Alexandra
Primary School
Aspire, Perform, Succeed

The Reading Framework Summary

The **Reading Framework: Teaching the Foundation of Literacy (July 2021)** is non-statutory guidance designed to support primary schools from Reception through to the end of Key Stage 2 in improving the teaching of reading.

Summary: The Reading Framework (DfE, 2021)

The Reading Framework sets out how schools should ensure **all children learn to read fluently, confidently and with enjoyment**, particularly in the early years and Key Stage 1. It is grounded in strong research evidence and aligns with the **National Curriculum**, **EYFS**, **Ofsted EIF**, and **EEF guidance**.

Why reading matters

- Reading is **fundamental to success across the curriculum**, future education, employment and wellbeing.
- High engagement in reading can **mitigate disadvantage** and close attainment gaps.
- Children cannot enjoy reading unless they can **decode words fluently**.

The Simple View of Reading

Reading is made up of **two equally important elements**:

1. **Word reading (decoding)** – taught through **systematic synthetic phonics (SSP)**
2. **Language comprehension** – developed through **talk, stories, vocabulary and knowledge**

Children need **both** to become successful readers.

Language comprehension

Strong language underpins reading comprehension and writing.
Key features of effective practice:

- Language-rich environments with frequent, high-quality adult–child talk
- Planned back-and-forth conversations across the curriculum
- Explicit teaching and revisiting of vocabulary
- Daily storytimes, poetry, rhymes and songs
- Re-reading texts to deepen understanding and enjoyment
- Careful support for children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Storytimes, poetry and reading for pleasure

- Reading aloud is non-negotiable and daily

Texts should:

- Build vocabulary
- Reflect children's own lives and widen horizons
- Be reread to deepen engagement

Poetry, rhymes and songs:

- Build memory, rhythm and sound awareness
- Support early phonological sensitivity

Book display

- Well-curated, uncluttered book corners act as mini-libraries and promote independent engagement

Word reading and spelling (phonics)

- Systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) is the most effective approach to teaching early reading

Teaching must:

- Follow a validated programme
- Be taught daily
- Be delivered with fidelity and consistency

Children learn:

- The alphabetic code (grapheme–phoneme correspondences)
- Blending for reading and segmenting for spelling
- Decodable books must be closely matched to the phonics taught

Developing fluency

- Fluent readers read accurately, automatically and with prosody

Fluency comes from:

- Secure phonics
- Frequent practice
- Reading aloud, shared reading and re-reading familiar texts

Children at risk of reading failure

- The priority is "keep up, not catch up"
- Early identification and immediate intervention are essential
- Older pupils who struggle must still receive phonics-based support, not alternative strategies

Assessment

Assessment should be:

- Regular and precise
- Used to identify next steps quickly

Phonics assessment informs:

- Teaching
- Grouping
- Intervention
- Over-recording and excessive evidence collection are discouraged

Leadership and management

School leaders must:

- Make reading a whole-school priority

Ensure:

- High-quality staff training
- Consistent implementation of SSP
- Strong monitoring of reading practice

Accountability

School focuses on:

- Regular monitoring and assessment
- Informing parents regarding attainment and progress
- Using AfL to ensure progress
- Providing opportunities and time to support the Reading for Pleasure pedagogy
- Pupil voice

Ofsted focuses closely on:

- How reading is taught
- Outcomes for weakest readers
- Phonics screening check results

Core message

If children are taught **well, early and consistently**, nearly all can learn to read fluently – **regardless of background, disadvantage or SEND**. Reading success is not accidental; it is the result of **expert teaching, strong leadership and a culture that values reading**