



SET Free: Unlocking Reading for every pupil

Summary of unlocking reading at Soke Education Trust

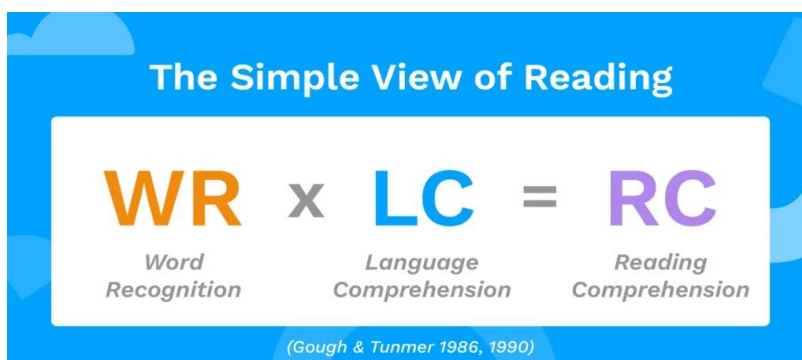
Integrating evidence-based strategies and literacy-rich settings in our schools has resulted in an enacted reading strategy that prioritises reading and language, motivation, engagement, and comprehension. We have maximised the physical, social, and instructional environments within schools and chosen assessments, schemes, interventions and resources that, underpinned by high quality teaching, create the conditions for all pupils to read fluently, unlocking the door to all learning.

Our approach to unlocking reading

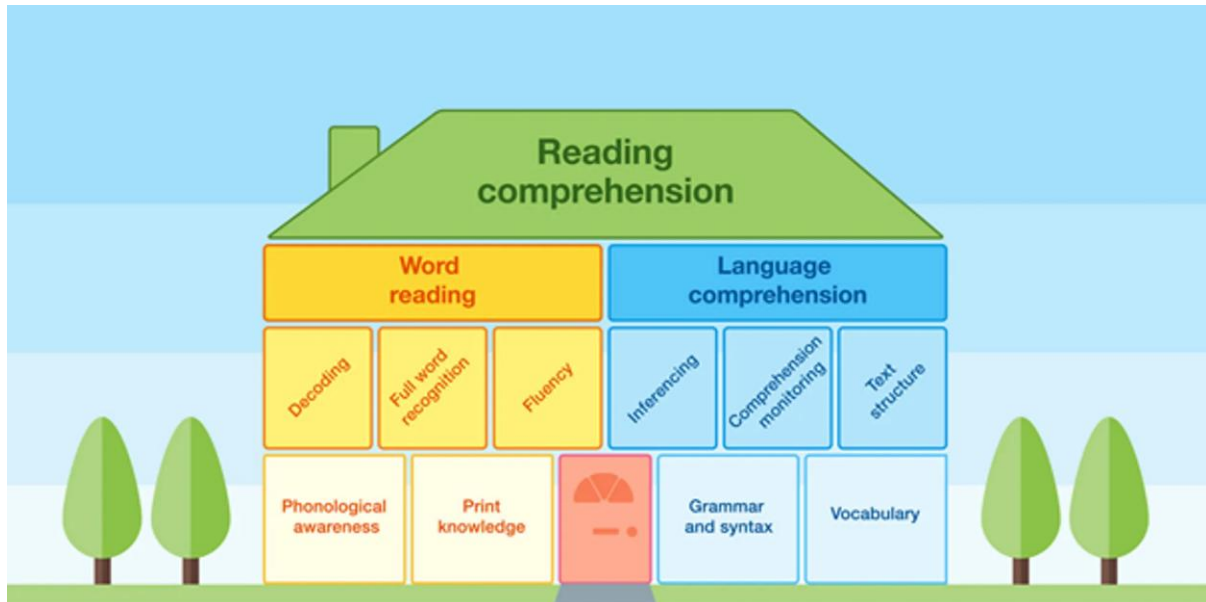
At Soke Education Trust, our strategy for teaching reading is grounded in the reading evidence-base. Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants use phonics instruction, vocabulary building, and repeated reading to improve decoding and fluency. Our daily reading lessons focus on building comprehension through strategies like making connections, predicting, visualising, questioning, and summarising. Additional engagement activities such as parental workshops and use of technology, such as audio-books, promote pupils' enjoyment and independence when reading and enable reading at home to be a supported and fun activity.

The methodology behind our approach

The Simple View of Reading shows the importance of both word recognition and language comprehension in becoming a fluent reader.



However, in order to enable more intentional teaching of reading, we use the **EEF's model of The Reading House**. This breaks down the simple view of reading further into component parts that are vital to comprehension.



The Reading Framework (DfE, July 2023)

The DfE Reading Framework emphasises the importance of selecting texts across the curriculum that are accessible, age-appropriate, and aligned with the knowledge and vocabulary pupils need to learn in each subject. Effective reading instruction goes beyond decoding words; it requires building pupils' background knowledge to support comprehension. The framework highlights the role of curriculum sequencing and the use of texts with organisational features (such as glossaries and tables) to deepen pupils' understanding. Reading across subjects supports the development of broad knowledge, which is essential for strong reading comprehension and critical thinking. Teachers should encourage talk and discussion in lessons to help pupils think deeply and articulate their understanding.

The framework provides the following recommendations for developing fluency and comprehension:

- Develop Fluency Through Repeated and Supported Reading, with strategies such as echo reading and choral reading





- Develop mental models of both narrative and non-narrative text, by use of interactive reading
- Build fluency progressively by re-reading texts that introduce new vocabulary and complex language
- Select motivating texts and modelling fluent reading
- Regularly read aloud across the curriculum to expose pupils to fluent reading models
- Build comprehension by developing linguistic knowledge (vocabulary and grammar) and world knowledge, alongside fluent decoding
- Instruction including targeted phonics, vocabulary building and multisensory techniques to engage different learning styles and build comprehension

Our approach in practice

Phonics Schemes

All Soke Education Trust schools use approved Systematic Synthetic Phonics schemes, with fidelity; all have had support from the New Wave English Hub to ensure that staff have the CPD, systems and resources they need to effectively teach their chosen scheme, through EYFS, KS1 and into KS2. Staff in school use their scheme's tracking systems to ensure that gaps do not emerge and the keep up, catch up strategy is embedded.

CUSP reading

All Soke Education Trust schools use CUSP Reading to teach whole-class daily reading sessions. CUSP reading is underpinned by the DfE's reading framework and has a clear evidence-based pedagogical framework, which engineers success for all learners.

The CUSP Reading curriculum exemplifies the principles of the reading framework and the EEF's guidance on preparing for and improving literacy, through its three core pillars: explicit vocabulary instruction, prosodic reading for fluency, and encouraging pupils to think hard about texts. It uses a carefully designed literature spine aligned with the wider curriculum, exposing pupils to diverse and rich texts. Lessons follow a structured six-phase approach (Connect, Explain, Example, Attempt, Apply, Challenge), supported by scaffolding strategies to ensure all pupils can access challenging literature. Pupils engage with whole texts and supplementary materials, promoting deep understanding and connections between reading and wider curriculum learning, thereby fostering both fluency and comprehension.





Reading environments

A well-designed reading environment plays a vital role in fostering pupils' literacy development and motivation. Classroom and school libraries include accessible, diverse, and engaging reading materials that reflect a range of genres, topics, and cultural backgrounds. Comfortable and inviting reading spaces encourage pupils to spend more time reading independently and collaboratively, helping to build positive associations with reading. Providing opportunities for social interaction around texts, such as paired reading and book discussions, further supports vocabulary growth, comprehension, and critical thinking skills.

Teacher Modelling and Resources

Teachers are central to creating an effective reading environment by modelling fluent, expressive reading and regularly reading aloud to pupils. This exposes pupils to prosody, new vocabulary, and complex language structures, supporting their comprehension and motivation. Additionally, thoughtfully integrating technology, such as digital texts and audiobooks, can enhance engagement and provide personalised reading experiences. The online e-book portal, Curriculum Visions, is used across the Trust and is one example of how we make reading accessible and engaging for all learners. Together, these elements create literacy-rich environments that support all pupils, including those who may struggle, to develop fluency, comprehension, and a lifelong love of reading.

Reading Interventions

All reading interventions used at Soke Education Trust are evidence-based and only put into place once we are confident that they will have the desired impact, based upon formative and summative assessments. This is because we prioritise the right intervention for the right pupil at the right time. We monitor impact frequently, including how pupils attending the interventions are progressing and using the focus skills in the classroom. We aim for any intervention to enable pupils to catch up or keep up so they access classroom learning as fully as possible and progress with their peers, closing the gap as quickly as possible. Schools use Herts for Learning reading fluency intervention and the Expanded Rehearsal Technique.





Use of the Pupil Premium Grant to unlock reading

At Soke Education Trust, we are committed to using the Pupil Premium grant strategically to narrow the attainment gap for our disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who struggle with reading. Research consistently shows that early language development and literacy are critical determinants of future academic success, and disadvantaged pupils often face additional barriers in these areas.

To address these challenges, our approach is informed by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance and the statutory "Using Pupil Premium: Guidance for School Leaders" (March 2025). We prioritise high-quality teaching and targeted academic support as the most effective means to accelerate progress in reading.

Diagnostic assessment is used to identify specific reading difficulties and tailor interventions accordingly. This targeted approach helps address root causes such as poor early language development, which is known to contribute to low attainment. Alongside this, professional development is prioritised. Staff receive ongoing coaching and mentoring to refine their delivery of reading interventions and phonics teaching, ensuring fidelity to best practices and continuous improvement.

Finally, we prioritise parental engagement and access to quality reading resources. Recognising the importance of a supportive home environment, we engage parents through communication and workshops to support reading at home, alongside providing access to resources like books and literacy activities.

By combining these evidence-informed strategies, we aim to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils at Soke Education Trust have the opportunity to develop strong reading skills, thereby transforming their life opportunities in line with our Trust vision.





EEF literacy Guidance

To unlock reading for every pupil, we follow EEF guidance:

EEF preparing for literacy	EEF Improving literacy in KS1	EEF Improving literacy in KS2
EYFS and preschool	KS1	KS2
<p>Recommendation 1: Prioritise the development of communication and language - high quality interactions; shared and interactive reading; storytelling; explicit vocabulary instruction</p>	<p>Recommendation 1: Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language - high quality adult interactions; explicit and implicit approaches to teaching vocabulary; collaborative activities to use, learn and hear language</p>	<p>Recommendation 1: Develop pupils; language capabilities - purposeful speaking and listening activities such as discussing, reading aloud articulating ideas; high quality dialogue that develops thinking and use of language; explicit vocabulary instruction</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Develop children's early reading using a balanced approach - storytelling, letter and sound knowledge; singing and rhyming activities, SSP</p>	<p>Recommendation 2: Use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, teaching both decoding and comprehension skills - decoding and encoding; comprehension of what is read; motivation and persistence; wider reading and experiences</p>	<p>Recommendation 2: Support pupils to develop fluent reading capabilities - guided oral reading instruction; repeated reading; support for decoding if still needed and reading fluency development</p>
<p>Preparing for Literacy KS1, Recommendation 3: Effectively implement a systematic phonics programme - SSP that explicitly teach comprehension and spelling; training, responsiveness to formative assessment, engagement, adaptations and focused teaching; (rec.1 and 2 of engaging parents); talk to less-involved parents about what would help them; support parents to have regular reading routines at home; consider initiatives that involve summer reading</p>		
<p>Recommendation 5: support parents to understand how to help their children learn: Reading cafes; phonics workshops; EYFS welcome</p>	<p>Recommendation 4: Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and monitoring their reading comprehension - self-</p>	<p>Recommendation 3: Teach reading comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice - teach prediction, questioning, clarifying,</p>



<p>packs</p>	<p>monitoring of pupils when reading; prediction, questioning, clarifying, summarising, activating prior knowledge; modelling and structured support leading to independence</p>	<p>summarising and activating prior knowledge; model and scaffold strategies towards independence; carefully selected texts that support teaching of these strategies</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: use high-quality assessment to ensure all children make good progress: Keep up and catch up methodology; tracking through phonics scheme to ensure the right support at the right time; use of assessments to inform practice; adjustments to engineer success for all</p>	<p>Recommendation 7: Use high quality information about pupils; current capabilities to select the best steps for teaching - high quality, timely information; the right support at the right time; use models of reading to diagnose the next area of focus; alternative approaches to develop each aspect of reading</p>	<p>Recommendation 6: Target teaching and support by accurately assessing pupil needs - high quality, timely information; the right support at the right time; formative assessment as part of classroom strategies; diagnostic assessments to ensure accurate teaching; well trained staff</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: use high quality targeted support to help struggling children: Small group interventions; the most capable adults for our children with the greatest need; evidence-based approaches delivered with fidelity</p>	<p>Recommendation 8: Use high quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy - quality first teaching of reading; interventions carefully matched to needs; one-to-one and small group tutoring with structured evidence-based interventions; regular review of progress to ensure impact</p>	<p>Recommendation 7: Use high quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with literacy - quality first teaching of reading; interventions carefully matched to needs; carefully match pupils with structured evidence-based interventions; regular review of progress to ensure impact</p>



EEF guidance Special Educational Needs in mainstream Schools

<p>Recommendation 1: For all pupils: create a positive and supportive environment; promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing; the best possible teaching; positive behaviour management approaches</p>	<p>Recommendation 2: Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs - 'assess, plan, do, review' approach; assessment that is regular and purposeful; teachers who are empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child</p>	<p>Recommendation 3: Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching - quality first teaching; flexible grouping, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, explicit instruction, using technology to support pupils with SEND, scaffolding</p>	<p>Recommendation 4: Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small- group and one- to-one interventions - total inclusion; interventions that increase with need; accurate assessment and carefully targeted interventions</p>	<p>Recommendation 5: Work effectively with teaching assistants - Effective deployment of teaching assistants; ensure positive impact of TA deployment on pupils with SEND; TAs that supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher</p>
---	---	--	---	--





References

DfE - The Reading Framework (July 2023)

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (2018). *Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants: Guidance Report*.

Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/TA_Guidance_Report_2018.pdf

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (n.d.). *Preparing for Literacy: Summary of Recommendations*.

Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Literacy/EEF_Preparing_for_Literacy_Summary.pdf

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (n.d.). *Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1: Summary of Recommendations*.

Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Literacy/EEF_Improving_Literacy_in_Key_Stage_1_Summary.pdf

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (n.d.). *Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2: Summary of Recommendations*.

Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Literacy/EEF_Improving_Literacy_in_Key_Stage_2_Summary.pdf

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (n.d.). *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools: Guidance Report*.

Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Literacy/EEF_Literacy_Guidance_Secondary.pdf

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (n.d.). *Pupil Premium: Guidance Report*.

Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Pupil_Premium_Guidance_iPDF.pdf





Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). (n.d.). *Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools: Guidance Report*.

Available at:
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/SEND_Guidance_Report.pdf

Gough, P. B., & Tunmer, W. E. (1986). Decoding, reading, and reading disability. *Remedial and Special Education*, 7(1), 6–10.

As referenced in: Department for Education (2023). *The Reading Framework*. Non-statutory guidance.

The Nuffield Foundation. (n.d.). *Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)*.

Available at: <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/nuffield-early-language-intervention-neli>

OFSTED Research Review Series: English

