



Covid-19 Recovery

Phonics and Early Reading

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Reviewing Early Reading Provision: Overview

Teaching early reading is the core purpose of every school, but it is the beginning not the end. Only children who can read choose to read. The early teaching of reading involves making careful use of a systematic synthetic phonics programme, developing children's language and promoting a love of reading. The National Curriculum recognises the interconnectedness of SSP programmes, support for language development, the use of whole texts and planned provision that promotes a love of reading. These areas all need attention to accelerate pupils' progress in reading, enabling them to develop as readers in childhood.

Being **a frequent** reader, one who chooses to read, is fundamental. It is more of an advantage than having well educated parents. Using effective ways to guide pupils towards developing the habit of reading is a professional responsibility, alongside high-quality teaching of SSP, language development and comprehension. Developing the habit of reading in childhood is one of the most important things that you can do to leverage social change. Those pupils who *choose to read* will fly higher and further than those who do not. The 'will' influences the 'skill' and vice versa.

The English Hubs programme focusses on supporting excellent teaching of reading, with a focus on systematic synthetic phonics and early language in school-based Early Years and Key Stage 1. It is centred on three priority areas. The English Hubs have prepared audits to support schools in reviewing their provision to teach reading and to develop readers.

- (1) **Age-appropriate phonics provision:** Encouraging best practice in systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) teaching from school-based early years provision to the end of Key Stage 1, and as the primary reading strategy throughout the school. Undertake Audit 1 on SSP.
- (2) **Early language development:** Providing evidence-based approaches to early language development and closing the word gap in school-based early years settings, including appropriate use of formative assessment. Consider the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme.
- (3) **Promoting a love of reading:** Encouraging the habit of reading for enjoyment through whole-school research-informed approaches, including reading aloud to children at least once a day and encouraging reading at home; developing teachers' knowledge of appropriate children's literature. Undertake Audit 2 on the 4 specific RfP practices.



AUDIT 1: Accelerating Phonics and Reading Progress

Pupil progress in reading needs to be accelerated to help them catch up quickly; any further delay will result in the gap widening and will require even more work later on.

There are two core strategies to catch up pupils:

1. Ensure the class/group teaching of phonics is the best it can be. This is the most efficient way to speed up progress for the majority of children. When phonic and reading lessons are of the highest standard, the number of pupils who need extra support reduces dramatically.
2. Assess pupils in Y1, 2, 3 and 4 using the school's phonic assessments, to identify pupils who will benefit from additional daily support to keep up with the rest of the group/ class.

Use the short checklist, below, to:

1. Decide if your staff would benefit from further training in SSP and early reading
2. Check if you have the necessary systems to in place provide daily tutoring
3. Check if you have the necessary resources and matched decodable storybooks

If you have mostly Bs and Cs, you are invited to contact your nearest hub who can put you in contact with training providers. This is Little Sutton English Hub. The email address is englishhub@littlesu.bham.sch.uk

NB depending on your results you may wish to consider spending some or all of your catch-up funding on training and/or resources to support your SSP provision. Schools are free to spend catch-up funding as they wish, as long as it is intended to support catch-up.

A = strong; B = some development required; C = significant development required

Is your class/ group teaching of phonics the best it can be?

Check your phonics programme plans sufficient time to teach the full phonics cycle (as below), including time to practise and apply what pupils know. Practice and application could be in one longer session or at separate times of the day.

	A	B	C
1. Check your programme provides sufficient time <u>every day</u> to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revision of sounds taught, in isolation and, when known, within words - teaching new letter-sound correspondences and reading these in words by blending sounds, and later, in multi-syllabic words - identifying the sounds in spoken words before spelling - forming letters correctly - writing dictated sentences with known sound-letter correspondences (once 			



<p>pupils can write words and increasing in complexity as pupils make progress)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teaching common exception words* (not necessarily for the first term in Reception) 			
<p>2. Check your programme reinforces and applies the letter-sounds pupils have been taught by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having 'decodable' reading books are organised in the given sequence in your chosen SSP programme i.e. reading books build letter-sound correspondences cumulatively - giving children reading books that match the letter-sound correspondences they can read - practising forming letters sitting on chairs and holding pencils correctly - writing independently (for pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills) <p><u>Avoid</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sorting books by traditional 'Book-Banding' criteria based on a mix of methods, i.e. sequential 'decodable' books are not mixed with texts that rely on repetition, prediction and 'look and say' - Asking pupils to read books that require them to guess words or deduce meaning from pictures, grammar or context clues, or taught words using whole word recognition. 			
<p>3. Check your phonics programme has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teaching resources (cards, friezes, grapheme posters) matched to your phonics programme. - resources that are displayed so all children can see them easily, from the correct angle without having to turn or look upwards. - resources that help learning, rather than act as wallpaper 			
<p>4. Check you have a reading/ literacy leader who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organises training on phonics and early reading - organises frequent practice and coaching in the teaching of early reading and writing - assesses pupils (who are learning to read) every half-term to check knowledge of sound-letter/s correspondences and word reading - uses assessment data to decide areas for practice - observes/coaches teachers in lessons every week 			
<p>5. Check your phonic programme has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clear expectations for starting teaching children in children's first week of school - clear expectations for speedy progress term-by-term in Reception and Year 1 including expectations for the Phonics Screening Check - Individual pupil assessment records that show sound- letter knowledge, 			



<p>word reading and fluency to re-assess pupils every half term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advice on how to support the slowest progress pupils - systems for fast-tracking late entry pupils to catch up with peers and those in Y2/3/4 reading below expectations 			
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Tutoring

Invest in training a strong team of tutors employed by your school, rather than training up external staff who will only stay for a short time.

Most children will make speedy progress if they receive a few weeks of intensive tutoring or small group teaching. Those with significant learning difficulties may need much longer. Whatever the reason for tutoring, children will only make rapid progress when they have individual support from an enthusiastic and well-trained tutor. This may be a coach, teacher or teaching assistant. Some schools choose one or two tutors who work with *all* children who need extra support. Others allocate children to one person who works in their class or year group.

Make sure tutoring takes place every day at a regular time in a quiet place.

	A	B	C
<p>Assess pupils in Y1, 2, 3, 4 using the school's phonic assessments, to identify pupils who will benefit from additional daily support to keep up with the rest of the group/ class. (Also check lowest achieving pupils in Y5 and 6)</p> <p>Check that all your tutors/ practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have sufficient training to support these slowest progress pupils using the phonics programme that meets the criteria above - are committed to teaching children to read - know that, with the right support, <i>all</i> children can learn to read - have excellent attendance to ensure <i>consistency</i> and continuity <p><u>Avoid</u> catch-up programmes that do not match or complement your existing phonics programme.</p> <p><u>Avoid</u> catch-up programmes that use multi-cueing strategies and claim to use phonics as <u>one</u> of the strategies.</p>			



Audit 2: Reading for Pleasure (RfP) Provision

There are four core practices that, combined, motivate children to choose to read and become frequent readers.

1. **High quality reading aloud for pleasure.** This is in addition to reading aloud as part of literacy teaching. Reading aloud for pleasure enables children to access rich, challenging texts, offers a model for silent reading, prompts affective engagement and creates a class repertoire of 'texts in common' to discuss.
2. **Talking about texts reader to reader.** Talk about texts is essential to all literacy teaching, but this reader to reader talk is more informal, often spontaneous, and includes reciprocal book recommendations between children and teachers.
3. **Choice-led independent reading time.** Children need both time to read and support for making informed choices from a range of texts that tempt.
4. **Social reading environments in and around school.** These are key to creating a strong reading culture. Successful environments invite readers to engage and share the pleasures of reading.

All of the above depend on teachers' knowledge of children's literature and non-fiction.

Use the short checklist, below, to decide if:

5. staff have a wide and deep knowledge of children's literature and non-fiction;
6. staff are familiar with and skilled in the 4 practices that motivate children to choose to read and become frequent readers;
7. your books for RfP are high-quality, promote diversity and equality and are organised coherently;
8. your reading/literacy leader is able to plan, support and monitor high-quality RfP provision.

If you have mostly Bs and Cs, you are invited to contact your nearest Hub, Little Sutton English Hub. The email address is: englishhub@littlesu.bham.sch.uk who can support you or signpost you to research-based professional development, including web-based resources and CPD materials.

NB depending on your results you may wish to consider spending some or all of your catch-up funding on training and/or resources to support your RfP provision. Schools are free to spend catch-up funding as they wish, as long as it is intended to support catch-up.

A = strong; B = some development required; C = significant development required

Is the reading for pleasure provision across your school the best it can be?



	A	B	C
<p>1. Check your staff know and can enthuse about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - authors, illustrators and poets whose work they value (both traditional and contemporary) - books which skilfully promote equality and diversity - a shared set of age-appropriate RfP texts that children get to know well and grow to love. 			
<p>2. Check your school RfP provision includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - daily read aloud sessions for pleasure, that are engaging and develop a love of language - regular informal opportunities for talking about stories, non-fiction and poetry to each other and their teachers - time when children to read to themselves or each other. <p><u>Avoid</u> A random mix of reading activities that are not rigorously planned, offered or monitored.</p>			
<p>3. Check your social reading environments in and around school include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high quality texts that reflect all children’s realities - well displayed, accessible book collections, with multiple copies of the shared set - appealing and relaxing spaces for reading alongside others - book recommendations by teachers and children. <p><u>Avoid</u> Emphasising the physical space at the expense of the book choices available. Making reading a competition or offering rewards as this reduces intrinsic/long-term motivation.</p>			
<p>4. Check you have a reading/ literacy leader who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensures rigorous RfP provision alongside the teaching of reading (SSP) and teaching within the literacy curriculum - organises training on staff knowledge and the 4 core RfP practices - monitors RfP provision and uses evidence to plan continual improvements 			



- provides support for all parents so that they understand: the importance of RfP; how this how this relates to learning to read through phonics; and how to read aloud well and talk about books with their children.			

For further information about the four core Reading for Pleasure practices and developing teachers' knowledge of children's texts see:

<https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/reading-for-pleasure>