

# English Intervention

## **Reading Skills** Programme

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*Pictured: Reading Skills Workbook 1, Workbook 2, Workbook 3 and the accompanying phonics flashcards.*

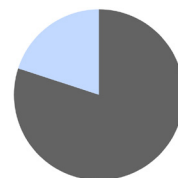
## Introduction

### Why Literacy Intervention is Needed

A child's ability to read accurately and fluently impacts every area of their education - and their wellbeing. From classroom participation to exam success, literacy underpins almost all aspects of school life.

**1 in 4** Children in the UK leaves primary school without reaching the expected level in reading (DfE, 2023)

At secondary school, **20% of 15-year-olds** in England do not meet the minimum level of literacy needed to access the curriculum (CamdenLearning, 2020). That's one in five pupils entering their GCSE years without the foundational skills they need to succeed.



Many of these children have special educational needs, speak English as an additional language, or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students with dyslexia are particularly affected. According to a recent report published in June 2025 by the British Dyslexia Association:

- Only **21.6%** of students with dyslexia achieved a grade 5 or above in both English and maths GCSEs, compared to **51.9%** of students with no identified SEND.
- Even at a grade 4, just **39.5%** of dyslexic students passed both subjects — compared to over **72%** of their peers.

### How Many Students Does This Affect?



**1 in 10** people  
are **Dyslexic**

On average, **three pupils in every classroom** of thirty have dyslexia - a figure that highlights just how many students are at risk of avoidable underachievement. Without the right support, many experience disengagement, exam anxiety, and long-term effects on their confidence and self-esteem.



To read the report published by the British Dyslexia Association, scan the QR code.

**1.** Key stage 2 attainment, academic year 2023/24 (2023) GOV.UK. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-2-attainment/2023-24>. **2.** Camdenlearning (2020) Camden Learning. Available at: <https://camdenlearning.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GL-Assessment.pdf>. **3.** British Dyslexia Association (2025) Available at: [https://cdn.bdadyslexia.org.uk/uploads/documents/BDA-Mind-the-Gap-GCSE-Results-and-the-dyslexia-divide\\_June-2025.pdf?v=1749118993](https://cdn.bdadyslexia.org.uk/uploads/documents/BDA-Mind-the-Gap-GCSE-Results-and-the-dyslexia-divide_June-2025.pdf?v=1749118993).

## The Picturing Method

We can improve the educational outcomes for these students by running targeted 1-2-1 or small group intervention sessions using a programme grounded in evidence-based teaching theory. The Picture Progress workbooks are founded on Dual-Coding Theory which tells us that learners are more likely to retain new information if they are taught in a way that engages both their verbal and non-verbal cognitive systems. We can do this when teaching reading by stimulating a learner's mental imagery, improving their ability to see letters or words in their mind. Once they can easily picture letters and recall their corresponding sounds, they can decode unfamiliar words with greater accuracy and fluency.

To achieve this, all new letters and sounds are introduced using the Picturing Method - a structured approach designed to activate a learner's mental imagery, making it easier to retain and apply new reading skills.



### Step 1: Picture

First, we introduce new letters and sounds in a way that sparks a child's mental imagery. Instead of just seeing and hearing the letter, we ask them to take a mental picture of it while listening to its name and sound. This helps create a strong visual connection in their mind.



### Step 2: Recall

Next, we cover up the letter - encouraging the child to visualise it from memory. They then write the letter in the air with their finger while saying its name and sound out loud. This step strengthens their ability to "see" the letter in their mind, reinforcing recall.



### Step 3: Strengthen

To solidify this learning, we immediately practice the new sounds through fun, engaging activities like: spot the letter; speed read and O's and X's. This process helps to strengthen the learning and aids with faster recall in subsequent reading.

## Why This Method Works

The Picturing Method is distinctive in its approach as it teaches the actual skill of recognising and remembering graphemes and their corresponding phonemes - the building blocks of reading. With regular, structured practice, pupils develop a secure understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondence, enabling them to decode unfamiliar words with greater confidence and fluency. As reading accuracy improves, so too does spelling, and pupils begin to access and comprehend texts more easily.

The method is highly adaptable and can be used beyond standalone intervention sessions. Support staff can apply it in real time during lessons across the curriculum - whether helping pupils read a maths problem, recognise musical terms, or access written content in any subject - making it a practical tool for everyday classroom support.

## Learning Progression

Each workbook contains 20 structured lessons, organised into five units. At the end of each unit, a checkpoint helps track progress and ensures key concepts have been secured. To support instruction, every lesson begins with a QR code linking to audio guides, and a pronunciation guide is included at the back of the book. To keep motivation high, each workbook also includes colourful stickers and a finisher's certificate to celebrate their achievement.

### Workbook 1

25 phonemes and 10 sight words. Blending phonemes to make CV and VC words.

Consolidates prior learning and teaches:

### Workbook 2

10 phonemes and 10 sight words. Blending phonemes to make CVC words.

### Workbook 3

10 phonemes and 10 sight words. Blending phonemes to make tricky (5 letter) CVC words.

### Workbook 4

10 sight words. Blending phonemes to make CCVC and CVCC words. 5 suffixes for easy 2 syllable words.

### Workbook 5

10 phonemes and 10 sight words. Blending tricky phonemes to make CVC words. Use in 2 syllable words.

### Workbook 6

10 suffixes for tricky 2 syllable words and 10 sight words. Blending phonemes to make CCVCC words.

### Workbook 7

10 prefixes for easy 3 syllable words and 10 sight words. Blending tricky phonemes in CCVC 2 syllable words.

### Workbook 8

10 sight words. Use prefixes and suffixes in tricky 3, 4 and 5 syllable words.

## Who This Supports

The Picture Progress workbooks will benefit a variety of student profiles, from learners with dyslexia and other SEND to those with EAL or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Dyslexia

Students with dyslexia often struggle with phonological processing, working memory, and decoding. These students benefit from being explicitly taught the skill of recognising and remembering graphemes and phonemes.

The Picturing Method is built around strengthening mental imagery and structured recall, helping dyslexic learners build lasting connections between letters, sounds, and meaning.

Low-threat, confidence-building activities support self-esteem and boost engagement.

### SEND

Many pupils with ADHD, autism, or other special educational needs benefit from structured, predictable routines and visual support.

This programme is designed with neurodivergent learners in mind: clear, consistent lesson formats, visual prompts, and step-by-step progression all help create a productive and successful learning experience.

Tasks are short and achievable, making it easier for learners to maintain attention, build independence, and retain new skills.

### EAL

Learners with English as an additional language may struggle to decode unfamiliar sounds and read irregular sight words - especially if their first language uses a different alphabet.

This programme introduces phonics and high-frequency words gradually and clearly.

As students gain the ability to decode unfamiliar English words accurately, their reading fluency and comprehension improve - enabling them to access the wider curriculum with greater independence.

### Pupil Premium

Children eligible for Pupil Premium may experience barriers such as reduced access to reading support at home or lower reading confidence.

This programme is carefully designed to teach essential literacy skills through engaging, gamified tasks that build motivation and momentum.

Frequent checkpoints help children experience early success, supporting both attainment and wellbeing. By delivering consistent progress, the programme can play a key role in closing literacy gaps.

## Implementation in School

### Step 1

#### Training Support Staff

To ensure consistency and confidence in delivery, I offer practical training for SENDCos, support staff, and intervention leads. These sessions introduce the principles behind the method, demonstrate how to use the workbooks effectively, and provide clear, actionable strategies for supporting pupils across the curriculum.

No prior specialist knowledge is required - the training equips staff to deliver structured, evidence-based literacy support from day one. Training is available in person or online and can be delivered as a full-day session or broken into shorter modules to suit staff availability. Online sessions can also be recorded for future use or revision.

##### What it looks like:

- Flexible training sessions
- Continuous on-demand support
- Regular support staff check-ins

##### Benefits:

- No prior phonics expertise required.
- Staff feel confident using the programme.
- Consistency across interventions.

### Step 2

#### Intervention Sessions

The Reading Skills workbooks are ideally suited for one-to-one or small group intervention, with groups kept to pupils working at a similar reading level to ensure effective progress. Sessions can be delivered by trained support staff and should ideally take place daily, or at least several times per week, to maintain momentum and build fluency.

Each workbook contains twenty carefully sequenced lessons divided into five units. Activities are short, structured, and easy to follow, with clear instructions to support consistent delivery by any trained member of staff - offering valuable flexibility for timetabling. End-of-unit checkpoints help monitor progress, celebrate success, and inform future planning.

##### What it looks like:

- 1:1 or small group sessions
- 15-20 minutes per session
- Ideally 4-5 times a week

##### Benefits:

- Tailored support for struggling readers
- Measurable progress via checkpoints
- Builds confidence in a safe setting

### Step 3

## In-Class Support

Teaching Assistants working alongside pupils in the classroom can use elements of the Picturing Method to reinforce literacy skills in real time. For example, imagery-based strategies can be applied when supporting a student to decode new vocabulary during a science or geography lesson.

This approach is particularly effective when students make errors. Using the error-handling techniques covered in the training (and outlined in the workbooks), TAs can guide pupils to self-correct and build independence - a strategy that works just as well in subjects like maths or music as it does in English. By embedding these techniques across all lessons, pupils receive consistent, high-quality support throughout the school day - not just during dedicated literacy time.

### What it looks like:

- Support staff use the Picturing Method during mainstream lessons.
- Reading strategies applied across the curriculum.

### Benefits:

- Reinforces skills in real-time.
- Literacy support beyond English lessons.
- Helps pupils access full curriculum.

### Step 4

## Booster Intensives

During quieter periods in the school year - such as after end of year exams, during transition weeks, or over summer school - the programme can be used for short-term intensives. Multiple lessons can be covered in a single day, with learning games and movement breaks built in to keep energy and engagement high.

The workbooks include a range of game-based activities (often using the phonics flashcards), and additional games are introduced during staff training to support motivation. This intensive format is particularly effective for pupils who need to make rapid progress to catch up and access the wider curriculum with confidence.

### What it looks like:

- Used during gaps in the school year (e.g. post-SATS, transition weeks, end of school year).
- Multiple workbook sessions per day.

### Benefits:

- Rapid progress over short bursts.
- Ideal for closing gaps before key transitions.
- Motivating and engaging for pupils.

## Notes





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