

Supporting reading in secondary school: Training for all secondary school staff

Description of the training

- In spring 2025 the Department for Education are launching training developed by Professor Jessie Ricketts at Royal Holloway, University of London.
- The short online training package is for all secondary school staff and will enable them to support reading in all secondary students. It can be completed individually or in groups and takes a maximum of one hour to complete.
- The training was developed as part of the implementation of the 2023 Reading Framework, which emphasised the importance of supporting reading for all learners in secondary school.
- There are two packages, one for secondary teachers and teaching assistants and one for school leaders (Box 1).
- Each package comprises a set of videos with guidance and a workbook for reflecting and making notes.
- Research-led videos were developed by Professor Ricketts and explain the underpinning theory and research on secondary reading. These videos build on 10 years of professional development with secondary school staff on reading.
- Teacher-led videos were co-created with teachers and cover seven core strategies for supporting reading in the classroom and four considerations for developing a whole school reading culture. The guidance provides examples to exemplify these strategies and considerations.
- The guidance provides information about the reading profiles that we are likely to see in secondary school and how to support students of all levels of reading ability.
- Both packages provide opportunities to reflect at the beginning and end of the training, and to develop an action plan.

Box 1. Summary of training packages for teachers and school leaders

| | Teacher package | | School leader package |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| Guidance | Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and reflection | Guidance | Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and reflection |
| | Research-led videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is reading? • Reading in secondary students | | Research-led videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is reading? • Reading in secondary students • Assessing reading |
| | Teacher-led videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Core strategies for the classroom | | Teacher-led videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • School leader principles |
| | End <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-training reflection and action plan | | End <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-training reflection and action plan |



Summary of findings from the pilot

The training was piloted in Spring 2024, demonstrating that the training was effective in promoting knowledge and confidence, and was feasible and accessible. It was also acceptable to school leaders and teachers who reported that it was needed, wanted, an efficient use of time and was already enabling them to reflect on how they might change their practice (Box 2). Pilot schools also provided feedback, which was used to finalise the training.

Box 2. Quotes from school leaders and teachers that indicate acceptability.

Quotes from school leaders:

'As a literacy coordinator and reading lead the whole package can really boost a school in the right direction or taking 1 or a few core strategies to focus on, embedding, practicing and evaluating their effectiveness over time'

'I think it would be really useful both as a refresher course for more experienced leads but also as really important training for colleagues who are new to leading literacy in schools.'

'I think the idea of an accessible online one-shot training module on this subject is really needed.'

Quotes from teachers:

'This is very interesting and useful training and has made me reflect on my own practice - I will make some amendments immediately to my lesson plans for tomorrow and am keen to see what impact this will have. I am particularly keen on exploring a more joined-up approach of support for struggling readers across departments.'

'This was great - as a non-English teacher, I feel that I have learnt so much. Thank you'

'Great resource. Very practical and time efficient way of developing knowledge.'

Key messages from the training

- Reading can be defined in a range of ways and means different things to different people. For example, it can be about knowledge and skills, enjoyment, engaging with new information or contexts, or building knowledge on a topic of interest.
- This CPD focuses on knowledge and skills, which is the first step to ensuring that students can benefit from opportunities to read to:
 - Access the curriculum
 - Read what they want to, when they want to
 - Read when they need to (e.g. instruction manuals, health information)
- The training aligns with the Reading Framework in using the Simple View of Reading as a framework for defining the knowledge and skills that are necessary for successful reading namely, word reading and comprehension.



- There are strategies that can be employed by any secondary teacher in any mainstream classroom to benefit all readers, including those with reading needs.
- There are principles that all secondary schools can consider in order to develop a rich whole school reading culture.
- Objective assessment is crucial for identifying reading needs, aligning those needs with both universal (wave 1) and targeted support, and evaluating the impact of support on pupils' reading.
- Secondary schools can expect to see a range of reading profiles amongst their students. In addition to successful readers, they can expect to see students with mild reading needs, and students with more substantial needs relating to word reading, reading comprehension, and both word reading and reading comprehension.
- This training promotes knowledge and confidence amongst all secondary school staff so that they can support the needs of students with all reading profiles.