



May 2023

A young woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue school sweater over a white collared shirt, is sitting and reading a book. She is in a library or bookstore, with bookshelves filled with books in the background. Other people in blue school uniforms are visible in the background, some looking at books. The scene is brightly lit, and the overall atmosphere is one of quiet study.

**Developing pupils' English
reading skills from 10-14
years of age**

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Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

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This report is also available in Welsh.

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Executive summary

We visited a sample of English-medium primary, secondary and all-age schools in autumn 2022 to evaluate pupils' English reading skills across the curriculum in Year 6 and Years 7-9 and observe what schools are doing to develop these skills. Schools were chosen based on their size, type, geographical location and socio-economic context to provide a cross-section of schools in Wales. In each school we visited, we held meetings with leaders of literacy, teachers and pupils. We observed sessions where reading skills were being developed or consolidated. We looked at any documents the school had on developing reading skills and on transition arrangements. We also drew on evidence from 98 primary, secondary and all-age inspections of schools outside the sample between January 2021 and October 2022. Conclusions have been drawn from findings across the phases and apply to all three sectors except where specified. We intend to produce a separate report in 2023-24 on how Welsh and bilingual schools are developing pupils' Welsh and English reading skills across the curriculum. Finally, we met with representatives from the school improvement services to discuss the professional learning opportunities related to developing pupils' reading skills that are available to school staff.

We found, unsurprisingly, that the pandemic had a negative impact on many pupils' reading skills but particularly on those pupils eligible for free school meals or from disadvantaged backgrounds. Overall, many pupils' standards in reading are beginning to improve. However, recent inspection findings show that wide variations in pupils' reading skills remain both within and across schools.

Many 10 to 14-year-olds use basic reading skills well, such as locating information through skimming or scanning, when reading suitably challenging texts. Around half of pupils in the sample use advanced reading skills confidently, such as summarising, evaluating or synthesising texts appropriate for their stage of development. Where provision is strong, many pupils develop these advanced skills well and, where it is weaker, only a minority do so. Overall, a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils are making good progress in developing their advanced reading skills than in Years 7-9. This is partly because of the challenges of co-ordinating the progressive development of reading skills consistently across the range of subjects and teachers in the secondary phase.

Nearly all pupils in the sample understand the importance of learning to read and reading to learn for their academic success and future life chances. However, for the majority of pupils, their enjoyment of reading declines from age 10 to 14.

Effective schools develop pupils' reading resilience by explicitly teaching the strategies pupils need to use when encountering unfamiliar words. They also develop pupils' reading stamina by introducing progressively complex texts at appropriate points. We found that the majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools promote reading for pleasure successfully through initiatives designed to develop a culture and enjoyment of reading alongside the teaching of reading skills in lessons. The support of senior leaders is an essential element in the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Where leaders and staff have identified deficits in pupils' skills and have the professional knowledge and skills to address these, pupils' progress is more rapid. On occasion, this means that teaching approaches that are normally used with younger pupils are having to be used with older pupils, and staff are having to learn teaching strategies they haven't employed before.

The development of pupils' reading skills almost always features as a priority within school improvement plans in both phases, although the planned actions in many secondary schools are vague, generic or over-reliant on data rather than first-hand evidence of pupils' progress from lessons and books. Our findings show that most primary and many secondary schools have identified evidence-based strategies to improve pupils' reading skills but only a minority of schools in the secondary phase are implementing these consistently in English lessons and across the curriculum. In both phases, only a minority of leaders are monitoring and evaluating the impact of reading strategies robustly enough.

In general, schools use a range of approaches to developing pupils' reading skills, including guided reading, reciprocal reading, shared reading and independent reading. Where provision is strong, there is a well co-ordinated balance of approaches, which provides pupils with regular opportunities to develop their reading skills independently and with their peers. We found that most primary schools provide such meaningful opportunities regularly, but only a minority of secondary schools do so. This is partly because of the complexity of co-ordinating the development of reading skills progressively across a large number of teachers and subjects.

Most primary schools and a minority of secondary schools that we visited have identified the development of pupils' vocabulary as a priority. However, only the majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools are beginning to teach vocabulary in a systematic way. In the best examples, teachers supplement this approach with other opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary when teaching shared texts. We found that the majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools plan the texts they read with pupils across the curriculum carefully, including the balance of fiction and non-fiction, and the progressive complexity of texts. Provision for pupils to analyse and evaluate multi-modal and media texts is underdeveloped in most schools.

Most primary schools and around half of secondary schools in the sample have invested in at least one published reading scheme and a minority make use of more than one. A majority of primary schools and a very few secondary schools monitor the implementation and evaluate the impact of their chosen reading schemes robustly and strategically enough.

Our findings show that very few school clusters (primary schools along with the secondary school that the majority of their pupils progress to) plan effectively for the development of pupils' reading skills from Year 6 into Year 7. This is also true in many all-age schools, which teach pupils from the primary and secondary phases.

Introduction

This thematic report is written in response to a request for advice from the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language in his remit letter to Estyn for 2022-23. The report describes how schools are developing pupils' English reading skills across the curriculum in Year 6 in primary schools, and in Years 7, 8 and 9 in secondary schools or from the age of 10-14 years in all-age schools. It considers how well pupils' reading skills are developing, their attitudes to reading, and the extent to which schools are developing a 'reading culture'.


The report draws on evidence from visits to a sample of English-medium primary, secondary and all-age schools, as well as evidence from 98 inspections carried out between January 2021 and October 2022. Schools were selected based on their size, type, geographical location and socio-economic context. Further details of the evidence base can be found in the ['Methods and evidence base'](#) section of this report. We intend to produce a separate report in 2023-24 on how Welsh and bilingual schools are developing pupils' Welsh and English reading skills across the curriculum.

This report focuses on how well schools are developing pupils' reading skills overall but does not evaluate the provision for pupils with specific reading difficulties or those who require intensive additional support. We did not have the capacity during this thematic review to investigate these important aspects of provision. We also considered what happens at the point of transition from the primary to the secondary phase and how well schools are planning for continuity and progression in pupils' reading skills from Year 6 to Year 7.

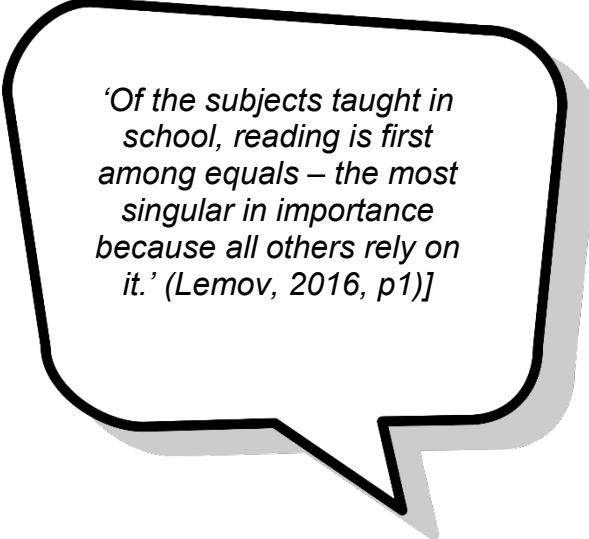
The intended audience for this report is the Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and school improvement services. It may also be of interest to parents and partnerships for initial teacher education. It is hoped that the report will contribute to professional discussions about how we can improve pupils' English reading skills further across Wales.

Background

There is little debate about the importance of pupils' literacy skills and, within these, their reading skills, for academic success and future life chances. There is also widespread agreement that too many young people leave school without the necessary skills to be functionally literate, which has significant social and economic costs for Wales.



'Few impediments undermine a person's aspirations as effectively as an inability to read.'
(Such, 2021, p1)



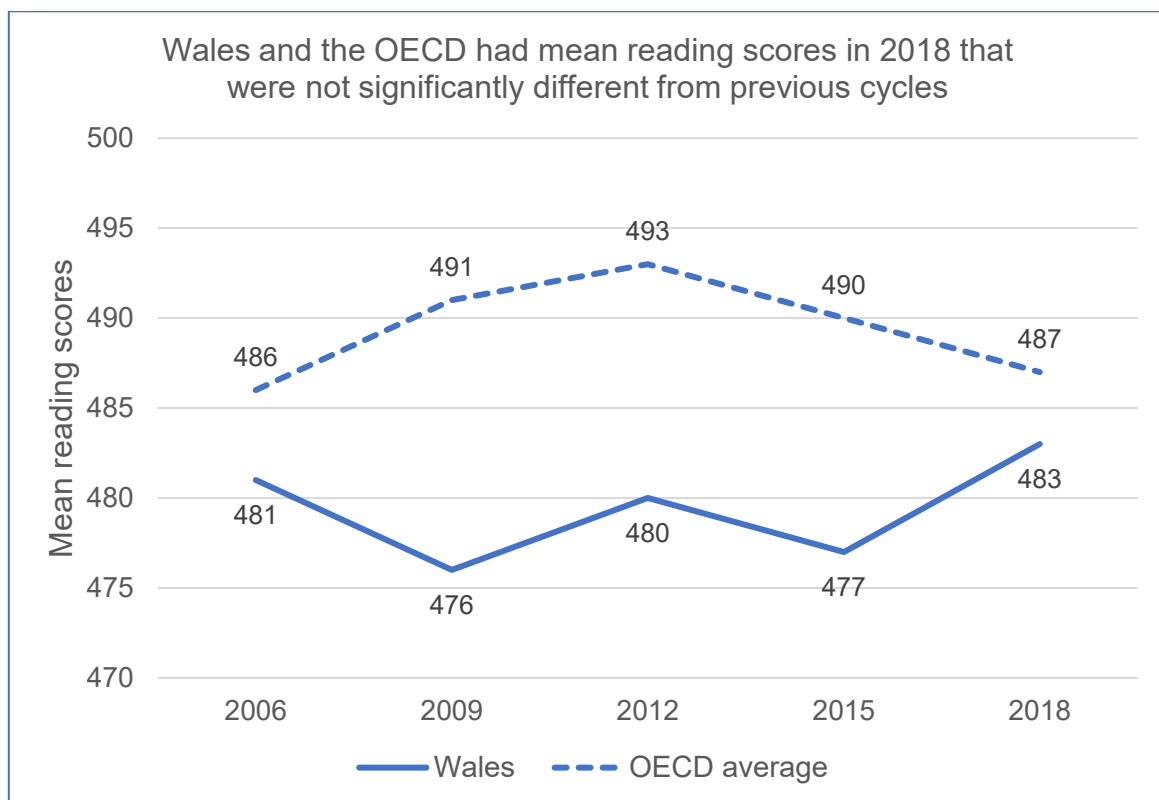
'Of the subjects taught in school, reading is first among equals – the most singular in importance because all others rely on it.' (Lemov, 2016, p1)]

The original [Literacy and Numeracy Framework](#) (LNF) was published in 2008 and made statutory in 2013. Alongside this, the national reading and numeracy tests were introduced. A revised [Literacy and Numeracy Framework](#) is now in place, to support the statutory duty for schools to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in [Curriculum for Wales](#). Within the new curriculum, each Area of Learning and Experience has guidance on its contribution to [cross-curricular](#) and [integral skills](#) built into the 'Designing your curriculum' section, with literacy skills identified first.

The [national reading test](#) (NRT) was introduced in 2013 to support the implementation of the LNF and to provide information for pupils, parents and schools about pupils' reading attainment compared with their national cohort. From the 2019-20 academic year, the paper-based NRT was replaced by online adaptive assessments, known as [personalised assessments](#). The assessments provide diagnostic information about each pupil's reading strengths and possible next steps. They also provide reports showing progress over time, year on year. Welsh Government guidance is clear that the purpose of personalised assessments is formative and that they should not be used for accountability or to compare one

school against another. Schools can decide at what point in the academic year pupils take the personalised assessments. A minority of schools in our sample use the assessments twice a year as a means of assessing pupils' progress in reading.

In autumn 2018, a sample of Year 11 pupils took the latest Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) test, which had a particular focus on reading skills. The results of these triennial tests were published by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in the document [Achievement of 15-Year Olds in Wales: PISA 2018 National Report \(NFER, 2019\)](#). The graph below (p32) shows the mean reading scores in Wales since 2006 compared against the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average scores:



The headline outcomes for Wales in pupils' reading from the 2018 PISA tests were:

- Reading scores were similar to what they were in 2006 but had improved by seven points since reading had last been the major focus of the tests in 2009
- For the first time, Wales' mean reading score was not significantly lower than the OECD average, but this was primarily because the performance of some other countries had deteriorated
- England, Scotland and Northern Ireland had mean reading scores that were statistically significantly higher than Wales' score
- There was a significant increase in the scores of higher achieving pupils in Wales compared to 2015 but the scores of lower achieving pupils had remained similar
- Pupils in Wales showed relative strengths in the reading skills of 'locating information' and 'evaluating and reflecting' but were less strong in 'understanding'
- In common with all other participating countries, pupils from more advantaged

backgrounds had higher achievement in reading than those from less socio-economically advantaged homes

- Also in common with all other participating countries, girls performed better in reading than boys
- Pupils in Wales were more confident in their reading ability than the OECD average but were less likely to read books and had more negative attitudes to reading

A report from Lancaster University (Johnes, 2020), published in the *Wales Journal of Education*, showed that, in 2015, pupils in Wales taking the PISA test in Welsh scored on average 25 points lower on the reading test than those taking it in English. This discrepancy, which obviously reduces Wales' overall mean reading score, has not been explained adequately.

In 2015, Estyn published [Literacy in key stage 3: An interim report \(Estyn, 2015\)](#), which looked at literacy progress in Years 7-9 since the introduction of the national reading test in summer 2013 and the LNF was made statutory in September 2013. The report noted that a minority of schools had made good progress in developing pupils' advanced reading skills, usually in English, Welsh and humanities lessons, but not particularly by using the LNF. It also noted that schools were making limited use of information from the NRT to plan learning experiences.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published two reports in 2021 entitled ['Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2' \(EEF, 2021\)](#) and ['Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' \(EEF, 2021\)](#). Both documents are revised editions of previous reports first published in 2017 for Key Stage 2 and 2018 for secondary schools. The Key Stage 2 report contains seven recommendations, two of which are specifically focused on reading and which highlight strategies to develop pupils' reading fluency and comprehension. Two other recommendations relate indirectly to reading: firstly, the need to develop pupils' language capabilities, including through the explicit teaching of vocabulary; and secondly, the need for high-quality structured interventions when pupils have fallen behind their peers, which are targeted to the pupils' specific skills deficits through careful diagnosis.

The secondary school report is based around the concept of developing 'disciplinary literacy', in other words literacy skills that are subject-specific rather than generic. The thinking is that pupils use speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in different ways in different subjects and therefore need to be taught these specific approaches by subject specialists. Again, the report contains seven recommendations but only one is focused specifically on reading, which is to develop pupils' ability to read complex academic texts through comprehension strategies that are modelled by the teacher and reinforced by group work. Two other recommendations relate indirectly to reading: firstly, to provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject; and secondly, to combine writing instruction with reading so that the texts used build the knowledge needed for effective writing and the writing in turn helps pupils to make sense of and remember what they have read.

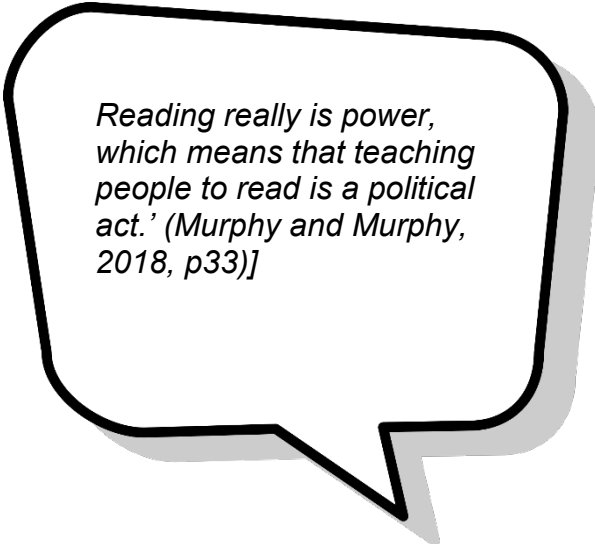
In 2021, Estyn produced a thematic report entitled [English language and literacy in settings and primary schools \(Estyn, 2021\)](#). This report notes that literacy standards were broadly similar to five years before, although most primary schools planned and

provided appropriately for teaching reading. It describes in detail the strategies that good schools use to develop pupils' literacy skills. Recommendations include developing a culture of reading, explicitly developing pupils' vocabulary and having a clear whole-school strategy for teaching reading and for developing pupils' advanced reading skills.

Recent HMCI annual reports have commented that standards of reading are good in about eight in ten primary schools and that most primary phase pupils develop good reading skills and positive attitudes to reading from an early age. In many secondary schools, pupils use basic reading skills well, but only a minority develop advanced reading skills effectively. The 2020-2021 [annual report](#) explains the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils' literacy skills and how many schools responded to this by focusing on specific skills, for example through strategic reading approaches.

The 2021-2022 [annual report](#) draws on evidence from a smaller sample of providers than usual, including schools that volunteered to pilot the revised inspection arrangements. It describes how many pupils in the primary phase make sound progress in their reading. In the most successful schools, teachers encourage and develop a culture of reading through a rich literacy curriculum. In a few primary schools, where there is an over-focus on reading techniques, pupils do not develop this enthusiasm for reading and this hinders their progress. In the secondary phase, pupils develop their reading skills well in the majority of schools. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their advanced reading skills well enough and do not read aloud with suitable fluency and expression.

In a [statement](#) to the Senedd on 16 November 2021, the Education Minister, Jeremy Miles MS, placed the development of pupils' reading and oracy skills at the heart of the Welsh Government's education policy. He announced funding to provide every pupil in Wales with a free book and spoke about the importance of systematic phonics teaching as part of a suite of strategies to build pupils' vocabulary and comprehension. The Welsh Government has produced a [toolkit](#) to support schools to develop a whole-school approach to oracy and reading, which was launched formally in March 2023. An important aim of the toolkit is to reduce the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals or from low-income households and their peers.



Reading really is power, which means that teaching people to read is a political act.' (Murphy and Murphy, 2018, p33)]

This report is structured in three sections. The first section, [**'Standards of pupils' reading and attitudes to reading'**](#), briefly evaluates pupils' current learning in relation to reading from observations carried out when visiting schools and from inspections carried out between January 2021 and October 2022.

The second section, [**'Provision to develop pupils' reading skills'**](#), describes the approaches to teaching reading which we encountered in our visits.

The third section, [**'Developing a reading culture'**](#), discusses how some schools are seeking to promote reading for pleasure alongside the teaching of reading in lessons.

Where we came across particularly effective practice, there are links to cameos, which describe the school's context, why it took action, the action it took and what the impact has been.

[**Appendix 2**](#) lists the key features of an effective programme to develop pupils' reading skills.

[**Appendix 3**](#) lists the key elements in developing a reading culture.

Main findings

Standards of pupils' reading and attitudes to reading

- 1 Evidence from schools in our sample suggests that the pandemic had a negative impact on many pupils' reading skills. Since face-to-face teaching has resumed, standards are beginning to improve. This is particularly the case in schools where specific skills deficits have been identified and provision put in place to address these.
- 2 Nearly all pupils who participated understand the importance of learning to read and reading to learn for their academic success and future life chances. Overall, in upper primary and lower secondary phases, many pupils in the sample can locate and retrieve information from suitably challenging texts. They can skim through a text to identify its gist and scan a text for specific pieces of information. Many pupils can highlight and annotate a suitably challenging text in a basic way. In Year 6, the majority of pupils use advanced reading skills confidently, such as summarising and evaluating suitably challenging texts. In Years 7-9, a minority of pupils continue to develop advanced reading skills effectively. The majority of pupils in Years 7-9 do not develop their reading skills well enough.
- 3 In the most effective schools, where reading skills are strong, many pupils read suitably challenging texts accurately, expressively and with understanding. They demonstrate reading stamina when faced with lengthy texts and reading resilience when they encounter unfamiliar words. More able pupils in the sample infer, deduce, predict, summarise and evaluate information effectively from texts to support their learning across the curriculum. Less able pupils engage well with complex texts with suitable support.
- 4 In the few primary schools and the minority of secondary schools where the provision for and standards of reading skills are too weak, a minority of pupils are unable to read stage-appropriate texts fluently. These pupils may have gaps in their phonological knowledge as well as not having an effective range of strategies to support their reading of challenging words and texts. As a result, they make limited progress in their learning.

Provision for developing pupils' reading skills

- 5 The development of pupils' reading skills, as an integral part of their literacy skills, almost always features as a priority within school improvement plans. However, in many secondary schools in the sample, planning is often vague, generic and over-reliant on summative data from tests rather than on first-hand evidence of pupils' progress from lessons and books.
- 6 Most primary schools and the majority of secondary schools we visited have identified evidence-based strategies to improve pupils' reading skills. The majority of primary schools and a minority of secondary schools have implemented these strategies consistently. Where provision is strongest, leaders have provided staff with effective

professional learning so that they understand the purpose of each strategy, when it should be used and how it can be applied in different contexts.

- 7 We found that nearly all primary schools and many secondary schools promote the importance of developing pupils' reading skills across the curriculum to staff and pupils. Many primary schools provide regular meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their reading across the curriculum. In a minority of secondary schools, the concept of adapting reading for specific areas of learning is beginning to be established.
- 8 Developing pupils' vocabulary is a priority for the majority of schools we visited. Generally, teachers are good at identifying and teaching tier 3 vocabulary because these words are essential to pupils' understanding and success in areas of learning. In a minority of schools, teachers are beginning to reinforce a range of tier 2 words systematically and pre-teach important vocabulary before they read a text with pupils.
- 9 Approaches to developing pupils' reading skills we observed include guided reading, reciprocal reading, shared reading and independent reading. Where provision is strong, there is a co-ordinated balance of approaches, giving pupils regular opportunities to develop their reading skills with their class, in groups and independently across the curriculum.
- 10 The majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools in the sample are thinking carefully about the texts they choose to read with pupils across the curriculum. This includes the balance of fiction and non-fiction and the progressive complexity of texts. Introducing more challenging texts is successful when teachers model the strategies pupils need to access these texts and provide appropriate support.
- 11 Overall, provision for pupils to analyse and evaluate multi-modal and media texts is underdeveloped in the upper primary and lower secondary phases.
- 12 We found that in most primary schools, pupils read aloud regularly, but only a few secondary schools have a consistent approach that supports pupils to develop these skills. Where provision is strong, there is a balance of activities so that pupils have regular opportunities to hear teachers read, read aloud themselves and develop their independent reading skills.
- 13 Most primary schools and around half of secondary schools have invested in at least one published reading scheme and a minority of schools make use of several. The majority of primary schools and a very few secondary schools monitor the implementation and evaluate the impact of their chosen reading schemes robustly and strategically enough.
- 14 Our findings suggest that, overall, planning for the progressive development of pupils' skills, particularly their reading skills, from Year 6 to Year 7, is underdeveloped in nearly all schools across Wales. This is also the case in many all-age schools because there isn't enough communication and collaborative planning between the Year 6 and Year 7 teachers.

- 15 School improvement services provide school staff with professional learning opportunities relating to developing pupils' reading skills, which are too variable in quality. The school improvement services do not collaborate well enough to ensure that the highest quality professional learning is available across Wales.

Developing a reading culture

- 16 We found that a minority of primary schools and a few secondary schools are beginning to move beyond the development of pupils' reading skills in lessons to create a 'reading culture' across the school. This is not a quick process and requires a range of relevant strategies implemented consistently well over time.
- 17 One of the most important factors in creating a reading culture is that senior leaders clearly support reading and ensure that it has a high profile among staff and pupils.
- 18 A school library that is welcoming, accessible, well-stocked, supervised regularly and used well by many classes contributes helpfully to developing a reading culture within a school. A minority of primary schools and a few secondary schools in the sample have such a facility.

Recommendations

School leaders should:

- R1 Provide staff with high-quality professional learning about evidence-based strategies to develop pupils' reading skills across the curriculum
- R2 Monitor and evaluate robustly the impact of reading strategies and interventions
- R3 Plan within their cluster for the progressive development of pupils' reading skills from Year 6 to Year 7, including making appropriate use of feedback and progress reports from personalised assessments

Teachers and classroom-based support staff should:

- R4 Plan meaningful and engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills progressively
- R5 Use high-quality, suitably challenging texts to develop pupils' reading skills alongside teaching the strategies pupils need to access and engage with these texts

School improvement partners should:

- R6 Work together closely to ensure greater consistency and synergy in professional learning opportunities around reading for school leaders, teachers and teaching assistants

The Welsh Government should:

- R7 Continue to promote and develop the whole-school approach to oracy and reading toolkit

Standards of pupils' reading and attitudes to reading

Overall, there is evidence from the sample of schools visited to suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on many pupils' reading skills across Wales, but particularly those pupils eligible for free school meals or from low-income households. The pandemic may have widened the gap in reading skills between pupils who had appropriate resources to study at home, including a selection of books and a digital device to access lessons, who were self-motivated and whose learning was encouraged and monitored by a parent or carer, compared with those who didn't have these advantages.

Since schools have returned to face-to-face teaching, our findings show that most pupils' reading skills are beginning to improve gradually. This is particularly true in schools that have identified specific skills deficits and have put in place appropriate evidence-based strategies to address these gaps in learning. Where provision is particularly effective, nearly all pupils value reading, and many can talk confidently about what they are reading and how their skills are developing. In the best examples in the sample, many pupils are making strong progress in developing advanced reading skills appropriate to their stage of learning.

We found that in the upper primary and lower secondary phases, nearly all pupils, including those who say they do not enjoy reading, understand the importance of learning to read and of reading to learn for their academic success and future life chances. In schools that have consistently implemented a range of effective strategies to promote reading, alongside teaching reading explicitly in lessons, the proportion of pupils who say they enjoy reading is generally higher than in schools that have not done this. In general, younger pupils in the sample were more enthusiastic about reading for pleasure than older pupils, which reflects the findings of surveys into children and young people's enjoyment of reading, such as the one reported on by the National Literacy Trust in 2020.

It is important to note that pupils do not have to enjoy reading in order to understand the value of developing their reading skills. Nevertheless, overall, pupils who enjoy reading and can draw on their intrinsic motivation to read are more likely to become proficient in advanced reading skills (OECD, 2002; Clark, 2011). They are more likely to demonstrate reading stamina when faced with long texts and reading resilience when faced with challenging texts than pupils whose main motivation to read is extrinsic. These positive attitudes to reading have a beneficial impact on their learning. There is also a considerable body of research evidence to indicate that reading for pleasure has long-term well-being benefits (Department for Education, 2012).

The evidence we gathered on our visits to schools is supported by inspection findings since 2021, which show that there are wide variations in pupils' reading skills within schools. Overall, in upper primary and lower secondary phases, most pupils can use basic reading strategies to locate and retrieve information from texts that are appropriate to their stage of learning. They can skim through a text to identify its gist

and scan a text for specific pieces of information. Many pupils in the sample can highlight and annotate a stage-appropriate text in a basic way, for example when identifying key words about a topic or adjectives being used to describe a character in a novel.

Our findings show that in Year 6, the majority of pupils use advanced reading skills confidently. In Years 7-9, a minority of pupils continue to develop advanced reading skills well. In both phases, where learning is strongest, these pupils can summarise and synthesise challenging texts well, for example when considering a range of historical sources about the Aberfan disaster. They can interrogate and analyse texts effectively to draw relevant inferences and derive deeper meaning successfully, such as when discussing a writer's style. In these schools, many pupils demonstrate reading resilience and stamina. They use a range of strategies well to tackle unfamiliar words, such as breaking them down into smaller chunks and using contextual clues to help them understand what the words mean.

In the upper primary phase, in schools where reading skills are strongest, nearly all pupils demonstrate a positive attitude towards reading and use their skills well to support their overall progress. They read suitably challenging texts accurately, expressively and with understanding. More able pupils infer, deduce, predict, summarise and evaluate information effectively from texts to support their learning across the curriculum. Less able pupils engage well with complex texts with suitable support. Nearly all pupils develop strong independent reading skills and can talk in detail with adults and their peers about what they are reading and how their skills are developing. In these schools, many Year 6 pupils enjoy reading for pleasure.

See the impact on standards of the focus on oracy and reading at Cyfarthfa Park Primary School

[Oracy and reading](#)

In a few primary schools where reading skills are weakest, a minority of older pupils are unable to read age-appropriate texts fluently and have gaps in their phonological knowledge. They do not develop an effective range of strategies to support their reading of unfamiliar words and texts. For example, they often skip over unknown words, which hinders their ability to understand what they read and to infer meaning, especially when reading independently. They do not demonstrate the reading stamina or resilience needed to tackle longer, more complex texts. Around half of upper primary pupils in these schools say they do not enjoy reading.

In a minority of secondary schools in the sample where the provision to develop pupils' reading skills is strong, many pupils continue to develop advanced reading skills well. They demonstrate understanding of increasingly complex texts and consider thoughtfully the reliability and impact of what they are reading. Their vocabulary develops rapidly, and they can use subject-specific terminology accurately in speech and writing. A few pupils interpret stage-appropriate texts in a particularly sophisticated way and, when given the opportunity to do so, read aloud confidently and expressively.

In secondary schools in the sample where reading skills are weakest, the majority of pupils in Years 7-9 are unable to use a suitable range of reading strategies to support

their learning. They struggle to understand basic implied meanings and do not persevere in their reading when faced with unfamiliar words. They have gaps in their phonological knowledge and have only a basic vocabulary, which limits their understanding of the texts they encounter across the curriculum. As a result, they make limited progress in their learning.

We found that, overall, a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils are making good progress in developing their advanced reading skills than pupils in the lower secondary phase. Nearly all primary schools teach reading skills explicitly on a daily basis and provide regular, focused opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading skills. It can be a greater challenge in the lower secondary phase to co-ordinate the progressive development and consolidation of pupils' reading skills comprehensively across the range of subjects and teachers. Different teachers have different expectations of pupils' reading skills and provide different levels of support to develop these skills. Pupils face a wide range of complex texts in secondary schools and those whose reading skills are weaker may find this daunting.

A minority of pupils in the sample schools continue to make good progress in their advanced reading skills across the curriculum in Years 7-9. However, the greater breadth and depth of reading they are exposed to widens the gap between higher and lower attaining pupils. Consequently, the majority of pupils in Years 7-9 do not develop their reading skills well enough. Nevertheless, many pupils can locate and retrieve information from stage-appropriate texts because these are the reading skills that they practise most often.

Provision to develop pupils' reading skills

Planning to develop pupils' reading skills

The development of pupils' literacy skills features as a priority in most school improvement plans. Following the pandemic, many primary and secondary schools focused their attention first on improving pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills because these appeared the most visibly weakened from having less face-to-face teaching. Many schools in the sample are now prioritising the development of pupils' reading skills alongside other literacy priorities. However, in many secondary schools, planned actions are often vague, generic and over-reliant on summative data from tests rather than on first-hand evidence of pupils' progress from lessons and books.

Our findings show that most primary schools and the majority of secondary schools have identified evidence-based strategies to improve pupils' reading skills, such as using questioning to support pupils' reading or pre-teaching important vocabulary. The majority of primary schools and a minority of secondary schools have implemented these strategies consistently. Where provision is strongest, leaders have provided staff with effective professional learning so that they understand the purpose of each strategy, when it should be used and how it can be applied in different contexts. In these schools, many staff teach reading skills consistently across the curriculum. The best teachers weave listening, speaking, reading and writing together skilfully so that each skill benefits the others. Examples of this include:

- teachers questioning pupils effectively before, during and after a reading activity so that the discussions help pupils to access and understand the text
- group reading activities where pupils have been assigned different roles to facilitate the development of their speaking and listening skills alongside their reading skills
- teachers using shared reading tasks as a stimulus for a wide variety of writing, from note-taking and summarising to explaining a process or constructing an argument from different viewpoints

See the way that schools are developing reading skills across the curriculum

[Children in Literature Project at St Julian's School](#)

[Reading carousel at Cyfarthfa Park Primary School](#)

In many schools that we visited, the negative impact of the pandemic on pupils' reading skills has meant that teachers are having to employ strategies that are normally used with younger pupils when teaching older pupils. Often this means that teachers are learning new approaches to developing pupils' reading skills. In many primary schools, teachers of younger pupils share their expertise readily and provide helpful professional learning for teachers of older pupils. Many secondary school

teachers have limited knowledge and understanding of how to develop pupils' reading skills, especially those who are weak readers. However, we found that in the minority of secondary schools where leaders have provided high-quality professional learning about evidence-based strategies for improving pupils' reading skills, teachers' knowledge, understanding and practice have been strengthened.

Reading in different areas of learning and experience

The concept of 'disciplinary literacy' is that different areas of learning require pupils to speak, read and write in different ways and therefore pupils need to be taught these skills explicitly across the curriculum. The Education Endowment Fund (2021) report, 'Improving literacy in secondary schools', is based on the central premise of disciplinary literacy. Curriculum for Wales guidance provides specific information about the contribution that each area of learning and experience makes to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

'Learning about our world and its culture is learning to read.' (Such, 2021, p86)

'As winners of the school game, we can too easily be blind to the issues related to reading or expect other school staff to address them.' (Quigley, 2018, p184)]

Many schools we visited promote the importance of reading skills across the curriculum to staff and pupils. Many primary schools provide regular meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their reading across the curriculum. In a minority of secondary schools, the concept of reading for specific subjects or areas of learning is beginning to be established. When teachers understand the impact of pupils' improved reading skills on their subject, they support the strategies these schools are using to bring about improvements in reading. In these schools, teachers design engaging opportunities to develop pupils' reading skills alongside the other knowledge, understanding and skills needed for success in that subject. In the best examples, teachers integrate the development of literacy skills effectively alongside those of numeracy or creativity, for instance. For example, maths teachers ask pupils to read and draw conclusions from the information provided for a numeracy question without seeing the actual question itself. To what extent do the pupils understand the

information? Can they predict what the question might be based on the information? This kind of activity helps to build pupils' reading stamina in the face of word-heavy numeracy questions.

See how schools are developing reading skills in different areas of learning

[Disciplinary literacy at Ysgol Bryn Elian](#)

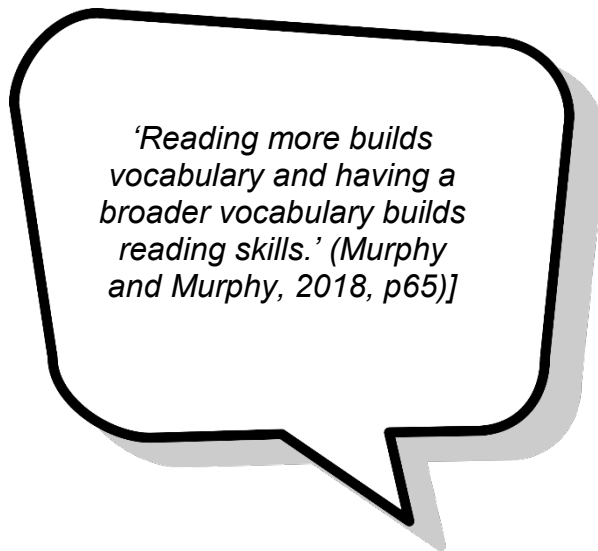
[Cross-curricular reading at St Julian's School](#)

Developing pupils' vocabulary

Developing pupils' vocabulary is a priority for the majority of schools in the sample. The range of a pupil's vocabulary impacts on the effectiveness of their oracy, reading and writing. It has been well-articulated (Beck, I., McKeown, M. and Kucan, L., 2002; Quigley, 2018) that there are three general tiers of vocabulary. Tier 1 is made up of words that are commonly used in speech and, therefore, pupils are likely to have regular exposure to these words, understand what they mean and be able to use them confidently. Tier 3 consists of words that are specific to subjects or topics and are rarely used in everyday speech. Generally, teachers are good at identifying and teaching these words because they are essential to pupils' understanding and success in a particular subject. Tier 3 words often appear in lists of key words for a topic and may be displayed around classroom walls or on sheets stuck into pupils' exercise books. Teachers regularly highlight and repeat these words when they occur in a text, explaining them and getting pupils to practise using them in meaningful contexts. When these strategies are used consistently, many pupils can understand these words and recall them later. In a minority of schools in the sample, teachers use specific templates to build pupils' vocabulary.

Teaching tier 2 words, such as 'consistent', 'logic' or 'distribute', are more challenging because these words only occur occasionally in everyday speech but are sprinkled throughout texts that pupils read in schools. Teachers do not automatically highlight these words because they are not subject-specific enough. Some tier 2 words have different meanings in different areas of learning, which may confuse pupils. A minority of schools in the sample are beginning to teach a range of these words systematically in context. Pupils told us that they find this process helpful for learning new words.

While targeted teaching is likely to be beneficial, it is not sufficient on its own to ensure that pupils' vocabularies continue to grow at an appropriate rate. In the best examples, teachers take opportunities to introduce and discuss new vocabulary regularly with pupils both formally and informally. This is done sensitively to avoid interrupting the flow of reading too frequently. In a minority of schools, teachers pre-teach important vocabulary before they read a text with pupils. Such a strategy helps pupils to understand the text and to remember the meaning of new words.



See how pupils' vocabulary is developed at Cyfarthfa Park Primary School

[Oracy and reading](#)

It is not only the breadth of a pupil's vocabulary that matters, it is also the depth. Pupils may recognise a word and be able to 'read' it fluently but, if they don't understand it, they will not adequately comprehend the text they are reading. Research suggests (Nation, I. and Webb, S., 2011) that pupils need to understand at least 95% of words in a text to make reasonable sense of it and 98% of words to understand it fully. Schools that have developed the explicit teaching of vocabulary ask teachers to discuss the etymology and morphology of words as part of the process of learning new words. For example, teachers discuss how the Greek 'kronos' has become 'chron' in English words like 'chronological' and 'synchronous'. Or they ask pupils to consider the meaning of the prefix 'mono' in words like 'monopoly', 'monogamous', 'monolith', 'monosyllabic' and 'monotheistic'. By considering the origins of words and breaking words down into their constituent parts, pupils are helped to make links between words and are better equipped to work out what new words mean when they encounter them.

In the majority of schools we visited, pupils have access to dictionaries, either in book form or online or both. However, only in a few cases are pupils supported to use dictionaries successfully. In these few effective schools, teachers model the process of finding a word that needs defining and then working out which is the correct meaning for the context of the passage they are reading. Once pupils have practised this process repeatedly, the majority are able to use a dictionary independently. Where pupils have not been taught explicitly how to use a dictionary, many struggle to identify correct meanings for unfamiliar words.

Teaching and learning approaches to reading

Teachers in primary and secondary schools use the phrase 'guided reading' to mean

different things, which isn't helpful in promoting a common language around reading across the phases. In most primary schools 'guided reading' takes place when pupils read different texts appropriate to their stage of learning together in groups, either silently or aloud. The teacher and any teaching assistants who may be present circulate around different groups in different sessions listening to pupils read and discussing the texts with them to develop their reading skills and monitor their understanding and fluency. We found that in nearly all primary schools, guided reading is a common approach to teaching reading for older pupils. In the best examples, pupils make excellent use of guided reading sessions and can work effectively together with or without adult involvement, building their independence and collaborative skills. They discuss the texts they are reading maturely and refer specifically to the strategies they are using and the skills they are developing. In schools where the pupils have not learned the required routines and independence consistently well, groups are sometimes given insufficiently challenging tasks to do when an adult isn't supporting them or time is wasted through off-task behaviour.

See how group guided reading and reciprocal reading are used to develop pupils' reading skills at Cyfarthfa Park Primary School

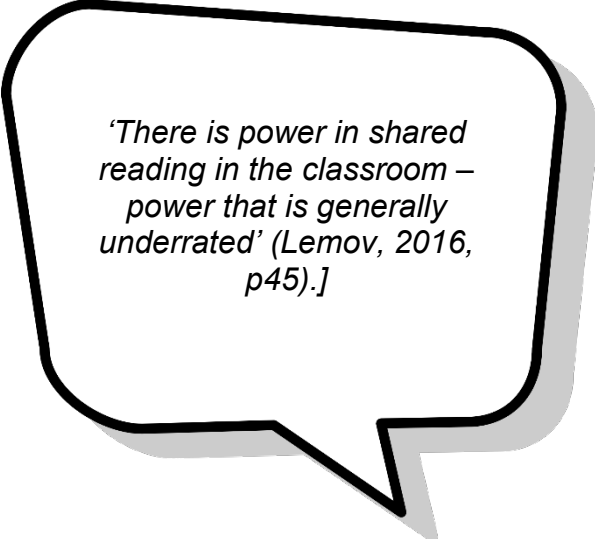
[Reading carousel](#)

In secondary schools, the term 'guided reading' is usually given to any reading task in which the teacher provides systematic guidance. Often this means that all the pupils are reading the same text. In a few secondary schools in the sample, teachers have created a common approach for reading and analysing texts across the curriculum. Teachers find this helpful for planning reading activities and many pupils say it helps them to organise their thinking.

Reciprocal reading is an approach in which pupils take on specific roles within a group that is reading the same text together. In a typical reciprocal reading session, a group of pupils will read from a stage-appropriate text with one making predictions about the text, another asking questions, the third clarifying key points and the fourth summarising what they read. The purpose of this approach is to allow pupils to practise evidence-based reading strategies. In the best examples, pupils are well-drilled in the routines of reciprocal reading and understand their roles well. They collaborate independently of the teacher. Reciprocal reading has the additional potential benefits of allowing pupils greater freedom in selecting what they read and allowing teachers to focus their attention on different groups at different times. A minority of primary schools and a few secondary schools in the sample (in certain subjects, including English and humanities) are using this strategy successfully. However, reciprocal reading can be used successfully across the whole curriculum.

Shared reading is a term for any occasion when pupils in a class are reading the same text, whether it is being read aloud together, read in groups or independently in silence. There may be any combination of pre-reading tasks, activities during the reading process and tasks that follow the reading, including listening and speaking or writing or both. This is the most common approach to reading across the curriculum in the secondary schools we visited. Where provision is strongest, the balance between non-fiction and fiction has been considered carefully and teachers choose

texts not only for their subject content but also because their increasing complexity helps pupils to develop their reading skills progressively. Pre-reading tasks, such as discussing key vocabulary, prepare pupils well for understanding the text and other activities require pupils to move beyond the basic location of information into developing their inference, analysis, summary and evaluation skills. In many primary schools in the sample, shared reading also takes place daily, often as a way of ending the school day.

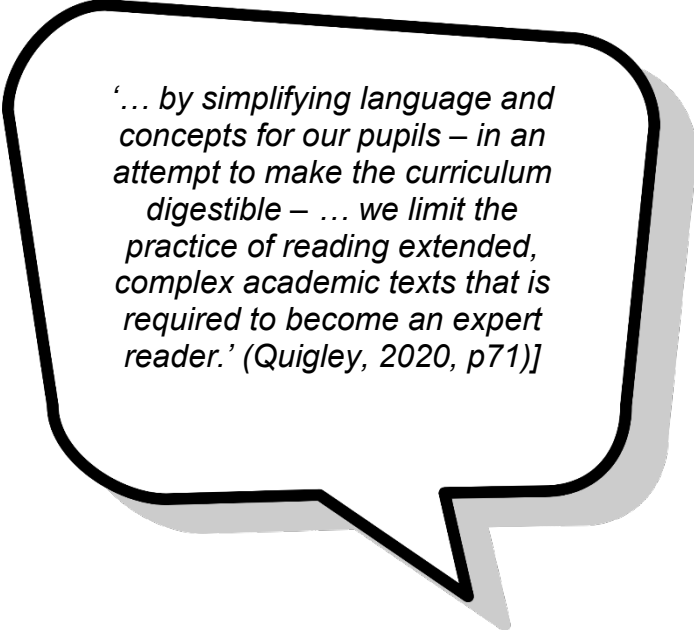


'There is power in shared reading in the classroom – power that is generally underrated' (Lemov, 2016, p45).]

Pupils reading independently in silence can be a helpful part of a guided or shared reading approach. Our findings suggest that in an increasing number of schools pupils read texts they have chosen themselves, either from a stage-appropriate selection or a free choice, usually for short bursts of time. When managed and monitored well, silent reading is enjoyed by many pupils and contributes to the development of their reading skills. However, it is least effective with weaker readers, who often lack the stamina and resilience to sustain independent reading.

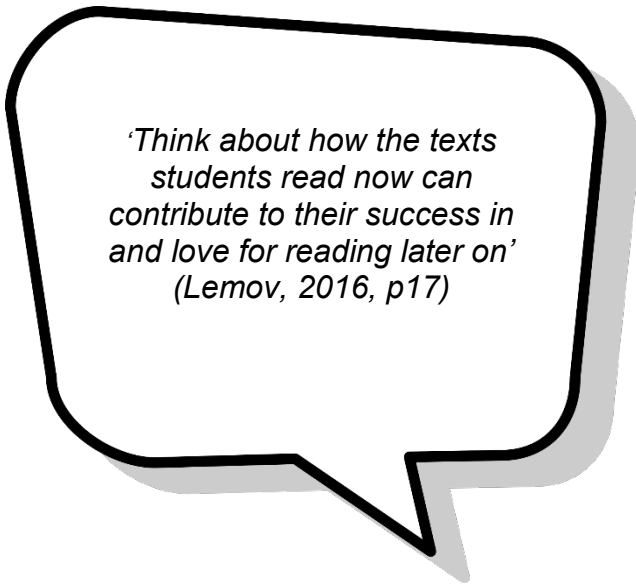
Choosing and adapting texts

The majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools in the sample are thinking carefully about the texts they choose to read with pupils across the curriculum. Some research (Fisher, Frey and Shanahan, 2012; Murphy Paul, 2014) suggests that pupils are often not exposed to challenging enough texts. A reduction in the challenge of reading has been driven partly by external accountability with senior leaders in secondary schools placing an over-emphasis on reading to pass exams rather than reading as a life skill and a pleasure. Technological advances may also have contributed in that texts that pupils read have often been displayed on interactive whiteboards or accessed through tablets. Generally, teachers have modified these texts and as a result they are often shorter and more simplified than those accessed in a physical form. Schools that have recognised these risks are making conscious decisions to reintroduce suitably challenging texts as a means of developing pupils' reading skills and expanding their knowledge.



'... by simplifying language and concepts for our pupils – in an attempt to make the curriculum digestible – ... we limit the practice of reading extended, complex academic texts that is required to become an expert reader.' (Quigley, 2020, p71)]

We found that in the schools where leaders and teachers are thinking carefully about the texts they use to develop pupils' reading skills, texts are selected across the curriculum because of their appropriateness for the pupils' stage of learning and the texts' progressive complexity as pupils' skills improve. A few clusters of schools have helpfully mapped the main texts they use throughout their cluster from upper primary to GCSE level to avoid repeated study of the same texts and ensure increasing complexity over time.



'Think about how the texts students read now can contribute to their success in and love for reading later on'
(Lemov, 2016, p17)

In a minority of schools we visited, teachers are using tools available on the internet to gauge the readability of the texts they use across the curriculum. These teachers say that, while such tools can never be entirely accurate, they enable them to consider how accessible to pupils any given text is likely to be. Pupils are usually able, with appropriate support, to understand texts that are more challenging than they could read independently. Many teachers who use challenging texts and provide the support pupils need to make sense of them report that this approach has a beneficial impact on pupils' reading skills, building their confidence and reading resilience.

The majority of pupils in the sample struggle when teachers introduce challenging texts without also explicitly teaching the necessary reading strategies and providing the support pupils need to access and understand them. We observed pupils grappling successfully with complex language and ideas, such as lower ability pupils in Year 9 discussing how influential Lady Macbeth is in persuading Macbeth to murder King Duncan. They were able to do this because their teacher built their understanding in small steps, asked probing questions and gave clear explanations appropriate to their stage of learning. We also observed pupils who couldn't understand texts or engage successfully with the activities they had been asked to do, because their teachers assumed they had more knowledge and understanding than they actually had and didn't provide the support they needed.

Overall, a minority of schools we visited are planning carefully enough to ensure that pupils read an appropriate balance of fiction and non-fiction texts across the curriculum. Many primary school teachers plan non-fiction texts that supplement the fiction texts they are reading with their classes. For example, when studying 'War Horse', pupils also read historical accounts of the causes, direction and consequences of World War 1 and examples of letters written by soldiers. However, in many secondary schools, pupils encounter almost all their fiction in English lessons and almost entirely non-fiction texts in other subjects. In a few secondary schools, teachers are planning opportunities for pupils to read fiction or narrative non-fiction, such as extracts from autobiographies or biographies, outside of English lessons, in subjects as diverse as religion, values and ethics, physical education and music.

One notably beneficial feature of the texts teachers are choosing to read with pupils is being encouraged by Curriculum for Wales. In the majority of schools in the sample, there is now a particular focus in the upper primary and lower secondary phases on reading texts that have relevance to the local area (or to Wales more widely) and to the diversity of the local community. In the best examples, schools have audited the texts they use to ensure that they are representative of their community and of Wales. These choices reflect the value in pupils developing roots in their personal identity and seeing themselves (at least sometimes) in the books that they read, while also having their horizons broadened to encounter the world beyond their own experience.

Our findings suggest that a few schools, mainly primary schools, are involving pupils in decisions about which texts to study. Generally, pupils have limited knowledge of the wealth of reading material available to teachers and a minority are content, when choosing their own books, to restrict themselves to a favoured genre or author. Where provision is strongest, teachers are deliberately choosing texts that are

progressively challenging and which take pupils beyond their experience. When these teachers provide pupils with choices of reading material, it is within the constraints of a carefully constructed selection. These teachers keep abreast of contemporary publications so that they can recommend books to pupils for their own reading, which will build on individual pupils' interests and progress.

A minority of schools we visited provide pupils with opportunities to read and discuss infographics and media texts in which words, images and data are combined. In these schools, teachers give explicit instruction in how to 'read' media texts and discuss their impact and reliability with pupils. Overall, provision for pupils to analyse and evaluate multi-modal and media texts is underdeveloped in the upper primary and lower secondary phases.

Reading aloud

We found that in most primary schools, pupils read aloud regularly, in guided reading groups or shared reading activities. This helps pupils to improve their reading fluency and gives teachers and other staff opportunities to listen to pupils read, monitor their progress and give them feedback. In shared reading sessions, teachers sometimes read to model fluency and expression or pupils volunteer to read to demonstrate these skills to their peers. On other occasions, teachers use the strategy of allowing pupils to read as little or as much as they wish and then to nominate a classmate to read next. Many Year 6 pupils read aloud enthusiastically with varying degrees of accuracy, fluency and expression.

Only a few secondary schools in the sample have a consistent approach to reading aloud. Many schools state that their practice is to encourage reading aloud but not to force pupils to do so. In a few secondary schools, pupils rarely read aloud. These schools believe that it is more important for pupils to hear the teacher model reading frequently. In these schools, the majority of teachers use appropriate strategies to check that pupils are following and understanding the text. Alternatively, there may be an emphasis on pupils' independent reading and teachers will ask pupils to read texts silently before they are discussed as a class.

Where provision is strongest, there is a balance of activities so that pupils have regular opportunities to hear teachers read, read aloud themselves and develop their independent reading skills. A few secondary schools in the sample have successfully 'normalised' reading aloud in class so that almost every pupil participates because they understand the value of doing so and the learning environment allows mistakes to be made without pupils feeling embarrassed. In these schools, teachers ask pupils to read aloud frequently from a variety of texts including pupils' own work. Teachers make reading aloud a normal part of lessons, for example by asking pupils to devise scripts in groups in modern foreign languages, which they then read out to the class, or to read texts in pairs in humanities, allowing the teacher to circulate to listen to their reading and provide support for weaker readers.

Published reading schemes

There are many published literacy resources available for educational use. Most primary schools and around half of secondary schools in the sample have invested in at least one reading scheme and a minority of schools make use of several. Some

reading schemes are specifically designed to support pupils with additional learning needs, while others are a means of providing all pupils with reading material that is appropriate for their interests and stage of learning. The latter kind of reading package typically includes a large number of texts, both fiction and non-fiction, which are categorised by approximate reading stage. Pupils take an initial test to identify where on the continuum of texts they should begin to read. There is a degree of choice about what they read. In a few reading schemes, there is an online quiz at the end of each text and the pupils have to achieve a certain level of accuracy to progress further.

In some schools, leaders have invested in published reading schemes because of a lack of other reading material available in the school. Many school leaders find reading packages reassuring because they provide materials for all pupils to read at an appropriate standard and regular testing enables pupils' reading progress to be tracked to an extent. Pupils in the sample express mixed views about how engaging or worthwhile they find these resources.

The majority of primary schools and a very few secondary schools we visited monitor the consistent implementation and evaluate the impact of their reading schemes strategically and robustly enough. Any published reading scheme is only as good as the way it is used within a school. It should always only ever be part of a wider set of strategies to promote reading, especially the consistent high-quality teaching of reading skills in lessons.

Reading skills at transition

Nearly all schools in the sample hold regular cluster meetings. The planning for and implementation of the Curriculum for Wales is often now the main focus of these meetings. In many clusters, this has led to beneficial cluster-wide professional learning events. In most clusters, the priority has been on gaining a shared understanding of Curriculum for Wales guidance, especially regarding progression steps and assessment. Nevertheless, planning for the consistent and progressive development of pupils' reading skills across schools and phases remains underdeveloped.

Nearly all primary schools pass on Year 6 pupils' results from standardised reading tests to secondary schools as part of the annual transfer of data. In many clusters, this information is supplemented by more detail about pupils' progress at formal meetings between Year 6 teachers and secondary school transition co-ordinators, although the main focus is usually on pupils with additional learning needs.

Our findings suggest that a minority of secondary schools make limited use of reading test results from primary schools and carry out a range of baseline tests on pupils moving from Year 6 to Year 7. Leaders say they do this to gain a wide range of information about pupils' literacy and numeracy skills using tests that are the same for every pupil.

Our evidence shows that in a few clusters, teachers have reached agreement about the content and timing of meaningful tasks that begin in Year 6, usually towards the end of the summer term, and continue through into Year 7. Typically, these tasks revolve around a shared text and the activities provide some continuity and progression in developing pupils' reading skills from the primary to secondary phase.

A few clusters have experimented with teacher swaps between upper primary and lower secondary phases in order to share teaching expertise, including strategies for developing pupils' reading skills. It is too early to comment on the benefits of this approach.

See how schools are working as a cluster to develop pupils' reading skills

[Teacher swaps at Ysgol Bryn Elian cluster](#)

Overall, planning for the progressive development of pupils' skills, including their reading skills, from Year 6 to Year 7, is underdeveloped in nearly all schools in the sample. This is also the case within many all-age schools because there isn't enough communication and collaborative planning between the Year 6 and Year 7 teachers.

Misconceptions about reading skills

It is important that all school staff have a common language and understanding of the precise meaning of terminology when they discuss the development of pupils' reading skills within and between schools. Reading skills can be broadly categorised into basic skills and advanced skills. For example, the ability to decode words and to locate information from a text are relatively basic skills. On the other hand, comparing and contrasting two or more texts and then summarising and synthesising the main ideas in them are more advanced skills. However, it is not particularly helpful to think about and teach reading skills in a hierarchical manner. In reality, what makes a skill basic or advanced is more to do with the complexity of the text and the task than it is with the actual skill. For example, pupils can make simple assertions about whether they like a text or not and link ideas between two texts from a very young age. There is a danger that hierarchical models for teaching reading skills lead to 'advanced skills' being developed later than they need to be. This can be a particular weakness at transition from primary to secondary school, if pupils have been developing skills in the upper primary phase which they don't continue to develop until later in the lower secondary phase. Inspection findings show that many pupils develop sophisticated advanced reading skills when they are given opportunities to do so through being regularly exposed to progressively challenging texts and tasks across the curriculum.

In a few instances, teachers do not use the terminology of reading skills in a precise enough way. For example, they ask pupils to 'infer' meaning from a sentence that doesn't require any inference. Or they ask pupils to 'locate', 'explain' and 'describe' information from a text, envisaging that these are increasingly demanding tasks, when in reality each may simply require pupils to locate information. If the text itself explains and describes processes or concepts, then pupils only have to locate this information within a text and copy it out to answer such questions.

In other cases, teachers use the terminology accurately, but pupils are unclear about precisely what they are required to do because the same term is used to mean different things. For example, pupils are asked to 'summarise' parts or all of a text, but in one lesson this means using just two or three words, in another lesson it means using a few sentences and in a third lesson it means shortening the text by identifying the key points, but without any restriction on the length of the response. All of these are valid activities that enable pupils to demonstrate and improve their

reading skills. However, teachers need to plan and co-ordinate better what they mean by specific terms and what they want pupils to do with texts. They need to ensure that their instructions are clear and that they model success for tasks that pupils are doing for the first time.

Developing a reading culture

A majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools in the sample are beginning to move beyond the development of pupils' reading skills in lessons to create a 'reading culture' across the school. In these schools, this aspiration often features as one of the aims in their school improvement plan and senior leaders recognise the importance of reading for pupils' academic and future success. They also recognise a natural synergy between developing pupils' reading skills in lessons and pupils making use of these skills outside lessons and at home. The more pupils practise their reading skills in their own time, the faster those skills develop to support their learning.

There are also other documented well-being benefits of reading for pleasure (Department of Education, 2012) and evidence of a link between improved reading skills, improved behaviour and greater self-confidence.

See how schools are developing a reading culture

[Ebbw Fawr Learning Community](#)

[St Julian's School](#)

[Ysgol Aberconwy](#)

The majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools have implemented (or are trialling) one or two initiatives to supplement the work being done in lessons to develop and consolidate pupils' reading skills. Some of these are described briefly below. Creating a reading culture across a school is not a quick process. It requires a range of relevant strategies implemented consistently well over time so that pupils are confronted daily in different ways with the message that reading matters and they have easy access to texts that interest them.

The greatest risk for schools with regard to creating a reading culture is if they implement some of the initiatives described below without ensuring that reading skills are being taught, developed and consolidated effectively through high-quality teaching and texts in lessons across the curriculum.

Initiatives to develop a reading culture

The single most important factor in creating a reading culture is that senior leaders support reading and ensure that it has a high profile among staff and pupils. In schools that have successfully established a culture of reading, leaders share a clear vision and expectations about how reading will be developed and consolidated across the curriculum and provide staff with high-quality professional learning to support this. Staff then consistently develop these practices with their classes and have regular opportunities to share, discuss and revisit strategies with colleagues. For pupils, this means that the message about the importance of reading is frequent and consistent, seen and heard, and is promoted inside and outside of lessons.

In nearly all primary schools in the sample, sessions in which the main focus is reading usually happen daily. Teachers and other staff listen to pupils read regularly, often as part of guided reading sessions. Many primary schools end their day with a shared reading experience. These strategies help pupils to understand the importance of developing their reading skills and help foster a love of reading. In a minority of primary schools, teachers create bespoke areas where pupils can read quietly, both inside and outside of classrooms. These spaces are welcoming and stocked with appropriately varied and challenging texts, and sometimes include displays reminding pupils of the strategies they should be using if they get stuck when reading. Such spaces, whose very existence is to promote and facilitate reading, contribute visibly and beneficially to a reading culture.

A minority of secondary schools in the sample have implemented some form of a 'drop everything and read' (DEAR) or 'everyone reads in class' (ERIC) strategy. Usually, this is a weekly or fortnightly short burst of independent reading lasting about 15-20 minutes. Sometimes this takes place in English lessons only, but more usually it takes place in different subjects across the curriculum (at different times so that its impact is spread over many subjects) to emphasise that reading skills are important in every subject. In a few schools, English lessons always begin with independent reading, which supplements the DEAR activity.

Independent reading normally means silent reading. When managed well and pupils engage with it suitably, short bursts of silent reading are enjoyed by many pupils. These opportunities can contribute to the 'reading miles' (Lemov, 2016, p210), which pupils need to put in to become expert readers. However, there are well-known risks to silent reading. Silent reading suits good readers. Pupils who don't enjoy reading because they find it arduous or boring are most likely to find ways to avoid reading. This could mean that they quietly disengage while giving the impression they are reading or they actively disrupt the session.

Pupils take notice of what teachers do during silent reading sessions. In the best examples, teachers make productive use of these sessions to promote reading. They use the time to read themselves, work with individual pupils to listen to them read or ask them questions about the texts they are reading to check for understanding. Occasionally, there is a mismatch between what senior leaders believe is happening in silent reading sessions and what is actually happening. As with any whole-school initiative, it is important that leaders monitor how consistently it is being implemented and evaluate its impact through a range of first-hand approaches.

In a few secondary schools in the sample, the DEAR/ERIC activity takes place during registration time, sometimes weekly or twice weekly. A variation on independent reading occurs in schools that have implemented a shared reading strategy during these sessions. Typically, this involves each year group reading the same fiction text together in their form group, often with the aim of completing one text per term. The texts will usually be selected by the literacy co-ordinator using criteria such as their accessibility, their interest to the pupils and their progressive challenge. Generally, form tutors read the text aloud to their form groups. This allows pupils to hear experienced readers read fluently and expressively while they follow along in their own copy of the text. In the best examples, teachers stop occasionally to ask questions about specific vocabulary or some aspect of characterisation or plot to

check pupils' engagement and understanding. Pupils often enjoy this kind of shared reading and speak positively about it.

Some of the schools that have implemented shared reading in registration sessions have continued this through to Key Stage 4. In these schools, teachers often read progressively complex non-fiction texts with older pupils as part of building pupils' general knowledge and generating discussion to develop speaking and listening as well as reading skills.

A minority of secondary schools in the sample have specific reading lessons, weekly or fortnightly, which are usually part of English curriculum time. Where these lessons are most effective, teachers plan shared reading activities with whole-class discussions and pupils read books they have chosen in pairs or groups. Teachers listen to pupils read and give them formative feedback. Where these lessons are least effective, pupils spend the whole lesson reading silently, taking quizzes on the books they are reading or not engaging in sustained reading.

Most primary schools and a few secondary schools we visited provide parents with helpful advice and guidance about how they can support the development of their children's reading skills.

School libraries and local libraries

There is a wide variation in school library provision in primary, secondary and all-age schools. Many schools in the sample have a library space but its usage, stock, state of repair and level of supervision differ considerably from school to school. In a minority of primary schools and a few secondary schools, the school library is a central hub for activities that support the development of pupils' reading skills from before school time formally begins until after it formally ends. In a few schools, the library is barely used or has been decommissioned and the space put to alternative use.

Secondary schools that have a library space but are unable to supervise it regularly are unable to make best use of the facility. Pupils say that it is difficult to borrow books from unsupervised libraries, that books are often poorly organised and that the spaces are used by pupils for socialising rather than reading.

Where school library provision is most effective, the space is welcoming, well-stocked, supervised and large enough to accommodate a class comfortably. The library is used by a range of classes and subjects on a daily basis. It may also be a venue for reading interventions, for example a buddy reading scheme between older and younger pupils. Pupils make use of the space at break time and lunch time for quiet reading and study. After school, pupils who need a warm, quiet space to carry out homework tasks and don't have this facility at home can be found working. A few schools provide transport home for such pupils using grant funding. The best school libraries are also the venue for events that promote and support reading, such as visits by authors and book fairs.

Pupils appreciate a well-resourced and well-run school library. They see it as something of a barometer in measuring the value that a school places on reading.

See how schools are using their libraries to support the development of pupils' reading skills

[Ebbw Fawr Learning Community](#)

[Ysgol Aberconwy](#)

Overall, a minority of pupils in the sample schools are members of local libraries, where these exist, although the proportion reduces from Year 6 to Year 9. Interestingly, pupils do not always see the existence of an accessible local library as a reason for schools not to have their own libraries. For some pupils, for example those who live a considerable distance from a local library, their only opportunity to use a library is at school.

Appendix 1

Case study 1: Planning for the consistent development of disciplinary literacy, including reading

Information about the school

Ysgol Bryn Eliau is an 11-18 comprehensive in Colwyn Bay, Conwy, with 976 pupils. In 2022, 24.7% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 20.3%.

Context and background to the practice

School leaders identified four key areas as a focus for improving provision to develop literacy skills across the curriculum: explicit language development, access to varied and challenging texts, improving learner accuracy and supporting extended writing.

Description of activity/strategy

Using the revised Literacy Framework, all departments identified the literacy needs for their subject to enable learners to progress. Leaders provided opportunities for collaboration, professional learning and exemplification to support the development of consistency.

As part of explicit language development, teachers in every subject provide systematic vocabulary instruction to help pupils access and use academic language. Teachers prioritise the teaching of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which learners are unlikely to encounter in everyday speech.

To comprehend complex texts, pupils 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, improve pupils' understanding of texts. Teachers introduce strategies through modelling and group work, before support is gradually removed to promote independence.

Impact on provision and standards

The introduction of disciplinary literacy as a fundamental practice has impacted positively on provision, especially curriculum design and teaching. Incorporating and prioritising disciplinary reading has enabled pupils to recognise, transfer and adapt a range of reading skills, from skimming and scanning, to making inferences, sequencing information, summarising, and comparing and contrasting information and ideas, across the curriculum.

Case study 2: Transition projects to share teaching strategies between the primary and secondary phases, including teaching reading

Information about the school

Ysgol Bryn Elian is an 11-18 comprehensive in Colwyn Bay, Conwy, with 976 pupils. In 2022, 24.7% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 20.3%.

Context and background to the practice

Leaders found that not all staff had the knowledge and skillset to support the progress of those pupils whose reading had regressed significantly, including those who joined the school with a reading age of less than 6.

Description of activity/strategy

In 2021/22, the school used the Accelerated Learning Programme grant to employ a primary school teacher from one of its cluster schools to teach in the secondary school and to increase the number of sessions secondary staff taught in the cluster primaries. Developing pupils' reading skills was a particular focus, specifically confidence, fluency and vocabulary acquisition. The primary specialist supported the lessons of the most vulnerable and negatively impacted Year 7 pupils. This allowed her to work with staff on planning interventions and improving their pedagogical skills while also supporting pupils directly.

Impact on provision and standards

Secondary staff's knowledge and understanding of curriculum, assessment and teaching has increased to support planning for transition. They are better informed of the approaches needed to secure improvement in outcomes for vulnerable and lower attaining learners, including their reading skills. Primary staff are better able to challenge more able learners through their collaboration and professional learning with secondary teachers.

Seventy-five per cent of learners in the target group improved their reading skills more than expected, measured by initial baseline testing and retesting at the end of the year. Pupils are more confident in reading aloud and their fluency has improved. They are better able to transfer key reading skills from one subject to another because of the consistent experience in their lessons.

Case study 3: Oracy and reading

Information about the school

Cyfarthfa Park Primary School has 448 pupils and is in Merthyr Tydfil. In 2022, 11.8% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 15%.

Context and background to the practice

The high profile of reading and oracy has been developed by senior leaders and staff through a structured, progressive and supportive approach over a number of years. The aim is to prepare children to be lifelong learners, through developing confident speakers and proficient readers.

Description of activity/strategy

To develop pupils' success in reading and oracy, the school introduced strategies in their reading sessions that fostered pupils' highly effective communication skills. These strategies enabled pupils to discuss texts and ideas raised in guided group reading sessions using appropriate speech and language skills. The introduction of listening and speaking roles within reciprocal reading sessions was key to the children being able to internalise the cognitive and metacognitive processes of reading and enable nearly all pupils to mirror what good readers do naturally.

The discrete teaching of key vocabulary takes place at the beginning of each reading session, enabling pupils to read successfully. New vocabulary is reinforced throughout the reading session, as well as in other areas of the curriculum.

Senior leaders ensure that all staff are appropriately trained in the effective delivery of reading and oracy. The school has developed a set of non-negotiables for reading sessions and these include expectations for all staff. The monitoring of reading sessions is essential to ensure that teaching is consistent and progressive.

Impact on provision and standards

The impact of teaching explicit oracy and reading skills at Cyfarthfa Park Primary School is visible and audible. Through regular staff modelling, the school has developed confident, articulate pupils who express a love of reading in and out of the classroom. As well as improved standards of attainment, well-being has also been enhanced as pupils are able to express themselves in a more self-assured way.

Case study 4: Reading carousel

Information about the school

Cyfarthfa Park Primary has 448 pupils and is in Merthyr Tydfil. In 2022, 11.8% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 15%.

Context and background to the practice

After researching and observing various methods of reading in other schools, senior leaders at Cyfarthfa Park Primary School made a conscious decision to move away from individual reading to guided group reading (GGR) sessions and to structure these to ensure they are focused entirely on reading. Senior leaders established a system that promotes deeper metacognition and comprehension in pupils so they become strategic readers who probe, predict, question, make connections, summarise and communicate effectively in GGR sessions on a daily basis.

Description of activity/strategy

The structure of the daily reading sessions aims to maximise learning, the development of reading, listening and speaking skills, as well independent learning. During GGR sessions a wide range of teaching and learning approaches are used to maximise pupil progress. These include reading with teachers and support staff; online reading with questions to test comprehension; differentiated, structured reading of texts with key focus tasks; pre-reading and reciprocal reading (RR). Teaching assistants play an important role in the reading sessions through their questioning and development of pupils' vocabulary, strategies that have been modelled by teaching staff.

During the RR sessions, pupils 'become the teacher' and lead the reading session, ensuring that all members of the group are involved. Pupils have different roles in the group, such as predictor, clarifier, questioner and summariser, with different oracy sentence stems to support them. This encourages pupils to think about their own cognitive process during reading. It helps pupils to be actively involved and monitor their comprehension as they read, as well as encouraging them to ask questions during reading which help make the text more comprehensible.

Impact on provision and standards

The impact of teaching reading in this way has been improved standards in reading because pupils have a greater comprehension of what has been read through their group discussions and questioning around the texts. In addition, pupils are more independent in leading their own learning, support their peers to think more deeply, and are developing a greater love of reading for pleasure.

Case study 5: Development of a reading culture

Information about the school

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (EFLC) is an all-age school with 1,308 pupils in Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent. In 2022, 16.5% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 29.1%.

Context and background to the practice

Post-pandemic, senior leaders at EFLC identified a significant decline in reading skills across primary and secondary phases. To address this, the school is creating a holistic approach to reading, which fosters enjoyment alongside focused strategies to improve reading skills.

Description of activity/strategy

Reading is a priority in the school improvement plan and cluster transition plan. Strategic planning has created a consistent cross-phase approach. Reading is a focus for professional learning and all staff share responsibility for promoting and developing a strong reading culture.

The school has developed a whole-school literacy toolkit to support the improvement of reading. Literacy skills are planned and promoted carefully across all areas of learning and experience. There is a robust pupil progress tracking system so that all pupils who require additional interventions are identified and supported with interventions tailored to their specific needs. EFLC has established strong home-school reading links through parental engagement sessions, reading cafes and with daily home reading books. Disadvantaged learners are a particular focus of these initiatives.

Reading skills are taught across the school, and the enjoyment of reading promoted through a range of activities including, in the primary phase, guided reading, daily individual reading time, literacy skills lessons and class readers. In the secondary phase, echo reading, reciprocal reading, guided reading sheets and vocabulary sheets are used consistently across the curriculum. In both phases, there is a modern, well-stocked library and in the primary phase, there are bespoke reading areas in all classes. The secondary phase provides library enrichment sessions with a discrete author focus and primary pupils visit the local library regularly.

Impact on provision and standards

Pupil voice evaluations indicate a significant increase in pupils' enjoyment of reading. Across both phases, reading programme assessments show that most targeted pupils have made greater than expected progress.

Case study 6: Developing reading skills through a Children in Literature project

Information about the school

St Julian's School is an 11-18 comprehensive in Newport with 1,452 pupils. In 2022, 21.1% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 23.3%.

Context and background to the practice

Teachers at St Julian's School have created the cross-curricular 'Children in Literature' project to allow Year 7 pupils to apply their understanding and knowledge of the key reading skills taught in the autumn term.

Description of activity/strategy

Initially, pupils are given an overview of how children have been presented in literature over the past two hundred years in a series of English lessons. This covers topics such as the orphan, the child of nature and the child of war. Pupils are taught note-taking skills and apply their knowledge of retrieval and summary skills. In history, pupils learn about the lives of children in Victorian times and, in religious studies, about how the rights of the child have changed over time. This cross-curricular approach allows pupils to make connections between subjects and apply their knowledge of the key reading skills more effectively.

Once pupils have acquired this overview, they are given a choice of tasks to complete independently. They have autonomy over what they focus on and how they present their projects. During the research stage, pupils apply their knowledge of a wide range of reading skills to create relevant coherent notes to support their projects. They are also taught how to make notes from websites and create a bibliography.

The project is completed for home learning with teachers checking pupils' progress during a number of sessions across the term. This step-by-step approach ensures that all pupils take part and feel a real sense of ownership and of achievement on completion. An awards assembly is held to reward the effort and resilience that pupils have shown while working independently. Recent projects have focused on a wide range of books from 'The Diary of Anne Frank' to 'Oliver Twist' to 'The Wizard of Oz'.

Impact on provision and standards

From conversations with pupils, it is clear that the project helps them become more confident at discussing their wider reading and their progress in the key reading skills. Pupils also commented on the time teachers spend recommending texts and how they have enjoyed these conversations.

Case study 7: Developing a reading culture

Information about the school

St Julian's School is an 11-18 comprehensive in Newport with 1,452 pupils. In 2022, 21.1% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 23.3%.

Context and background to the practice

As part of their wider work on cross-curricular skills, staff at St Julian's have focused on developing reading at the school. The leadership and approach to skills development begins in the core subjects and is then applied and consolidated in the wider curriculum, with a focus on using the skills to enhance subject understanding.

Description of activity/strategy

In the autumn term of Year 7, pupils complete a literacy scheme of learning in English lessons, which introduces them to specific reading skills. Pupils continue to develop and apply these across the curriculum. Staff in all other departments have received training in how to incorporate these skills into their own teaching where it is relevant to do so. This means that pupils apply the skills in ways that also enhance their subject knowledge and understanding.

In addition, all teachers have focused on expanding the number, type and complexity of texts that pupils read. English teachers run a Challenge Reading Programme, in which learners individually read a suitably challenging text, from a range of genres, every half term. The department teaches termly class texts, which complement the theme of the pupils' learning. For example, a Year 9 class studying War might read 'The Cellist of Sarajevo'.

To reinforce this culture of reading, form tutors at St Julian's read aloud to their tutor groups weekly. In Key Stage 3, this is a novel, such as 'Murder on the Orient Express'. In Key Stage 4, it is a series of non-fiction articles. This approach allows many students to access more challenging texts than they could read independently.

Impact on provision and standards

Pupils are progressing well in their reading levels as a result of teachers focusing on reading skills like analysis and comparison within and beyond English lessons. Advanced reading skills are applied in appropriate subjects with many pupils having a clear understanding of the different skills and how to use them to enhance their reading comprehension. Overall, pupils are reading more widely, more frequently and with greater enjoyment.

Case study 8: Developing a reading culture

Information about the school

Ysgol Aberconwy is an 11-18 comprehensive in Conwy with 977 pupils. In 2022, 20.1% of pupils had additional learning needs and the three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals was 19%.

Context and background to the practice

Since 2013 the school has strategically developed a reading culture in Years 7-9. Prior to this, the majority of pupils had negative attitudes to reading with most not reading for pleasure. Library stock was outdated and did not meet the needs or interests of pupils. In addition, the library was being used primarily as a computer room.

Description of activity/strategy

Leaders redesigned the school library to promote reading for pleasure for pupils in Years 7-9. The old stock, computers and desks were removed. New fiction was purchased and the library re-located to the front of the school to signal that reading is important and valued. Staff made the space inviting, furnishing it with armchairs and painting it with bright colours.

A literacy mentor was appointed to supervise the library with responsibility for the delivery of reading interventions and the development of a vibrant reading environment. A fortnightly library lesson was introduced in which teachers listen to pupils read, pupils take quizzes on the books they have read, new books are introduced, and teachers ensure that pupils are reading appropriate books. Leaders introduced a daily 20-minute reading session in lessons and promoted 20 minutes of reading at home every day.

In 2021, leaders reviewed the library stock again and increased the budget to provide a modern, dynamic and diverse reading experience. Following research and consultation with pupils, the library now incorporates four movable room dividers, to zone the space for small group reading discussions, and bean bags to provide flexible and moveable seating. Staff further refined the reading lesson to follow a more explicit plan, which specifies a writer focus, identifies texts to be read aloud by teachers and prescribes the reading pupils do – pair, individual and group.

Impact on provision and standards

The school's data shows that pupils are now reading significantly more than before. The school surveys pupils annually and results indicate that the percentage of pupils who say they rarely or never read in their own time has reduced by 10% to below 20%..

Appendix 2

Key features of an effective programme to develop pupils' reading skills

- Senior leaders promote a shared vision for the importance of reading and how pupils' reading skills are developed across the curriculum
- Leaders provide appropriate coordination and planning of where, when and how pupils' reading skills are being developed and consolidated across the curriculum
- Leaders provide teachers with helpful professional learning about how to develop pupils' reading skills across the curriculum
- Teachers provide regular meaningful opportunities for pupils to read engaging, relevant and suitably challenging texts
- Teachers choose a wide range of texts to read and study which are progressively complex
- The texts chosen are accessible and staff provide pupils with appropriate support where necessary
- Pupils read a suitable balance of fiction and non-fiction texts across the curriculum
- Pupils are taught and given regular opportunities to practise reading strategies, such as predicting, questioning and summarising, which help them understand complex texts
- Teachers check pupils' understanding of what they are reading regularly, for example by skilful questioning and activities that require pupils to demonstrate advanced reading skills
- Teachers discuss multi-modal and media texts with pupils and teach them how to analyse and evaluate these
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to develop their fluency and prosody by reading aloud
- Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to read with their class, in groups and independently
- Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary formally and informally
- Reading interventions for pupils with weaker reading skills are based on a diagnosis of specific skills deficits and teaching by trained staff aimed at addressing these. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and the overall impact of interventions is monitored and evaluated robustly
- Leaders and teachers actively seek to develop pupils' enjoyment and love of reading (see Appendix 3)

Appendix 3

Key elements in developing a reading culture

- Senior leaders demonstrate active and visible support for reading
- Teachers develop and consolidate pupils' reading skills in a planned and coordinated way across the curriculum (see Appendix 2)
- Activities to develop a reading culture are planned and coordinated effectively
- All staff are involved in promoting the importance and enjoyment of reading
- Staff talk to pupils about the books staff and pupils are reading. Staff recommend appropriate books to pupils
- The school emphasises the value of pupils reading outside of lessons and at home
- Inviting reading spaces and appropriate, suitably challenging and engaging reading material are readily available to pupils in school
- The school is involved in local and national reading events
- The school engages with local and national authors
- The school finds ways to celebrate pupils' reading
- Staff provide pupils with opportunities to share their opinions and responses to what they have read
- The school promotes the importance of reading to parents and provides helpful guidance about how they can support their children's reading
- The school monitors and evaluates its strategy to develop a reading culture regularly and robustly and makes changes based on the evidence it gathers

Methods and evidence base

This report draws on evidence from visits to a sample of primary, secondary and all-age schools, as well as evidence from inspections carried out since January 2021. Schools were selected based on their size, geographical location and socio-economic factors. The report focuses only on pupils' English reading skills. Estyn intends to produce a separate report in 2023/24 into how schools are developing pupils' Welsh and English reading skills across the curriculum in Welsh-medium schools.

In total, 23 schools were visited by HMI or by peer inspectors. In order to gather evidence of how clusters of schools were planning for the development of pupils' reading skills at the point of transition, we visited four primary schools along with their catchment secondary schools. We also visited two all-age schools where we gathered evidence on learning and provision for pupils aged 10-14 years. In visits to primary schools and their catchment secondary schools and to all-age schools, two inspectors carried out the activity, so that we had primary and secondary phase experience on the team. Visits to the other 13 secondary schools were carried out by individual inspectors with secondary phase experience.

In each school visited, inspectors:

- observed sessions in Year 6 classes or a variety of lessons across the curriculum in Years 7-9
- met with small groups of pupils in Years 6, 7, 8 and 9 to discuss their attitudes to reading and how their schools are helping them to develop their reading skills
- interviewed the literacy coordinator to discuss the strategies the school is using to develop pupils' reading skills
- interviewed the transition coordinator to discuss provision at transition
- met with teachers (Year 6 in primary schools, a small cross-curricular group in secondary schools and both of these in all-age schools) to discuss how they implement strategies to develop pupils' reading skills in their lessons
- scrutinised any literacy/reading toolkit and transition plan if the school had these documents
- met briefly with the headteacher at the start of the day to confirm arrangements and at the end of the day to give feedback on the main findings from the visit

The relatively small sample of schools that we were able to visit for this thematic review meant that we have also used evidence from 98 inspections of primary and secondary schools outside the sample carried out between January 2021 and October 2022 when evaluating pupils' learning. We have also considered a range of national and international research on the development of pupils' literacy and reading skills, some of which is summarised in the 'Background' section of the report. Finally, we met with representatives from the school improvement services to discuss the professional learning opportunities related to developing pupils' reading skills that are available to school staff.

Estyn would like to thank the following schools that supported this thematic review:

School	Phase	Local authority
Cyfarthfa Park Primary School	Primary	Merthyr Tydfil
Glan Usk Primary School	Primary	Newport
Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran	Primary	Conwy
Ysgol Stryd Y Rhos	Primary	Denbighshire
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	All-age	Blaenau Gwent
Ysgol Llanfyllin	All-age	Powys
Bedwas High School	Secondary	Caerphilly
Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School	Secondary	Rhondda Cynon Taff
Chepstow School	Secondary	Monmouthshire
Cyfarthfa High School	Secondary	Merthyr Tydfil
Darland High School	Secondary	Wrexham
Gowerton Comprehensive School	Secondary	Swansea
Llangatwg Community School	Secondary	Neath Port Talbot
St Joseph's Catholic School and Sixth Form Centre	Secondary	Neath Port Talbot
St Julian's School	Secondary	Newport
St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School	Secondary	Vale of Glamorgan
Ysgol Aberconwy	Secondary	Conwy
Ysgol Botwnnog	Secondary	Gwynedd
Ysgol Bryn Elian	Secondary	Conwy
Ysgol Brynhyfryd	Secondary	Denbighshire
Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn	Secondary	Carmarthenshire
Ysgol Maesydderwen	Secondary	Powys
Ysgol Treffynnon	Secondary	Flintshire

Glossary

Advanced reading skills	Skills that enable pupils to read a range of materials including complex literary and non-literary texts with confidence and understanding
Basic reading skills	Skills that enable pupils to begin to make sense of texts, such as decoding words, building fluency and comprehension
Guided reading	Pupils read texts in groups, usually with others of similar ability, either silently or aloud.
Independent reading	Pupils read on their own.
Inference	Understanding information or views that are not explicitly stated
Prosody	The expression used when reading aloud to make a text clear and interesting.
Reading culture	An environment where reading is successfully championed, valued, respected and encouraged so that many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure as well as to learn
Reciprocal reading	A form of group reading in which pupils take on specific roles, usually predictor, questioner, summariser and clarifier
Shared reading	Pupils in a class read the same text together.
Stage-appropriate text	A text that is suitably challenging for the pupils' age and ability
Tier 1 vocabulary	Basic words that are used in everyday speech
Tier 2 vocabulary	Words that are seldom used in speech but are regularly found in complex literary and non-literary texts
Tier 3 vocabulary	Subject-specific vocabulary

Numbers – quantities and proportions

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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