

MILLER

Research Evaluation Consulting

Research project to support the future commissioning of literacy resources

Report

Adnodd

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Research project to support the future commissioning of literacy resources: Report Structure

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GLOSSARY

Glossary text

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	A term used to describe learners who require additional support for their learning, including those with conditions such as dyslexia or other learning difficulties.
Bilingual literacy / Biliteracy	The development of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in two languages, specifically Welsh and English in the context of this report.
Curriculum for Wales	The national curriculum framework in Wales, which emphasises flexibility, inclusivity and learner-centred approaches.
Decoding	The process of converting written words into spoken language by recognising letter-sound relationships.
Digital literacy	The ability to engage with and understand digital texts and tools, including e-books, online reading and AI-supported literacy tools.
Disciplinary literacy	An approach where literacy skills (reading, writing, communication) are taught within subject-specific contexts across the curriculum.
Engagement (literacy)	The extent to which learners participate in and interact with reading and literacy activities, influenced by motivation, access, confidence, support and environment.

GLOSSARY

Extrinsic access	Access to reading materials and resources, including books, libraries, and digital formats.
Intrinsic access	A learner's ability to engage successfully with reading, including confidence, comprehension and language skills.
Literacy intervention	A structured programme or approach designed to improve literacy skills such as reading, writing or language development.
Literacy outcome	A measurable or observable change in literacy skills, behaviours, confidence, motivation or engagement.
Multimodal literacy	Engagement with different forms of reading and communication, including print, digital, audio and visual content.
Oracy	Spoken language skills, including speaking, listening, discussion and communication.
Phonemic awareness	A subset of phonological awareness that refers to the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual phonemes, the smallest units of sound in a language.
Phonological awareness	Awareness of the sound structure of language, including the ability to recognise and manipulate sounds in words.
Reading for pleasure	Reading that is self-selected and motivated by enjoyment, interest or personal meaning rather than formal instruction.
Reading comprehension	The ability to understand, interpret and engage with the meaning of texts.
Thematic analysis	A qualitative data analysis method used to identify patterns and themes within data.
Translanguaging	The use of multiple languages by learners to support understanding and communication across different contexts.

Executive Summary

i. Miller Research was commissioned by Adnodd to undertake research to support the future commissioning of literacy resources in Wales. The research aimed to strengthen Adnodd's understanding of the current landscape of literacy resources, interventions and programmes, their effectiveness, and how they are experienced by practitioners, learners, parents and carers. It focused both on evidence of what supports literacy outcomes and on how users engage with literacy initiatives in practice, including those intended to promote reading for pleasure.

ii. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining a structured evidence review with user experience research. The evidence review examined existing research on literacy resources, interventions and programmes, including international examples and evidence relevant to Wales. The user experience research explored how literacy resources and initiatives are accessed, used and experienced by practitioners, learners, parents and carers across different contexts, language mediums and levels of engagement. The findings are primarily qualitative and should be understood as providing in-depth insight rather than statistically representative evidence.

iii. A central finding is that literacy outcomes should be understood broadly. While reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, writing and oracy remain core outcomes, the evidence also highlights the importance of confidence, motivation, reading enjoyment, access to books, family reading routines, bilingual confidence, learner identity and wellbeing. These outcomes can be grouped into 3 connected areas:

- core outcomes
- engagement and behaviour outcomes
- equity and context outcomes.

iv. This wider framing is important because resources and interventions are more likely to have sustained impact when they support not only literacy skills, but also the conditions that enable children and young people to engage with literacy in meaningful and lasting ways.

v. Across age groups there are different priorities. For children aged 0 to 3, effective support focuses on early language, shared reading, songs, stories, parent and carer confidence, and the home literacy environment. For primary-aged learners, the priority is to combine explicit teaching of reading, writing, vocabulary and oracy with access to appealing books, inclusive support and opportunities to develop reading enjoyment. For secondary-aged learners, the need is to sustain motivation and choice while strengthening subject-specific reading, writing, oracy and critical literacy across the curriculum.

vi. Reading for pleasure should not be treated as separate from literacy development. Enjoyment, choice, confidence, relevance and identity are closely connected to learners' willingness to read and to sustain reading habits. Learners are more likely to engage when they have access to texts that reflect their interests, lives, languages and confidence levels, including varied forms such as fiction, non-fiction, comics, poetry, song lyrics, audiobooks, digital texts and short-form reading. Engagement can be undermined where reading is experienced as too difficult, too long, too formal, overly assessed or disconnected from learners' interests.

vii. Access remains a major issue. Stakeholders identified gaps in the availability of high-quality, age-appropriate and appealing books, particularly for older learners, Welsh medium readers, reluctant readers and learners with additional learning needs. The research also identified concerns about school and public library provision, the cost of books and subscriptions, and the impact of limited school budgets on the quality and freshness of available reading materials. Access to resources is not only a practical issue, but also an equity issue, particularly for learners and families with fewer books at home

or fewer opportunities to access libraries, bookshops or paid resources.

viii. Welsh-language, bilingual and multilingual provision is a cross-cutting priority. There are gaps in Welsh-medium resources, Welsh-language fiction for older learners, bilingual assessment and diagnostic tools, and appropriate support for learners with ALN in Welsh-medium and bilingual contexts. Stakeholders also highlighted the need for resources that are adapted rather than simply translated, so that Welsh-language materials feel authentic, culturally meaningful and appropriate to learners' ages, interests, dialects and contexts. More broadly, it is important to recognise bilingualism and multilingualism as assets, and of supporting learners to draw on Welsh, English and other home languages where relevant.

ix. There is a diverse but uneven landscape of literacy and reading initiatives in Wales. Stakeholders cited 51 unique programmes, but these are not considered to represent the full landscape. The programmes mentioned were concentrated heavily in pre-school and primary-age provision, with very limited reference to programmes aimed at secondary-aged learners. Many of the programmes identified were commercially produced, school-delivered and available only at a cost. Access to literacy interventions and reading-for-pleasure provision may be shaped by institutional funding capacity, household resources and awareness of what is available, rather than by learner need alone.

x. Stakeholders described current provision as patchy, scattered and difficult to navigate. Practitioners, parents and scoping stakeholders identified a lack of coordination, limited evidence of impact, short-term or ad hoc initiatives, and uncertainty about which programmes genuinely support reading for pleasure rather than only skills remediation. There was also concern that enjoyment of reading is often overshadowed by attainment-focused or intervention-focused provision. These findings point to the need for a more coherent national approach that supports both literacy development and

reading engagement, while making it easier for practitioners and families to identify appropriate, evidence-informed resources.

xi. Practitioner engagement is shaped by time, capacity, confidence, school culture and the usability of resources. Practitioners valued ready-made and flexible materials that can be used without heavy adaptation, particularly where resources are affordable, aligned with the Curriculum for Wales, available in Welsh and English, and suitable for different ages, abilities and contexts. However, practitioners also reported barriers including limited time, fragmented provision, outdated resources, lack of confidence in motivating reading for pleasure, limited professional learning, and insufficient Welsh-medium materials. School leadership, professional learning, clearer guidance and access to high-quality adaptable resources were identified as important enablers.

xii. Learner engagement is influenced by both literacy confidence and the wider reading environment. Learners and stakeholders identified barriers including weak foundational skills, books that are too difficult or unappealing, stigma around struggling with reading, lack of support, distractions, competing activities, cost, language barriers and additional learning needs. Enablers included strong foundational skills, achievable and rewarding reading experiences, individual choice, representation, images and visual support, home reading routines, adult encouragement, technology used constructively, ownership of materials, and creative approaches such as drama, role play, discussion, singing and performance.

xiii. Parent and carer engagement is similarly shaped by confidence, time, cost, access and communication from schools. Parents and carers may value reading but still be unsure how to support children to want to read, particularly where they feel they have limited time, limited confidence in their own literacy, limited Welsh-language skills, or limited access to books and resources. Clear, practical and non-judgemental guidance can help parents and carers understand how to support reading at home without needing specialist knowledge.

Schools, libraries and community spaces are important parts of the wider reading ecosystem, particularly where they provide trusted routes into resources, activities and support.

xiv. 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.

xv. 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

xvi. 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 are embedded when designing and commissioning 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. Prioritise commissioning high-quality, accessible and adaptable literacy resources that are free or low cost for schools and families. These should reflect diverse identities, interests and experiences, and include a variety of formats
5. Commissioning Welsh-language and bilingual resources specifically for Welsh contexts.
6. Adnodd considers commissioning and procuring resources and initiatives to support the literacy of secondary-age learners.
7. Adnodd could work with the Welsh Government and others to strengthen support for parents and carers and encourage literacy engagement beyond the classroom.

1. Background

Introduction

1.1 This report presents the findings from a research project commissioned by Adnodd to support the future commissioning of literacy resources. The research aimed to strengthen Adnodd's understanding of the current landscape of literacy resources, interventions and programmes, their effectiveness, and how they are experienced by practitioners, learners and families.

1.2 Adnodd's vision is that all learners and practitioners, regardless of background, have access to high-quality educational resources that support well-being, spark imagination and encourage a lifelong love of learning. Its mission is to lead and coordinate the provision of user-friendly, adaptable bilingual resources that support the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales. Within this context, literacy represents a key priority area, with a particular focus on improving access to high-quality resources in both Welsh and English and ensuring that these resources respond to the needs of practitioners and learners across Wales.

1.3 This research was designed to generate evidence-based insights into accessing resources to support literacy and encourage reading for pleasure. The project focused both on understanding "what works" in literacy interventions and on exploring how users engage with literacy initiatives in practice, including programmes promoting reading for pleasure. In doing so, the research contributes to Adnodd's wider aim of developing an evidence base to guide future commissioning decisions and to support the development of high-quality, inclusive literacy resources.

Policy and research context

1.4 This study sits within a wider context of ongoing reforms to education, including the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, which emphasises flexibility, inclusivity and learner-centred approaches.

Supporting this shift requires access to relevant, high-quality resources that can be adapted to meet diverse learner needs, including those in Welsh-medium, English-medium and bilingual settings.

1.5 At the same time, the literacy landscape is complex and evolving. Evidence highlights a wide range of literacy resources and initiatives, spanning different age groups, settings and delivery models. These include both structured literacy interventions focused on skills development, and initiatives aimed at fostering engagement, motivation and reading for pleasure.

1.6 Literacy outcomes are multi-dimensional. They include not only core skills such as reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension and writing, but also wider behaviours and attitudes, such as confidence, motivation, frequency of reading, and access to reading materials. These outcomes are interconnected, reflecting the relationship between literacy skills, reading behaviours, and wider educational and well-being outcomes.

Challenges in literacy and reading for pleasure

1.7 There are several challenges associated with literacy and reading for pleasure. Engagement is shaped by a range of factors, including access to resources, availability of appropriate materials, practitioner capacity, and support from families and communities.

1.8 This research responded to challenges identified at the outset of the project, including:

- the need to map a diverse and evolving landscape of literacy resources and interventions;
- the need to engage effectively with practitioners, learners and families across different contexts and language mediums;
- and the need to draw on international evidence, particularly from bilingual contexts, to inform approaches relevant to Wales.

1.9 There was also a recognised need to better understand how and why different groups engage with literacy initiatives, including the barriers and enablers influencing participation and impact.

Aims and objectives of the research

1.10 The overarching aim of this research was to support Adnodd's future commissioning of literacy resources through the development of a robust evidence base.

1.11 Specifically, the research sought to:

- assess the effectiveness of literacy resources, interventions and programmes in improving literacy outcomes;
- identify international best practice, particularly from bilingual contexts, which could inform resource development in Wales;
- explore how practitioners, learners and families engage with literacy initiatives, including those promoting reading for pleasure;
- identify barriers and enablers to engagement and factors affecting the impact of these initiatives.

Overview of the research approach

1.12 To address these aims, the research adopted a mixed-methods approach, structured across two interconnected components:

- Part 1: a systematic review of existing evidence on literacy resources, interventions and programmes, including international examples;
- Part 2: user experience research exploring engagement with literacy initiatives among practitioners, learners and families.

1.13 These two components were designed to be complementary. The findings from the literature review set the context for the empirical research, while the user experience research provided insight into how literacy initiatives are experienced in practice, including the factors that influence participation and perceived impact.

Structure of the report

1.14 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Methodology – outlines the research design, data collection and analysis approaches;
- Section 3: Findings – presents evidence from both the literature review and the user experience research;
- Section 4: Conclusions and Recommendations – draws together insights and sets out implications for future commissioning of literacy resources.

2. Methodology

2.1 This research adopted a mixed-methods approach comprising of two complementary strands of work, undertaken alongside each other:

- **Part 1: a structured evidence review**, examining existing research on literacy resources, interventions and programmes
- **Part 2: user experience research**, exploring how practitioners, learners and families engage with literacy initiatives in practice

2.2 These two strands were designed to address different but related aspects of the research aims. The structured evidence review synthesised existing knowledge on "what works", while the user experience research provided insight into how literacy resources and programmes are accessed, used and experienced across Wales.

Part 1: structured evidence review

2.3 The structured evidence review involved a systematic process of identifying and synthesising relevant literature on literacy resources, interventions and programmes.

2.4 The review primarily focused on literature published from 2020 onwards, although selected sources from 2010-2020 were also included where appropriate. Evidence from Wales was prioritised, alongside selected countries or regions identified as examples of best practice or as relevant to the Welsh context, particularly in relation to bilingual education. Searches were guided by combinations of terms relating to; reading skills, reading instruction, reading interventions, reading programmes, teaching programmes, reading for pleasure, reading enjoyment, literacy outcomes, literacy skills, reading comprehension, reading development, literacy promotion, emergent readers, book gifting, book access, shared book reading, interactive book reading, library reading programmes, digital and technology based reading support, international reading assessment, international literacy outcomes, post pandemic literacy, post

pandemic education, bilingual literacy, multilingual literacy, plurilingual literacy, second language, PISA, as well as named book schemes (Bookseed, Bookstart etc). Searches were targeted and iterative, with additional sources identified through citation trails and follow up searches around relevant countries and programmes.

2.5 The review focused on:

- evidence relating to the effectiveness of literacy interventions across different age groups
- programmes and initiatives promoting reading for pleasure
- international examples, including bilingual and multilingual contexts
- evidence relevant to the Welsh context where available.

2.6 Sources included academic literature, evaluation reports, policy documents and programme evidence. The review placed particular emphasis on identifying evidence that highlighted both core literacy outcomes and wider engagement outcomes, including reading behaviours, motivation and access to resources.

2.7 Findings from the evidence review were used to:

- establish a conceptual framework for understanding literacy outcomes
- identify themes and effective approaches across age groups
- inform the design of primary research tools and topic guides.

Part 2: user experience research

2.8 The user experience research explored how literacy resources and initiatives are experienced in practice by practitioners, learners and families. A qualitative-led, multi-method approach was adopted, supported by a small-scale survey.

2.9 The fieldwork was designed to capture a range of perspectives across stakeholder groups and to explore:

- awareness and use of literacy programmes and resources
- experiences of engagement with reading for pleasure initiatives

- barriers and enablers affecting participation and impact
- differences across language medium, setting and level of engagement.

Sampling and recruitment

2.10 Participants were recruited through a combination of targeted and open approaches:

- scoping stakeholders were recruited via Adnodd networks and stakeholder contacts
- practitioners were recruited through a screening survey shared via social media channels
- parents and carers were recruited by DJS Research using a combination of their existing database and recruitment of additional participants
- Learners were recruited by directly approaching schools based on age, school language medium, and location.

2.11 The practitioner survey was distributed to all respondents to the screening survey of practitioners who were not selected for interview.

Fieldwork methods

2.12 The fieldwork comprised the following components:

- stakeholder interviews (n=16)
- practitioner interviews (n=16)
- online survey of practitioners (n=12)
- learner focus groups (n=3)
  - One Welsh medium primary in north east Wales delivered by Children in Wales (12 participants)
  - One English medium primary in south east Wales delivered by Children in Wales (18 participants)
  - One English medium secondary in south east Wales delivered by Miller Research (11 participants).
- parent/carer focus groups (n=6)

- Group 1: English language, high literacy experience/access (9 participants)
- Group 2: English language, low literacy experience/access (8 participants)
- Group 3: Welsh language, high literacy experience/access (10 participants)
- Group 4: Welsh language, low literacy experience/access (9 participants)
- Group 5: English language, high literacy experience/access (10 participants)
- Group 6: English language, low literacy experience/access (8 participants).

2.13 Focus groups with parents and carers were structured to capture a range of perspectives. Six sessions were conducted, including:

- four conducted in English and 2 in Welsh
- groups categorised as higher literacy engaged or lower literacy engaged, based on self-reported behaviours, including whether in the previous month their child(ren) had:
  - read books independently
  - been read to by an adult or parent
  - visited a library or chosen books in the previous month.

2.14 This segmentation was used to explore differences in engagement with literacy and reading for pleasure.

Data analysis

2.15 Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis. This involved:

- coding data to identify recurring themes and patterns
- comparing responses across different participant groups
- identifying barriers, enablers and areas of common experience.

2.16 Quantitative data from the practitioner survey were used to provide additional context and to support interpretation of qualitative findings.

2.17 Findings from the structured evidence review and user experience research were analysed separately and then brought together to identify areas of alignment and divergence between evidence from literature and evidence from lived experience.

Limitations

2.18 This research was primarily qualitative in nature and was intended to provide in-depth insights rather than statistically representative findings. The sample size for the practitioner survey was below target.

2.19 Participants were recruited through a combination of networks, social media and research panels, which may mean that those who took part were more engaged with literacy or more willing to participate in research than the wider population. In addition, responses relating to levels of literacy engagement were self-reported.

2.20 For Part 1, the structured evidence review draws on a wide range of existing studies and programme evaluations. In some cases, evaluations were conducted or commissioned by organisations involved in the design or delivery of programmes, and authorship was not always fully independent. The body of evidence also included a high proportion of sources produced by publishers or organisations with a direct interest in promoting reading initiatives. While these sources provide valuable insights, this may introduce potential bias in the available evidence.

2.21 There is also relatively limited evidence specific to Wales only, with much of the available literature drawn from UK-wide or international contexts. As a result, the transferability of some findings to the Welsh context should be considered with caution.

3. Findings

Literacy outcomes

3.1 For the purposes of this research, a literacy outcome is understood as a measurable or observable change in children and young people's literacy skills, behaviours, confidence, motivation, access to or engagement with literacy. Literacy outcomes are not limited to improvements in formal attainment or test scores. They also include the wider conditions that enable children and young people to become confident, motivated and regular readers, writers and communicators.

3.2 This broader definition is important because the evidence reviewed shows that literacy development is shaped by a combination of skill-based, social, cultural and contextual factors. Improvements in reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and writing remain central. However, outcomes such as reading enjoyment, book ownership, family reading routines, bilingual confidence, access to appropriate resources, learner identity and wellbeing are also important indicators of whether literacy interventions are likely to have a meaningful and sustained impact.

3.3 The outcomes can be grouped into 3 areas to understand how resources, programmes and interventions can improve literacy.

3.4 Core outcomes:

- Reading skills and attainment: reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension, decoding, skimming, scanning, inference, evaluation and reading across the curriculum.
- Foundational literacy skills: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, rapid naming, word recognition, early reading readiness and early language development.
- Language, vocabulary and oracy: breadth of vocabulary, oral language, communication, speaking, listening, discussion, self-expression and confidence in spoken communication.

- Writing and spelling: spelling, grammar, transcription, sentence construction, writing composition, drafting, feedback, creativity and written self-expression.
- Digital and media literacy: engagement with e-books, digital texts, text-to-speech, online reading, AI-supported literacy tools and balancing print and digital reading.

3.5 Engagement and behaviour outcomes:

- Reading for pleasure: enjoyment, motivation, interest, reading identity, positive attitudes to books and willingness or desire to read independently.
- Reading behaviours and habits: frequency of reading, daily reading, shared reading, book ownership, use of libraries, reading routines and sustained engagement over time.
- Family and home literacy: parent-child reading, shared stories, songs and rhymes, parent confidence in reading, home learning routines and access to books at home.
- Wider learner outcomes: confidence, wellbeing, belonging, self-regulation, learner agency, identity, motivation, participation and school engagement.

3.6 Equity and context outcomes

- Bilingual and multilingual literacy: Welsh-English biliteracy, cross-linguistic transfer, language exposure, Welsh reading confidence, Welsh-medium provision and support for multilingual learners.
- Equity and access: improved access to books, libraries, digital resources and literacy support for learners affected by poverty, ALN, care experience, language background or limited home resources.

Early years

3.7 Literacy interventions for children aged 0 to 3 are primarily intended to build the foundations for later language, reading and learning. At this

age, interventions are not focused on formal reading instruction. Instead, they aim to strengthen the early home literacy environment by encouraging parents and carers to talk, sing, share books and stories, and build positive routines around language and reading from the earliest months of life.

3.8 Evidence from longitudinal cohort studies highlights the importance of early shared reading. Analysis of the Growing Up in Ireland dataset found that children who were read to at 9 months demonstrated stronger expressive vocabulary at 36 months, even after controlling for socio-demographic and home literacy factors.

3.9 Similarly, longitudinal evidence from the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development found that early home literacy enrichment at the age of two is associated with higher levels of classroom and school engagement later in childhood and adolescence.

3.10 The main purpose of literacy interventions for this age group is to create the conditions in which early language and literacy can develop. This includes supporting both the child and the adults around them.

3.11 Purposes include:

- developing early language, vocabulary, speech and communication
- encouraging shared reading, songs, rhymes, stories and conversation
- building positive associations with books and reading
- strengthening care giver-child bonding and responsive interaction
- increasing access to books and literacy resources in the home
- supporting parents and carers to feel confident sharing books and stories
- helping families establish regular reading and story-sharing routines
- reducing early inequalities before children start school

- supporting school readiness and later literacy development

3.12 Evaluations of early years programmes illustrate these outcomes in practice. For example, the Bookseed programme in Ireland found benefits relating to care giver-child relationships, language development and early engagement with books, with parents reporting increased enjoyment of shared reading and more frequent reading behaviours.

3.13 Similarly, UK-based evidence from BookTrust programmes, including Bookstart and BookTrust Storytime, shows that early shared reading supports bonding, communication, and early development, particularly for families on low incomes and those facing disadvantage.

3.14 In both the UK and internationally, interventions for children aged 0 to 3 are typically delivered through parents, carers and trusted early years services, rather than directly to children through formal teaching.

3.15 The most common delivery models include:

- book gifting schemes
- shared reading guidance and demonstrations
- public health or library-based delivery
- parent support programmes
- home learning environment interventions

3.16 Book gifting is a common approach. Across the UK, Bookstart provides a book and reading materials to families accompanied by a short shared-reading demonstration from the health visitor. In Wales this is at every child's 6 month and 27 month health visit, in England all children are eligible between 0 to 12 months old with delivery varying locally, and in Northern Ireland this is delivered by health visitors during the first 12 months. In Scotland the equivalent is Bookbug with a Baby Bag at 2 to 5 weeks and a Toddler Bag at 13 to 15 months, usually given by a health visitor. This is an example of how book gifting can be integrated into existing public health touchpoints.

3.17 Other book gifting models operate over a longer period. An evaluation of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in a disadvantaged city in England, compared families who had received books for different lengths of time with families not involved in the programme. The programme provided books from birth to the age of 5, with the aim of influencing children's interest in literacy activities and parent-child reading behaviours.

3.18 Bookseed in Ireland also used trusted public services as delivery routes. The programme was delivered through baby health checks and involved public health nurses and librarians, with data collected from parents and stakeholders during an infants' first year of life.

3.19 Shared reading support is another important delivery model. England-based Noble et al. (2020) tested interactive shared reading interventions with children aged 2 years and 6 months to 3 years. The study found that caregivers from different socio-economic backgrounds were able to adopt interactive shared reading behaviours, suggesting that this model can successfully influence adult practice across varied family contexts.

3.20 However, it should be noted this did not produce a significant measurable impact on children's language skills within the study period. This indicates that while shared reading interventions may be effective in changing caregiver behaviour, improvements in child language outcomes may require longer-term implementation, greater intensity, or additional support before measurable effects can be detected.

3.21 The evidence suggests that the most effective approaches for this age group focus on strengthening the home literacy environment. Outcomes are most consistently observed in parent and family behaviours, including increased reading frequency, improved confidence, and more structured reading routines.

3.22 The conclusion from the literature review on early years literacy programmes highlights the importance of the following:

3.23 Start early: Evidence from longitudinal studies shows that early reading behaviours (e.g. being read to at 9 months) are associated with good vocabulary development in subsequent years. UK programme evidence, including Bookstart, shows that families who begin reading earlier are more likely to sustain reading routines over time.

3.24 Combine access to books with guidance: Interventions that combine book provision with guidance for parents and carers are more effective than book provision alone. The Bookstart+ trial in Northern Ireland demonstrates how combining book gifting with a shared-reading demonstration can influence parental attitudes to reading. Evidence from Bookseed also highlights the role of practitioners (e.g. health workers and librarians) in supporting parents to use books effectively.

3.25 Focus on relational and interactive reading: Evidence from early years programmes shows that shared reading supports caregiver-child interaction, including responsive behaviours such as talking, pointing and responding to the child's cues. UK programme evidence, including BookTrust delivery, emphasises that shared reading provides a structured context for building relationships and supporting early learning.

3.26 Support parents and carers directly: Evidence from UK programmes, including those delivered by BookTrust and the National Literacy Trust, shows that supporting parents and carers directly can increase confidence, encourage more frequent reading, and help families establish routines. For example, targeted interventions delivered by the National Literacy Trust, including Early Words Together (England), Early Words Together at Two (England), and First Words Together (England), provide structured support to improve the home learning environment and early language development.

3.27 Target families facing barriers: UK evidence highlights that barriers to engagement include time, cost, access to resources and limited local

provision. Targeted interventions aimed at families facing these barriers include programmes delivered by the National Literacy Trust (e.g. Early Words Together, Early Words Together at Two and First Words Together), alongside targeted elements within BookTrust delivery, such as additional needs packs and dual language resources within Bookstart.

3.28 Sustain support over time: Longitudinal and quasi-experimental evidence suggests that longer-term engagement with book gifting schemes is associated with more frequent reading interactions. For example, families participating in long-term programmes such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library were more likely to read daily than those engaged for shorter periods.

Primary-aged learners

3.29 For the purposes of this report, primary age is treated as approximately 3 to 11 years, covering pre-school and primary education through to the end of Year 6. Cited evidence refers to children aged 3 to 5, 5 to 7, 7 to 11, 5 to 11, 6 to 12, 7 to 11, and broader primary school samples.

3.30 Literacy interventions for primary-aged children are intended to strengthen the core building blocks of reading, writing, speaking and listening, while also developing children's confidence, motivation and enjoyment of literacy. Unlike interventions for children aged 0 to 3, primary-age interventions often include more explicit teaching of literacy skills, such as phonics, decoding, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling and writing composition. However, evidence indicates that reading for pleasure is linked to improved literacy attainment, vocabulary development and wider educational outcomes. UK wide survey and longitudinal evidence shows that children who read regularly for pleasure are more likely to perform well in reading and writing, and to demonstrate higher levels of engagement with learning.

3.31 The main purpose of literacy interventions during the primary years is to ensure that children develop the skills, confidence and habits needed to become fluent, motivated and independent readers, writers and communicators. This includes both universal provision for all learners and targeted support for children who are struggling or at risk of falling behind.

3.32 Purposes include:

- developing speaking, listening, vocabulary and wider language understanding
- teaching phonics, decoding and word recognition
- supporting reading fluency and reading comprehension
- developing spelling, grammar, transcription and sentence construction
- supporting writing composition, planning, drafting and editing
- encouraging reading for pleasure and independent reading
- building confidence, motivation and positive reading identity
- increasing access to high-quality and appealing books
- supporting learners with ALN, dyslexia, EAL or additional literacy needs
- supporting Welsh, English and bilingual literacy development
- reducing gaps linked to poverty, language background, additional needs or limited home access to books

3.33 Within the Curriculum for Wales, literacy is positioned as both part of the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience and as a mandatory cross-curricular skill. This means that learners' development in listening, speaking, reading and writing is expected to be developed, extended and applied across the curriculum, rather than confined to one subject area. For learners working within Progression Steps 1, 2 and 3, this provides a clear foundation for progression in oral language, reading and writing, including learners' ability to listen and respond, develop vocabulary, understand and interpret spoken and written language, read with

increasing confidence, and write for different purposes and audiences. Curriculum for Wales guidance also recognises phonological and phonemic awareness as important cognitive skills in learning to read, and places emphasis on their systematic development.

3.34 The Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) guidance provides a useful wider evidence reference that aligns with this Curriculum for Wales emphasis on language, reading and writing development. Although structured around the English school system, its guidance for Key Stage 1 (equivalent to reception to Year 2 in Wales) emphasises the importance of developing learners' speaking and listening skills, using a balanced and engaging approach to reading, implementing systematic phonics, teaching reading comprehension strategies, supporting writing, and using high-quality structured interventions for learners who are struggling. Its guidance for Key Stage 2 (equivalent to Years 3 to 6 in Wales) similarly stresses high-quality teaching, extensive opportunities to practise reading and writing, language development, fluent reading, comprehension through modelling and supported practice, writing composition, transcription and targeted support based on pupil need. Its core messages support a more universal point that is consistent with the Curriculum for Wales. Effective literacy development depends on coherent, progressive support for oral language, reading, comprehension and writing, alongside targeted support where learners require additional help to progress.

3.35 For primary-aged children, literacy interventions are typically delivered through a combination of school-based provision, targeted support, and wider community and library services.

3.36 The most common delivery models include:

- classroom-based literacy instruction and curriculum delivery
- targeted small-group or one-to-one interventions
- reading-for-pleasure programmes and campaigns

- book access and gifting schemes
- library and community-based provision
- parent and family engagement initiatives

3.37 The central approach for this age group is the explicit, structured and direct teaching of literacy. The Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel's (GEEAP) review on effective reading instruction in low- and middle-income countries concludes that structured reading instruction, supported by teacher guidance and aligned materials, consistently improves literacy outcomes. Although the report focuses on global evidence from low- and middle-income contexts, its emphasis on explicit instruction, aligned materials and teacher support is relevant to primary literacy resource development.

3.38 In the early primary years, structured literacy teaching commonly includes phonological awareness, phonics, decoding, word recognition and early comprehension. The EEF Key Stage 1 guidance recommends systematic phonics, alongside speaking and listening, comprehension strategies and writing development. For children aged 7 to 11, the EEF Key Stage 2 guidance places greater emphasis on fluent reading, reading comprehension through modelling and supported practice, language development, writing composition and targeted support for learners who are struggling.

3.39 Another delivery route is reading for pleasure and school reading culture. Estyn's 2021 report on Welsh language acquisition identifies successful whole-school strategies for promoting reading for pleasure, including reading to learners, providing opportunities for learners to read aloud, sharing complete novels and allowing time for daily independent reading. BookTrust's 2024 briefing (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) on primary school children's reading also highlights the significant role teachers play in nurturing reading enjoyment. It notes that children's enjoyment of reading decreases as they progress through primary school, and that shared reading and teacher support are important in fostering enjoyment.

3.40 A further approach is book access and library provision. The National Literacy Trust's UK evaluation of Libraries for Primaries found that investment in school libraries, teacher training and new resources improved library provision, children's access to high-quality books, reading enjoyment, confidence and reading frequency. It also found promising evidence of improved reading attainment, especially for children most in need of support.

3.41 Some interventions use creative and performance-based approaches. Mastrothanasis et al.'s systematic review and meta-analysis, drawing primarily on studies conducted in America, alongside a smaller number from Asia and Europe, found that Readers' Theatre had positive effects on reading skills, especially fluency and decoding, with generally positive effects on comprehension. It also found advantageous effects on reading motivation, engagement and confidence, suggesting that creative approaches can support both core literacy skills and positive reading behaviours.

3.42 Technology-based interventions also appear in the evidence, though findings are mixed. Alqahtani's 2024 meta-analysis, drawing largely on US-based studies with some wider international evidence, found that technology-based interventions for elementary-aged learners with reading difficulties had a moderate positive effect on reading outcomes. However, an evaluation of Microsoft Immersive Reader in UK Year 3 and Year 4 classrooms conducted by RAND (a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organisation based in the USA) found no significant impact on reading attainment, with implementation challenges including inconsistent use, limited teacher training, lack of IT resources and technical difficulties. This suggests that technology is most likely to help when it is well implemented, accessible, supported by training and integrated into wider teaching practice.

3.43 The evidence suggests that effective primary-age literacy interventions need to combine explicit skills teaching with opportunities for practice, enjoyment, access and support. Impact is most likely when interventions address both core literacy outcomes

and the wider engagement and equity factors that shape children's literacy development.

3.44 Important areas for primary-age literacy support are:

3.45 Use explicit, structured teaching of reading and writing: The Curriculum for Wales supports explicit, structured teaching of reading and writing by positioning literacy as a mandatory cross-curricular skill, with planned progression in listening, speaking, reading and writing, including oral language, phonological awareness, reading strategies, comprehension, spelling, grammar and writing for different purposes. The EEF Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 guidance reports both emphasise direct teaching of core literacy components, including phonics, decoding, comprehension, fluent reading, writing composition, transcription and sentence construction. The GEEAP evidence review similarly finds that structured reading instruction, teacher guidance and aligned materials are associated with improved reading outcomes.

3.46 Assess pupil needs and target support carefully: The EEF guidance recommends using high-quality information about learners' current capabilities to select next steps for teaching and to provide structured interventions for learners who are struggling. Pegram et al. (2022), in a study of interventions used in a Welsh school cluster, found that many school interventions had limited published evidence of causal impact, highlighting the need for schools to choose interventions based on stronger evidence and clearer links to learner outcomes.

3.47 Build reading enjoyment alongside reading skills: Aerila and Merisuo-Storm's Finnish evidence highlights the importance of interest, pleasure, success, appropriate reading levels, comfortable reading places, time to concentrate and varied social reading activities. Readers' Theatre also appears promising because it supports fluency and decoding while strengthening motivation, engagement and confidence. These findings suggest that skills-based teaching and enjoyment-led approaches should not be treated as separate aims.

3.48 Increase access to appealing, high-quality books: The National Literacy Trust's 2025 report on children and young people's book ownership found that having a book of one's own was strongly associated with greater reading enjoyment, more frequent reading and stronger self-perceived reading ability. The Libraries for Primaries evaluation similarly suggests that improving library spaces and book access can strengthen reading behaviours and may support attainment, particularly for learners most in need of support.

3.49 Support teachers and schools to create a sustained reading culture: BookTrust's 2024 Primary school children's reading briefing identifies teachers as highly influential in fostering children's reading enjoyment. Estyn's 2021 Welsh language acquisition report found that effective schools prioritise fostering a love of reading and literature through whole-school strategies, adult role-modelling, reading aloud, independent reading and exposure to complete texts. However, Estyn also warns that reading enjoyment can be undermined when practitioners rely too rigidly on reading schemes or when there is no whole-school strategy for decoding, vocabulary or responding to texts.

3.50 Support family and home literacy practices: As in younger age children, shared reading, parental confidence and access to books are important for building sustained reading habits amongst primary age learners. Although some of this evidence begins before primary school, it remains relevant for younger primary-aged children, particularly during the transition into school when parents may need to balance school-assigned reading with shared reading for enjoyment.

3.51 Design for bilingual and Welsh-language contexts: Estyn's 2021 report on Welsh language acquisition found that Welsh-medium and bilingual settings can successfully develop learners' Welsh language skills, but also highlighted the need to foster reading enjoyment, develop advanced reading skills and provide opportunities for translanguaging across the curriculum. Hadden-Purnell's 2025 work on bilingual learners in Welsh primary education emphasises the importance of considering foundational literacy in both Welsh and

English, while Rhys and Thomas (2013) show that exposure to, and engagement with, both languages play an important role in bilingual children's vocabulary and reading development.

3.52 Ensure support for learners with ALN, dyslexia or additional literacy needs is equitable in Welsh and English: Evidence from Wales (Packer and Rhys (2025)) identifies a shortage of Welsh resources, standardised assessments and qualified Welsh-speaking practitioners to support learners with ALN, particularly in literacy. Thomas et al. (2023) similarly argue that bilingual children need assessment tools and approaches that take account of both languages and individual language profiles. These findings suggest that literacy resources for Wales need to be accessible, bilingual and suitable for learners with diverse needs.

Secondary-aged learners

3.53 For this report, secondary age is treated as approximately aged 12 to 16 (i.e.: completion of compulsory education), while recognising that several relevant sources use overlapping age ranges such as 10 to 14, 11 to 16, 13 to 18, 15-year-olds, or Years 7 to 13. The evidence is therefore most relevant to learners in the transition from upper primary into lower secondary, and across the main secondary school years.

3.54 Literacy interventions for secondary-aged learners are intended to help young people use reading, writing, speaking and listening confidently across the curriculum, while also addressing the decline in reading enjoyment and voluntary engagement that often occurs during adolescence. At this stage, literacy is not only about learning to read, but about reading, writing, speaking and listening in increasingly complex ways across subjects, formats and contexts.

3.55 The main purpose of literacy interventions during the secondary years is to ensure that learners can access, understand and communicate knowledge across the curriculum, while also maintaining motivation and confidence as readers, writers and communicators.

3.56 Purposes include:

- improving reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary and advanced reading skills
- supporting learners to read increasingly complex subject-specific texts
- strengthening writing quality, planning, drafting, grammar, spelling and composition
- developing speaking, listening, discussion, presentation and self-expression skills
- supporting struggling readers, particularly at the transition into secondary school
- maintaining reading for pleasure during adolescence
- building confidence, motivation, learner identity and independence
- reducing gaps linked to poverty, gender, ALN, language background or access to books
- supporting Welsh, English, bilingual and multilingual literacy development
- helping learners engage critically with digital texts and AI-supported literacy tools

3.57 Estyn's reports on English and Welsh reading skills from ages 10 to 14 show why this phase matters. The English reading report found that many learners use basic reading skills, such as skimming, scanning and locating information, but only around half use advanced reading skills confidently. It also found that enjoyment of reading declines for the majority of learners between ages 10 and 14. The Welsh reading report reached similar conclusions, noting that many learners used basic Welsh reading skills successfully, but that advanced reading skills in Years 7 to 9 were less well developed because learners lacked purposeful opportunities to develop reading across the curriculum. Both reports also highlight weak transition planning between Year 6 and Year 7.

3.58 The EEF's guidance on improving literacy in secondary schools also emphasises that literacy is central to learning across all subjects. It argues that secondary literacy should be supported through disciplinary literacy, explicit vocabulary instruction, reading strategies, writing support and subject-specific approaches rather than being treated as the responsibility of English and Welsh departments alone.

3.59 For secondary-aged learners, literacy interventions are typically delivered through a combination of whole-school approaches, subject-specific teaching, targeted support and wider enrichment activities.

3.60 The most common delivery models include:

- whole-school literacy strategies and cross-curricular approaches
- subject-specific literacy teaching (disciplinary literacy)
- targeted small-group or one-to-one interventions
- reading-for-pleasure programmes and book access initiatives
- writing and communication-focused programmes
- oracy and speaking and listening activities
- digital and media literacy approaches

3.61 A central model is disciplinary literacy, where teachers help learners understand how reading, writing and communication work within different subjects. Estyn's report on English reading skills recommends that practitioners should be provided with high-quality professional learning by school leadership about evidence-based strategies to develop pupils' reading skills across the curriculum. The EEF guidance on secondary literacy recommends that all teachers should be supported to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects. This includes explicit teaching of subject-specific vocabulary, support for reading complex texts, modelling of strategies such as prediction and questioning, and gradually removing scaffolds to promote independence.

3.62 Targeted support for struggling readers is important, particularly around transition. Higgins et al.'s EEF evidence brief, focused on the

transition from primary to secondary school in England and drawing on wider UK and overseas evidence, highlights that the reading gap at age 11 is persistent and unlikely to be closed by a single approach. It suggests that supporting struggling readers requires a concerted effort across the curriculum and a combination of approaches. Baye et al.'s review of UK and US evidence on secondary reading programmes similarly found that most programmes had relatively small effects, but that tutoring, cooperative learning and some writing-focused programmes showed more promising results.

3.63 Secondary literacy interventions are also delivered through reading for pleasure and engagement strategies. The National Literacy Trust's 2026 report Teenage reading: (Re)framing the challenge (based on their UK wide Annual Literacy Survey) argues that adolescence is a critical period for reading engagement, with reading enjoyment and daily reading declining sharply as young people get older. However, it also finds that many teenagers still value reading for learning, relaxation, escapism, wellbeing and understanding the world. The challenge is that reading becomes harder to sustain because of time pressures, competing activities, changing routines and limited relevance or choice limit access.

3.64 As in primary years, book access and choice are important delivery mechanisms. The National Literacy Trust's 2025 report on book ownership found that ownership was lower among children receiving free school meals, boys, older learners and children in Wales and some English regions compared to the UK as a whole. This suggests that secondary interventions should continue to address access to appealing reading materials, rather than assuming that book access is only an issue in the early years or primary school period.

3.65 Digital literacy and AI-supported literacy are emerging delivery contexts. The National Literacy Trust's 2025 report on young people's use of generative AI in the UK found that young people aged 13 to 18 use AI to support homework, writing, vocabulary, spelling, summarising and understanding texts. However, it also raised

concerns about copying AI outputs, weaker critical engagement among younger learners and learners receiving free school meals, and the risk of dependency rather than independence. This suggests that secondary literacy interventions need to support critical, ethical and reflective use of digital tools.

3.66 The evidence suggests that effective secondary literacy interventions need to combine explicit teaching, subject-specific practice, targeted support for struggling readers and approaches that make reading and writing relevant to teenagers' lives.

3.67 Important actions to support secondary aged learners are as follows:

3.68 Treat literacy as a whole-school and cross-curricular responsibility. Estyn's English and Welsh reading reports both identify the need for more consistent development of reading skills across the curriculum. In the Welsh reading report, the most beneficial opportunities to develop reading skills were seen in Welsh lessons, language sessions and some humanities subjects, but advanced reading skills were less well developed where learners lacked purposeful opportunities across the curriculum. The EEF secondary literacy guidance similarly argues that literacy should be embedded within subject teaching through disciplinary literacy.

3.69 Teach vocabulary, reading and writing explicitly within subjects: The EEF guidance recommends explicit vocabulary instruction, particularly for academic and subject-specific language, and teaching reading strategies such as activating prior knowledge[1], prediction and questioning. This is important because secondary learners increasingly encounter specialised texts and concepts that require more than general reading ability.

3.70 Support struggling readers through a combination of interventions rather than a single programme: Higgins et al. conclude that the reading gap at transition is wide and stubborn, and that no single

[1] Helping learners think about what they already know about a topic, text type, word, idea or experience before they start reading or learning something new.

approach is likely to be sufficient. Baye et al.'s review suggests that tutoring, cooperative learning, writing-focused programmes, motivation, relationships, social-emotional learning and personalisation are common features of more promising secondary reading interventions.

3.71 Maintain reading motivation, choice and relevance during adolescence: The National Literacy Trust's 2026 teenage reading report suggests that teenagers are more likely to sustain reading when it feels relevant, accessible, self-directed and rewarding. The 2025 UK reading report similarly argues that re-engaging children and young people requires personalised, flexible approaches that provide choice, connect reading to interests and wider media habits, and offer access to appealing print and digital materials.

3.72 Address access to books and reading materials for older learners: National Literacy Trust evidence on book ownership shows that children and young people with books of their own are more likely to enjoy reading, read frequently and see themselves as good readers. This is particularly relevant where ownership is lower among older learners, boys, learners receiving free school meals and children in Wales (compared to the rest of the UK).[2]

3.73 Use writing as a route into both literacy development and self-expression: Slavin et al.'s EEF review of England and US evidence on writing approaches in Years 3 to 13 found positive average outcomes for writing programmes. Characteristics of stronger programmes included cooperative learning, structured approaches to writing in different genres, peer and self-assessment, balancing writing with reading, building motivation to write and enjoy self-expression, explicit teaching of conventions in context, and extensive teacher CPD.

3.74 Strengthen speaking and listening opportunities: The National Literacy Trust's 2025 report on speaking and listening in the UK found

[2] Figures for Wales are based on 1.8% of responses to National Literacy Trust's Annual Literacy Survey. The other characteristics are UK wide but relevant for Wales' context.

that many children and young people feel confident in everyday communication, but confidence is weaker in self-expression, public speaking, presentations and other practical oracy skills, especially during early adolescence. Children receiving free school meals rated themselves lower across speaking and listening areas, while teacher responses suggested that speaking and listening activities are less consistent in secondary school. This points to the need for structured oracy opportunities across the secondary curriculum.

3.75 Support bilingual and Welsh-language engagement in meaningful, relevant ways: Estyn's 2024 report on Welsh reading found that a minority of learners had lost confidence to communicate and read in Welsh following the pandemic, and that there were fewer Welsh-medium reading schemes or platforms than English-medium ones. Rhys and Smith's 2022 study of Welsh as a second language found that students often experienced a disconnect between school Welsh lessons and Welsh in everyday life, with lessons seen as too exam-focused and insufficiently linked to language use, proficiency or appreciation. These findings suggest that secondary Welsh literacy resources need to be engaging, practical, plentiful and connected to real-life language use.

3.76 Improve representation and diversity in texts: Olive, Maelor and Davies' 2024 study on teaching literatures in secondary schools in Wales found that women and authors of colour were under-represented in the texts taught, with no authors of colour of Welsh-language texts reported in the sample. The study authors argue that lack of diversity can negatively affect learners' sense of belonging, worldview, self-image, relationship with reading and educational attainment. This suggests that secondary resources should support more diverse, inclusive and representative text choices in Welsh, English and international languages.

3.77 Support critical digital and AI literacy: National Literacy Trust's UK evidence on young people's use of generative AI suggests that AI can support vocabulary, spelling, summarising and understanding texts,

but may also encourage over-reliance or copying. OECD evidence on digital devices in France also cautions that leisure use of devices in school can distract learners and is associated with lower performance and belonging, while learning-related digital use can be beneficial when well supported. This means that digital tools should be used deliberately, with adult guidance, clear literacy aims and attention to independence and critical thinking.

Reading for pleasure

3.78 The preceding sections have considered literacy interventions by age group, including the role of early shared reading, structured teaching, targeted support, school reading cultures, disciplinary literacy and bilingual provision. This section focuses specifically on the cross-cutting approaches that appear most relevant to improving engagement and behaviour outcomes and equity and context outcomes.

3.79 These outcomes are important because literacy development is not shaped by skills instruction alone. Children and young people are more likely to engage with reading, writing and communication when they have access to appealing resources, feel confident, see literacy as relevant to their lives, and encounter materials that reflect their identities, languages and interests. The evidence also shows that engagement is affected by practical and structural barriers, including poverty, limited book access, lack of time, low confidence, language mismatch, limited representation, additional learning needs and unequal access to support.

Making reading enjoyable, meaningful and choice-led

3.80 A consistent message is that enjoyment and choice are central to reading engagement. The UK Department for Education evidence briefing on reading for pleasure highlights positive relationships between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment, while also noting that choice and interest are important in developing reading for pleasure. It also identifies relationships with parents,

teachers and libraries as important influences on children's reading journeys.

3.81 National Literacy Trust evidence from 2025 similarly suggests that re-engaging children and young people requires personalised and flexible approaches that give them choice, connect reading to their interests and wider media habits, and provide access to appealing print and digital materials. This is particularly important because reading enjoyment and daily reading were reported to be at historically low levels among eight to 18-year-olds.

3.82 For teenagers, the National Literacy Trust's Teenage reading: (Re)framing the challenge argues that adolescence is a critical period for reading engagement and that many teenagers still value reading despite increasing challenges to do so. This suggests that secondary-age engagement strategies need to reflect young people's real lives, rather than assuming that disengagement means young people do not value reading.

3.83 Effective approaches include:

- giving learners meaningful choice over what they read
- offering texts that connect with learners' interests, identities and everyday lives
- including varied formats, such as fiction, non-fiction, comics, poetry, song lyrics, audiobooks, digital texts and short-form reading
- recognising digital and informal reading as part of young people's literacy lives
- avoiding approaches that make reading feel only like assessment or compulsory schoolwork
- supporting learners to find the right text, format or entry point for them

Building confidence and positive literacy identity

3.84 Engagement is closely linked to whether learners feel successful and see themselves as readers, writers and communicators. The National

Literacy Trust's analysis of children and young people's own comments about reading shows that reading engagement is shaped by feelings, confidence, habits, support, access and environment. Keen readers often describe reading as joyful, calming and meaningful, while averse readers are more likely to experience it as boring, difficult, irrelevant, effortful or forced.

3.85 This suggests that interventions should not only provide resources but should also help learners experience reading as achievable and personally meaningful. Creative and social approaches can be useful here. For example, evidence on Readers' Theatre shows benefits for motivation, engagement and confidence, alongside reading fluency and decoding. UK evidence from BookTrust's Letterbox Club also highlights children's reported enjoyment, confidence and sense of belonging after receiving individually addressed book parcels.

3.86 Effective approaches include:

- matching materials to learners' confidence as well as their reading level
- offering accessible formats for reluctant or struggling readers
- using creative responses, performance, storytelling, poetry and discussion
- celebrating effort, progress and personal response
- avoiding practices that make learners feel exposed or judged
- supporting children and young people to see themselves as capable readers, writers and communicators

Combining access with encouragement and sustained support

3.87 Book access is important, but evidence suggests that access alone is not always sufficient. Interventions appear stronger when books are combined with encouragement, guidance, routines, discussion or trusted support.

3.88 BookTrust's Bookstart Toddler and Pre-schooler Impact Report 2024-25 covering Wales, England, and Northern Ireland, found that the programme prompted families to read or share books and stories

more often, helped some establish reading routines, and increased parental confidence. Similarly, Bookseed in Ireland found benefits relating to positive parent-infant relationships, support for language development and the development of a general interest in books, with some parents beginning to read earlier and more regularly with their baby.

3.89 The evaluation of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in a UK city found that families registered for a year or more reported more frequent parent-child reading interactions than families not receiving books and were more likely to read daily than those registered for less than a year. This suggests that sustained book gifting can influence home literacy behaviours more effectively than one-off provision.

3.90 However, evaluations of book gifting for children in care show that book provision is not automatically enough to improve outcomes. Mooney et al.'s evaluation of the Letterbox Club in Northern Ireland found no evidence of impact on measured outcomes and concluded that good intentions are not enough without a clear theory of change and support for foster carer engagement. Connolly et al.'s evaluation of Reading Together in England similarly found no evidence of effectiveness, although the authors note that the Covid-19 pandemic and national lockdown may have affected implementation and outcomes.

3.91 Effective approaches include:

- linking resource provision to guidance, encouragement or facilitated activity
- ensuring adults know how to use resources with children and young people
- making resources feel personal, exciting and age-appropriate
- sustaining engagement over time rather than relying on one-off provision
- building in follow-up contact, discussion, prompts or shared activities

- ensuring initiatives have a clear theory of change

Addressing unequal access to books, libraries and reading opportunities

3.92 Equity outcomes depend partly on whether children and young people can access books and literacy-rich environments. According to National Literacy Trust's 2025 report, book ownership is lower among some children, including those in Wales compared to the UK average, with a likely negative associative effect on reading enjoyment, frequency and self-perceived reading ability.

3.93 Evidence from school and public library programmes also points to the importance of free and accessible reading opportunities. The Libraries for Primaries evaluation found that investment in school libraries, training and resources improved children's access to high-quality books, reading enjoyment, confidence and reading frequency, with promising evidence of improved reading attainment for children most in need of support.

3.94 Effective approaches include:

- providing free or low-cost access to appealing books and resources
- targeting learners with fewer books at home
- investing in school libraries, class libraries and public library links
- ensuring book collections are current, diverse and age-appropriate
- supporting groups with lower levels of book ownership, including older learners, boys and learners receiving free school meals
- treating book access as an equity issue, not only a resource issue

Using trusted and local routes to reach families and communities

3.95 For families facing barriers, how an intervention is delivered can be as important as what is delivered. Evidence from Bookseed in Ireland, BookTrust programmes and the National Literacy Trust's Start for Life campaign in England highlights the value of trusted delivery routes, including health services, libraries, early years providers, Family Hubs, schools, local partners, volunteers and literacy champions.

3.96 These routes can help reach families who may not actively seek literacy support, particularly where barriers include cost, transport, lack of confidence, limited local provision or uncertainty about how to support children's literacy.

3.97 Effective approaches include:

- delivering through services and settings families already use
- working with schools, libraries, health visitors, Family Hubs and community partners
- using local champions, practitioners and volunteers
- embedding literacy support into wider family and community provision
- designing support around the needs, barriers and strengths of each local community
- reducing the burden on families to find and navigate support

Making representation meaningful and embedded

3.98 Representation is important for both engagement and equity. BookTrust's work on representation in the UK argues that diversity in stories, characters and illustrations can affect how young readers see themselves and can motivate children to read. However, the evidence also highlights continuing gaps in the representativeness of children's literature. As seen above this is particularly relevant in Wales.

3.99 Effective approaches include:

- including diverse characters, authors, illustrators, communities and settings

- ensuring representation is present across ordinary stories and genres, not only issue-based texts (where a particular identity, experience or social issue is the main focus of the plot)
- diversifying Welsh-language as well as English-language resources
- including texts that reflect different ethnicities, languages, family structures, abilities and localities
- using author visits and role models to support aspiration and motivation
- avoiding tokenistic or problem-focused representation

Designing for Welsh, English and multilingual contexts

3.100 For Wales, equity and context outcomes must include language context. The evidence points to the importance of supporting Welsh-English biliteracy, recognising learners' home language experiences and ensuring that Welsh-medium resources, assessment tools and support are available across age ranges and learner needs. It also points to gaps in Welsh-language resources, reading schemes, assessment tools and specialist support, particularly for learners with ALN.

3.101 International evidence also supports the value of bilingual approaches. Studies from Ireland and the Basque Country suggest that minority-language immersion can support literacy in both majority and minority languages. Evidence from Catalonia and wider multilingual research further emphasises the importance of recognising learners' full linguistic repertoires, rather than treating multilingualism as a deficit.

3.102 Effective approaches include:

- providing high-quality resources in Welsh and English
- supporting transfer between languages
- recognising home language experience and multilingual identity
- using translanguaging where appropriate

- developing Welsh-language resources for a wider range of ages, abilities and needs
- ensuring assessment and diagnostic tools are suitable for bilingual learners
- supporting confidence and enjoyment in reading Welsh, not only attainment

Reducing practical and structural barriers to participation

3.103 Low engagement is not always caused by low interest. Families and learners may face practical and structural barriers that make it harder to participate in literacy activities. National Literacy Trust's UK wide evidence on parents' support for young children's literacy identifies barriers such as time, cost, transport, limited local provision and lack of support. BookTrust evidence on children experiencing vulnerability in Wales, England, and Northern Ireland, also shows that foster, kinship and adoptive families may face general barriers to reading alongside additional pressures.

3.104 Effective approaches include:

- making resources free or low cost
- offering flexible routes into participation
- providing simple and practical guidance
- reducing reliance on transport, paid activities or high parental confidence
- designing resources for families with limited time
- supporting foster, kinship, adoptive and vulnerable family contexts
- giving children agency and choice in how they engage

Using digital tools inclusively and carefully

3.105 Digital formats can widen access and engagement for some learners, particularly those who are less engaged with print. National Literacy Trust's UK evidence on print and digital reading suggests that digital reading is now a significant part of children and young people's

everyday literacy and may be particularly important for some less-engaged readers, boys and children receiving free school meals.

3.106 However, digital tools are not automatically effective. Evidence on Microsoft's Immersive Reader found no significant overall impact on attainment, partly because of inconsistent use, limited teacher training, technical problems and lack of IT resources. Evidence on generative AI also suggests both potential benefits and risks, including support for vocabulary, spelling and summarising, but concerns about copying, over-reliance and weaker critical engagement among some groups.

3.107 Effective approaches include:

- valuing both print and digital reading at school, home and in the community
- using digital formats to widen access for less-engaged learners
- providing clear adult guidance and being explicit about which literacy skills or behaviours the digital tool is intended to support
- avoiding technology-only solutions
- supporting critical, ethical and reflective AI use
- addressing digital access, confidence and infrastructure gaps
- ensuring digital tools support independence rather than dependency

3.108 Overall, the evidence suggests that improving literacy outcomes requires a balanced approach that addresses both core literacy skills and the wider conditions that enable children and young people to engage with literacy. Across the 3 age phases, the emphasis changes: for children aged 0 to 3 years, the priority is building early language, shared reading routines and parent confidence; for primary-aged children, it is combining explicit literacy teaching with reading enjoyment, access to books and inclusive support; and for secondary-aged learners, it is sustaining engagement while strengthening

subject-specific reading, writing, oracy and critical literacy across the curriculum.

3.109 Across all ages, the most promising approaches are those that combine access, quality, relevance, consistency and support. Literacy resources are more likely to make a sustained difference when they are engaging, age-appropriate, available in Welsh and English, inclusive of different learners' identities and needs, and supported by practitioners, families, libraries, health services and community partners. The implication for future resource development is that literacy interventions should not focus only on whether learners can read and write better, but also on whether they want to engage with literacy, have equitable access to the right resources, feel confident using them, and can build lasting literacy habits in the contexts where they live and learn.

International examples of initiatives promoting reading for pleasure

3.110 The literature review and, to a lesser extent, the qualitative stakeholder engagement (discussed later in this report) identified a range of international examples used to promote reading for pleasure. These included book-gifting programmes, library-based initiatives, digital access interventions, reading motivation projects, and wider cultural practices. Stakeholders (specifically scoping interviewees and practitioners) also highlighted examples where reading was perceived to be embedded in national identity or everyday life. For example, one stakeholder highlighted Catalonia, where Diada de Sant Jordi / Saint George's Day, also known as the Day of Books and Roses, involves the traditional gifting of books and roses. Stakeholders also referred to Finland and Iceland as countries where reading was described as culturally normalised. Together, these examples suggest that stakeholders viewed wider cultural context as relevant to how reading for pleasure is encouraged, alongside formal programmes and initiatives.

3.111 Several literature review examples focused on early years book-gifting and family engagement. In Ireland, the Bookseed programme provides early book-gifting packs through child health visits, supporting positive parent-child relationships, language development and children's interest in books. Similarly, the Netherlands Bookstart programme provides babies with books, early reading guidance, and free library membership, with follow-up evidence indicating longer-term language benefits before formal reading begins. Programme evidence on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library shows that it operates in the United States, Canada, the UK, Australia, and the Republic of Ireland, and had distributed over 152 million books across these countries as of January 2021. These examples illustrate how book-gifting has been used internationally, as in Wales, to increase early book access and encourage home reading routines.

3.112 The literature review also identified initiatives focused on maintaining access to reading materials beyond the classroom. Evidence from public library summer reading programmes in the United States found that participating learners avoided summer reading loss and returned to school with stronger motivation, enjoyment, and confidence. A German e-reader intervention provided low-income 11-12-year-olds with access to digital books, with evaluation evidence indicating increased reading engagement and academic performance, including reading comprehension. The Letterbox Club, a UK BookTrust programme, also provides parcels of books, activities, and stationery for vulnerable and looked-after children to encourage reading at home. These examples highlight the importance of access, particularly for learners with fewer reading materials at home, during periods outside normal school provision, or where learners may face additional barriers to reading.

3.113 Other literature review examples focused on increasing motivation and enjoyment through choice and social reading. In Finland, the JEKKU and LUKUINTO projects promoted reading enjoyment through book choice, social reading activities, and varied reading materials;

LUKUINTO involved almost 15,000 children. Stakeholders also referred to the National Literacy Trust as an example of an organisation delivering reading-for-pleasure initiatives in the UK. Its programmes include the Young Readers Programme, which supports book choice and reading enjoyment, and Game Changers, which aims to re-engage students who have disengaged from reading.

3.114 Some examples also highlighted the relationship between reading, language, and identity. The literature review identified an after-school reading support programme in Catalonia that enabled children to use Catalan, Spanish, and home languages in reading activities. The evidence suggested that this supported engagement and identity by allowing children to draw on languages and experiences that were meaningful to them. Stakeholders also identified the Basque Country as a relevant comparator for Wales, reflecting similar tensions between a minoritised language and a dominant/global language. Stakeholders noted that the Basque Country places emphasis on *"adaptation rather than translation"* of resources, particularly to ensure materials reflect local language and culture.

3.115 Stakeholder evidence also cautioned against assuming that successful international initiatives could be transferred directly into Wales. One stakeholder stated that *"interventions can be introduced in Wales, but only through adaptation rather than adoption."* This reflected a wider view that international examples may offer useful learning but would need to be adapted to Wales' specific context, including local reading cultures, Welsh-medium resource availability, cost, infrastructure, and differences in how families and learners engage with reading. International examples were therefore viewed as sources of learning and inspiration, rather than models to be copied wholesale.

International best practice: lessons for Wales

3.116 Lessons Wales can take from international examples are:

3.117 Bilingualism as an asset to literacy development. International evidence from bilingual and minoritised language contexts suggests that literacy development in one language can support wider language and learning outcomes, provided that resources and pedagogy are designed intentionally. For Wales, this means avoiding a deficit view of bilingual learners and instead designing resources that support learners to develop confidence and competence in both Welsh and English.

3.118 Recognise the importance of supporting biliteracy by helping learners transfer skills between Welsh and English. Resources should help learners make connections across languages, rather than treating each language in isolation. This could include explicit links between vocabulary, decoding, comprehension, grammar, morphology and reading strategies. In practice, this means developing resources that help practitioners and learners understand how skills developed in one language can support literacy development in another.

3.119 Bilingual resources need to be adapted, not simply translated, particularly where resources need to reflect local language, culture and identity. For Wales, this means that Welsh-medium resources should feel authentic and culturally meaningful in their own right, rather than appearing as translated versions of English-language materials.

3.120 Provide sustained phonological support for bilingual learners with dyslexia or reading difficulties. This is particularly relevant in Wales because learners may need support across Welsh and English, and because the availability of Welsh-medium assessment tools, diagnostic resources and specialist support is uneven. Future resource development should therefore include accessible, bilingual support for decoding, phonological awareness, fluency and comprehension, including for learners with ALN or additional literacy needs.

3.121 Informal and community spaces can support engagement. International examples show that reading for pleasure can be promoted beyond the classroom through libraries, after-school programmes, cultural events and wider community practices. For Wales, this suggests that literacy resources should not only be designed for formal classroom use. They should also support families, libraries, community partners and informal learning spaces to make reading visible, enjoyable and accessible.

3.122 Learners should be able to draw on Welsh, English and other home languages where relevant. Evidence from plurilingual contexts suggests that allowing children and young people to use their full linguistic repertoire can support engagement, identity and meaning making. In Wales, this is relevant not only to Welsh-English biliteracy, but also to multilingual learners whose home languages form part of their literacy lives.

3.123 Resources should include diverse and meaningful representation to support identity and motivation. Learners are more likely to engage with reading when texts reflect their lives, communities, interests and aspirations. This includes representation across Welsh-language, English-language and multilingual resources.

3.124 Wales should start early through shared reading, book gifting, songs, stories and parent and carer-child interaction. International book-gifting and early years examples show the value of introducing books and reading routines before formal schooling.

3.125 Resources should be delivered through trusted routes, including health visitors, schools, libraries and community partners. Access is not only about whether resources exist, but whether they reach the children, families and practitioners who need them. Delivery through trusted local routes can help reduce barriers linked to cost, confidence, transport, language and awareness.

3.126 Access to books and other literacy resources should be combined with guidance, encouragement and follow-up support. The

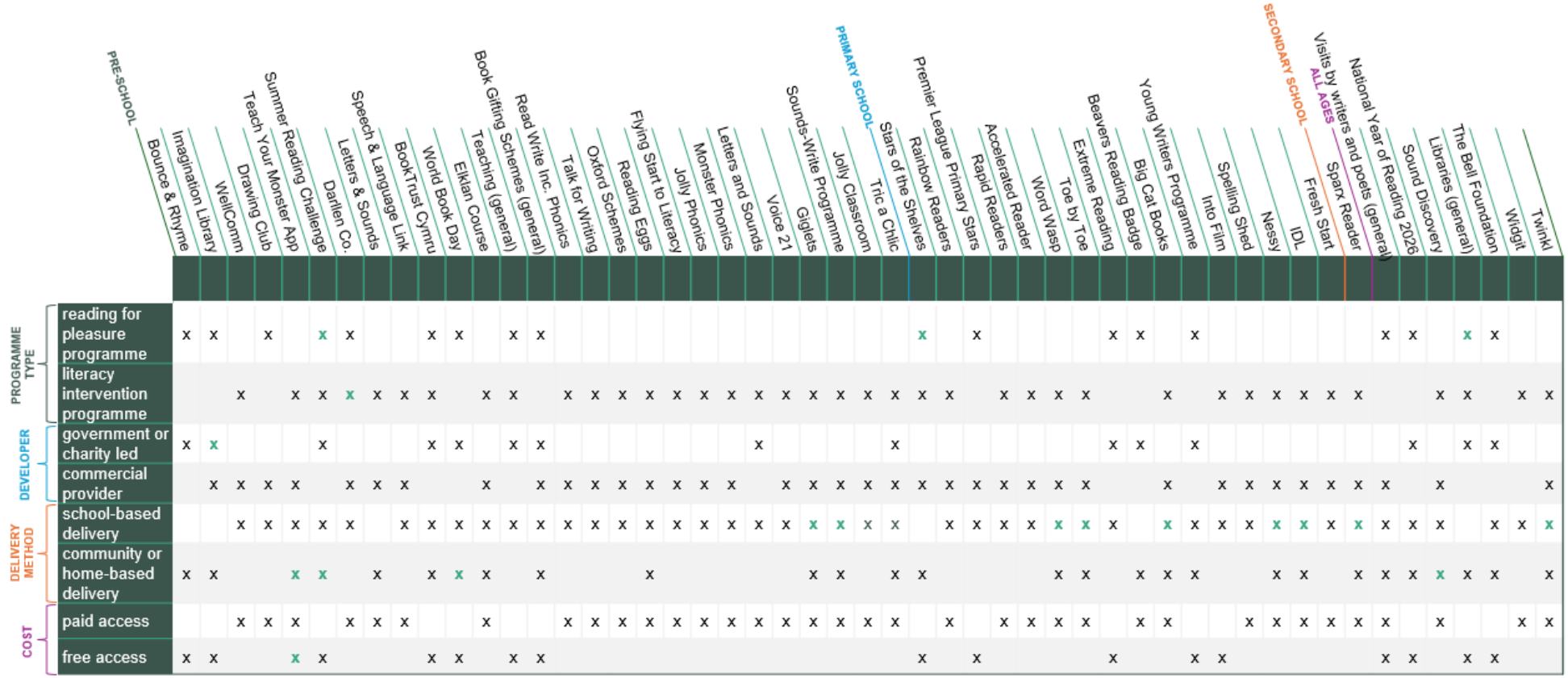
international evidence suggests that providing books or resources is unlikely to be sufficient on its own. Greater impact is likely where adults are supported to use resources confidently, where children are encouraged to choose and enjoy reading, and where initiatives are sustained over time.

3.127 Overall, the lesson for Wales is that literacy resources should be bilingual, inclusive, culturally meaningful and practically accessible. They should support Welsh and English literacy, recognise multilingual learners' wider language experiences, provide equitable support for learners with additional needs, and help families, practitioners and communities build lasting reading habits. The aim should be to adapt the strongest principles from international practice to Wales' own linguistic, cultural and educational context.

Programmes in Wales

3.128 Across the interviews and focus groups with all stakeholders, a total of 51 unique programmes were cited. Whilst this does not necessarily equate to all the initiatives supporting literacy and reading in Wales, it is likely to reflect the main ones familiar to teachers and other stakeholders. This section provides a review of these programmes via an analysis of four themes: age, programme type, developer and delivery method, and costs. It is important to reiterate that programmes discussed in this section only represent awareness and/or use amongst stakeholders engaged in this research and do not necessarily represent the full landscape of literacy intervention programmes or initiatives promoting reading for pleasure that are available in Wales.

Figure 3.1: Programmes cited by stakeholders



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 and '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.*

3.129 Age is a fundamental way of segmenting the scope of programmes discussed by stakeholders. Analysis found that the greatest share of identified programmes is available at the pre-school level (52%), with primary-age programmes accounting for almost a third (32%), programmes aimed at secondary school-aged learners just 2% and all ages programmes making up the remaining 14%. Importantly, stakeholders made no reference to programmes available primarily to learners past compulsory education in ages 16 and over, indicating that the greatest access point to embed ideas of reading for pleasure is with readers in ages 0 to 12. There is an opportunity to either create additional programmes or enhance awareness of reading for pleasure and literacy intervention for ages 12 and over.

3.130 Most of the programmes mentioned by stakeholders are intended for literacy intervention (72%). However, there is some limited overlap in programmes which appear to be developed to enhance literacy and enjoyment of reading (12%). In four cases, programmes appeared to explicitly cover both learning pathways. These suggest an over reliance on developing literacy skills to develop a sense of reading for pleasure in young learners.

3.131 The programmes identified by stakeholders are predominantly school delivered and commercially developed. Of the 50 known programmes, 36 are commercially produced, where only 14 programmes are government- or charity-led. Delivery methods demonstrate a strong reliance on institutional teaching, with 35 programmes delivered primarily through school-based settings, in comparison with 18 programmes delivered through community or home-based models. Programmes often require paid subscriptions or training packages which can create inequity in reading access or enjoyment due to potential cost barriers.

3.132 The concentration of paid-access programmes is striking, with 34 of the identified programmes only being available at a cost to practitioners or households. While some information about the costs

of individual programmes was not publicly available, expenses could range from £20 for a few worksheets or books, to £6,000+ for training or teaching lesson plans. Given that only 14 of the programmes are identified as being largely freely accessible, evidence suggests that access to both literacy intervention and reading for pleasure may be shaped by institutional funding capacity and household resources rather than by need alone. This creates the potential for inequitable access for under-resourced schools and poorer families in Wales. However, given that findings originate from a limited set of stakeholders, findings may also represent a lack of awareness of free resources by parents and teachers alike. If this is the case, there may be opportunities to expand and embed knowledge of available reading programmes.

3.133 The stakeholder comments indicate a strong reliance on commercially developed and paid materials which are delivered in school-based settings. Typically, resources are most commonly available to children aged 0-12, where older children appear to have less access to both literacy intervention and reading for pleasure programmes. This suggests that as learners age there are less accessible pathways to support reading for pleasure sustainably. Opportunities may exist in expanding marketing for reading programmes, developing programmes for learners aged 12 and over, and validating the number of free or otherwise accessible resources to enrich reading for pleasure in Wales.

Gaps and shortcomings in initiatives promoting reading for pleasure

3.134 Stakeholders identified several perceived shortcomings both in terms of dedicated initiatives aimed to encourage reading for pleasure as well as the wider landscape intended to support literacy and stimulate a lifelong love of reading.

3.135 A concern for scoping stakeholders and practitioners is the limited evidence of impact of existing programmes, particularly in relation to

their effectiveness in getting children and learners to read for pleasure: *"very few of them [initiatives], if any, have been tested sufficiently"* (scoping stakeholder)

3.136 Many recognised the challenges in doing this, partly because – unlike improvements in literacy – enjoyment of reading is difficult to measure. Furthermore, initiatives do not operate in isolation of one another, but instead schools are commonly *"layering things on top of one another"*, making attribution a challenge.

3.137 This issue is exacerbated by that fact that formal initiatives or programmes are often short-term and ad hoc rather than joined up and sustained over time. Parents were critical of the short-term nature of some initiatives, which run *"for a couple of weeks"* and then *"fizzle out",* something that not only creates challenges for assessing outcomes but can also limit the overall impact.

3.138 Numerous practitioners described current provision as *"patchy"*, *"very siloed"* or *"scattered, with limited coordination"*. It was suggested that schools face *"a messy offer"* in terms of what they can access, making it hard to identify which programmes genuinely support reading for pleasure versus skills remediation. Where there is a cost associated with the initiatives, this exacerbates the issue, in the context of very limited school budgets.

3.139 In terms of what initiatives are available, many of those contributing to the research pointed to an insufficient emphasis on motivation for or enjoyment of reading. One scoping stakeholder commented that provision is commonly *"intervention-focused, rather than designed to foster enjoyment"* and that reading for pleasure can be *"overshadowed by phonics and attainment-focused interventions."* Parents felt that programmes often focus on *"extrinsic rewards"* rather than fostering *"intrinsic motivation"* or *"sustained enjoyment"* whilst practitioners suggested that long, *"overstructured"* or *"rigid"* sessions can reduce enjoyment and lead to learners disengaging with reading out of choice. It was also suggested that teachers are not necessarily

provided with training on how to motivate and inspire reading for pleasure.

3.140 There was a widespread sentiment amongst practitioners, parents and scoping stakeholders that the availability of initiatives promoting reading decreases with age and that whilst there is a strong focus on early years (in the form of book gifting schemes, and parent and toddler reading groups, for example) *"nothing exists for teenagers"* (parent). This perception is endorsed by the target age profile of the initiatives that stakeholders identified, as described in the section immediately above.

3.141 One scoping stakeholder identified an assumption that once children can read, they no longer need support with reading for pleasure, whilst parents in one group felt that support with reading from schools can *"drop off"* once learners become *"free readers"*.

3.142 Part of the problem relates to the types of books that are available and a specific lack of age-appropriate books for older children (in terms of subject matter) who have weaker literacy skills but *"don't want to be seen as reading baby books"* (practitioner).

3.143 Several practitioners and stakeholders referred to what one teacher in a special school described as a "*severe lack of ALN-appropriate resources [and] very limited materials suited to older learners with cognitive delay."* It was suggested that whilst resources can be *"too childlike in design"* they can still be *"cognitively inaccessible for ALN learners".*

3.144 The research identified conflicting views on the role and impact of digital provision; some suggest the growth in digital platforms has *"displaced investment in physical books"* (scoping stakeholder) whilst others suggested that existing initiatives focus too much on traditional book-based reading and do not reflect how children actually read today, i.e.: *"the multimodal side of reading"* (scoping stakeholder).

3.145 The financial cost of subscriptions to digital platforms and physical books were considered to be an issue affecting many schools in

Wales. Restricted budgets mean school are unable to keep purchasing *"new, relevant books that reflect children's lives and interests"* (scoping stakeholder).

3.146 Parents described *"limited school budgets"* resulting in *"old, damaged books"* whilst a practitioner referred to books that *are "outdated and not in good condition"* in many schools and early years settings. This creates a missed opportunity to inspire children and young people to choose books to read that are contemporary and of interest to them.

3.147 In addition to schools lacking books of sufficient quality and breadth, it was suggested that declining levels of library access is undermining aspirations to promote reading for pleasure. For rural areas in particular there can be *"access issues where local libraries have closed"* and the alternative is *"2 bus rides away"* and so is *"not realistic"* (scoping stakeholder). Even where public libraries are available, they may have reduced hours and/or be understocked libraries: *"Libraries don't have the books, or there are no local libraries."* (scoping stakeholder).

3.148 Numerous scoping stakeholders, parents and practitioners highlighted gaps in Welsh language fiction. They cited a lack of high-quality Welsh medium books for teenagers, which results in older learners *"switching"* to English *"to access authors and books they want to read."* (scoping stakeholder).

3.149 Some stakeholders were critical of the lack of diversity of genre in Welsh-medium fiction. For example, stories linked to sport, science fiction or creative arts. More broadly, there was a suggestion that Welsh texts are not always age-appropriate, being either *"too simplistic"* or *"excessively formal"*, which *"alienates both parents and children"* (parent).

3.150 Other issues in relation to the provision of Welsh-language fiction for children and young people identified in the research included regional mismatches in some novels, for instance the use of North Wales dialect or West Wales settings that can exclude learners from other

areas of Wales, and an over-reliance on books translated from English, rather than books originally written in Welsh.

3.151 One stakeholder suggested that literacy programmes typically assume a single language learner and are not always designed with bilingual sequencing in mind**.**

Research on initiatives promoting reading for pleasure

Research in Wales

3.152 Whilst the premise of this question was to explore awareness of any research or evaluations of initiatives promoting reading for pleasure, in most instances the examples cited were literacy interventions (e.g.: programmes focused on phonics and decoding skills, reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension) that have been evaluated rather that initiatives aimed to develop learner interest in reading out of choice. One example cited was Research Informed Literacy with Language (RILL), which was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on language and literacy development. The programme has recently been evaluated (results yet to be published), with funding from the Nuffield Foundation and the Welsh Government.

3.153 A minority of stakeholders referred to examples of research into or evaluation of enrichment initiatives, though they had limited knowledge of findings or conclusions from the research:

"I'm aware that the Premier League Foundation evaluate their [Premier League Primary Stars] programme, but I don't know whether literacy outcomes are included." (scoping stakeholder)

"The National Literacy Trust has carried out research on interventions such as World Book Day and the Summer Reading Challenge." (scoping stakeholder)

3.154 Another scoping stakeholder referred to *"mixed-methods evaluations"* of Bookstart, Pori Drwy Stori and Letterbox Club and a 3-wave national survey of children's reading behaviours.

3.155 The limited feedback from stakeholders indicates that the bulk of evidence is perceived to focus on *why* reading (and to a lesser extent reading for pleasure) matters, not *what* makes a programme effective. The only exception to this that was mentioned is the 2023 and 2024 Estyn reports on developing reading skills (English and Welsh, respectively), which identified stronger literacy and reading engagement in schools with well-resourced, well-used school libraries.

International research

3.156 This research also aimed to capture any awareness of international examples of research into initiatives promoting reading for pleasure. In this instance, only scoping stakeholders shared examples, and in all but one instance, they cited research related to the effectiveness of literacy interventions or programmes rather than initiatives intended to inspire reading out of choice.

3.157 Examples mentioned by scoping stakeholders included:

- International research into the simple view of reading (SVR)
- Research into the effect of system-level literacy reform evidence in New Zealand and Mississippi.
- International research into the cognitive and educational benefits of print reading (compared with screen-based reading), which included improved comprehension, retention and higher order reading skills; however, no reference to specific countries included in the research was provided.

3.158 The only example of research into an initiative promoting reading for pleasure mentioned in interviews was a review of intensive reading-for-pleasure programmes run by the National Literacy Trust in England, which showed both short-term attainment gains and longer-term increases in reading for pleasure.

Research gaps on initiatives promoting reading for pleasure

3.159 Stakeholders were also asked about their awareness of any gaps in the existing research evidence on initiatives aimed to encourage reading for pleasure. Again, many interpreted this question as relating to research into literacy programmes, either as well as or instead of enrichment initiatives.

3.160 Amongst those who answered this question[3], there were widespread references to a lack of benchmarking, value-for-money assessment or comparative evaluation: *"there's no comprehensive, system-wide evidence base on what works best in Wales. Addressing this gap [should be] a major priority for Welsh Government and Adnodd."* (scoping stakeholder)

3.161 One scoping stakeholder suggested that whilst pilot studies *"show positive indicators"*, this is not reinforced by large-scale, long-term evaluation of impact.

3.162 Another scoping stakeholder suggested that existing research evidence is primarily based on anecdotal evidence or feedback from Estyn: *"…evidence is often practice-based or inspection-led, rather than from large-scale experimental studies."* (scoping stakeholder).

3.163 Specific gaps in the research evidence were noted in:

- The effectiveness of print versus digital reading is supporting literacy development and encouraging reading for pleasure
- What works in disadvantaged and lower-performing schools (the perception was that the focus of existing research evidence is on higher-performing schools in more affluent areas)
- Research into whole-system approaches: *"[there's] a gap in evidence examining joined-up, holistic approaches that link schools, families, libraries and communities, rather than isolated classroom interventions."* (scoping stakeholder)

[3] Almost all substantive responses to this question came from scoping stakeholders.

- Research on Welsh versus English literacy resources and bilingual progression.
- Evidence specific to Wales, with data *"often combined with England" and including "very few respondents from Wales… [making it] hard to understand what is particular to Wales."* (scoping stakeholder)

Factors affecting practitioner engagement in initiatives

Barriers

3.164 According to many scoping stakeholders, a major barrier to practitioner engagement with literacy initiatives was the time and capacity available within schools. Practitioners themselves also reported that limited time restricted their ability to engage fully with initiatives, adapt resources creatively or tailor support to individual learner needs. Instead, staff were often required to prioritise immediate operational and curriculum demands. This was particularly evident where reading for pleasure programmes were perceived as additional to core teaching responsibilities, rather than as an integral part of literacy provision. Other practitioners also noted that the busy curriculum limited opportunities to incorporate activities such as library visits into already busy school schedules.

3.165 Resource availability was also identified as an important factor limiting practitioner engagement. Practitioners outlined how there was limited staff knowledge around where to find high quality and representative literature to use in the classroom. A lack of awareness of available initiatives aimed at promoting reading for pleasure (when compared with those specifically relating to literacy pedagogy) amongst practitioners was also identified as a factor affecting engagement. Some practitioners reported limited exposure to relevant programmes, with one stating "*I wouldn't say that I've come across that much [programmes specifically promoting reading for pleasure]*".

3.166 Existing resources were also described as outdated or "*not fit for purpose*", with limited funding restricting schools' ability to update

materials so that they better reflect learners' interests and experiences (practitioner).

3.167 The availability of Welsh-medium resources was identified as a particular concern, with practitioners reporting that current provision was insufficient to support consistent engagement across Welsh-medium and bilingual settings.

3.168 Reduced library and book service infrastructure was also seen as contributing to reduced access to resources, limiting what practitioners can use to support reading for pleasure.

3.169 A further barrier related to the perceived misalignment between available resources and the Curriculum for Wales. Practitioners reported that some resources developed in England set expectations that were seen to be higher than those in Wales and noted challenges when attempting to match English year group labels to progression stages in Wales. Several practitioners mentioned that the current resources are not aligned with Curriculum for Wales itself. Core literacy skills are not necessarily being built progressively or explicitly across the curriculum, and, for one practitioner, creative approaches sit uneasily alongside GCSE demands.

3.170 Practitioners' personal attitudes towards reading also shaped engagement. A recurring theme from scoping stakeholders was that some practitioners may not read for pleasure themselves, which can make it harder for them to model enthusiasm for reading or recommend texts confidently to learners. One scoping stakeholder also identified a subject divide in engagement with reading initiatives, stating that in their experience, practitioners in STEM subjects never participate. There was a view that some practitioners lacked confidence in supporting reading beyond technical skills such as phonics and vocabulary. This was linked to a perception by another scoping stakeholder that "*teachers are absolutely terrified… they do not see themselves as languages teachers.*"

3.171 Practitioner engagement was also shaped by the wider reading culture within schools. In some schools, engagement was seen to be limited by the absence of a "*whole school reading culture*" (scoping stakeholder) and leadership that did not prioritise reading for pleasure.

3.172 Finally, it was highlighted by a scoping stakeholder that the outcomes of reading for pleasure initiatives can be difficult to measure, while schools are often required to demonstrate progress through measurable outcomes.

Enablers

3.173 Practitioners also identified a range of factors that made engagement with literacy initiatives easier for them. A key enabler was access to ready-made materials that could be used without requiring heavy adaptation. This was particularly important given that time and capacity were identified as major barriers to engagement. Practitioners widely valued programmes and initiatives that offered flexibility and could be integrated naturally into classroom routines, such as shared reading activities or short daily sessions. Some practitioners also identified online literacy resources as enabling engagement, highlighting the breadth of resources available digitally and the potential for digital platforms to support different modes of learning. There was also a clear preference for readymade materials that are available in multi-medium provision, and that are affordable for schools to access and sustain.

3.174 Access to high-quality professional learning was also identified as an important enabler. A scoping stakeholder reported that training could help build confidence in supporting literacy beyond basic skills such as phonics, decoding and vocabulary. Structured and ongoing support was viewed by scoping stakeholders as particularly important where it helped practitioners understand how to use resources effectively and adapt them to learner needs. In addition, institutional and network-based knowledge sharing was seen as a way of sharing effective practice.

3.175 Practitioners also highlighted the importance of clearer guidance and evidence about what works. For one practitioner, approaches that demonstrate promptly that they are working can help encourage sustained use and make it easier for practitioners to continue with an initiative.

3.176 School leadership support was another important enabler of engagement. Scoping stakeholders saw that where senior leaders actively prioritised literacy and reading for pleasure, practitioners were more likely to feel that this work was valued and protected. Leadership support is also important in creating the practical conditions for engagement, including allocating budget, providing time, arranging cover and enabling staff to attend relevant training.

3.177 Age-appropriate resources were identified as a factor supporting engagement. Practitioners and scoping stakeholders highlighted the importance of systems that match books to learners' reading stage, rather than relying solely on age-based categorisation. At the same time, resources need to feel age-appropriate in terms of themes, presentation and interests. Practitioners also emphasised the need for suitable formats across different ages, including durable and play-based books for early years settings.

3.178 Finally, practitioners expressed a clear preference for materials and programmes that aligned with the Curriculum for Wales and wider literacy priorities. Initiatives were seen as more useful where resources could be used across the curriculum, rather than being confined to discrete literacy or language lessons. This was important in helping practitioners position reading and literacy as part of wider teaching and learning, rather than as an additional activity competing with existing curriculum demands.

Factors affecting learner engagement in initiatives and reading for pleasure in general

Barriers

3.179 A major barrier to learner engagement with literacy initiatives was weak foundational reading skills, particularly where learners were given books beyond their current reading age or confidence level. Learners reported being given *"harder books"* before they felt ready, which resulted in them *"not want[ing] to read or give up."* When asked about the extent to which they enjoy reading alone, primary school learners commented that a barrier to this was that they did not have someone listening who could point out the mistakes or explain more complex words. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of comprehension, noting that being able to decode words was not always enough to make reading enjoyable or meaningful. As one scoping stakeholder explained: *"Learners may disengage if they can decode text but do not understand it, which reduces enjoyment and motivation."* Low pupil confidence was also identified as a barrier, with practitioners suggesting that some learners avoid books in order not to *"feel stupid"* (practitioner).

3.180 The expectation that more able readers should progress onto longer or more complex books was also identified as a factor that could undermine engagement. One parent explained that *"when their [a learner's] reading gets better, books... get bigger"* and can become *"overwhelming"* (parent). This suggests that progression in reading was not always experienced positively by learners, particularly where increased difficulty was associated with longer texts rather than continued enjoyment, choice, or confidence. Stigma around struggling with reading or asking for help was also identified as a barrier, with one practitioner noting that *"struggling readers associate reading with failure"* (practitioner).

3.181 Learners reported that a lack of support from parents or teachers – particularly when they are being asked to read a more challenging book – could be a barrier to reading

3.182 An over-emphasis on skills development, at the expense of meaning and enjoyment, was also reported to affect learner engagement. Learners described feeling *"judged"*, *"rushed"*, and *"unable to follow*

the story", and noted that *"new words or tricky language is a barrier [to reading for pleasure]."* Stakeholders similarly suggested that programmes focused too narrowly on the mechanics of reading may not support sustained reading enjoyment. As one scoping stakeholder stated: *"Where programmes focus narrowly on mechanics rather than meaning and enjoyment, learners may improve technically but do not develop positive reading habits."* This was seen as limiting the extent to which learners develop positive associations with reading, even where technical reading skills improve.

3.183 Access to engaging and age-appropriate reading material was another barrier to learner engagement. Stakeholders identified a lack of up-to-date fiction aligned with learners' interests, including books linked to sport, culture, and other topics that learners saw as relevant to their lives. This was seen as particularly important for older learners, given that stakeholders reported that reading-for-pleasure support often reduces after early primary, and that suitable books need to match learners' interests and maturity. Primary school learners also cited *"boring"* or uninteresting books as a disincentive to read. Some had experience of reading books that *"started good but then the story turned bad."*

3.184 The loss of school and community libraries was also seen to reduce opportunities for learners to *"browse and discover books"* (scoping stakeholder), whilst limited library opening hours, rural location, and low use of local libraries further restricted access outside school. Wider sources of enrichment were also raised, including limited access to cultural experiences such as drama and theatre, which may support reading engagement indirectly. Learners also reported that being forced to *"read lots of books all the time"* could deter them from reading by choice, whilst younger learners emphasised the importance of illustrations in helping them remain interested. Conversely, a minority of primary school learners considered illustrations in books to be a distraction as they end up looking at the pictures rather than reading the story.

3.185 Competition for learners' time and attention was also identified as a barrier. Practitioners suggested that widespread use of phones and tablets was linked to *"short attention spans"* and a desire for *"instant gratification"*, which could undermine engagement with sustained reading. This was linked to wider screen-based activities, including gaming, television, social media, the internet, and apps, which stakeholders felt could distract learners and displace time spent with books. Parents also noted that other commitments, particularly extracurricular activities, limited the time some children had available for reading for pleasure outside school. This was seen as particularly relevant for some boys, where sport and other activities were viewed as competing with reading for time and prioritisation. Notably all of the secondary learners felt that having *"better things to do, like sport"* was a barrier to reading for pleasure. Wider home routines were also seen as shaping engagement, with practitioners reporting that reading could be less embedded where parents were not reading to children, did not read themselves, or where busy family schedules limited time for reading.

3.186 Learners also referred to things that distracted them from reading, including the internet or apps (particularly an issue in the case of digital reading) but also distractions from people talking around them, making them more likely to lose their place, stop reading to talk or listen to the other people or result in them read the same pages or lines repeatedly. Secondary school learners in particular referred to loud noise around them as making it difficult to read.

3.187 Deprivation was also reported to affect learner engagement, particularly through the cost of books and reliance on shared or pre-loved materials. Of the 11 secondary learners engaged in the research, 8 of them cited the cost of books as being a barrier to reading. Practitioners and scoping stakeholders identified limited access to books as a barrier, with some practitioners noting that families had few or no books at home and could not always afford to buy books. One practitioner stated that *"[some] children don't have*

access to books, toys", while a scoping stakeholder noted that some families *"could not afford £8.99 for a book"*. Practitioners and scoping stakeholders viewed this as especially important in the early years, where fewer early experiences and reduced exposure to books may contribute to narrower vocabulary, making it harder for learners to understand texts and reducing later reading enjoyment and engagement. Access to reading materials was therefore viewed as important not only for immediate engagement, but also for supporting learners' longer-term confidence and enjoyment of reading.

3.188 Some primary school learners commented that needing to physically hold a book can be a deterrent to reading, whilst the Kindle was considered the best reading resource, given that it is easy to use, can be used hands free and has access to a wide range of books online.

3.189 Language was another important barrier to learner engagement. English as an additional language was described as *"a major barrier"* to reading in English, particularly where learners were learning through a language *"they're not spoken to at home"* (practitioner). Bilingual learners were also reported to face choices between reading in English and Welsh. Stakeholders noted that learners *"may switch to English reading if suitable Welsh-language books are unavailable or unappealing, reducing engagement with Welsh reading"* (scoping stakeholder). Some parents also perceived Welsh books as *"harder"* than English books. In Welsh-medium contexts, practitioners reported that a lack of Welsh skills at home could limit the impact of resources sent home, as *"parents may not be able to support reading at home, limiting impact of [Welsh language] resources sent home"* (practitioner).

3.190 Additional learning needs were also identified as affecting learner engagement, including dyslexia and ADHD. Stakeholders suggested that learners with additional needs may require more tailored support to engage with literacy initiatives, particularly where reading is already associated with difficulty or frustration. Practitioners also noted wider classroom implications, with one stating *"[with] more kids on the [ASD]*

spectrum it detracts from literacy support for all the other kids" (practitioner).

Enablers

3.191 Strong foundational skills were identified as an enabler of learner engagement. Scoping stakeholders said that learners are more likely to enjoy reading when decoding and language comprehension are secure, and that reading for pleasure is difficult "*if you can't read*", particularly for struggling readers (scoping stakeholder). Ensuring that learners develop strong foundational skills early was therefore seen as important in enabling engagement with initiatives. Learners also reported the importance of being able to read well as a pre-requisite to reading for pleasure.

3.192 Learners' sense of success and motivation were also supported through approaches that made reading feel achievable and rewarding. Programmes that helped learners feel successful, including those involving shorter sessions, were seen to support willingness to read independently. Several responses also highlighted that competition between peers and elements of reward could help encourage participation. Teacher enthusiasm was also identified as important, with practitioners noting that learners respond positively when teachers are visibly interested in the text or activity. These approaches appeared to be most useful where they supported confidence and motivation, rather than adding pressure or reinforcing negative experiences of reading.

3.193 Primary school learners commented that being recommended books by teachers, parents and even friends can encourage them to read for pleasure.

3.194 Individual choice, representation, and personal interests were identified as important enablers of engagement. Allowing learners to choose the topics and themes they read or write about was frequently identified as supporting engagement. Practitioners also reported that learners were more likely to engage when they could "*see*

themselves" or recognise relatable experiences in what they read, which was seen as supporting ambition and inclusion. Reading materials that included images were also identified as helpful (even for older learners), as these made it easier for learners to imagine stories and engage with the material.

3.195 Reading at home was also identified as an important enabler of learner engagement. Parent and carer support within the home, being read to, and being encouraged to read and write were all noted as supporting positive engagement with literacy. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of adults valuing any reading done at home, even where this was not a reading scheme book assigned by school. Adult role-modelling was seen as important, with one practitioner noting that *"what children see is what they do"*. Shared activity and relationships were also identified as vital, with practitioners suggesting that reading with adults, singing together, or looking over materials could support engagement, particularly where children preferred to read with adults rather than alone.

3.196 Technology, social media, games, and apps were identified as potential enablers where they helped learners understand reading as broader than physical books. Practitioners and parents suggested that learners showed higher engagement when reading was connected to other formats, including games, digital activities, and device-based content. Digital formats were also praised for enabling learners to communicate and express ideas in different ways, suggesting that technology may help engage learners who do not readily connect with traditional print-based reading. Teenage learners themselves identified plot and pace of the story as some of the reasons why video games were so engaging.

3.197 Ownership of materials and regular access to physical books were also seen to support engagement. Stakeholders reported that children were more likely to engage where they had regular access to books through schools, libraries, or at home. This was seen as particularly important for learners who may not have many books at home, as

school and library provision could provide opportunities to browse, choose, and take books away. This was endorsed by learners who valued the opportunity to visit libraries – in some cases independently – and choose from a wide range of books. Some noted that being able to “read the blurb” on the back cover helped them identify books that they would enjoy. Ownership of books was also viewed as encouraging engagement by giving learners something that felt personally theirs.

3.198 Secondary school learners commented on the importance of having an appropriate environment for reading, including being some quiet and on their own and having a hot drink. Conversely 5 of the 11 secondary school learners felt that listening to music in the background can make it easier to read for pleasure.

3.199 Finally, alternative teaching methods were identified as enabling learner engagement with literacy initiatives. Practitioners suggested that changing environments, role play, discussion, collaborative activities, drama, singing, and performance could help make reading more engaging. These approaches were seen as useful where they moved literacy beyond individual reading tasks and created more active, social, and creative routes into engagement.

Factors affecting parent/carer engagement in initiatives

3.200 Survey results suggest that practitioner perceptions of parent and carer engagement with reading for pleasure programmes were mixed, but generally modest. None of the 12 practitioners who responded felt that parents and carers were either very engaged or extremely engaged. Half of respondents described parents and carers as moderately engaged, while 4 felt they were slightly engaged and 2 reported that they were not at all engaged.

Barriers

3.201 Cost and resource availability were identified as barriers to parent and carer engagement with literacy initiatives. It was recognised that some families have limited access to reading materials at home, which can

restrict parent and carer engagement as well as learners' wider engagement with literacy. Furthermore, the cost of literacy materials makes them inaccessible for many parents and carers. It was noted by scoping stakeholders and practitioners that many families in deprived areas struggle to afford to buy books or digital tools and devices, and a lack of free book provision makes engagement very difficult. This suggests that initiatives that rely on families already having the necessary materials may risk excluding those who could benefit most. Moreover, cost and availability of Welsh-medium resources was identified as a particular concern, with many parents in both Welsh and English medium focus groups noting that these materials can be more expensive and less readily available.

3.202 Physical access to resources was also raised as a barrier. Limited library opening hours, the loss of local library services and the distance some families need to travel to reach bookshops or libraries were all seen by several parents and scoping stakeholders as limiting engagement. This was particularly relevant in rural areas, where initiatives that depend on regular library access may be less effective if families face logistical difficulties getting to these spaces.

3.203 A further barrier identified by practitioners and scoping stakeholders related to parents' and carers' own confidence and literacy skills. Many parents and carers may struggle with reading themselves to the point of illiteracy or underestimate their own reading level. As one scoping stakeholder noted some parents who had negative school experiences or feel unsure about their own skills may be anxious about "*teaching wrong*" or exposing their own difficulties. This lack of confidence may make parents and carers less likely to seek support or engage with initiatives – or simply encourage their child to read for pleasure – particularly where they fear judgement from others.

3.204 Similarly, parents' and carers' understanding of the wider value of reading was identified as an important factor shaping engagement. Practitioners and scoping stakeholders suggested that some families may not fully recognise the role that reading can play in supporting

learners' confidence, wellbeing, attainment and wider development. In these cases, reading at home may be seen as a positive additional activity, rather than as something that can be embedded into everyday family routines. For example, bedtime reading may be treated as an occasional novelty rather than a regular habit. This was also linked to parents' and carers' own relationship with reading, in which adults who do not enjoy reading themselves may be less likely to choose reading as a shared activity with their child and may instead prioritise activities that feel more familiar or accessible.

3.205 In parent focus groups participants typically valued reading. Nonetheless, parents in groups with lower levels of literacy engagement were more likely to express that they did not know how to support their child to want to engage with reading. One parent also explained how they did not recognise how other activities that were not reading a book, such as using digital devices, could also be considered reading for pleasure.

3.206 Practitioners commented that parents did not recognise their own important role in literacy and reading, feeling that education was "*what they go to school for*" (practitioner). Another practitioner explained how parents did not see reading with their children as "*their job*".

3.207 Language was another important barrier to engagement. This was particularly relevant for scoping stakeholders, and practitioners in Welsh-medium settings, where some parents and carers may not speak Welsh themselves. In these cases, supporting reading at home in Welsh can be challenging, especially where parents are unsure how to use Welsh-language books or activities with confidence. Similar challenges were also identified for parents and carers with English as an additional language, who may face difficulties engaging with initiatives where resources or communication are not accessible in the languages they are most confident using.

3.208 Lack of time and competing priorities also affected parent and carer engagement. It was noted by many parents and practitioners, that

parents and carers have limited time because of work commitments and wider pressures at home. Even where families value reading, these pressures can make it difficult to prioritise regular reading routines. Fatigue and stress were also seen as limiting parents' and carers' capacity to engage with reading.

3.209 Finally, screen time and digital distractions were identified as a challenge. Although digital resources can support literacy in some contexts, practitioners raised concerns that digital alternatives may sometimes replace shared reading rather than complement it. One practitioner described audio boxes[4] and screens as "*replacing, not adding to, shared reading*", while others suggested that digital habits were displacing routines such as bedtime reading.

Enablers

3.210 Improved guidance was identified as an enabler of parent and carer engagement with literacy initiatives. Clear and practical guidance can help parents and carers understand how to support reading at home without feeling that they need specialist literacy knowledge. A point raised by practitioners and scoping stakeholders was that parents and carers may be more likely to engage when they understand that reading for pleasure supports not only attainment, but also learners' confidence and well-being. This could be supported through programmes that work directly with parents and carers, alongside clear communication from schools about how families can support reading at home. One scoping stakeholder also emphasised that this support needs to be welcoming and non-judgemental, so that parents and carers feel comfortable.

3.211 Access to books was also identified as an important enabler. Learners bringing home physical books was seen by one scoping stakeholder as more effective than relying solely on vouchers or digital alternatives, as it gives families something immediate and tangible to use together. Free access to books was particularly important for

[4] Tonie boxes are an electronic device that can be used to play stories aloud to children.

parents in reducing barriers for families, especially where schools regularly send books home. One practitioner noted how resources for the home such as reading folders, story sacks and book related activities make it easier for parents and carers to know what to do at home.

3.212 Low-pressure incentives were seen as supporting engagement. Practitioners and scoping stakeholders noted that approaches such as Bookstart passports, stamps and certificates can motivate families to stay involved without making reading feel overly formal or assessed.

3.213 Parental confidence and values were also identified as important factors shaping engagement. Parents' and carers' confidence can increase when they relate to other families and recognise that supporting reading is not only about having access to resources, but also about encouragement, routine and positive interaction. There was also evidence from a parent focus group that parents and carers who enjoy reading themselves may be more likely to introduce books to learners and engage with reading initiatives. This points to the importance of approaches that support the wider family reading culture, rather than focusing only on the learner.

3.214 Libraries and community spaces were identified as part of the wider reading ecosystem that can support access to books and encourage positive reading experiences, facilitating engagement from parents and carers themselves. They can support parent and carer engagement where literacy resources are designed to travel beyond the classroom, through reading challenges or school library visits. Informal and community spaces can also strengthen engagement where they feel welcoming and offer activities, groups and support, rather than only book borrowing. Scoping stakeholders highlighted that families were more likely to engage with initiatives where they had previous positive experiences of libraries or community-based reading activities. This suggests that effective resources are those

that are able to connect with wider reading ecosystems around families, including libraries and community spaces.

3.215 For one scoping stakeholder learner choice was another important enabler. Where learners can choose books themselves, this can support both learner motivation and parent and carer engagement. This was particularly evident where children brought books home, spoke positively about reading experiences at school, or showed enthusiasm for particular authors, topics or formats.

3.216 Online resources were also viewed as enabling engagement in some contexts. Parents listed school apps, online resources, podcasts and audiobooks as making reading support more accessible, particularly for parents and carers who face time pressures. However, in line with concerns raised elsewhere, digital resources appear most useful where they complement shared reading and provide flexible routes into engagement, rather than replacing adult-child interactions.

3.217 Finally, one scoping stakeholder viewed linking books to film or TV adaptations as making reading feel more accessible for parents and carers.

Perceived success of initiatives promoting reading for pleasure

3.218 Stakeholders across interviews and focus groups reflected on the extent to which existing initiatives promoting reading for pleasure are successful. Overall, evidence from the fieldwork points to a mixed and uneven picture, shaped by local context, programme design, and levels of support across schools, families and communities.

3.219 Stakeholders described the success of initiatives to be highly dependent on context. A consistent theme across scoping interviews, practitioner discussions and parent groups was that outcomes vary widely based on local conditions rather than the existence of programmes themselves. Factors such as access to local libraries, the level of enthusiasm within individual schools, and parent capacity were all seen to shape engagement. Where there is a strong whole-school reading culture, supported by structured delivery and

consistent practitioner engagement initiatives were perceived to be more successful.

3.220 However, stakeholders also highlighted that programme design can limit effectiveness. Several scoping stakeholders noted that initiatives often assume a level of interest from learners, parents and practitioners that is not always present in practice. As a result, engagement is uneven, with some groups participating actively while others disengage, particularly where reading is "*not on their agenda or radar*". There was a view that many initiatives are more effective for those already inclined to read, with more limited success in reaching those who do not already enjoy reading. For example, World Book Day was seen by practitioners and parents as focusing more on dressing up as characters than on reading itself.

3.221 The scale and duration of initiatives were also identified as constraints. A scoping stakeholder described a pattern of small-scale pilots and short-term activity, rather than sustained or national provision, which was seen to limit long-term impact.

3.222 Despite these challenges, stakeholders did identify clear areas of success. Publicly funded programmes were widely seen as important in reaching families who would not otherwise access reading resources. These programmes were described as enabling engagement in communities where families cannot afford to buy books, meaning that without this support, reading would be less accessible.

3.223 Success was also seen to be stronger at younger ages, where provision is more established. Parents and practitioners highlighted that support tends to be more consistent in early years and primary settings, with a perceived drop-off in initiatives for older children, particularly in secondary school.

3.224 At the same time, stakeholders suggested that reading for pleasure is not consistently prioritised within the wider literacy landscape. A practitioner highlighted uneven targeting of provision, with focus on

reading for pleasure in more affluent areas and, in economically disadvantaged areas, a greater emphasis on basic literacy rather than enjoyment of reading. Libraries were also described as sometimes prioritising other activities, such as IT or recreational clubs, rather than reading promotion.

3.225 Where initiatives were perceived to work well, stakeholders pointed to several enabling factors. An influence was the role of individual teachers. Success was described as heavily dependent on practitioners who actively create a reading-for-pleasure culture, particularly where they read for pleasure themselves and model this behaviour. Practitioners also referred to the importance of "*hardworking staff*" who explore different approaches, use trials to identify what works, and develop initiatives that are embedded within the school context.

3.226 Access to engaging and relevant reading materials was also seen as critical. All stakeholder types emphasised the importance of providing a range of choices that reflect learners' interests and offer an "*authentic context*" that can be shared with peers. Competitive elements and incentives were also mentioned by parents and practitioners as supporting engagement, alongside approaches involving authors. Author-led initiatives, including "*patron of reading*" roles, were described as particularly effective, with one practitioner noting that authors can carry a "*celebrity element*" for learners.

3.227 Library-based initiatives were also highlighted as examples of success under the right conditions. A scoping stakeholder pointed to the Summer Reading Challenge as an example of high voluntary participation, alongside early years activities such as Bounce and Rhyme, where repeated contact points and support from health visitors were seen to support engagement.

3.228 Amongst survey responses, half of respondents (6 of 12) said that the most successful initiatives were both school reading challenges and library led programmes, whilst 5 out of 12 considered peer or mentor

reading programmes the most successful. Things that successful programmes do well were said to be those that:

- are accessible for learners (9 out of 12)
- provide engaging content (8 out of 12)
- are easy for staff to use (7 out of 12)

3.229 Alongside these examples of success, stakeholders identified ongoing barriers. Practitioners reported that some parents have limited understanding of early literacy development, focusing primarily on reading text aloud rather than broader interactions such as discussing pictures, asking questions or building vocabulary. Parents themselves highlighted competing demands on time and attention, as well as differences in access to local libraries, as limiting their ability to support reading at home.

3.230 A lack of appealing, age-appropriate and Welsh-language books was consistently identified as a barrier across all stakeholder groups.

3.231 Within schools, practitioners also suggested that externally developed schemes are often peripheral and not tailored to individual contexts, limiting the impact they can achieve.

Areas for improvement in promoting reading for pleasure

3.232 Stakeholders were asked to suggest ways in which the promotion of reading for pleasure could be improved. The scope of answers to this question extended beyond dedicated schemes or initiatives and included wider issues relating to availability of inspiring reading material, marketing, partnership working and professional development.

3.233 The most commonly cited area for improvement related to improving access to good quality books covering a range of genres, age profiles and reading levels. Many practitioners and scoping stakeholders highlighted the importance of investment in libraries (both in schools and those open to the public) to allow for regular refreshes of available books to ensure sufficient breadth of interests and abilities.

This was corroborated by primary and secondary school learners who valued visits to libraries. Secondary school learners felt that introducing library lessons (something they had in primary school but not in secondary) would help them to read more.

3.234 Requests for specific literature included illustrated books that appeal to teenagers, greater diversity and improved representation (i.e.: in terms of dialect, ethnicity, culture etc.) in books so learners *"see themselves reflected"* (scoping stakeholder), availability of shorter books for older learners and provision of *"dialect-sensitive, accessible Welsh books"* (practitioner). Primary school learner called for cookery books, books about animals and books that include maps.

3.235 In recognition that having libraries in every school is not going to happen overnight, some stakeholders recommended prioritising the allocation of dedicated space for books in all schools, given the reality that in some schools *"shelves of books [have] been replaced by tablets and books [are] kept in cupboards… so children [do] not see them."* (scoping stakeholder)

3.236 Prioritising marketing and promotion of reading was referenced by a number of stakeholders. There was widespread call for broadening the definition of reading, 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 are already engaging with to varying degrees. As well as widening what is defined as 'reading for pleasure' in the interests of inclusivity, there was also an identified need to address the stigma around books being, *"uncool"*, *"posh"* or inaccessible; as one scoping stakeholder noted, there is a need to *"normalise reading culturally, not just educationally"*, learning from Scandinavian nations, where reading is embedded in culture and society.

3.237 Whilst World Book Day was identified as having a role in promoting reading for pleasure, many considered it a one-off event, with limited lasting impact. There is a need to extend activities associated with

World Book Day beyond *"dressing up"*, potentially drawing on festivals like the Day of Books and Roses in Catalonia, Spain. Whilst some parents expressed caution about working with influencers to get teenagers reading (given the risk of being or being considered inauthentic), others felt there could be value in identifying genuine role models from other spheres (e.g.: sport) to share what they enjoy reading.

3.238 Ensuring a school leadership focus on literacy so that reading for pleasure remains central to schools' vision and daily practice was also mentioned as an important priority. One scoping stakeholder suggested that all school practitioners should: "*model positive reading behaviours … teachers talking about books and demonstrating a love of reading helps build enthusiasm among learners."* Others (including teachers) expressed a similar sentiment, in recognition that in some schools reading *"for pleasure"* is *"deprioritised"* due to other competing pressures.

3.239 Given the lack of awareness of resources and initiatives available to teachers to inspire reading for pleasure, it is unsurprising that there was a call for Adnodd and other organisations to develop *"easy-to-use resources that can be picked up quickly [and] a bank of ideas linked to texts [literature], rather than fixed lesson plans."* (Practitioner)

3.240 It was suggested that investment is needed in resources in a variety of formats (including both print and digital) that align with the Curriculum for Wales. These resources also need to reflect different school contexts on the grounds that: *"Welsh-medium, English-medium, multilingual urban schools, and schools in areas of deprivation face different challenges, so resources need to be adaptable."* (Scoping stakeholder)

3.241 Stakeholder also called for support that is long-term: *"literacy programmes require significant lead-in time, so commissioning should allow for multi-year planning to maintain quality and consistency."* (Scoping stakeholder)

3.242 Reflecting on their earlier comments relating to the lack of evidence on the effectiveness of existing literacy and reading programmes, many stakeholders mentioned the importance of prioritising evaluation that allows for comparison across initiatives: *"Evaluation… needs to be built into the commissioning process."* (Scoping stakeholder)

3.243 The role of partnership working in improving engagement in reading for pleasure was emphasised by a number of stakeholders; it was noted that relationships between education and libraries have *"broken down over time"* due to schools needing to arrange transport to visit libraries and library staff lacking capacity to go into schools, and that this had in the past been a great way to introduce learners to public libraries and the wider range of books that they offer. Primary school learners highlighted the importance of creating comfortable spaces to read, including things like "pillows", "blankets" and "beanbags" as well as bookshelves.

3.244 There were also calls to prioritise visits from Welsh authors to schools, on the basis that schools reported a very positive experience of being involved in these visits, particularly where they are sustained over a period of weeks, resulting in greater buy-in from learners and the wider school community.

3.245 To allow for improved partnership working, some scoping stakeholders emphasised the need to ensure *"education jargon"* does not exclude arts organisations and writers and to provide clearer pathways and guidance for non-education organisations on where they fit within promoting reading for pleasure.

3.246 Given the reported lack of support for promoting reading for pleasure to learners with additional learning needs, it is unsurprising that some practitioners asked for resources suited to learners with ALN and to provide clearer differentiation between resources intended for learners with different ALN, for example, profound and multiple learning difficulties, multiple learning difficulties and older learners with ALN.

3.247 One final area for improvement or development that stakeholders suggested was to provide learners with tangible motivations for reading, in the form of incentives or rewards to *"kick-start an appreciation of reading"*. Ideas suggested by parents included weekly challenges around *"reading minutes"* including certificates and prizes (e.g.: in the form of book vouchers) to motivate learners. Secondary school learners also felt that awards for reading the largest number of books or words would encourage them to read more.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 This research set out to support Adnodd's future commissioning of literacy resources by developing an evidence base on effective literacy approaches, understanding how resources and initiatives are experienced in practice, and identifying the barriers and enablers shaping engagement among practitioners, learners and families.

4.2 The findings demonstrate that improving literacy outcomes in Wales requires a balanced and integrated approach that addresses both core literacy skills and the wider conditions that enable children and young people to engage with reading and writing in meaningful and sustained ways.

4.3 The structured evidence review identified a strong body of international and UK evidence on effective literacy approaches. This highlights the importance of explicit, structured teaching of core literacy skills, such as phonics, reading comprehension, vocabulary and writing, alongside opportunities for practice, application and progression across age groups. The evidence also consistently shows that reading for pleasure, motivation and engagement are closely associated with improved literacy outcomes.

4.4 The user experience research complements this by demonstrating how literacy resources and initiatives are experienced in practice. Engagement is shaped by a combination of resource quality, practitioner capacity, access to materials, and wider social and contextual factors, including family support and local infrastructure. This reinforces the importance of designing literacy provision that is not only evidence-informed, but also practical, accessible and aligned with real-world settings in Wales.

4.5 Across both strands of research, a consistent set of barriers and enablers emerged. Barriers include limited time and capacity within schools, uneven access to high-quality and up-to-date books, cost constraints, limited awareness of available initiatives, and challenges related to language and accessibility. Enablers include clear and

adaptable resources, strong leadership support, access to professional learning, availability of engaging materials, and strong alignment with the Curriculum for Wales.

Literacy as a multi-dimensional outcome

4.6 An important conclusion from the research is that literacy outcomes extend beyond technical proficiency. While reading accuracy, fluency, comprehension and writing remain central, the evidence shows that wider outcomes, such as motivation, confidence, identity, reading habits and access to resources, are essential to sustained literacy development.

4.7 Across all ages, literacy development is shaped by the interaction between skills, behaviours and context. Early years provision focuses on building language, shared reading routines and parental confidence. In primary education, effective approaches combine structured teaching with reading enjoyment, access to books and inclusive support. In secondary settings, the challenge shifts to sustaining engagement while developing more advanced and subject-specific literacy skills.

4.8 This progression highlights the importance of continuity in literacy support, particularly in maintaining engagement with reading for pleasure as children grow older.

Engagement and reading for pleasure

4.9 The findings demonstrate that engagement is a critical driver of literacy outcomes. However, engagement is not shaped by a single factor. Across both the evidence review and user experience research, it reflects the interaction of five interconnected domains:

- Motivation – whether learners perceive reading as meaningful, enjoyable and relevant
- Extrinsic access – availability of appealing, age-appropriate and culturally relevant materials

- Intrinsic access – learners' confidence and ability to access and understand texts
- Social and relational support – encouragement, modelling and recommendations from parents, practitioners and peers
- Environment and conditions – time, space and competing demands affecting opportunities to read

4.10 These domains reinforce one another, and limitations in any one area can restrict overall engagement (See annex A for more detail).

4.11 This helps explain findings from the research. For example, learners may be motivated but lack access to appropriate materials; may have access but lack confidence to engage; or may be supported by practitioners but constrained by time, competing activities or limited opportunities to read. Similarly, practitioner and family engagement plays a critical role in shaping motivation and sustaining reading behaviours over time.

4.12 The research also highlights a consistent decline in reading enjoyment with age, alongside stakeholder perceptions that provision is often fragmented, short-term and focused on skills development rather than sustained engagement. This indicates the importance of approaches that address all aspects of engagement, rather than focusing on access or skills in isolation.

Equity, access and the Welsh context

4.13 A further important conclusion is that access to literacy opportunities is uneven and shaped by structural and contextual factors. Inequalities are most visible in relation to access to appropriate reading materials, including the availability of books in homes, schools and communities, and the ability of schools and families to afford or sustain provision.

4.14 These issues are reflected in the programme landscape, where many resources are commercially developed and require paid access. This creates the potential for inequitable access conditions, particularly for under-resourced schools and families.

4.15 The research also highlights specific challenges within the Welsh context. These include limited availability of Welsh-language resources in some areas and for some age groups, gaps in provision for learners with additional learning needs, and challenges in supporting bilingual literacy progression. Issues relating to the quality, diversity and age-appropriateness of Welsh-language texts, particularly for older learners, were also consistently identified.

4.16 At the same time, evidence shows that bilingualism can support literacy development when resources and approaches are designed appropriately. This reinforces the importance of embedding Welsh-English bilingualism within literacy resource development, ensuring that materials are accessible, culturally relevant and aligned with learners' linguistic experiences.

The programme and delivery landscape

4.17 The mapping of programmes indicates a landscape that is predominantly school-based and as already noted, commercially developed and often dependent on paid access. Provision is heavily concentrated in early years and primary phases, with more limited availability for secondary-aged learners.

4.18 Stakeholders described this landscape as complex and difficult to navigate, with limited coordination and a lack of clear, comparable evidence on what works most effectively in promoting reading for pleasure. The prevalence of short-term or pilot initiatives further limits opportunities to build sustained engagement or generate robust evidence of impact.

4.19 These findings suggest that future commissioning decisions will need to consider how individual resources and initiatives contribute to a more coherent and sustained system of literacy support across Wales.

Evidence gaps and implications for commissioning

4.20 The research identifies several gaps in the existing evidence base. These include a lack of large-scale, long-term evaluations of reading

for pleasure initiatives, limited Wales-specific evidence, and a lack of comparative analysis of different approaches. There is also limited understanding of what works most effectively for specific groups, including learners in disadvantaged contexts and those with additional learning needs.

4.21 Overall, the findings suggest that effective literacy provision in Wales will require a more coordinated approach that:

- balances skills development with sustained engagement and motivation
- improves access to high-quality, diverse and relevant reading materials
- addresses equity and inclusion, including cost and accessibility
- supports practitioners, families and communities through guidance and professional learning
- aligns clearly with the Curriculum for Wales
- strengthens the evidence base through more consistent evaluation

4.22 Across all ages, the most effective approaches are those that address motivation, access, capability, support and conditions in a coordinated way.

4.23 Improving literacy outcomes therefore depends not only on whether learners can read and write effectively, but on whether they are supported to engage with literacy, have equitable access to appropriate resources, feel confident using them, and are able to build sustained reading habits across the contexts in which they live and learn.

Considerations and recommendations for Adnodd and partners

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

4.24 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.

Build a stronger evidence base on what works in Wales

4.25 Further investment is needed for 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, in bilingual contexts, and among 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

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

4.26 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 ALN, 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

Improve access to high-quality, inclusive resources

4.27 Access to books and reading materials needs to be improved for schools and families. There 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)

Address gaps in Welsh-language and bilingual provision

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

Improve provision for secondary-aged learners

4.29 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 promotes 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
- that can encourage reading for pleasure

Strengthen family and community involvement in literacy

4.30 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

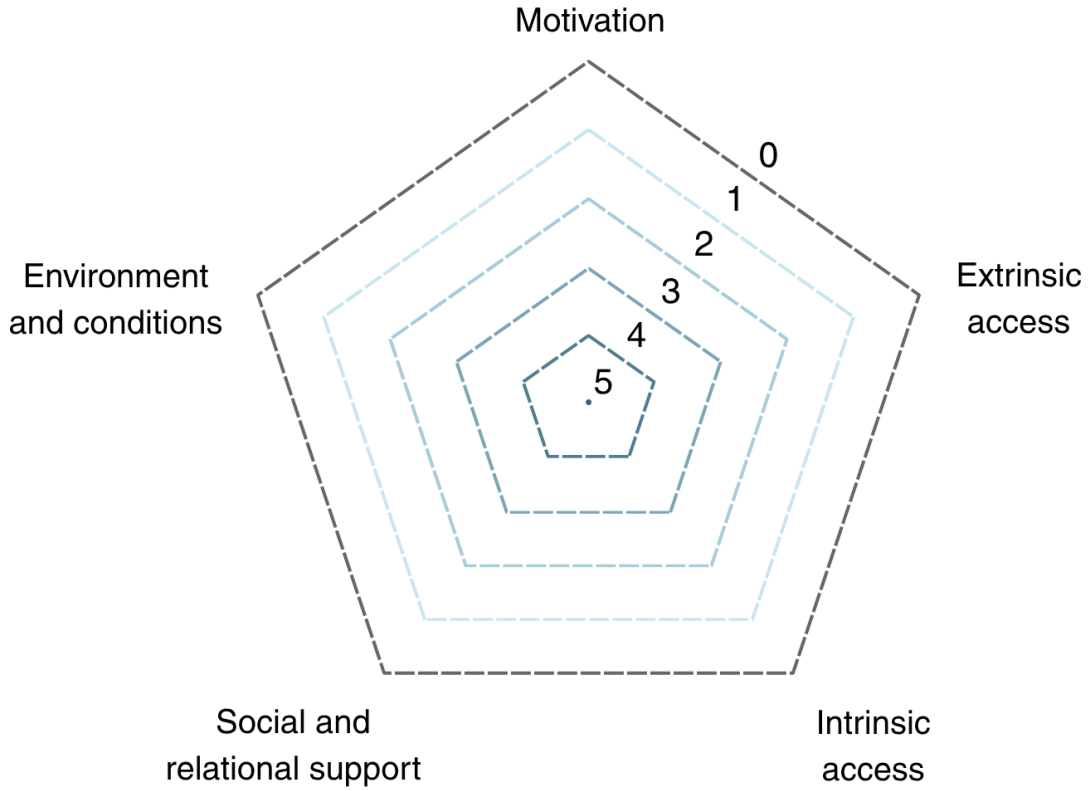
Overall implications

4.31 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.

4.32 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.

Annex A The five domains of reading for pleasure

Figure A: Domains of reading for pleasure



1. Motivation

Motivation refers to whether learners perceive reading as meaningful, enjoyable and relevant.

This includes:

- interest in subject matter or format
- choice and autonomy
- representation and identity
- perceived relevance to everyday life

Motivation is a critical condition for engagement. Without it, even well-resourced provision may not lead to sustained reading behaviours.

2. Extrinsic access

Extrinsic access refers to whether learners are able to obtain suitable materials to read.

This includes:

- availability of books and other reading materials at home, school and in the community
- access to school and public libraries
- book-gifting schemes and resource provision
- availability of materials in Welsh, English and other relevant languages
- access to digital and multimodal formats

Access to materials is necessary but not sufficient on its own to support reading for pleasure.

3. Intrinsic access

Intrinsic access refers to whether learners are able to engage successfully with reading once materials are available.

This includes:

- reading confidence and self-perception
- decoding, fluency and comprehension
- vocabulary and language proficiency
- suitability of text level and format
- accessibility for learners with additional learning needs or different language backgrounds

Intrinsic access is important because reading for pleasure depends on reading feeling manageable and achievable.

4. Social and relational support

Social and relational support refers to the role of relationships in encouraging and sustaining reading.

This includes:

- encouragement and modelling by parents, carers and families
- practitioner support, guidance and enthusiasm
- peer influence and shared reading experiences
- support from libraries, community organisations and wider networks

This domain recognises that reading behaviours are often shaped through interaction, recommendation and shared experiences.

5. Environment and conditions

Environment and conditions refer to the practical circumstances that enable or constrain reading in everyday life.

This includes:

- time available for reading
- physical space and environment
- competing demands (e.g. schoolwork, screen use, extracurricular activities)
- routines and habits
- wider household or community conditions

This domain is distinct from motivation, access and support, focusing on whether reading is practically possible within everyday contexts.

Interactions between domains

The 5 domains are interdependent. Effective engagement is most likely where they operate together.

For example:

- A learner may be motivated to read but lack access to appropriate materials
- A learner may have access to books but lack confidence to engage with them
- A learner may have both access and motivation but limited time or opportunity to read
- A learner may rely on social encouragement to sustain reading behaviours over time

This interaction highlights that addressing a single factor in isolation is unlikely to be sufficient to support sustained reading for pleasure.

Implications for resource development and commissioning

The framework supports the interpretation of findings in the main report and highlights considerations for resource development and commissioning.
In particular, it indicates that effective approaches to promoting reading for pleasure should:

- combine engaging and relevant content with appropriate levels of challenge
- ensure equitable access to high-quality materials across settings
- support learners' confidence and ability to engage with texts
- involve practitioners, families and communities in supporting reading
- consider the practical conditions that enable regular reading

These considerations are particularly relevant in the Welsh context, where resources need to support bilingual literacy development, reflect diverse learner identities, and be usable across home, school and community environments.

Annex B Literature review matrix

Please see external document.

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