



DFE Reading Framework summary

This document was published in July 2021. The Reading Framework, formed through the contributions of literacy experts and school leaders, builds on existing progress and shows how schools can introduce these changes with long term effect. It sets out the core principles of teaching reading for children in Reception and Year 1, and for older pupils who have not yet mastered the foundations. It provides support and guidance for school leaders, classroom teachers and Initial Teacher Training partnerships about how to create a school environment where every child is not only able to read proficiently, but also develops a genuine love of reading.

This is a summary of the full document which should also be read and shared widely with staff across the whole school. The implications of the document should be considered and actioned at individual school level.

The document consists of thirteen sections:

- The importance of talk
- Reading as a catalyst
- Vocabulary acquisition through talk
- Adults modelling speaking and listening
- Partner talk
- No hands up
- Choosing books to read aloud
- Thriving on repetition
- Dedicated time for stories, poems and rhymes
- The language of stories
- Book corners
- Systematic phonics instruction
- Children with SEND

The importance of talk

An environment that is rich in language and high-quality talk are central to the approach to developing literacy in schools. The quality of adult interaction with children directly affects their vocabulary acquisition, as well as their cognitive development. Developing pupils' spoken language is integral to all subjects in the NC and in EYFS so that they can articulate their understanding, develop their knowledge, and build the vocabulary they need to support their learning.

Reading as a catalyst

Reading for pleasure is associated with higher levels of literacy achievement. There is also a relationship between cognition and motivation, proficiency and motivation in reading. Those who are good at reading, read more, they learn more and expand their vocabulary and knowledge. This enables them to understand more of what they read. For those who read less, or who find reading difficult, the opposite is true. Reading more makes children more academically capable.

Vocabulary acquisition through talk

High-quality adult interactions and purposeful experiences can build children's vocabulary size. Within the document is an example for how a fire station might unleash the teaching of semantic fields linked with some of the key information. For example, by talking of fire, children would learn and connect words such as blaze, flame, heat, smoke, plumes and extinguish. This supports later reading by helping children comprehend texts when they see such words.

Adults modelling speaking and listening

Adults can plan to develop children's vocabulary through everyday experiences. This can include adding adjectives and adverbs into interactions so that children begin to expand their word knowledge and understand them in a greater range of contexts. Children should also be explicitly taught what good listening is like, both through direct instruction and through teacher modelling. Good listening should also be reinforced and rewarded with praise.

Partner talk

Children benefit from being taught how to talk to a partner, speaking in complete sentences and taking turns as appropriate. Children should be taught to speak to each other in complete sentences, listening to what is being said. Teachers can use these interactions to assess what children know, as they listen to discussions and give feedback. Pairs can then be selected to share their responses with the group.

No hands up

Hands up in class reduces the opportunities for interaction, limits the number of children whom the teacher 'hears', excludes children who raise their hands and aren't heard, and suggests to children who don't raise their hands, that they don't need to participate. Over time, the difference between those who raise their hands and those who do not, grows the language gap that needs to be eliminated.

Choosing books to read aloud

Teachers should choose books which engage children emotionally. Young children care about what their teachers think about the stories they read. The report gives a guide of how to choose books to ensure children are presented with a wide range of stories from a wide range of contexts. There should be a 'core' set of stories for each year group which reflects a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and contexts, which can be supplemented by teachers' choices.

Thriving on repetition

By re-reading stories to children, teachers can deepen the children's familiarity with a story and increase their emotional involvement. Re-reading allows children to hear new vocabulary over again, which helps them to commit the meaning of new words into their long-term memory. Additionally, children have new opportunities to connect with characters and their feelings, and to relive the excitement and emotion of stories.

Dedicated time for stories, poems and rhymes

Prioritise a dedicated story time each day as well as a dedicated poetry or singing time in Reception and Year 1. Extra small-group story times can be used as additional inputs for children with speech, language and communication needs. Schools should encourage parents to read aloud to their children and to provide opportunities for children to read at home.

The language of stories

Listening to stories enables children to encounter vocabulary they are unlikely to hear in everyday speech. (Tier 2 vocabulary). Teachers can support this vocabulary acquisition by explicitly explaining the meaning of new words and providing additional examples of their usage to enforce their meaning. Listening to stories also allows children to hear a wider range of sentence structures which not only supports their grammatical understanding, but also the bank of sentences they can draw from when they come to speak or write.

Book corners

The quality of books in a book corner is what makes a difference. Book corners should enable children to browse the best books, revisit ones they have been read to in class, and to borrow books to read or retell at home. Every child should be able to spend time in the book corner and be able to share books with each other. The focus should always be on making a big difference to children's reading habits.

Systematic phonics instruction

Schools should implement a systematic phonics programme. Fidelity to a systematic programme, with the implementation monitored by the schools' leadership team, is one of the most effective ways of teaching all children how to read and write. Decodable books allow children to practise and memorise their learning from phonics lessons, so that they build their accuracy, fluency and confidence with their phonics knowledge.

Children with SEND

The framework quotes a range of recent research findings which supports the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics for children with SEND. Teachers will need to adapt the pace of instruction, based around their understanding of a child's unique needs and profile; however, all children should be considered as being able to learn to read using a phonics programme.

Please follow the link to the full report: [DfE Reading Framework July 2021](#)