



The reading framework

Teaching the foundations of literacy

July 2021

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**Section 1: The importance of reading
and a conceptual model**

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Section 2: Language comprehension

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Section 3: Word reading and spelling

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Section 4: Children at risk of reading
failure

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Section 5: Leadership and
management

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Section 6: Building on the foundations
with older pupils – a summary

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Overview

Funded by



Department
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English Hubs

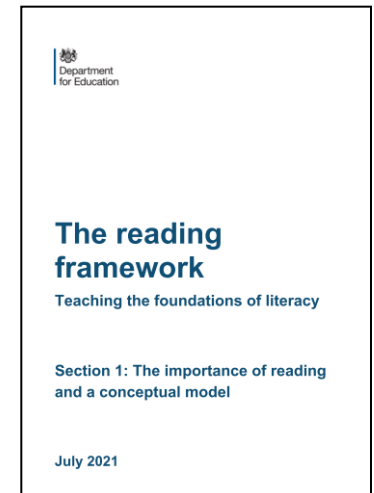
- Created by literacy experts, school leaders and 34 English Hubs.
- Outlines guidance based on research and classroom practice for:
 - high quality teaching of **systematic synthetic phonics (SSP)**
 - teaching and assessing **early reading** in Reception and year 1
 - the importance of **talk and stories** when teaching reading
 - use of **SSP for older pupils** who are risk of falling behind
 - **school and parent partnerships** to support reading

Importance of Reading – Section 1

- All **talk** is useful!
- **Adult interactions** (school and home) bring huge benefits in supporting children to become committed and enthusiastic readers
- Book-related talk introduces children to **language** they might not hear in ordinary conversation but **all opportunities** for conversation are essential!

Parents reading with children by 5 years old

- Never read to, 4,662 words
- 1-2 times per week, 63, 570 words
- 3-5 times per week, 169, 520 words
- Daily, 296, 660 words
- 5 books a day, 1, 483, 300 words



Reading for pleasure

- Children cannot be highly engaged if reading words is a **struggle**.
- **Phonics, fluency** and **motivation** are essential.

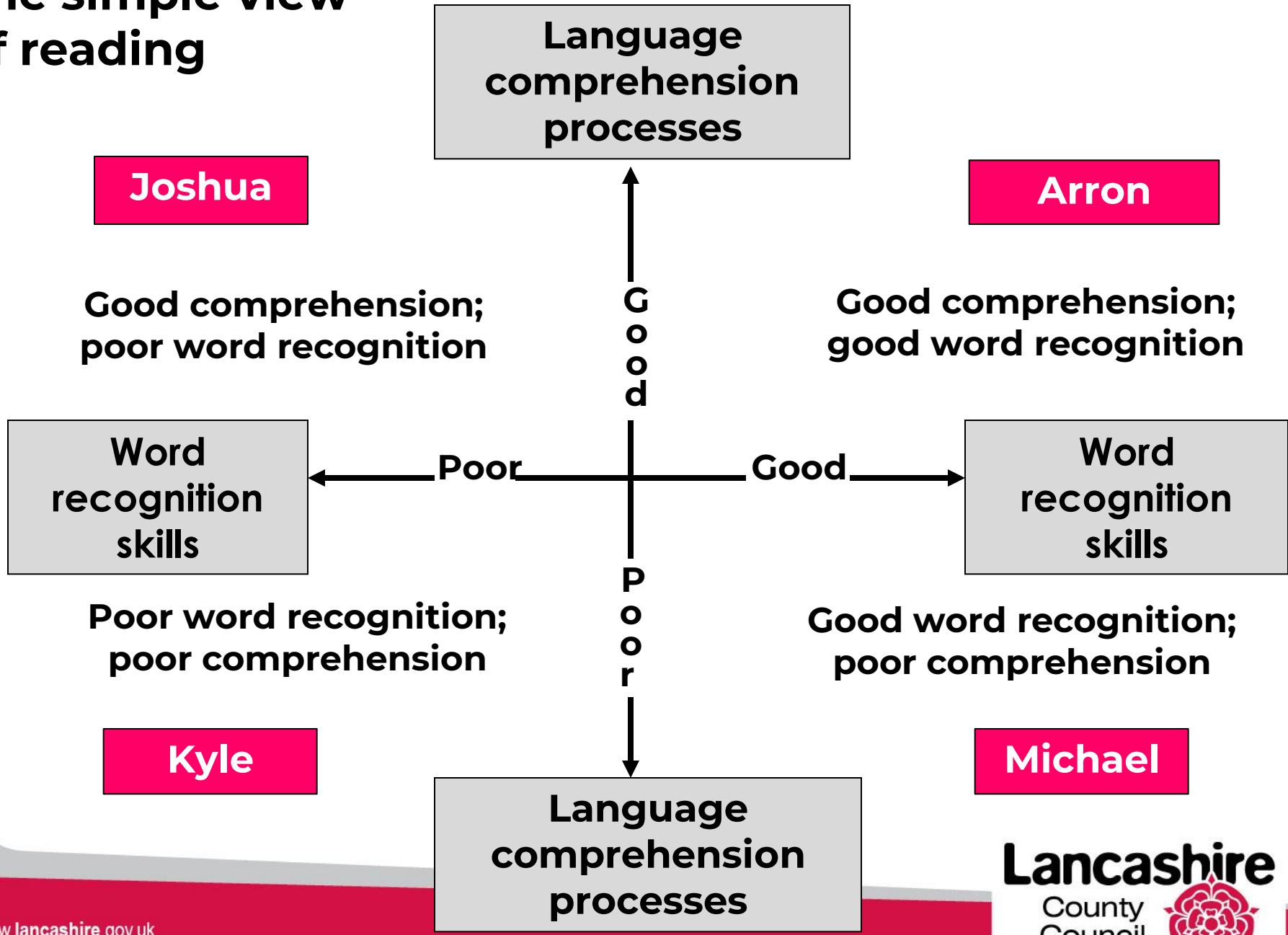
Motivation and cognitive differences

- Access to interesting and **meaningful reading** materials.
- **Narrative / stories** make the most difference.

Economic and social argument

- Being unable to read significantly **narrows the range of work and life opportunities**.
- If children are taught well, their backgrounds, ethnicity, level of disadvantage, their disabilities and other variables, such as boys, summer born children, should **rarely prevent their learning to read**.

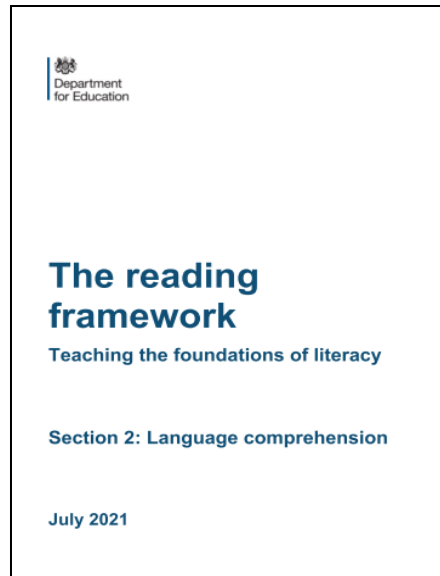
The simple view of reading



Language Comprehension – Section 2

Developing talk

- Language-rich environment – adults talk with children constantly throughout the day.
- Spoken language is part of the NC programme of study for English and all seven areas of EYFS.



Back and forth talk across the curriculum

- High-quality dialogue and direct teaching.
- Back and forth interactions involve the adult in:
 - thinking out loud, **modelling new language** for children
 - paying **close attention** to what the children say
 - validating the children's attempts at using **new vocabulary and grammar by rephrasing** if necessary
 - asking **closed** and **open** questions
 - **answering** the children's questions
 - **explaining** why things happen
 - deliberately **connecting** current and past events (do you remember when?)
 - providing models of **accurate grammar**
 - extending children's vocabulary and **explaining new words**
 - **connecting** one idea or action to another
 - helping children to articulate ideas in **well-formed sentences**

Listening

- **Model** and support good listening.
- Reinforce and **praise** good listening.

Talking with a partner and giving feedback

- Establish **strong routines**, turn taking and use a variety of pairings.
- Select pairs to feedback who **don't put their hands up**.
- Encourage and expect children to articulate in **well-formed sentences**.
- Use **choral repeating**, frequently.

Speech, language and communication needs

- Reduce **noise levels** where possible.
- Consider **seating** to support hearing and paying attention.

Practices that reduce interaction with children

- Observing, recording, collecting and compiling evidence takes **teachers' time away** from teaching, including talking.
- **'Hands up'** can limit classroom interaction.
- **Noisy environments** make it difficult to hear what the teacher / other children are saying. Calm classrooms provide the best chance to interact.

Storytimes

- Identify a **core set of stories** to read to each year group – traditional and modern, alongside non-fiction texts.
- Consider how these texts support the English curriculum and the wider curriculum – **link texts**.
- Ensure all teachers know texts read in **previous year groups**.
- Share the list with **parents**.
- **Re-read** stories to promote children reading it for themselves.
- Bring texts to life by using **drama and role play**.

Using stories and rhymes to develop vocabulary and language

- **Repeated readings** of texts ensure children have multiple exposure to vocabulary and language.
- Children encounter vocabulary that they are unlikely to hear in everyday conversation – **tier 2 vocabulary**.
- Ensure to **explore, explain and make connections** with new vocabulary.

Book corners

- **Books / words of the stories** are more important than decoration!
- Avoid displaying too many books at once. **Change regularly**.
- Use **outward-facing** shelves.
- Ensure the book area reflects the **current curriculum / story-time books**.
- **Dull and dog-eared books** should be removed!

Reading with children at home

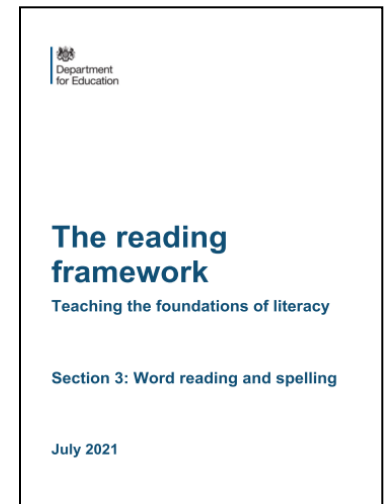
- Encourage **any family member** to read aloud to children.
- Support parents by **modelling reading aloud** sessions, e.g. parent meetings or film sessions for the school website.

Poetry and rhymes

- Identify a **core set of poems** for each year group:
 - rhyming poems
 - nursery rhymes
 - alliterative poems
 - traditional songs and rhymes
 - nonsense rhymes
- **Frequently**, share and learn poems, songs and rhymes in each year group.

Word Reading and Spelling – Section 3

- **Fidelity** to one SSP programme (progression and the supporting materials).
- Children should **not** be asked to learn lists of **high frequency words**.
- Teach **lower-case and capital letters together** and ensure children know they share the letter name and represent the same sound.
- The national curriculum specifies that children should ‘read aloud accurately books that are **consistent with their developing phonic knowledge** and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words.’
- Books should be purchased and structured in **cumulative steps** when children are learning to read so they can decode every word.



Teaching a systematic programme

- Phonics sessions should begin **as soon as** children start their **Reception year**.
- Phonics teaching may start with **ten minute sessions** at the beginning of the year and build up to **an hour a day** to include **direct teaching, practising and applying** with different activities.
- Sessions can be organised into **whole class, group or one-to-one sessions** depending upon need.
- Ensure **maximum participation** throughout phonics sessions and use assessment to determine next steps daily. Identify children who might need **immediate extra support**.

Direct teaching of reading and writing

- For **reading**, children should:
 - revise GPCs
 - be taught new GPCs
 - practise reading words containing those GPCs
 - read common exception words
 - read decodable phrases, sentences and books containing GPCs and exception words they already know
- For **writing** (spelling and handwriting), children should:
 - practise segmenting spoken words into their individual sounds
 - choose which letter or letters to represent each sound
 - practise a correct pencil grip
 - be taught the correct start and exit points for each letter
 - respond to dictation from the teacher, practising words in sentences that only include the GPCs and exception words they have learnt.

Handwriting

- Schools should consider the **advantages and disadvantages** of delaying the teaching of joined handwriting.
- If **cursive or pre-cursive script** is used in Reception, ensure it does not **slow down** children's writing. If the muscles in their shoulders, arms and hands are still developing.
- Consider when it is appropriate to use a **mini-whiteboard and pencil and paper**.

Writing composition

- Before children write independently, they need to know:
 - what they want to say
 - how to identify sounds in words
 - at least one way to spell each of the sounds of English
 - how to form letters
- **Ensure plenty of practice from** dictation with a pencil and paper.
- Avoid **writing at length** as this results in cognitive overload.
- **Orally compose** sentences before writing.

Resources

- Ensure teaching spaces for phonics are **well-organised**.
- Phonics should be taught in a **quiet space**.
- **Highly decorated walls** can hinder children's ability to concentrate and absorb instructions.
- Model how to use **classroom posters and charts** for support when reading and spelling.

Activities that can hinder learning

- Activities must be high quality, well-designed, practical, efficient and focused on the **goal of reading and spelling** using phonics.
- Consider if activities such as painting, colouring, playing in the sand or water are **effectively supporting word reading or writing**.
- Ensure **maximum participation** with phonics learning by avoiding asking individuals to read or write whilst others simply watch.

Children with SEND

- **SSP** rather than a whole word approach provides the best opportunity to gain functional literacy.
- Provide materials that limit distraction and are **age-appropriate**.
- Use multiple **overlearning** opportunities for recall, practice and application of the alphabetic code.
- Plan for daily teaching at a **slower pace** through the SSP progression with **engaging and motivating** lessons.
- Use **assessment information** to take full account of a child's strengths and next steps.

Developing fluency

- Fluency is **accuracy and automaticity** in word reading.
- Children need **practice** to gain automaticity by decoding accurately.
- **Re-reading** helps to develop fluency – reading at speed does not help.
- Teachers need to **model** re-reading of sentences and sections to support phrasing.
- Teaching reading in **small groups or one-to-one** is most effective. Select texts which **closely match the GPCs** the group knows and **identify key vocabulary** to explain.

Assessment – formative and summative

- Once teachers are expert in teaching the schools SSP programme, they can **respond to misconceptions** and adjust teaching minute by minute!
- Summative assessments might be **termly or half-termly**.
- Use **data to inform** the phonic curriculum and teaching, pinpointing specific gaps in knowledge. Respond immediately!
- Use **individual records of progress**, not simply group records. Essential for children at risk of not meeting standards in PSC or failing to learn to read.

Phonics screening check (PSC)

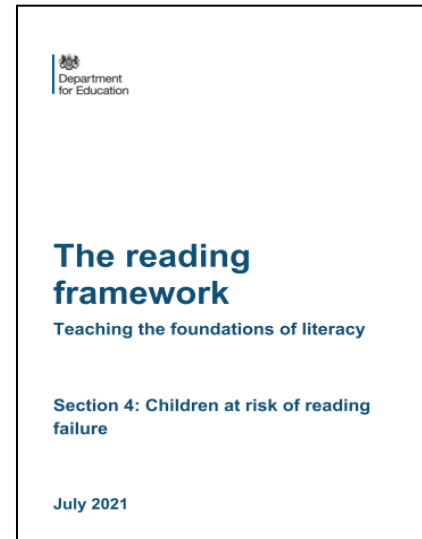
- Year 1 children take the PSC in June (since 2012)
- Year 2 children resit the test if they did not meet the standard in Year 1.
- Meeting the standard **does not mean children are readers!**
- Children need **considerable practice** in decoding unfamiliar words and reading familiar words 'at a glance' to build up stamina.
- STA says that around **90 words per minute** is a good indicator of children reading with sufficient fluency. However, **some children might read more slowly** to be able to understand what they are reading.

Assessing reading comprehension

- Avoid assessing reading comprehension using summative assessments before children read fluently.
- When children are learning to read, they should listen to, talk about, and explore vocabulary in books that include words beyond those they can read themselves.

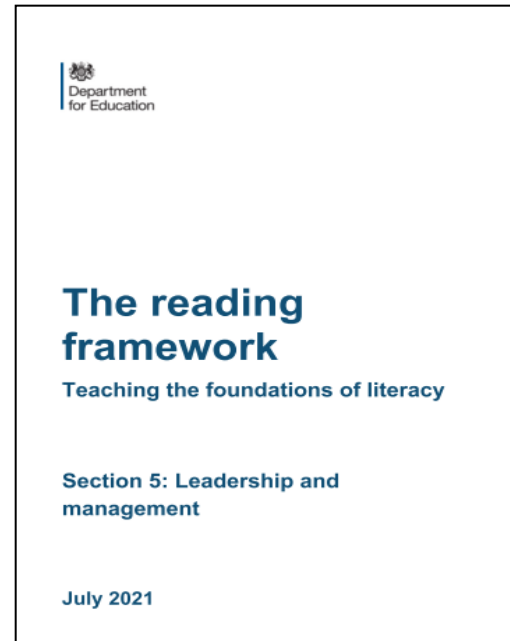
Children at Risk of Reading Failure – Section 4

- Aim for all children to **keep up** with the school's selected SSP programme.
- Identify children who begin to fall behind **as quickly as possible**.
- Extra practice should be **small group or one-to-one with trained adults** in a quiet place, daily or frequently, focusing on specific gaps in learning.
- **Decodable books** should be used for reading.
- Provide **in-school support** if children do not read at home.
- Prioritise catch-up for children **after year 1**.
- Intervention should be **short term and intensive**.
- Ensure high-quality teaching by **school staff**.



Leadership and Management – Section 5

- Headteachers have the **ultimate responsibility** for building a reading culture and ensuring that the teaching of reading is as effective as possible by:
 - believing **all children** can learn to read
 - adopting a **rigorous SSP programme** to meet or exceed age-related expectations
 - building a **team of experts**
 - ensuring ongoing **assessment is effective**
 - making efforts to **involve families**
 - making sure children are taught to read from the **very beginning of Reception**
 - **prioritising literacy** in Reception and year 1
 - developing a programme for **reading aloud**
 - appointing **a literacy / reading leader**
 - providing **sustained CPD / coaching**



Building on the Foundations with Older Pupils - Section 6

- After a strong start in Reception and year 1, teachers can spend **more time** developing **reading comprehension** and **writing composition**.
- Continue to **read aloud** every day.
- Actively, **increase vocabulary** in order to develop language comprehension.
- Children should **read as often as possible** in English and across the curriculum.
- Select an effective **spelling programme** and use rigorously and with **fidelity**.
- Use **joined handwriting** to increase fluency, legibility and quality.
- Continue to use **sentence dictation** to support spelling, grammar and punctuation.

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Appendices

- **Appendix 1 – For parents: reading stories to children**
- **Appendix 2 – Supporting children’s thinking**
- **Appendix 3 – For teachers: preparing to read a story**
- **Appendix 4 – An alphabetic code chart**
- **Appendix 5 – Pronouncing phonemes**
- **Appendix 6 – Decodable texts for children beginning to learn to read**
- **Appendix 7 – Guidance for choosing a phonics programme**
- **Appendix 8 – Audit for leaders and teachers**
- **Appendix 9 – Glossary**