

Reading Strategy

2024-25



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A. What Reading Is and Does for Children

Reading confidence, competence and engagement is at the heart of all forms of learning. It is intimately connected to communication of all types including speaking and listening and writing. A rich and varied reading experience is the entitlement of all children and the provision of this must be at the forefront of curriculum planning and resourcing.

A1. READING AND CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

I. A Functional View of Reading

Children need to learn to read to allow them access to a society shaped and expressed through text. Reading is a key element in preparing for adulthood and a marker for future independence, employment and inclusion.

A functional view of literacy recognises the importance of equipping children with the tools to navigate real world reading challenges. To be able to read signs, maps, timetables and instruction manuals is of course essential to independence as they grow towards adulthood. But reading is more than that.

II. Reading and Language Development

Reading of all types has a major contribution to play in children development of language. Spoken language and alternative communication systems is /are supported and extended by reading.

'Through stories, children encounter vocabulary that they are unlikely to hear in everyday conversation but will come across in writing, once they can read for themselves' Reading Framework July 2021.

Reading introduces children to vocabulary and grammatical structures they are unlikely to encounter in every day spoken exchanges. Reading has the power to shift children's language up the Linguistic Register Continuum (Systemic Functional Linguistics) from the informal towards the formal. It has the ability to model the structure and language of texts (spoken, written media etc) which we consider appropriate for different audiences and purposes.

'Researchers in the United States who had looked at the impact of parents reading with their children quoted the following figures in a news release about their findings:

'Here's how many words kids would have heard by the time they were 5 years old: Never read to, 4,662 words; 1-2 times per week, 63,570 words; 3-5 times per week, 169,520 words; daily, 296,660 words; and five books a day, 1,483,300 words. Reading Framework July 2021

Education is about engaging in increasingly sophisticated ideas expressed in increasingly technical language constructed by and for increasingly distant and unfamiliar audiences. That is the case for babies as much as it is for PHD students. That is the case for children in specialist provision as much as it is for those in mainstream schools and colleges.

III. Reading and Cognitive Development

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report '*described the 'entangled relationship' between 'cognition and motivation, proficiency and engagement in reading'. Reading Framework July 2021*

Of course, language and cognition are intertwined so when we say reading is essential for the development of language we are saying it is crucial for cognitive development.

However, we can make some further claims for its contribution to cognitive development if we focus on knowledge – knowing, remembering and doing that is related to the concepts and skills children learn as they grow.

New knowledge taught purely verbally might 'stick' if children are interested, motivated and have great memories.

New knowledge taught through a combination of reading with verbal reinforcement is much more likely to stick.

New knowledge taught through a combination of reading and writing with verbal reinforcement is even more effective.

Of course, if some kinaesthetic activity can also be added the chances of deep learning occurring are maximised. But the point still remains - if children read something at the same moment they hear about it they are more likely to remember. Reading allows children to revisit, to re- evaluate and to 'redraft' learning. It allows children to organise and park information so they have the capacity to build on that knowledge.

'Everybody loves a good story. Even small children who have difficulty focusing in class will sit with rapt attention in the presence of a good storyteller. But stories are not just fun. There are important cognitive consequences of the story format. Our minds treat stories differently than other types of material. People find stories interesting, easy to understand, and easy to remember'. Reading Framework July 2021

IV. Reading and Writing

Children who are not exposed to a variety of rich reading texts lack the models for their own writing.

Children need to be taught how writers' write.

They need to see good writing (What a Good One Looks Like WAGOLL) and to experience the impact effective writing for a clear purpose can have on an audience.

Children need to explore the possible shapes and styles of writing and become proficient at selecting the forms most appropriate for their own purposes.

They need to read writing by published authors, by their peers by their teachers as well as by themselves.

Children need to be guided in how to deconstruct writing to see how it works. They need to talk about it.

They need to read to develop their vocabularies, their spelling and grammar skills and reading is the most effective way.

V. Reading and Social and Emotional Development

'Children also need to learn about the lives of those whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. Choosing stories and non-fiction that explore such differences begins to break down a sense of otherness that often leads to division and prejudice'. Reading Framework July 2021

Reading can be an individual pleasure explored and enjoyed. It can feed imaginations and delight with fantastical visions or inform with facts and figures. It can encourage a child to find answers and to ask questions about the world and all the knowledge in it.

'Literature is probably the most powerful medium through which children have a chance to inhabit the lives of those who are like them. All children need to imagine themselves as the main protagonist in a story: celebrating a birthday, going shopping, being ill, having a tantrum, having their hair cut, worrying about a new sibling, being the superhero, going camping, visiting the seaside and having adventures'. Reading Framework July 2021

It can also be a shared experience which brings groups, classes, schools and wider communities together. Shared reading is powerful. Being read to is a pleasure most children enjoy. Talking about a shared text allows children and adults to explore not just that text but their emotional reactions to it and to build a social and historical context around it. Talking to in school adults, but also talking to parents and peers about an entertaining or stimulating read is a great way to connect.

Rich texts provide a springboard for learning about history, geography, science, RE PSHE and every other subject. They can help build children's understanding of their place in the world.

Reading stretches horizons.

A2. THE DFE READING FRAMEWORK JULY 2021- ADVICE ON READING GOOD PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN WITH SEND

'Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' (Pages 19-21 in entirety. See the framework for all citations)

'The wide range of learning difficulties experienced by children with identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can have a significant impact on children's and young people's access to the curriculum.

This section concentrates on good practice for those with moderate to severe SEND and complex needs, most (but not all) of whom will be in specialist provision.

Literacy is as important for these children as for their peers and teachers should be ambitious about teaching them to read and write. These children have to navigate the same written language, unlock the same alphabetic code, learn the same skills, and learn and remember the same body of knowledge as their peers. It is a critical skill in helping them prepare for adulthood.

Schools are expected to enable access to appropriate phonics instruction for children with complex needs.

Under the Equality Act 2010, they are required to make reasonable adjustments to enable pupils with disabilities to have full access to the curriculum and to be able to participate in it.

Consensus is growing among academics and teachers that the best reading instruction for children with SEND is SSP, taught by direct instruction. They can learn to read and write and can make progress towards or attain functional literacy.

In a 2021 French study of children with learning disabilities, Sermier said: 'These findings suggest that students with [special educational needs] benefit from phonics-based programs integrating research-based approaches and techniques.'

Similarly, a recent systematic review for children with autism by Arcuili and Bailey concluded: '...comprehensive instruction that incorporates [phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency and reading comprehension] ...is not only appropriate for children with autism but also effective.'

The view that children learn in different ways is under scrutiny. Dehaene has said: '...it is simply not true that there are hundreds of ways to learn to read. Every child is unique... but when it comes to reading we all have roughly the same brain that imposes the same constraints and the same learning sequence.'

Evidence suggests that most children with moderate to severe and complex needs are not 'visual learners', as previously thought. Trembath, for instance, in a small study, found 'no evidence of a prominent visual learning style in children with ASD,' while Kathy Cologon has noted that, for children with Down's syndrome: 'Sight-word learning on its own is insufficient for reading development and teaching with this approach alone is contrary to current evidence-based practices in literacy instruction'.

SSP, rather than a whole-word approach, provides children with moderate to severe and complex needs the best opportunity to gain functional literacy. Children who have a hearing or visual impairment are generally able to access phonics teaching if they have some hearing or vision.

Instruction should be accessible to all these children. Teachers should:

- provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to read and spell, by direct instruction, progressing systematically with carefully structured, small and cumulative steps
- use instructional routines that become familiar
- provide materials that limit distraction; are clear, linear and easy to follow; are age-neutral or age-appropriate and can be adapted further, such as being reduced to individual items
- provide opportunities for work on vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension
- provide multiple opportunities for overlearning (recall, retrieval, practice and application at the level of the alphabetic code, word, sentence and text)

Teaching should:

- be at a suitable pace for the child because progression through a programme will be much slower than for their typically developing peers
- be daily, with well-paced, well-planned lessons that are engaging and motivating
- take full account of the child's individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and understanding, and profile of needs

Some children may need additional strategies, such as for those who:

- have physical disabilities that affect their fine motor control for holding and manipulating objects, e.g. use of desktop manipulatives, alternative writing strategies

- are pre- or non-verbal, e.g. use of alternative communication strategies, such as selecting their response from auditory choices anchored to visual symbols or place-markers
- have both fine motor difficulties and are pre- or non-verbal, e.g. use of low- or high-tech eye gaze strategies. A very few children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) might not be able to access direct literacy instruction, but might access alternative activities to teach children how letters correspond to sounds within the context of a pre- formal sensory curriculum.

A3. DIFFERENT TYPES OF READING, DIFFERENT READING TEXTS

I. What We Mean by Reading

Reading begins before children can hold a book. It covers a range of activities that includes decoding, understanding, talking about and writing about the ideas and language encountered in a written text.

For emergent readers, a wide range of pre-reading activities will be appropriate:

- hearing and joining in with songs and rhymes, enjoying picture books, relating objects to stories, recalling stories, making up stories.
- understanding what books are and how they work.

‘Through enjoying rhymes, poems and songs, and reciting poems or parts of longer poems together as a class, teachers can build children’s strong emotional connection to language’.

‘When children ask for a story to be re-read, in effect they are asking for another chance to explore the language, the characters and their feelings, and to relive the emotions they felt on the first reading. They hear the same words read in the same way and gain a sense of comfort in knowing what follows. They wait for their favourite bits, ready to join in or ready to be scared, even when they already know what happens. Their attachment to the story equips them to retell it and, when they have learnt to read, encourages them to read it for themselves’. Reading Framework July 2021

For more confident readers it is worth remembering that, while children *independently* reading books and other texts appropriate to their age and stage, is a key aim; children *engaging* with more complex texts scaffolded, presented and mediated by adults also constitutes ‘reading’.

Sharing (exploring, analysing, modelling, enjoying) texts should be a feature of reading in every key stage.

A teacher reading aloud can engage, enthuse, amuse and transport at any key stage.

II. Word Reading and Comprehension.

The National Curriculum identifies two types of early reading – word and comprehension. ‘Word reading and language comprehension require different sorts of teaching’.

By word they mean phonological understanding and by comprehension they mean understanding, linking, inferring, extrapolating from what has been read (they don’t mean 10 questions)

- 'language comprehension and composition are developed by talking, listening to and talking about stories, and by learning poetry and songs
- decoding and encoding can be taught through a systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme'

Decoding refers to:

- reading unfamiliar words (words that have not been decoded before) by saying the sounds corresponding to the letters in the words and then blending the sounds together, either aloud or silently
- reading familiar words accurately and silently 'at a glance', that is, no longer saying the sounds consciously'
Reading Framework July 2021

Phonological understanding or decoding print is seen as essential to later reading competence. It is a requirement that children in reception and year 1 have a systematic programme of phonics teaching.

Not all children will learn the formula for decoding print quickly and easily using a phonics approach- but most/ many will. However, many children at West Lea will need phonics support throughout their learning journey at our school and we have incorporated this into our curriculum offer up to KS4.

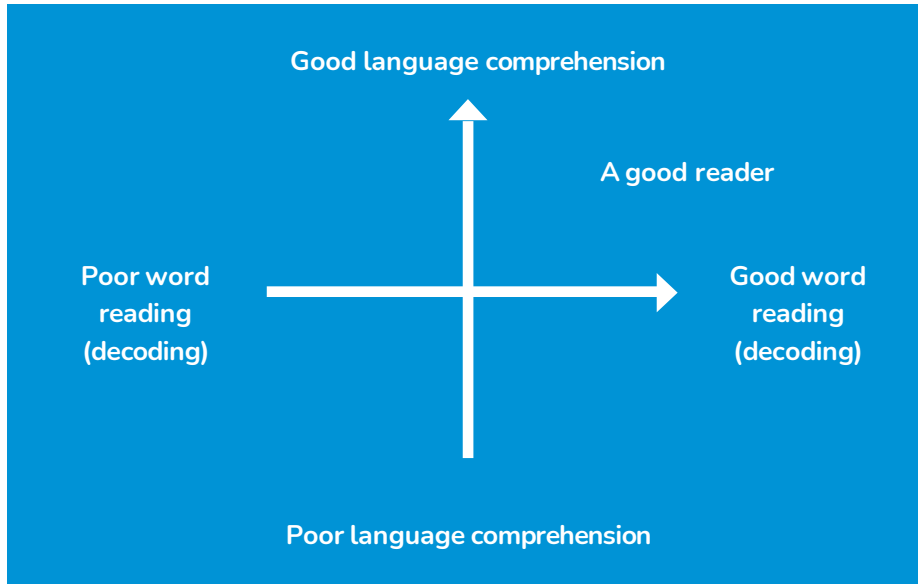
For a few children phonics will not work and may dishearten and confuse them. Unfortunately, it is not always clear which children will never 'get it' through phonics and which children just need longer so it is important not to give up too soon as research suggest the alternatives are less effective in most cases.

Being able to decode print does not mean children will understand what they have read. Reading comprehension needs to build over the rest of their education. Teachers and TAS will provide children with the strategies to make sense of the texts they encounter using a variety of direct teaching, reciprocal reading and lots of practice.

The Reading Framework references Gough and Turner's model widely quoted as *A Simple View of Reading* which helps us to recognise the dual processing skills required for fluency in reading. It invites us to identify where children might sit on the quadrant diagram.

Many mainstream children will develop confidence and competence in decoding and will also demonstrate good comprehension of what they read (often as a result of positive language experiences before arriving at school). These children sit in the top right-hand quadrant. Children who struggle with decoding but have good understanding once they have grasped the word sit in the top left-hand quadrant and those with poor comprehension even though they have grasped the principles of decoding will sit in the bottom right-hand quadrant. Many SEN children of course, struggle with both elements of the process (bottom left quadrant).

A Simple View of Reading



III. Different Types of Texts to Be Read

Systemic functional linguists define a text as any structured form of communication (thus you can have an oral text, a media text, a visual text as well as a print text.) You can even read a game of football as a text!

For the purposes of this strategy we will define a text as something that communicates through written words, pictures or moving images.

There are many different genres of texts and children need exposure to these in a carefully graduated way. The list begins with fictional narratives because these are at the centre of how we make sense of the world and are usually the first text types children encounter.

The most common text genres:

Fiction: narratives

- Nursery rhymes, songs, fairy stories, myths, allegories
- Picture books with or without words, chapter books, interactive story texts- online or in print
- Prose, poetry, plays

Fiction and non- fiction: narratives

- Letters, diaries, blogs, vlogs Film, videos, pop videos
- Newspaper articles (print and on line), advertisements (print, on line and moving image)

Non-fiction

- Essays, articles, reports
- Instructions, notes, minutes
- Photographs, photo reportage
- Diagrams and tables
- CVs, job specifications
- Mathematics, Science, Geography (maps etc.) DT and IT symbols

It is the responsibility of teachers in every subject to teach children how to navigate texts of different genres. It must never be the responsibility of teachers to teach reading in Reading or English lessons only!

Every lesson is a reading lesson and must have an identified reading activity (guided whole class, group, pair of individual) within it.

B. West Lea's Commitment to Reading

B1. TEACHING (AND DEVELOPING) EARLY READING SKILLS - AT ALL KEY STAGES

I. Early Reading (EYFS and KS 1)

Commitment 1. Phonics:

Formal Phonics Teaching in EYFS and KS1

- Children in EYFS and KS 1 will engage in a daily phonics reading session
- For young/ developmentally young children this may be very short (less than 10 minutes). For older and more confident learners, this will be closer to the NC required one hour
- Children will be taught the identified school phonics programme (Little Wandle Letters and Sounds)
- No other programme, or programme materials will be used (to avoid confusion or mixed messaging for the children)
- Support material to reinforce aspects of the programme will be prominently displayed in all EYFS and KS 1 classrooms and teaching spaces
- All children will be started on this programme
- Where it is apparent that children are not making progress using this programme, interventions will be put in place. These will reinforce the approaches of this programme
- Children will not be withdrawn from the programme without line manager agreement and only after sustained attempts have been made to support the child. If the programme is abandoned an appropriate alternative must be designed and submitted for agreement with line managers and parents before implementation
- Details of alternative approaches (e.g. a more guided reading approach) will be available from the line manager (i.e. without abandoning attempts to secure the child's understanding of phonics)

II. Follow up Phonics and developing reader teaching in KS 2, KS 3 & KS4

- Guided reading using reciprocal reading strategies to be delivered as part of reading lessons for all learners that have completed the Little Wandle phonics programme
- Age - appropriate Big Cats books to be provided for KS 3 classrooms, as well as core texts that are part of the half termly English curriculum
- KS4 learners who require further support with phonics and reading will have access to phonics interventions to continue to develop their reading skills
- All key stages to make use of Big Cats as one of several word reading focused resources and approaches including Ecollins books for home reading.

Phonics Resources

- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds decodable books (by colour coded level) to be provided for each class
- Appropriate storage for these books to be provided to each classroom
- Teacher access to Little Wandle website to be provided for each teacher and made available for all TAS engaged in delivery
- A system for tracking phonics progress to be implemented
- Small group phonics teaching areas to be identified and equipped if necessary (e.g. if all children to be engaged in phonics at the same time)
- English medium-term planning takes account of the need for opportunities to build phonics confidence and reinforce the Little Wandle and Big Cats approach and materials
- Home reading record books and Ecollins login system set up for each child at every campus.

Phonics CPD Requirements

- A literacy lead to take charge of the phonics programme to be identified at each campus
- Home reading and parental involvement arranged by literacy lead
- Little Wandle training arranged for teachers and TAs

B2. READING WITHIN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

It is the responsibility of teachers in every subject to teach children how to navigate texts of different genres. It must never be the responsibility of teachers to teach reading in Reading or English lessons only!

Every lesson is a reading lesson and must have an identified reading activity (guided whole class, group, pair of individual) within it.

Commitment 1: Discreet Reading Lessons

- Discreet reading lessons (as identified in the timetable) will focus either on word level reading e.g. phonics or grammar, spelling vocabulary where phonics is secure, or on inference, reciprocal reading strategies and deduction skills where children are working at a more advanced level.
- KS2 & KS3 reading lessons are daily and will continue to build word reading skills alongside comprehension.
- KS4 reading lessons have been reduced to four sessions for focused word reading skills a week during tutorial time.

Commitment 2: A Daily Reading Activity

- Identified reading activities will take place every lesson at KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4
- The identified activity may be short but will be very focused. It might be individual, pair, group or whole class. Where possible it will be integrated into the main objective of the lesson (i.e. it may be a preparatory 'do now task' or a reciprocal reading task). The activity may well be teacher led.
- It will not be a general instruction to 'read your book'. The teacher will reinforce the significance of the reading activity by modelling engagement and interest. The activities will vary but will always have a clear purpose.

'Teachers are the best people to promote a love of reading because children, particularly young children, care what their teachers think about the stories they read aloud. If teachers show they love the story, the children are likely to respond in the same way'. Reading Framework July 2021

Commitment 3: Guided Reading

Guided reading refers to all reading (with writing, speaking and listening) activities which are led by a teacher and which explore, model and examine texts.

- Texts used in lessons will be chosen by teacher teams with a sharp awareness of the texts already studied in previous key stages and an awareness of what will be taught in later years
- The rationale for the selection of texts will be to meet reading or writing objectives and to build knowledge and skills and are chosen by the English team with the view of the whole school overview
- Guided reading teaching will encourage children to engage closely with texts and to identify how texts of different genres work
- Teachers will model reading skills and reciprocal reading strategies until learners are able to lead with these roles in groups independently
- Group and pair work will reinforce the learning about and through core texts
- Talk will be structured to support access and to help the learning stick
- Writing will be closely connected to reading: texts will be used to model writing and as stimulus for children's imaginative and creative expression.

Resources

- A site-specific teachers' library of rich texts to be purchased from which teacher teams can construct story time and guided reading teaching and learning. This resource bank to include: Big books, picture books, on line books
- Site specific sets (some whole class and some small group) of books for class study. These sets to include: picture books, chapter books, short stories, fiction, non-fiction (related to KOW or Creative topics), plays, poetry. Some could be online for use via tablets but real books must be part of the resource
- Class book corners/ book boxes/ class libraires/ site libraries. A bank of books for individual reading and for pair reading in every classroom is essential. The selection should be broad and reflect interests and prior reading experiences. The selection would, ideally rotate to allow fresh titles to come to children's attention
- Books that can go home (see Home reading) This may be physical books or Ebooks

CPD

- Teachers and TAs to be trained in explicit literacy aware approaches to English teaching
- Teachers and TAs to be trained in the IT resources to support explicit literacy aware approaches to English teaching
- Elklan training for staff related to a communication friendly setting and Blanks questions to support guided reading

Some advice on text choosing form the Reading Framework

'The decisions we make about how we educate our children are rooted in our beliefs and attitudes. The challenge is to reflect them in the stories and non-fiction children listen to and, later, in what they read for themselves.'

'Literature is probably the most powerful medium through which children have a chance to inhabit the lives of those who are like them. All children need to imagine themselves as the main protagonist in a story: celebrating a birthday, going shopping, being ill, having a tantrum, having their hair cut, worrying about a new sibling, being the superhero, going camping, visiting the seaside and having adventures'

'The challenge is to make sure that the right books support all children to thrive, whatever their background. Teachers need to choose those that will engage all of them emotionally' The Treading Framework July 2021.

B3. READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

It is the responsibility of teachers in every subject to teach children how to navigate texts of different genres. It must never be the responsibility of teachers to teach reading in Reading or English lessons only!

Every lesson is a reading lesson and must have an identified reading activity (guided whole class, group, pair of individual) within it.

'Children also need to learn about the lives of those whose experiences and perspectives differ from their own. Choosing stories and non-fiction that explore such differences begins to break down a sense of otherness that often leads to division and prejudice'. Reading Framework July 2021

Commitment 1:

- Cross curricular reading will be directly related to the reading skills taught in reading/ English lessons
- Teachers and TAs will model reading skills
- Teachers will design lessons to build reading (writing, speaking and listening) skills over sequences of lessons- and over key stages
- Teachers will be cautious when introducing phonics knowledge or comprehension requirements not yet covered in English or Reading lessons
- Texts will wherever possible cross over between subjects e.g. a fiction text about the war may be studied in English and Knowledge about the World
- Teachers will apply close reading and guided reading approaches to the texts used in all subjects
- Group and pair reading, with opportunities to process information through structured talk and writing, will be evident in medium term planning

Resources

- Subject related texts to be purchased for use when teaching topics in history, geography, science RE PSHE and Creative. Some may be individual and be lodged in the class book corner, others will be for whole class or small group use.

B4. INDIVIDUAL READING/ READING FOR PLEASURE AND HOME READING

Children need access to books that interest excite and challenge. They need to find these in school and be able to take some home to read with parents and siblings.

'Ideally, every book corner should be a mini-library, a place for children to browse the best books, revisit the ones that the teacher has read to them, and borrow books to read or retell at home. Every child should be able to spend time in their book corner. Children will want to share books with others, especially if they are 'books in common' that they know their friends have heard before'.

Commitment 1: Individual / independent reading in school

- Time to be allocated for individual/ pair/ small group reading for pleasure and information
- This time could be in soft start slots, registration, tutorial, breaks and lunchtimes
- Ideally reading times would be daily although this may not be possible at KS4 or KS5
- Teachers know that children sitting quietly with a book on the desk is not individual reading and will intervene to encourage active engagement with that or an alternative text

Teachers and TAS will listen to children read when possible

- Small groups and pairs may read aloud to each other
- Individual reading activities will include opportunities to respond to books through talk and maybe writing (e.g. book reviews)

Commitment 2: Home Reading

'Parents who engage their children in books prepare them to become committed and enthusiastic readers: they can transform their attitudes to reading' Reading Framework DFE July 2021

'Children benefit hugely from listening to family members reading aloud to them. Teachers might consider making a film for parents to illustrate the benefits of sharing and talking about stories aloud and how teachers read stories aloud to their own class'. Reading Framework July 2021

- HOS will institute programmes which allow children to borrow books for home reading
- These books maybe physical or Ebooks
- Parents will be encouraged to read daily with their children
- Reading homework will become a standard expectation
- Home-school documentation (passports/reading record books) will be used to reward children for home reading and track reading engagement.

Resources

- All classrooms in KS 1,2,3,4 will have book boxes/ book corners or site libraries from which children can select books with or without adult support
- All classrooms will have reading areas / comfortable furniture to encourage quiet reading
- Independent reading books will reflect the interests and age and stages of the children in the group
- The election will be large enough for children to find something fresh and engaging whenever they go to look
- Selections will rotate around classes so that children can have new and different choices regularly
- Selections will include picture books, chapter books, fiction and non- fiction
- Selections will include some pair readers e.g. small plays) poetry and short stories suitable for one -off reading occasions
- A system for lending out books or Ebooks uploads will be set up
- West Lea School is committed to developing a reading culture across all its school sites.
- This will be achieved by raising the profile of reading among children but also among school adults and parents.

Children will need to be inspired to read for pleasure and for information and to choose books and online reading materials that challenge and extend their knowledge, feed their imaginations and develop their language and vocabulary and support their written literacy skills.

B5. CREATING AND CELEBRATING A READING CULTURE

Top Tips from Pearson's web site

West Lea is committed to the creation of a reading culture which encourages all children and adults to see reading as an exciting and important activity. To that end West Lea School looks for support and advice on reading from a variety of sources.

Publishers can be useful sources of advice and inspiration. The following two articles from the Pearson's web site give a sample of what a publisher can offer. Other publishers offer similar advice.

Article 1 Ten Ways to Create a Reading Culture in Your School by Catherine Wilson (January 2020) and

Article 2 How to Motivate Reluctant Readers by Sue Alderman (January 2018)

These two articles have been reproduced here to demonstrate ideas and approaches as well as to suggest resources. They should be read as an example of the kinds of materials and approaches that can be used in and out of West Lea classrooms.

Pearson's Article 1 - Ten Ways to Create a Reading Culture in Your School

Create a thriving reading culture in your school – turn your students into bookworms with our ten expert tips! What do we mean by a reading culture? Simply put, it is an environment where reading is valued, promoted and actively encouraged. Teachers have long known...

- 1. Introduce DEAR to your classroom** DEAR - Drop Everything and Read - was started in the US by children's author Beverly Cleary. In some schools it's a part of the school day, where a special bell rings and everyone in the school – pupils, teachers, management and auxiliary staff – stops what they are doing and reads for half an hour. This reading isn't part of the curriculum, and children aren't tested on it. It's purely for pleasure. Of course, it doesn't have to be school-wide. Start off small with DEAR time in your own classroom - and if your students react positively then maybe the idea can be rolled out across the school.
- 2. Be a reading role model** as a teacher, you are a role model for your students. Apart from their parents, you're probably the adult that they see the most. This means you can set a powerful example when it comes to reading for fun. Take a few moments each week to talk to your students about what you're reading in your free time. Create a list on your classroom wall of all the books you've read so far this year. When it comes to DEAR time, get out your own book, so your students can see you reading.
- 3. Read books in different subject areas** by pairing different subjects with books on relevant themes, your school's reading culture will flourish across all subject areas. For example, if you're a PE teacher, you could take five minutes of class time to read a section from Bend It Like Beckham. If you teach Food Preparation and Nutrition, encourage your class to read recipes and articles about food. If your subject is History, your students could read The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas. Reading doesn't have to be confined to English class!
- 4. Explore a variety of genres** Encouraging your students to read across genres offers them a multitude of entry points into reading for pleasure. Graphic novels, biographies, memoirs, poetry, picture books, short stories, essays, articles and blog posts all offer stimulating and enriching alternatives to classic books. You could even set a challenge for your class to read from five different genres in a month. As well as encouraging individual students to read more. It will also expose the class to the many options available to them.

5. **Create individual classroom libraries** in addition to the school library, set up an informal classroom library that your students can borrow books from. Group books by topic – animals, mountains, etc. – so it’s easy for your students to find books they are interested in. If you don’t have a lot of books to start off with, it’s time to get resourceful! Keep an eye out in charity shops and car boot sales for second-hand books, and ask parents to bring in old books that their children have outgrown. Get in touch with local bookshops and ask if they’d like to donate a bundle of books. Local companies might consider sponsoring a book bundle. This way, the reading culture becomes a community effort.
6. **Create reading nooks across the school** as well as making books available to your students, it’s important to provide students with a place to read them. Look at where students can read in your school. Are there reading areas in the common spaces? Is there anywhere to read outside in the playground? You can create a reading nook in your classroom – decorate a corner with some posters and bookmarks, put some beanbags or comfortable seating there and encourage your students to use the space for their own reading.
7. **Engage with authors** Inviting an author into your school is an exciting experience for students and teachers alike. It’s a chance for your students to hear about the creative process, which in turn can spark their own creativity, encouraging them not only to read more but also to write more. If finding a local author to speak is challenging, you might be able to find a talk or a lecture by a writer online to show your students.
8. **Set reading challenges with prizes** Adding a competitive edge to the reading culture can encourage even reluctant readers. Setting reading challenges – where students have to read five books in a month, for example – will help motivate your students. Include all books to make the challenge accessible for the whole class. Encourage your students to think outside the box. For example, they could read a picture book at home to a younger sibling. And the prize – a book of course!
9. **Celebrate book-themed days** Make these days a part of your school calendar. From Winnie-the-Pooh day to Jane Austen’s birthday, there is a literary holiday for all ages and stages. Celebrating these days, even in a small way, is a reminder to your students that reading is something that is celebrated far beyond the walls of the classroom. And this can make them feel like they’re part of a reading community.
10. **Get your students to recommend books to one another.** Put a whiteboard up in the library or in your classroom. Encourage your students to write their personal book recommendations, along with a one-line review, for other students. This encourages your students not just to read, but also to talk about reading to one another.

The Bug Club reading challenge

So, you’ve created a healthy, thriving reading culture in your school. But what happens when school breaks for holidays? Primary school teachers often see a dip in their students’ reading abilities after the summer reading gap.

The Bug Club reading challenge aims to tackle that dip by motivating students to continue reading and making progress during holidays. You can set your students e-books to read during the break. When they come back to school, you can reward them with their very own bug club certificate. Find out more about the bug club reading challenge.

Pearson’s Article 2 How to Motivate Reluctant Readers

Reading in English can be one of the most challenging activities for young learners and teenagers, especially when they don’t get much enjoyment from reading in their own language.

These four reading strategies are fun, high-energy, and educational ways of getting even the most reluctant students involved in your reading lessons.

1. Bring outside interests into the classroom

- Lots of students find it hard to get enthused by the reading texts being used in their classrooms; they might feature complex vocabulary, be too generic, or just not resonate with their interests. An effective way of reaching out to the more reluctant readers in the class is to use reading materials that relate to the types of media they enjoy engaging with in their leisure time.
- Pearson's Marvel series of graded readers, which is being launched this February, provides an ideal opportunity for bringing popular movie culture into your learners' reading skills development. The Marvel series of readers includes recent box office hits, such as [Captain America: Civil War](#), [The Avengers](#), [Guardians of the Galaxy](#), and [Thor](#).
- Pearson's says that 'All of the readers are designed specifically for use in the classroom and feature an integrated skills approach that reinforces vocabulary and helps develop language skills. The readers come with a series of activities to be completed throughout the book rather than at the end, and key vocabulary is highlighted and defined'. Other schemes are available.
- Excitingly, most of our readers [says Pearson's] come with downloadable audio files (MP3s), so the students can listen along and hear the stories come to life. The audio can help students model pronunciation, get used to different accents and dialects, and make it even more accessible for students who are still less keen on reading.

2. Visit publisher sites for inspiration and ideas:

Visit the [Pearson English Readers' homepage](#) and find a book which matches your students' interests'.

Also visit Collins <https://www.badgerlearning.co.uk/struggling-and-reluctant-reader-books.html> for a range of accessible and engaging texts for readers of all ages

3. Gamify the reading experience (*n.b. adaption of this approach will be required*)

By adding simple game dynamics and mechanics to your reading activities, you can add a competitive and fun element to your classes. This could really help with maintaining the interest of learners who might otherwise lose enthusiasm.

The "dictogloss" activity is a good way of adding that extra element as it uses a countdown timer and peer-to-peer interaction to make the reading more of a competitive game.

- First of all, find a good level and age-appropriate story for your students. Before you begin reading the story, tell your students to pay close attention because they are going to re-tell it themselves later.
- You will need to read the story to the students in an engaging way, occasionally stopping, and asking students what they think will happen next.
- Afterwards, allow the students five minutes to write as much of the story as they can remember their notebooks.
- When time is up, put the students in pairs and allow them to compare stories and correct each other, combining their stories so they have a complete version. Help students by writing key vocabulary on the board as they request it.
- Finally, hand out the original story for students to compare. Get feedback to find out what new vocabulary they have learned and help them make corrections in their stories where needed.

4. Experiment with high-energy activities

Reading doesn't have to be a sedentary activity. Make use of the classroom space and use movement as a way to motivate and engage your students.

- Add a dash of physical activity to your reading task by turning it into a running dictation competition. At the same time, they will practice a whole range of skills; reading, listening, pronunciation, and writing.
- Prior to the class, stick some level-appropriate reading materials to a classroom wall; ideally you should space it out well and have one reading sheet for every two to four students (the material should be identical).
- Put your students into pairs and tell them they are going to have a reading race. Nominate one student to write and another student to dictate.
- Students who are writing must sit at a table on the opposite side of the room to the reading material. Students who are dictating must go to the text on the wall, memorize as much of the text as possible, come back to the writer and dictate what they can remember.
- Pairs must write as much as they can in four minutes, and when you get halfway through the activity, students should swap roles.
- Finally, ask the students to swap their papers and listen to your dictation, making corrections and asking questions as they go. The pair with the longest text and fewest number of errors is the winner!

5. Go beyond the text (*adaption will be required*)

- Taking a text and making it into something entirely original can also be a powerful motivator for creative students. Those who complain that reading is boring or too hard will have an extra reason to get through a story if there's a promise of creative fun at the end of the task.
- Tell students that once they have finished reading, they must re-imagine the story and characters and adapt it for a radio show, complete with sound effects, music and scripts.
- Depending on how creative your students are feeling, they could write a sequel or a prequel, or simply adapt the existing story – ideal if you're using a superhero reader from the Marvel series.
- They will need to review vocabulary and pronunciation, remember the details of the original story, explain the characters and their motivations, and plot and write their own scripts. Students can find sound effects on YouTube and record the whole thing on their mobile phones, or on a school computer.
- By turning a book into a creative project, not only can you motivate students to read, but you will reinforce vocabulary, pronunciation and have a lot of fun doing it.

C. Appendices

C1. SOME USEFUL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

I. The Reading Framework Sections 1-3

This document contains advice for teachers and leaders in all aspects of early years development.

It also contains audit tools to support leaders in self-evaluation and in resourcing. [www.gov.uk/government/publications The Reading Framework Teaching the foundations of Literacy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/The-Reading-Framework-Teaching-the-foundations-of-Literacy)

II. From the OFSTED Framework 2019

‘a rigorous approach to the teaching of reading develops learners’ confidence and enjoyment in reading. At the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to learners’ phonics knowledge.

And

III. Applying the EIF to the teaching of early reading in infant, junior, primary and lower-middle schools

342.

During all inspections of infant, junior, primary and lower-middle schools, inspectors must focus on how well pupils are taught to read as a main inspection activity. They will pay particular attention to pupils who are reading below age-related expectations (the lowest 20%) to assess how well the school is teaching phonics and supporting all children to become confident, fluent readers. This will include understanding how reading is taught remotely, where applicable.

343.

Inspectors will listen to several low-attaining pupils in Years 1 to 3 read from unseen books appropriate to their stage of progress. ^[footnote 70] They should also draw on information from the school’s policy for teaching reading, phonics assessments, phonics screening check results and lesson visits.

344.

In reaching an evaluation against the ‘quality of education’ judgement, inspectors will consider whether:

- the school is determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. All pupils, including the weakest readers, make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age-related expectations
- stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction are chosen for reading to develop pupils’ vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading. Pupils are familiar with and enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction
- the school’s phonics programme matches or exceeds the expectations of the national curriculum and the early learning goals. The school has clear expectations of pupils’ phonics progress term-by-term, from Reception to Year 2
- the sequence of reading books shows a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge that is matched closely to the school’s phonics programme. Teachers give pupils sufficient practice in reading and re-reading books that match the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they know, both at school and at home

- reading, including the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics, is taught from the beginning of reception
- the ongoing assessment of pupils' phonics progress is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme's pace. If they do fall behind, targeted support is given immediately
- the school has developed sufficient expertise in the teaching of phonics and reading

IV. From the OFSTED Deputy Director ((Early years) Blog:

'Gill Jones, our Deputy Director for Early Education, sets out how we look at early reading and phonics teaching as part of our new inspections'. 4.11.2019

'As I write, many schools will already have had an inspection under the new education inspection framework (EIF). A large proportion of those are primary schools.

If you're reading this and work in a primary, junior, infant or lower middle school, you should be aware that the new EIF includes a reading deep dive. The reading deep dive is a mandatory part of the new inspections in these schools.

Inspectors will look at 7 aspects of **early reading**, as set out in paragraph 298 of the [school inspection handbook](#).

If you've not looked at this section of the handbook yet, then do; it sets out what inspectors will be considering when they look at how well the school teaches children to read from the beginning of Reception.

We've made the early reading deep dive mandatory because it's so important that children learn to read fluently as quickly as possible. Inevitably, fluent readers will learn more, because they can read and gain knowledge for themselves.

All inspectors have been trained to focus on the things that make the biggest difference, drawing on the evidence set out in our report '[Bold beginnings: the Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools](#)'.

To prevent myths being created, I've set out here what inspectors will be looking at during deep dives into early reading. They will consider the extent to which:

- direct, focused phonics is taught every day in Reception and key stage 1
- children read from books with the sounds they know, while they are learning to read
- teachers and teaching assistants provide extra practice through the day for the children who make the slowest progress (the lowest 20%)
- all children in Year 3 and above can read age-appropriate books
- teachers instil in children a love of literature: the best stories and poems

However, we do not expect to see phonics in 'continuous provision' activities. This is a time to develop children's talk, play and wider curriculum experiences. A 'language-rich' environment is just about **talking with** children, not building displays, or sticking on Post-it Notes.

I've been looking closely at what inspectors are finding so far when they look carefully at reading on inspection. It's heartening to see the teaching of reading being reported on so clearly in our new-style inspection reports. Here is what some inspectors are writing in their reports about the teaching of reading:

“Leaders believe that the key to pupils’ success is their ability to read. Well-trained staff ensure the expert teaching of phonics. As a result, nearly all pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.”

“There is a well-organised system for teaching reading, which starts from the beginning of Reception.”

“Teachers are ambitious in their expectations of the sounds and words that children should be able to read by the end of each term.”

“Pupils told us they love to read. They spoke confidently about their favourite stories.”

“Almost all the children, including the disadvantaged, were successful in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Any pupil who falls behind is given extra help to catch up.”

I’m pleased to say that many schools are coming out well in reading because leaders are making sure that staff are experts in teaching reading, particularly phonics. However, some schools have been judged to require improvement because they are not teaching reading well enough. For example:

“Early reading and phonics remain areas for improvement, particularly for pupils who struggle.”

“They have attempted to bring together several phonic schemes that do not match. This leads to inconsistencies from class to class.”

“Pupils’ reading books are not always well matched to their reading stage. Books contain sounds they have not yet been taught. As a result, some pupils fall behind in their reading.”

“There are not enough phonics experts across the staff team to help all pupils to learn to read from an early age.”

“Staff try to develop pupils’ love of reading. Storytelling sessions occur daily, and these engage pupils well, but some of the books that staff read to pupils vary in quality.”

At a national level, I was disappointed to see that the phonics screening check (PSC) results did not improve in 2018/19. Most concerning was that nearly a third of children from poorer backgrounds did not reach the required standard, as opposed to 15% of those from better- off backgrounds.

As Amanda Spielman mentioned in our [Annual Report](#) last year, this does not have to be the case. Some schools in disadvantaged areas help **all** their children learn to read well from the start. Some schools have said that this gap in the PSC between poorer and more affluent children is because of the lower levels of cultural capital among disadvantaged children. However, as we know, the successful learning of systematic synthetic phonics is not dependent on cultural capital.

Good phonics teaching will make sure that **all** children learn to read early, regardless of their background. It is easy for inspectors to find out if a school has a team of expert reading teachers: if the slowest progress readers in key stage 2 can read age-appropriate unseen books with fluency, inspectors know the school has made reading its priority.

I hope that with a strong focus on the teaching of early reading in the EIF, it will lead headteachers to pay greater attention to ensuring that **every** child learns to read.



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