

# Supporting Reading in Secondary

This document sets out our approach to the teaching of reading for older pupils in our AP Academies.

## Identifying gaps

All pupils are screened on entry to our AP Academies\*. In Secondary, where the reading entry test (New Group Reading Test -GL Assessment) highlights need, a further diagnostic screening is used. (Fresh Start) This is done on a one-to-one basis with a trained teacher or teaching assistant. Depending on the specific needs identified, pupils receive individual Fresh start phonics and fluency catch up teaching on a one-to-one basis beyond English lessons, and careful thought and attention is given about how to sensitively manage this so that pupils get the support they need without this need being highlighted to others.

Where fluency and extra practise is an identified need beyond the taught curriculum, again, a bespoke package might be appropriate. Our screening tools above enable us to determine the most effective support. The importance of our well planned and taught KS3 and 4 curriculum, with focus on developing language, oracy, comprehension in our very small teaching groups is also key. All teachers are trained in supporting reading, but also specific strategies for each pupil. We rescreen in order to understand the impact and effectiveness of our interventions termly, and more regularly for pupils on the specific Phonics programme. This is summarised in Figure 1 below.

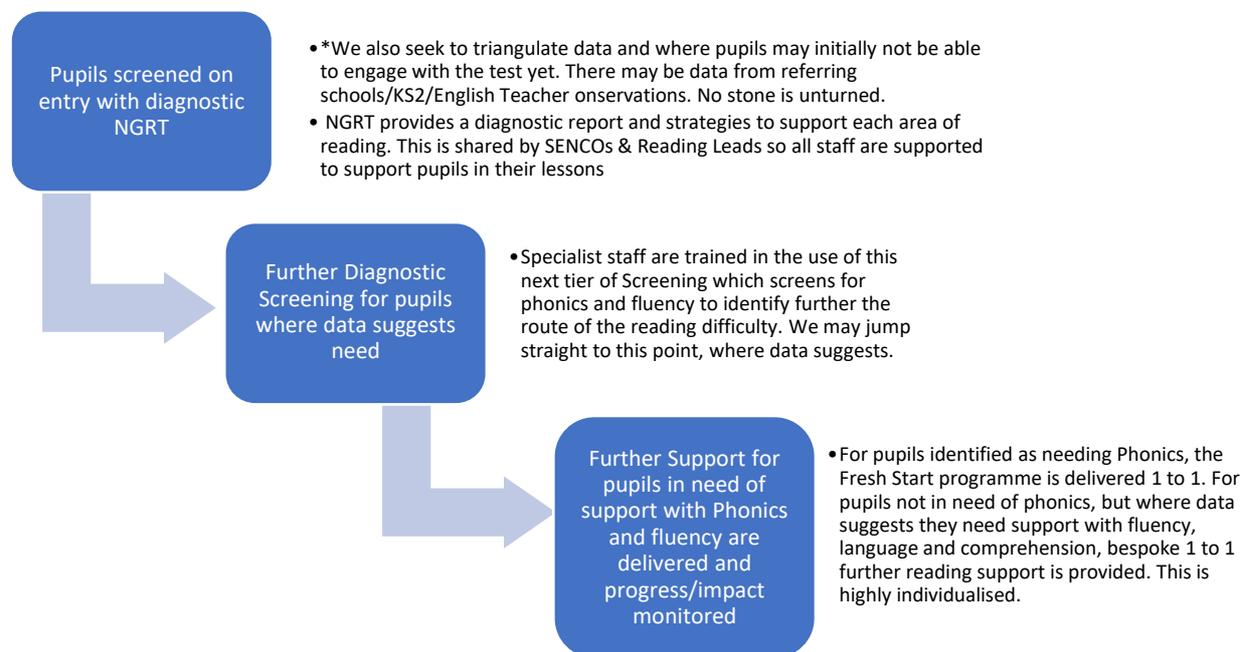


Figure 1-Wave Model for Reading Screening and Support

In Alternative Provision, at times we have pupils who are struggling to engage with the above planned model of support and so we may need to develop some further creative timetabling and staffing solutions to reach the point of engagement in being taught to read. Here we build on Phase 1 outcomes around engaging and attending. We never stop. Leaders in Academies will have individual education plans around each pupil which are kept regularly under review so that no pupil is ever left behind. There is no one size fits all in implementing our resolute intent that all pupils will be supported to learn to read.

## How we support reading and language development and comprehension across the curriculum in Secondary?

We are mindful of the EEF guidance on ‘disciplinary literacy’ below. Reading Lead/English Lead and SENCOs regularly cascade information from the diagnostic screenings above and suggest strategies that will support individual pupils at the specific and identified points of difficulty, whether this be decoding, language, comprehension and fluency. Leaders in our school ensure that all staff understand how pupils learn to read, and can be supported. Leaders direct staff to DfE English Hub specialist training, such as ‘Phonics to Fluency’, where we have an ongoing strong relationship with our Hub.



**IMPROVING LITERACY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**  
Summary of recommendations

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Prioritise ‘disciplinary literacy’ across the curriculum</b></p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject</b></p> 	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Develop students’ ability to read complex academic texts</b></p> 	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Break down complex writing tasks</b></p> 	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject</b></p> 	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Provide opportunities for structured talk</b></p> 	<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students</b></p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy is key to learning across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.</li> <li>Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum that emphasises the importance of subject specific support.</li> <li>All teachers should be supported to understand how to teach students to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.</li> <li>School leaders can help teachers by ensuring training related to literacy prioritises subject specificity over general approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers in every subject should provide explicit vocabulary instruction to help students access and use academic language.</li> <li>Effective approaches, including those related to etymology and morphology, will help students remember new words and make connections between words.</li> <li>Teachers should prioritise teaching Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which students are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.</li> <li>Teachers and subject leaders should consider which words and phrases to teach as part of curriculum planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training focused on teaching reading is likely to help secondary school teachers teach their subject more effectively.</li> <li>To comprehend complex texts, students need to actively engage with what they are reading and use their existing subject knowledge.</li> <li>Reading strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, prediction and questioning can improve students’ comprehension.</li> <li>Strategies can be introduced through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.</li> <li>Teachers can break writing down into planning, monitoring and evaluation, and can support students by modelling each step.</li> <li>Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.</li> <li>Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combining reading activities and writing instruction is likely to improve students’ skills in both, compared to a less balanced approach.</li> <li>Reading helps students gain knowledge, which leads to better writing, whilst writing can deepen students’ understanding of ideas.</li> <li>Students should be taught to recognise features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject.</li> <li>Teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation explicitly can improve students’ writing, particularly when focused on meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk matters: both in its own right and because of its impact on other aspects of learning.</li> <li>High quality talk is typically well-structured and guided by teachers.</li> <li>Accountable talk is a useful framework to ensure talk is high quality, and emphasises how talk can be subject specific.</li> <li>Teachers can support students by modelling high quality talk, for example including key vocabulary and metacognitive reflection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools should expect and proactively plan to support students with the weakest levels of literacy, particularly in Year 7.</li> <li>Developing a model of tiered support, which increases in intensity in line with need is a promising approach.</li> <li>Assessment should be used to match students to appropriate types of intervention, and to monitor the impact of interventions.</li> <li>Creating a co-ordinated system of support is a significant challenge requiring both specialist input and whole school leadership.</li> </ul>

### Developing fluency and comprehension

For our older pupils in secondary sometimes language comprehension and vocabulary still remains a barrier, rather than phonics and our diagnostic

screenings support precise identification of the areas of difficulty, along with Dyslexia screenings by the SENCO. Fluency gives the reader the choice to read at a speed that allows for comprehension and can be adapted to the purpose of the reading. Beginner readers, however, do not have a choice about speed because they are still engaged in decoding the words on the page.

Through our curriculum planning, we address fluency with many opportunities to read together in class and support comprehension and Tier 2 explicit vocabulary instruction. Through screening pupils on entry, we ensure we have decodable texts matched to reading abilities for extra practise, and to move pupils progressively forward rather than casting adrift as ‘free readers’ once assessed off needing phonics. Equally, our planning at Key Stage 3 reflects ambitious and difficult texts, to prepare for demands of GCSE. Our subject specialists support pupils’ fluency. Interventions where needed can support extra practise to enable pupils to put in ‘reading miles’ again, and details of approaches to reading books and sessions to really ensure this is effective, not a tick box, are detailed below and timetabled/planned by each Academy bespoke to their pupils to ensure impact. The planned English curriculum, based on the full National Curriculum objectives; accurate assessment to identify gaps; our skilled and adaptive teaching, small teaching groups, high pupil to adult ratios, mean that pupils move forward from starting points.

## **How do we encourage positive attitudes to reading and/or ‘a love of reading’ for our older pupils?**

Many pupils who join us have experienced reading failure, and have turned away from reading. In Alternative Provision, we understand that approaches may need to be bespoke in order to engage, whilst never deviating from our core belief that every child can and must be supported and taught to learn to read. Each Academy outlines their approaches below.

Our Secondary curriculum is rich in story, where pupils develop writing and reading skills concurrently and coherently, along with a high focus on developing oracy, language and vocabulary. ‘Class readers’ -whole texts- are detailed within our Reading curriculum. We adapt learning, but maintain the highest and inclusive expectations that pupils can attain GCSE qualifications. We continue to read widely and often beyond the analytical element of the GCSE within English lessons, so that pupils are able to ‘stay in the story’ and understand that stories are to be enjoyed, not just for transactional analysis or as a model for writing.

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## **Reading Interventions and Approaches for Secondary Pupils at River Dart Academy**

At River Dart Academy, we prioritise the teaching of reading. Pupils are screened on entry, and for those where we feel there may be further investigation needed, we screen also for gaps in phonics. We use the RWInc Fresh Start programme to enable us to identify the exact pathway the student needs to take in order to make progress in their reading. It is well resourced, and structured with regular training.

Our SENCO and English Lead are both fully trained, and cascade this to our wider staff. Together they ensure there is a weekly focus on reading across the curriculum, and liaise regularly with SLT and subject teachers. Through this process, staff are supported to apply the strategies to support reading that they share.

Pupils have English lessons every day, and the reading curriculum is designed to allow access and challenge for readers at different stages. Pupils are taught in small groups with staff to pupil ratios of typically 1 to 6, but often 1 or 2. This allows for individualised reading support and teaching informed by the data we gather.

Pupils in need of further support are timetabled by the SENCO/Reading Lead for 1 to 1 bespoke support. This will take place in our dedicated reading space which is currently being developed into a warm and safe space where pupils can be taught to read. Pupils who need phonics are taught through Fresh Start. The latter stages of Fresh Start also support fluency. Pupils who need further support to put in reading miles also receive support.

### **Our Universal Provision**

-All pupils at RDA are timetabled for English every day. Our taught English/Reading Curriculum is ambitious, coherent and well sequenced. (See English Subject Pages for further details)

-This is a very small group session, with our specialist and experienced English Lead, enabling effective challenge and support.

-As per Figure 1 in the Trust model, we ensure those pupils in need of further support -whether phonics or fluency-will receive this

Ring-fenced Story Time-Our ambition is that all pupils timetabled for English every day listen to a 10 minute story-time from the ambitious chosen class novel-often at the end of the lesson, but sometimes at the start as part of the settling routine. For example, Patrick Ness- A Monster Calls. This is linked to the Curriculum topic, but enables pupils to listen with no other demand than to engage with the story, to build engagement with why stories matter-to give motivation to want to read. We enable pupils to hear language and vocabulary above that which many can independently read in our ambitious choice of texts.

Tutor time also provides pupils with a range of magazines and reading materials to support independent choice; our Foyle Library grant has also supported a wider range of books available to encourage reading and e-reading.

All pupils at RDA are matched with an individual reading book, expertly supported in choice by our experienced English Lead who has a wealth of experience in young person Literature.

We have a new 'Reading Room' which pupils' access. This is a quiet and safe space, where pupils are able to read independently or with an adult, and as part of any specific teaching (e.g. phonics Fresh Start) Our aim is to reengage pupils with reading, providing the space, support, resource and environment that will make a difference.

### **Further Support**

Pupils in need of phonics receive support in 1 to 1 sessions, 3 times a week with our specially trained RWINC teacher/SENCO. We follow the DfE approved Fresh Start phonics programme, and linked anthologies.

For pupils not in need of phonics, but who need further support with fluency, we again timetable further fluency support and reading practise where needed, beyond the timetabled daily English sessions above.

### **Across the Curriculum**

Our Reading lead regularly updates staff on Reading scores and what these mean in practise, and deliver regular CPD in how to support pupils wider reading throughout the curriculum. The NGRT diagnostic tests provide individual reports that can also help staff identify strategies they can use to support pupils gain meaning from text and build fluency. Further CPD is provided in how to support developing vocabulary, for example, and all staff identify and actively teach key Tier 3 words as part of the planned curriculum. Also see above section in document.