



THE **PRIMARY** LITERACY RESEARCH AND POLICY GUIDE **2017/2018**



The gateway to good practice

The Primary *Literacy Research and Policy Guide* is a yearly compilation of recent research and policy developments in literacy that is designed to support busy practitioners in building evidence-based practice.

The annual literacy toolkit: The *Literacy Research and Policy Guide* sits alongside our **Annual Literacy School Review** and our **Annual Literacy Pupil Survey** to provide a comprehensive suite of materials to support evaluation, reflection and ongoing strategic development of whole-school literacy. Updated every year, these three essential publications can be built into your annual school-improvement cycle to provide a gateway to practice that is informed by evidence, in line with policy and inspired by practical ideas.

The Annual Literacy School Review REFLECTION

- A practical set of easy-to-use audit posters to support whole-school discussion, reflection and target areas for development over the year
- Advice and practical resources linked to each poster to support and develop good practice
- Primary and secondary versions available

The Annual Literacy Pupil Survey ANALYSIS

- Reports and insights from our unique yearly national survey to track pupil attitudes and behaviours towards reading, writing, spoken language and technology to help map trends and inform practice
- Your own survey. Sign your school up to be part of the annual literacy pupil survey and receive your own individual school report to build practice based on analysis and evidence

The Literacy Research and Policy Guide RESEARCH

- Your yearly guide to new research and policy from the literacy sector to help keep you up to date and informed
- Useful summary and headline pointers to support busy practitioners in accessing and disseminating key recent literacy research – the gateway to good practice
- Primary and secondary versions available

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- State that any views expressed are yours and not necessarily those of the National Literacy Trust.

Introduction

The *Literacy Research and Policy Guide* aims to inform and support busy teachers and leaders of literacy to bridge the gap between evidence and practice. It does this by collating and summarising key points from recent research and policy developments across all areas of the English curriculum. Our aim is to make research easily accessible to facilitate teachers and leaders making informed, professional decisions about literacy development in their schools.

This year's guide concentrates on the most recent research related to literacy published in the last academic year. A focus on these recent publications enables more detail to be included while still ensuring a digestible format is maintained.

If you missed 2016/2017's *Literacy Guide for Schools* and need to catch up, core research and policy publications from the previous years can be downloaded [here](#).

In addition to this headline document, more comprehensive practical guidance on how to implement both research and policy can be found by accessing our **Primary Annual Literacy School Review 2017/18**. It has been designed to complement this research guide and help practitioners both reflect upon and implement good practice in each of the key areas of literacy. The review encompasses two distinct elements: a set of evaluation and discussion posters for whole-staff reflection and analysis, and a corresponding set of advice and resources to help address elements of need and priority. The **Annual Literacy School Review** enables literacy leaders to review their school's current literacy provision and develop an action plan for moving forward.

"Teachers have the opportunity to become an evidence based profession, in just one generation: embedding research into everyday practice; making informed decisions independently; and fighting off the odd spectacle of governments telling teachers how to teach, because teachers can use the good quality evidence that they have helped to create, to make their own informed judgements."

Goldacre, 2013

WHAT'S NEW IN ASSESSMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Assessment and leadership

With more autonomy, less central guidance and a seemingly never-ending agenda of change, strong, innovative and visionary leadership has never been more important. At the heart of every successful school are committed, knowledgeable, passionate and driven leaders who have high expectations, know their pupils' needs and accept no excuse for pursuing an evidence-based vision of success. Leading literacy matters.

Consultation on primary assessment continues, and the drive for a more research-informed approach to improvement is growing. The following comprises some of this year's developments to support leadership of literacy.

1. Primary Assessment (April 2017). House of Commons Education Committee.

Following the 2016 new-assessment arrangements, concerns have been expressed about their design and implementation. In September 2016, the House of Commons Education Committee launched an inquiry into the new assessments. The report provides a summary of the issues raised and a makes a series of recommendations.

Key recommendations:

- Schools should be given detailed information about changes to SATs at least a year before their implementation. Expected standards should be raised over a longer time period than is currently planned so that schools have time to adjust
- The Key Stage 2 spelling, punctuation and grammar test should be retained for internal monitoring, but it should not be a statutory requirement
- To reduce issues that arise when data on a small number of pupils are reported, there should be a rolling three-year average of a school's performance on the league tables. Yearly cohort level data should be used for internal monitoring only
- Ofsted needs to consider whether its inspectors rely too heavily on data. To do this, it should pilot inspections in which data is looked at only after a visit
- There needs to be a further review of the STA following the 2017 SATs to assess progress made against the recommendations of the internal report
- The role of Ofqual in regulating SATs should be reviewed to ascertain whether it should have more control over standardised tests in schools. The committee also recommends a review of the development process for tests to improve confidence among school leaders and teachers
- The STA should do more to explain the development process of national curriculum assessments to schools and ensure that teachers have confidence that they are involved from an appropriate stage. The committee wants the DfE and the STA to publish plans to improve the test experience for pupils, particularly with regard to reading

- The government should provide adequate resource for the training of teachers and leaders on the new assessments, including how to work with pupils who are working below national curriculum levels
- Schools should receive advice on commercial assessment systems. There is currently little information about their cost-effectiveness or reliability
- Each Ofsted report should state whether a primary school is offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Reports should include science as a core subject alongside English and maths. They should also include a range of other areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities
- There should be a review of any potential harmful effects of introducing baseline testing in reception. This should involve early years practitioners and experts and it should look at the potential impact on pupils' wellbeing
- The government should carry out a thorough evaluation of the reliability of teacher-assessment judgements and reconsider whether such judgements can be used for accountability purposes
- The government should assess the impact of any changes to the curriculum and standards on teacher and pupil wellbeing, and publish plans to avoid negative consequences

2. Report of the Assessment Review Group – Redressing the Balance (Jan 2017). NAHT.

The Assessment Review Group was established in May 2016 to consider the current system and to try to identify an alternative, better vision for the future. This report is the culmination of the discussions that took place within the group over a series of meetings. The report sets out a series of principles that should underpin any future assessment system.

The six guiding principles of assessment:

- Assessment is at the core of good teaching and learning
- Statutory assessment should be separated from ongoing assessment that happens in the classroom
- Data from statutory assessment will never tell you the whole story of school effectiveness
- The statutory-assessment system should be accessible to pupils of all abilities and recognise their progress
- Progress should be valued over attainment in statutory assessment
- The number of statutory assessments in the primary phase should be minimised

3. What Makes Great Assessment? (2017). Durham, Evidenced Based Education.

This panel discussion hosted by the creators of the Assessment Academy & the Chartered College of Teaching centres on three essential areas:

- What makes great assessment?
- Identifying assessment challenges and uncertainties
- Addressing the challenges we face

Some of the foremost innovators in education share their views and expertise to open debate and support informed and much-needed changes to our accountability system. Register your email to download the full transcription report.

4. The Rochford Review: final report – Review of assessment for pupils working below the standard of National Curriculum tests (Oct 2016). Crown Copyright.

This independent review makes the following recommendations to the government for the statutory assessment of pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2:

1. The removal of the statutory requirement to assess pupils using P scales
2. The interim pre-key stage standards for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests are made permanent and extended to include all pupils engaged in subject-specific learning

3. Schools assess pupils' development in all four areas of need outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, but statutory assessment for pupils who are not engaged in subject-specific learning should be limited to the area of cognition and learning
4. A statutory duty to assess pupils not engaged in subject-specific learning against the following seven aspects of cognition and learning and report this to parents and carers:
 - Responsiveness
 - Curiosity
 - Discovery
 - Anticipation
 - Persistence
 - Initiation
 - Investigation

Following recommendation 4, schools should decide their own approach to making these assessments according to the curriculum they use and the needs of their pupils

1. Initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) for staff in educational settings should reflect the need for teachers to have a greater understanding of assessing pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests, including those pupils with SEND who are not engaged in subject-specific learning
2. Where there is demonstrable good practice in schools, those schools should actively share their expertise and practice with others. Schools in need of support should actively seek out and create links with those that can help support them
3. Schools should work collaboratively to develop an understanding of good practice in assessing pupils working below the standard of national curriculum tests, particularly across different educational settings. Schools should support this by actively engaging in quality assurance, such as through school governance and peer review
4. There should be no requirement to submit assessment data on the seven areas of cognition and learning to the DfE, but schools must be able to provide evidence to support a dialogue with parents and carers, inspectors, regional schools commissioners, local authorities, school governors and those engaged in peer review to ensure robust and effective accountability
5. Further work should be done to consider the best way to support schools with assessing pupils with EAL

See also useful new tools and support for developing leadership and practice:

1. Assessing and Monitoring Pupil Progress. Education Endowment Foundation.

The EEFs online guidance tool which outlines the components of effective assessment and offers practical steps for putting this into practice. Divided into the following sections:

- Developing whole school assessment
- Assessing progress without levels
- Testing
- Improving teacher assessment
- Measuring impact

2. **Research Rich Pedagogies.** Open University

This new OU website seeks to build connections between education research and those supporting learning in schools, nurseries, teacher training providers and informal settings. The site highlights research which fosters creative and innovative pedagogies. The current two literacy areas of research and practice to explore are:

- Reading for Pleasure
- Digital Books

3. **The Chartered College of Teaching**

The Chartered College of Teaching is the new independent professional body for the teaching profession. The College aims to develop as an independent, member-driven and voluntary professional body. It aims to give teachers equality of status with other professions by advancing high standards, recognising excellence and promoting evidence-based practice and policy. Membership also comes with access to a large education research database.

- **If you missed last year's Literacy Guide for Schools on essential research in this area, you can download it [here](#)**

An essential organisation for those passionate about improving and developing our teaching profession.

The bigger picture...

"The UK is the only economically developed country where 16 to 24-year-olds have the lowest literacy skills of any age group in society. In England 14.9% of adults aged 16-65 lack functional literacy skills. This equates to 5.1 million people.

The UK's literacy gap undermines our economic competitiveness and sustainability. It creates obstacles to fairness across society. It is at the heart of economic and cultural inequalities and is creating a divided society. We can't afford to allow this to continue. We must act now.

The challenge is intergenerational and closely linked to poverty. Up to 40% of the adult population in the UK's most deprived wards lack the literacy skills expected of an 11-year-old." **Vision for Literacy 2025**

In challenging times, let us support each other as schools and leaders in developing innovative, engaging and successful teaching and learning in literacy. The *Literacy Research and Policy Guide* is our annual starting point but join us and become part of our community of practice to put excellence in literacy at the heart of our primary schools.