contents

contents

List of Figures

4

Introduction

Reading is a skill we use every day. Whether a road sign, or a novel, at the supermarket or the library, reading is an integral part of our lives. It is not merely a functional tool to meet the demands of society but a mechanism by which we can acquire knowledge and new ideas, gaining a greater understanding of the world around us. It opens the door to a feast of imagination and creativity which provides enjoyment to reader and author alike.

Reading is not just pronouncing written words. Children who become avid and accomplished readers focus on making sense from the start: they develop a habit of mind that expects the words they decode to make sense.
(Dombey *et al.*, 2010:5)

The NLS searchlights model of reading

Phonics (sounds and spelling)

Text

Knowledge of context

Grammatical knowledge

Word recognition and graphic knowledge

The simple view of reading

Language comprehension processes

GOOD

Word recognition processes ← POOR GOOD → *Word recognition processes*

POOR

Language comprehension processes

As long ago as 1998 the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998), through the Framework for Teaching, introduced the notion of the Searchlights model of reading (Figure 1). This represents the reading process as involving four strategies or 'searchlights'. In this model, readers use four sources of knowledge to support decoding and understanding of the text:

• phonic knowledge (sounds and spelling)
• grammatical knowledge
• word recognition and graphic knowledge
• knowledge of context.

Left: Figure 1 The NLS Searchlights model of reading
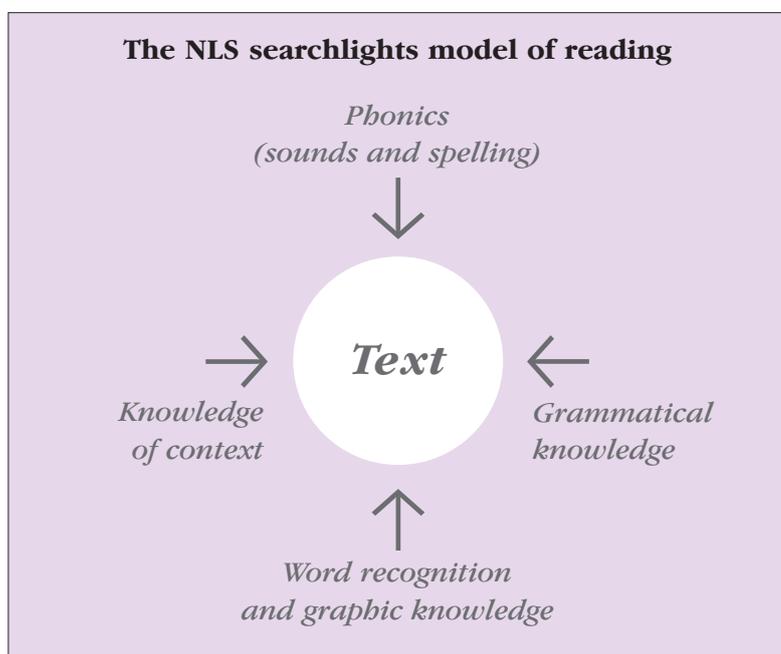
By 2006 the government had introduced the concept of the 'simple' view of reading (Gough and Tunmer, 1986: Rose, 2006). Gough and Tunmer emphasised that decoding and comprehension must both be present if children are to read for meaning. Rose (2006) expressed this diagrammatically (see Figure 2) as a means of identifying differences in the balance between decoding and comprehension.

Below: Figure 2 The Simple View of Reading
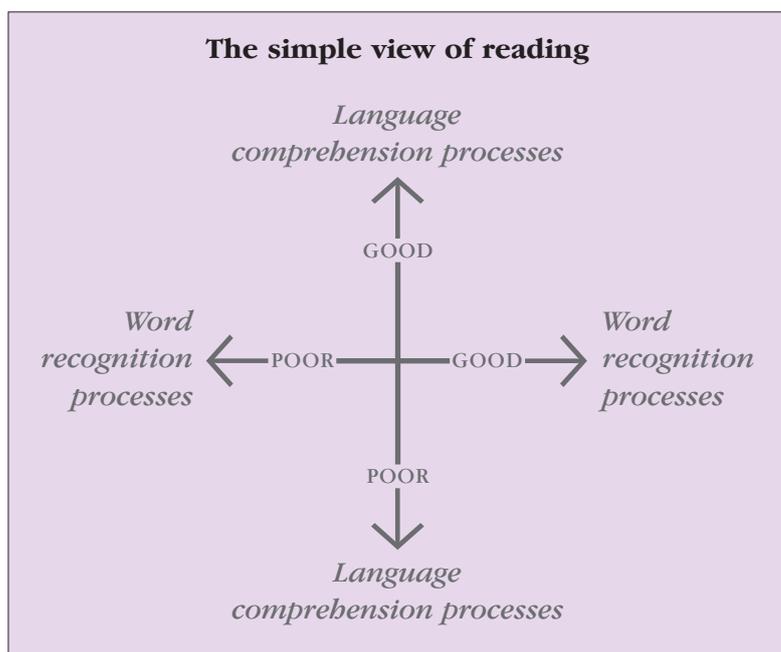
However, reading is not a 'simple' task. Word identification may well involve comprehension, particularly where words such as 'read' or 'sow' are involved. And reading is, of course, much more than word identification. It is a complex interaction between reader and writer that requires children to develop a range of information, strategies and behaviours which they can use independently, a knowledge and understanding of the world and a rich and broad vocabulary that they can bring to texts they read.

If children are to progress as readers, schools will need to provide key elements of good practice. At the heart of this is a strong emphasis on oral language development, which is particularly crucial in the early stages of reading.

Good practice in teaching reading

Good practice includes highly trained, effectively deployed staff with sound subject knowledge, a consistent approach across each year group and throughout the school and quality resources which are well organised. In addition, good practice requires rigorous assessments which are used effectively, daily reading sessions based on assessed needs and close monitoring of the assessment and teaching of reading throughout the school. Storytime, reading to children, literacy rich environments, including book corners, also play a key role and a high level of parental involvement is essential.

> *Learning to read should not be regarded as a hierarchy of skills from lower to higher order, but as a developmental language process. The approaches in the initial stages will colour the children's motivation and their perception of reading as a purposeful and valuable activity.* (Clark, 2014:12)

Underpinning all of these elements, there needs to be a broad and rich reading curriculum which engages teachers and children alike - a curriculum which builds on children's own experiences and interests, makes use of the environment and fosters an atmosphere in which all languages, dialects and traditions are valued - a curriculum that promotes a positive reading ethos throughout the school.

> *Language is the tool through which ideas are stored in memory. For these reasons oral language is the basis of interpreting print. As a general rule anything children have difficulty saying cannot be easily read. There is usually a close relationship between a child's growth in oral language and his* [sic] *progress in reading.* (Hildreth, 1959: 566)

In line with these principles for good practice, this book is designed to fit with the national curriculum for English which stresses skilled word reading involving 'both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words' (DfE, 2014: 14) in partnership with knowledge of language, and of the world, to support comprehension. The approach to comprehension in this book aligns with the NC statement that:

> *Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world they live in, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum.* (DfE, 2014: *ibid*.)

national curriculum

6

While many children in the UK bring knowledge of a language - or languages - other than English, the teaching suggestions work equally well with bi-/multilingual children or English first language speakers and the advice to parents has been developed in multilingual communities.

For the first five years the child's language growth is entirely dependent on what people say to him [sic] *– on how much they speak to him* [sic]*, about what things, in what dialect or language and in what manner, whether gentle and explaining or peremptory and imperative.* (Clay, 1991: 70)

Each section of the book is designed to align with - and enhance - the reading requirements of national curriculum. However, although the national curriculum follows a year-by-year programme, the underlying view of this book is that learning to read is best seen as a developmental continuum, not necessarily tied to year groups.

This book offers practical guidance to those wishing to provide a full rich reading curriculum for children whilst ensuring that they meet the statutory requirements of the national curriculum for English. For that reason, although the curriculum emphasises phonics teaching and learning, the material presented here goes well beyond that element in taking a holistic view of what becoming a reader involves. This view is founded on three key elements in the reading process:

A balanced approach means… ensuring that classrooms are filled with interesting written texts – on screen as well as on paper – and that children are given rich experiences to put these texts to use. (Dombey *et al.*, 2010:7)

semantic (meaning), syntactic (sentence structure) and graphophonic (sound symbol correspondence). All these **sources of information** need to be systematically taught to support children to:

- understand that reading has to make sense
- gain knowledge of sentence grammar and punctuation
- get to grips with visual information – the print on the page (grapheme/phoneme correspondences and other letter patterns including high frequency words)

as well as developing a range of **reading strategies** and **behaviours**.

How to use this book

Each section deals with essential parts of provision for reading. It need not be read in any particular order.

The first section **The reading curriculum** gives an overview of all aspects of teaching reading.

Section Two gives the details of **What the reading process involves**, from early concepts about print through to developing fluency.

Section Three **Comprehension** looks at all the skills needed for successful understanding, with vignette examples of sessions for each of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to support teaching.

The final section **Assessment of reading** provides step-by-step guidance for keeping informed assessments and records of progress.

Throughout the book there are key teaching points, some of them vignettes, drawn from examples of good practice and key questions to help focus on providing good practice. A glossary of terms is supplied at the end of the book.

Sources of Information for word identification

Meaning (semantic: pictures and context)	*Does it make sense?*
Structure (syntactic: grammar and punctuation)	*Does it sound right?*
Visual (graphophonic: phonics and graphic representation)	*Does it look right?*

Strategies (processing information)

- self-monitoring
- self-correcting
- re-reading
- reading on
- cross checking
- searching for more information
- orchestrating all sources of information.

Behaviours

- understanding that English print goes left to right
- reading fluently without finger pointing
- reading longer phrases and more complex sentences
- reading silently most of the time.

Sources of information, strategies and behaviours also support understanding.

Acknowledgements