



## **Call for Evidence**

**Developing a new national reading strategy in England for the  
'Read On, Get On' campaign to get every child  
reading well by the age of 11**

**Response Form**

**Closing date for responses: 15 June 2015**



## **About the Read On. Get On campaign**

Read On. Get On. is a national campaign to get every child in the UK reading well by the age of 11. At the moment far too many children are leaving primary school without this key skill – including, in England, one in three of our poorest children. Our mission is to change this for good so that all our children start secondary school as confident readers. Further information about the campaign is available at <http://www.readongeton.org.uk/>

## **About the national reading strategy (England)**

On behalf of the ROGO coalition in England, the RSA (Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce) has been commissioned to develop a national reading strategy for England. This work will provide analysis of the problem, identify key objectives and set out the strategic action needed over the next decade to achieve the following target goals for 2020 and 2025:

1. All children achieve good early language development by age five by 2020
2. Every child is able to read well by the age of 11 by 2025, with good progress made so that we are at least halfway towards this goal by 2020

## **Call for Evidence**

As part of the process of developing the national strategy, we invite submissions based on the questions below from all individuals and organisations with an interest in promoting children's reading and early language development. Your contributions will help us to identify key issues and strategic priorities for action, to help achieve the 2020 and 2025 target goals.

## **Submitting any additional information or evidence**

Beyond the answers given here, we would be pleased to receive any additional information or evidence that is relevant for the strategy. Do get in touch via the contact details below for a brief discussion about what material would be most useful and relevant.



## Respondent Details

Personal information will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties or used except for the purposes of the national strategy. We may refer to your response in our strategy reports or may publish extracts from it. All responses will be anonymised unless you consent to being identified.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response anonymous:		<input type="checkbox"/>
Name:	Andrew Lambirth	
Please tell us your current occupation (if applicable):	Professor of Education/ President Elect of UKLA	
Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Name of organisation (if applicable):	United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA)	
Address:	United Kingdom Literacy Association c/o University of Leicester University Road Leicester LE1 7RH Tel: 0116 2231664	
Postcode:	Fax: 0116 2231665	

## Key Questions:

**1. In your view, how can parents and families best be supported (and support each other) to help their 0-5 year old children learn to listen, speak and communicate clearly and confidently?**

Research (Twist et al., 2004; Allington et al., 2010) has consistently shown the detrimental effects of poverty on the children's development in and outside of school. It is the responsibility of governments to ensure child poverty is eradicated. Unfortunately, current austerity measures are creating an even greater danger of poverty continuing to be present for the foreseeable future. This needs to be addressed if families are to be supported to help their children's language and literacy development.

Over the last few years funding for Sure Start and children's centres has been reduced (4Children 2014). This has resulted in fewer opportunities for parents to access support. Centres like these provide crucial levels of appropriate literacy and language support for families with the attendant threat to families' ability to support their children's speech, language and



communication development.

Library funding has also been cut over recent years. Libraries are essential for supporting 0-5 year olds' development in reading. It is vital that library facilities are improved. Extra funding is required to offer access to modern library facilities in all areas of the UK.

There needs to be an integrated and coherent approach to children's services. Schools and nursery settings, if provided with adequate funding and resources, are well placed to invite parents to participate in their literacy life. Through literacy clubs and workshops for parents they can enhance their literacy skills,, give them confidence in their own abilities to support their children and offer guidance on ways to engage their children in literacy practices that will support schooling.

Since digital literacy is an essential component of literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there needs to be a shift of attitude about the importance of home literacy practices, particularly in respect of digital literacies. Research (Cremin et al, 2014; Marsh, 2010) indicates the importance of acknowledging the role played by home literacy, cultural and language practices to the development of creativity and fluent and flexible language and literacy.

#### References

Allington, R., McGill-Franzen, A., Camilli, G., Williams, L., Graf, J., Zeig, J. Zmach, C. and Nowak, R. (2010) Addressing summer reading setback among economically disadvantaged elementary students. *Reading Psychology* 31, 5, pp. 411– 427

Cremin , Teresa ; Mottram , Marilyn; Collins , Fiona M.; Powell, Sacha and Drury, Rose (2015). *Researching Literacy Lives: Building Communities between Home and School*. Abingdon: Routledge.

4Children (2014) [http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/oct/12/sure-start-childrens-centres-face-worst-year-of-budget-cuts?CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/oct/12/sure-start-childrens-centres-face-worst-year-of-budget-cuts?CMP=tw_t_gu)

Marsh, J. (2010) *Childhood, culture and creativity: A literature review*. Newcastle: Creativity, Culture and Education. <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/childhood-culture-and-creativity-a-literature-review>

Twist, L., Gnaldi, M., Schagen, I and Morrison, J. (2004) Good readers but at a cost? Attitudes to reading in England, *Journal of Research in Reading* 27(4) pp 387-400



## Key Questions (continued):

**2. What steps need to be taken to build capacity for everyone who works with very young children and their families (e.g. health visitors, nurseries, child care providers, speech and language therapists etc.) to make sure that every child has good early language development by the time they start school?**

One of the key steps here is to establish a combination of graduate/ qualified staff in Early years settings so that every nursery in England should be led by an Early Years graduate and other staff should have intermediate qualifications in children's speech, language and communication development.

Health visitors should also be trained to develop an increased capacity to assess children's language development .

In addition, greater efforts should be made to integrate all services for children and their families.

**3. What are the main issues and barriers that need to be overcome to ensure every child is able to read accurately, fluently and with enjoyment by the end of primary school?**

The main barriers include:

1. *The current reductive literacy curriculum (and Ofsted requirements in respect of synthetic phonics).* Barriers are constructed for children's learning when only one method for teaching early reading is recommended to teachers and parents. Whilst of course a secure grasp of phonics is (and has been for many decades) a central aim of early reading instruction, the view of teaching reading espoused by DfE and enshrined in the National Curriculum for English, which prioritises one single strategy for early reading, flies in the face of substantial research about how best to develop children as readers, conducted both in the UK and internationally (Medwell et al. 1998; Pressley et al., 2001; Taylor and Pearson, 2002;) Such evidence implies that a National Curriculum should offer a broad and rich entitlement, responding to both national and local need (Alexander, 2010). FPhonics must be part of most children's experience of the teaching of reading, but too much focus on this route to word identification and neglect of other reading strategies can have detrimental effects on the development of children's comprehension skills (Pearson et al., 2010). Equating decoding with reading is not only completely at odds with research and observation about effective reading instruction but is also highly likely to produce children who do not wish to read for pleasure. The low standing of English children in the PIRLS survey (Mullis et al., 2012) in terms of reading enjoyment is a serious cause for concern.
2. *The establishment of the phonics check for 6 year-olds, which distorts reading teaching.* Recent research into the efficacy of the check as a measure of reading capability (Duff et al, 2015) concludes that rather than spending money on tests like this, 'resources might be better focused on training and supporting teachers in the ongoing monitoring of phonics'

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(ibid. p.109). There needs to be reduction in the amount of high stakes testing which distorts the teaching of reading, replacing it with rich formative and summative literacy assessment. Recognition needs to be given that the problems in learning to read do not always reside in the individual child. Policy needs to reflect the perspective that social, economic, cultural and environmental factors also play a part in a child's literacy development (Rasool 2009).

Alexander, R. (2010) *Children, their World, their Education* Abingdon: Routledge.

Brown, G.D.A. and Deavers, R.P. (1999) Units of analysis in non-word reading: evidence from children and adults. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 73, pp. 208-242

Duff, F.J., Mengoni, S.E., Bailey, A.M. and Snowling, M.J. (2015) Validity and sensitivity of the phonics screening check: implications for practice, *Journal of Research in Reading*, 38(2) pp. 109-123.

Goswami, U. (2010) A psycholinguistic grain size view of reading acquisition across languages In N. Brunswick, S. McDougall & P. Mornay-Davies (Eds). *The Role of Orthographies in Reading and Spelling*. Hove: Psychology Press.

Medwell, J., Fox, R., Poulson, L. and Wray, D. (1998) *Effective Teachers of Literacy*. Exeter: The Teacher Training Agency

Mullis, I., Martin, M., Foy, P. and Drucker, K. (2012), *IEA's Progress in International Reading*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College  
[http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/downloads/P11\\_IR\\_FullBook.pdf](http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/downloads/P11_IR_FullBook.pdf)

Pearson P. David and Hiebert, Elfrieda H. (2010). National Reports in Literacy, Building a Scientific Base for Practice and Policy *Educational Researcher* 39(4), pp286-294

Pressley, M., Wharton-McDonald, R., Allington, R., Block, C.C., Morrow, L., Tracey, D., Baker, K., Brooks, G., Cronin, J., Nelson, E. and Woo, D. (2001) A study of effective first grade literacy instruction. *Scientific Studies of Reading* 5, 1, 35-58.

Rasool, N. (2009) 'Literacy in search of a Paradigm' in J. Solar, F. Fletcher Campbell, G. Reid (eds.) *Understanding Difficulties in Literacy Development: Issues and Concepts* London: Sage.

Taylor, B.M. and Pearson, P.D. (2002) (Eds.) *Teaching Reading: Effective schools, accomplished teachers*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Torgerson, C., Brooks, G. and Hall, J. (2006) *A Systematic Review of the Research Literature on the Use of Phonics in the Teaching of Reading and Spelling*. London: DfES, Research Report.



## Key Questions (continued):

### 4. How can parents best be supported (and support each other) to help their children with reading?

We would broaden this question to include the role of other family members as suggested by research (Cremin et al., 2014, 2015; Gregory, 2005). There are significant family and community resources available for support, but many current practices neither acknowledge nor build on these. Deficit models of homes and families need to be challenged and there needs to be acknowledgement that children's home cultural literacy experiences can offer a rich foundation for later speech, language and communication development (Cremin et al., 2015).

Research (Hannon et al., 2005; Hannon, 1995) has consistently shown the positive effects of parental involvement in the teaching of early literacy indicating four main ways with which parents can help their children's reading development: 1. Opportunities for children to engage in literacy activities, supplying the resources for drawing and writing and play. 2. Recognition of children's development and to celebrate milestones and celebrating children's drawing, writing, reading and talk achievements. 3. Interaction between parents and children, talking about literacy and language. 4. Parents as models, by being users of literacy. However, parents and other family members cannot necessarily be expected to know how best to support their children's reading without resources. Encouraging these need not be costly, but a matter of developing stronger links between settings or schools and community groups and leaders, particularly in areas of poverty.

Communities need to be reached by agencies connected to schools and Higher Education Institutions. Developing programmes that invite families to be involved in speech, language and literacy activities in communities and around schools carries financial implications, but the benefits would amply justify the expense.

Cremin, Teresa ; Mottram, Marilyn; Collins, Fiona M.; Powell, Sacha and Drury, Rose (2015). *Researching Literacy Lives: Building Communities between Home and School*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Cremin, Teresa ; Mottram, Marilyn; Collins, Fiona; Powell, Sacha and Safford, Kimberly (2014). *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure*. London: Routledge.

Gregory, E (2004) *Many Pathways to Literacy: Young Children Learning with Siblings: Grandparents, Peers and Communities*. London: Routledge. (co-editors: S. Long and D. Volk)

Hannon, P. (1995) *Literacy, home and School: research and practice in teaching literacy with parents* London: Falmer Press.

Hannon, P. Nutbrown, C. and Morgan, A. (2005) *Early Literacy Work with Families: Policy, Practice and Research* London: Sage.

### 5. How can all partners (including libraries, local businesses etc.) in the community best be involved to support and encourage children with early language and reading?

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Please see above section 1



## Key Questions (continued):

**6. What do you think is the most important priority for ensuring that every child achieves good early language development by age 5 by 2020, and why?**

1. There needs to be clear definition of what 'good' early language actually is. This will help schools build on home language skills and experiences. For example, many children in the UK are multilingual. This needs to be taken into account by schools to ensure this rich source of language experiences can be built upon by a pedagogy which celebrates these language achievements.
2. It is the responsibility of governments to overcome poverty and inequalities in society which we know are major contributory causes of poor literacy levels.
3. A fully integrated support and education service needs to be provided that involves outreach facilities to reach all in the community. Many new parents require the support of outside agencies to help them support their children's literacy development.
4. School literacy curricula must demonstrate a commitment to prioritising the making of meaning as children learn to read and write.
5. Re-instate talk as a major component of the NC and increase the emphasis on spoken language as the key aspect that underpins the development of reading development, pleasure and comprehension.
6. There needs to be reduction in the amount of high stakes testing which distorts the teaching of reading, replacing it with rich literacy assessment.
7. A fully trained and professional teaching workforce who have learned to teach literacy through a combination of research evidence and school based education and training, and who are capable of applying this professional knowledge to provide individually tailored teaching and support. Such a work force needs a very strong knowledge of children's literature and other texts and a wide conception for reading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
8. Children need access to a rich range of high quality literature which reflects this commitment to meaning-making and the pleasure of engaging in literacy and language activities.
9. A renewed emphasis on creativity and the role of the imagination in language and literacy development.
10. Efforts to engage more families with local library facilities.
11. Establishing school libraries in all schools and settings as there is a strong relationship between reading attainment and school library use (OECD, 2010; Clark, 2010; Francis et al., 2010).

Clark, C. and Foster, A. (2005). *Children's and Young People's Reading Habits and Preferences*. London: National Literacy Trust (online).  
[http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt\\_research/273\\_childrens\\_and\\_young\\_peoples\\_reading\\_habits\\_and\\_preferences\\_the\\_who\\_what\\_why\\_where\\_and\\_when](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/273_childrens_and_young_peoples_reading_habits_and_preferences_the_who_what_why_where_and_when)

Francis, B.H., Lance, K. C., Lietzau, Z. (2010). *School Librarians Continue to Help Students Achieve*



Standards: *The third Colorado study (2010)*. (Closer Look Report). Denver, CO: Colorado State Library, Library Research Service.

OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: Learning to Learn – Student engagement, strategies and practices (Volume III)* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264083943-en>

**7. What do you think is the most important priority for ensuring that every child reads well by age 11 by 2025, and why?**

A fully trained and professional teaching workforce who have learned to teach literacy through a combination of research evidence and school based education and training, and who are capable of applying this professional knowledge to provide individually tailored teaching and support. Such a workforce needs a very strong knowledge of children’s literature and other texts and a wide conception for reading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

See above, responses to question 7 plus:

The establishment of reading pedagogy that emphasises meaning and includes broader conceptions of what reading and being a reader means in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Teachers who are readers and communicate their love of reading (Cremin et al., 2008) and who can make connections between children’s home and school reading experiences, not only privileging reading that goes on in school.

Professional development for teachers about the role of drama, film, digital technologies in developing reading comprehension (Bearne and Bazalgette, 2010).

Greater links between schools and agencies that support reading, for example, the Impact Report of The Reading Agency’s Summer Reading Challenge (Kennedy and Bearne, 2009) indicated that ‘The Summer Reading Challenge thrives best where there are strong links between schools, teachers, librarians and children’s and youth services.’

Emphasis on talking about reading with teachers and other adults. In the Summer Reading Challenge Impact Report, Kennedy and Bearne noted: ‘All the children in the sample indicated their enjoyment of talking about reading with friends, family and teachers and... commented on valuing opportunities to talk about reading with librarians.’

Cremin, T., Mottram, M. Bearne, E. and Goodwin, P. (2008) Exploring Teachers’ Knowledge of Literature, *Cambridge Journal of Education* 38(4) pp. 449-464

Bearne, E. and Bazalgette, C. (eds) (2010) *Beyond Words*. Leicester: United Kingdom Literacy Association.

Kennedy, R. and Bearne, E. (2009) *Summer Reading Challenge 2009 Impact Research Report*. [readingagency.org.uk/.../Final\\_SRC\\_Impact\\_research\\_report\\_Dec\\_09%2](http://readingagency.org.uk/.../Final_SRC_Impact_research_report_Dec_09%2)



**Key Questions (continued):**

**8. Is there anything else you would like to add that hasn't been covered above?**

**Thank you very much for taking the time to let us have your views.**

Completed responses should be submitted by **15 June 2015**.

Send by e-mail to: [Thomas.Hauschildt@rsa.org.uk](mailto:Thomas.Hauschildt@rsa.org.uk)

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Send by post to: Thomas Hauschildt, The RSA, 8 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6EZ