

Overview of progress in language learning

The language learning that takes place at the primary stages lays the foundations of lifelong language learning. It plays a vital role in ensuring our children and young people develop the correct attitudes towards learning other languages and exploring cultures other than their own. As language learning progresses from first to second level, teachers will recognise that, as in other curriculum areas, they have to plan and provide appropriate support and challenge to meet the needs of learners of differing abilities.

As children make progress within first level in the target language (the L2), they will develop skills in listening and talking in particular. Children's confidence to 'have a go' in the target language develops most notably where teachers and learners use the target language as part of everyday classroom routines.

The skill of reading in the target language should be introduced gradually from the early stages, supported by classroom environmental print. Learners will have also experimented with writing in the target language by the end of first level. From second level therefore, the learning and teaching of the target language should include the development of all four skills. Discrete language lessons will be necessary to ensure that children have opportunities to broaden their vocabulary, expand their knowledge of grammar, improve their pronunciation skills and develop a deeper understanding of how these skills interact. This will support them in becoming confident language learners.

As teachers and learners focus on developing the knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities detailed in the experiences and outcomes, evidence of progression in language learning will be found in, for example:

- understanding and using a wider range of vocabulary
- understanding and using more complex sentences
- engaging in increasingly complex conversations
- understanding and using a wider range of texts
- deploying an increasing range of reading strategies
- producing written language with increasing complexity and accuracy.

In reflecting on what progress in language learning looks like, it is important that teachers work together across the primary stages, ideally working across their cluster schools. Clarity and agreement on what children should be able to achieve by the end of first and second level is crucial. Thereafter, teachers can plan appropriate steps for the earlier stages of language learning and incorporate a balance of activities in all four skills.

Using the Benchmarks for modern languages will support teachers' professional judgements :

<https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/ModernLanguagesBenchmarksWord.docx>

Further information on progression in language learning can be found at the following links:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/1-plus-2-languages-progress-from-first-to-second-level/>

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/progression-in-modern-languages-second-to-third-level/>

Reflective questions: making progress in language learning from first to second curricular level.

- How are you ensuring sufficient emphasis on all four skills?
- How are you including grammatical development (KAL) into your contexts for learning?
- How can you use a familiar context to practise different skills?
- Does your planning allow for recap and review?
- Are you confident in the language you will need to cover the chosen themes effectively? Where can you find further support?
- Which aspects will you cover in discrete lessons?
- Which opportunities will you take to embed and consolidate new language in other contexts and areas of the curriculum?
- How will you offer greater support and challenge to meet the needs of different ability levels?
- How will you know if children are making effective progress? How might you assess their understanding and confidence in using the language?