

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.

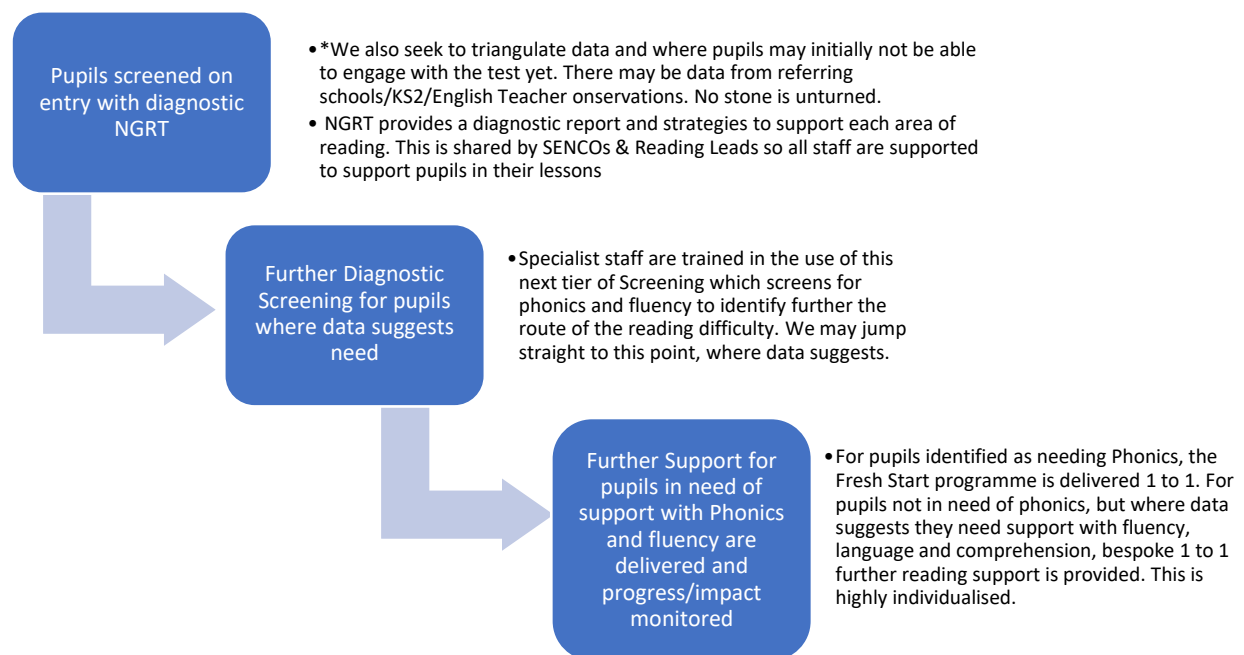


Figure 1-Wave Model for Reading Screening and Support

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

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.
