

# **Great Dunmow School**

## **Reading Strategy: 2025 – 2026**

### **INTENT**

Great Dunmow School intention for reading is to create a holistic and enjoyable approach to reading across the curriculum, to create an environment which students develop their curiosity of the world around them whilst fostering a love of reading which will stay with them throughout their lives. We will support early readers to improve their phonics understanding and encourage students to read for pleasure, to foster more confidence in their reading ability and fluency and improve literacy in all subject areas. We recognise that literacy skills are both general and subject specific so have implemented a strategy which will encourage wider reading around all of the subjects we teach and boost literacy across the curriculum.

We intend to create a whole-school approach to reading that enables all learners to access texts that are appropriate for their age and stage. This includes not only books but also a wide range of other reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, online articles, e-books and audiobooks. By providing varied and engaging reading opportunities, we aim to develop confident, fluent readers who are motivated to read for pleasure and purpose.

In addition, we will ensure that early year's readers receive targeted support to close any gaps in their phonics knowledge, enabling them to access a curriculum that matches their age, expected ability and beyond.

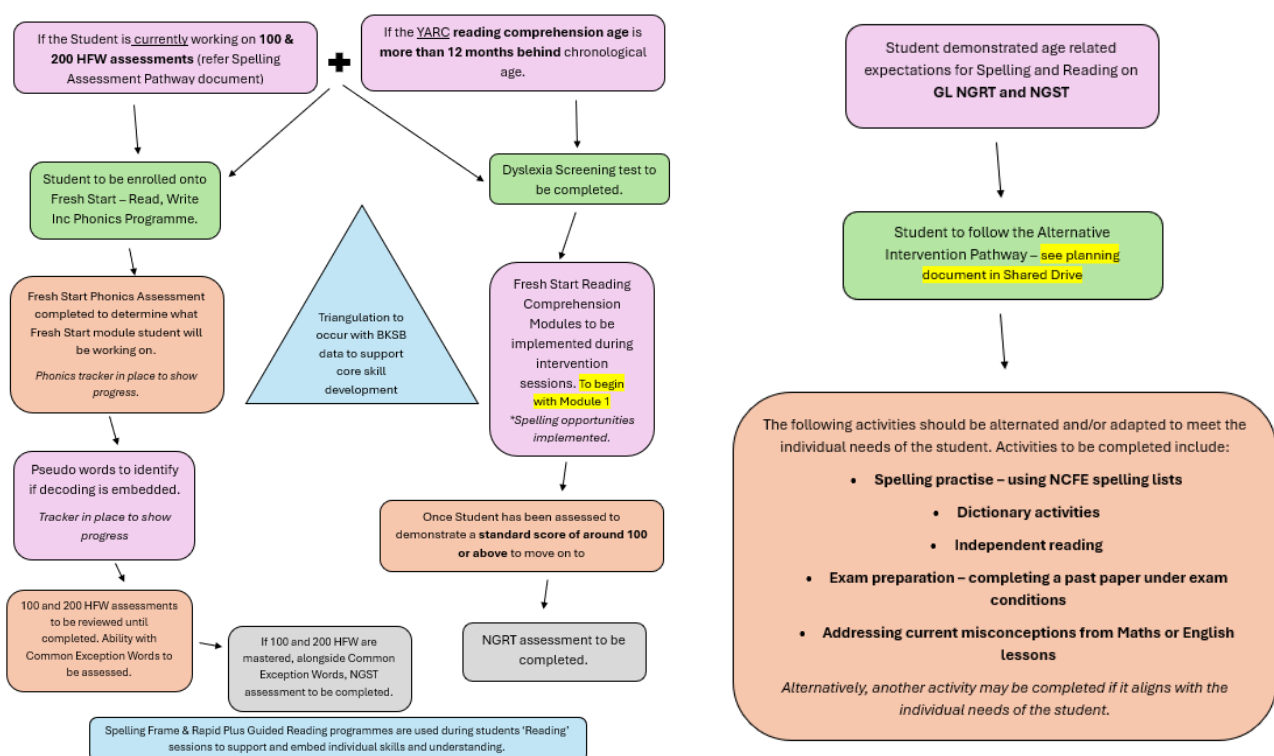
### **IMPLEMENTATION**

At Great Dunmow School, all learners will be assessed on entry to determine their reading age. This will be established using the YARC (York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension) to measure each student's reading ability against Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 objectives as a baselining tool. Once these have been mastered, students will then progress to assessment using the GL platform, in line with Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 standards.

If a learner scores 12 months below their chronological age on the YARC assessment, then a GL Dyslexia assessment will be carried out. Students will then be enrolled on the *Read Write Inc. Fresh Start* by Ruth Miskin Reading Comprehension intervention pathway, where all low-level readers will be supported on a one-to-one basis or in small groups when appropriate. Students are supported in re-engaging with a love of reading, both for pleasure and through *Fresh Start Early Reader* reading books and subject-specific reading. The main reading programme that will be followed at Great Dunmow School is *Read Write Inc. Fresh Start* by Ruth Miskin, and progress will be monitored throughout this programme to support early readers in becoming more confident and fluent.

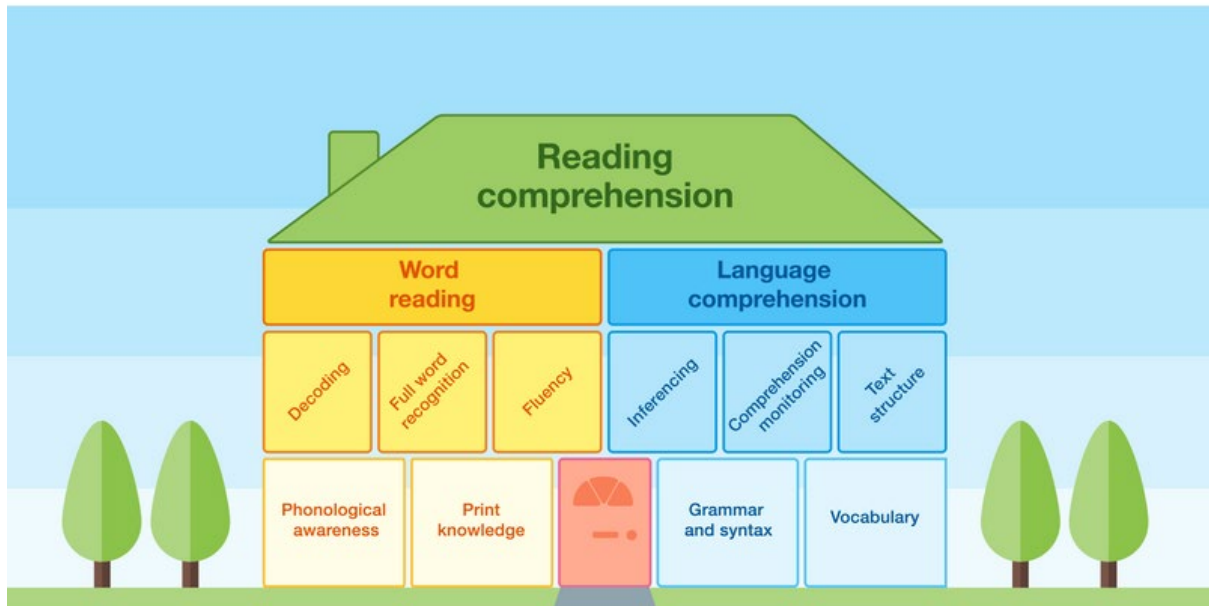
All learners will have access to texts to support reading for pleasure, both within school and at home; topic-related texts will be available in classrooms where appropriate, and learners will have regular access to the school library. Learners will also have the opportunity, through Student Voice, to request specific texts or books that reflect their interests or hobbies. Teachers will ensure that books are matched to each learner's current reading ability and interests.

A phonics pathway is in place to help older struggling readers rapidly catch up by securing their phonics knowledge, improving their decoding skills, and developing reading fluency and comprehension. Students complete a phonics assessment which determines the module that will be their starting point. The modules progress up to number 33. Upon completion, students then follow the Reading Comprehension pathway — see diagram below.



The Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) *Reading House* framework is fully embedded in the way our interventions are planned, delivered, and assessed. It also underpins how we support and develop reading across all subjects within the curriculum. By using the *Reading House* model, we ensure that all staff understand the key components of effective reading instruction — including decoding, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension — and apply these principles consistently.

This approach helps us to identify specific barriers to reading for individual learners, select appropriate strategies to address them, and monitor progress carefully. In addition, it ensures that reading skills are not developed in isolation but are reinforced and practised through subject-specific texts and activities, enabling students to build their confidence, knowledge, and enjoyment of reading both in and beyond the classroom.



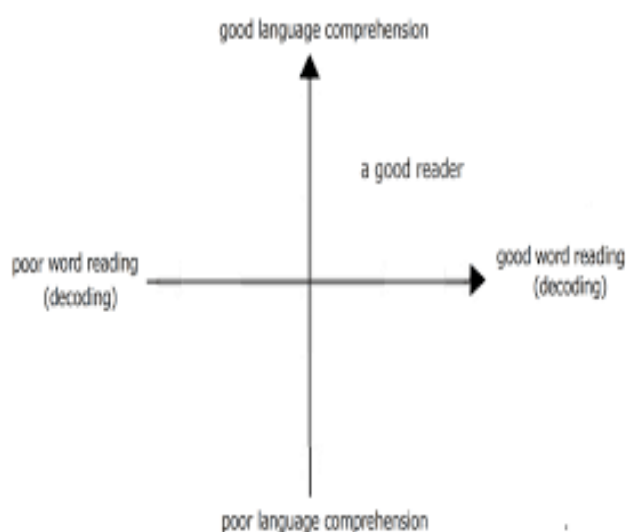
The National Literacy Trust states that “If we want to be skilful in helping other people, especially children, become willing, avid, and – most important of all – thoughtful readers, we need to know how to create a reading environment that enables them.” Many learners arrive at school with low reading levels and as a school we will ensure we understand individual gaps and support learners to embark on their journey in bringing reading alive.

The Department for Education in The Reading Framework states that “The Simple View of Reading has been described as the product of decoding and comprehension, a model first proposed by Gough and Tunmer in 1986, who called it the Simple View of Reading. It has been fundamental in changing the debate about the teaching of reading over at least the last 20 years. It is frequently shown as a diagram (Figure 1), consisting of two axes and four quadrants: a horizontal axis for word reading (decoding) processes and a vertical axis for language comprehension processes.”

The National Curriculum programmes of study for reading reflect the model, presented as two dimensions: ‘word reading’ and ‘comprehension’. At Great Dunmow, low-level reading support will be provided through the use of the **Read Write Inc. Fresh Start Phonics programme by Ruth Miskin** and the **Read Write Inc. Fresh Start Comprehension programme**. Guided reading will be supported through the careful mapping of all reading books, including National Curriculum texts, to ensure whole-school access for all learners, regardless of ability or level, along with Fresh Start Early Readers texts. **Rapid Plus** guided reading and comprehension is implemented to support pupils as part of the reading curriculum, aimed at struggling KS3 and SEND pupils. **Rapid Plus** inspires a love of reading through use of real-life, age-appropriate topics and provides an assessment record focusing on decoding, comprehension, and spelling.

Curriculum text formats are chosen specifically to support the needs of pupils and include dyslexia-appropriate fonts and images to support dual coding.

Figure 1 -



We have drawn heavily from the recommendations of the Education Endowment Foundation recommendations in their “Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools” document, first published 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018 ([Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools | EEF](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) ([educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)) )

### 1. Prioritise “disciplinary literacy” across the curriculum

We have membership of the National Literacy Trust which gives us access to wide range of CPD opportunities, teaching resources and subject specific guidance so that we can prioritise literacy across the curriculum.

Key words specific to each subject are displayed in every classroom to ensure maximum exposure to the vocabulary conventions of each subject. Key words for each topic are reviewed and assessed at the beginning and end of each unit to support students’ exposure to and development of vocabulary.

Students are exposed to 5 1:1, 45-minute intervention sessions each week, the intervention sessions are either following the Phonics or Reading Comprehension pathway. The structure of each pathway exposes the students to reading which both follow the Read, Write Inc Ruth Miskin programme. The reading that is completed during the intervention sessions feed into our Reading Racetrack incentive.

Books are selected based on current affairs or personal growth and development, books are also differentiated to support all reading levels and abilities. Teachers will support learners to access books at their level.

Current affairs books support learners to widen their knowledge and interest in events of political or social interest and importance happening in the world at the present time.

Personal growth and development books support learners in the development of new skills, attitudes, actions, or reactions that can have a positive impact on their life and increase overall well-being. Through books within this genre, it may also support learners to process previous trauma in a positive way or creates a safe space where they can open up and reflect on their own experiences in the context of the characters of the book rather than themselves.

All books are vetted through school and in consultation with parents when necessary.

Reader of the week award is also encouraged to support individual reading, reading for pleasure and reading at home. To support learners reading at home, we encourage and assist learners and parents/carers by providing them with a chosen book to read at home. We also emphasise the importance and impact of learners reading at home.

## **2. Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject**

We have implemented a 'Word of the Week' that links to a specific subject. The Word of the Week includes the focus phonics sound of the week to reinforce the children's understanding. All lessons focus on 3 key words for the topics taught. Staff encourage students to think about unfamiliar words and what they look like so that they might be able to decode the meaning of them.

Staff look for opportunities wherever possible within the lesson and teaching to highlight word etymology and morphology to help students remember the meanings of new words and to make connections with the words they already know e.g. in science, the prefix photo- means light therefore photosynthesis is concerned with light.

Staff support the introduction of key words through the use of word banks and encouraging pupils to decode the meaning during discussion. Topic words are provided by teachers, and pupils are supported in memorising their key words through the awarding of a bonus point when they are asked to recite them and explain their definition.

## **3. Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts**

Across the curriculum, students are given the opportunity to read complex texts relevant to the subject they are studying, either as a reading comprehension or analysis. For example, in maths, we use extended written questions where students need to read and pick out key pieces of information in order to answer the question.

## **4. Break down complex writing tasks**

Where students are expected to create extended pieces of writing, teachers use a combination of planning, monitoring, evaluation and modelling to support students to structure their text appropriately and to a high academic standard. We also provide

targeted support for those who need it through the use of scaffolded structures, sentence starters and keyword mats as appropriate.

**5. Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject**

We encourage students to recognise key features, aims and conventions of good writing within each subject through the use of model answers and structural analysis.

**6. Provide opportunities for structured talk**

Students at our school can be reluctant writers so our verbal discussions form an integral part of our learning journeys, which we then use as a platform to stimulate written work. Staff encourage high quality talk through excellent questioning techniques, by modelling examples of high-quality talk and by encouraging students to use key words from lessons in their responses in order to ensure that discussions are including high level vocabulary. Verbal discussions, where appropriate and relevant to the lesson, can be recorded through scribing in order to demonstrate understanding of the topic.

**7. Provide high-quality literacy interventions for struggling students**

Students receive targeted literacy interventions that are appropriate to their level and individual needs. Our literacy interventions use the *Read Write Inc.* programme by Ruth Miskin, which aligns with the Reading Framework published by the DfE in July 2021. [The reading framework - teaching the foundations of literacy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/)

## IMPACT

Through the implementation of our comprehensive Reading Strategy, we aspire to cultivate a deep and enduring love of reading in all our students. By fostering reading confidence, we aim to empower students to engage with a diverse range of texts spanning a wide variety of genres. This confidence will not only enable them to navigate written materials with ease in their further education at college but also equip them with essential transferable skills highly valued in the workplace. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that every student develops lifelong literacy skills, enriching their personal and professional lives and opening doors to countless opportunities.

In July 2025, the DfE reported the following: *“Reading for pleasure isn’t just a hobby. It’s linked to a range of benefits including stronger writing skills, improved wellbeing and confidence, and even higher future earnings, with new data showing those proficient in reading and writing in primary school earn £65,000 more over their lifetime.”* With this report, we remain fully committed to promoting a culture of reading for pleasure throughout our school. We recognise the significant impact that reading can have on our students’ academic success, personal development, and future opportunities. To support this, we provide access to a wide range of engaging texts, encourage independent reading

both in school and at home, and ensure that all learners are given the time, space, and support they need to become confident, enthusiastic readers for life.

### QUESTIONS FOR EACH SUBJECT LEAD TO CONSIDER

1. What is unique about your subject discipline in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening? What is common with other subject disciplines?
2. How do members of the subject discipline use language on a daily basis?
3. Are there any literacy misconceptions held by students, for example, how to write an effective science report?
4. Are there words and phrases used typically, or uniquely, in the subject discipline?
5. How can we ensure that vocabulary instruction is effectively integrated into classroom teaching?
6. How can we move beyond static word lists to support students to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning and applications of words?
7. How can we ensure that subject specific vocabulary becomes memorable and that students can use new words in writing and talk?
8. How can we best teach students to read academic texts?
9. Which reading strategies improve the accessibility of subject specific texts and genres?
10. How can we support students to become effective independent learners?
11. How do we break down complex reading tasks?
12. How can we support students to become independent writers?
13. How can we motivate students to persist with challenging writing tasks?
14. Where should writing tasks sit within lessons and lesson sequences?
15. How can we integrate reading and writing tasks in different subject areas?
16. How can we support students to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar?
17. Is it right to view talk as a luxury?
18. How can we structure speaking and listening activities to support learning?
19. Where should discussion activities sit within lessons and lesson sequences?
20. What types of interventions are most likely to have an impact?
21. Who should provide targeted support?
22. How will the impact of the intervention be monitored?

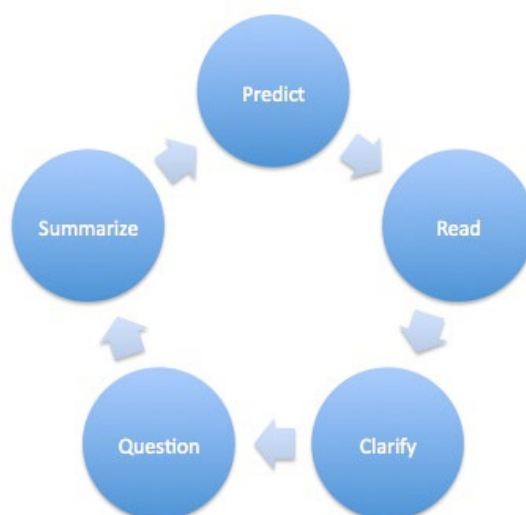
### ACTIONS

- Continue to evaluate the quality and complexity of existing reading materials in the school.
- Ensure that the development of disciplinary literacy is coherently aligned with curriculum planning.
- Identify tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary across your subject.



- Identify 15–20 words of academic vocabulary needed for each topic and scheme of work, and teach these explicitly until they are embedded and mastered.
- Find tasks where you can use the Reciprocal Reading Approach to support students in reading academic text – see The Reciprocal Teaching Cycle below:

### *The Reciprocal Teaching Cycle*



- For extended writing opportunities, break down writing tasks by providing instruction at word, sentence and whole-text level; ensure students understand the Tier 2 vocabulary used in writing questions; explicitly teach students planning strategies; help students to monitor and review their writing.
- Look in your Scheme of Work (SoW) to identify opportunities for structured talk and make these explicit either on whiteboards, task cards or in your SoW.
- Use data from the Spelling Assessment Pathway, YARC, NGRT, NGST and BKSb assessment data to track improvements in literacy.
- Word of the week – subject specific
- Key words in lessons
- Use word games such as Boggle, Scrabble and Zilch where necessary
- Fresh Start Read Write Inc. Phonics and Comprehensive intervention programme for students, where applicable.