

Communication & Interaction	Cognition & Learning
<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <p>Pupils may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding spoken language: Difficulty following instructions or comprehending stories and discussions. • Expressing themselves: Struggling to articulate thoughts, ideas, or feelings clearly. • Engaging in conversations: Challenges in initiating or maintaining conversations with peers and teachers. • Social communication: Difficulty understanding social cues, such as body language and tone of voice. <p><u>Provision</u></p> <p>Teaching staff do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use visual aids: Incorporate visual timetables, vocabulary walls, and story maps to support understanding. ✓ Model language: Demonstrate correct sentence structures and vocabulary usage during lessons. ✓ Encourage peer interactions: Facilitate talking partner activities and group discussions to practice communication skills. ✓ Simplify instructions: Give clear, concise instructions and avoid complex language. <p>Teaching staff provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visual supports: Provide visual cues, such as pictures and diagrams, to aid comprehension. ✓ Structured activities: Use structured activities like role-playing and storytelling to enhance interaction skills. 	<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <p>Pupils may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading difficulties: Struggling with decoding words, reading fluently, and understanding texts. • Writing challenges: Difficulty organising thoughts, spelling, and constructing sentences and paragraphs. • Memory issues: Problems retaining information, following multi-step instructions, and recalling learned material. • Processing speed: Taking longer to process information and complete tasks. <p><u>Provision</u></p> <p>Teaching staff do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scaffold/adapt instruction: Tailor lessons to match pupils' current levels of attainment. ✓ Use scaffolding: Provide step-by-step guidance and gradually reduce support as pupils gain confidence. ✓ Incorporate multi-sensory teaching: Use visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic methods to reinforce learning. ✓ Regularly recap: Frequently review and practice key concepts to ensure retention. <p>Teaching staff provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visual aids: Use mind maps, word banks, and writing frames to support learning. ✓ Concrete examples: Provide hands-on activities and real-life examples to make abstract concepts tangible.

- ✓ Alternative communication tools: Offer tools like communication boards or apps for non-verbal pupils.
- ✓ Quiet spaces: Create quiet areas for pupils who need a break from sensory overload

- ✓ Assistive technology: Offer tools like text-to-speech software and interactive whiteboards.
- ✓ Flexible grouping: Arrange temporary groups based on pupils' needs for targeted support.

Social, Emotional & Mental Health

Sensory/Physical

Challenges

Pupils may have:

- Emotional regulation: Difficulty managing emotions, leading to frustration, anxiety, or outbursts.
- Social skills: Struggling to form and maintain friendships, and experiencing social isolation.
- Behavioural issues: Exhibiting disruptive behaviour, which can impact learning and classroom dynamics.
- Mental health: Experiencing anxiety, depression, or low self-esteem, affecting engagement and performance.

Provision

Teaching staff do:

- ✓ Promote emotional regulation: Teach strategies for managing emotions, such as deep breathing and mindfulness.
- ✓ Encourage social skills: Plan structured activities that promote peer interaction and collaboration.
- ✓ Monitor behaviour: Implement consistent behaviour management strategies and positive reinforcement.
- ✓ Support mental health: Provide regular check-ins and create a supportive classroom environment.

Teaching staff provide:

- ✓ Safe spaces: Designate areas where pupils can go to calm down and feel safe.
- ✓ Social stories: Use social stories to help pupils understand and navigate social situations.

Challenges

Pupils may have:

- Sensory sensitivities: Being easily overwhelmed by sensory stimuli, such as noise, light, or touch, which can distract from learning.
- Physical challenges: Difficulty with fine motor skills, affecting handwriting and the use of classroom tools.
- Accessibility: Needing adaptations for physical access to learning materials and classroom environments.
- Fatigue: Experiencing tiredness or physical discomfort, impacting concentration and participation.

Provision

Teaching staff do:

- ✓ Adapt environment: Ensure the classroom is accessible and minimise sensory distractions.
- ✓ Use preferential seating: Position pupils with sensory needs in optimal locations for learning.
- ✓ Provide movement breaks: Incorporate regular breaks to help pupils manage physical discomfort.
- ✓ Use clear visuals: Ensure all visual materials are high-contrast and uncluttered.

Teaching staff provide:

- ✓ Assistive devices: Offer tools like magnifiers, hearing aids, or specialised keyboards.

- ✓ Counselling services: Offer access to school counsellors or mental health professionals.
- ✓ Peer mentoring: Facilitate peer mentoring programmes to build social connections.

- ✓ Sensory supports: Provide items like noise-cancelling headphones or fidget tools.
- ✓ Accessible materials: Ensure all learning materials are available in accessible formats.
- ✓ Physical adaptations: Make physical adjustments to the classroom, such as ramps or adjustable desks.

Primary Reading

Why is Reading so important?

The impact of being able to read extends beyond simply having a set of skills. The benefits of being able to read, and of being a reader (one who enjoys reading and chooses to do it) are far reaching, such as:

- **Neurological:** reading helps to develop the learner's brain and increases their memory function.
- **Educational:** as well as giving the learner access to text-based learning across all subject areas and in all lessons, reading improves attention spans and leads to better concentration.
- **Psychologically:** reading helps children to grow in self-confidence and independence. Reading offers a greater insight into human nature and decision-making; through the texts they read, learners develop a greater understanding of the world around them, and a better sense of self.
- **Socially:** being a reader increases the learner's social status among their peers as well as their self-image and self-confidence. Reading also develops a better understanding of other cultures and can lead to better community participation.
- **Linguistically:** learners develop richer vocabulary, correct grammar, improved writing, better spelling, and articulate verbal communication.

In their Literature Review, The Impact of Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment, The Reading Agency found that reading for pleasure can result in increased empathy, improved relationships with others, reductions in the symptoms of depression and dementia, and improved wellbeing.¹

Creating an Inclusive Environment

Within the classroom, there should be a range of texts which meet the needs of all learners. These should also be well organised to support learners with browsing and making choices. Teach learners, especially those who find it more challenging and feel less confident, how to navigate book areas/corners and where to find the texts they will be able to and will want to read.

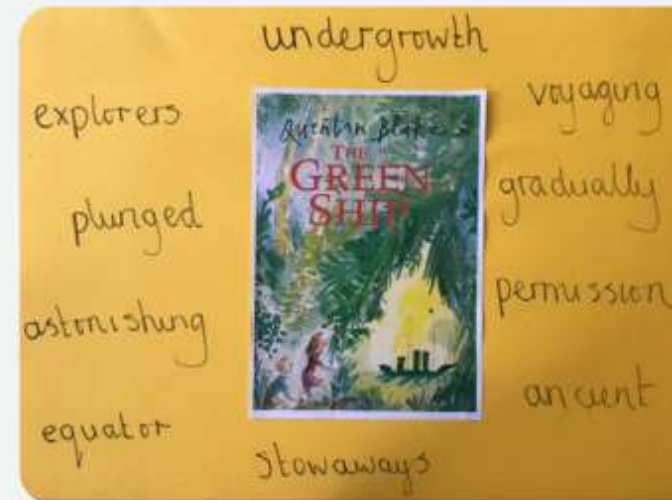
Consider using your most qualified adults to work with the learners with the greatest need. In addition, ensure that they have daily reading with adult support. It is essential that they are reading matched books and/or with an adult as much as, if not more than, their peers. Where learners are having additional intervention to support with phonics, these should be in addition to daily reading, not in place of it.

Make modelled, shared and peer talk core to your reading. Talking through any important background knowledge necessary to understand the text, for example the historical and geographical setting for a story can help learners' comprehension.

Consider the physical environment and making displayed print accessible to all learners. Ensure that print which forms part of classroom displays are words that learners have been taught to read or are words that will be taught. Print could be displayed through a key word wall which is built up as learners are explicitly taught new words. Topic-related vocabulary that has been taught displayed on a working wall will support learners with both reading and writing these words.

Ensure that print on display is decipherable by using dyslexia friendly fonts or handwriting, and by ensuring writing is appropriately sized. In addition, think about how words can be organised to support learners, for example using different colour backgrounds for different word classes, or organising words in alphabetical order.

Involve and give families regular feedback. Developing and extending independent practice at home is important to improving reading. Families may find it harder at home to support learners with additional needs; sharing information about strategies and approaches used in school will support them.



Teacher reading aloud

Plan for class 'read-alouds' and discussions that give learners with lower reading fluency access to age-appropriate texts. Hearing texts beyond their fluency level will also ensure that these learners are having opportunities to extend their vocabulary. Giving learners the opportunity to listen to a story without the printed text can support their engagement by freeing up their working memory.



Primary Reading

Planning Inclusive Lessons

We read for a range of reasons: for fun, for excitement, for relaxation, for information, amongst many others. Enjoyment and purpose should be at the heart of learners' reading provision; we can achieve this through providing a range of reading activities which are fun, exciting, relaxing, informative experiences.

To become skilled readers, learners need to be explicitly taught the phonic code and practise applying it. Learners should develop all aspects of fluency, including the expression needed when reading aloud. In order to comprehend what they read, learners need to know about the content, i.e., the background knowledge, be familiar with any complex vocabulary and also know about the genre, e.g., if it is a mystery story. Learners also should be taught about the way different printed texts can be structured.

Throughout the primary phase, learners should be part of reading lessons which follow the sequence of 'teach, practise and then apply'. Teachers should share the learning objective or reading strategy. They should model this through reading out loud, but also through thinking out loud, explicitly modelling the reader's comprehension processes. Learners should have the opportunity to practise within a scaffolded and supported environment where they are able to receive feedback which supports them with achieving and progressing. Learners should then apply teaching through independent practice. Once learners have mastered the phonics code, allow them to frequently revisit texts that have been taught. Through the re-reading of familiar texts, learners will build sight vocabulary, develop reading fluency, and deepen their understanding.

These reading lessons should form part of a wide and varied reading diet which makes reading enjoyable and purposeful. This could include further activities such as listening to texts being read out loud, sharing texts with peers through paired or 'buddy' reading sessions, and opportunities for reading during other curriculum lessons.

Reading Motivation and Engagement

Learners will be motivated to read if they are successful in reading activities; reading texts which are too challenging is likely to result in reducing motivation. As such, it is essential that learners are accurately assessed and, during daily reading lessons, are reading texts which are closely matched to their phonic knowledge.

As well as reading books closely matched to their phonic knowledge, learners also need to have opportunities to self-select and be guided by a teacher to books that they are interested in or that will broaden their reading experience and expose them to different authors. These books can be read by an adult if they do not match with the learner's phonic knowledge. Ensure texts in the classroom will appeal to the learners' interests; a wish-list of topics, genres and authors could be created with the class.

Plan for activities which reinforce the content of reading and engage the learners: if learners have read a story about leaf-boats, consolidate this with an experience making leaf-boats; if they read an information book about making pasta, consolidate this with the experience of making pasta; if learners read a story about a panda, and want to know more about them, consolidate this by reading with them further information about pandas.

Paired or 'buddy' reading is an enjoyable experience and benefits both the least able (tutee) and the most able (tutor) within the pair. This strategy can be used to support learners with accessing whole class texts, such as during lessons in other areas of the curriculum. It can also be used to build confidence and deepen text understanding when the learner is able to take on the role of tutor within the group; this can be made possible through pairing learners with younger readers.

Research illustrates that it is not only children's cognitive skills (e.g., language, decoding skills) that are important for their reading attainment, children's motivation to read is additionally important... In other words, to become successful readers, children need the 'skill' and the 'will'.²

When struggling readers are not motivated to read, their opportunities to learn decrease significantly.³



Primary Reading

Reading and Phonics

It is widely agreed that reading involves far more than decoding words on the page. Nevertheless, words must be decoded if readers are to make sense of the text. Phonic work is therefore a necessary but not sufficient part of the wider knowledge, skills and understanding which children need to become skilled readers and writers, capable of comprehending and composing text.⁴

For learners in the early stages of reading, and not yet secure in their phonics knowledge, daily phonics teaching at their phonics level is essential. To become readers, learners need to know how the letters of the alphabet represent the sounds in words both individually and in combinations, and they need to acquire the skills which enable them to read words through blending these sounds together.

Guidance on teaching and supporting learners with developing phonics skills is within the Phonics section of this Handbook.



Curriculum Considerations

Key Stage 1

- In Key Stage 1, learners should be part of daily reading lessons in which they are reading texts closely matched to their phonics knowledge.
- In addition to these daily reading lessons, in Year 1, and if appropriate, in Year 2, learners should be accessing daily phonics lessons, where teaching is matched to learners' individual phonics knowledge. Phonics groups may need to be streamed, and learners with a higher level of need may need small group focused teaching. During and outside of phonics teaching, learners should have opportunities to apply their phonics knowledge and skills to reading texts which are matched to their phonics level.
- Learners should also be hearing stories being read out loud, developing their knowledge of language patterns, text structures and broadening their vocabulary, in addition to developing their enjoyment. Re-read class favourites to help them learn the rhythms and tunes of language and to develop their knowledge of syntax which will support with reading skills. Becoming familiar with texts will also deepen their understanding.

Key Stage 2

- Once learners are secure with the alphabetic code, they should read books which are an age-appropriate level. For learners who have not cracked the phonics code, books should match their phonic knowledge until they can read familiar words speedily and unfamiliar words accurately.
- For learners in Key Stage 2 with gaps in their phonics knowledge, continuation of phonics lessons at their phonics level are key to enabling them to read new words and increase reading fluency.

- During daily reading lessons, explicitly teach individual reading comprehension skills, e.g., asking questions, drawing inferences, predicting, or summarising (refer to the National Curriculum for age-related-expectations for individual year groups). Explicitly teach these through defining each skill and modelling during reading aloud and thinking aloud. For learners to be able to effectively apply reading comprehension skills, they will need to have background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge and grammatical knowledge, as well as knowledge about the structure, genre and form of a given text.
- Learners should listen to texts being read aloud by adults, continuing to develop their knowledge, and understanding of language and broadening their vocabulary.



Primary Reading

Using assessment to identify barriers and target teaching and support

- Regular assessment is essential to ensure that learners are reading at the most appropriate level – a text which is too tricky can result in frustration and unwillingness, whilst one that is too easy means that learners are not developing through learning new words and concepts.
- Assessment should also be used as a tool to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses. Running records can be used to assess fluency and decoding ability, and word reading strategies and comprehension can be assessed through verbal discussion around a text or using verbal or written questions during reading. Use assessment information to target teaching and focus support on the needs of the learner.
- If you are using other adults such as support staff or volunteers to extend learners' opportunities to read, ensure that they are made aware of the needs of the learners and are given training and specific strategies or lesson structures to use during interventions.



Case Study

At the end-of-year assessment point a Year 3 learner was assessed in reading as working significantly below age-related- expectations. The learner appeared to be 'reading' by memorising the words using the repetitive patterns in the books she was accessing. The pupil was also very reluctant to participate in any reading-related activities. She had previously received an intensive daily 1:1 reading intervention where some progress had been made but had not resulted in her internalising key reading skills to support her progression towards fluency.

The reading lead worked with the class teacher to ensure provision was carefully informed by an assess-plan-do-review cycle. This involved a phonics assessment and a benchmarking reading assessment. The learner was assessed as reading at blue book band level (end of autumn Year 1 level) with relatively good sight vocabulary and comprehension, but with poor decoding skills. The phonics assessment identified she required additional teaching in phonics at phase 3 level (Letters and Sounds).

During the following year her teacher implemented several strategies:

- *Access to a range of appropriate books matched to her level.*
- *Phonics intervention at her phonics level three times a week.*
- *Access to the teaching part of whole class reading lessons at her year group level so that the learner could listen to a skilled reader modelling, continue to develop her listening comprehension and extend her vocabulary.*
- *During the independent part of the whole-class lesson, access to texts at her instructional level, regularly reading 1:1 with an adult.*

In addition, her teacher created a box of 'special books' for her. These were books at her reading level, including many she had previously read. She accessed these during the independent reading part of whole-class lessons and during 'reading for pleasure' time. Through reading at her level and through revisiting texts, she was able to improve her fluency and experience reading success. She also showed greater enthusiasm when participating in reading activities.

By the spring term in Year 4, she had progressed to reading at purple book band level (Year 2 autumn term level). Whilst she was still reading below age-related-expectations, she had made significant progress in two terms.

When supporting learners in the early stages of reading, whatever their year group, it is essential to use strategies that are suitable to the learner's developmental stage to support them to make progress. Forensic assessment to understand the barriers to learning being experienced by a learner is the starting point of any provision. Working alongside colleagues with greater experience of strategies used to support early readers was empowering in the confident implementation of appropriate provision.



Primary Reading

Strategies to Scaffold Learning

How can I support learners who struggle with developing fluency (including phonics knowledge and word recognition)?

- Where learners are not yet secure with phonics, their phonics knowledge must be assessed. Phonics teaching can then be correctly pitched for developing learners' knowledge of phonics and skills such as blending for word reading. Use the same scheme or approach which is used for whole-class teaching in EYFS and Year 1 – this will support learners with making links and building on prior phonics knowledge.
- Whilst phonics should be the first strategy for common exception words, if learners have difficulty retaining words consider using precision teaching interventions or flashcards. Games can be used to engage learners such as Bingo, Pelmanism (matching pairs) or Snap. Learners could also have further opportunities to consolidate through playing these games during break or playtimes. Consolidation can also come through learners being able to independently revisit through accessing word mats on their tables or accessing these words on display in the classroom.
- Re-reading taught or familiar texts is key to building learners' confidence; have a box of taught or familiar books for individual learners to independently revisit during reading lessons, reading for pleasure, paired reading or if reading with volunteers.
- Ensure that learners have sufficient practice in reading, and re-reading, books matched to their phonic knowledge so that they can build up their bank of words that can be read speedily.
- Identify and pre-teach tricky or new words – find them in the book and tell the learner to look at them carefully. Write them on a whiteboard or on a flashcard and practise reading them before reading the text.

How can I support learners who struggle with comprehending texts (including vocabulary, reasoning, and print-concepts)?

- Talk about the book before reading; make predictions and ignite prior knowledge by talking about what they may already know about the genre, the author, or other books they have read with a similar or the same setting. Making links with other books will support learners with understanding the text they are preparing to read, whilst making predictions will support with building enjoyment – they will want to read on to find out what happens next!
- Practise deepening comprehension of shorter extracts of the text, e.g., looking closely at small chunks such as sentences or paragraphs to discuss between reading. Discuss reading at smaller intervals, e.g., after each sentence or paragraph, rather than at the end of a chapter; looking for inferences and authorial word choices within sentences rather than inferences related to broader reading such as characters' motivations or themes.
- Giving learners opportunities for re-reading following book talk will deepen their understanding as they will be able to give greater attention to the meaning.
- Support readers with understanding and retaining new vocabulary by pre-teaching new words prior to tackling the text.
- Have class 'read-alouds' which gives all learners access to age-appropriate texts. Plan for discussions at key points which will deepen all learners' understanding. Listening to texts being read out loud will also extend learners' vocabulary.
- Use drama and role-play activities to enable learners to explore the meaning of text through first-hand experience thereby deepening their understanding. Drama and role-play also provide engaging activities which are accessible to all learners.



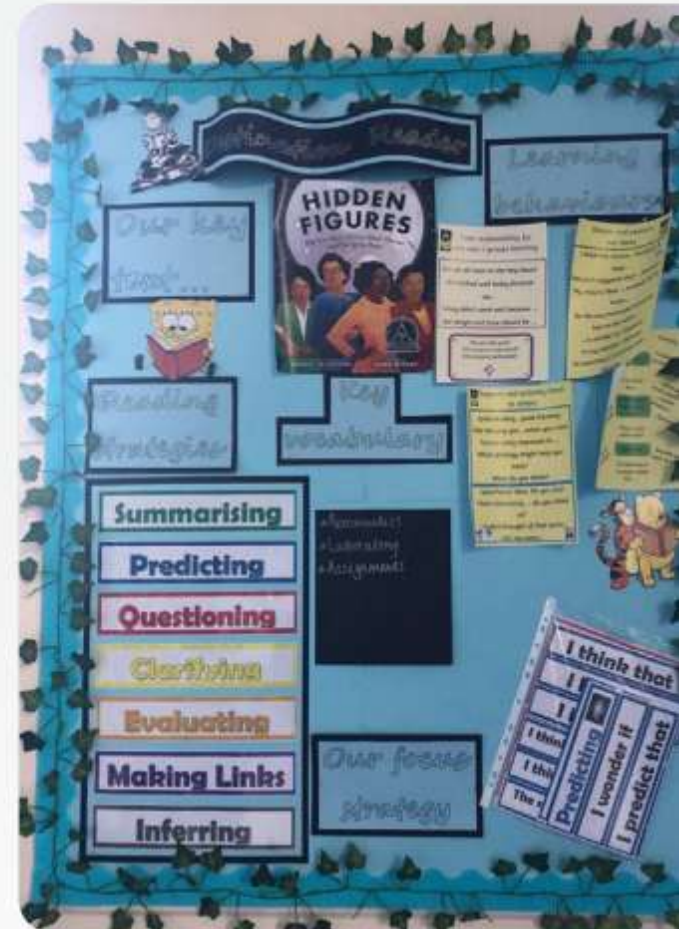
Primary Reading

How can I support learners who struggle with attention?

- Wherever possible and practical, allow the learner choice in the reading material, e.g., choosing a text from a selection of texts.
- Use props or guides to support learners to focus on following the print in the text in front of them. This could be a lolly stick, cardboard pointing finger or a reading ruler.
- For younger learners, using story sacks or props representing characters or objects in the story can support with maintaining attention, as well as deepening understanding.
- Sharing the reading between the learner and the adult supporting, e.g., taking turns on alternate pages, will help if the learner has difficulties with reading stamina as well as maintaining focus.
- Timetable reading sessions so they are short and frequent; some learners may benefit from multiple shorter sessions each day.
- Where reading sessions are required to be longer, plan for regular movement breaks. This could be a palm press at the end of each page, a hand massage at the end of each double page, ten chair presses at the end of each chapter, etc.

How can I support learners who struggle with change and transition?

- In advance of the lesson, show learners the book they will be reading; draw them in through reading the blurb, making real life connections or connections with texts they have already read.
- Always begin the lesson with a 'safe' activity – this could be listening to the teacher modelling reading, talking about a book together, or re-reading a familiar text that the learner feels confident with and can be successful with.
- Have a clear teach-practise-apply model to reading lessons and ensure that lessons always follow this structure; the learner will feel more confident if there is a familiar routine to lessons.
- With a fiction text, always finish the book, either within the lesson, or across a sequence of lessons. If the lesson is using an extract and the learners are engaged, make time to read the text outside of the lesson; it is frustrating for readers to not be able to complete a book, and find out what happens in the end. The reading for enjoyment is also lost if the text is not read completely.



Primary Writing

Planning Inclusive Lessons

Teaching writing is an opportunity to be playful – with language, with grammar, with ideas. Through the use of rich texts to stimulate writing, teaching new words and grammar in context and writing for purpose, learners become independent, creative writers and thinkers. Throughout the primary phase, language-rich classrooms are vital to this. In addition, learners need opportunities for oral rehearsal and to develop their thinking out loud – with a partner, in small groups and in whole-class teaching. Use this as an opportunity to model back the correct grammar or to up-level learners' language so that they are exposed to and have opportunities to explore high-level vocabulary and different sentence structures. Be playful with language – learners will make mistakes, but they will experiment and enjoy the effect words can have. Always write for purpose so that what learners are writing is rooted in context and meaning. In the EYFS, this could be writing a letter to the pirates who stole their construction toys to ask for them back; in Year 6 it may be from Charles Darwin recounting his travels and discoveries. Use pictures and actions to support oral rehearsal, embedding new learning and reinforcing new language. For example, use story maps to retell stories, with consistent symbols for story language. You can even draw them top to bottom, left to right and add punctuation to support early reading.

Creating an Inclusive Environment

Language is critical to learning, but disparities are stark, as 5-year-olds with poor language skills are five times more likely to be unable to read well at age 11 (National Literacy Trust). Creating a vocabulary-rich classroom is vital to closing the gaps and enabling future attainment. Key questions and vocabulary linked to what you are currently learning should be displayed in your class. You can then refer to the vocabulary on your working walls when you are speaking and when you are modelling writing. This will encourage learners to use the vocabulary displayed to support their independent work. Adding visuals to key vocabulary ensures all learners can access it.

Work to create a culture where mistakes are part of the learning process and are even celebrated. For example, if learners have been using adjectives to describe a monster, as well as asking them to identify their most powerful one, ask them to share their worst (and model doing this too). If you do this sensitively and build acknowledging and sharing mistakes into your practice, learners will feel safe to experiment and try things out because they will see that trying, making mistakes and using them to move forward is part of learning.

Teaching Considerations

Key Stage 1

- Key Stage 1 builds on the foundations of the EYFS, developing and embedding basic skills in writing.
- Ensure learners are secure with finger spaces, capital letters and full stops.
- Always model writing, then shared writing and then independent writing.
- When modelling, use actions for these basic skills (such as through kung-fu punctuation).
- Orally rehearse sentences, counting the words on your fingers, and encourage learners to do the same.
- Model your thinking process, including using phonics to segment words or referring to the working wall for ideas.
- To support with segmenting words, model drawing sound buttons and then sounding out the word, pointing to each one.
- For learners who need support to separate words in a sentence and write one at a time, say the sentence and draw a line for each word as you do. Repeat the sentence, pointing to each line as you go.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, continue to model writing and embedding basic skills. This is a time also to model terminology and grammar, drip-feeding it into your modelled and shared writing.

- For example, when asking learners how to make their setting sound scary, repeat back the words or phrases they use and identify their word class: "You said the wind was whistling spookily. Spookily – the adverb describing your verb – makes the night sound very eery."
- As well as discussing terminology, share your thinking process and encourage learners to do the same, making choices about words and sentence structure, reflecting on choices, and editing to up-level or improve vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.



Primary Writing

Strategies to Scaffold Learning

How can I support learners who are reading below age-related expectations?

- Securing the basics of pen grip, letter formation and spelling allow learners to be able to focus on composing a piece of writing.
- For learners not secure with phonics, this should be a priority. Learners should have plenty of practice writing using the phoneme-grapheme correspondences they know and using the letter formation they have been taught. This can be most easily provided through dictation activities.
- Use picture and word banks of key vocabulary. When learners are doing extended writing, make sure that they have word banks of key topic words with pictures to match. This will support them to find and use adventurous and topic-related language. Ideally, the words for these word banks will be the ones you have generated together in skills lessons and added to your working wall, so they will be the ones learners have already begun to use and explore.
- Use the school marking code or symbols to remind learners of key skills, e.g., if they need to remember spaces between words, you could draw a little hand symbol at the top of their page to remind them or give them a simple reminder sheet of what makes a good sentence.
- Use story maps with actions. Story maps are an excellent way to develop early reading skills and support learners with oral rehearsal. If you draw your story map from top to bottom, left to write, learners can point at each symbol as they retell it. Use the same symbols and gestures to match each time, e.g., → for next, so that learners develop their independence and confidence retelling stories and using story language

How can I support learners who struggle to retain vocabulary?

- Identify new, interesting or useful words in a text or topic together (e.g., in the plenary of the first lesson looking at a new text) and add them to the working wall together. Refer to these words and model using them in your teaching and encourage learners to use the working wall in their independent writing.
- Rehearse new words. Practise saying them together in a high voice, a low voice, a fast voice, and a slow voice. Come up with an action together (or use a Makaton action), then say the word and show the action to reinforce.
- New vocabulary should be planned for and taught in context. Model using new words in a sentence and give learners time to practise them in context. For example, give them time to answer a question and share their answer.

How can I support learners who need additional time to develop conceptual understanding?

- Pre-teach. For example, if you are starting a new text on a Monday and know a learner will need more time to process it, find time for them to read it (ideally with a peer or an adult) on the Friday before. This allows them to explore it in their own time, ask any questions they may have and then be the expert when the class reads it on Monday.
- Create links in learning in different areas. For example, if you are learning about the Antarctic in geography, read related texts, learn about a penguin's life cycle in science, write an explanation text about it in literacy, represent its life cycle through dance in PE. Also, make links to what learners have previously learnt – did they learn about the life cycle of a frog the previous year? This helps to embed learning.
- Make learning multi-sensory, e.g., if you are learning a new concept or piece of vocabulary, read it, draw it, write it, act it out.

Case Study

A learner in Year 6 with dyslexia, a very imaginative and enthusiastic writer, whose writing could not be read without mediation and who could not always read it back herself because she missed words, blended them together and made multiple letter substitutions, struggling to hear and write the dominant sounds in words.

The learner was encouraged to:

- *Identify key words that she would need to spell and then look them up in her spelling dictionary, when sharing ideas with a peer or adult.*
- *Use the working wall (with word and picture banks) to identify key topic words or phrases.*
- *Box up her ideas to help organise her thoughts into a clear beginning, middle and end, when beginning to write.*
- *Look at the first section of her writing and orally rehearse the first sentence, counting the words on her fingers.*
- *Write one word at a time. Midway through and at the end of the sentence, pausing and reading back from the beginning of the sentence, pointing at each word.*

To begin with, the adult would model these strategies, but independence increased over time.



Primary Writing

How can I support learners who struggle with attention?

- Break the learning into chunks. Ensure you mix teacher talk with partner talk, opportunities to write ideas on a whiteboard, and feedback through gesture (e.g., show me on your thumbs if you agree or disagree; wiggle your fingers if you could up-level my adjective).
- Give learners movement breaks. You can build this into your class routine; they help everyone to concentrate, e.g., before starting a teaching session, choose two or three short OT warm-ups to do together (such as rolling your shoulders 5 times, chair presses, piano fingers). Add these into independent learning when learners are writing for an extended period. For learners who need additional movement breaks, build in opportunities to the lesson. Could they hand out exercise books? Sharpen their pencil?
- Build in opportunities to develop attention and listening skills with your whole class. For example, when feeding back an answer, tell learners that you will ask them to share their partner's answer. To start with, practise this with simple questions (such as, what's your favourite colour?). Increase the complexity of questions over time. When asking learners to retell a story in pairs, play 'story whoosh': one partner begins retelling and, when you give a signal, the other person takes over and continues. You will need to model this first.



How can I support learners who struggle with change and transition?

- Have a clear routine and use visuals to support. For example, share the visual timetable at the start of each day. Refer back to it throughout the day: 'Now we have literacy, next handwriting and after that it is lunch'. If changes occur, share this with learners and change the timetable with them.
- Give learners warning. For example, if they will need to tidy up for lunch, give them a five-minute warning. Then, count them down. This means they know how long they have to finish and are prepared to stop. For some learners, it will be helpful to give them a five-minute sand timer so they can visualise this.
- Allow learners time to complete work. They may really want to finish what they are doing – it can be very frustrating if your story is missing its ending! Find time later in the day or soon after (e.g., for early morning work the next day) where they can finish. Keep their book open and any notes they've made on a whiteboard, so they know that it's in your mind.

Key takeaways to support learners with SEND in writing

The following strategies scaffold learning for all ages and stages:

Communication-friendly strategies:

- Use gestures
- Make it visual: add pictures to word banks to help all children access them
- Allow thinking time: always allow thinking time when you ask a question, even before children talk to their partner (think, pair, share)
- For those who need it, keep language simple and short
- When children need further support, offer forced choices, or use gap fills to scaffold them.

Model your thinking process: as teachers, we often ask questions. While these are important, it is also important to model your thinking process, and to model wondering or imagining. This removes the pressure of a question for a child while still allowing them to develop their thinking.

