

Literacy resources in Wales

An evidence review of literacy
support, reading for pleasure
and access to resources





This research was commissioned by Adnodd to help inform future commissioning decisions. Its purpose is to examine the current landscape of literacy resources across Wales and to explore the evidence around which approaches are most effective in supporting the development of literacy skills.

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Executive Summary

This research was commissioned by Adnodd to help inform future commissioning decisions. Its purpose is to examine the current landscape of literacy resources across Wales and to explore the evidence around which approaches are most effective in supporting the development of literacy skills.

By examining what is currently available and used in Wales, this research has identified the gaps and reviewed the available evidence on what works best.

As well as reviewing the evidence, the research also captured the experiences of those directly involved in literacy initiatives. Through interviews with learners, practitioners, and parents and carers, the research explored how literacy initiatives are experienced in practice and the conditions that support successful engagement with reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Together, these provide us with both an evidence-based and user-centred understanding of literacy resources in Wales. By literacy resources, we mean the materials, tools, guidance, interventions, programmes and supporting activities that enable practitioners to develop learners' literacy outcomes.

The research highlights that literacy extends beyond the development of technical skills alone. Alongside reading accuracy, comprehension, oracy and writing, successful literacy outcomes also include confidence, motivation and equitable access to relevant materials in Welsh, English and bilingual formats. These elements demonstrate that literacy skills, literacy engagement and wider educational and well-being outcomes are intrinsically linked.

One of the strongest findings from the research is that the most effective approaches combine the development of core literacy skills with sustained support for reading for pleasure. Rather than treating these as separate priorities, the evidence suggests that progress in one area can strengthen and sustain progress in the other.

The research highlights that, to achieve the best outcomes, literacy initiatives should take into account the wider conditions that enable engagement with programmes. Learners are more likely to develop strong literacy skills when reading, writing, and speaking are meaningful, enjoyable and consistently supported over time. Positive literacy outcomes are most likely where support begins early and is maintained through sustained engagement, including opportunities for follow-up and ongoing reinforcement. A whole-school approach can help create the conditions for learners to develop the skills, confidence and enjoyment needed to thrive as readers, while supporting literacy across all areas of learning.

This research found that there are limitations within the current evidence base. Many evaluations are carried out by the organisations involved in the design or delivery of programmes, and authorship was not always fully independent. There is also relatively limited evidence specific to Wales, with much of the available literature drawn from UK-wide or international contexts.

Access to literacy resources is influenced by a range of factors, including cost, availability, language, age-appropriateness, local provision, school budgets and practitioner awareness.



Of the 51 programmes identified by stakeholders, **34** required payment to access.

One notable gap in provision relates to learners in secondary schools. While many programmes targeted younger learners, only 2% were aimed at secondary-age readers.

Welsh-language, bilingual and multilingual literacy are important considerations in ensuring equitable access to reading. Respondents to this research pointed towards a number of challenges, including gaps in the availability of high-quality Welsh-medium books for teenagers, a limited range of genres in Welsh-language publications, and a lack of age-appropriate and dialect-sensitive resources. There are also challenges in relation to bilingual progression and the availability of resources for learners with additional learning needs. Collectively, these factors can influence learners' reading choices and contribute to a greater reliance on English-medium materials.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of recognising the many ways in which learners engage with reading, including through comics, subtitles, digital text, audiobooks, drama, song lyrics and music. Improving access to high-quality, engaging and inclusive materials was seen as an important part of supporting literacy for all learners.

The experiences of practitioners, learners, and parents and carers suggest that engagement with literacy is shaped by a range of interconnected factors. These include access to appropriate resources, confidence, time, language, awareness of available support, and the extent to which resources are relevant and easy to use in practice. Digital tools, for example, can support access and engagement, while also presenting challenges such as creating distractions away from reading. Positive experiences of libraries also play an important role in supporting literacy engagement, providing access to resources, opportunities for discovery, and welcoming spaces to read and learn.

Considerations for supporting literacy and reading engagement in Wales should balance the development of core literacy skills with the wider conditions that enable children and young people to engage with reading and writing in meaningful, sustained and enjoyable ways. This requires looking beyond individual resources to consider how learners access and experience literacy across different contexts. Resources need to be relevant, accessible, and available in Welsh and English, supported by practitioners and families, and connected across home, school and community settings. Equally important is building a stronger evidence base through evaluation, helping to understand what works for whom and in which contexts across Wales.

Together, the following actions can help ensure every child and young person in Wales has the support, access and motivation to become a confident, lifelong reader:

- Develop a coherent national approach to literacy and reading for pleasure
- Build a stronger evidence base on what works in Wales
- Equip practitioners with the knowledge and guidance needed to support literacy and reading for pleasure effectively
- Improve access to high-quality, inclusive resources
- Address gaps in Welsh-language and bilingual provision
- Improve provision for secondary-age learners
- Strengthen family and community involvement in literacy



To address these issues, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Adnodd should work with the Welsh Government and other partners to establish a more coordinated national approach for literacy and reading for pleasure, reducing fragmentation and improving clarity for practitioners and families.
2. Evaluation requirements should be embedded in the design and commissioning of literacy programmes and resources.
3. Adnodd should consider working with Dysgu and other partners to provide clear, user-friendly guidance for practitioners on literacy and reading for pleasure approaches.
4. The commissioning of high-quality, accessible and adaptable literacy resources that are free or low cost for schools and families should be prioritised. These resources should reflect diverse identities, interests and experiences, and include a variety of formats.
5. The commissioning of Welsh-language and bilingual resources designed specifically for Welsh contexts should be prioritised.
6. Adnodd should consider commissioning and procuring resources and initiatives to support the literacy development of secondary-age learners.
7. Adnodd should work with the Welsh Government and other partners to strengthen support for parents and carers and encourage literacy engagement beyond the classroom.

1. Introduction

The research was designed to strengthen understanding of the current landscape of literacy resources used by learners and practitioners¹ in Wales.

The study examined the evidence on effective literacy interventions and programmes, and the ways in which children and young people, practitioners, and parents and carers engage with literacy initiatives in practice.

The research sits within Adnodd's wider role in supporting high-quality, adaptable and user-friendly educational resources in Welsh and English. In the context of literacy, this includes resources that support the Curriculum for Wales, respond to different learner needs and help create the conditions for children and young people to develop as confident, motivated and capable readers, writers and communicators.

The study focused on two connected areas:

Examining existing evidence on literacy resources, interventions and programmes, including approaches aimed at improving literacy outcomes across different ages and stages. This included early years provision, school-based literacy support, reading for pleasure initiatives, and evidence from international bilingual and multilingual contexts that may offer useful learning for Wales.

Exploring user experiences of literacy initiatives in practice. This included how practitioners, learners, parents and carers, and wider stakeholders engage with programmes that support literacy and reading for pleasure. It also examined the barriers and enablers that affect participation.

The research adopted a broad understanding of literacy. Reading and writing attainment remain central, but the findings also point to the importance of confidence, motivation, enjoyment, access to resources, language context and the support available through schools, families and communities.

¹ – Literacy resources are understood as the materials, tools, guidance, interventions, programmes and supporting activities that enable practitioners to develop learners' literacy outcomes in Welsh and/or English. This includes resources that support reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary development, comprehension, communication and engagement with language across the curriculum, as well as learner enjoyment, motivation, access, and support. Literacy resources may be designed for universal classroom use, targeted intervention, independent learning, family engagement or practitioner professional learning, and may be provided in print, digital, bilingual or multimodal formats.

2. Literacy outcomes

For the purposes of this research, literacy outcomes include changes in children and young people's skills, behaviours, confidence, motivation, access to resources and engagement with literacy.

In addition to attainment in reading and writing, literacy development is shaped by whether learners want to engage with literacy, whether they have access to appropriate materials, and whether they are supported by the adults and settings around them.

Literacy outcomes can be grouped into three broad categories:

Core outcomes relate to the skills and capabilities associated with literacy development. These include reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, oracy, writing, spelling, and the ability to engage with increasingly complex texts across the curriculum. These outcomes remain essential, particularly where learners need structured teaching, targeted support or help to access subject-specific language and texts.

Engagement and behaviour outcomes relate to whether children and young people want to engage with literacy and whether they develop positive and sustained literacy habits. These include reading for pleasure, motivation, reading frequency, reading routines, confidence, book ownership, and positive attitudes towards reading, writing and communication. Evidence suggests that enjoyment, choice and personal relevance can support engagement, and that engagement can in turn support wider literacy development.

Equity outcomes relate to the wider conditions that shape whether learners can access and benefit from literacy opportunities. These include access to appropriate books and resources; the availability of resources in Welsh and English; the extent to which resources reflect learners' identities, interests and experiences; and whether they are accessible to learners with additional learning needs or different language backgrounds. These outcomes matter because literacy is not developed in isolation. It is shaped by home circumstances, school culture, local provision, language context, cost, practitioner capacity and the availability of sustained support.

Skills development and reading enjoyment should be understood as connected rather than separate aims. Learners may need structured support with decoding, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, writing or oracy, but they also need confidence, access to appropriate materials and opportunities to engage meaningfully with literacy. This relationship between skills, motivation and engagement is considered further in the next section.

2.1 The focus of literacy support changes across age phases

In the early years, literacy support is closely linked to the development of spoken language, communication and positive engagement with books and stories. In primary education, structured literacy teaching becomes more prominent, while access to appealing books and family support remain important. In secondary education, literacy becomes increasingly connected to subject learning, disciplinary language, independent reading and critical engagement with texts.



This has implications for how resources are described and evaluated. Some resources may be designed primarily to strengthen core literacy skills. Others may focus on confidence, access, reading habits, family engagement or reading for pleasure. Many resources are likely to support several aims and therefore should be evaluated against more than one outcome category.

3. What the evidence tells us about effective literacy support

The evidence review identifies several principles associated with effective literacy support. These include starting early, sustaining support over time, combining access to books with guidance, keeping skills development and reading enjoyment connected, and treating literacy as a responsibility across the curriculum.

This section focuses on the evidence review rather than on user experience findings. The barriers, enablers and suggested improvements identified by practitioners, learners, parents and carers, and wider stakeholders are considered later.

3.1 Starting early and sustaining support

Early language and literacy experiences are important foundations for later reading, writing and communication. Positive interactions with stories, books, songs, rhymes and conversation help children develop vocabulary, understanding and confidence with language. These activities support early language development and help establish reading as part of everyday life.

The evidence review found that best practice in early years provision highlights the importance of supporting parents and carers as well as providing books. Book provision alone is likely to be less effective than programmes that also help parents and carers use books confidently with children. This includes guidance on sharing books, talking about stories, responding to children's interests and making reading part of regular routines.

Sustained support is also important. Evidence from book-gifting and family literacy programmes suggests that repeated contact, follow-up and adult guidance are more likely to support engagement than one-off provision alone. This is particularly relevant where families face barriers related to time, confidence, cost, access to resources or limited local provision, such as libraries.

3.2 Combining access to books with guidance and encouragement

Access to books and other literacy resources provides an important foundation for engagement, but as noted above, evidence suggests that access alone is not sufficient. Programmes appear to be more effective when resources are combined with encouragement, guidance, shared activities or support from trusted adults.

This applies across home, school and community settings. Parents and carers may benefit from practical guidance on how to support reading effectively, without requiring specialist knowledge or training. Practitioners need resources that are easy to use and adaptable for different learners. Libraries, community settings and other local routes – for example sports and arts clubs – can also provide opportunities for children and young people to encounter books and reading beyond the classroom.

Evidence from book-gifting programmes also highlights the importance of having a clear rationale for how provision is expected to support outcomes. Evaluations of some programmes found limited impact where book provision was not accompanied by sufficient support for the adults involved or underpinned by a clear theory of change.

3.3 Bringing together skills development and reading enjoyment

Structured teaching of literacy skills, such as phonics, remains central. Learners need support to develop reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, writing, spelling, speaking and listening. Targeted support is also important for learners who are struggling or who need additional help to engage with literacy.

At the same time, the evidence review found that reading for pleasure, motivation and engagement are linked with positive literacy outcomes. Skills development and reading enjoyment should therefore not be treated as separate or competing aims. Enjoyment can encourage wider engagement with literacy, while core literacy skills can enable learners to access texts with greater confidence.

This balance is important across age groups. In the early years, the emphasis is on language development, shared reading and routines. In primary education, structured teaching becomes more prominent, but access to books and enjoyment remain important. In secondary education, learners need support to develop more complex and subject-specific literacy skills, while continuing to have opportunities to read in ways that feel relevant and meaningful.

3.4 Supporting literacy across the curriculum

In secondary settings, literacy becomes increasingly connected to subject learning. Learners need to read, write, speak and listen in different ways across different areas of learning and experience, including using subject-specific vocabulary and forms of explanation, interpretation and argument.

Findings from the evidence review and the views of stakeholders identified the importance of whole-school and cross-curricular approaches. Literacy should not be confined to English and Welsh lessons or to the Language, Literacy and Communication area of the curriculum. Schools need to consider how reading, writing, speaking and listening are supported across subjects, and how reading engagement can be maintained alongside curriculum demands.

Reading for pleasure also benefits from a wider school culture in which reading is visible and valued. Evidence from the review identifies school leadership, practitioner confidence, access to resources and professional learning as factors that can support this. These issues are considered in more detail in the later sections of this report, which focus on barriers, enablers and areas for improvement.

4. Access, equity and the resource landscape in Wales

Access to literacy resources is shaped by more than the existence of materials. The research identified cost, availability, language, age-appropriateness, local provision, school budgets and practitioner awareness as factors affecting whether learners, practitioners and parents and carers can engage with literacy resources and initiatives.

4.1 The programme landscape

The mapping exercise identified 51 unique programmes cited by stakeholders (see Appendix A). These do not represent the full landscape of literacy interventions or reading for pleasure initiatives in Wales, but they provide insight into the activity known to those who contributed to the research.



Of the initiatives cited by stakeholders, only **18** were explicitly associated with promoting reading for pleasure, while **33** focused solely on literacy skills intervention.

This raises questions about whether sufficient attention is being given to supporting reading engagement alongside literacy skills development.

Analysis of the mapping shows that provision was concentrated in the pre-school and primary phases. Programmes aimed at secondary school-aged learners represented just 2% of those identified, and stakeholders made no reference to programmes primarily targeted at learners aged 16 and over.

The mapping also found that the programmes identified by stakeholders were predominantly school-delivered and commercially developed. Of the 51 programmes identified, 36 were commercially produced, while 15 were government- or charity-led.

4.2 Cost and paid access

Cost was a significant feature of the programme landscape. The research found that 34 of the identified programmes were only available through paid access. Prices ranged considerably, from around £20 for a few worksheets or books, to £6,000+ for professional learning and teaching resources.

Paid access was identified as a potential equity issue. Programmes often require subscriptions, licences, books or training packages, which can affect whether schools and families are able to access them. This was particularly important in the context of limited school budgets and household cost pressures.

The research also noted that limited awareness of free or lower-cost provision may affect perceptions of availability. Where free resources exist but are not well known, practitioners and families may still experience provision as difficult to navigate.

4.3 Fragmentation and awareness

Stakeholders described the resource and programme landscape as complex, patchy, scattered or difficult to navigate. Schools were described as facing a “messy offer” in terms of the resources and programmes available to them, making it harder to identify which programmes support reading for pleasure and which focus primarily on skills development.

Practitioners also reported limited knowledge of where to find high-quality and representative books and reading materials. Awareness of reading for pleasure initiatives appeared to be lower than awareness of approaches focused on literacy pedagogy.

This fragmentation was also linked to challenges around evidence and evaluation. Stakeholders noted a lack of comparable evidence on what works, and some initiatives were described as short-term, ad hoc or overlapping with one another.

4.4 Age and access

Age was a clear factor in the programme landscape. As already noted, stakeholders identified much stronger provision for pre-school and primary-aged learners than for older learners. The research also records a perception among practitioners, parents and stakeholders that the availability of initiatives promoting reading for pleasure decreases with age.

This is significant because secondary-aged learners may still need support with reading engagement, access to appropriate materials and subject-specific literacy. The detail of the barriers and enablers facing learners is considered later, but the programme mapping indicates that older learners are less well represented within the current provision landscape.

4.5 Access as a cross-cutting issue

Access is therefore a cross-cutting issue across the resource landscape. It is affected by cost, awareness, language, age, local provision and the extent to which resources are available in formats and settings that practitioners, learners, and parents and carers can access and use.

The research points to the need to understand access at the level of the wider landscape, not only individual resources. This includes how programmes are funded, where they are delivered, who knows about them, and whether provision is visible and usable across home, school, library and community contexts. Stakeholders particularly highlighted concerns about access to libraries, given their role in providing free, local and equitable access to books and reading opportunities.

5. Welsh-language, bilingual and multilingual literacy development

Welsh-language, bilingual and multilingual literacy are central considerations in the Welsh literacy resource landscape. The research identified language as a factor affecting resource access, learner engagement, parent and carer support, and practitioner use.

5.1 Bilingualism as an asset

The evidence review frames bilingualism and multilingualism positively. It identified evidence that literacy development in one language can support wider language and learning outcomes where resources and approaches are designed intentionally. Rather than making literacy development more difficult, learning to read and write in more than one language can strengthen overall literacy development, with skills learned in one language supporting the other.

For Wales, this points to the importance of supporting Welsh and English literacy development in connected ways. It also highlights the need to recognise that some learners bring additional home languages into their literacy experiences.

5.2 Welsh-medium resources should be authentic and culturally meaningful

The research identified the need for Welsh-medium resources that feel authentic and culturally meaningful in their own right. Stakeholders raised concerns about resources that feel translated, overly formal, regionally mismatched or disconnected from learners' interests.

International examples were considered as part of the evidence review, but the research emphasises the importance of adaptation rather than adoption. Approaches from other bilingual or multilingual contexts may offer useful insights but need to be considered in relation to Wales' linguistic, cultural and educational context.

5.3 Key gaps in Welsh-language and bilingual provision

Stakeholders identified several gaps in Welsh-language and bilingual provision. These included gaps in the availability of high-quality Welsh-medium books for teenagers, the diversity of genres, dialect-sensitive resources, age-appropriate resources, bilingual sequencing, and resources for learners with additional learning needs.

The gap for older learners was particularly prominent. Stakeholders reported a lack of appealing Welsh-language books for teenagers, and some noted that learners may switch to English when suitable Welsh-language books are unavailable or unappealing.

The research also identified concerns about the range of genres available in Welsh-medium publications. Stakeholders referred to gaps in areas such as sport, science fiction and the arts. These points sit alongside wider findings on learner choice, interests and relevance.

5.4 Supporting Welsh, English and multilingual literacy development

Resources need to support progression in both Welsh and English. When learners are properly instructed in both languages, there are opportunities for them to transfer skills across languages, including vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, morphology, decoding, encoding, and reading strategies. Similarly, where learners and their families use other languages, there are opportunities for skills transfer.

Language also affects access to support. In Welsh-medium contexts, some parents and carers may not speak Welsh themselves, making it harder to support reading at home in Welsh. Similar issues were identified in English-medium contexts for parents and carers with English as an additional language, where resources or communication are not accessible in the languages they are most confident using.

5.5 Implications for resource development

The findings indicate that Welsh-language and bilingual provision should be considered from the outset of resource development. Key considerations include Welsh and English progression, cultural relevance, dialect, genre diversity, age-appropriateness, accessibility and suitability for learners with additional learning needs.

Resource development should also consider the language needs of parents and carers, ensuring that support materials and communications are accessible to families in ways that enable them to support literacy development effectively.



6. Barriers and enablers to engagement

A range of barriers and enablers affect engagement with literacy initiatives. These vary for practitioners, learners, and parents and carers, but several themes recur across groups.

Engagement is shaped by access to appropriate resources, confidence, time, language, awareness of available support, and the extent to which resources feel relevant and usable in practice.

6.1 Practitioners

Time and capacity were identified as major barriers to engagement with literacy initiatives. Practitioners may have limited time to search for resources, assess their quality, adapt materials, translate content, or tailor support to individual learners. Resources that require substantial adaptation can add to workload.

Awareness and confidence were also identified as barriers. Staff may have limited knowledge of where to find high-quality, representative and age-appropriate materials, particularly resources that support reading for pleasure rather than literacy skills alone. Some practitioners also reported that available resources were not always aligned with the Curriculum for Wales or were not suited to their school context.

Practitioners also highlighted a need for clearer evidence about what works, alongside professional learning to support literacy development beyond basic skills such as phonics, decoding, and vocabulary. Practitioners who have limited experience of reading for pleasure themselves may also lack confidence in recommending reading materials or in demonstrating positive reading habits.

Practitioners valued ready-made, adaptable materials that fit naturally into classroom routines and are available in both Welsh and English. Professional learning, practical guidance, evidence-informed approaches, and opportunities for knowledge sharing were seen as important enablers.

School-level support was another important factor. Leadership, budget, time, cover and access to training can all enable practitioner engagement. Practitioners also expressed a preference for resources and programmes that align with the Curriculum for Wales and wider literacy priorities, and that can be used across the curriculum rather than being limited to discrete literature or language lessons.

6.2 Learners

Learners described difficult language, unfamiliar vocabulary and more challenging books as barriers to engagement. Some reported losing interest in reading or giving up when they did not understand the text. Similarly, practitioners and stakeholders identified weak foundational skills, including decoding, comprehension and confidence, as barriers to engagement.

Reading at an appropriate level was particularly important. While progression to longer and more complex texts is necessary, parents, carers and practitioners noted that this can undermine engagement when learners find the transition overwhelming, overly difficult or disconnected from enjoyment and choice. Learners also identified support with difficult words, opportunities to read at their own pace, and help when needed as factors that make reading easier. Stakeholders similarly highlighted strong foundational literacy skills as an important enabler.



Learners emphasised the importance of having access to books that matched their interests. Uninteresting books were identified as a barrier, while choice was consistently described as an important enabler. Learners valued selecting books in libraries, reading blurbs, using book fairs, and following recommendations from trusted family members, friends and teachers.

Practitioners and stakeholders echoed these views, highlighting the importance of learner choice, representation, and personal interests in supporting engagement. They also identified a lack of engaging, age-appropriate, and up-to-date materials, particularly for older learners and within Welsh-language provision, as a barrier to reading engagement.

Some stakeholders also questioned whether existing initiatives are always successful in reaching learners who are least engaged with reading. Several suggested that opportunities may be more likely to attract children and young people who have an existing interest in books and reading.

The context in which reading takes place also influenced engagement. Some learners preferred reading independently because they felt less judged, while others valued support when they encountered difficulties. Learners described reading aloud in class as uncomfortable when they felt rushed, judged or unable to follow the story.

Family support was viewed positively by many learners, particularly where reading together felt more comfortable than reading aloud in class. Parents, carers, practitioners and stakeholders similarly highlighted encouragement, adult role-modelling, and shared reading activities as important enablers of engagement.

Access to resources was identified as an important factor influencing engagement. Although the learner engagement activities did not explore deprivation or additional learning needs in detail, practitioners and stakeholders identified cost, limited access to books at home, and the lack of tailored resources as barriers.

Language also emerged as an important consideration. One learner noted that reading helped them practise English, while stakeholders highlighted English as an additional language, confidence in Welsh, and access to suitable Welsh-language books as factors that can affect engagement.

Learners also emphasised the importance of access to books and comfortable reading spaces, while stakeholders highlighted regular access to physical books, libraries, and alternative teaching approaches as supporting engagement.

Learners highlighted a range of distractions that could affect reading, including apps, games, pop-ups, nearby conversations, and tiredness. Practitioners and parents similarly pointed to screen time, extracurricular activities, and busy home routines as competing demands on reading.

Views on digital reading were mixed. Some learners valued apps, Kindles, audiobooks, comics, pictures, and interactive activities as ways of supporting their engagement with reading. Practitioners and parents also viewed technology, social media, games, and apps as potential enablers when used to broaden opportunities for reading engagement.

6.3 Parents and carers

Time and competing priorities were common challenges for parents and carers, including work commitments, wider household pressures, fatigue and stress. Even where parents and carers valued reading, these pressures could make it difficult to establish regular reading routines.

Confidence was another barrier. Parents' and carers' own literacy confidence and previous experiences of education can affect engagement. Some parents and carers were unsure how to support their child's reading or were concerned about doing the wrong thing. Practitioners also reported that some parents and carers did not always recognise their own role in supporting literacy and reading.

Understanding of reading was also relevant. Some parents and carers focused on formal reading or reading aloud, while a wider range of activities that can support literacy engagement, including discussing pictures, asking questions, building vocabulary, and engaging in digital or informal reading were not always recognised as part of reading for pleasure.

As noted above, language could also affect parent and carer engagement. However, greater understanding of the linguistic nuances of literacy development in Wales may support stronger engagement, increased confidence, and more positive home-school relationships. Clear, practical and non-judgemental guidance, access to books, resources that can be used at home, and low-pressure incentives such as passports, stamps and certificates were all seen as enablers.

Physical books sent home, reading folders, story sacks, and book-related activities were also thought to contribute to literacy engagement. Support that helped parents and carers understand that everyday activities can strengthen literacy was also considered useful.

Libraries and community spaces were identified as part of the wider reading ecosystem. Positive previous experiences of libraries or community-based reading activities were associated with greater engagement, and trusted local routes were seen as important for reaching families beyond school.

6.4 Factors affecting engagement

The barriers and enablers identified by practitioners, learners, and parents and carers suggest that engagement with literacy and reading for pleasure is shaped by five interconnected factors. Together, these themes provide a useful framework for understanding how engagement is supported or constrained across home, school and community settings. They also help explain why improving a single aspect of provision is unlikely to be sufficient on its own, as engagement is influenced by the interaction between motivation, access, support and wider contextual factors.

- Motivation relates to the extent to which reading feels enjoyable, meaningful and relevant. This includes access to texts that reflect learners' identities, interests, languages and experiences, as well as opportunities to exercise choice in what, when and how they read.
- Extrinsic access refers to the availability of appropriate reading materials and opportunities to engage with them. Access was influenced by factors including the availability of books at home and school, library provision, cost, and the availability of Welsh-language, bilingual, digital and multimodal resources.
- Intrinsic access concerns whether learners are able to engage successfully with reading once materials are available. Reading confidence, comprehension, vocabulary, decoding skills, text suitability and accessibility all influenced whether reading felt achievable and enjoyable.
- Social and relational support reflects the role of practitioners, parents and carers, peers, libraries and wider communities in encouraging reading. Encouragement, role-modelling, shared reading experiences, recommendations, practical support and a positive culture of reading were identified as important influences on engagement.
- Environment and conditions relate to the practical circumstances that enable or constrain reading. Time, routines, reading spaces, competing activities and wider household or community conditions all affected opportunities to engage with literacy.

7. Areas for improvement in promoting reading for pleasure

Stakeholders identified several ways in which the promotion of reading for pleasure could be strengthened. These suggestions extended beyond dedicated schemes or programmes and included wider issues relating to access to books, libraries, marketing, school culture, partnership working, practitioner support and evaluation.

7.1 Improve access to high-quality and appealing books

The most cited area for improvement was access to good-quality books covering a range of genres, age profiles and reading levels. Practitioners and other stakeholders highlighted the importance of investment in school and public libraries, including regular refreshes of available books so that collections reflect a wider range of interests and abilities.

Specific suggestions included illustrated books that appeal to teenagers, shorter books for older learners, more diverse and representative books, and dialect-sensitive, accessible Welsh-language books. Stakeholders also identified the importance of books in which learners can see themselves reflected.

Where schools do not have libraries, some stakeholders recommended prioritising dedicated spaces for books and reading in all schools. This was linked to concerns that books may be less visible to children and young people where they are kept in cupboards or replaced by tablets.

7.2 Broaden how reading for pleasure is understood

Stakeholders called for a broader definition of reading. There were calls to recognise comics, subtitles, digital text, audiobooks, drama, music, event programmes and multimodal literacy as valid and meaningful forms of reading that children and young people already engage with by choice.

This was linked to inclusivity and to the need to challenge perceptions of books as uncool, inaccessible or relevant only to school. However, the role of digital formats should be handled carefully. There were concerns that digital platforms may displace investment in physical books, alongside views that traditional book-based approaches may not reflect how children and young people read today.

7.3 Move beyond one-off activities

There were also concerns about the short-term nature of initiatives that run for a limited period and then lose momentum. As an example, World Book Day was identified as having a role in promoting reading for pleasure, but many stakeholders considered it a one-off event with limited lasting impact, which they attributed to the emphasis on dressing up as characters rather than on the books themselves.

This suggests that improvement activity should give attention to continuity, follow-up and longer-term engagement, rather than relying only on short campaigns or events.

7.4 Strengthen whole-school reading culture and practitioner support

Stakeholders identified strong school leadership as important to embedding reading for pleasure within schools' vision and daily practice. Practitioners and stakeholders also identified the need for easy-to-use resources, including materials that can be picked up quickly and banks of ideas linked to texts.

Professional learning and guidance for practitioners were also highlighted. There is a need to support practitioners in motivating and inspiring reading for pleasure, using resources effectively, and aligning literacy activity with the Curriculum for Wales.

7.5 Develop resources that reflect different contexts and learner needs

Stakeholders called for resources in a variety of formats, including both print and digital, aligned with the Curriculum for Wales. Resources need to reflect different school contexts, including Welsh-medium, English-medium and multilingual settings, as well as schools in areas of higher deprivation.

Resources for learners with additional learning needs were also identified as an area for improvement. Practitioners asked for resources suited to different needs and clearer differentiation between them. The findings also point to the need for resources that are suitable for older learners, particularly where reading level, maturity, interests and confidence do not align neatly.

7.6 Strengthen partnership working and evaluation

Partnership working was identified as another area for improvement. Stakeholders referred to the role of libraries, schools, authors, arts organisations, and other partners in supporting reading for pleasure. Some also emphasised the need to avoid education jargon that may exclude arts organisations and writers, and to provide clearer pathways for non-education organisations.

Stakeholders also highlighted the need for stronger evaluation. They expressed concerns that existing initiatives are often not evaluated sufficiently, that enjoyment of reading is difficult to measure, and that initiatives often operate alongside one another, making attribution difficult. Evaluation therefore needs to be built more clearly into future commissioning.

8. Evidence, evaluation and future commissioning

The research provides a useful basis for future commissioning, but important limitations remain within the available evidence base. Information exists on literacy interventions, reading development, reading for pleasure, bilingual literacy and access to resources, but the quality, independence and relevance of this data vary.

Some evaluations were conducted or commissioned by organisations involved in the design or delivery of programmes. This represents an important limitation when interpreting evidence on impact. There is also relatively limited evidence specific to Wales, with some findings drawn from wider UK or international contexts. While these findings can inform future thinking, they need to be considered in relation to Wales' linguistic, cultural and educational context.

Stakeholders also identified gaps in evidence relating to reading for pleasure. They noted that much of the available evidence focuses on why reading matters, rather than what makes specific programmes effective, which elements contribute most to positive outcomes, or how successful approaches can be replicated in different contexts. Stakeholders also referred to a lack of comparative evidence across initiatives, limited evidence on value for money, and a limited understanding of what works for specific groups, including disadvantaged learners, bilingual learners and secondary-aged learners.

The evaluation of reading for pleasure presents particular challenges. Outcomes such as enjoyment, motivation, confidence and reading habits are harder to measure than attainment. In addition, initiatives frequently operate alongside one another, with schools implementing multiple activities over time, making it difficult to attribute change to a single programme or resource.

9. Considerations and recommendations for Adnodd and partners

The findings identify key priorities for strengthening literacy and reading engagement across Wales. They highlight the importance of not only developing core literacy skills but also creating the conditions that enable children and young people to engage with reading and writing in ways that are meaningful, motivating and sustained.

The evidence points to the need for coordinated action across the system, including improved access to high-quality resources, stronger Welsh-language and bilingual provision, enhanced support for secondary-aged learners, continued investment in practitioner development, greater family and community engagement, and a stronger focus on evaluation and collaboration. Together, these considerations provide a foundation for a more coherent and equitable literacy and reading landscape in Wales.

9.1 Develop a coherent national approach to literacy and reading for pleasure

There is a need for a national approach to literacy and reading for pleasure that encompasses both skills development and engagement. The approach should provide a shared direction that strengthens coordination and alignment across education, library and community settings, promoting consistent messages, support and greater awareness for learners, families and stakeholders.



Recommendation 1: Adnodd should work with the Welsh Government and other partners to establish a more coordinated national approach for literacy and reading for pleasure, reducing fragmentation and improving clarity for practitioners and families.

9.2 Build a stronger evidence base on what works in Wales

Further investment is needed in longitudinal and Wales-specific research to develop a stronger evidence base on effective approaches to supporting literacy and reading for pleasure. Priority should be given to understanding what works for disadvantaged learners, learners in bilingual contexts, and secondary-aged learners.



Recommendation 2: Evaluation requirements should be embedded in the design and commissioning of literacy programmes and resources. Evaluation should include:

- clear theories of change
- defined (short, medium and long-term) outcomes
- agreed shared indicators of reading behaviours, motivation and engagement alongside attainment outcomes
- assessment of impacts on priority groups
- plans for knowledge mobilisation and mechanisms for disseminating learning

9.3 Equip practitioners with the knowledge and guidance needed to support literacy and reading for pleasure effectively

The existence of literacy resources for learners alone is not enough. Practitioners need to be aware of resources and be confident in how best to use them.



Recommendation 3: Adnodd should consider working with Dysgu and other partners to provide clear, user-friendly guidance for practitioners on literacy and reading for pleasure approaches. The guidance could cover:

- how to use resources effectively
- how to promote reading for pleasure within and beyond the classroom
- how to adapt resources for different learners, including learners with additional learning needs and bilingual learners
- using resources effectively in different settings
- how to integrate literacy across the Curriculum for Wales
- how to support a whole-school reading culture
- reading for pleasure and motivation

9.4 Improve access to high-quality, inclusive resources

Access to books and reading materials needs to be improved for schools and families. The materials need to reflect diverse identities, interests and experiences, and include formats beyond traditional books. This should include considering sustained support for school libraries, public library partnerships, targeted book-gifting and home reading initiatives.



Recommendation 4: The commissioning of high-quality, accessible and adaptable literacy resources should be prioritised. These resources should:

- be available free of charge or at a low cost to schools and families
- reflect diverse identities, interests and experiences
- include different formats (e.g. audio, print, digital, multimodal)

9.5 Address gaps in Welsh-language and bilingual provision

Gaps exist in Welsh-language and bilingual provision, particularly in genre diversity and age-appropriateness, and for secondary-aged learners and those with additional learning needs.



Recommendation 5: Adnodd should prioritise the commissioning of Welsh-language and bilingual resources that:

- are designed and developed specifically for Welsh contexts
- support progression in both Welsh and English in line with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 Progression Code and section 12 of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025
- reflect the breadth of local dialects, identities and lived experiences
- meet the needs of learners across all age groups, including secondary-aged learners and learners with additional learning needs

- provide a diverse range of genres, formats and levels of challenge suitable for different ages and abilities

9.6 Improve provision for secondary-aged learners

Support for literacy and reading for pleasure for secondary-aged learners needs to be a priority. Learners require sustained approaches to reading engagement that recognise the role of literacy across the curriculum and promote reading for pleasure.



Recommendation 6: Adnodd should consider commissioning and procuring resources and initiatives to support the literacy development of secondary-age learners, including:

- age-appropriate, engaging texts that enrich learning
- relatable formats suited to adolescent reading habits
- approaches that maintain motivation and relevance, and
- resources that can encourage reading for pleasure

9.7 Strengthen family and community involvement in literacy

Guidance and resources outside of school settings can be an important enabler of engagement with literacy.



Recommendation 7: Adnodd should work with the Welsh Government and other partners to explore, identify and, where appropriate, commission resources for parents and carers that:

- are practical and accessible
- emphasise everyday reading activities (not only formal reading)
- are available in multiple languages and formats

9.8 Overall implication

Taken together, the findings show the importance of a more coherent and coordinated approach to literacy and reading engagement in Wales. The research highlights the need to move beyond a fragmented landscape of programmes by improving coordination, strengthening access to appropriate and relevant resources, and ensuring provision is visible and usable across home, school, library and community contexts. Addressing gaps in Welsh-language and bilingual provision, as well as the very limited provision identified for secondary-aged learners, remains important.

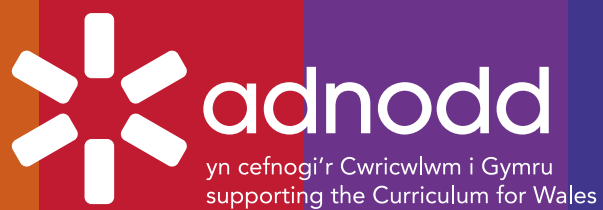
The findings also emphasise the need to strengthen practitioner support, family and community engagement, and the evidence base, including clearer evaluation of programmes and better understanding of what works in practice. These aims can be achieved by embedding evaluation more consistently and addressing the current limitations in Wales-specific evidence.

Supporting literacy and reading engagement requires not only access to resources, but resources that are accessible, relevant, bilingual, supported by practitioners and families, connected across settings, and evaluated in ways that build a stronger understanding of effective approaches in Wales. In this way, Wales can help ensure that every child and young person has the support, access and motivation needed to become a confident, capable and lifelong reader.

Appendix A: The programme landscape

	PROGRAMME TYPE		DEVELOPER		DELIVERY METHOD		COST	
	reading for pleasure programme	literacy intervention programme	government or charity led	commercial provider	school-based delivery	community or home-based delivery	paid access	free access
PRE-SCHOOL	Bounce & Rhyme	x	x			x		x
	Imagination Library	x	X	x		x		x
	WellComm			x	x		x	
	Drawing Club	x		x	x		x	
	Teach Your Monster App			x	x	X	x	X
	Summer Reading Challenge	X	x		x	X		x
	Darllen Company	x	X	x	x		x	
	Unlocking Letters and Sounds			x		x	x	
	Speech & Language Link			x	x		x	
	Bookstart	x	x	x	x	x		x
	World Book Day	x	x		x	X		x
	Elklan Course			x	x	x	x	
	Teaching (general)	x	x		x			x
	Book Gifting Schemes (general)	x	x	x	x	x		x
	Read Write Phonics			x	x		x	
	Talk for Writing			x	x		x	
	Oxford Schemes			x	x		x	
	Reading Eggs			x	x	x	x	
	Flying Start to Literacy			x	x		x	
	Jolly Phonics			x	x		x	
PRIMARY SCHOOL	Monster Phonics			x	x		x	
	Letters and sounds		x		x		x	
	Voice 21			x	x		x	
	Giglets			x	X	x	x	
	Sounds-Write Programme			x	X	x	x	
	Jolly Classroom			x	x		x	
	Tric a Chlic		x	x	x	x	x	
	Stars of the Shelves	X	x	x		x		x
	Rainbow Readers			x	x		x	
	Premier League Primary Stars	x		x	x			x
	Rapid Readers			x	x		x	
	Accelerated Reader			x	x		x	
	Word Wasp			x	X	x	x	
	Toe by Toe			x	X	x	x	
	Extreme Reading	x	x		x			x
	Beavers Reading Badge	x	x			x	x	
	Big Cat Books			x	X	x	x	
	Young Writers Programme	x	x		x	x		x
	Into Film			x	x			x
	Spelling Shed			x	x		x	
SECONDARY SCHOOL	Nessy			x	X	x	x	
	IDL			x	X	x	x	
	Fresh Start			x	x		x	
	Sparx Reader			x	X	x	x	
	Visits by writers and poets (general)	x		x	x	x	x	x
	National Year of Reading 2026	x	x		x	x		x
	Sound Discovery			x	x	X	x	
	Libraries (general)	X	x	x		x		x
	The Bell Foundation	x	x		x	x		x
	Widgit				x		x	
ALL AGES	Twinkl			x	X	x	x	

KEY: An 'X' indicates the primary programme, developer, delivery partner, and cost. For example, if a programme offers both free and paid access, however paid access offers a user more features, paid access would be denoted with a 'X'. In some cases, programmes have an 'x' in multiple boxes with no clear delineation between available options. *This table is meant to serve as an illustrative landscape guide to discussed programmes.*



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