Reading Comprehension Strategy: Developing the domains of Word Meaning (Vocabulary), Retrieval and Inference

Rationale for a common approach

Across ESW there is shared common curriculum in the vast majority of primary subjects. This common way of working enables professional in different settings to shared resources, assessment information and the findings from monitoring activities in a productive and helpful way. It enables leaders to have an overview of the taught content delivered to all children in the trust and helps us to quality assure the learning experiences of children in all classrooms.

There is currently strong and increasingly consistent practice in the delivery of early reading, through the Read Write Inc programme, across our schools. This has led to improving phonics outcomes in year 1 and impactful collaborative working across settings.

However, the delivery of reading lessons beyond RWInc is inconsistent and there is no common ESW wide approach. Outcomes are variable in Y6 SATS. With as many as 2,300 words in a SATs reading paper, concerning numbers of our children lack the stamina and speed of reading required to complete their tests.

Furthermore, attainment in reading is below the assessment levels we are ambitious to attain in years 2, 3, 4 and 5. This is particularly evident for our children with special educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premium who are currently underperforming significantly when compared to their peers.

Therefore, we need to ensure that there is rigorous and high-quality systematic teaching of reading comprehension across all primary settings in ESW. We also need to ensure that all children are effectively supported in building the stamina and speed required to access their end of key stage assessments. In order to achieve this, we have decided to develop a common approach to the delivery of reading lessons. This approach will focus repeated and consistent direct instructional teaching of reading skills with accurately pitched practice for fluency and question response.

What will our common approach be and why?

To achieve higher outcomes for all, reading leaders have shared current practice, what is working well and also what is proving challenging. Whilst there are pockets of good practice and evidence of some stronger curriculum choices, there is no current approach within our schools that we believe will improve outcomes in reading to the level that we are seeking. Therefore, we have looked beyond the trust to see what other trusts and schools are doing to ensure that reading comprehension is systematically well taught and with sufficient rigour to enable all children to succeed.

Using the analysis of content domain done by TPAT, we can see that the skills of retrieval, word meaning (vocabulary) and inference far outweigh prediction, explanation and summary when answering assessment questions. With this in mind, we believe that the weighting of teaching and practice needs to reflect this. How will this be achieved:

- Word meaning (vocabulary) will be a consistent part of every lesson for all children post RWInc.
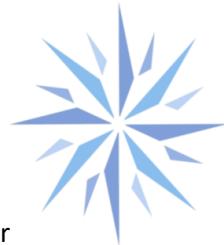
- Secure retrieval skills are the next steps. Children moving off of RWInc, and in the earlier stages of our comprehension programme, will have lessons that heavily focus on retrieval skills.
- Inference requires deeper thinking and understanding. Inference questions will be phased in as children move through reading stages.
- The teaching of prediction, explanation and summary skills will be taught outside of reading comprehension lessons. These domain may well benefit from existing whole book reading approaches that some schools within the trust already have in place.

Comprehension lessons will last for 30 minutes and take place three times a week. These sessions will involve direct instruction and will be based on short texts or extracts of longer text. The sessions will focus on word meaning (vocabulary), retrieval and inference. These sessions will be consistent across all ESW schools and will build upon the impactful pacey teaching currently seen in RWInc sessions.

A further two reading sessions each week will enable teachers to cover all reading skills (VIPERS) and will provide opportunity for whole book reading as appropriate. Initially, the content and coverage of these sessions will be held at school level and will enable the continuation of best practice currently in place.

Daily AR and independent reading will continue as will story time and other reading for pleasure activities.

What will reading comprehension sessions look like?

Before teaching

Establishing the Environment

- All children will have the same text as the teacher.
- All children will need to be sitting with clear sight of the board. Teachers will use a visualiser in every session.
- All children will need to sit next to a reading partner. This could be an adult as appropriate.
- The teacher will use a green pen, green highlighter and green unlaminated book mark.
- Children will need a yellow highlighter, pen/pencil and a laminated book mark. This is so that they can directly emulate the teacher.
- A timer will be used in every session. This needs to be visible to all children and understood by them.
- The direct instruction style of teaching will be used throughout sessions and teacher modelling is a crucial element. The pace of sessions will resemble RWInc and will include very little partner talk and discussion. There should be as little distraction as possible and children will not talk between activities.
- When children are working independently answering questions, the room should be quiet. During this time the teacher/TA will be circulating, live marking, checking progress and addressing misconceptions. The room therefore needs to be set up to enable this to happen.
- Flashcards with key vocabulary from the week's texts (2 words per session) will be displayed prominently near the board. These words should be referred to regularly during the week order in that they be embedded.

Text Selection

- Teachers will need to use NFER and other assessments to inform their choice of texts.
- Genres of text should match genres being covered in Book Rights/T4W sequences for at least two weeks of each writing sequence. This will leave some space (one or two weeks per BR/T4W sequence) for teachers to include a wider variety of texts. They will need to ensure that the genres covered in end of term NFER tests are covered ahead of the test so that children have some previous knowledge of those text types.
- The length of text extracts will increase according to the stage okf the group. These are as follows:

	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6 (Y6 EXS)	Stage 7 (Y6 GDS)
60 secs 1 min	80-90 words	90-100 words	100-110 words	110-120 words	120-130 words	130+ words
120 secs 2 mins	160-170 words	180-190 words	200-210 words	220-230 words	240-250 words	260+ words
180 secs 3 mins	240-250 words	270-280 words	300-310 words	330-340 words	360-370 words	390+ words
300 secs 5 mins	400-410 words	450-460 words	500-510 words	550-560 words	600-610 words	650+ words

- Texts for session one and two each week will be one minute reads in line with the text lengths above. On day three, children will need a longer two minute read. This is referred to as the stamina read.
- A longer piece of text could be used over more than one day but this will need to be chunked into sections in line with the table above and questions will be asked on the section read within that reading lesson.
- Teachers may source reading extracts from a variety of places. These include real books; Reading Shed; Twinkl; Ashley Booth, and Oak Academy. Reading extracts can also be generated using AI.
- As the children move through the stages of the programme, they will need texts with increasingly complex language choices inline with the complexity of texts encountered in their NFER papers.
- Reading leaders will need to regularly sample texts chosen by teachers in order to ensure that there is clear progression in their complexity. Teachers will also need to regularly check text choices against those used in the stage above and below the one that they teach.
- Teachers will need to identify two key words in each day's text and print these in advance of the lesson to create flash cards. These are words that will be discussed for meaning and added to a class word bank used in the retrieval element of the lesson.
- Teachers need to rehearse their 'reading voice' and pace ahead of lessons in order to ensure that they are able to model accurately the reading of the text in the time available.
- Teachers will need to ensure that they generate appropriate questions ahead of each lesson and in line with the following domain weighting:
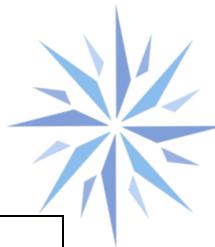
Stage	Approximate Domain Weighting		
2	60% Retrieval	30% Word Meaning	10% Inference
3	60% Retrieval	30% Word Meaning	10% Inference
4	50% Retrieval	30% Word Meaning	20% Inference
5	50% Retrieval	30% Word Meaning	20% Inference
6 (Y6 EXS)	40% Retrieval	30% Word Meaning	30% Inference
7 (Y6 GDS)	30% Retrieval	30% Word Meaning	40% Inference

- Teachers and the reading leader will also need to regularly moderate the complexity of questions to ensure that there is clear progression through stages.

Assessment

- Teachers will need to create an assessment folder to include a section for fluency assessments and a section for NFER and test data.
- Before beginning a stage, teachers will need to carry out a fluency baseline assessment of pupils. They will provide a 60 second read in line with the stage expectation. After 60 seconds, they will highlight the word the child has reached. Should the child finish before 60 seconds, the teacher will write down the number of seconds that the child has remaining. Teachers will not highlight mistakes as this baseline is for fluency only.
- Teachers will store the baseline in the fluency section of their folder.
- The baseline 60 second fluency read will be repeated at the end of each term to assess progress in reading speed.
- Teachers will also collate a running record of reading assessment scores and question level analysis at the end of each term. They will use this analysis to help them to focus their teaching the following term. They will need to pay particular attention to the types of questions the pupils struggle with and include regular similar style questions in their sessions.

During teaching

Lesson structure day one and two

1) Vocabulary warm up (5 mins)

From week 2 onwards, lessons start with a vocabulary revisit warm up drawing on words in the teacher's vocabulary pack (the two flashcards created each day).

Start with 'My turn, Your turn' followed by three or four of the following:

- Recalling definitions
- Recalling synonyms
- Recalling antonyms
- Putting in context
- True or false
- Odd one out
- What's the missing word?
- Scrambled words

2) Leading reading for fluency (5 mins)

Teacher reads:

The teacher reminds the children to watch out for unknown vocabulary and listen to the way that they use punctuation to inform their reading.

The teacher reads the text at the speed required in order to get through the length of text required for the stage that they are in. This will demonstrate the pace required in order to get to the end within the 60 Seconds. Using the visualiser, the teacher models using the bookmark to show the line that they are reading and how to follow the text with their finger.

The children watch the technique on the board whilst listening to their teacher read.

Once the teacher has finished reading, they identify any unknown words. These are practiced with the children using 'My turn, your turn'. The teacher does not explain the meaning of these words only shares the correct pronunciation of them.

Paired read:

The children turn to their partner.

The timer is reset to one minute.

Child one reads the text aloud to child two. Once the minute is over, child one draws a circle around the last word they read in the 60 seconds.

The timer is reset to one minute.

Child two reads the text to child one circling the word reached in the time.

Final read:

The teacher choses one child to read the text to the class. The timer is set to one minute, however, should the child fail to reach the end in that time they are permitted to continue in order that the class hear the final read fully.

3) Teaching comprehension skills for word meaning (vocabulary) (4 mins)

There will be two or three questions on word meaning. All questions will be set out in the same format.

The **teacher will model answering the first question on the visualiser**. The children will watch and listen as the teacher 'thinks out loud' to find the answer to the question. The teacher will highlight the text to pick out specific vocabulary referred to, if this is helpful in answering the question. The teacher will demonstrate how they would re-read the sentence, then paragraph if required or the whole text if needed, in order to establish what the word means in the context it is written. They will also point out any other clues that they use in order to work out the word's meaning.

The **children** will mirror the teacher's answering of this question before **completing the further question, or two, independently.**

Teachers will ensure that words covered in these questions are shared fully with the children so that they have a clear understanding of their definition.

4) Teaching comprehension skills for retrieval and inference (4 mins)

The next section of questions will cover either retrieval or inference.

Questions, over each week, need to reflect the % in the domain weighting for the stage of the children.

Using the visualiser, teachers will model how to answer the first question using text scanning, re-reading and highlighting key information. Over the course of lessons, these questions will include those requiring circling correct answers; giving single word answers, or the writing of longer answers using sentences starters and sentence structuring. Throughout this modelling, the teacher will explain their thinking fully out loud.

The children then complete this question using the teacher's modelled answer.

5) Independent work time (10 mins)

Children will then work through at least 4 retrieval or inference questions independently. The first will be in the same format as the one modelled by the teacher.

Questions should progress in challenge.

Children will work quietly and independently. Teachers will circulate, live mark and address misconceptions during the remainder of the session.

6) Vocabulary Plenary (2 mins)

Teachers will share flash cards of two words focused on in the questions completed in the teaching comprehension for word meaning (vocabulary) part of the lesson.

As the children get used to the format of the lesson, they can be asked if they can come up with the two words that have been chosen before being show the cards.

Teachers will then go over the definitions of these words again and they will be added to the display around the board for the week.

The cards will then be put into the vocabulary bank and drawn upon during part one of lessons for the next four weeks. To support this process, it is helpful for teachers to label the back of each flashcard with the school week it was taught in so that they can be taken out of the pack after four weeks.

Lesson structure: day three (stamina read)

1) Vocabulary warm up (5 mins)

From week 2 onwards, lessons start with a vocabulary revisit warm up drawing on words in your vocabulary pack (the two flashcards created each day).

Start with 'My turn, Your turn' followed by three or four of the following:

- Recalling definitions
- Recalling synonyms
- Recalling antonyms
- Putting in context
- True or false
- Odd one out
- What's the missing word?
- Scrambled words

2) Leading reading for fluency (6 mins)

Teacher reads:

The teacher reminds the children to watch out for unknown vocabulary and listen to the way punctuation is used to inform their reading.

The teacher reads the text at the speed required in order to get through the length of text required for the stage that they are in. This will demonstrate the pace required in order to get to the end within the 120 seconds given for the stamina read. Using the visualiser, the teacher models using the bookmark to show the line they are reading and using their finger to follow the text.

The children watch the technique on the board whilst listening to their teacher read.

Once the teacher has finished reading, they return to any unknown words. These are practiced using 'My turn, your turn'. The teacher does not explain the meaning of these words only shares the correct pronunciation of them.

Second read:

The timer is set to two minutes. All children read the text in their head, circling the word they get to in two minutes. If, after two minutes they have read the whole text, they start the independent work immediately. If they still have text to read, they do this before starting their independent work.

3) Independent work time (17 mins)

Children will then work through a mixture of question representing the domain weighting connected to their stage. These will always start with two vocabulary questions followed by retrieval and inference.

Questions should progress in challenge but be in the same style as those seen in lessons one and two.

Children will work quietly and independently. Teachers will circulate, live mark and address misconceptions during the remainder of the session.

If there is a question that the majority of children get wrong, the teacher will stop everyone immediately and model how to find the answer using the visualiser. Teachers must only do this once in each lesson and only when it is absolutely necessary.

4) Vocabulary Plenary (2 mins)

Teachers will share flash cards of two words from the text.

Teachers will share the definitions of these words again and they will be added to the display around the board for the week.

The cards will then be put into the vocabulary bank and drawn upon during part one of lessons for the next three weeks. To support this process, it is helpful for teachers to label the back of each flashcard with the school week it was taught in.