



West Lothian Council

West Lothian Council in Scotland, and its Education Service, is supporting schools to use the PM Writing programme as one of their key resources. PM, a complete learning, teaching and assessment package focusing on the writing process through the primary phase, is one of the Council's tools to promote literacy as part of its robust strategy to raise attainment for all.

Having first come across the programme in September 2018, Literacy and English Pedagogy Officer Marion Cochrane is using PM Writing as a framework to teach the literacy of different genres. "I was listening to a presentation by literacy expert Stephen Graham who said that 93% of secondary school learners' writing is non-fiction – I knew that this number was high, but not that high," Marion said. "This caused me to reflect on the styles of writing we were teaching in our primary schools in terms of writing across a wider range of genres. Our objective is to close the gaps and improve attainment in writing, and PM met a lot of our requirements. It provides a range of literacy genres and a bespoke format for teachers, which means that even those not particularly skilled in teaching literacy can easily deliver it."

Marion, who was formerly Deputy Headteacher at Knightsridge Primary School in Livingston, highlighted the "robust approach" that she is taking across West Lothian. "I have used PM as a useful resource within the authority, creating core writing targets based on genres, which sit alongside our West Lothian literacy progression pathways," she said. "My role includes supporting schools to raise attainment in writing and encouraging them to promote writing across the four contexts for learning throughout the year – therefore schools will be teaching different genres across the curriculum. This pedagogy sits very well with the 'Developing the Young Workforce'

agenda. It is clear that employers are looking for school-leavers to be able to write in a range of specific genres and PM writing supports learners to develop these skills."

The programme provides instruction in writing, incorporating shared, guided and independent writing and independent reading. In addition to hundreds of finely graded texts, the PM Writing collection provides teacher support through exemplar texts, teacher and student resource books, and student assessment and activity pages. PM Writing has already helped Marion's former primary school win the 'Raising Attainment in Literacy Award' at the Scottish Education Awards 2019, a success which saw Knightsridge's use of different text types highlighted by the judges. There have already been a number of benefits in using the programme in many schools across West Lothian, she said:

"PM Writing exposes learners to a wide range of vocabulary. It extends general knowledge and is very popular, particularly with boys, who enjoy the structure of the writing and clearly are able to make links with the purpose of their writing.

"Pupil voice tells us that these learners are much happier, have a richer experience, and are very quickly able to articulate the specific genre markers required in each text type."

Marion is delighted with schools' response to the PM Writing programme. **"It is proving very successful and a key element in supporting us to raise attainment in literacy across the region."**

Case study developed: July 2019