

Year 4

The learner

At the start of Year 4, the majority of children are rapidly gaining confidence and fluency in literacy and mathematics. They are now securely established in Key Stage 2. The end of Year 3 assessment profile provides a clear benchmark of their attainment in literacy and mathematics. This, together with ongoing teacher assessment, informs planning and teaching across the broader curriculum. The profile enables teachers to identify and plan how to address any gaps in learning. Helping children to recognise their progress maintains their enthusiasm and motivation. Giving children increasing opportunities to make choices and to justify their decisions builds their sense of independence over the year and promotes their responsibility as learners. Year 4 teachers need to plan opportunities for children to link their learning in literacy and mathematics to practical experience and to learning in other curricular areas. The home-school link continues to play a key role and homework helps to secure past or ongoing learning, or prepares children for the next steps in learning.

Effective daily literacy and mathematics teaching provides new learning, consolidation through practice and opportunity to use and apply their learning to solve problems and pursue enquiries. In Year 4, for the majority of children, technical skills in reading and writing and their recall and mental calculation skills in mathematics are becoming more automatic. These learners can access a wider range of fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts independently. They rely less on adult choice and suggestion. Control over literacy skills enables them to develop their personal preferences in reading and writing in and out of school. As children's knowledge, skills and confidence grow in mathematics, they begin to identify more general patterns and rules. They begin to understand when and how they can use them to simplify calculations and reduce the steps needed to reach a solution.

Year 4 children extend their understanding of all text-types through personal response, while at the same time becoming aware of linguistic features, text organisation and authors' style. Most children can identify and make notes on the main points of sections of text and identify how different texts are organised. They can infer characters' feelings in fiction and discuss consequences in logical explanations.

As in reading, Year 4 is marked by growing confidence, control and fluency in writing fiction and non-fiction. Children are aware of features that writers use to provoke reactions in readers and they have gained confidence in selecting forms of writing for different audiences and purposes. They have begun to use success criteria in evaluating their own writing.

Going into Year 4, most children have a good understanding of place value. They begin to make connections in mathematics, understand and use the inverse relationships between the operations and derive and recall a wide range of number facts. They are becoming more secure in using mental and informal written methods of calculation for all four operations. Children construct equivalent number sentences that help them simplify calculations.

Children use and apply what they know about number, shape and measurement when solving one-step and two-step problems and the majority become more confident in discussing and explaining their ideas and solutions. Children recognise how properties of shapes can be used to identify what is similar, identical or different about them. They are able to draw on a wider set of skills to organise and represent information and to interpret data presented in tables and charts. As children's knowledge, skills and confidence grow they begin to identify more general patterns and rules.

Children's use and application of mathematics and evaluative skills in literacy provide opportunities to review how successfully they are acquiring the key aspects of learning identified in *Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years*.

Speaking and listening

In Year 4 speaking and listening, as well as being critical skills in their own right, continue to form the foundation of reading and writing skills and of the development of mathematical thinking and ideas across a broad and rich curriculum. Carefully planned collaborative group work provides social opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills in a structured context, allowing children to experience different roles as they work cooperatively on tasks and reflect on the ground rules for sustaining talk and interactions.

In Year 4 most learners are beginning to understand that people can hold alternative viewpoints, and to experiment with looking at the world through someone else's eyes. They can explore how talk varies according to different contexts, purposes and audiences in drama and role-play and in different media. They can compare the different contributions of music, words and images, for example through watching performances and short extracts from TV programmes.

Seeing, listening to and speaking about mathematics are key aspects of learning and teaching in mathematics. Oral and mental work continue to help children to rehearse and sharpen their mathematical skills. The use of models and images to represent situations and structures and to support methods and thinking all provide a context for sustained mathematical discussion. Teachers plan opportunities for more sustained discussion in groups and with the whole class to exemplify use of vocabulary and language, and to promote thinking, explanation and reasoning skills.

When working in groups, children can take different roles and use language appropriate to those roles. They can make effective use of time and resources to secure effective group working, for example by sharing tasks, checking on progress and amending plans. In Year 4, children create roles showing how behaviour can be interpreted from different viewpoints, and they develop scripts based on improvisation, exploring these differing feelings and viewpoints. Speaking and listening activities, drama and role-play allow children to create a sense of community and shared experience. They continue to support reading and writing and the development of mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills in all curricular areas.

Literacy

The reading curriculum in Year 4 must be soundly based on a wide range of high-quality fiction, poetry and non-fiction and provide opportunities for children to apply their developing reading skills appropriately.

Teachers continue to plan to teach reading skills and comprehension explicitly through shared, guided and independent reading. A planned read-aloud programme continues to support independent reading and introduces children to a range of genres they may not choose for themselves. At the same time, children need many opportunities to choose their own books and other reading materials to develop personal tastes in text-types and authors. Teachers continue to make reading relevant, exciting and pleasurable as well as demonstrating its vital functional use in all aspects of life. They plan frequent opportunities for reading in literacy lessons, for cross-curricular purposes and outside school. In Year 4, as well as listening to teachers and other adults read, for example on CD, children need time to read silently for extended periods to develop fluency and stamina.

When securely based in evidence from the text, personal and analytical responses work together to deepen understanding. Children need to be aware of the reading skills required for different texts, for example navigating a website, following instructions or reading a novel, and how to vary them consciously to suit different purposes. The Year 4 reader needs to develop the ability to access and use a range of resources to find information and answers to formulate questions, deciding which are helpful and trustworthy and which to treat with caution or put aside.

For the majority of children, the balance of attention in reading will have fully shifted from decoding words to comprehending subject matter. Children's grasp of phonics by the beginning of Year 4 is so secure that they can decode many unfamiliar words sufficiently rapidly for the comprehension of the

sentence they are reading not to be disrupted. In the course of the year they decode words that are not in their spoken vocabulary and make sensible deductions about their meaning from their structure within the context of the sentence. This opens up the possibility of a limitless expansion of their vocabulary through reading.

Some children in Year 4 are still insecure with reading and continue to need support in learning skills and strategies and in maintaining interest and enthusiasm. Wanting to read is important as well as learning how to do it. As in Year 3, listening to high-quality texts, guided reading and targeted intervention programmes are essential elements for this group. It is vital to maintain the interest and motivation of struggling readers, giving them access to texts well beyond their own reading ability. Including non-fiction regularly helps learners to understand and internalise text organisation and exposes them to the linguistic features of explanation, discussion and persuasive texts. It helps the transition from writing based largely on spoken, personal language to the more formal style introduced in Year 4.

Talking, first-hand experience, listening to the teacher reading aloud and personal reading all provide the foundation for writing, which needs to be firmly located in a relevant, motivating context. Teachers emphasise the purpose and audience for all forms of writing. They encourage children to be experimental and adventurous and, wherever possible, give them choice and control over the content for writing.

Talking and oral rehearsal are still essential planning skills for writing in Year 4. Reading as they write is now an established skill, enabling children to check for meaning as they compose, adapt and make changes as they go along.

Narrative writing develops both in length and in structure, using good models from personal reading and stories read aloud. Clear chronological stages begin to be organised into paragraphs. Learners are increasingly using ambitious vocabulary and varied sentence construction to engage the reader. They create realistic or imaginative settings for stories, developing character through action and dialogue, and deliberately create effects such as suspense or foreboding. With an increasing awareness of others' viewpoint, the Year 4 writer is conscious of how vocabulary and grammatical choices affect the reader. Their word choices show more careful selection, for example through use of more appropriate or effective adjectives.

In Year 4, non-fiction writing continues to develop through recounts and reports and extends into explanations, persuasive and discussion texts. Children use some elements of formal, impersonal writing. Controlling structural organisation of non-fiction text-types through paragraphs and devices such as headings and subheadings is a major task for Year 4. At the same time, learners are mastering internal organisational features such as tense, pronoun agreement and connectives, which guide the reader to clear understanding of information, argument or point of view. They are becoming confident in using connectives and subordination in order to show why, when or where something happened. As children learn to use a variety of complex sentences, punctuation using commas within sentences develops. They begin to use the possessive apostrophe accurately.

Year 4 spelling is marked by increasing accuracy of high frequency and phonically regular words and the ability to apply a range of strategies to unfamiliar words. When spelling unfamiliar words with long vowels, children enter Year 4 with sufficient information to make an accurate choice, and for many fairly common words will correctly decide, on visual appearance, between two alternatives. They distinguish between the spelling and meaning of common homophones. By the beginning of Year 4, children have had a lot of practice in reading and spelling verbs with the inflected endings *-s*, *-ing* and *-ed* and plural nouns. These will need further revision in Year 4 and be extended to include verb stems ending in *y*, for example 'marry', 'married'.

Children use a neat, joined and legible handwriting style both in dedicated practice sessions and consistently across the curriculum. Teachers demonstrate and expect accurate spelling and punctuation, combined with legibility, modelling these three technical aspects of writing as a major aid

to meaning. Children use a range of computer-generated fonts and type sizes and continue to work towards increasing speed and accuracy in typing. ICT should be used for drafting and revising as well as producing a finished piece.

Further guidance and support on planning to meet the needs of Year 4 learners in literacy can be found in the planning section of the electronic Framework.

Mathematics

In Year 4, children solve increasingly complex word problems and, where appropriate, use a calculator to do so. They identify the operations to use, record them using symbols in number sentences and talk about their methods and their solutions. Most children learn how mathematics is used to represent real-life problems and situations which can then be solved as a mathematics problem with the solution checked by presenting and interpreting it in the original context. Links to other curriculum areas and to out-of-school contexts demonstrate the role of mathematics as an important and valuable problem-solving tool.

Children are becoming more aware that problem solving often involves them in making informed decisions about the number sentences, statements, diagrams or images they can use to represent the problem, and which are then used to solve the problem. They suggest a line of enquiry and discuss how to approach it, collecting, organising and interpreting information to find solutions. They report solutions orally to other children and in writing, using diagrams and pictures that illustrate their reasoning and support their explanations. Teachers give children sufficient structure to help them to organise their ideas, thinking, solutions and explanations. With practice, children begin to take on more responsibility for organising and planning their activities in groups, and become more confident at discussing and sharing their approaches and methods.

Children generate number sequences given the start number and the whole number step size. They develop their knowledge of place value to include numbers with one and two decimal places. They meet negative numbers, order them and place them on a number line. Children identify equivalent fractions using practical resources and diagrams. They find unit fractions of numbers and quantities and identify pairs of fractions that total 1. Children use the vocabulary of ratio and proportion to describe the relationship between two quantities. Teachers provide children with a good balance of practical, oral and written work involving whole and part numbers so that children become confident with the important concepts underpinning number and the symbolism involved in representing these numbers.

Year 4 children derive and recall addition and subtraction facts that involve two-digit numbers. They use their knowledge to derive doubles and halves, the sums and differences of pairs of multiples of 10 and 100, and begin to apply this work involving 1000s. Children recall multiplication tables to 10×10 and derive the associated division facts. They use the vocabulary 'multiple' and 'factor' when describing relationships between numbers. Children use their knowledge of number facts to calculate mentally. They develop and refine efficient methods of calculation for addition and subtraction and written methods to support multiplication and division. Teachers secure children's recall skills and their mental and written methods of calculation through demonstration and discussion. They give children regular and frequent short periods of practice and consolidation. Teachers introduce children to the skills needed to use a calculator efficiently to carry out calculations involving all four operations.

Children draw and classify polygons. They recognise and use line symmetry. They visualise common 3-D objects from 2-D drawings and make their nets. Children know that angles are measured in degrees and that one full turn is 360° . They compare and order angles less than 180° . Teachers develop children's use of language of shape, direction and position, generating situations and activities where children use the eight compass points and describe the position of squares on a grid.

Children read partially numbered scales more accurately. They choose and use standard metric units to measure, using decimal notation to record. Children draw and measure the perimeters of rectangles

and find the areas of shapes made up of rectangles by counting squares on a grid. They read times and interpret and calculate time intervals.

Children use data they collect to answer questions, making more sophisticated use of pictorial representation and ICT. They understand that changing a step size on a scale, a pictogram or a bar chart changes the diagram and they begin to identify when a scale is inappropriate for the data they are representing. Teachers identify contexts in other subject areas where children can apply the skills of measuring and data handling and help them to recognise the role that mathematics plays across the curriculum.

Embedding key aspects of learning

In Year 4, thinking, communication and social skills continue to develop through literacy and mathematics. For example, reading and writing narrative and poetry develops skills in questioning, reasoning, evaluating and empathy. In mathematics the majority of children use their reasoning skills to identify and use patterns and relationships in numbers and shapes and to investigate a general statement, testing examples to determine whether they do or do not satisfy the statement. They describe shapes and solids, extending their use of vocabulary and language to do so. Literature expands self-awareness and often supports children dealing with difficult feelings in themselves and others. Non-fiction reading and writing develops clarity and precision of expression.

Children develop enquiry, information processing and communication skills as they retrieve information from a wide range of texts, including ICT, graphic and multimodal texts. They learn how to locate information across texts, and plan how to present it effectively, orally or in writing, for a specific audience. In mathematics, children decide what information they need in order to answer a question, and collect data which they organise, present and analyse. They interpret data from different sources and presented in different ways.

Children use texts as evidence, applying their own knowledge and experience to interpret and understand them. They continue to develop the ability to evaluate the usefulness of texts for specific purposes. Evaluating other people's writing provides children with tools to judge the effectiveness of their own.

Speaking, listening, reading and writing promote creative thinking by providing opportunities for children to make connections and to see relationships. They encourage children to visualise the past and to project into the future. They open up ideas and real and imaginary worlds to explore, with endless possibilities.

During Year 4 children develop a greater understanding of how they learn and most are increasingly able to set their own learning goals. Supported by the teacher, they use this self-awareness to set their own literacy challenges.

Inclusion

Children with SEN and/or learning difficulties or disabilities

Where possible through the use of appropriate access strategies and support, Year 4 children with SEN will be working towards the same learning objectives as their peers. From time to time those working well below the level of the whole class may be working towards related objectives chosen from the relevant progression strand from an earlier year.

Children who are gifted and talented

Children who are working well above the overall level of their class or group will be engaging with a range of experiences designed to broaden or deepen their learning while working on the same learning objectives as their peers. From time to time they may also be accelerating the pace of their learning by working towards objectives chosen from the relevant progression strand from a later year.

Children learning EAL

Year 4 children learning EAL will be accessing curriculum content while also developing cognitive and academic language within whole-class, group and independent contexts. Through the use of appropriate access strategies and support, they will be experiencing a level of cognitive challenge consistent with that provided for their peers. Those Year 4 children who have become conversationally fluent will continue to receive support to develop the academic language and vocabulary associated with the subject and the language and grammar used to express ideas and thinking within the subject.

Further guidance and support on planning for inclusion to meet the needs of Year 4 learners in literacy and mathematics can be found in the planning section of the electronic Framework.