

# Literacy Review



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# Welcome to Derby Research School


Derby Research School is part of the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) Research Schools Network—a national initiative designed to connect schools with the most effective evidence-informed strategies for improving outcomes. As a regional hub for translating research into practice, we work directly with schools, trusts, and local authorities to support sustainable, high-impact approaches to literacy improvement.

Our team combines deep expertise in school leadership, curriculum development, and teacher development with a strong understanding of the barriers disadvantaged pupils face in reading, writing and oracy. We have played a central role in the development and delivery of national professional learning programmes on literacy, and our work is directly informed by the [EEF's suite of literacy guidance reports and the Priority Literacy framework](#).

We are uniquely placed to lead Literacy Reviews because:

- We support schools to embed the EEF's tiered model across reading and writing, balancing high-quality teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies.
- Our approach draws on the most up-to-date evidence on improving reading fluency, disciplinary literacy, early language, and writing development.
- We are actively engaged in [Priority Literacy partnerships](#), giving us insight into sector-leading tools and approaches.
- We work across diverse educational settings, tailoring our support to the specific phase, context, and literacy challenges each school faces.
- We focus on building staff expertise and leadership capacity, ensuring that literacy strategies are coherent, consistent, and sustainable.




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# Introduction

## Why a Literacy Review?

Strong literacy is the foundation of academic success, yet many schools continue to face complex challenges in ensuring every pupil learns to read, write, and communicate confidently. Whether due to gaps in early language, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension, too many pupils—especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds—do not make the progress in literacy they need to thrive across the curriculum and beyond school.

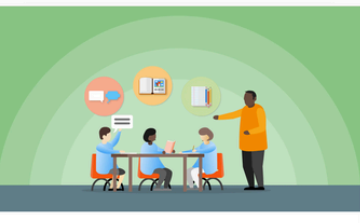
A Literacy Review provides an independent, evidence-informed opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of your current literacy strategy. Schools often seek a review when they want to:

- Evaluate the impact of existing approaches across teaching, intervention, and reading culture
- Identify strengths and areas for development across different pupil groups
- Align literacy leadership, curriculum, and CPD to the best available evidence
- Strengthen the coherence between class teaching, targeted support, and whole-school strategy
- Ensure all pupils, especially struggling readers, are supported by a joined-up, sustainable approach



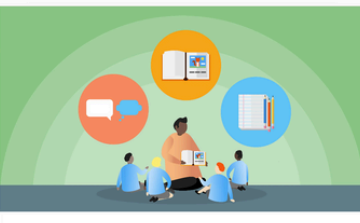
**Guidance Reports**  
**Preparing for Literacy**  
Build the foundations of literacy for three – five year olds.

Early Years




**Guidance Reports**  
**Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2**  
Develop fluent reading and writing skills for seven – 11 year olds.

Primary



**Guidance Reports**  
**Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1**  
Support language, reading, and writing skills for five – seven year olds.

Primary



**Guidance Reports**  
**Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools**  
Seven recommendations related to reading, writing, talk, vocabulary development and supporting struggling students

Secondary

# Introduction

## What You Can Expect from Us

We bring national insight and local expertise, drawing on our role as a member of the EEF's Research Schools Network and our partnership with Priority Literacy.

## Our Literacy Reviews are:

- Tailored to your school's context – recognising your setting, phase, and priorities
- Rooted in research – aligned to the EEF's literacy guidance and Priority Literacy's five pillars
- Collaborative and developmental – designed to support professional dialogue and build staff ownership
- Action-oriented – we offer practical, strategic recommendations and can support implementation planning

Whether you are refining your early reading approach, developing disciplinary literacy at secondary, or improving reading outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, our review process provides clarity, coherence, and expert insight to move your practice forward.



## Priority Literacy

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# Structure of the Review

Our Literacy Review is designed to offer schools a rigorous yet developmental lens on their current approach to improving literacy outcomes—particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The review takes place in three phases, with a strong focus on preparation and baseline insight to ensure school time is used effectively.

## **Baseline: Pre-Review Information and Audit**

Prior to the in-school review, we will gather a baseline understanding of your school's current literacy strategy using a streamlined version of the Priority Literacy Gateway Audit, developed in collaboration with EEF colleagues and national literacy specialists. This is a shorter diagnostic designed to:

- Surface strengths and gaps in your literacy provision
- Enable reviewers to tailor the in-school visit to your context and needs
- Reduce duplication and focus discussion on areas of greatest impact

The audit captures information across the five pillars of Priority Literacy and is aligned with EEF's Literacy Guidance Reports.

We may also request additional documents based on your audit responses—such as literacy action plans, curriculum maps, reading intervention records, and staff CPD plans—before visiting the school. As much as possible we will do a desktop search of your website to locate as much information as possible.

# Review Process

## Before the review

### School Self-Evaluation and Preparation

- Completion of pre-review self-evaluation document
- Alignment with the most recent EEF guidance on literacy, reading, writing, and school improvement

### Desktop Review of School Documentation

We will review the following documents in advance or from the school website:

#### Documents to send in advance:

- Current School Improvement Plan
- Most recent Ofsted Inspection Dashboard Summary Report
- Most recent FFT data summary dashboards (if available)
- Attendance and persistent absence data (if relevant to literacy engagement)
- Staffing structure identifying roles with a literacy responsibility
- Completed pre-review self-evaluation document
- Literacy policies or action plans
- PP strategy Statement

#### Documents accessed via school website:

- Published Literacy or Reading Strategy (if available)
- Any literacy-specific impact reports or evaluations
- Curriculum intent and implementation documentation



# Review Process

## During the review

### Core Activities:

- Leadership Discussion: Headteacher & Literacy Lead Lead/SLT/ PP Lead with 2 reviewers (60 mins)
- Joint Learning Walks: 2 walks (60 mins each) followed by a 30-min discussion
- Book Look: Sample from all year groups following Alex Bedford's Book Study (3 PP, 2 non-PP)

### Stakeholder Discussions:

- Teachers (30 mins with 2 reviewers)
- Middle Leaders (30 mins with 2 reviewers)
- Support Staff (30 mins with 2 reviewers)
- Pupil Voice (30 mins with 2 reviewers): Work and reading book discussion
- Parents (Optional, 30 mins with 1 reviewer)
- Governors (Optional, 30 mins with 1 reviewer)

### End-of-Day Feedback:

- 3:00–4:00pm: Reviewer reflection and synthesis (1 hour)
- 4:00pm: Leadership discussion on impact and next steps (up to 1 hour)

**We adapt the structure based on your school phase and key priorities (e.g. early reading, disciplinary literacy, SEND).**





# Review Process

## After the review

### Following the review, we will provide:

- A written summary of key strengths and development areas
- A short action plan informed by research and your context
- Signposting to evidence-informed resources and implementation guidance
- Optional follow-up support (coaching, CPD, review of progress)

### Key Threads Throughout the Review

- Understanding and application of research evidence
- Interventions and strategies rooted in EEF-endorsed best practice
- Strategic use of resources and support systems
- School culture and capacity for sustainable impact
- Progress monitoring and milestone tracking

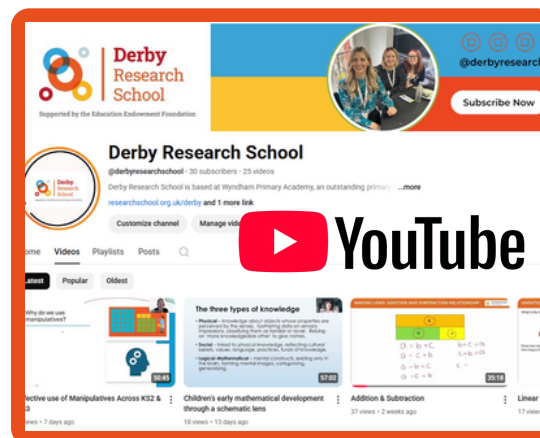
We will provide tailored recommendations and direct you to relevant EEF and research-backed resources for further development.

**The cost for the whole review is £1600**



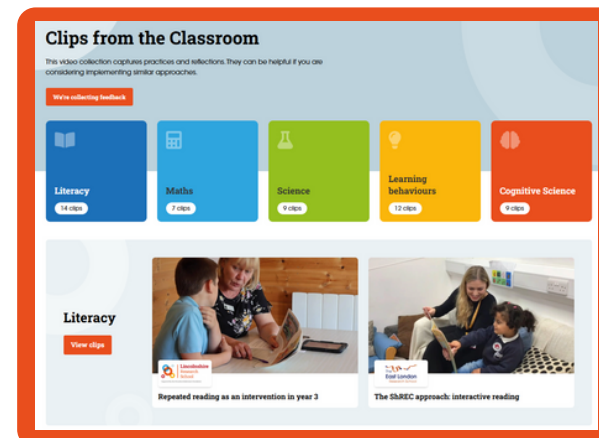
# Further Research Resources

## YouTube/Webinars



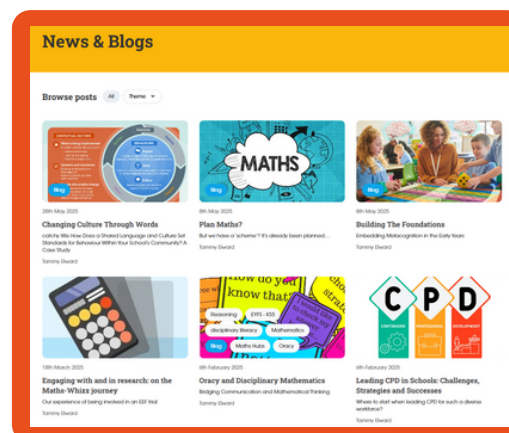
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## Clips from the Classroom



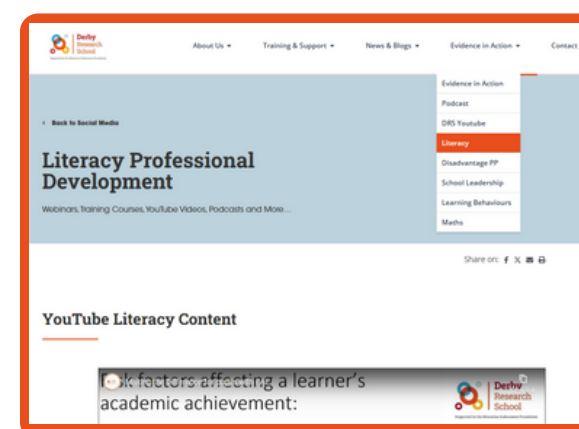
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