage had achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence level in numeracy, reading, writing and listening and talking.

[Achievement of curriculum for excellence levels 2015-16](#)

[Achievement of curriculum for excellence levels 2016-17](#)

[Achievement of curriculum for excellence levels 2017-18](#)

22. Because ACEL is a new and developing data source, statistics published in each ACEL report to date are badged as experimental data. Over time, a better understanding of the moderation process, engagement with the literacy and English Benchmarks, and increased opportunities at local and national level to engage in the moderation of a range of learner evidence is emerging across the system. This is leading to the submission of more accurate ACEL data in reading, writing and listening and talking.

Attainment in Listening and talking in the Broad General Education

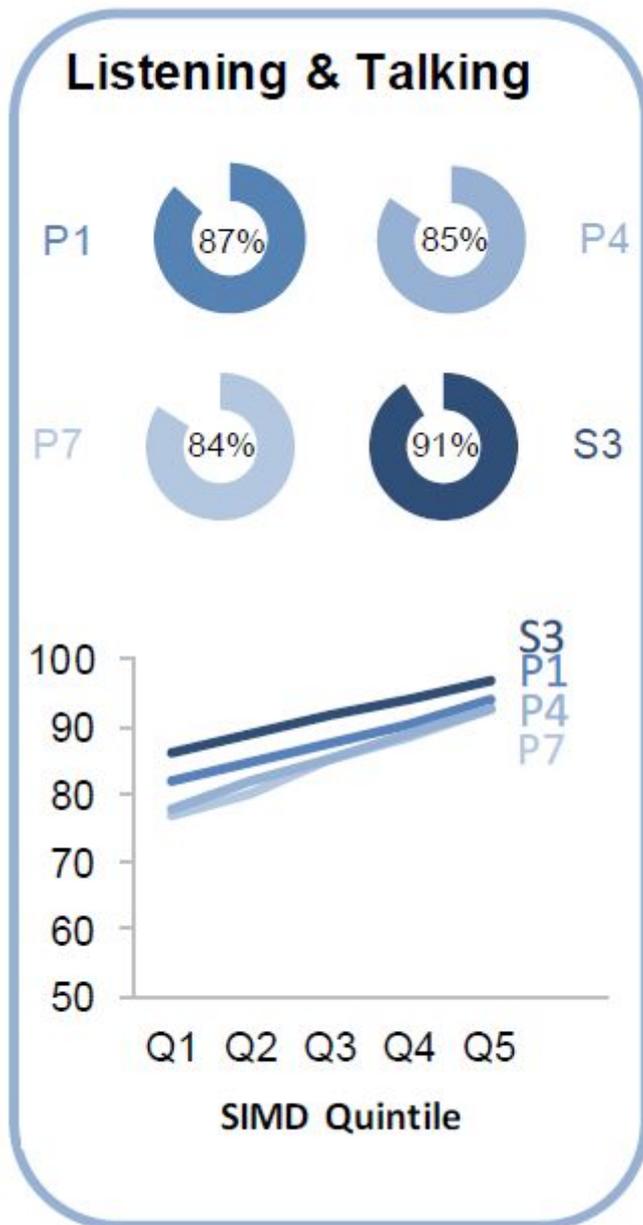


Fig. 1

23. The chart above (Fig.1), based on the results of the 2017/18 ACEL survey results, shows the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in listening and talking. The gap in attainment in literacy between Scotland's most and least advantaged children, or the poverty-related attainment gap, is also shown, This reported based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)³.
24. In [2017/18](#), across all primary stages (ages 5 to 11 years), around 85 per cent of pupils achieved the expected CfE level for their relevant stage in listening and talking, with at least 75 per cent achieving the expected level for reading and 70 per cent for writing. In secondary schools, at S3 (age 14 years) almost nine out of ten pupils achieved third level or better in listening and talking.

³ [The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation. SIMD ranks small areas (called data zones) from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). For the purposes of analysis within the ACEL survey, these datazones are arranged by quintile, with the most deprived learners residing in quintile 1 and the least deprived learners residing in quintile 5.

25. Compared with reading and writing, the poverty-related attainment gap is smallest in listening and talking at 12 percentage points in P1; 15 points in P4; 16 points in P7 and 10 percentage points at S3.

Attainment in the Senior Phase

26. School qualifications in Scotland are certified by a single agency, the [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#). Scottish schools and special education settings offer a range of qualifications from National 1 to Advanced Higher level. National 5 qualifications are roughly equivalent to English GCSE. Higher qualifications usually form the entry requirements for admission to universities.

27. Since the introduction of new National Qualifications (NQ) in 2013/14, listening and talking has been assessed as part of the overall courses for Literacy and English. From 2017/18, as part of an effort to reduce over-assessment across all National Qualifications, separate internal assessments were removed from the qualifications for Literacy and English and replaced with the Performance - spoken language component. Pupils are now assessed either through a spoken presentation or through their performance within a class group discussion. They are marked internally on a pass/fail basis and schools' assessment approaches are verified by the SQA.

28. The new approach is now in its second year of operation at National 5 level (roughly equivalent to GCSE) and its first year at Higher level. In its annual Course Reports for [National 5](#) and [Higher English](#), the SQA has commented that schools have taken a holistic approach to this new assessment of spoken language and that linking the assessment tasks to the wider learning context (e.g. discursive essay topics), allowed pupils to perform well.