

Cawston Primary School Plan 2026-2027

September 2026

INQUIRY QUESTION:

How will our students be impacted when our school community works together to strengthen literacy through direct instruction, shared strategies, and a collective commitment to supporting every learner?

SCANNING: What is going on for our learners?

In August 2026, we reviewed year-end data to better understand the scope of our students' literacy challenges. Only 30% of students in grades 1-4 demonstrate proficiency in reading, with just 18% of Indigenous students represented in this group. Our students are below our district and provincial averages in literacy.

These numbers align with what we see in classrooms. PM Benchmark assessments show that most students are reading below, or significantly below, grade level. In practice, this means many students require one-to-one support and small-group instruction just to approach independent reading levels. Our NFRA (grade 4) data signifies that students are reluctant to persevere when reading for information. Teachers report that a large proportion of students cannot yet read independently, creating overreliance on read-aloud and guided reading. This year, at least 35% of students will receive targeted learner support to build reading fluency.

CORE assessment (grades 1-4) has helped us to identify specific areas of reading difficulty of individual students. We noted progress with all of our students when applying specific intervention strategies aligned to these areas of difficulty.

We recognize a connection between reading challenges and attentiveness. Many students enter school with lower oral language abilities, speech difficulties, and attention regulation issues. Without foundational literacy skills, academic struggles are likely to intensify from grade to grade. For these students, reading becomes harder, and school increasingly disconnected.

FOCUSING: What will have the biggest impact?

Literacy remains our focus because reading, comprehension, communication, and making meaning are foundational to all learning. This year, we will focus not only on what individual educators can do but what we can accomplish collectively. Literacy is a foundational life skill that every student must have to thrive as an adult.

DEVELOPING A HUNCH: What is leading to this situation? How are we contributing to it?

Some students transition from Grade 4 to Grade 5 at SESS without the level of preparedness needed for success in the intermediate classroom. In previous years, our school has placed greater emphasis on nurturing emotional well-being and developing social regulation skills. When we look at our own practices, we ask whether our current practices are effective to meet the needs of our diverse learners. We believe the best path forward is to pursue more effective

literacy programs, maintain increased instructional time for literacy, provide multiple access points for students, and use common strategies to support literacy, school-wide. In addition, we believe this can be enhanced from a collaborative approach. Every learner has unique needs, which may require integrating hands-on, oral, and action-based elements into literacy learning.

LEARNING: What do we need to learn?

We will strengthen our understanding of each learner's strengths, needs, and specific learning challenges. Our start of year assessments have established a baseline. Ongoing observation, collaboration, and assessment will help us to respond with effective next steps.

We will also deepen our understanding of the conditions where learners are most engaged and successful. These conditions are likely to vary across individual students and classrooms. By sharing observations, learning from one another, and responding to student needs, we can align literacy instruction with each learner's optimal conditions for learning and engagement.

Our literacy work will continue to incorporate decolonizing approaches, guided by the knowledge of our Indigenous Education Advocates. Indigenous ways of knowing will be intentionally considered in the design of our literacy time with students.