Policy Statement for Talking and Listening

Rationale

Listening and talking is the key to early language development and as such must be encouraged and supported. Being an effective talker involves having knowledge, feelings, ideas or opinions and being able to communicate these in ways which will have a particular effect on an audience or help achieve a personal or group goal. It involves a complex array of skills: for example, mental agility, command of a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures; the ability to recognise and use language conventions; and sensitivity and responsiveness to others.

Aims

At Hamnavoe Primary we aim to offer all our pupils a talking and listening programme of high quality. To achieve this aim for talking and listening, all pupils will experience a range of activities that included:

Enjoyment and choice – within a motivating and challenging environment, developing an awareness of the relevance of texts in my life

Tools for listening and talking – to help me when interacting or presenting within and beyond my place of learning

Finding and using information – when listening to, watching and talking about texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary

Understanding, analysing and evaluating – investigating and/or appreciating texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary for different purposes

Creating texts – applying the elements others use to create different types of short and extended texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and
vocabulary

We also aim to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the programme for listening and talking irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability or background.

To achieve this view of listening and talking we need to develop in our pupils:

- To create a whole school ethos in which listening and talking is highly valued.
- To give pupils a structured talking and listening programme in order to allow them to make progression in their talking and listening skills.
- To give pupils opportunities to express feelings, ideas and thoughts through appropriate contexts for talking and listening.
- To equip pupils with skills to talk and listen effectively in a variety of genres.
- To give pupils experiences of real-life talking and listening activities.
- To equip pupils with technical skills necessary for accuracy in writing.
- To give pupils opportunities to order, clarify, record and reflect on experiences.
- To help pupils develop confidence and pleasure in talking and listening.
- To involve the pupils in evaluating own/peers talking and listening.

Teaching and Learning

At All Stages, as appropriate to age and ability, pupils will be involved in a variety of paired, group and class activities which will encourage effective and constructive listening and talking on a wide range of topics across the curriculum.

Some specific examples might include: discussion with others in the context of class work; in problem solving and practical work where discussion is an essential element of the task; whilst playing games or participating in teamwork; engaging in role-play and drama and in presentations to an audience.

At all times pupils will be encouraged to develop an awareness of purpose and audience and will be introduced to the etiquette of effective listening and
talk: clarity, fluency, good posture, eye-contact etc.

Talking

Talking is the most common form of communication and is not as rigid as the written word. You can change what is said immediately, clarifying ideas and thoughts. Recording children as they talk allows them to hear how they sound and is a good way of encouraging assessment.

Listening

Children are bombarded with information in many forms and have the ability to be selective in what they listen to or hear. Active listening needs to be enthusiastically encouraged with children being guided to listen for information in order to respond appropriately on an individual, paired or group basis. Good listening requires modeling and a clear purpose.

Children need to be shown the basics for talking and listening - eye contact, body language, use of questions. Through these being modeled on a daily basis, children understand how a talker and listener behaves. Engaging children in conversation helps them to reflect on and understand the importance of listening carefully.

The teacher

The teacher should be clear about his/her aims and learning outcomes in relation to listen and talking and these should form the basis for assessment.

- Listening and talking should be relevant, purposeful and meaningful.
- Listen and talking activities should be taught within the context of other curricular areas, but at times it may be appropriate to teach certain skills in isolation.
- Provide contexts, which stimulate pupils’ imagination as well as their interest in and enjoyment of language.
- Teachers should provide a role model for good listening and talking skills. Whenever possible, children will be grouped with others of a similar ability for listening and talking activities and, where necessary,
using a variety of differentiated approaches and resources including staff.

- A wide range of media to talk about and listen to, including photographs, video and computer programmes, audio tapes, newspaper and magazine articles and real performances, visits and visitors to school will be offered.
- Listening and talking should also indicate exposure to local dialect, the Scots language and Modern Languages.
- Develop the pupil's ability when talking and writing to choose a style of language appropriate to purpose and audience.
- Encouragement, praise and appropriate rewards should be offered to those children who are, and are trying their best to be, active talkers and listeners.
- Capitalise on the child's experience of family, school, local community and the wider world as opportunities for language activities and language development.

Teachers can make the skill of active listening really important in the classroom by:

- avoiding repeating what children say
- expecting others to respond;
- devising tasks which require all children to contribute what they know;
- not repeating instructions;
- sometimes speaking quietly;
- insisting children respond to the last speaker;
- ensuring children answer the question they are asked;
- encouraging children to speak audibly.

“The development of literacy is an integral part of communication during the learning and teaching process. Teachers of all subjects give instructions and explain subject-specific terms. They often rephrase or give additional explanations to address misconceptions and confirm understanding. They stimulate thinking by using challenging questions. They encourage learners to respond at length to their questions, to engage in discussions with their classmates, to listen carefully and to ask questions to deepen
their understanding and extend their knowledge.”

(Literacy across the Curriculum)

Developing successful learners
Developing their skills in talking and writing enables them to develop and communicate their thoughts and opinions effectively. Language facilitates more complex thinking and learning processes. Applying literacy skills successfully through technologies allows children and young people to engage with and express themselves using different media.

Developing confident individuals
Effective communication helps children and young people to relate positively to others and interact successfully in different social contexts. Competence and confidence in talking, reading and writing are important to self-respect and are extended through the continued study of their own and other languages.

Developing responsible citizens
As they develop their abilities in their own language, children and young people learn to reflect and develop their ideas and stances. They can practise communicating their thoughts and feelings through talking and writing, and learn to consider the thoughts and feelings of other people. They can participate in discussions, help to resolve conflicts and learn to play a part in influencing decisions and actions.

Developing effective contributors
Through expressing their creativity individually or as part of a group, children and young people can contribute to the life of their school and community through, for example, writing and sharing their stories and poems. Effective language and literacy skills enable young people to contribute to developing creative and enterprising ideas and communities. As they develop an awareness of audience and register, they can learn to communicate successfully in ways which are appropriate for different situations.

“Skills in listening and talking provide the foundation for the development of
literacy and language skills. To emphasise this, and to show the important links that are made between talking and listening, reading, and writing across the curriculum, many of the experiences and outcomes are similarly worded. The framework takes account of the importance of literacy and language skills in the development of thinking and learning.”

(Curriculum for Excellence)

Programmes of Study

Teachers should provide opportunities to develop Listening and Talking in the classroom through:

- Cross-curricular activities and contents e.g. Drama, PSD, Problem Solving, Environmental Studies etc.
- Listening centre activities
- Use of tape recorder to listen to and make recordings
- Organised discussions in groups with a Chairperson, Secretary and/or Spokesperson reporting back.
- Listening to and talking about a variety of texts
- Planned personal talks on a given topic
- Listening games

Infant classes:

The Classroom Environment

We will arrange furniture to enable children to explore, create and move around whilst ensuring a balance between 'quiet' and 'noisy' areas. Teachers will set up clearly defined areas of play with resources appropriate to the developing needs and interests of the children.

Children benefit from the opportunity to talk, particularly structured activities, which involves them in turn taking and presenting ideas in a coherent manner, with their audience in mind. 'Show and Tell' activities or 'News' are periods of time given over to individual children to talk for 5-10 minutes on any subject they are interested in. They may bring pictures, toys, books, etc. from home to support their talk. The class listen then a number of questions are asked based around the information given by the speaker.
The children asking the questions have to word them carefully and sensitively. Talking clearly and coherently is a difficult task for some children, particularly if they are in the habit of one-word replies or shakes/nods of the head.

Staff will discuss and agree appropriate names for each area with the children and label the areas clearly. It is important to set up role-play situations where teachers actively participate so that children can hear the language used in different contexts.

“Children and young people need to spend time with stories, literature and other texts which will enrich their learning, develop their language skills and enable them to find enjoyment.”

(Curriculum for Excellence)

We will provide props to support role-play and use outdoor play areas as part of the learning environment. A listening centre will be a feature of our rooms. ICT is recognised as an important part of collaborative learning.

**Social Conventions**

Children will learn how to develop friendships, have conversations, give and receive information, share materials and ideas and show respect and consideration as they interact with others.

The following experiences will assist children to develop appropriate and effective social conventions.

**Conversation**

Informal conversations will model social courtesies and conventions, for example, greetings, enquiries, turn-taking, responding, and non-verbal communication.

Structured conversations will involve children in purposeful conversation by introducing topics, displaying pictures, telling stories etc.

Partner work will be used to model appropriate interactions thus providing
opportunities for children to complete tasks together.

Talking partners encourages children to share ideas and answers with a range of different partners but teachers will need to model how to interact in these situations.

Group discussion with teacher guidance, where appropriate, will encourage children to listen attentively, look at the speaker, make contributions and respond to others. We must also provide opportunities to talk in groups in a range of different contexts. Children will speak and behave in an appropriate manner, discuss class rules and use role-play scenarios.

Our visits and trips within the school, local area and local community are an important part of talking and listening. Children must have opportunities to respond to a variety of language styles. These strategies encourage language development through discussion, giving descriptions, sharing information, comparing, recalling and reporting.

**Middle Stages:**

Pupils will be enabled to:

- participate in talking and listening in every area of learning;
- listen to, respond to and explore stories, poems, songs, drama, and media texts through the use of traditional and digital resources and recreate parts of them in a range of expressive activities;
- listen to, interpret and retell, with some supporting detail, a range of oral and written texts;
- tell their own stories based on personal experiences and imagination;
- listen to and respond to guidance and instructions;
- take turns at talking and listening in group and paired activities;
- take part in a range of drama activities to support activity based learning across the curriculum;
express thoughts, feelings and opinions in response to personal experiences, imaginary situations, literature, media and curricular topics and activities;

present ideas and information with some structure and sequence;

think about what they say and how they say it;

speak audibly and clearly, using appropriate quality of speech and voice;

devise and ask questions to find information in social situations and across the curriculum;

read aloud from a variety of sources, including their own work, inflecting appropriately to emphasise meaning;

**Upper Stages:**

Pupils will be enabled to:

listen and respond to a range of fiction, poetry, drama and media texts through the use of traditional and digital resources;

tell, re-tell and interpret stories based on memories, personal experiences, literature, imagination and the content of the curriculum;

participate in group and class discussions for a variety of curricular purposes;

know, understand and use the conventions of group discussion;

share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view and use evidence or reason to justify opinions, actions or proposals;

formulate, give and respond to guidance, directions and instructions;

participate in a range of drama activities across the curriculum;

improvise a scene based on experience, imagination, literature, media and/or curricular topics;
describe and talk about real experiences and imaginary situations and about people, places, events and artefacts;

prepare and give a short oral presentation to a familiar group, showing an awareness of audience and including the use of multimedia presentations;

identify and ask appropriate questions to seek information, views and feelings;

talk with people in a variety of formal and informal situations;

use appropriate quality of speech and voice, speaking audibly and varying register, according to the purpose and audience;

read aloud, inflecting appropriately, to express thoughts and feelings and emphasise the meaning of what they have read;

recognise and discuss features of spoken language, including formal and informal language, dialect and colloquial speech.

**Resources:**

Perhaps more than any other this is an area of the curriculum that cannot be resource led, as by far the bulk of the work done in this area will be determined by the focus of other areas of the curriculum.

We do however have some resources specifically developed to encourage talking and listening activities in our classrooms. This includes - Listening Centres.

**Assessment**

Teachers use a variety of assessment methods, depending on what is to be assessed. These include observing activities, discussing events with pupils. Pupil self-assessment has a place; it is valuable for its motivating effect and for the insight it offers pupils on how to improve.

"Independent learners have the ability to seek out and gain new skills, new knowledge and new understandings. They are able to engage in self-
reflection and to identify the next steps in their learning. Teachers should equip learners with the desire and the capacity to take charge of their learning through developing the skills of self-assessment."

(Assessment is for Learning)

The following criteria should be considered when assessing childrens' talk ability to:

- make themselves understood by others
- use language including gestures and intonation to convey meaning to others
- ability to adapt the way they talk to a variety of situations
- use appropriate vocabulary in a variety of situations
- listen to and allow others to have a chance to talk
- recall and communicate past experiences
- initiate ideas
- consider others' ideas
- reshape their own ideas and thoughts
- argue, discuss, debate and disagree
- summarise their or others' ideas and arguments
- reach a consensus of thought
- reflect and review situations.

In order to assess talk teachers must look for evidence by:

- sampling talk over a period of time
- providing a wide range of contexts for talking
- allowing for unplanned contexts
- gathering evidence which produces an adequate profile of the class

**Conclusion**

This statement of policy has been agreed and accepted by all staff at Hamnavoe Primary School in April 2010 and is intended to show parents and visitors what we achieve and how we do it.