Interventions for Pupils with Literacy Difficulties

For pupils who are really struggling with literacy, even outstanding classroom teaching is unlikely to address all their needs. However, it is important to use good quality intervention materials and to monitor the progress pupils make in order to evaluate the impact. TAs need to be properly trained to deliver sessions and monitored for quality assurance. Research shows that short, intense interventions have as much impact as those that carry on for longer. However, for pupils with severe levels of difficulty, daily sessions are needed for learning to be secured and maintained. Intervening as early as possible prevents pupils falling behind further. *What Works for Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties*, Greg Brooks 2013 gives an overview of successful interventions nationally, and below are summaries of intervention materials that have shown to be effective in schools across Oxfordshire.

The Importance of Multi-sensory Teaching and Learning
Pupils with dyslexia and other literacy difficulties need the opportunity to over-learn skills and knowledge. Poor short term and working memory, as well as slow processing skills, can make learning arduous. Doing things in different sensory ways - visually, aurally, orally and kinaesthetically – helps build neural pathways in the brain, and the more sensory pathways are built up, the more secure the learning.

Precision Teaching
This is a really good way of monitoring and embedding multi-sensory teaching. It is useful for helping pupils learn letter sounds, sight vocabulary as well as times tables and other number facts.

- Daily focussed session of multi-sensory teaching 1:1 or in a small group: 5-10 minutes
- Each pupil then individually completes a precision grid for 1 minute
- Sessions should be daily – less than 3x a week is not worth doing

When addressing sight vocabulary, it is useful to focus on high frequency words (HFW). The HFW lists in Letters and Sounds can be used, but the Dolch list may also be useful.

Cued Spelling
When pupils are learning to spell words, it may be useful to use Cued Spelling. This is where the pupil works with an adult to work out the cues that will help them to remember that particular word. It may be a picture, a mnemonic or using a similar word that is already known, such as ‘the’ in ‘there’ or ‘there’ and ‘where’.

Letters and Sounds
*Letters and Sounds* gives really good guidance on the order in which to teach phonics. If pupils struggle with learning phonics they still need to complete all 6 phases, otherwise they will be missing essentials aspects of phonic knowledge. Phase 1 develops phonological skills that are vital to learning and using phonics, and
those skills need to continue to be taught as pupils progress through the other phases. *Letters and Sounds* can be used as a teaching guide for phonic intervention throughout every Key Stage, although materials used need to be adapted to the age of the pupil.

**Launch Into Reading Success**
This was designed as a group intervention for Year 1 children at risk of reading difficulty, and is an auditory training programme to develop phonological skills. It consists of 9 sections with 66 activities, which are all outlined clearly and for which resources are provided. It can be run by an experienced TA with support from the teacher. To some extent *Letters and Sounds Phase 1* covers these skills, but this programme can be useful for pupils struggling at this early stage.

**Sound Linkage**
This is a programme of phonological skills training for pupils in KS2 consisting of 5 minutes a day 1-1. It can be done in isolation, but can also be used as part of a longer tailored package for pupils with higher levels of need. It includes:
- Phoneme segmentation
- Phoneme blending
- Phoneme deletion
- Phoneme substitution
- Phoneme transposition
- Phonological linkage activities

**Direct Phonics**
Direct Phonics is a group phonic intervention. There are 3 books, so levels will need to be selected appropriately:
- Book 1 - single letter sounds, c-v-c words and selection of sight words
- Book 2 – consonant blends and some vowel digraphs
- Book 3 – syllable recognition, polysyllabic and compound words
Each session follows a structured plan and is clearly scripted. The programme can be used to teach phonics initially, but is also good for consolidating skills and knowledge with older pupils, who may have gaps in their learning. There are options for fast tracking pupils who are doing well.

**Acceleread Accelewrite**
This programme uses a talking word processor programme to give auditory feedback to pupils, to develop their auditory and phonological skills. Any talking programme can be used: Clicker, Texthelp, Read and Write, Write: Outloud, and Talking Textease, but Clicker 5 is probably the best. Sessions are designed to run for 15 minutes a day for 4 weeks (20 sessions) but a shorter term also works well. Pupils can return to the programme again at a later date. Pupils memorise sentences from cards then type them into the computer, listening to check sounds and self-correct where possible. A TA needs to supervise to pick up errors missed by the pupil. The cards present phonic patterns in developmental order, so assessment is needed to find the starting point for pupils. The LAPack Flow Chart will help. Keeping a chart of their progress through the programme helps pupils to see the steps they are taking and gain confidence.
**Rapid Readers/Rapid Plus**
This reading scheme from Pearson is colourful and engaging. There is an emphasis on comprehension with questions for discussion at the end of each book. There is also software available that allows pupils to read into a computer which will then highlight words they have read incorrectly and prompt them to self-correct. Pupils who are reluctant to read aloud are more confident reading into a computer. Boys particularly seem to enjoy the IT aspect and find the books interesting. Schools using the scheme have been very successful in accelerating progress in reading.

**New Reading and Thinking**
These six booklets provide work on inferential comprehension at an increasingly complex level. Pupils working through them have shown huge rates of improvement both in comprehension and in overall NC Reading levels. Pupils can work 1:1, but can also benefit from small group discussion. Answers do not need to be written; it is the thinking process that is the important part.

**Read Write Inc and Freshstart**
There are several Read Write Inc programmes providing a systematic approach to literacy, covering the teaching of reading, writing, spelling and comprehension.
- Read Write Inc Phonics - Systematic literacy programme rooted in phonics (ages 4-7)
- Read Write Inc Comprehension – literacy programme for children who can read (ages 7-9)
- Read Write Inc Comprehension Plus- (ages 9-11)
- Read Write Inc Spelling- 10 minutes a day spelling programme (ages 7-9)
- Read Write Inc Freshstart- intervention for struggling readers (ages 9-11)
These can be used as independent programmes or as a whole-school approach to literacy. Schools in Oxford City with high numbers of pupils with SEN and EAL have used this programme successfully. Read Write Inc Freshstart is a programme for older pupils who are struggling with reading. It is designed for KS2, but has also been used successfully in a few county secondary schools.

**FFT Intervention Programmes**
Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team run training for these programmes under licence from the FFT. These three programmes are designed to be run by Teaching Assistants with the support of a teacher. Schools will be required to send both a teacher and a TA to training sessions.

**FFT Wave 3 Reading Programme**
This is a 1:1 programme designed for children in Y1 who are working within and below Book Band 2 in reading and Level 1c or below in writing. However, it has also been successfully used for older children, including secondary pupils, and those working at slightly higher levels of literacy. The programme uses an approach based on the principles of Marie Clay’s Reading Recovery with daily sessions of 20 minutes running for a maximum of 22 weeks. The focus for sessions alternates between reading and writing.

Data collected from Oxfordshire schools shows that pupils made an average gain of 2.2 NC sub-levels or 3.86 APS in writing. There was an average rise of 3.05 book bands. However, there is a larger rise the lower the starting point.
Write Away Together
This programme can be run 1:1 or in small groups (4 max). It is based on Assessment for Learning, and works at the editing stage of writing. A piece of the child’s independent writing is used for discussion and improvement. The programme is suitable for any pupil, from those who are beginning to write a couple of sentences to those who are gifted writers.

Hi Five
Hi Five is designed for groups of 1-4 pupils from Y5 or above, working at a low Level 2 with a RA of 6.5 to 7.0. There are 4 sessions a week, each lasting 15-20 minutes, for a minimum of 10 weeks. One chapter of text is used each week. The focus of sessions is as follows:
Session 1 Guided reading and clarification
Session 2 Re-reading, questioning and summarizing
Session 3 Supported writing
Session 4 Editing

Every Child a Reader (ECaR) is a strategy of layer intervention, built around Reading Recovery, for quickly raising attainment in literacy. It offers the capacity for whole school impact through managed and targeted layers of literacy support. Oxfordshire Primary Support Team runs training for Reading Recovery, Boosting Reading Potential and Talking Partners under licence. See details of each programme below.

Reading Recovery is at the heart of ECaR. It is a short-term intervention for children who have the lowest achievement in literacy learning. A highly trained Reading Recovery Teacher works individually with these children for 30 minutes each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The goal is for children to develop effective reading and writing strategies in order to work within an average range of classroom performance.
ECaR also supports a number of ‘lighter touch’ TA lead interventions to support reading, comprehension and spoken language.

Boosting Reading Potential @Primary
BRP is a TA-lead intervention. It is a targeted, time-limited, one-to-one intervention over 10 weeks. It is designed to improve the way children read, enabling them to be independent problem solvers who read with understanding and enjoyment. The programme is for pupils in KS1 & KS2 who:
- Lack skills and confidence as readers
- Require a boost to their reading age
- Need to develop their understanding of texts

Talking Partners@Primary
TP@Primary is a successful small group intervention programme which gives children the basic life skills of how to be good communicators; it gives children the opportunity to develop the skills to listen attentively and talk confidently. TP@Primary promotes risk-taking, raises self-esteem and independence, develops interactive listening and an awareness of the audience and produces measurable progress in
speaking and listening. It is a TA led 10 week intervention for pupils from Foundation to Year 6.

**Monitoring and Evaluating Interventions**
All interventions used need to be rigorously evaluated. Assessing pupils at the beginning and end of a programme of work shows what impact the intervention has had. The assessments used do not always need to be complicated or time consuming. Sections of the *Oxfordshire Literacy Assessment Pack (LAPack)* can sometimes suffice. Please see the *Oxfordshire Literacy Difficulties Policy and Advice* for guidance on evaluating the impact of interventions.

**For further advice on suitable interventions and support for pupils with literacy difficulties contact** vulnerable.learners@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Flow Chart to show possible interventions for pupils having difficulties on the Oxfordshire Literacy Assessment Pack

Areas of difficulty

phonological skills

No

letter sounds

No

cvc words

No

consonant digraphs

No

initial consonant blends

No

final consonant blends

No

vowel digraphs

No

sight vocabulary

Yes

Possible interventions

Launch into Reading Success (KS1)
Sound Linkage (KS2)
Letters and Sounds – Phase 1

Yes

Letters and Sounds Phase 1 & 2
Precision Teaching
Multi-sensory formation practice
Phonic Games
Read Write Inc Phonics (4-7yrs)
Read Write Inc Freshstart (9-11+)

Yes

Letters and Sounds Phase 2
Plastic letter word building - Alphabet Arc
Direct Phonics Book 1
Acceleread/Acclewrite Green 1-5
Read Write Inc Phonics (4-7yrs)
Read Write Inc Freshstart (9-11+)

Yes

Letters and Sounds Phase 3
Direct Phonics Book 2
Acceleread/Acclewrite Yellow 1-3, Orange 4
Read Write Inc Phonics (4-7yrs)
Read Write Inc Freshstart (9-11+)

Yes

Letters and Sounds Phase 4
Direct Phonics Book 2
Acceleread/Acclewrite Start at Green 6
Read Write Inc Phonics (4-7yrs)
Read Write Inc Freshstart (9-11+)

Yes

Letters and Sounds Phase 4
Direct Phonics Book 2
Acceleread/Acclewrite Start at Yellow 4
Read Write Inc Phonics (4-7yrs)
Read Write Inc Freshstart (9-11+)

Yes

Letters and Sounds Phase 3,4,5
Direct Phonics Book 2 Block 3+
Acceleread/Acclewrite Start Orange 1
Read Write Inc Phonics (4-7yrs)
Read Write Inc Freshstart (9-11+)

Yes

Precision teaching and multi-sensory practice
Cued Spelling