

## **Part B - English Hubs' Secondary Reading Challenge Checklist**

### **Working with secondaries**

We understand that every secondary school is at a different stage in developing their reading or literacy strategy, and this checklist is designed to support schools at whatever point they are at in their journey.

Some secondary schools will be in the early stages of establishing reading or literacy as a strategic priority. Others will have well-established policies and practices. We anticipate that English Hubs can work with secondary schools regardless of their starting position. Hubs will use these checklist to assess what reading support a secondary school already has in place and then identify a manageable number of areas to focus on, enabling secondary schools to develop their offer, particularly for pupils with reading needs.

#### **A. Building a team of experts**

*'...Build a team of expert teachers who know and understand the processes that underpin learning to read, and draw on expert training, practice and coaching to achieve this.'* (*The Reading Framework, 2023, Department for Education*)

#### **The Senior Leadership Team:**

- Appoints staff to lead on reading who have, or will be supported to develop, expertise in promoting reading for all learners and in supporting pupils with reading needs to make progress.
- Allocates dedicated, regular time for staff leading on reading to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Supports the staff leading on reading to provide CPD to school staff as needed.
- Ensures processes are in place to identify pupils with reading needs, deliver targeted interventions and monitor their progress.
- Ensures that the professional environment for staff is supportive with sufficient time for high-quality dialogue and collaboration.
- Promotes a joined-up approach to supporting pupils with reading needs, including ensuring subject teachers are aware of the reading needs of pupils in their classes, for example by sharing data from reading assessments, and addressing barriers such as timetabling.
- Promotes a whole-school approach to supporting reading proficiency and engagement, including ensuring all subject teachers understand how to



support readers at all levels in their classroom practice and providing opportunities for pupils to access challenging texts.

- Adopts new approaches based on evidence of what has (and has not) worked before, using both internal and external evidence (e.g. pupil outcome data and research-based guidance) to support reading needs across the school.

### **The staff leading on reading:**

- Are represented on the Senior Leadership team, or regularly meet with the Senior Leadership team to review progress against strategic priorities in developing reading. This may include discussions on the impact of interventions on pupils' reading progress.
- Establish and review processes to identify reading needs.
- Establish and review intervention timetables to ensure their effectiveness, including collaborating with the SENCO.
- Analyse assessment data to identify areas for improvement.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of reading and engage with emerging evidence.<sup>1</sup> As part of this, staff leading on reading should consider how reading, writing and spoken language are interrelated.
- Ensure all staff receive relevant and up-to-date training, including specialist training for staff delivering reading interventions and diagnostic assessments.
- Coach staff delivering targeted support or ensure staff have access to an expert. If the staff leading on reading are unable to coach those delivering interventions, they should set out a plan to develop this expertise and use experts in the interim.
- Champion reading across all subjects, ensuring necessary adaptations are implemented to prevent reading from becoming a barrier to lesson accessibility.
- Maintain records of all CPD, practice, and coaching sessions.

### **The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO):**

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, the key responsibilities of the SENCO include:

- Having day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN policy and coordinating specific provision to support individual pupils with SEN, including those with EHC plans.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy (NPQLL) is designed for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading literacy across a school, year group, key stage or phase.



- Providing professional guidance to colleagues such as the staff leading on reading.
- The SENCO may also collaborate with feeder primary schools and the staff leading on reading to discuss pupils already receiving or potentially needing support in reading as they enter KS3. This collaboration ensures that all staff members are equipped to support pupils with SEN in their reading needs.

Some pupils with reading needs will also have SEND, meaning that the SENCO will need to work closely with staff leading on reading. Support for the weakest readers should be prioritised and it should be clear who is responsible for this group.

### **Heads of Department:**

- All subject leaders should attend professional development sessions focused on supporting readers at all levels to ensure a cohesive, whole-school approach.
- Subject leaders should assist subject teachers by promoting quality first teaching and strategies to ensure pupils with reading needs can access lesson material and learn effectively. This should form part of a whole school approach to professional development (see below).

### **B. Whole School Professional Development**

*‘Literacy in secondary school must not simply be seen as a basket of general skills. Instead, it must be grounded in the specifics of each subject.’* (Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools, Education Endowment Foundation)

- Professional development is strategically selected to enhance the capability and knowledge of secondary school staff in promoting reading for all learners and supporting pupils with reading needs. This is particularly important in Key Stage 3, as pupils transition from primary to secondary school.
- Time is protected for teachers to plan, test and implement new, evidence-informed ideas. (Department for Education, National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Leading Teaching Framework)
- Any professional development time is used productively and colleagues perceive the relevance to their work. (Department for Education, National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Leading Teaching Framework)
- All subject teachers receive training to improve their understanding of how they can support pupils with reading needs through their classroom practice. Each subject takes a subject-specific approach to supporting reading.



## **C. Assessment, identification and progress**

- In order to support pupils' reading, schools supplement SATs results with data from reading screening and diagnostic assessments in Year 7. Schools may also use additional assessments to build a rich picture.
- Screening assessments are administered to all pupils to ensure that reading needs are not missed. Where screening indicates reading below the average range for age, individual diagnostic assessments are used to confirm and specify the nature of reading needs (e.g. phonics, word reading, fluency, comprehension) so that support is accurately targeted.
- Processes are in place to monitor the progress of pupils with reading needs, based on carefully chosen data, given that the complexity of some pupils' reading needs may mean that assessment data does not reflect progress in specific reading domains.
- Reading assessment data is shared with subject teachers, to support adaptive teaching.

## **D. Support and Intervention**

### **Training (as noted in section A):**

- All subject teachers receive training to enhance their understanding of how to support pupils with reading needs through their classroom practice and quality first teaching and know what the signs are that pupils have reading needs.
- Staff responsible for implementing interventions and conducting assessments undergo appropriate training to ensure these activities are performed effectively and with fidelity, maximising their impact on pupils.
- Staff leading on reading undergo training to enhance their knowledge of reading (and writing and spoken language) so that they can support all colleagues and identify their training needs – for example the NPQ in Leading Literacy.

### **Interventions:**

- A needs-based approach is used to select interventions, to ensure interventions accurately target pupils' reading needs. For example, pupils with decoding needs receive rapid phonics support.
- Consideration is given to how well aligned programmes are to the wider evidence base (for example EEF's Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools



guidance<sup>2</sup> and DfE's Reading Framework 2023<sup>3</sup>). The EEF secondary literacy guidance report sets out the following key features of effective literacy interventions:

- Regular sessions that are maintained over a sustained period and carefully timetabled to enable consistent delivery;
  - Training from experienced trainers or teachers;
  - Structured supporting resources and/or lesson plans with clear objectives;
  - Assessments to identify appropriate pupils, guide areas for focus, and track pupil progress;
  - Tuition that is additional to, and explicitly linked with, normal lessons; and
  - Connections between the out of class learning and day-to-day whole class learning.
- The school monitors the implementation of programmes and takes action where programmes are not having the expected impact.
  - When monitoring implementation, schools reflect on data to identify any problems that arise as well as solutions to those problems. (EEF, A School's Guide to Implementation)

## Resources:

- Staff involved in assessments and intervention programmes have access to the necessary resources and training.
- Pupils are provided with resources to support their reading in all lessons.
- A collection of books is maintained that is accessible to pupils of all reading abilities.

## E. Parental Involvement

- Parents are kept informed about the reading interventions their child is receiving.
- Opportunities are created for parents to engage with the school, such as workshops or meetings, to discuss their child's reading progress and strategies for improvement.

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<sup>2</sup> [Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools | EEF](#)

<sup>3</sup> [The reading framework - GOV.UK](#)