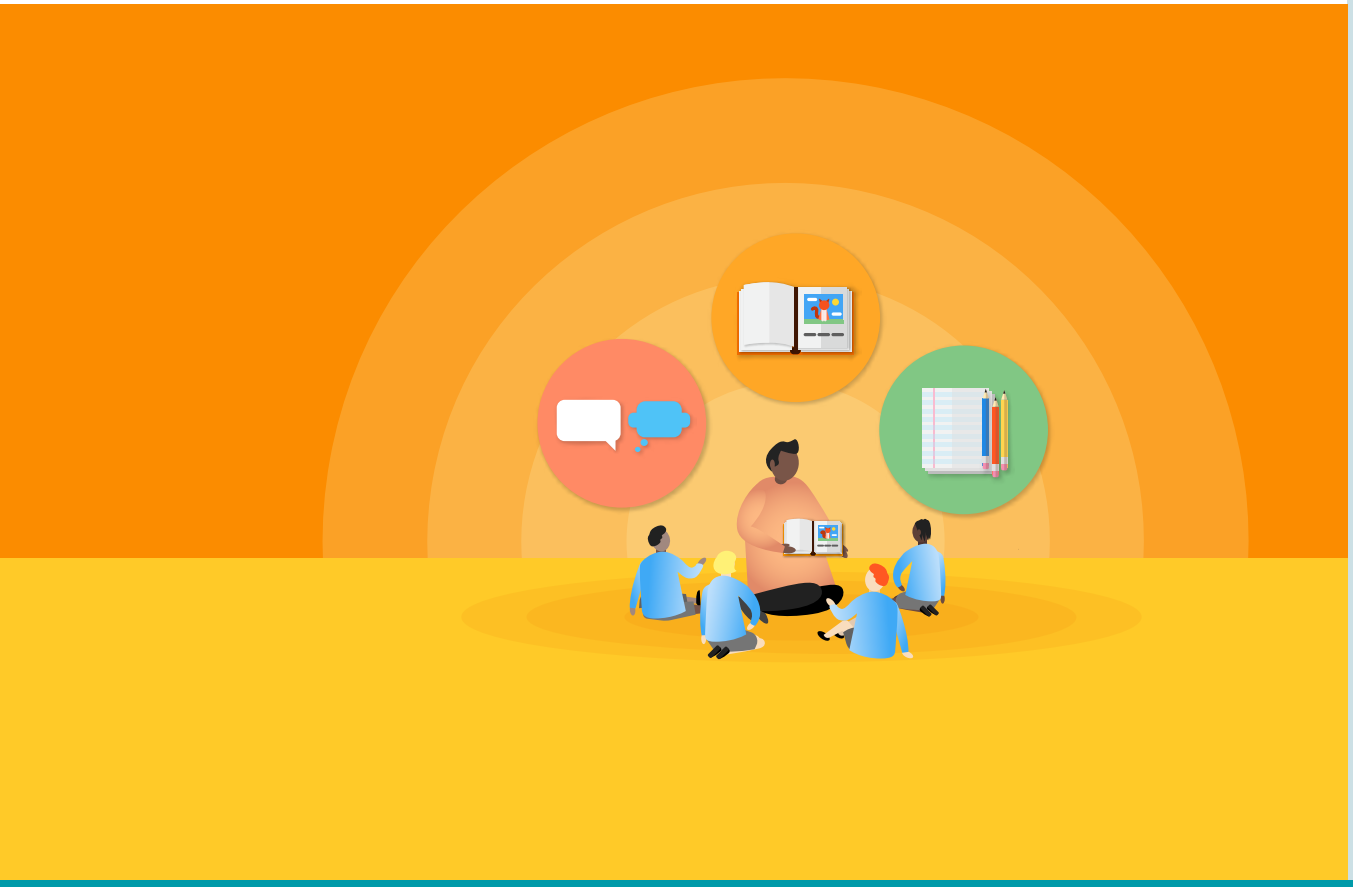
IMPROVING LITERACY IN KEY STAGE 1

Guidance Report



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First Edition

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About the Education Endowment Foundation

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent charity supporting teachers and school leaders to use evidence of what works—and what doesn't—to improve educational outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children and young people.

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FOREWORD

Good literacy skills—the ability to read, write, and communicate confidently—are foundational to learning. They unlock access to all areas of the curriculum, enabling students to discover and pursue their individual talents and interests.

Yet despite our best efforts, a child from a disadvantaged background in England is still significantly more likely than their classmates from better-off homes to leave primary school without securing their skills in reading and writing. The most recent data indicates around four in ten disadvantaged 11-year-olds—75,000 children—did not reach expected reading standards at Key Stage 2.[1] All too often, they will go on to experience difficulties in secondary school as well, leaving formal education without the qualifications they will need for further study or a secure decent job.

At the Education Endowment Foundation, we believe the best way to break the link between family income and educational attainment is through better use of evidence: looking at what has—and has not—worked in the past can put us in a much better place to judge what is likely to work in the future.

> *"75,000 children did not reach expected reading standards at Key Stage 2..."*

And one aspect of the research above all stands out: the fundamental importance of great teaching in supporting pupils to master the skills and knowledge they will need throughout their lives.

Key Stage 1 marks a crucial stage in children's literacy development. It is during this phase that five- to seven-year-olds transition from effortful decoders, breaking down words into individual sounds, into emerging readers who are able to recognise words on sight and simultaneously comprehend them. To witness pupils beginning to grasp the joy of independent reading and writing is one of the most thrilling developments of childhood.

The EEF first published Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1 in 2016 to offer teachers and school leaders an accessible overview of the best available evidence on supporting children's literacy in this stage of primary education. We are now updating it, both to take account of the latest research—including a number of relevant EEF-funded evaluations of high-potential programmes—and also to offer teacher-led exemplifications of how its eight recommendations can be put into practice.

One aspect has not changed, however. Our aim remains to offer clear, practical, and actionable advice that is relevant to all pupils, but particularly to those struggling with their literacy. We will continue working with the sector, including through our colleagues in the Research Schools Network, to build on the recommendations with further training, resources, and partnerships.

This is a companion to our other literacy guidance reports, *'Preparing for Literacy'* (focusing on Early Years), *'Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2'* (7–11-year-olds), and *'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools'* (11–16-year-olds).

Our hope is that all this guidance will support consistently excellent, evidence-informed literacy provision for children throughout their time in school and whatever their background.

Professor Becky Francis
Chief Executive
Education Endowment Foundation

INTRODUCTION

What does this guidance cover?

This report is part of a series of four guidance reports that the EEF has produced on the theme of language and literacy. It focuses on pupils between the ages of five and seven in Key Stage 1. However, it may also be applicable to older pupils who have fallen behind their peers, or younger pupils who are making rapid progress. Separate reports cover recommendations for effective approaches for improving literacy in Key Stage 2 (age seven to eleven years), supporting language and literacy development in the early years (age three to five years), and improving literacy in secondary schools.

This second edition presents the same recommendations as the first and offers additional examples, explanations, and resources to provide direct paths of action from the evidence-based guidance to classroom practice. The recommendations represent 'lever points' where there is useful evidence about language and literacy teaching that schools can use to make a significant difference to pupils' learning. The report focuses on pedagogy and approaches that are supported by good evidence; it does not cover all of the potential components of successful literacy provision. Some will be missing because they are related to organisational or leadership issues; other areas are not covered because there is insufficient evidence to create an actionable recommendation in which we have confidence. Other important issues to consider include—but are not limited to—leadership, staff deployment and development, parental engagement, and resources.

The update now includes a vignette at the beginning of each section to support training and professional conversations about effective practice. We have also included tools and case studies to support understanding of the recommendations and how they might be put into action in schools.

The guidance draws predominately on studies that feed into the Teaching and Learning Toolkit produced by the EEF in collaboration with the Sutton Trust and Durham University.[2] More information about how this guidance was created is available at the end of the report.

> *"This second edition presents the same recommendations as the first, but offers additional examples..."*

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is aimed primarily at English Leads, KS1 class teachers, headteachers, and other staff with leadership responsibility in primary schools. Senior leaders have responsibility for managing change across a school so attempts to implement these recommendations are more likely to be successful if they are involved. Early Years and Key Stage 2 teachers will also find this guidance useful as a resource to aid their day-to-day literacy and language teaching.

It may also be used by:

- governors and parents to support and challenge school staff;
- programme developers to create more effective interventions and teacher training; and
- educational researchers to conduct further testing of the recommendations in this guidance, and fill in any gaps in the evidence.

INTRODUCTION

What support is available for using this guidance?

We recognise that the effective implementation of these recommendations—so they can have a real impact on children's learning—is both critical and challenging. Therefore, the EEF is collaborating with a range of organisations across England to support schools to use the guidance.

The Research Schools Network is a collaboration between the EEF and Institute for Effective Education to fund a network of schools and settings which support the use of evidence to improve teaching practice. The network contains early years settings, primary and secondary schools.

Research Schools work with the other schools and settings in their areas to help them make better use of evidence to inform their teaching by:

- encouraging schools and early years settings to make use of evidence-based programmes and practices through regular communication and events;
- providing training and professional development for senior leaders and practitioners on how to improve practice based on the best evidence; and
- supporting schools and early years settings to develop innovative ways of improving teaching and learning and provide them with the expertise to evaluate their impact.

More information about the Research School Network and how it can provide support on the use of EEF guidance reports can be found at: https://researchschool.org.uk

In addition, the EEF has six regional teams across the country that help foster and coordinate school improvement partnerships with local authorities, multi-academy trusts, teaching school alliances, and informal groups of schools and settings.

The EEF will also produce a number of additional resources that will sit alongside this guidance report to support practitioners to build on these recommendations and put them into practice.

If you have examples of a recommendation that has been effectively implemented in your setting, then please get in touch: info@eefoundation.org.uk

Acting on the guidance

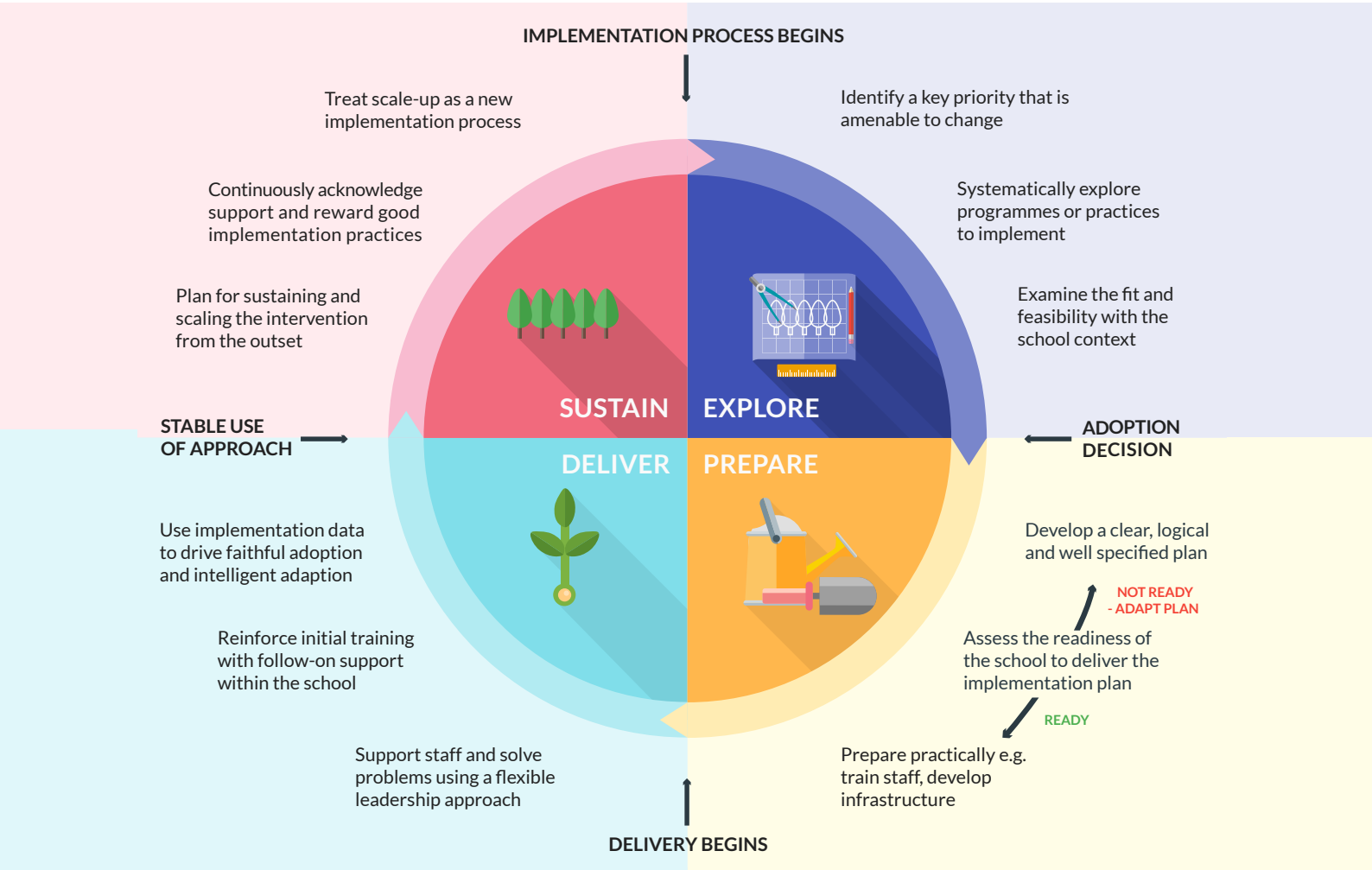
There are several key principles to consider when acting on this guidance.

These recommendations do not provide a 'one size fits all' solution. It is important to consider the delicate balance between implementing the recommendations faithfully and applying them appropriately to your schools' particular context. Implementing the recommendations effectively will require careful consideration of how they fit your setting's context and the application of sound professional judgement.

The recommendations should be considered together, as a group, and should not be implemented selectively. Further, it is important to consider the precise detail provided beneath the headline recommendations. For example, schools should not use Recommendation 8 to justify the purchase of many interventions. Rather, it should provoke thought about the most appropriate interventions to buy.

Inevitably, change takes time, and we recommend taking at least two terms to plan, develop, and pilot strategies on a small scale before rolling out new practices across the school. Gather support for change across the school and set aside regular time throughout the year to focus on this project and review progress. You can find out more about implementation in our guidance report *'Putting Evidence to Work—A School's Guide to Implementation'*.

Figure 1: The school implementation process



INTRODUCTION

What is literacy?

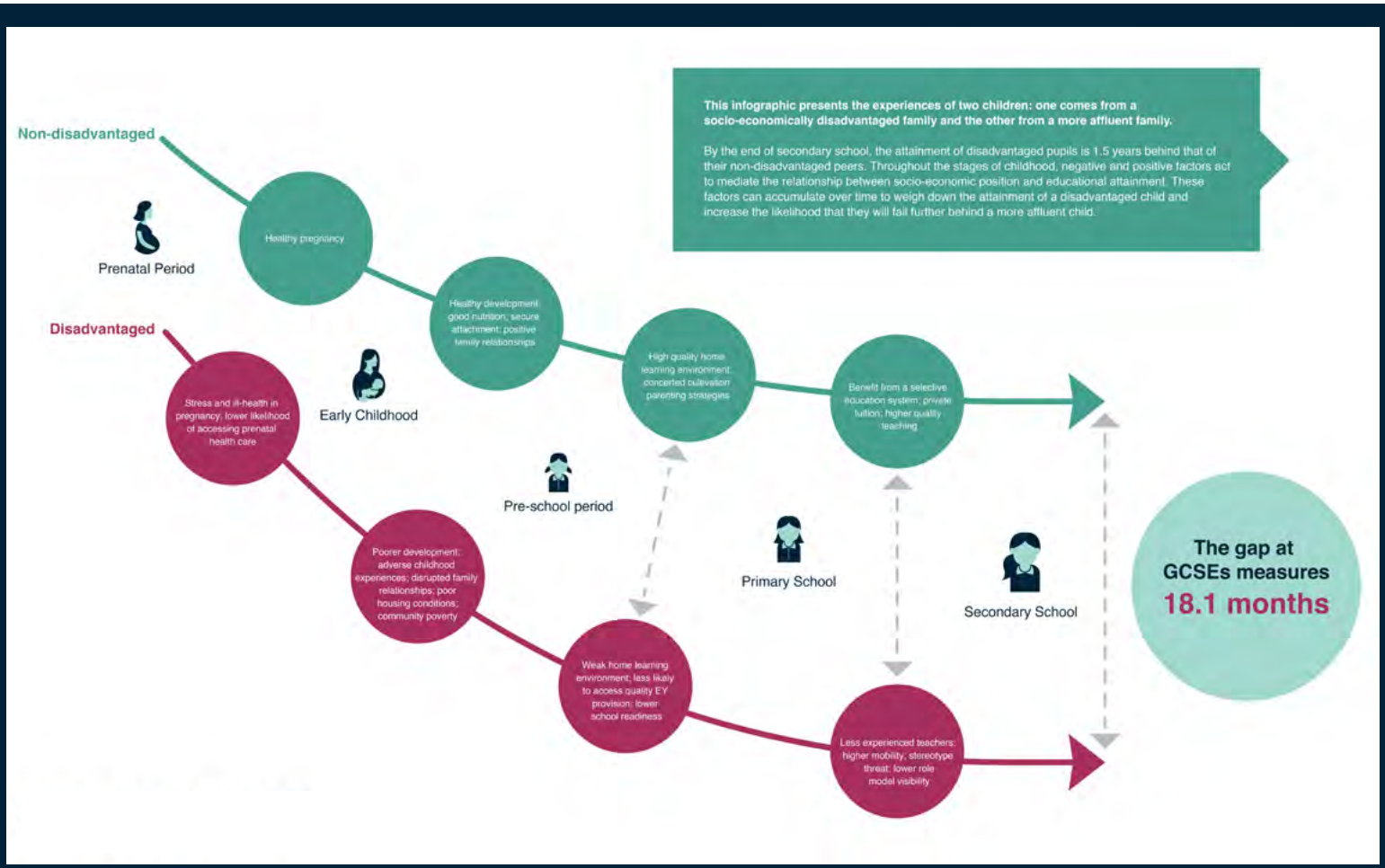
Literacy describes a range of complex skills. It includes the word-level skills spelling and word-reading and the text-level skills reading comprehension and writing composition. The overall aim of these skills being communication for an author to communicate their message and a reader to decipher and receive it.

Word reading, spelling, reading comprehension, and writing composition rely to some extent on the same underlying processes and are therefore inexplicitly linked.[3] Learning to be literate relies on pre-existing oral language and cognitive skills, with the extent of involvement of these processes differing between aspects of reading and writing and at different points during development.[4] As an educator it is important to understand the underlying skills used in reading and writing and how the processes are related, work together, and operate in isolation. This will support planning—ensuring that the right skills become the focus, assessment, so children's literacy progress can be monitored with any weaknesses identified, and teaching—so support can be adapted to the needs of the child.

Wider issues relating to the child and his or her environment that indirectly influence literary development should also inform teaching. These include child-based factors such as hearing, speech and motor difficulties, retrieval speed, metacognition, and executive function. These child factors are influenced further by the environment, such as family background, home language and literacy environment, and whether they speak, read, or write in an additional language.

The reciprocal relationship between oral language, reading, and writing can cause the gaps between children with literacy difficulties, or children from disadvantaged homes, and their more advantaged peers to grow as they move through school.[3] Teachers can play an important role in establishing children as competent readers so reading can become the child's own tool for lifelong learning.

'Determinants of the education disadvantage gap' —an infographic by the Education Policy Institute



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language

- Language provides the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised.
- High quality adult-child interactions are important and sometimes described as talking with children rather than just talking to children.
- Use a wide range of explicit and implicit approaches including planning the teaching of vocabulary as well as modelling and extending children's language and thinking during interactions and activities such as shared reading.
- Collaborative activities that provide opportunities to learn/hear language often also provide opportunities for wider learning through talk. Skills such as social awareness, relationship skills, and problem-solving are developed, as well as knowledge.

2

Use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, teaching both decoding and comprehension skills

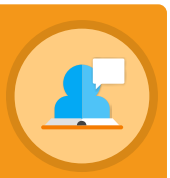
- Both decoding (the ability to translate written words into the sounds of spoken language) and comprehension (the ability to understand the meaning of the language being read) skills are necessary for confident and competent reading, but neither is sufficient on its own.
- It is also important to remember that progress in literacy requires motivation and engagement, which will help children to develop persistence and enjoyment in their reading.
- Children will need a range of wider language and literacy experiences to develop their understanding of written texts in all their forms. This should include active engagement with different media and genres of texts and a wide range of content topics.

3

Effectively implement a systematic phonics programme

- Systematic phonics approaches explicitly teach pupils a comprehensive set of letter-sound relationships for reading and sound-letter relationships for spelling.
- Consider the following when teaching a phonics programme:
  - **Training:** ensure all staff have the necessary pedagogical skills and content knowledge.
  - **Responsiveness:** check if learning can be accelerated or extra support is needed and identify specific capabilities and difficulties to focus teaching.
  - **Engagement:** lessons engage pupils and are enjoyable to teach.
  - **Adaptations:** carefully consider the potential impact of adaptations to the programme.
  - **Focus:** a responsive approach to grouping pupils is likely to help focus effort and improve teaching efficiency.

4



Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and monitoring their reading comprehension

- Reading comprehension can be improved by teaching pupils' specific strategies to support them with inferencing and self-monitoring their understanding.
- These include:
  - prediction;
  - questioning;
  - clarifying;
  - summarising; and
  - activating prior knowledge.
- Teachers could introduce these strategies using modelling and structured support, which should be strategically reduced as a child progresses until they are capable of completing the activity independently.

5

Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and monitoring their writing

- Pupils' writing can be improved by teaching them to plan and monitor their writing.
- Producing quality writing is a complex process but a number of different strategies are likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer.
- These include:
  - pre-writing activities;
  - drafting, editing and revising; and
  - sharing.
- Teachers should introduce these strategies using modelling and structured support, which should be gradually reduced as a child progresses until the child is capable of completing the activity independently.

6

Promote fluent written transcription skills by encouraging extensive and purposeful practice and explicitly teaching spelling

- Transcription refers to the physical processes of handwriting or typing, and spelling.
- Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated. If children have to concentrate to ensure their transcription is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing.
- A large amount of purposeful practice, supported by effective feedback, is required to develop fluency. Achieving the necessary quantity of practice requires that children are motivated and fully engaged in the process of improving their writing.
- Spelling should be explicitly taught. Teaching could focus on spellings that are relevant to the topic or genre being studied.

7

Use high quality information about pupils' current capabilities to select the best next steps for teaching

- Collect high quality, up-to-date information about pupil's current capabilities and adapt teaching accordingly to focus on exactly what pupils need to progress. This approach is more efficient because effort is spent on the best next step and not wasted by rehearsing skills or content that a child already knows well.
- Teaching can be adapted by:
  - **changing the focus:** models of reading and writing, e.g. The Simple View of Reading, can be used to diagnose pupils' capabilities and select a particular aspect of literacy to focus on next.
  - **changing the approach:** if a pupil is disengaged or is finding activities too easy or too hard, adopt a different approach to teaching the same aspect of literacy.

8

Use high quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy

- Schools should initially focus on ensuring they offer high quality in-class support for the whole class. However, even when excellent classroom teaching is in place, it is likely that a small but significant number of children will require additional targeted literacy support.
- Use accurate assessment of capabilities and difficulties to ensure interventions are appropriately matched to pupils needs.
- Use one-to-one and small-group tutoring ideally involving structured interventions. There is consistent evidence the approach supports children struggling with aspects of literacy.
- Regularly review children's progress whilst they are part of the intervention to ensure the support indeed enhances their learning.

1 Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language

A class of Year 1 children are excited about the new book they are going to read that day. It is an information book about orangutans. The book will form the basis for work across the curriculum.

This is the first in a series of lessons the teacher has carefully planned to help the children learn more about the features of information texts and find out about where orangutans live, their diet, and why they are endangered. The three-week block of work will culminate in a family assembly in which the children will present their ideas about how to protect orangutans in the wild.

The teacher quickly becomes concerned that some children are losing interest and struggling to participate in class discussions about the text. She considers what she could do to develop a more inclusive experience of the book.

Questions for discussion:

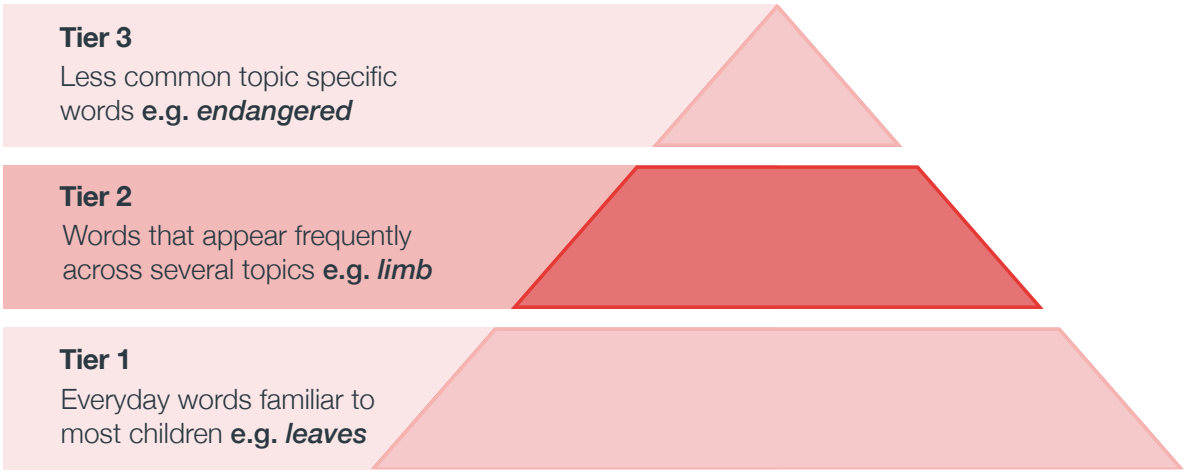
What vocabulary and background knowledge do children need when accessing a new text?

- For many children, the home literacy environment has provided a wealth of experiences which prepares them to meet a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Where this experience has been more limited, children can be supported to engage with texts through careful preparation. This might include an introduction to the setting of the text and the pre-teaching of vocabulary the child may struggle to understand.
- Teachers should consider a range of strategies which may be used to teach and address this. For example, using classroom visits and visitors; use of online materials and television programmes can support children to develop the appropriate domain knowledge.

How can we identify key vocabulary within texts, to pre-teach children, in order to ensure all children are able to access the range of texts read in class?

- Teachers often remember to pre-teach children less common (topic specific) words (Tier 3 vocabulary, see **Figure 2**). Children can have gaps in their knowledge of topic vocabulary that appears frequently across contexts (Tier 2 vocabulary). Both word types would benefit from explanation, but explicit pre-teaching activities should be prioritised for Tier 2 vocabulary.
- For example, in this book the whole class benefited from understanding the word 'endangered'. Some of the children had more limited vocabulary and needed support to understand key vocabulary such as: *'ape'*, *'limb'*, and *'tool'*.
- As we want **all** children to learn from and enjoy a wide range of texts, it is important to understand the breadth of vocabulary and background knowledge needed to fully access it.

Figure 2: Tiered systems for selecting target words for explicit instruction —adapted from Beck & McKeown (1985)



Evidence summary

Speaking and listening skills are critical foundations for reading and writing, and are also essential skills for thinking and communication. A focus on developing oral language skills is particularly important for pupils in this age group.[6]

There is promising evidence that reading comprehension can be improved with targeted teaching that improves pupils' speaking and listening skills.[7] Teachers could use approaches such as:[6]

- implicit (see **Figure 3**) and explicit activities that extend pupils' spoken and receptive vocabulary; approaches that explicitly aim to develop vocabulary work best when they are related to current topics in the curriculum as there will be more opportunities to practise using the new vocabulary (see example in **Questions for discussion**);
- modelling the process of making inferences (using information in a text to arrive at another piece of information that is implicit) by asking relevant questions aloud and answering them themselves (see **Box 1: Modelling inferencing**);
- pupils engaging in paired or group work so they can share the thought processes that lead them to make inferences (see **Box 1**); and
- pupils reading books and stories aloud and being encouraged to have conversations about them with their teacher and peers (see section on peer collaboration on page 14).

Speaking and listening activities can support pupils to practise essential skills for effective writing. Writing requires the consideration of purpose and audience, and the coordination of meaning, form, and structure. The coordination of these concepts is a complex, yet essential, skill that can be practised through purposeful speaking and listening activities for writing. For example, a teacher could encourage children to verbally articulate their ideas, which the teacher then puts into writing while explaining sentences and demonstrating how to construct them.[8]

Why oral language development matters

Communication and language provide the foundations for learning, thinking, and wellbeing. A child's core language acquisition occurs between one and four years old, with children acquiring basic **phonology**, **syntax**, and **vocabulary** during this period.[9] Evidence indicates that success in literacy relies on the secure development of language,[4] and these skills are amongst the best predictors of educational success.[9] Phonological skills at age five, for example, predict reading ability at age seven and vocabulary at age five predicts child's ability to complete the more complex tasks of reading at age 11.[10] Research also indicates that from birth to six years of age is a key time when children's capacity for metacognition and self-regulation develops and that language skills, though **'private' and 'inner' speech**, play a significant role in honing these skills.[11]

Although studies have demonstrated individual variability in language as it develops (some children starting well and dropping behind, or others starting slowly and catching up), around 30% of pre-school children with low language abilities continue to show persistent difficulties into their primary school years.[12]

Evidence suggests this rate could be higher in socially disadvantaged communities than the wider population.[13]

It is therefore crucial that approaches to supporting children's language development are offered as a central component of a school's literacy curriculum and additional targeted support is offered to those with language weaknesses. For schools that serve areas with high levels of social disadvantage, or pupils where English is an additional language, supporting children's language will be a priority.

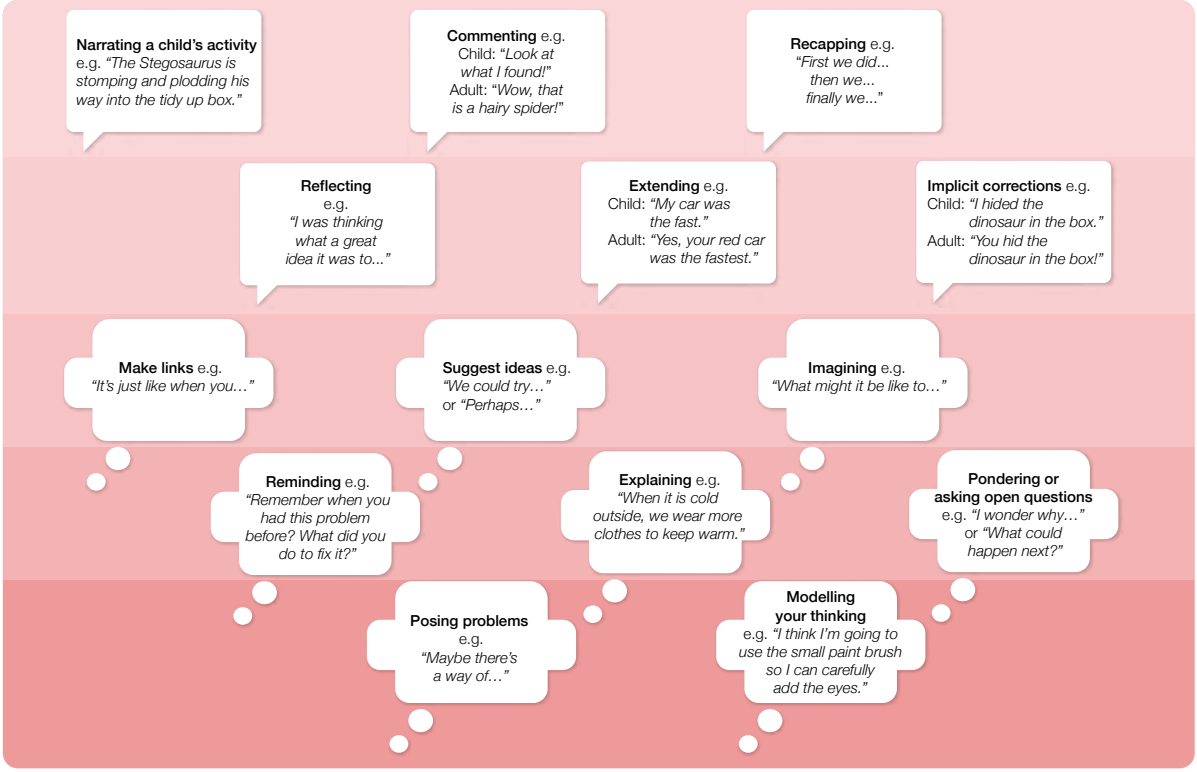
- Do you know which children only just met the Early Learning Goals for Communication and Language, as well the children who did not?
- What targeted support do you have in place to ensure their oral language skills are progressing?
- Is there support to develop all the key elements within language, such as vocabulary, phonology, narrative skills, listening and attention skills, and social communication?

Effective classrooms for supporting oral language

There is evidence that the rate at which children develop language is sensitive to the amount of input they receive from the adults and peers around them, and that the quality of this input is likely to be more important than the quantity.[12] Ensuring all children experience effective language support requires a considered approach appropriate to the needs of individual children as well as staff training for good implementation.

A review of the evidence as part of the Better Communication Research Programme[14] led to the identification of key elements and processes involved in classroom environments which enhance language development.[15] These features are presented in the Communication Supporting Classrooms (CsC) Observation Tool,[16] the effectiveness of which was assessed in 101 Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 classrooms and can be accessed on the Communication Trust website.

Figure 3: Implicit approaches for supporting language, communication, and thinking —adapted from Siraj (2005) and Fisher (2016)[18]



The CsC Observation Tool is divided into three dimensions:

- **Language learning environment:** items related to the physical environment and learning context that provide important infrastructure for language learning, for example, resources, space, and noise at transition times.
- **Language learning opportunities:** Items related to the explicit structured opportunities that are present in the setting to support children's language development, for example, pre-teaching key vocabulary, interactive book reading, language intervention groups or talk partners.
- **Language learning interactions:** Items related to the ways in which adults in the setting talk with children, for example, adult responsiveness and modelling of language.

Conversations are the ideal context for the development of children's language and thinking. Dialogic encounters can confirm a child's understanding or feelings, while others elaborate and extend knowledge. During high quality adult-child interactions there are several techniques that school staff could adopt to implicitly reinforce or enhance children's language and communication development (see thought bubbles in **Figure 3**). Similarly, there are several approaches to consolidate, extend, and promote thinking which often also help sustain an interaction for longer, increasing opportunities for language learning, but also work to support the development of self-regulation (**Figure 3**).

Maximising opportunities for language and learning through peer collaboration

The impact of collaborative approaches on learning is consistently positive.[17] However, the size of impact varies, so it is important to get the detail right. Effective collaborative learning requires much more than just sitting pupils together and asking them to work in a group; structured approaches with well-designed tasks lead to the greatest learning gain.[17]

What is collaborative learning?

Collaborative learning involves children working together in groups, focusing on a joint outcome to what they are working to achieve. This may include children working together on the same part of a task or activity or working on separate tasks contributing to a common overall outcome.

An example of a collaborative learning task, which could support language and literacy learning, might include children working with a partner, or in a group, to improvise a short narrative from a set of picture cards. As they are developing the narrative, children can be encouraged to ask and answer questions of each other. For example, if the set of cards includes a racing car, think about the character who might drive the car, where they might go, and who they could meet. It could be useful for teachers to model and scaffold the process of developing these narratives with the ultimate goal of gradually shifting the role to the children so peers can provide effective modelling.

By teaching children to become more effective in their speaking and listening through collaborative learning activities, we also provide opportunities to develop relationship skills, practise solving problems, and develop a better understanding of themselves, each other, and the world around them. These opportunities to further develop Social and Emotional Learning are highlighted in our *'Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools'* guidance report.

Box 1: Modelling inferencing

Discussion of texts provides rich opportunities for language development. Making inferences, through the deployment of reading comprehension strategies, can be modelled and scaffolded by the teacher. The ultimate aim is that children can then make and discuss inferences when reading with peers, creating a successful and stimulating environment for learning through, and about, language and communication.

2 Use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, teaching both decoding and comprehension skills

A class of Year 2 children are working in groups which have been organised using phonics assessments from a programme the school follows. The groups, who have been identified to focus on improving their skills of word reading and fluency, are reading decodable books which match their phonics skills. The children who have reached an 'end point' in the phonics programme are working to support their comprehension strategies. They are being taught to question, clarify, summarise, activate prior knowledge, and make predictions from a text which is linked to their class topic.

When the teacher brings the children together as a class to read to them, sharing a picture book which offers rich opportunities for discussion, he observes that some children are highly engaged with the text, actively using the reading comprehension strategies they have been taught; they are able to discuss the text confidently and make inferences. However, the children who have not had the same instruction appear less engaged and motivated to understand the text.

The teacher wonders if focusing on decoding before reading comprehension strategies has had an impact on the children's engagement with, and understanding of, texts they read in shared reading.

Questions for discussion

Why is it important for all children to develop reading comprehension strategies alongside decoding?

- From the earliest opportunity, reading should be presented as the process of understanding a text. As children learn the complex skill of reading, we help them recognise that when they read, they use skills of word recognition to develop reading fluency and to make sense of the text.
- Many children arrive at school with poor language and communication skills, which may be a barrier to the development of inference skills. They will need targeted support to understand texts as they learn to read.
- The perception of an 'end point' in the teaching of phonics may lead to children missing out on later important opportunities to further develop decoding with fluency and comprehension.

If a child can't read a text independently, how can they comprehend it?

- When staff read aloud to a group of children, essential listening and reading comprehension skills are developed. Skilful questioning is key to this shared story time and should constantly reinforce how the child can unlock the meaning and joy of the text.
- The teacher can also model the comprehension strategies they are focusing on. For example, *'I'm going to make a prediction…I think the little girl will…'* (see **Figure 6**).

Evidence summary

Reading requires two broad skills: word recognition and language comprehension.[20] Word recognition initially involves decoding (the ability to translate written words into the sounds of spoken language) but later progresses to more fluent word reading. Language comprehension is an understanding of the language being read.

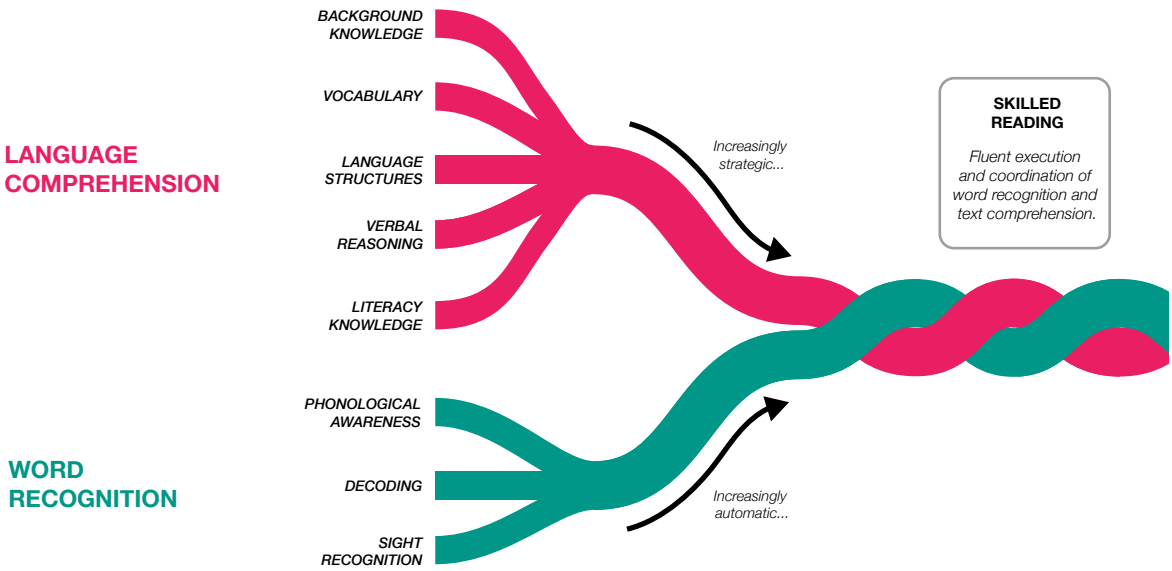
Scarborough's Reading Rope[21] (**Figure 4**) provides a useful model for reading by likening it to a rope comprised of multiple strands. Word recognition and language comprehension are the two main strands composed of several sub-strands that through teaching and practice become increasingly more strategic, automatic, and coordinated.

There is less evidence regarding precisely how these approaches should be integrated, or exactly which skills should be taught and when. A good assumption for young readers is that both skills need equal attention, as programmes (like the one highlighted in **Box 2**) where content aims to support both word recognition and comprehension find positive impacts.

When observing children's early reading it is clear they cannot apply both skills equally without support. Initially comprehension of the text read is limited by the effort needed to decode words. As children's decoding skills become more fluent, and many words are recognised whole without effortful 'sounding out', greater comprehension of the text is possible. It is at this stage successful reading comprehension becomes increasingly dependent on a child's language comprehension skills.[4] Therefore in KS1, where many children are still refining their decoding skills, time is also dedicated to developing the processes that contribute to language comprehension. This could be achieved, for example, by the teacher or another pupil taking on the role of reader while other pupils listen and focus on comprehension. Several of the components of language comprehension are discussed in Recommendation 1, such as vocabulary, background knowledge, and inferencing.

Comprehension also requires an understanding of the structure of language, which is composed of morphology and syntax. Morphology refers to the arrangement of the smallest units of words that contain meaning, such as the 'root' word, *'child'*, and the affix, *'-ish'*, which in combination make the new word, *'childish'*. Syntax refers to how words are combined and organised into phrases and sentences.

Figure 4: Scarborough's Reading Rope[21]—the many strands of skilled reading



Children also need a wide range of language and literacy experiences to develop their understanding of written text in all its forms. This should include active engagement with different media and genres of texts and a wide range of content topics. Pupils should read both narrative (for example, fictional stories and poetry) and informational texts (such as, news articles and speeches). Introducing children to a range of texts and reading experiences can support the development of pupils' reading comprehension by extending both their knowledge (for example facts, vocabulary, print concepts) and their skills (for example inferencing, phonemic awareness).[22]

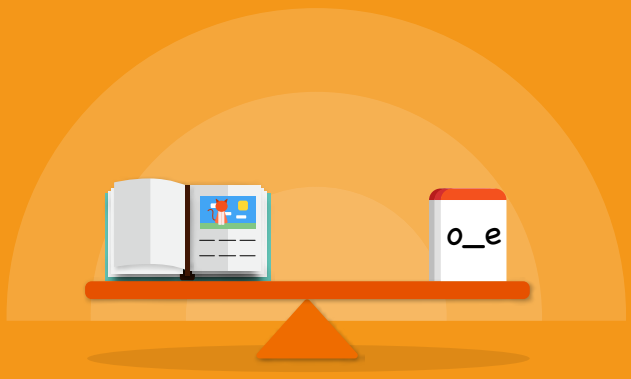
Both decoding and comprehension are necessary, but not sufficient, to develop confident and competent readers. In other words, the reading rope only highlights the cognitive and linguistic aspects of reading. It is also important to remember that progress in literacy requires motivation and engagement, both of which help children to develop persistence and resilience as well as enjoyment and satisfaction in their reading. If pupils are not making expected progress it may be that they are not engaged in the process and require a different approach that motivates them to practise and improve (see Recommendation 7).

Motivation and engagement

Teachers play an important part in motivating children to read. Being willing and eager to read influences reading attainment by increasing the amount of reading a child undertakes.[23] This may also lead to an increased confidence to engage with a wider range of genres. Undertaking more reading from a wider range of genres offers greater opportunities to develop deeper understanding of texts.

Teachers influence reading motivation by creating a culture which puts reading and book discussions at the heart of every day. The important implications for teachers' practice may include:

- demonstrating enjoyment of reading and having a wide knowledge of children's fiction; for example, a teacher can create a sense of intrigue about a book they know well by asking the children to watch out for characters or twists in the plot *'Look out … I know how sneaky this giant is!'*
- encouraging children to see books as adventures rather than tasks to complete in school; for example, when reading a story about the night sky, switching the classroom lights off and reading by twinkling light.
- giving children a sense of choice about what they read; for example, recognising children's hobbies and interests in the books available for them to read and recommend to their peers; and
- ensuring all children experience success when reading; it is vital to be aware that a negative attitude towards reading can create a vicious circle of underachievement.



Box 2: Promising project ABRACADABRA[23]

ABRACADABRA is a KS1 reading programme designed for delivery to all pupils in a class through small group work. The programme takes a balanced approach to teaching literacy as it acknowledges both 'word-level' and 'text-level' reading skills by offering phonics, reading fluency and comprehension activities based around age-appropriate texts.

In an EEF trial of the programme, teaching assistants were trained to deliver the 20-week programme to groups of three to four children four times a week, outside of core literacy provision, with sessions lasting 15–20 minutes. The trial evaluated an online version of the programme from Concordia University in Canada and a paper-based version adapted from the online version for the project by UK researchers. The results of the randomised controlled trial support the wider evidence base that a balanced approach to the teaching of reading is effective. The evaluation found positive effects for both approaches equivalent to two and three months of additional progress, with even larger impacts for pupils eligible for free school meals. Impressively, the impact on attainment was still observable a year after the intervention, with pupils in receipt of free school meals appearing to continue to reap larger benefits from the intervention. Pupils who had experienced the intervention achieved higher standards in national KS1 teacher assessments in reading and writing than children in the control group.

The small group format, the interactive nature of the sessions, the humour, and the general appeal of the resources appeared to be key to its popularity with children and teaching assistants. A further trial of both formats of the programme, due to be published soon, will test whether a scalable version delivered in a larger number of schools can produce similar results. The online edition is freely available from Concordia University.

3 Effectively implement a systematic phonics programme

At the beginning of term, a Key Stage 1 team are meeting to discuss the teaching of phonics. They have identified the training needs of new staff and planned to ensure that they work alongside experienced colleagues until they have received full training.

They have carefully analysed children's phonics assessments and used the information to decide where learning can be accelerated, or extra support is needed.

Different aspects of the programme, including strategies to achieve the highest levels of engagement and motivation, have also been discussed. There is shared recognition of the importance of delivering well-paced purposeful phonics lessons. The team often share ideas and learn from each other about how to achieve this.

The discussion has now moved on to the organisation and staffing of phonics teaching.

Questions for discussion

What should be considered when planning staffing for the teaching of phonics?

- Many programmes highlight the benefits of team teaching (teachers and teaching assistants working together) in phonics sessions. The opportunities this provides to deploy staff effectively in whole class lessons, small group, and one-to-one targeted support should be carefully considered at the planning stage.
- Whilst many teaching assistants have undertaken full training to teach phonics, qualified teachers tend to get better results when delivering phonics lessons.[24] This indicates that pedagogical awareness is a key component for successful teaching of early reading and should be carefully considered when organising the staffing of groups.

What else should be considered if children are organised in smaller groups?

- If grouping is organised according to prioir attainment, responsive grouping is a key factor in successful organisation. Regular assessment will ensure that children move between groups as appropriate to their level of attainment. It is also important to change the adult leading the groups as evidence tells us that this is a significant factor.

Evidence summary

The purpose of phonics is to quickly develop pupils' word recognition and spelling. This involves developing a child's phonemic awareness, which is their ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes (the smallest unit of spoken language), and to teach them the relationship between phonemes and the graphemes (a letter or combination of letters used to represent a phoneme) that represent them. There is very extensive evidence to support the use of a systematic phonics programme with pupils in Key Stage 1.[24]

Systematic phonics approaches explicitly teach pupils a comprehensive set of letter-sound relationships through an organised sequence. In systematic phonics programmes that use synthetic phonics approaches, this often means teaching the skills of decoding new words by sounding them out and combining or 'blending' the sound spelling patterns. The sequence is generally organised to introduce children to the most common graphemes and familiarise them with the most useful frequent pairing of graphemes in words first; *'satpin'* is a prevalent example of this, but other initial sequences are possible. It is necessary to teach these skills explicitly, but pupils should also have the opportunity to apply and practise these skills outside of phonics sessions during other reading and writing activities.[25]

Our guide *'Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning'* highlights the impact of parent-child home reading on language and literacy development and offers some approaches for supporting parents with shared reading so further practice can be undertaken at home.

Teachers could support pupils to practise by providing them with text containing words that can be decoded using the letter-sound patterns they have already been taught, or by having children write their own sentences using the letter-sound combinations taught and then reading their own and others' stories.[25] The goal is to improve the fluency (speed) as well as accuracy of pupils' decoding to the point that it becomes automatic and does not require conscious effort.

Schools should use a systematic phonics programme or approach with secure evidence of effectiveness. However, in the UK there are currently only a small number of phonics programmes that have been rigorously evaluated.[26]

A further consideration is that there are several approaches to teaching phonics systematically this including the analytic approach (which uses word groups, for example, *'pet'*, *'park'* and *'push'*), the analogy approach (which uses rimes, for example, *'night'*, *'flight'* and *'bright'*), and the highly popular synthetic phonics approach described above. Only a few studies have compared these approaches, and there is not yet enough evidence to make a confident recommendation to use one approach rather than the other.[27]

The prevalence of synthetic phonics in English schools makes studies comparing different types of systematic phonics approaches difficult.

The available evidence clearly indicates that it is important how phonics is taught, so it may help to consider the following features of effective programmes:[25]

Training—ensure all staff have the necessary pedagogical skills and content knowledge, for example, sufficient linguistic knowledge and understanding.

Responsiveness—check if learning can be accelerated or extra support is needed and identify specific capabilities and difficulties to focus teaching.

Engagement—lessons engage pupils and are enjoyable to teach.

Adaptations—carefully consider any adaptations to the programme as they may reduce its impact.

Focus—a responsive approach to grouping pupils is likely to help focus pupil's effort and improve teaching efficiency.

Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness

As highlighted in Scarborough's Reading Rope, it is well established that a child's phonological skills have a close relationship with their development of word reading. Surveys of teachers in England highlight strong knowledge of phonics (how to apply letter-sound knowledge to decode words) but gaps in understanding of phonological awareness and particularly phonemic awareness.[28]

Phonological awareness is the ability to reflect upon and consciously manipulate the sound structures of language at each level—word, syllable, and phoneme. This means phonological awareness is an umbrella term for a broad set of skills that vary in difficulty by the size of the unit manipulated (for example, syllable or phoneme) and by the judgement that is needed (for example, *'Do these two words rhyme?'* or *'What else rhymes with...?'*).

Phonemic awareness is one aspect of phonological awareness and refers to the skill of manipulating the smallest unit—phonemes (for example, isolating the initial sound *'d'* in *'dig'*). Evidence suggests weaker readers, as well as children with dyslexia, perform less well on phonemic awareness tasks.[29] Training phoneme awareness can improve word reading.[30] Teachers could use the tasks in **Figure 5** to assess children's phonemic awareness and understand their next steps.

The complexity of learning to read and spell English words

Alphabetic languages vary in their consistency between graphemes and phonemes. In languages such as Finnish, Italian, Spanish, German, or Greek the majority of graphemes represent the same phoneme in the spoken language, whereas English, unfortunately, has many inconsistencies. This means in English the spelling of a word is not always an accurate clue to how it needs to be pronounced, for example the grapheme 'a' is pronounced differently in *'cat'*, *'was'*, *'father',* and *'ball'*.

Research has highlighted that because of its complexities, the acquisition of word recognition takes significantly longer in English than in simpler languages.[31] The volume of inconsistencies means that there are many more grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPCs) and exception words to learn in English than in consistent languages. A growing body of evidence highlights a ceiling in the efficiency of explicitly learning some letter-sound relationships suggesting that those which appear most frequently should be prioritised.[32] Although many popular phonics programmes correctly focus on around 60 GPCs, some of those are included are quite infrequent. For example, *'ie'* ranks 77th, *'ew'* ranks 89th, and *'ph'* ranks 99th in their frequency in texts whereas *'a_e'* ranks 24th and *'i_e'* ranks 34th but are not taught until Year 1.[32] Focusing on the most frequent GPCs could be especially important for the 5–10% of children who find learning letter-sound relationships particularly effortful.[29]

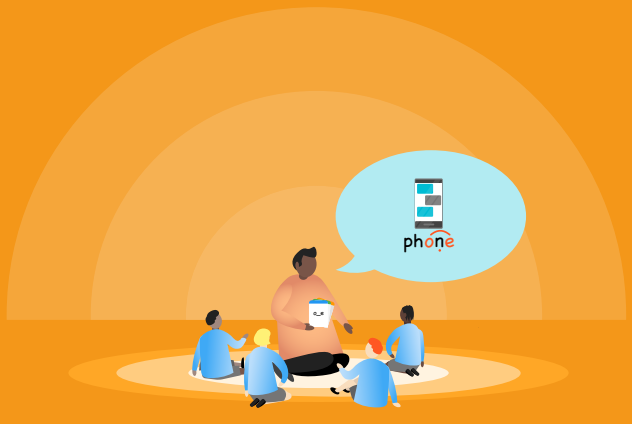


Figure 5: Phoneme awareness tasks ordered by difficulty

Task	Pupils can...	Example
Phoneme isolation	Recognise alliteration	Correctly identifies that *'cat'* and *'cot'* start with the same phoneme when also given the word *'dig'*.
	Recognise when words have the same final phoneme	Correctly identifies that *'top'* and *'cap'* end with the same phoneme when also given the word *'pig'*.
	Isolate the first phoneme in words	Gives the picture of a *'sun'* in answer to the question, *'Which picture begins with 's'?'*.
Blending	Orally blend isolated phonemes together to hear words	Says *'dad'* when given *'d-a-d'*. Phonemes that make a long sound may be easier to blend at first, e.g. *'mmmooonnnn'*, than those with a short sound e.g. *'bat'*.
	Orally blend longer words with consonant clusters	Says *'clip'*, *'sift'*, *'splat'*, *'sprint'*, when presented with their isolated phonemes. Words with consonant clusters at the beginning may be initially easier to blend than those with clusters at the end.
Segmentation	Orally segment words into their component phonemes	When given *'sit'* can hear and isolate each of the word's phonemes *'s-i-t'*.
	Orally segment longer words with consonant clusters	When given *'slop'* can hear and isolate each of the word's phonemes *'s-l-o-p'*. Words with consonant clusters at the beginning may be initially easier to segment than those at the end.
Phoneme addition	Manipulate words by adding phonemes in different locations	Adding *'c'* to the word *'am'* to create *'cam'*, or adding *'t'* to the word *'bel'* to create *'belt'*.
Phoneme deletion	Manipulate phonemes by deleting them from the beginning or end of words	Removing *'c'* from *'cup'* to get *'up'*.
	Manipulate phonemes by deleting phonemes within consonant clusters	Removing *'n'* from *'long'* to get *'log'*.
Phoneme substitution	Substitute initial phoneme with another—this would make a rhyming string	Deleting *'s'* from *'sit'* and adding *'p'* instead to get *'pit'*.
	Substitute a phoneme within a word	Deleting the short *'a'* in *'fad'* with the long *'a-e'* to get *'fade'*.

4 Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and monitoring their reading comprehension

A Year 2 class have been learning about 'keeping safe'. The teacher has given groups of children a differentiated text about a visit to the seaside. When the children have finished reading the text, they have a set of questions to answer. The questions require the children to recall information, or make inferences, from what they have read.

The teacher understands the importance of teaching reading comprehension but is not sure that the comprehension tasks are developing the children as strategic readers. She is also concerned that some children are lacking the confidence to participate in class discussions about books.

Questions for discussion

Is reading comprehension the ability to answer questions?

- Reading comprehension is the ability to make sense of the ideas expressed in a text. It is not the ability to answer certain kinds of questions.
- In providing children with simplified texts they may already be able to comprehend, if we focus on the ability to answer questions, we miss teaching the complexities of how to find meaning and understanding.

How do I develop strategic readers in my class?

- The teaching of reading comprehension relies on the explicit teaching of key strategies: Predict, Question, Clarify, Summarise, and Activate prior knowledge. When introducing these strategies, they should be modelled and practised in the classroom. This might include the teacher verbalising their own inner monologue to show the children how they make inferences from a text using questioning to dig more deeply into it. They should then be given opportunities, using appropriate texts, to practise actively seeking understanding from a text and develop their ability to make inferences. (**See Box 1.**)

Evidence summary

Reading comprehension can be improved by teaching pupils specific strategies that they can apply both to monitor and overcome barriers to understanding.[33] A number of different strategies exist and some overlap. They support children to interact in the moment with a text, to identify key points, and make inferences from what they are reading.

They include:[34]

Prediction—pupils predict what might happen as a text is read. This causes them to pay close attention to the text, which means they can closely monitor their own comprehension.

Questioning—pupils generate their own questions about a text in order to check their comprehension.

Clarifying—pupils identify areas of uncertainty, which may be individual words or phrases, and seek information to clarify meaning.

Summarising—pupils succinctly describe the meaning of sections of the text. This causes pupils to focus on the key content, which in turn supports comprehension monitoring. This can be attempted using graphic organisers that illustrate concepts and the relationships between them using diagrams.

Activating prior knowledge—pupils think about what they already know about a topic, from reading or other experiences, and try to make links. This helps pupils to infer and elaborate, ask questions to fill in missing or incomplete information and use existing mental structures to support recall.

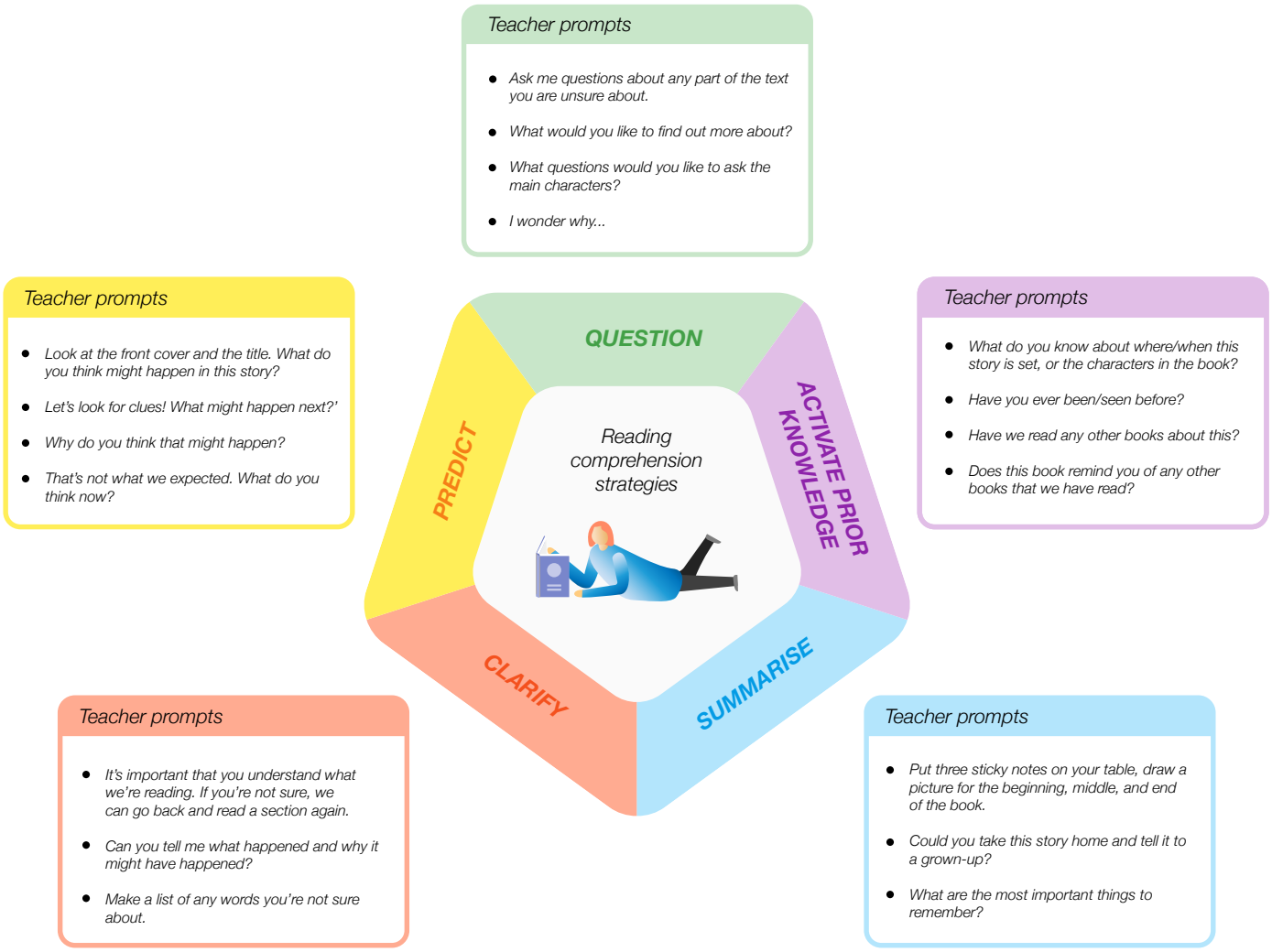
The strategies should be modelled and practised to ensure that they become embedded and fluent. For example, a teacher could model how they would attempt to understand a text using questioning.[34] Children could then practise these skills in collaborative groups with support and feedback from their teacher decreasing as pupils become increasingly effective at using each strategy (see **Box 1** in Recommendation 1). The amount of time this takes will vary according to the needs of the children, but maintaining a focus on the strategies, and evaluating their use alongside the development of background knowledge and vocabulary, will support children to become proficient readers.

The strategies can be introduced individually but pupils should also be taught when to use and how to combine strategies. The effectiveness of teaching pupils to integrate multiple strategies is well-supported by research evidence and is likely to be more effective than relying on single strategies in isolation.[16]

The use of these strategies is developed and refined as the reader learns which ones are best suited to aid their comprehension at the right time. Actively engaging with texts and monitoring their own understanding are essential as the child develops the confidence to apply reading comprehension strategies independently in their own reading. Discussions that encourage children to reflect on the strategies they used whilst reading should support ongoing refinement of their deployment.

Ultimately, the aim is for pupils themselves to take responsibility for automatically using these strategies to monitor and improve their reading comprehension.[36] Further information on supporting pupils to develop monitoring strategies is covered in our *'Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning'* Guidance Report.

Figure 6: Reading comprehension with prompts to support practice



Explicitly teaching children these strategies supports them to become strategic readers. What does a strategic reader do before, during, and after reading?

Before reading…	*During reading…*	*After reading…*
• Asks questions about the text. • Activates prior knowledge. • Makes predictions.	• Monitors understanding. • Makes connections within and beyond the text. • Makes mental models of the text. • Updates and makes new predictions.	• Clarifies understanding of the text. • Revisits and revises predictions. • Asks further questions. • Reflects on their own reading.

5 Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and monitoring their writing

An English lead has collected a set of Year 1 children's English workbooks for a book scrutiny. She notes that the children can write at increasing length and are clearly enthusiastic about the pieces of writing they are producing. During the discussion about the workbooks, the teachers talk about what is working well as the children develop as writers. The class teacher shares further examples that support the writing process, including a range of graphic organisers and annotated pictures in the children's workbooks. He also has a floor book (large whole class book) which shows examples of planning activities, including story maps and photographs from drama and collaborative work.

The teachers go on to discuss how the focus on planning and monitoring writing is supporting the children to develop as writers.

Questions for discussion

Why is it important to see writing as a process, not a single event?

- Providing children with a range of writing activities that support the organisation and development of their ideas is a positive way to engage children in writing tasks. Understanding writing as an iterative process, developing understanding about how to improve their work, is key to developing as writers.
- Teachers looking for opportunities in texts they are reading, or topics the children are enjoying, often find highly engaging contexts, which can provide real purpose and audience for children's work. Providing children with genuine purpose and audience for their writing can be highly effective in terms of motivation to write.

What scaffolds can we provide to support the planning and monitoring of writing?

- It is important that children are supported to organise their ideas as effectively as possible. This might include a simple graphic organiser which supports the child to sequence their ideas visually. It may also include a series of pictures or objects which the child would like to include in their writing.
- Whilst monitoring their writing, children may refer to classroom displays including prompts to support the content and organisation of their work.

Evidence summary

Writing is a very challenging skill to learn and there is less evidence about the most effective ways to teach writing than there is about reading. Nevertheless, access to effective writing instruction is important, as writing enables pupils to communicate, express their ideas and views, as well as opening up opportunities for success in school across the curriculum. Encouraging children to manage and monitor aspects of their writing is a key step.

A number of different strategies are likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer.[37]

Prewriting activities—engaging children in activities prior to writing that help them think of, and organise, their ideas. This can involve tasks that encourage them to remember what they already know, find out about a topic they are not familiar with, or arrange their ideas visually (for example, by using a planning tool or graphic organiser) before writing.[38] (See **Box 3**.)

Drafting, revising, and editing—helping pupils to get their ideas written down as a first draft which they can then edit and revise. (See **Box 4**.)

Sharing—instructing pupils to share, read, and edit each other's work.

Children need to be introduced to, then practise, planning, drafting, revising, and editing with feedback from the teacher and from their peers. The aim is for them to increase the fluency of these skills and techniques so that they become automatic. The teacher should provide appropriate support that models the process of writing which is gradually reduced over time so the child is ultimately capable of completing the activity independently.

Pupils also need to learn about text structure, and how texts in different genres are formed. Studies show young children benefit from explicit teaching about the structure of narrative and information texts.[39] Providing pupils with models of simple structures for different types of text can support this.

Modelling is also important as pupils progress from constructing simple sentences to being able to combine sentences with more complex grammatical structures. Teachers could model these processes, for example, by explicitly demonstrating how to combine several related, simple sentences to make more complex ones. Teachers should encourage pupils to do this on their own as they write.[40]

Working memory and writing

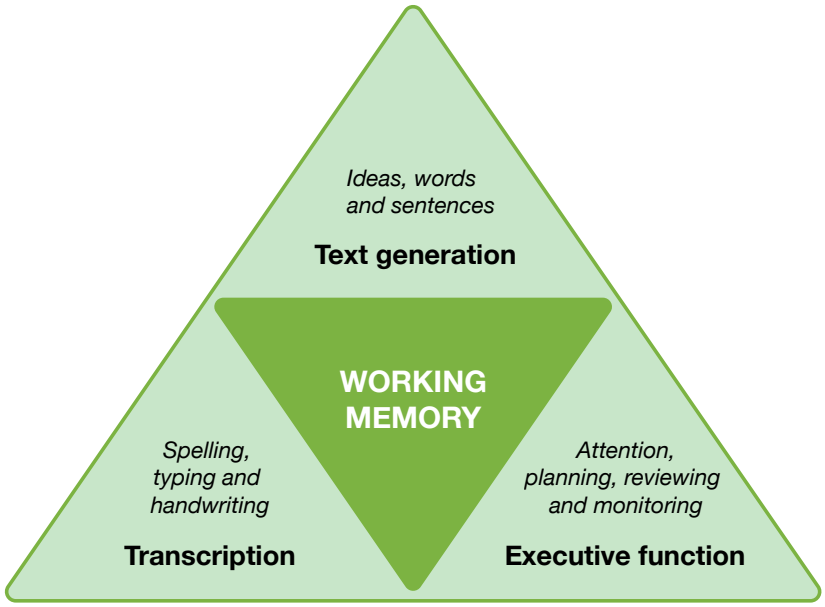
A child's capacity to plan and monitoring their writing depends on whether they have enough cognitive resources available. The Simple View of Writing[41] (**Figure 7**) highlights the key groups of skills that work together as children write:

- **text generation—**which involves thinking of ideas and using oral language skills to put those thoughts into words and sentences;
- **transcription skills—**which enable the writer to move oral language into written language; and
- **executive functions**—such as working memory, self-regulation, planning, problem-solving, and monitoring their writing.

The model places working memory in the centre, emphasising how it plays a role in enabling each of these skills to operate. Working memory is the cognitive process used when people hold information in mind and manipulate it. When writing, for example, working memory enables a sentence to be held in mind while each word is recalled or segmented and the letters are recorded on the page. Working memory has a limited capacity, therefore when children are in the early stages of writing development, they are not able to apply all the skills within The Simple View of Writing to produce high quality writing.[41]

To support children with writing composition in the classroom, teachers need to consider appropriate scaffolds as highlighted by the strategies above and within **Box 3** and **Box 4**. It is unlikely that children apply approaches like planning, editing, and reviewing spontaneously without explicit teaching and encouragement.[37] Planning is usually the first composition strategy to emerge followed by 'in the moment' monitoring, which prompts some editing to take place. Approaches like considering the audience/reader appear much later.[3] However, children may only be able to apply these strategies when spelling and handwriting require less of the child's working memory capacity.[42] Key Stage 1, therefore, is a good time to develop fluency and automatic transcriptions skills to allow children to generate high quality text. (see Recommendation 6 for how to support transcription skills).

Figure 7: Based on 'The Simple View of Writing' developed by Berninger et al.[41]



Box 3: Prewriting and drafting activities—WISE Multi Academy Trust

WISE MAT, which includes the Town End associate research school, located in the North East of England, has developed a series of prompts for Key Stage 1 children. The children are supported to develop ideas for writing verbally and are given a series of scaffolds to develop a first draft. The emphasis is on the importance of being immersed in the context of the piece. The children develop an enthusiasm to write from the 'hook' provided, and the purpose and audience are identified at the outset.

Focus	Guidance
Prewriting activities which support oracy	• Teachers provide children with a 'hook'; this links to the book being shared and builds towards something real. The hook might include a drama activity, video, object, letter, photograph, or experience—anything the children would be excited and motivated to write about. Their ideas and interests are very much considered when devising the 'hook'. • Teachers also provide children with a range of appropriate experiences to fully understand the context and acquire the background knowledge they need. The 'excellence model' is introduced by the teacher to exemplify the finished piece that the children are aiming to produce. • Identifying the purpose and audience for the piece is seen as vital at this stage. This might include the use of drama with opportunities for practise and performance.
Vocabulary and oracy development	• During prewriting activities, words are gamified, dramatised, and contextualised before being added to the working wall for children to refer to. These lessons enable children to experiment with, discuss, and use the words through a variety of meaningful activities. • Short bursts of writing build the children's confidence to use the vocabulary precisely in their writing. • Children investigate morphology and how words in their different forms can support them to vary both verbal and written sentence structures. The working wall in the classroom reflects the context for the writing.
Identifying key text features	• The teacher demonstrates reading the 'excellence' model as a writer. They show how to scour the model for key features including genre and specific vocabulary, figurative language, punctuation, and grammatical devices. The effect of these features on the reader is consistently explored. • At this stage, the teacher and children work together to co-create the 'Writer's Toolkit' (success criteria) which will be displayed on the working wall. • The teacher continues to build an understanding of the genre and how writers deliberately influence the reader.
Teacher modelling and shared writing	• A further stimulus is introduced. This may include a video clip, animation, or a photograph. As they write, the teacher models their thought processes and choices by articulating them aloud. Choices are explained and justified in relation to the desired effect upon the reader. They model how to include aspects of the Writer's Toolkit to develop a first draft in the same genre as the model. • As the children begin their drafts, the teacher provides on the spot feedback relating to the Writer's Toolkit. The focus at this stage is very much about recording ideas in a way that supports the sequencing of the piece. • To develop resilience, the teacher chunks the drafting process into manageable sections with each part building towards the final piece. After each chunk, the teacher models explicitly how to make edits and revisions. This might not be a complete piece of writing and is not a reworking of the excellence model. • Having completed the immersive prewriting activities, and with a clear understanding of the purpose and audience for their writing, the children are ready to continue drafting revising and editing their writing more independently.

Box 4: Drafting, revising, and editing—Charles Dickens Primary School

Key Stage 1 teachers at Charles Dickens Primary School, part of our Research School Network, model the process of drafting, revising, and editing writing. The children are encouraged to make ambitious choices in their work; resilience is developed by chunking the writing tasks up to manageable sections of writing. This encourages children to develop their understanding of writing as an iterative process. The purpose and audience for the writing is communicated clearly throughout the process.

Focus	Guidance
Scaffolded support to produce a written piece from a plan.	• At this stage, teachers and children are encouraged to build on the foundations laid in prewriting activities. • Teachers use a model text, of the type children are writing, to ensure they are clear about what they are aiming for. Teachers model turning a plan into a piece of writing based on the key features identified. • To encourage resilience, teachers break the plan into small sections, modelling one section at a time. • Whilst writing, the children are encouraged to use word banks, sentence stems, and scaffolds to support ambitious choices and sequencing in their work. • Where possible, the scaffolds are dual coded so there is a visual cue as a well as a language one.
Scaffolding to support the revising process.	• Having produced their first draft, children are shown examples that highlight lots of revisions and edits; children are encouraged to understand writing as an iterative process. • Teachers exemplify what a 'strong' model is and compare to a 'weak' model. This supports discussion about the components of the stronger model and how they could be included in the children's own work. Teachers then model revising the 'weaker' piece before children apply similar strategies to their own writing. Whilst undertaking this, the children are provided with a selection of ideas which they can choose from to revise their piece. They are also asked to return to the ideas and word banks generated in the prewriting phase and to integrate them where appropriate.
Feedback, including peer marking, to support the editing process.	• Peer marking and sharing of work is used to improve ideas. Drama is also used to add detail to ideas and suggestions for improvement. • Having completed the writing, children are encouraged to share their work with the audience identified at the beginning of the process. This may include presenting it on an online platform or taking a photocopy home to share with family. The opportunities to share the final pieces of work are taken wherever possible as children develop as writers and look to celebrate their achievements in every piece of work.

6 Promote fluent written transcription skills by encouraging extensive and purposeful practice and explicitly teaching spelling

Children in a Year 1 class are regularly given a set of spellings to take home to learn. The teacher has asked the children to use the 'look-say-cover-write-check' strategy to help them. The children can say the strategy confidently, each child also has a copy of it in their School Planner.

Having initially felt very positive about the confidence with which the children could talk about the strategy, the teacher is becoming increasingly concerned that it is not providing the support that is needed.

To help the children become more confident and accurate with their spelling, the teacher is now reflecting on the changes that may have a positive effect.

Questions for discussion

What place should spelling have in the teaching of fluent transcription skills?

- The notion that spelling can be 'caught' has been superseded by the understanding that to develop and sustain children's ability to spell, they need direct systematic instruction. Spelling, as a key transcription skill, must be explicitly taught, rather than simply tested.

How can the 'look-say-cover-write-check' strategy be taught to maximum effect?

- Children need to be taught how to use strategies such as the 'look-say-cover-write-check' technique. This includes modelling and scaffolding what the child should look for at the 'look' stage. To achieve this understanding, the teacher modelling the process, articulating each step, is a powerful support.
- Unlocking the process of the technique is critical to maximise the impact on the child's ability to spell confidently and accurately.
- For example, this might include drawing on children's knowledge of phonic patterns in spelling: *'Let's listen for the phonemes we know in the word ch-e-ck.'*
- It may also include drawing children's attention to their knowledge of morphology. For example, '*Look at this list of words, they all end in "ed".'*
- A further example of how to model this might include supporting children to learn how to spell the word 'friend'. '*Let's look for the "tricky part". I always forget that "i" in the middle too. We can practise saying the word in chunks. Don't forget the "i" in the middle!'*

Evidence summary

Writing is a physical task as well as an intellectual one. 'Transcription' refers to the physical skills involved in writing and the skill of spelling words correctly. Pupils must learn to form letters and spell words correctly, start to write in joined-up handwriting when appropriate, and use a keyboard.

Handwriting

Accurate letter formation is an essential early skill that forms the basis of a fluent handwriting style. However, it is also important to focus on the speed of pupils' writing as well as the accuracy. Slow or effortful transcription hinders writing composition as pupils have to concentrate on monitoring their handwriting and spelling and are less able to think about the content of their writing[42] (see **Figure 7**).

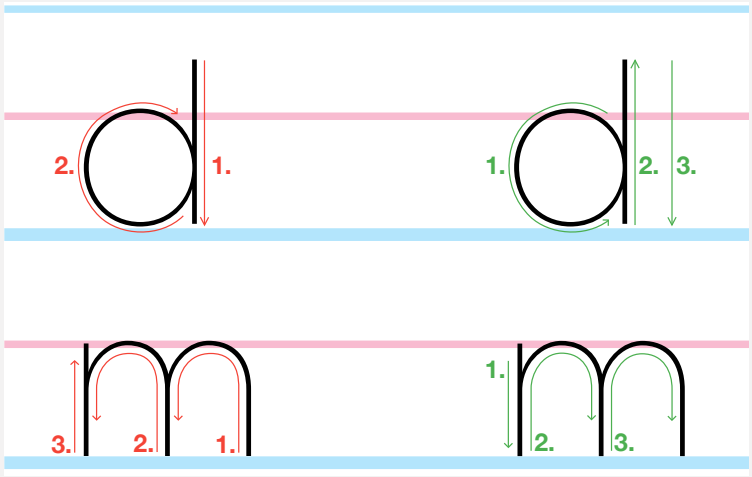
There is no quick way to develop these essential skills other than through regular and substantial practice.

Practice should be extensive—a large amount of regular practice is required for pupils to achieve fluency in these skills. Achieving the necessary quantity of practice requires pupils to be motivated and fully engaged in improving their writing.[43] Ensure practice is purposeful by targeting letters which are frequently formed inaccurately (see **Box 5**).

Practice should be supported by effective feedback—teachers can support children to practise effectively by providing opportunities for effective feedback.[44] Feedback should:

- be specific, accurate, and clear (for example: *'It was good because you joined up your letters correctly'* rather than *'Your handwriting is getting neater'*);
- compare what a pupil is doing right now with what they have done wrong before (for example: *'I can see you focused on making sure you crossed your "t"s, as you remembered more often than last time'*);
- encourage and support further effort;
- be given sparingly so that it is meaningful; and
- provide specific guidance on how to improve rather than just telling pupils when they are incorrect (for example: *'Next time, you should make sure that all of your "t"s are crossed. This is where you put the cross'*).

Box 5: Product and process of handwriting



It is important that children can form the letters of the alphabet correctly. This means knowing the correct starting point for each letter and following the correct movement pathways. Errors in letter formation are often the source of handwriting difficulties in children, but are not always obvious to a reader after the event of writing. Observations of the child's process of letter formation need to be undertaken so that incorrect patterns do not become embedded, leading to difficulties with fluency later on. Ten letters seem more susceptible to formation errors and may require additional attention: *i, j, a, d, g, r, n, m, h,* and *z*.[52]

Spelling

Accurate spelling is a key component of writing fluency and should be explicitly taught rather than simply tested.[41] Evidence so far suggests a range of approaches are effective for teaching spelling, however, overall this is an area in need of more research.[45] Some approaches do have some evidence to support them, especially when evaluated on the basis of improvements to the spelling of individual words. It is less clear which approaches lead to better spelling in the context of pupils' composition of full texts.[46]

The teaching of spelling is likely to work best when the spellings are related to the current content being studied in school as it is likely to encourage active use of any new spellings in pupils' writing.[47]

There is some evidence to suggest that teaching word patterns may help with spelling.[48] Pupils could learn about morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, and root words) and show how they recur in different words. It may be that by being able to, for example, understand that the *'un-'* prefix in *'unlike'* has the same spelling and meaning as in *'unusual'*, *'unhappy'*, and *'unpleasant'*, pupils can see that they can break words into smaller parts, many of which they already know from other words (see **Figure 8**). It should be noted that an EEF-funded trial of a programme that taught Key Stage 1 pupils about morphemes did not improve their reading comprehension.[49]

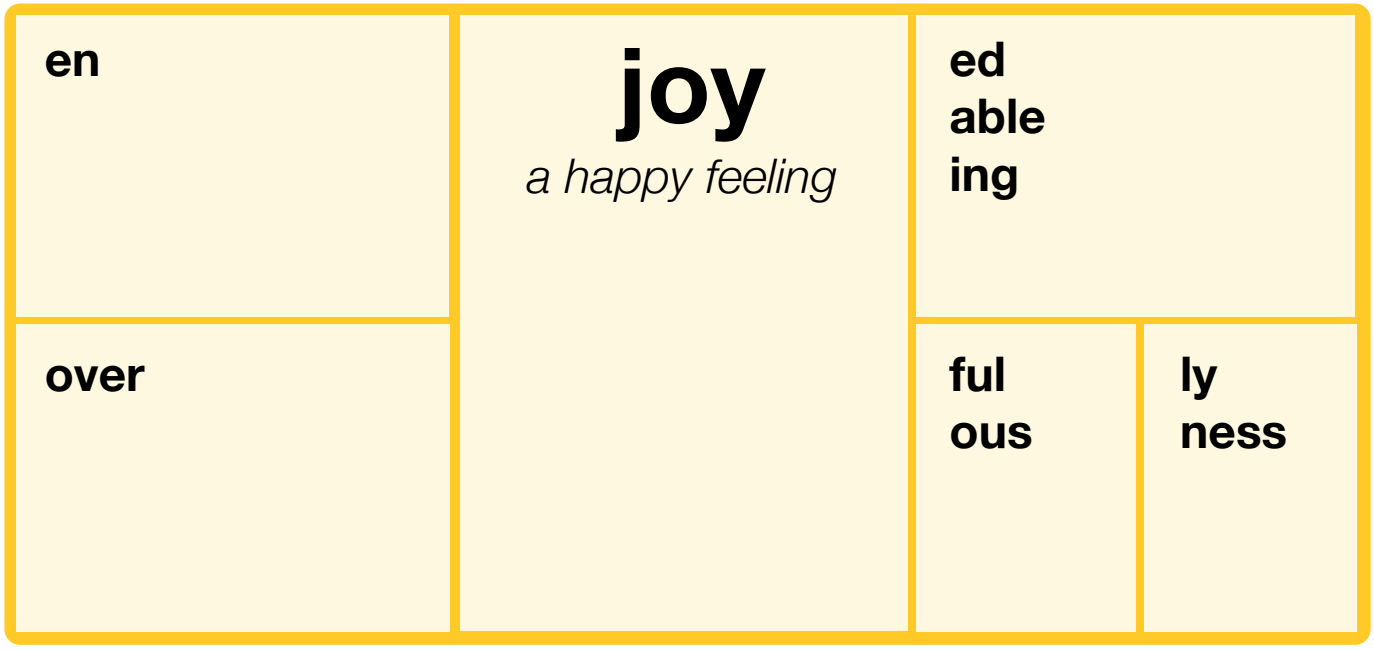


Figure 8: Graphic organiser for morphology

Other promising approaches include paired learning approaches and the use of techniques such as 'look-say-cover-write-check' (see **Questions for Discussion, page 34**).[50]

In the absence of better evidence regarding the teaching of spelling, teachers should be aware of the other strategies that good spellers appear to use, and consider teaching these strategies directly[51] (see also **Box 7**). These include:

- **a phonic approach**—sounding out the word, and spelling it the way it sounds (this approach also has reciprocal benefits on word reading);[45]
- **analogy**—spelling it like other known words (for example, *'call'* and *'fall'*);
- **the identification of the 'tricky' parts of words so that these can be learned** (such as *'separate'* and *'miniature'*): many of the most common words in English are 'tricky' (now known as 'common exception words' in the National Curriculum); and
- **a visual approach**—writing the word in two or three different ways and deciding which looks right (such as switching between graphemes to compare for best fit: *'seal'*, *'seel'*, and *'sele'*).

Box 6: When and how to introduce joining

The National Curriculum identifies several handwriting related outcomes for KS1. Initially there is a focus on correct letter formation in Year 1 including shape, size and spacing followed by an introduction to joining in Year 2.

The National Handwriting Association provides a free Good Practice Toolkit for teachers accessible on their website. It suggests:

- Un-joined letters are easier to learn initially as they require fewer strokes and changes in direction.
- Learning to join can be introduced in Year 2 once the previous outcomes of correct shape, size, and spacing are well established. Teachers need to be mindful that joining 'some' letters at the end of Year 2 is necessary only for 'working at greater depth' in the Teacher Assessment Framework.
- 'Starting to join' should not be given elevated esteem in the classroom or some children will feel pressured to try joining before they are developmentally ready.
- Some children struggle with the coordination involved in learning to join. For these children, it is advisable to spend time improving the legibility and fluency of a basic un-joined style before progressing.
- Joins can be taught in sets: start with letters which finish/start in the same position and join horizontally (for example, *'o-o'*, *'o-n'*); then progress to the diagonal strokes required to join letters which finish on the baseline and join to a taller letter for example, *'a-h'*); and then 'over and back' joins (for example, *'a-d'*, *'a-c'*).
- Letters which are best left un-joined include those that finish on the left (such as *s, b, j, g, y*).
- Writing in a fully joined style can inhibit handwriting fluency. A mixed style has, in fact, been shown to be quicker.
- As soon as children are able to join letters, they should use this for all of their written work so that it gradually becomes automatic.

Box 7: Common types of spelling error and possible teaching strategies

Errors:	Phonological	Orthographical	Morphological
	Phonological errors are not phonologially plausible, e.g. *'frist'* for first or *'gaj'* for garage.	Orthological errors are phonologically plausible but innacurate e.g. *'gud'* for good, or *'carm'* for calm.	Morphological errors are due to a lack of awareness of morphemes e.g. *'trapt'* for trapped; *'realshun'* for relation, or *'ekscuse'* for excuse.
Strategies:	**Explicit teaching of consonant and vowel phonemes.** **Practise sounding phonemes all the way through words.** **Focus on identification of common digraphs in words.** Look at the common digraphs the child is struggling with, focus on lots of examples and exceptions to practise.	**Look at the pattern of letters and syllables within words.** Support children to know what the 'look' stage involves. *'When you look at the word, you are looking for patterns of letters and syllables. Think about what helps you remember the patterns.'* **Encourage automatic recognition of whole words in conjunction with an emphasis on careful decoding and encoding.** Teach strategies which support this, e.g: '*Write the word and write again over the top, write the word again, write the word again, then write the word with your eyes closed.'* Exaggerate the pronunciation or 'say it silly' (SIS) e.g, *'clim-b'*. Chunk longer words before 'saying silly', e.g. *'be-au-ti-ful'*. Mnemonics: Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants.	**Focus on prefixes, suffixes and root words and learn common rules. For example, most words ending in *'f'* or *'fe'* change their plurals to *'ves'*, e.g. *'half'* to *'halves'* and *'knife'* to *'knives'*.** Systematically teach spelling rules—including exceptions—and consistently give opportunities for retrieval practice. **Explore the relationship between meaning and spelling by looking at etymology.** In Key Stage 1, the children may be introduced to the history and origins words. For example, knowing the Greek *'aer'* (which means *'air'*) to help children to remember how to spell aeroplane.

7 Use high quality information about pupils' current capabilities to select the best next steps for teaching

A small team of Year 1 class teachers are planning a unit of work for the new term. The teachers recognise that in order to complete their planning, with the needs of the children as the foundation for their plans, they need accurate and up-to-date information.

They decide to plan the early stages of the unit with formative assessment built in as an ongoing and frequent consideration. They recognise that they can learn a great deal about the children in the minute-by-minute opportunities of open-ended tasks and interaction.

As they are planning these tasks, they reflect on what they should consider further.

Questions for discussion

How often should formative assessment happen in the classroom?

- Assessment can sometimes be considered as onerous. However, understanding the part assessment plays, within all interactions in the classroom, can support teachers to recognise the importance of each small piece of information which contributes to a bigger picture of the child.
- For example, increasing the use of open-ended questioning when sharing a text with children can provide numerous opportunities to assess vocabulary and reading comprehension.
- Looking for planned or informal opportunities to build a bank of information is rooted in good pedagogy.

How is assessment affected by the classroom environment?

- A learning environment in which children feel safe to take risks and make mistakes is essential as we ask children to reveal what they do and don't understand. Formative assessment, embedded in everyday practice, can be used as a nurturing opportunity to further build a sense of safety.
- A further significant consideration is the importance of trusting relationships in which the child can interact with confidence. Where the development of these relationships takes time, an appreciation of the limitations of the information gathered is vital.

Evidence summary

As pupils develop their literacy skills, teaching should respond to their changing needs. This requires teachers to collect accurate and up-to-date information about pupils' current capabilities so that they can adapt their teaching to focus on exactly what each pupil needs to progress. Teaching that adapts to pupils' needs is more efficient because effort is focused on the best next step and is not wasted by rehearsing skills or content that a child already knows well. This approach can be used to identify appropriate catch-up support for struggling pupils, but can also be used to ensure that high attaining pupils continue to make good progress. Once a teacher has identified a pupil's needs, teaching can be adapted by:

1. **changing the focus**—targeting an aspect of literacy where a pupil needs more support; or

2. **changing the approach**—adopting a different approach to teaching the same aspect of literacy.

A helpful distinction can be made between using assessment to monitor a pupil's progress and using it to assess or diagnose a pupil's specific capabilities and difficulties. Both are important. Monitoring can be used to identify pupils who are struggling, or whose progress can be accelerated, and diagnostic assessments can suggest the type of support they need from the teacher to continue to progress. When assessment suggests that a child is struggling, effective diagnosis of the exact nature of their difficulty should be the first step, and this information should inform early and targeted intervention[53] (see **Box 8** for a worked example).

A range of diagnostic tests and assessments for reading and writing are available for school staff and they should be trained to use and interpret these effectively.[54] The results should be used to supplement, not replace, professional judgement about a child's current capabilities. If concerns about a child's progress continue after targeted support is provided, a referral to a specialist team such as a speech and language therapist or an occupational therapist may be appropriate for further more in-depth diagnostic assessment.

Every assessment involves trade-offs, such as taking the time to complete the assessment rather than spend the time teaching. Consequently, it is crucial to consider what data you hope to collect before selecting an appropriate assessment. For example, scores out of ten on a weekly spelling test may be appropriate for the purpose of identifying pupils most in need of extra spelling support (monitoring), but the scores alone would not be useful for the purpose of identifying why the pupil may be struggling with spelling or informing future teaching (diagnosis). Analysis of the kinds of mistakes a child makes during a spelling test or piece of writing could inform specific teaching strategies. More guidance regarding effective assessment is available in the EEF's online guide to Assessment and Monitoring Pupil Progress.[55]

Box 8: Effective diagnosis of need—a classroom based worked example

Ongoing formative assessment during class teaching:

A class teacher is concerned about a child who, when asked questions about what they have read independently, often answers *'I don't know'* or *'I can't remember'.*

The child can decode all the words they encounter. They also appear to have good understanding of the individual words read.

Further individual assessment:

On further investigation, when the child is reading aloud to the class teacher it is noted that they lack appropriate phrasing or interest in what they are reading.

The teacher asks the child to continue reading aloud and counts the number of words per minute. Whilst the child can decode the words in the text, the rate at which they are reading is significantly below the number expected in Year 2. They are also struggling with expression, pace, and smoothness, including a difficulty chunking words into meaningful units.

Effective diagnosis:

From whole-class to individual assessment, the teacher now has enough information to identify that the child is struggling with reading fluency.

Action:

The teacher recognises the significance of reading fluency as the bridge between decoding and comprehension. There is also an understanding that simply asking the child to 'read faster' will not help.

A series of actions are planned to support the child's progress with reading fluency. They include:

- the use of repeated reading of texts in class; parental support with this is also encouraged;
- increased opportunities to develop fluency through modelled reading—whole class and peer groups;
- enlarged copies of texts on the interactive board in the classroom allowing children to follow the text as it is read aloud; and
- choral reading using multiple copies of texts.

The teacher decides these four strategies, alongside any short opportunities for individual reading with feedback, are an appropriate set of actions to begin to address the issue identified.

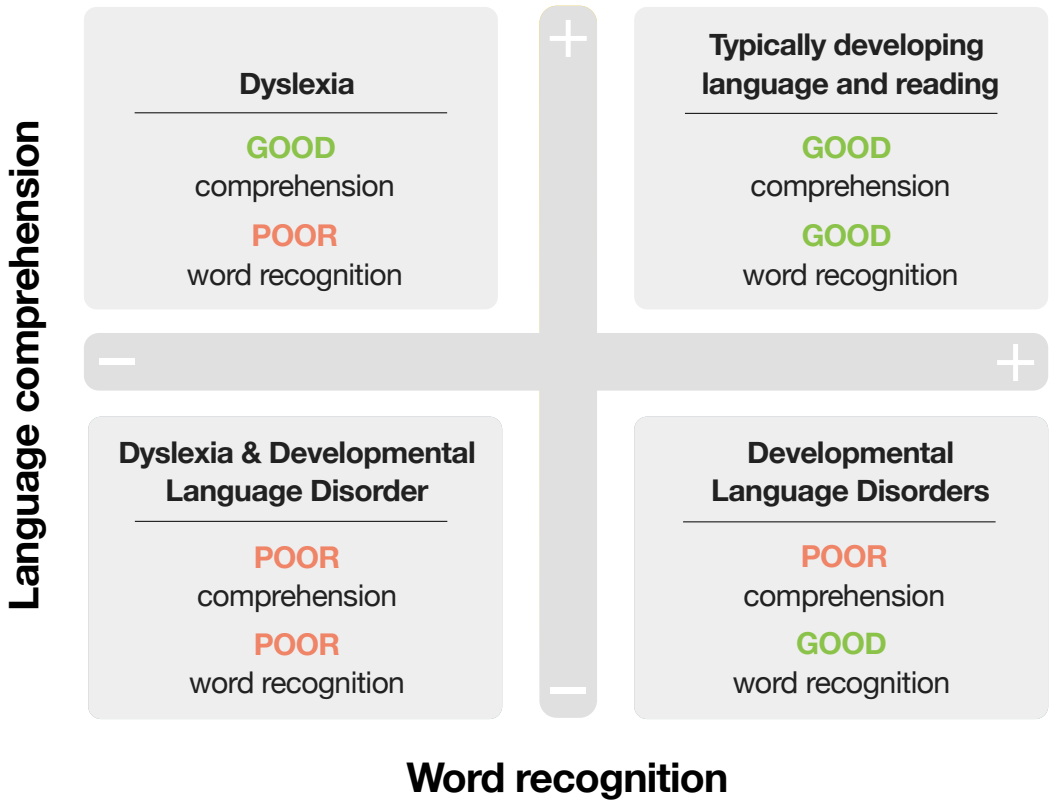
Ongoing regular monitoring of progress is also undertaken.

Changing the focus of teaching

Models of typical literacy development can provide useful tools to support teachers in selecting a particular aspect of literacy to focus on. For example, the Simple View of Reading can be used as a framework for diagnosing pupils' weaknesses in reading, and to suggest an appropriate next step for teaching.[57] According to this model, reading consists of two interacting dimensions: word recognition (the ability to recognise and pronounce individual words) and comprehension (the ability to understand the form and meaning of language).

Proficient readers are skilled in both of these dimensions, while weaker readers may struggle with one or both of them. These weaknesses may be severe enough to seek a diagnosis of dyslexia or developmental language disorder—or they may even co-exists (see reading profiles in **Figure 9**).[57] An additional consideration is that as children progress through lower primary, there are some children who move in and out of language and reading difficulties, often due to children making small changes which place them either just above or just below the cut-point where difficulties are defined.[12] Knowing which children just met age-related expectations is as important as knowing those who are working below. Regular assessment and monitoring will support teachers in understanding which children may need additional support.

Figure 9: Profiles of reading abilities—adapted from Catts et al. (2005)



Changing the teaching approach

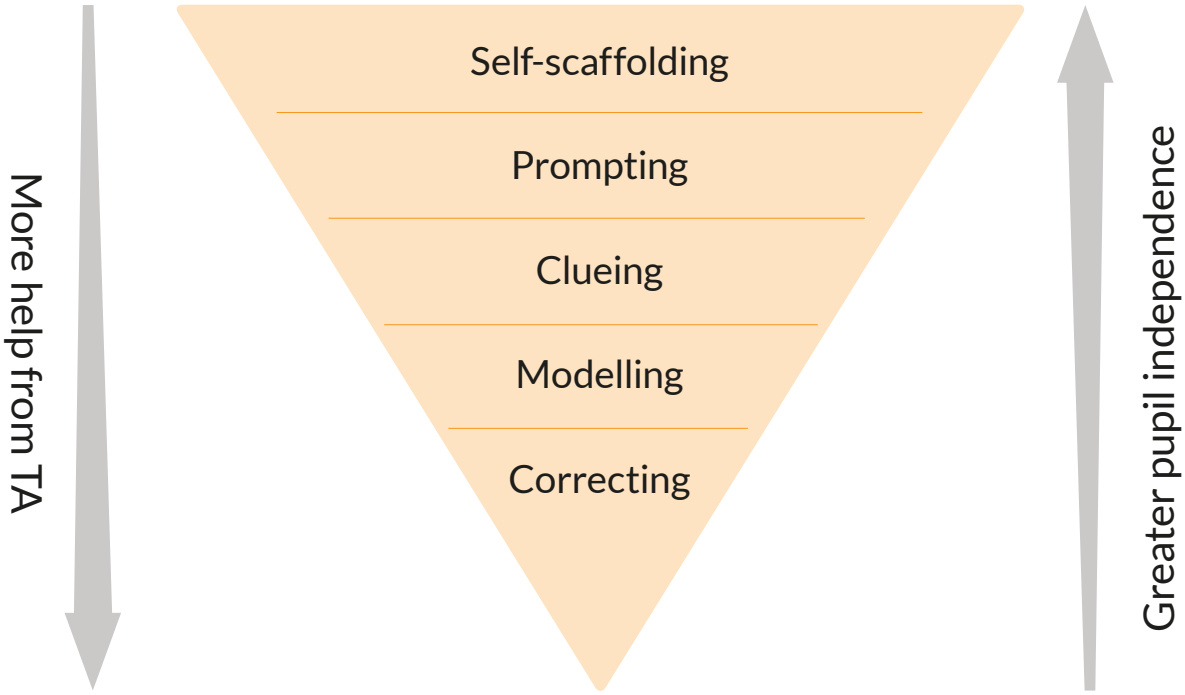
It may be that a pupil does not need more instruction on a particular aspect of their literacy, but instead they require a different approach. In this case the pupil may have become disengaged or may be finding activities too hard or too easy. Re-engaging a pupil in their learning could require using an approach that is better suited to the pupil's interests.

Where activities are found to be too challenging then scaffolding provides a useful analogy. In construction, scaffolding provides temporary, adjustable support enabling tasks that would not otherwise be possible. In education, 'scaffolding' is a term that is used regularly but its meaning is often conflated with 'differentiation', 'help', and 'support'. Scaffolding has a precise meaning: it describes how someone who is more expert (an adult or peer) can provide structured help when a pupil is learning a new skill. There are many different frameworks for scaffolding but they typically share three characteristics:[59]

- **responsiveness to need**—scaffolding requires high quality information about students' current capabilities so that support can be appropriately tailored;
- **fading of support as pupils' capabilities develop**—the rate of fading depends on the needs of the individual student and can be done by reducing the amount and/or level of support; and
- **transfer of responsibility**—as support fades the responsibility for the skill should increasingly transfer from the teacher to the student.

A key principle of scaffolding is that one should aim to provide the minimum level of support that is needed. The level of support should gradually decrease in response to pupils becoming increasingly independent to avoid pupils failing to manage their own learning and becoming over-dependent (see **Figure 10**).

Figure 10: Scaffolding model



8 Use high quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy

A Year 1 class teacher has identified a small group of children who would benefit from additional support to develop reading fluency. The teacher and teaching assistant are considering if it is appropriate to set up a reading intervention to address this issue. The teacher is aware of how well trained the teaching assistant is in the phonics programme the school uses. She has also observed the teaching assistant working very skilfully with small groups and during one-to-one interventions.

The teaching assistant is keen to support with the intervention as he recognises the importance of this work. However, whilst feeling well trained to teach phonics, and being very eager to help, the teacher and teaching assistant recognise that there are further points to consider.

Questions for discussion

How can we make best use of TAs to support the teaching of literacy?[60]

- TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource; this deployment can have negative impacts on pupils outcomes.
- School should deliver only a small number of carefully planned, well-structured interventions. If you are considering purchasing a programme, check if it has been rigorously evaluated.
- High quality support and training for TAs is essential to ensure maximum impact of the interventions they lead.

When should teachers plan for interventions to take place?

- If a teacher is planning for a group to be run outside of whole-class teaching, it is vital to be confident that the alternative support is more effective than the teaching that is happening in class. If this is not the case, withdrawing children from whole-class teaching may lead to a widening of the attainment gap. Schools can mitigate separation effects by ensuring that children who struggle most have no less time with their teacher.

Evidence summary

Schools should focus first on developing core classroom teaching strategies that improve the literacy capabilities of the whole class. With this in place, the need for additional support should decrease. Nevertheless, it is likely that a small number of pupils will require additional support—in the form of high quality, structured, targeted interventions—to make progress.[61]

Identifying pupils who are struggling with their literacy is the first step (see Recommendation 7). Diagnostic assessments should be used to understand the nature of the pupil's needs and match them to an appropriate intervention.

Targeted interventions involve a teacher, teaching assistant, or other adult providing intensive individual or small-group support. This may take place outside of normal lessons as additional teaching or as a replacement for other lessons. If pupils are withdrawn from normal classroom activity it is important that the alternative support is more effective than the teaching they would normally receive. If the alternative support is not more effective then it is possible for pupils to fall even further behind as children who remain in class may continue to make further progress. It is also important that pupils do not miss activities that they enjoy, and that a plan is in place to ensure the pupil can make links between their learning in intervention sessions and their work back in the classroom. The Intervention Healthcheck tool,[62] provided as a resource alongside our *'Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants'* guidance report, could be used to guide discussions on improving the implementation of targeted interventions.

On average, it is a case of the smaller the group, the greater the impact: groups of two have slightly higher impact than groups of three, but slightly lower impact compared to one-to-one tuition.[63] Some studies suggest that greater feedback from the teacher, more sustained engagement in smaller groups, or work that is more closely matched to pupils' needs explains this impact. Once group size increases above six or seven there is a noticeable reduction in effectiveness.[63] However, although this generally holds, there is evidence that it is not always the case. For example, in reading, small-group teaching can sometimes be more effective than either one-to-one or paired tuition.[63] It may be that in these cases reading practice has been efficiently organised so that all the group stay fully engaged as each take their turn. This variability in findings suggests that the quality of the teaching in small groups may be as, or more important, than group size.

Choosing an intervention programme

There is extensive and consistent evidence of the impact of intensive small group and one-to-one support.[61] Significantly, this tutoring seems most impactful for younger pupils, particularly when the additional support is offered in school or when focused on reading.[61] There are many intervention programmes available for schools to purchase, however, only a handful of targeted literacy programmes have been rigorously evaluated in England or evaluated with KS1 pupils.[64]

The resources in **Box 9** are a good place to assess the evidence of programmes. Reading Recovery, an intensive teacher-led one-to-one reading programme for KS1 pupils, is highlighted by the EIF guidebook for the positive impacts found in several high quality evaluations conducted in America.[65] This is consistent with the evidence that one-to-one tuition can have particularly positive impacts if delivered by a teacher.[63]

Interventions delivered by teaching assistants or volunteers can have a valuable, cost-effective impact. Crucially, these positive effects only occur when TAs work in structured settings with high quality support and training. When TAs are deployed in more informal, unsupported instructional roles, they can impact negatively on pupils' learning outcomes. In other words, what matters most is not whether TAs are delivering interventions, but how they are doing so. In this context, structured evidence-based programmes provide an excellent means of aiding high quality delivery. The EEF's *'Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants'* guidance report provides more guidance about the deployment of TAs.

In the meantime, while the evidence for particular programmes develops, the following common elements are features of effective targeted interventions. If your school is using or considering programmes that have not been rigorously evaluated, you should ensure that they include these features:[60]

- brief (about 15–45 minutes) and regular (3–5 times per week) sessions that are maintained over a sustained period (8-20 weeks) and carefully timetabled to enable consistent delivery;
- extensive training (5–30 hours) from experienced trainers and/or teachers;
- structured supporting resources and/or lesson plans with clear objectives;
- assessments to identify appropriate pupils, guide areas for focus, and track pupil progress—effective interventions ensure the right support is being provided to the right child;
- support that is additional to, and explicitly linked with, normal lessons; and
- makes connections between the out-of-class (intervention) learning and classroom teaching.

There are a variety of reasons why a child may need targeted or specialist language and literacy support. Our guidance report *'Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools'* provides more detail on approaches to interventions, such as adopting a tiered approach to educational support and key questions to consider when implementing interventions:

The report advises adopting a tiered approach to educational support and considers key questions that should be considered when implementing interventions:

— *What are pupils missing by spending time away from class?*

— *How does a pupil's experience in an intervention relate to whole-class teaching?*

— *Is this the right intervention for the pupil?*

— *Can we provide the support required for our staff to deliver the intervention well?*

— *Are we able to dedicate the time and resources required to implement the intervention well?*

Box 9: Evidence-based programmes

Many interventions claim to be supported by evidence and it can be challenging to assess the claims of programme developers or compare different interventions. The following continuously evolving online resources provide a good starting point for considering interventions and assessing evidence claims:

- The EEF's Promising Projects[66] page lists the programmes that have received high quality evaluations and where the report finds outcomes that meet both high standards of impact and cost effectiveness.
- The Early Intervention Foundation's Guidebook[67] highlights the strength of evidence for a programme by assessing evaluations conducted by organisations in the UK and abroad.
- The Institute of Effective Education's Evidence 4 Impact[68] database provides a similar resource.
- The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust, in collaboration with other partners, provides the Interventions for Literacy[69] interventions database, which summaries targeted literacy programmes with UK evaluations (including studies without a comparison group), and;
- The Communication Trust's What Works?[70] database summarises targeted and specialist interventions for pupils with speech, language, and communication needs.

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GLOSSARY

Analytic phonics

Refers to an approach in which the sounds associated with letters are not pronounced in isolation. Children identify the phonic element from a set of words in which each word contains the particular element under study. For example, teacher and students discuss how the following words are alike: *pat, park, push,* and *pen*.

Diagnostic assessment

An assessment that aims to identify a pupil's current strengths and weaknesses so as to determine the most helpful teaching strategies and content to move the pupil forwards. It can be distinguished from tracking or monitoring where the aim is just to check progress. Diagnostic assessment aims to make teaching more efficient.

Dialogic encounters

Dialogic learning is learning that takes place through conversations.

Domain knowledge

The knowledge that is specific to a topic or activity.

Decoding skills

The ability to translate written words into the sounds of spoken language.

Etymology

The study of the origins and history of words and the way in which their meanings have changed. The etymology of 'phonics', for example, is from the Greek *phone* meaning 'voice'. It was originally used in the 17th century to mean the science of sound, but has now come to mean an approach to teaching reading

Expressive vocabulary

The words that a pupil can express through speaking or writing.

Grapheme

A letter or combination of letters used to represent a phoneme, for example, in the word 'push', the graphemes <p, u, sh>, represent the phonemes / p / ʊ / ʃ / to make the word 'push'. Graphemes in English may consist of 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters such as in the spelling of the sound 'oo' in the words do, you, manoeuvre and through. Split diagraphs have a consonant letter between the two vowel letters as in the word 'rule'.

Inference

Using information from a text in order to arrive at another piece of information that is implicit.

Inner speech

A form of internal self-directed talk that represents a person's thoughts and feelings which can be used by the person to direct (or self-regulate) their behaviour.

Meta-analysis

A particular type of systematic research review which focuses on the quantitative evidence from different studies and combines these statistically to seek a more reliable or more robust conclusion than can be drawn from separate studies.

Metacognition

A critical awareness of one's own thinking and learning, and an understanding of oneself as a thinker and learner. The process of metacognition is used when planning, monitoring and evaluating tasks.

Morphemes

The smallest units of words that contain meaning, such as the 'root' word *'child'* and the affix *'-ish'*, which in combination make a new word *'childish'*.

Morphology

The form and meaning of a language; the study of the smallest units of words that contain meaning.

Onset rime

The onset of a one-syllable word consists of any consonants that precede the vowel of the syllable (sometimes there may be no consonant in that position). The rime is the rest of the word, including the vowel and any consonants that follow it (there may be no consonants in that position either).

Orthography

The rules for writing a language, including spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation.

GLOSSARY

Phoneme

A phoneme is a speech sound. It is the smallest unit of spoken language that distinguishes one word (or word part) from another, for example, *'t'* and *'d'* in *'tip'* and *'dip'*. Phonemes are represented with a range of symbols (see Grapheme above).

Phonemic awareness

Relates to the skill of manipulating the smallest unit of language—phonemes. It is one aspect within the larger set of phonological awareness skills.

Phonics

An approach to teaching reading that focuses on the sounds represented by letters in words (see also 'analytic' and 'synthetic' phonics).

Phonological awareness

The ability to reflect upon and manipulate the sound structures of language at each level—word, syllable, and phoneme.

Private speech

The speech used to address oneself for the purpose of managing personal behaviour (i.e. self-regulation). Gradually this private dialogue can be completed internally as 'inner speech'.

Reading comprehension

The ability to understand the meaning of a text.

Receptive vocabulary

The words that can be understood by a person when they are reading or listening.

Reliable assessments

Assessments which are consistent and would produce the same results when repeated. If two teachers give different marks for a piece of writing, then their assessment is not reliable.

Segmentation

The separation of words into parts, usually into phonemes or morphemes.

Self-regulation

The process of controlling your own behaviour, thoughts, and emotions to pursue longer-term goals. The capacity to self-regulate relies heavily on oral language skills through private and inner speech

Semantics

The part of language (or linguistics) and logic concerned with meaning.

Strategic reader

A strategic reader uses a variety of strategies and skills as they construct meaning from a text.

Syntax

The rules and principles for how words are combined and organised into phrases and sentences.

Synthetic phonics

A form of phonics teaching in which sounding-out is used. Children are taught to segment written words into graphemes, sound out a phoneme for each grapheme, and then blend the phonemes together into words. The classic example is *'c-a-t'—'cat'*.

Systematic phonics

The teaching of letter-sound relationships in an explicit, organised, and sequenced fashion, as opposed to incidentally or on a 'when-needed' basis. May refer to systematic synthetic or systematic analytic phonics.

Valid assessments

Valid assessments measure what the assessment is supposed to measure.

HOW WAS THIS GUIDANCE COMPILED?

This guidance report draws on the best available evidence regarding the teaching of literacy to primary-aged pupils. The primary source of evidence for the recommendations is the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, which is a synthesis of international research evidence developed by Professor Steve Higgins and colleagues at the University of Durham with the support of the Sutton Trust and the EEF. However, the report also draws on a wide range of evidence from other studies and reviews regarding literacy development and teaching. The emphasis is on rigorous evaluations that provide reliable evidence of an impact on pupil learning outcomes. The intention is to provide a reliable foundation of what is effective, based on robust evidence.

The first edition of the report was developed over several stages starting in 2016. The initial stage produced a scoping document that set out the headline recommendations and supporting evidence. This was subjected to an academic peer review. The feedback from this review informed the writing of a final draft of the report which was then subjected to a second external review by a group of academics, practitioners, and other stakeholders. The aim of the second edition was primarily to provide additional exemplification to support schools with embedding the recommendations, but also allowed some update of the evidence. The updated guidance was subjected to external review by a group of academics, teachers, and other stakeholders.

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