Milton Keynes City Council

Literacy Guidance.

Summary document

Spring 2025

Contents

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity for school staff about how to best support children in developing their literacy skills. It will also be helpful to all those involved in teaching children to read and write.

This document presents an overview of the way in which children learn to read and write; the skills required and why some children might experience additional difficulties. We also talk about how to intervene when difficulties are noted.

Reading and writing are complex processes that involve a number of other sub skills including language development and comprehension, fine motor skills, auditory discrimination skills, and visual recognition skills. Some children and young people experience difficulties in one or more of these areas, or with the ability to bring all these skills together.

Learning to Read

For a more thorough and comprehensive document please refer to: The reading framework

> *The Reading Framework is a comprehensive document for both primary and secondary schools which sets out how reading should be taught. It aligns with the Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework and the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and the national curriculum.*

Most of us learn to read remembering very little about the process involved. Learning to read and write increases our ability to access the school curriculum and achieve academic success, as well as to manage the literacy demands within wider society. It also opens up a world of being able enjoy reading read books, poem, songs, and stories.

> *"Reading is a cultural invention, not a biologically programmed facility. Children do not suddenly start reading, they need to be taught."*
>
> Bonnie Macmillan (educational psychologist and author of Why School Children Can't Read: No. 2 (Studies on Education)

"Real life" literacy skills depend on:
- *Purpose:* as adults we tend to read and write with clear reason, but how often is this the case for children learning and developing their skills?
- *Using a range of strategies*: switching between skim reading and intense reading or going from making rough notes to a detailed final draft.
- *Having definite outcomes* as a consequence of applying literacy skills: e.g. arriving at the right venue for a meeting or completing a piece of work by a specific date.

> *"Finding ways to engage students in reading may be one of the most effective ways to leverage social change".*
>
> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2002

Importance of Spoken Language

> *Strong foundations in the first years of school - GOV.UK is a research-based report from Ofsted that provides an evidence informed overview as to how schools can best secure the knowledge and skills that all children need by the end of Key Stage 1 to give them the best chance of educational success. Within the document it references Language as "the bedrock of thinking and learning" and how it should be a priority within the curriculum. Sharing books and having discussions with adults support the conceptual knowledge that will help develop writing skills, their understanding of what they read and extend their world knowledge.*

Before we consider how children become literate, we need to consider how they develop spoken language. Acquiring language is something that is natural, children do not need to be specifically taught. They do need to learn to distinguish the words in their language from the stream of sound they hear. Think about what it's like when you first hear a foreign language, and how difficult it is to make out the individual words. We need help from a native speaker to do this.

Therefore, within their early years, children should be exposed to a language rich environment which includes sharing books with adults, listening to poems and stories and joining in with action rhymes and songs. Adults need to help children develop their speaking and listening skills, developing a rich and varied vocabulary and their awareness that print carries meaning.

> *Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.*
>
> EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers

Spoken to Written Language

Being able to read and write means being able to use and decipher the "code" we use for putting spoken language into a written form.

> Look at this recoded version of the first line of a famous nursery rhyme, can you recognise it?
>
> Ytoxto hruxsz ub idyyuos xtmo

The example above provides the adult reader with some idea of the child's first experience with print… did you work it out? ('London Bridge is Falling Down').

Writing systems are codes for spoken language, and they must be taught. Nobody can unravel a written code without knowing something about how the code works, even when they are told that symbols on a page stand for sounds in their native language.

Reading Skills

> *Reading has been described as the product of decoding and comprehension, a model first proposed by Gough and Tunmer in 1986, who called it the Simple View of Reading.*
>
> *It has been fundamental in changing the debate about the teaching of reading over at least the last 20 years. It is frequently shown as a diagram, consisting of two axes and four quadrants: a horizontal axis for word reading (decoding) processes and a vertical axis for language comprehension processes.* [The reading framework](#)

The Simple View of Reading

Reading is complex and involves two interdependent processes or abilities:
- Word recognition (i.e. the ability to read and understand the words on the page, also known as decoding).
- Language comprehension (i.e. the ability to understand the language we hear and the language we read).

The Simple View of Reading is one framework that can help us to understand how a child learns to read, with research outlining some strengths and limitations of this framework.

If we want to better understand how to intervene to support a child learning to read, some more detailed knowledge of the cognitive process involved is needed. However, no single unified model details the many aspects involved in learning to read.
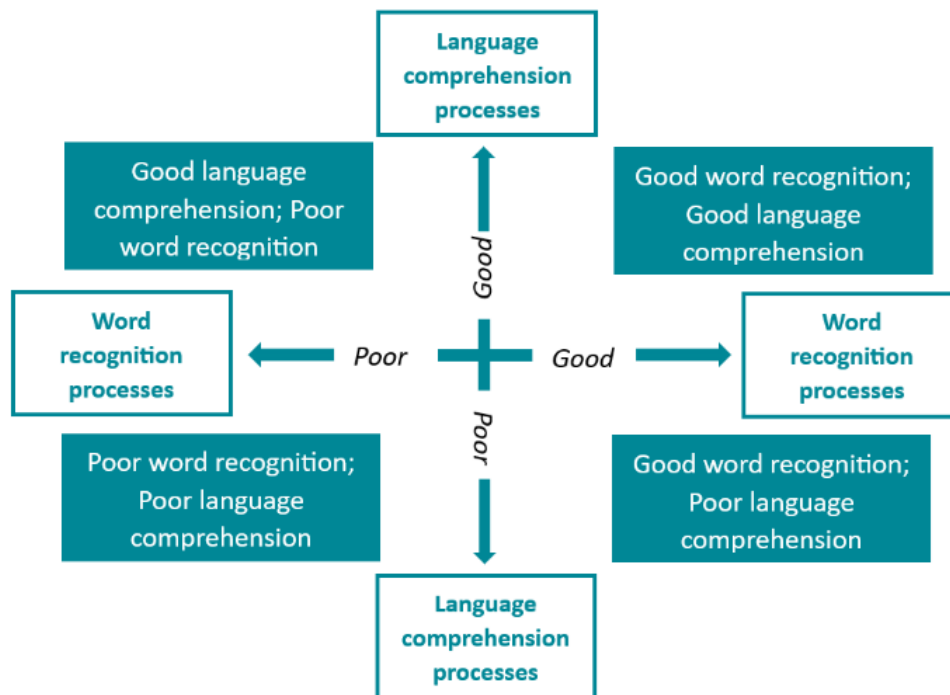
Fig 1. The Simple View of Reading

So, let's break down the skills we need to teach children in order to decode:

- **Phonological skills** refer to the ability to manipulate sound in the absence of print. Think about children being able to remember and recall rhymes and make predictions about what word might fit with the ending of nursery rhyme. Synthesis skills/blending (encoding) where sounds are put together to make words. Segmentation skills (decoding) where words are broken down into sounds.
- **Phonic skills** refer to children knowing that particular letter shapes represent particular sounds. We have what we refer to as initial code that is the main sounds represented by the 26 letters of the alphabet. We then have what we refer to as the extended code which refers to letter combinations such as ck sh, th and er.
- **Whole word recognition** is a fundamental skill in learning to read. Children's progress in word recognition is closely related to their phonological skills. (appendix 1)

Why can't we learn to read all words by sight?

Whilst it is useful to learn the 100 most frequently occurring words (as these account for about 50% of all text) learning more does not provide a significant benefit.

Research shows us is that ordinary people (including children) can only remember about 1,500 – 2,000 abstract visual symbols. This is not enough to be able to read by memorising whole words – i.e., by using a sight vocabulary alone (McGuinness and Pinker 1998).

Why phonics?

Evidence shows that teaching phonics is the best way to teach children to read words, e.g., the EEF (education endowment foundation) considers phonics to be one of the most secure and best-evidenced areas of pedagogy, recommending all schools use a systematic approach to teaching it.   The reading framework

* Jonathan Solity from The University of Warwick conducted a research project called The Early Reading Research which promoted teaching a set number of phonic skills made up of 26 initial letter sounds and 31 letter combinations. Alongside being able to read the 100 key sight words, children would then be able to access 90% of all written text.

Learning to Write

Why do we need to write?

- To i**nform** - so that we can share facts and statements to let people know what happened, this type of writing is informed by "evidence".
- To **explain** - this type of writing is about how we might make something, think of instructions or recipes.
- To **narrate** - to tell a story, to provide a commentary; this may be either fiction or non-fiction.
- To **persuade** - to convince the reader of an opinion or view providing reasons and supporting details to persuade the reader to agree or take action.

Why is writing important?

- It supports us to develop our reading skills.
- Through writing we can express who we are.
- It makes our thinking and learning visible and permanent.
- It fosters our ability to explain, develop and refine our ideas in our communications with others.
- It preserves our memories and ideas.
- It allows us to understand our lives.
- It allows us to entertain others, to keep in touch with others and to communicate. our thoughts and feelings to others.
- It is the primary basis on which children's work learning and intellect will be judged.
- It equips us with communication and thinking skills.
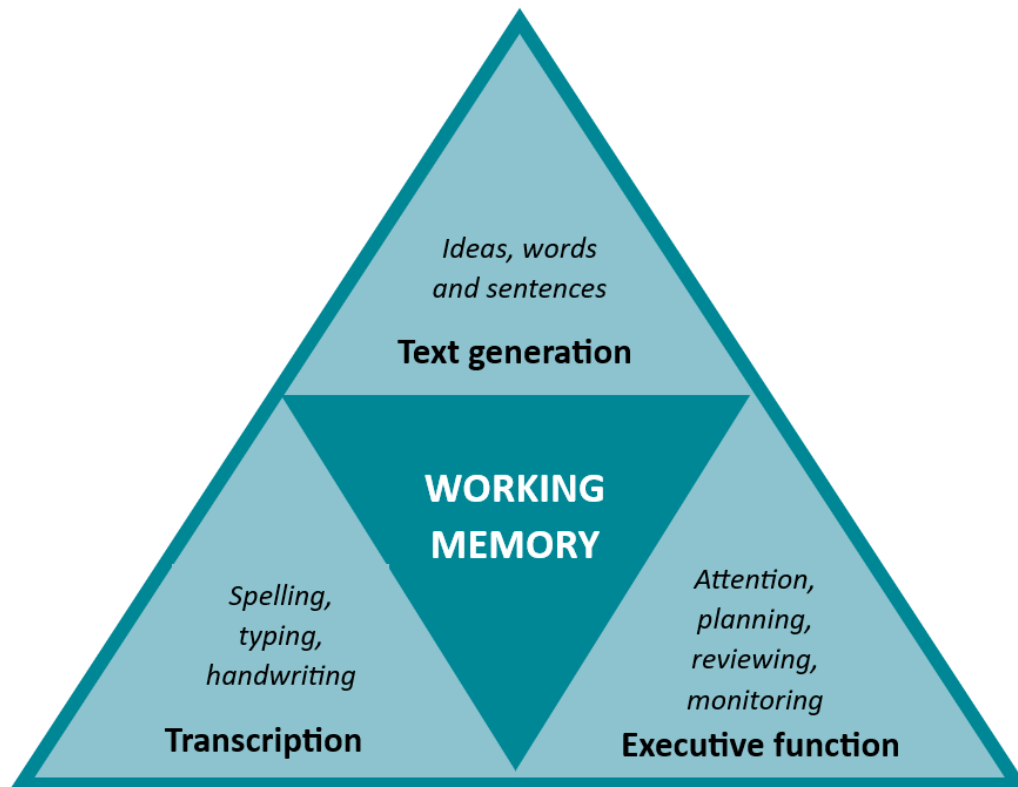- It is an essential job skill.

Fig 2. Based on 'The Simple View of Writing' developed by Berninger et al. from the Education Endowment Fund Literacy_KS1_Guidance_Report_2020.pdf

The Simple View of Writing sets out the key groups of skills that work together as children write which include:

- Text Generation: This involves thinking of ideas and using oral language skills to put thoughts into words and sentences.
- Transcription Skills: This enables the writer to move oral language into written language.
- Executive Functions: This refers to 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.

Spelling

Through exposure to print and spoken language children develop a sense of the alphabetic principles. They learn to link letter shapes to letter sounds and that words are made up of syllables that can be broken down into letters. Early attempts at spelling may include "plausible phonic attempts" as children develop their skills with phonemic analysis – for example spelling horse as "hors" and apple and "apul". As exposure and experience develop children learn letter positions, combinations and sequences that make a word (the orthographic pattern), eg *ck, ll* at the end of words, double letters in the middle of words and adding *ing* or *ed* to route words.

How children learn to write

Pre-writing skills are those that help children develop their ability to hold a pencil in order to mark make. Children need to develop their skills to draw, copy and colour. A key factor in prewriting skills is being able to make key shapes such as: – O I X + /, alongside squares and triangles. This is where high quality early years provision is highly important in order to provide opportunities and resources in fun, engaging and motivating ways for children to develop their confidence and competency alongside their peers. Children move through the stages set out in Figure 3 below as they develop their skills and competencies.

Developmental Stages of Writing

Pre-Literate	
Stage Description	**Sample**
Scribble Stage- starting point any place on page, resembles drawing large circular strokes and random marks that do not resemble print or communicate a message	
Symbolic Stage- starting point any place on page, pictures or random strokes/marks with an intended message	"I am happy."
Directional Scribble- scribble left to right direction, linear, intended as writing that communicates a meaningful message/idea	"I am playing."
Symbolic/Mock Letters- letter-like formations, may resemble letters but it isn't intentional, interspersed w/ numbers, spacing rarely present	

Emergent	
Strings of Letters- long strings of various letters in random order, may go left to right, uses letter sequence perhaps from name, usually uses capital letters, may write same letters in many ways	
Groups of letters-groupings of letters with spaces in between to resemble words	
Labeling pictures- matching beginning sounds with the letter to label a picture	
Environmental Print- copies letters/words from environmental/classroom print, reversals common, uses a variety of resources to facilitate writing	

Transitional	
Letter/Word Representation-uses first letter sound of word to represent entire word, uses letter sound relationships	(I went home.)
First/Last Letter Representation- word represented by first and last letter sound	(cat)
Medial Letter Sounds- words spelled phonetically using BME sounds, attempts medial vowels, uses some known words, more conventionally spelled words, one letter may represent one syllable, attempts to use word spacing, writing is readable	(My cat is brown.)

Fluent	
Beginning Phrase Writing- using all of the above skills to construct phrases that convey a message connected to their illustration	
Sentence Writing- Construction of words into sentence formation, maybe multiple sentences, writing is readable, may use punctuation, known words spelled correctly, topic focused, BME with detail	
Six Traits of Writing- Students use Six Traits of Writing (Conventions, Organization, Voice, Ideas, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency)	

Revised 8/10

Fig 3. Stages_of_Writing_Development.pdf

The skills needed to physically write:
- Hand and finger strength
- Pencil grasp
- Hand eye co-ordination
- Bilateral integration
- Upper body strength
- Object manipulation
- Visual perception
- Hand dominance
- Hand division

Activities to encourage these skills should be offered through both structured and unstructured opportunities.

Literacy difficulties

The age range of 4-9 years is critical for literacy development. Most children do learn to read with exposure to language, sharing books, being taught the skills above, and having plenty of practice and reassurance. Children will develop their skills at different rates, and it is important that they enjoy reading and are motivated to apply their developing skills in context.

Key risk indicators

Key risk indicators for children vulnerable to finding literacy acquisition more difficult than their peers include:
- Speech difficulties (particularly children who find it hard to produce clear word sounds or have a reduced vocabulary) after the age of 5 years.
- Hearing difficulties, including those that are temporary e.g., glue ear.
- Poor phonological awareness, such as difficulty identifying and manipulating (blending, segmenting) the speech sound segments in spoken words.
- Difficulty acquiring letter knowledge – both letter sounds and letter names.
- Phonic difficulties.
- Language comprehension difficulties.

The SEN Code of Practice 2015 (6.17 CoP) provides guidance for schools on what can be considered as making less than expected progress. This is characterised as progress which:
- *Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline.*
- *Fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress.*
- *Fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers.*
- *Widens the attainment gap.*

Some pupils continue to struggle to learn to read and/or spell accurately and fluently despite appropriate high-quality teaching, assessment, and intervention. They present with severe and persistent literacy difficulties and different people may use different terms to describe these difficulties, for example, specific learning difficulties or *dyslexia*.

An approach which promotes assessment through teaching (ATT) will help identify which children are vulnerable to developing literacy difficulties (see Appendix 1).

Dyslexia

It is important to clarify the use of the term *dyslexia* and the implications for assessment and support at a school level in Milton Keynes. This is based upon current research evidence and debate in this area and effective practice in identification and support.

In Milton Keynes, we use the current evidence-based definition of dyslexia by the British Psychological Society (BPS) from 1999 (reprinted in 2005).

> *Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis of a staged process of assessment through teaching.*

A similar definition was offered in the Rose Report (2009) and repeated within the Reading Framework:

> *Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.*

With the following key characteristics noted:
- *Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory, and verbal processing speed.*
- *Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.*
- *It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.*
- *Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration, and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.*
- *A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.*

> *Dyslexic pupils may take longer than other pupils to embed their knowledge of GPCs and may need supporting in small incremental steps from the very beginning, so they achieve success each day. However, systematic synthetic phonics is the best evidenced way to teach decoding, including for these pupils. They should be assessed regularly to ensure that any gaps in their knowledge are remedied quickly and effectively.* The reading framework

An approach which recognises that dyslexia is a descriptive term is promoted in Milton Keynes. This means that use of the term does not have any specific bearing on interventions, support, or resources as these need to be matched to the child's or young person's specific and presenting needs.

In terms of practice, an essential element in the identification of dyslexia is that word level difficulties (in reading and spelling accuracy, fluency, and automaticity) are evident, which are severe and prove resistant to high quality teaching, personalised learning opportunities and evidenced-based intervention. In relation to reading, this would be a consistent difficulty in decoding words accurately and/or fluently despite access to high quality reading instruction and additional evidence-based literacy interventions which focus on reading decoding skills.

The approach to the assessment, identification, and support of reading difficulties at the word level promoted in Milton Keynes, requires that support and/or intervention occurs at the first level of concern.

> *Other conditions*
> *A very few pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) might not be able to access direct literacy instruction. For pupils who are working at Standard 1 in the pre-key stage 1 standards, it may not be appropriate to begin teaching them to read.*
> *Framework [The reading framework](#)*

Writing difficulties

Common difficulties that can arise in the process of learning to write:
- Difficulty remembering how to form letters without visual prompts or when copying from a book or whiteboard.
- Poor spacing and positioning of letters and words.
- Discomfort in gripping a pencil for any length of time.
- Weak fine motor skills, hand strength and dexterity.
- Difficulties concentrating, or poor behaviour in the classroom that is less evident in the playground.
- Excessive tiredness after short periods of writing.

Similar to dyslexia, where there are severe and persistent difficulties with handwriting, we would promote an assessment through teaching approach to identify the areas of need and use the assess plan do review cycles to monitor progress. It may also be appropriate to refer to the occupational therapy team or look at strategies and ideas available on the NHS website to address fine motor skill needs. [Education resources - Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust - CYP Website](#)

How to help

Universal – Quality First Provision

Within Milton Keynes we also have Ordinarily Available Provision documents:
Ordinarily Available Provision - School Age | Milton Keynes City Council
Ordinarily Available Provision - Early Years | Milton Keynes City Council

Effective provision for pupils with literacy difficulties requires a whole school approach, reflected in policies, classroom practice and the support available to individual pupils.

High quality literacy teaching helps every child get off to the best start. This incorporates approaches and strategies that enable pupils at different levels of literacy attainment to access lessons confidently, including through a range of environmental and delivery adaptations. In conjunction, regular assessment in order to monitor the progression of all pupils as a result of the teaching received is vital.

The reading framework provides a useful backdrop of both how children learn to read and write, the subskills they need to develop and how to assess and track children's progress.

Dyslexia friendly policies in schools and settings are most effective when they form part of the whole school development plan and when progress towards the goals and targets on the plan are regularly monitored. Dyslexia friendly schools recognise that teaching staff, as individuals, are key to the success of students overcoming their difficulties.

> *The four key elements of good practice*
> - *A whole school ethos that respects individuals' differences, maintains high expectations for all and promotes good communication between teachers, parents, and pupils.*
> - *Knowledgeable and sensitive teachers who understand the processes of learning and the impact that specific difficulties can have on these.*
> - *Creative adaptations to classroom practice enabling children with special needs to learn inclusively and meaningfully, alongside their peers.*
> - *Access to additional learning programmes and resources to support development of key skills and strategies for independent learning.*
> *The Rose Report 2006 and OFSTED 2010*

Schools are also encouraged to:
- Complete dyslexia awareness training.
- Regularly review their training in order to keep up to date in line with national developments.
- Ensure that children are accessing teaching which focuses on the key building blocks and follows an assessment through teaching model.

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Please also refer to [Telling the story: the English education subject report - GOV.UK](#) strategies to promote good literacy development for primary and secondary schools which include:

- Encouraging children to become competent speakers.
- Promoting a wide range of books and encourage all children to develop a reading "habit".
- Planning a reading curriculum that over time builds pupils' reading fluency, linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world, and that does not limit them to responding to exam-style questions.

If children are not developing their literacy skills as might be expected, then appropriate targeted support should be implemented.

Targeted support

After a period of teaching, some children may demonstrate difficulties learning to read; and/or frustrations with writing. This can be distressing for the child and impair their ability to engage with the wider curriculum. Early identification of difficulties and effective intervention is therefore essential.

The same approach to helping children to develop their literacy skills is also the proven approach to helping children who are having difficulties. We just need to pinpoint which aspects they are having difficulties with and ensure our interventions are specific, targeted, and linked to an Assessment Through Teaching (ATT) model. Such a model provides a rigorous framework for the Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) process.
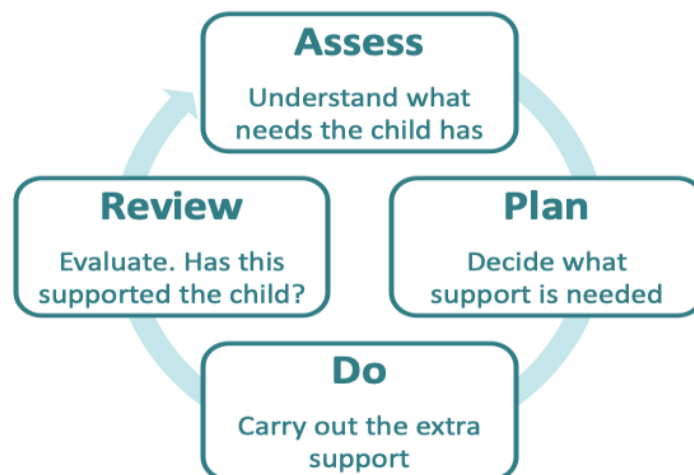

Fig 4. Assess Plan Do Review

The ATT model supports school staff to monitor a child or young person's access to the curriculum and their response to a skill-based intervention aimed at the following:

- 100 key sight words.
- Phonic skills (single sounds and letter combinations).
- Segmentation skills.
- Synthesis skills.
- Handwriting skills (motor co-ordination and hand eye co-ordination).
- Reading and writing for meaning.

This process of ongoing assessment of progress over time, also known as 'Response to Intervention' (RTI), is a dynamic system whereby the support in place is constantly adapted and refined based on how the pupil responds. Key components of RTI at the *targeted level* include:

- A range of assessment information is used to identify the specific areas of literacy that need improving and inform the appropriate focus of an intervention.
- Literacy interventions (small group or one to one) are structured, evidence based and delivered on a distributed practice basis (little and often).
- Interventions programmes are followed precisely by trained school staff who have access to high quality support.
- Continued inclusion of all children and young people in high quality literacy teaching.
- The use of environmental and delivery adaptations in the classroom to compensate for any literacy difficulties.
- Exploration of ways to increase motivation, confidence and enjoyment of reading and writing with the involvement of the child/young person.
- Progress monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of personalised support, i.e., through Precision Teaching approaches (Precision Teaching Guide).

Four strands of literacy support

The four strands of literacy support outlined below can be a useful framework when planning personalised support.

Literacy skills development work

where the focus is on developing the accuracy and fluency of single skills through a structured approach

Classroom adaptations to ensure access to the curriculum

where the focus is on ensuring the pupil can access teaching input, show their learning (output) and access the same learning as others

Literacy based activities that are motivating and build confidence

where the focus is on increasing motivation, confidence and enjoyment of reading/writing.

Review and problem-solving

where the focus is on checking progress is being made and considering whether any changes need to be made to the plan of support
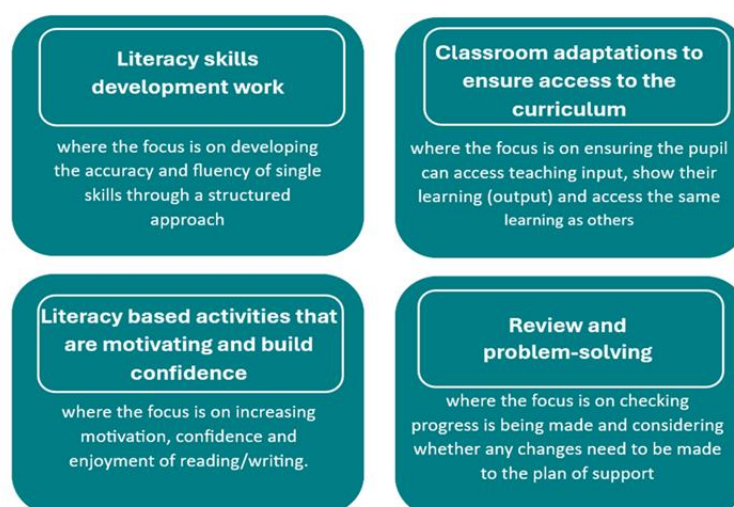
Fig 5. The Four Strands of Literacy Support

Motivation and Confidence

We need to provide all children with a reason to read and write; they need to see these skills as both purposeful and pleasurable. In order to support this, they need to see adults reading and writing for both purpose and pleasure.

Children need to be encouraged to choose books which are rich in language and have interesting stories that they can engage with. Where children are unable to read these books independently, they should still be allowed to choose these books and a Paired Reading approach used (Paired Reading Guide). Children need to be encouraged to apply their emerging and developing written skills in new and novel situations.

Assessments

There are a range of assessment tools which schools can use to identify reading skill difficulties in order to plan a personalised programme of support.

> *Pre-key stage 1: pupils working below the national curriculum assessment standard - GOV.UK*
>
> *Schools are encouraged to use the pre-key stage standards to assess pupils working below the national curriculum at Key Stage 1.*
>
> *2021 Pre-key stage 2 - pupils working below the national curriculum assessment standard*
>
> *These standards must be used for statutory assessment at the end of key stage 2 for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum assessments engaged in subject-specific study.*

Criterion referenced assessments
These link to the specific reading intervention programmes you may be using in your schools to identify where children are in relation to the skills you are teaching.

The reading framework provides comprehensive checklists for assessment and planning interventions.

Standardised tests

Name of assessment	Skills assessed/description	Age range
The British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS3)	Receptive vocabulary. It measures a child's understanding of spoken individual words (by having them choose a picture that best represents a spoken word).	3-16
The Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB)	Different aspects of phonological processing. Can also be used to inform further teaching and intervention programmes to help with the child's specific phonological difficulties.	6-14

The Phonological Assessment Battery, Second Edition, Primary (PhAB2)	The PhAB2 provides updated versions of the six standardised tests of the PhAB, as well as four new tests, in line with the latest research in phonological awareness.	5-11
The York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC)	Analyses reading accuracy, rate and comprehension. Includes Single Word Reading Test as part of it (for free).	
	- Early Reading (in Primary set): includes word reading, letter sound knowledge and phoneme awareness.	4-7
	- Primary set	4-11
	- Secondary set	11-16
New Group Reading Test	Sentence and passage comprehension	6-16 (group)
New Group Spelling Test	Word spelling and spelling in context (sentence completion). Completed digitally.	7-14+ (group)
Progress Test in English	Technical English skills (spelling, grammar and punctuation), reading comprehension and writing. Paper or digital. Also available: version specifically for Y6-7 transition.	Digital 7-14 Paper 5-14
DASH (Detailed Assessment of Handwriting Speed)	Assesses handwriting speed – can provide evidence for Access Arrangements for Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests and for General Qualifications	9-16
Any others		

Pupil voice measures

Children views of them self as a reader.
This provides a standardised score as to how children view their skills, confidence and motivation (Henk   Melnick_1995_RSPS.pdf)

We can also just ask children and help them to identify what they like, what they find hard and what support would be helpful.
Me as a Reader Sheet — PlanBee
This could be easily adapted for a me as a writer document.

Recommended Interventions

Please also refer to Telling the story: the English education subject report - GOV.UK

If a child or young person requires additional support, there are many evidence-based interventions that can be carried out in school. Any intervention should be done alongside the universal support that school is putting in place.

There are a number of sources that school can access to find out what evidence-based interventions are available. It is beyond the capacity of this document and the associated Guidance document to provide an exhaustive list of evidence-based literacy interventions available. However, useful sources to access include:
- Greg Brooks (2016): https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/documents/files/What-works-for-children-and-young-people-with-literacy-difficulties-5th-edition.pdf
- Evidence 4 Impact: https://www.evidence4impact.org.uk/
- Whole School SEND: https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/page/cognition-and-learning
- Education Endowment Foundation: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/

Where evidence-based interventions are used, they **must** be implemented according to the way the programme was designed. Strategies for maintaining effectiveness of an intervention or programme include:
- Ensuring that all staff are committed to the fidelity of the programme or intervention.
- Taking account of cultural adaptation.
- Considering the language used in the programme or intervention.
- Staying true to the duration and intensity of the programme or intervention.
- Taking steps to avoid programme drift.
- Staying up to date with programme revisions and new materials.

We recommend a Precision Teaching approach to support the monitoring of the teaching intervention to ensure that effectiveness of the teaching strategies. Training is provided through the SEND support offer to schools and the centralised training programme.
Centralised Training Booklet FINAL 2024-2025_0.pdf

Assistive Technology

Some children and young people's difficulties with literacy/dyslexia will be so severe and persistent that they will struggle to read throughout their lives and will benefit from assistive technology.
Key considerations when planning to use assistive technology to support individuals are:
- What role will it have in their learning?
- How will the child/young person be taught how to use it properly?

This area is continually growing and improving, but here are some resources that can help children and young people:
- Clicker is the most widely used reading and writing tool in the UK for young learners with dyslexia. Versions available for Windows/Mac, iPad, and Chromebook (www.clickersoft.com)
- Dragon dictate used for dictation (Mac version) Dragon Naturally Speaking (Windows version), or Dragon Anywhere app (www.nuance.com).
- Otter Voice Meeting Notes is used for dictation.

- Easy Spelling Aid app helps children independently spell words (Easyspellingaid.com)
- Exam pen instantly displays scanned words on the screen and instantly says the word or line of text aloud. The exam pen is approved by Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) (www.scanningpens.co.uk)
- Whispersync is an app for kindles that allows you to switch between reading and listening (www.audible.co.uk)
- Read and write software enables the user to read on-screen text aloud (https://www.texthelp.com/en-gb/products/read-write/)
- Claro-read enables the user to read on-screen text.
- Predictive text software Co:Writer Universal (https://learningtools.donjohnston.com/product/cowriter/)
- Predictive text software sprint-plus (https://www.sprintplus.be/en)
- Mind-mapping Kidspiration (http://www.inspiration.com/Kidspiration)

Further support

The local authority provides services to assist schools in supporting children and young people with special educational needs, including literacy difficulties.

SEND Support is the 'front door' for all the SEND Education Teams (Educational Psychology Team, Inclusion Specialist Teaching Team, EHC Specialist Teaching Team, SEND Assessment and EHC Review Teams). This includes different options for support or routes into involvement from the Educational Psychology Team and the Inclusion Specialist Teaching Team.

Schools can contact **SEND Support** for advice on SEN concerns about children and young people. Advice and support will be given with clear recommendations to implement.

Both the Educational Psychology and Inclusion Specialist Teaching Team offer schools **consultation support** via a Teams/or telephone call with a brief record of the discussion/agreed next steps. A review can be arranged if needed. This can be booked by contacting SEND Support.

Direct requests for SEND Services involvement are also considered for children and young people who meet one or more vulnerability criteria.

Schools can also access **training and workshops** as part of the SEND Team Centralised Training Offer. This includes training on topics relevant to children and young people who are experiencing learning challenges due to difficulties with developing and applying their literacy skills. For further information please see the SEND Team Centralised Training Offer. Centralised Training Booklet FINAL 2024-2025_0.pdf

Information for parents can also be found here https://www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk/dyslexia-information-parents-carers

Useful websites

- http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/quality-mark
- CBBC video – dealing with dyslexia
- See dyslexia differently animation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11r7CFlK2sc.
- DfE BDA Neurodiversity training
  https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about/projects/dyslexia-spld-support-project-2016-17
- National Literacy Trust | UK Literacy Charity
- BookTrust: Getting children reading | BookTrust
- Joanna Standbridge EdPsychEd | Literacy | Educational Psychology Online CPD

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Appendix 1: The 100 key sight words from Solity: The Early Reading Research Project

100 Key Sight Words: account for 50% of all texts

a   in   of   to   and   is   that   was   he   it   the

went   I   my   then   with

(these 16 words account for 25% of all texts)

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am   had   me   some   are   has   one   there   at   have

out   they   come   her   saw   this   for   his   see   we   go

little   she   when

---

about   could   make   take   after   did   new   their   all   do   next

them   an   down   not   three   as   from   now   time   away

get   off   today   back   got   old   too   be   here   on   two

up   him   once   because   big   into   other   us   but   last

our   very   by   like   over   were   call   live   put   what

came   look   said   will   can   made   so   you

Appendix 2: Assessment Through Teaching Model

Steps of Assessment through teaching Framework In line with SEND Code of Practice 2015		Practical Implications
Step One **ASSESS**	Baseline literacy assessment	Ensure assessment includes: • Standardised assessments of word level reading and spelling skills. • Curriculum-based assessments (school assessment). • Skill-based assessments. • Identifying strengths as well as difficulties
Step Two **PLAN**	Instructional content: Deciding what and how to teach	Organise whole class teaching so that: • What is being taught is clear. • Teaching support staff are clear what is expected of them by sharing lesson plans with them in advance. • Task analysis caters for all cognitive and linguistic skill levels. • Build in opportunities so that strengths are celebrated. Organise interventions so that: • Accurate assessment has been completed to identify the areas of literacy that need targeting. • The focus is on skills that are most useful and that can be generalised. • Skills that are readily confused are separated. • One skill is being identified to teach. • The most useful skills are taught first. • Ensure teaching assistants are appropriately trained and equipped. • Identified strengths are to be used to plan learning.
Step Three **DO**	Instructional delivery and classroom organisation	Organise whole class teaching so that: • Reasonable adjustments are in place to enable all CYP to access (read) and produce (write) the written word using alternative methods of reading and recording, as required. Whole class teaching is made explicit across the range of cognitive and linguistic skills through: • Clear differentiation. • Reducing task demand to match need. • Use of questioning and feedback.
Step Four **REVIEW**	Assess and evaluate learning	Ensure that the access to the curriculum is evaluated by assessing the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments. Ensure that evaluation of interventions includes assessment of: • Accuracy, fluency, and generalisation. • New and old learning. • Self-esteem and well-being. Ensure that CYP are aware of their progress and the next steps in moving learning forward.

Appendix 3: Areas of literacy concern identified and recommended focus of an intervention.

Area of concern identified	Recommended focus of the intervention
Word reading	• Synthesis – this is a phonological skill (i.e., children or young people do not look at print) and refers to a child or young person's capability to hear individual sounds and put them together to make words. • Systematic phonic intervention that focuses on the most frequently occurring grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) in written English. • Teaching children and young people to correct the pronunciation of words that have been decoded accurately but lead to a non-word pronunciation. • Sight vocabulary intervention that focuses on the most frequently occurring phonically irregular words. • Vocabulary knowledge. • Generalising reading skills to real books.
Comprehension	• Word Reading to accuracy and fluency. • Oral language skills. • The following skills: literal, inference, summarising, simplifying syntactic and semantic complexities, critical skills, study skills. • The following knowledge: vocabulary, facts, reasoning skills, logic, schemata, syntax, specific topic knowledge.
Spelling	• Segmentation - this is a phonological skill (i.e., children or young people do not look at print) and refers to a child or young person's capability to hear a word and separate it into the individual sounds. • Writing letters to dictation. • Phonic, whole word, morphemic spelling interventions. • Generalising spelling skills into independent writing/recording.
Writing	• Letter and number formation. • Word formation. • Writing sentences. • Oral language skill.

Taken from 'Teaching reading, writing and spelling to children and young people with literacy difficulties', Practice Guidance October 2020. Warwickshire Educational Psychology Service