

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Reading: For learners, for Wales

Publications and resources

Here are links to Estyn publications and resources you can use to support your professional learning about reading:

HMCI annual report (February 2026): [The impact of planning for literacy on pupils' reading, writing, and oracy skills in primary, secondary and all-age schools – Adroddiad Blynyddol | Annual Report](#)

Estyn 'live' (January 2026): [Estyn Live: The reading journey in the primary sector - Estyn](#)

Sgwrs podcast (December 2025): [Overcoming challenges in the teaching of reading - Estyn](#)

News article (November 2025):

[Estyn's Enhanced Focus on Reading: Supporting Every Learner to Succeed](#)

Frequently asked questions: [Reading: For learners, for Wales](#)

Thematic report (September 2024): [Thematic Report: Developing pupils' Welsh reading skills from 10-14 years of age - Estyn](#)

Thematic report (May 2023): [Developing pupils' English reading skills from 10-14 years of age - Estyn](#)

Thematic report (March 2021): [Welsh language acquisition - How Welsh-medium and bilingual settings and primary schools develop learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills - Estyn](#)

Thematic report (March 2021): [English language and literacy in settings and primary schools](#)

Training materials (March 2021): [English language and literacy in settings and primary schools](#)

Effective practice case studies

These are some examples of effective practice case studies identified through Estyn's inspection work:

Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun:

Provision for developing pupils' reading and oral skills - Estyn

Busy Bodies Playgroup:

Creating a rich and stimulating reading environment that instils a love of books amongst children. - Estyn

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron:

A whole school programme to raise reading standards - Estyn

Fitzalan High School:

Provision to develop pupils' understanding of histories, stories and contributions of black, Asian and minority ethnic people - Estyn

Haberdashers' Monmouth School:

'Literally everything' – realising the full potential of a school's library. - Estyn



Reflective prompts

You might also find it useful to consider the following **reflective prompts** when looking at provision for reading or when you observe reading during your **primary school experiences**:

- Strong reading begins with strong oracy. **Which types of language experiences do pupils have?**

Look and listen for:

- rich classroom talk
- storytelling and discussion
- adults modelling vocabulary and introducing pupils to new vocabulary and language structures
- pupils explaining and justifying their ideas and views

Ask yourself:

‘Are pupils developing the spoken language they need in order to understand what they will later read?’

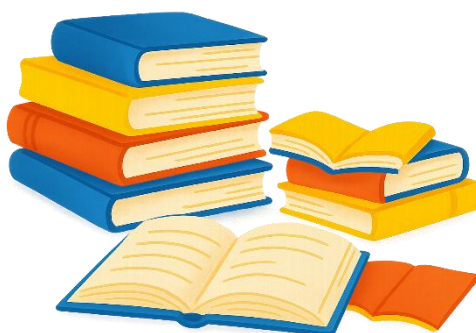
- In the early years of a pupil’s primary education, pre-reading skills matter. **How do adults ensure that pupils have secure foundations for reading, before the formal teaching of reading begins?**

Look for:

- listening games and activities
- rhyme, rhythm and sound play
- shared enjoyment of stories and poems
- how pupils develop their attention, listening, turn-taking and talk
- how pupils develop their physical skills

Ask yourself:

‘How do adults build the groundwork for pupils’ reading development?’



- **Phonics is a key building block of learning to read. It works best when children are ready and when it is connected to meaning. Is phonics taught systematically and at the right stage for pupils?**

Notice:

- clear teaching of sound-letter relationships
- pupils blending confidently
- adults checking for accuracy and understanding when pupils are reading

Ask yourself:

‘Does phonics teaching help pupils to develop word reading skills?’

- Across Wales, the biggest challenge for schools is often pupils’ understanding of what they read. **How do adults support pupils to understand what they read?**

Look for teaching that supports:

- vocabulary development
- pupils’ abilities to infer (‘reading between and beyond the lines’), evaluate and appreciate what they read
- linking texts to pupils’ knowledge and experience
- discussion of meaning, not just decoding words

Ask yourself:

‘Can this pupil explain, in their own words, what they have read?’

- The strongest schools in Wales treat reading as central to all learning. **Is reading woven through pupils’ learning experiences, rather than being confined to one teaching session?**

Look for:

- pupils accessing high-quality texts across the curriculum
- teachers modelling how to read diagrams, charts, images and other sources
- reading supporting pupils’ learning in science and technology, humanities and the expressive arts, for example
- pupils applying reading strategies and skills independently to support their work

Ask yourself:

‘Are pupils reading to learn and learning to read across the curriculum?’