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Reading in Secondary Students: What do we know?

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Executive summary

Historically, reading has been emphasised more in primary than secondary education, with initiatives to support reading typically falling away as children move up the school system. Recent evidence shows high levels of reading need alongside minimal reading activity in secondary school students. Therefore, there is a pressing need to promote reading in secondary school.

This report brings together insights from different research methodologies and perspectives to synthesise key findings on reading in secondary students. The report presents a number of challenges, setting the scene for future work that identifies good practice in schools and evidence-based approaches for supporting reading in secondary school.

Key highlights:

There are high levels of reading need in secondary school

- Evidence indicates a need to target the following in secondary students:
 - **reading proficiency**, including word and text reading accuracy, reading fluency and reading comprehension
 - **reading behaviour**, supporting choice of reading materials and encouraging more reading
 - **reading affect**, including how motivated students are to read, how enjoyable they find reading

We need to support reading for all secondary students

- Reading knowledge and skills are extremely variable
- This presents substantial challenges for teachers
- We must ensure that teachers have the confidence and capacity that they need to support all learners, as well as those with reading needs

We can't rely on primary schools to identify reading needs

- Some needs are pervasive, so support needs to continue in secondary school
- Some needs emerge in secondary as the challenge of reading and teacher expectations change

We need evidence-based approaches for secondary that are effective, feasible and acceptable

- Evidence for how to promote reading in secondary students is only starting to emerge
 - We can draw insights from primary approaches but cannot assume that these will be effective in secondary
 - Researchers must collaborate with teachers and students to find approaches that are effective, but will also be feasible and acceptable across secondary school contexts
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Introduction

Historically, reading has been emphasised more in primary than secondary education, with initiatives to support reading falling away as children move up the school system. However, a 2016 report found that England had the lowest teenage literacy rate in the OECD (Kuczera et al., 2016).

More recently, there is evidence that school closures in response to the pandemic have particularly impacted reading in secondary-aged students (Department for Education, 2022; Education Endowment Foundation, 2022; Twist et al., 2022). For example, reading scores for 15-year-olds decreased dramatically in almost all countries taking part in PISA 2022, with mean performance falling by 10 points across the OECD, which is equivalent to around half a school year (OECD, 2023). Within the UK, there were decreases compared with the previous cycles in 2018 in all home nations, with England's scoring nine points lower, and even greater decreases in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales (at 11, 16 and 18 points lower respectively).'

Indeed, research shows that a worrying minority of secondary-aged students do not have the reading skills they need to access the curriculum (Ricketts et al., 2020; van der Kleij et al., 2023), read infrequently in their spare time (Cole et al., 2022; van der Kleij et al., 2022), and show lower enjoyment of reading and motivation to read than younger children (Lepper et al., 2005; Cole et al., 2022). Research on adolescent development demonstrates important changes in the brain and marks this period as being distinct from childhood (Blakemore, 2018). Therefore, we can't assume that observations from child development and primary school practices will translate well to adolescence and secondary school approaches.

There is increasing recognition that reading must be supported in secondary school, with the Education Endowment Foundation and Ofsted publishing research and guidance (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021; Ofsted, 2022). Further, the 2023 Department for Education Reading Framework clearly acknowledges the importance of supporting reading in secondary school (Department for Education, 2023). While this new focus is welcome, more needs to be done.

This report brings together insights from different research methodologies and perspectives to synthesise key findings on reading in secondary students. The report presents a number of challenges, setting the scene for future work that identifies good practice in schools and evidence-based approaches for supporting reading in secondary school.

Reading knowledge and skills: What do we know?

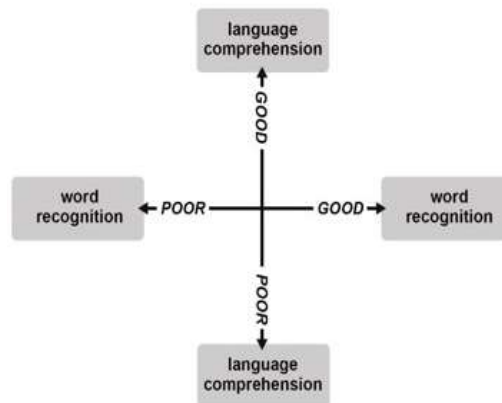
One of the most important goals of education is to ensure that young people can read well enough to participate fully in society. Indeed, international assessments demonstrate that over 80% of 15-year-olds in England are proficient readers (Jerrim & Shure, 2016). At first glance, this figure may indicate success. However, interpreted another way, it shows that nearly 20% of adolescents show unacceptably low reading proficiency. These young people will find everyday reading tasks challenging, such as the reading needed to fill in forms or look up information about health services.

When we look at national school assessments, approximately 30% of students did not pass their English Language GCSE (achieve a grade 4) in 2022. For many, this will present a barrier to subsequent education and employment options. Notably, GCSE performance is closely linked with earlier school attainment, suggesting that schools may be missing opportunities to identify and support struggling students throughout their time at school (Elliot Major & Parsons, 2022). Clearly action is needed. To understand what can and should be done, we must first understand what reading success looks like and why so many of our young people are not getting there.

One way of conceptualising reading success is to consider the reading knowledge and skills that we need to navigate our daily life (cf. Sabatini et al., 2015). For secondary students, this will range from the knowledge and skills that they need to access the school curriculum and achieve at school to those needed outside of school: to communicate effectively with others, engage critically with the digital environment, read instructions, follow recipes, play games and so on.

Another way of understanding reading success is to draw on theoretical frameworks from the research literature. Perhaps most well-known is the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), which is indeed simple in proposing that two things are necessary for reading success: word reading (the ability to read words) and language comprehension (the ability to understand spoken and written language). Notably, Figure 1 refers to 'word recognition' or the ability to recognise words from memory. We use the broader term 'word reading' instead to include decoding (using phonics to read words) and fluency, as well as word recognition.

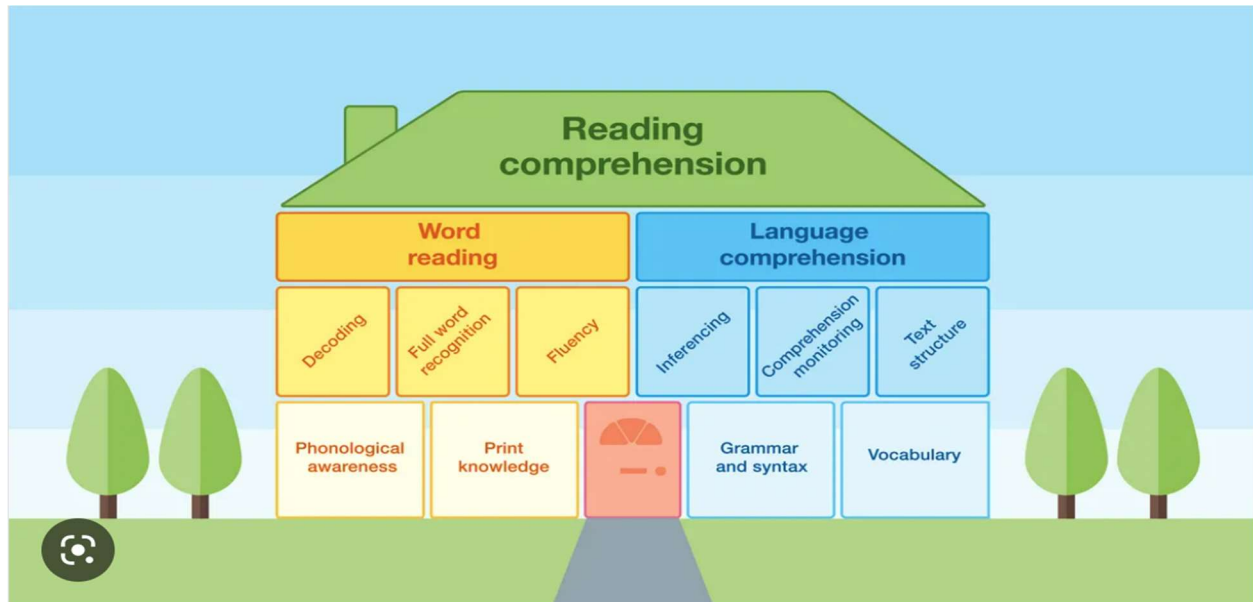
Figure 1. The Simple View of Reading (adapted from Gough and Tunmer, 1986)



The Simple View of Reading is supported by decades of research (Castles et al., 2018). Further, it is extremely useful in identifying what is necessary for reading to be successful: we need strong word reading and language comprehension. Indeed, someone who can't read words accurately and fluently can't successfully read the instructions for their new TV or read a book at school. Further, though, being able to read the words in a set of instructions or a book does not mean that they will be understood. Both word reading and language comprehension are necessary, and neither is sufficient on its own.

Nonetheless, the Simple View of Reading isn't without limitations (Nation, 2019). For example, what exactly do we need to teach to enable word reading? Language comprehension? Here, the Reading Comprehension House (Hogan, Bridges, Justice, & Cain, 2011) is helpful. The 'bricks' that underpin word reading are decoding, word recognition and fluency, which, in turn, are supported by phonological awareness and print knowledge. The 'bricks' that underpin language comprehension are inferencing, comprehension monitoring and text structure, supported by vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

Figure 2. The Reading Comprehension House (adapted from Hogan et al., 2011; reproduced with permission from Educational Endowment Foundation)



In the Reading Comprehension House, language comprehension encompasses the aspects of language that act in service of reading. The comprehension of spoken language is also sub-served by vocabulary and grammar and syntax, but is different from reading comprehension in important ways. For example, text structure is not relevant. Also, it is not possible to revisit content (i.e. re-read) if we realise that we are not following what the speaker is saying. Instead, we must ask them to repeat what they said.

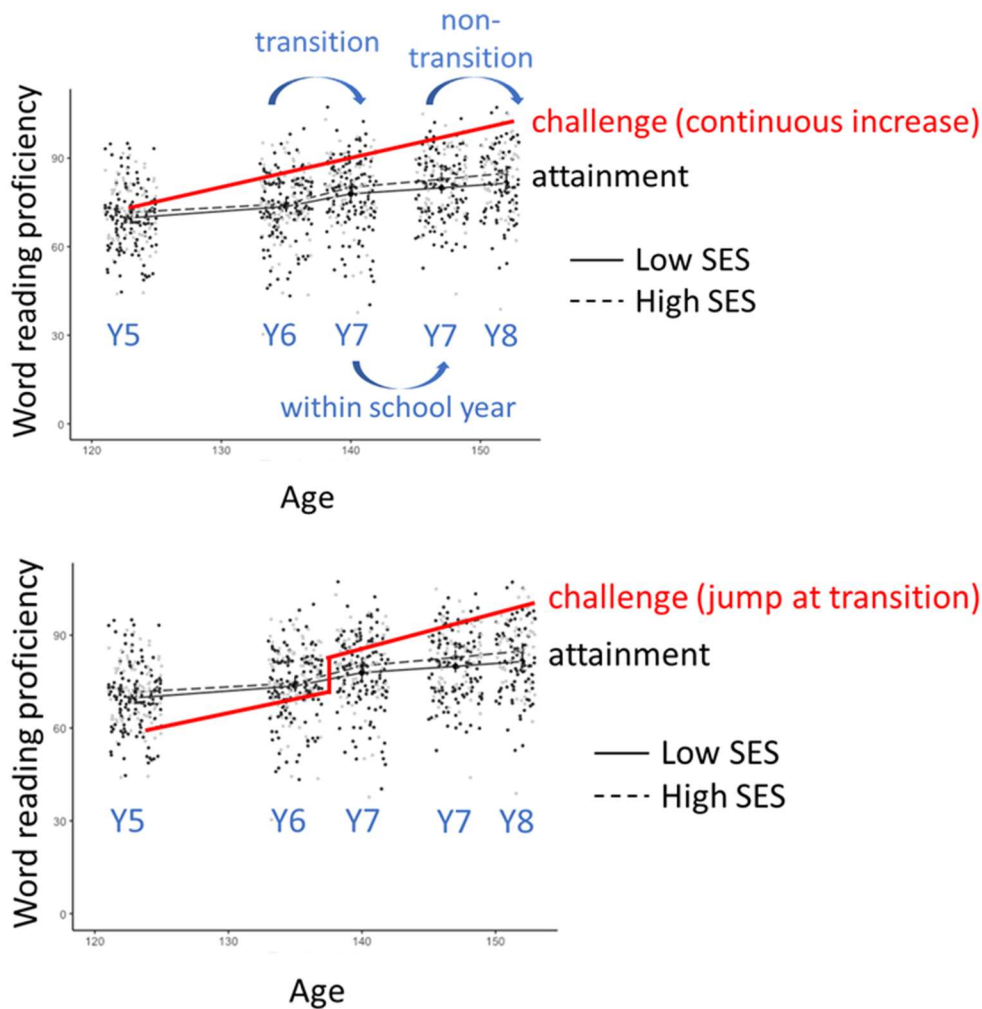
Neither the Simple View of Reading nor the Reading Comprehension House fully capture the complexity of reading. Word reading and comprehension are not entirely independent processes (Nation, 2019). For example, vocabulary knowledge underpins both word reading and language comprehension. Further, it is clear that many factors beyond word reading and language comprehension are important for reading. For example, a student may well need background knowledge to fully understand a text (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). For instance, readers of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* may enjoy the story of animals behaving badly towards each other. Those who know more about the book’s historical context will be able to interpret the text at a different level, in that it reflects the Russian revolution. As we will discuss below, reading also goes beyond knowledge and skills; it is also about behaviour (e.g. what is read and how much) and affect (e.g. reading motivation and enjoyment).

In order to identify what we can do to support and promote reading proficiency in secondary students, we need to understand what this looks like in adolescence and how this is changing and developing. Here, we are limited by a gap in the research literature. Reading research focuses on childhood and adulthood, neglecting the intervening adolescent period. Nonetheless, there are some clear messages from the research that has been conducted (Ricketts et al., 2020; van der Kleij et al., 2022; van der Kleij et al., 2023).

In secondary school students, reading abilities are extremely variable, with a substantial number of young people showing limited reading abilities that will impede their learning. Secondary students are making progress in their reading, although this is not as marked as it is in primary. However, even seemingly small gains can make a real difference 'on the ground', especially for those with reading needs. For example, being able to read more words accurately and readily might be important for understanding a tricky examination question or providing the confidence needed to read information about a job and complete an application form.

Variability and progress in secondary school are captured in Figure 3, which shows reading development as children move from primary to secondary school (figure adapted from van der Kleij et al., 2023). It is clear that large a variation shadows modest progress over time, a pattern that continues as students move up secondary school (Ricketts et al., 2020). For teachers, this means that any mixed-ability class will include students who bring a wide range of knowledge and skills to the reading tasks that they encounter. Also, Figure 3 shows that although, on average, reading ability is increasing (indicated by the lines), the range of reading ability in Year 5 almost entirely overlaps with ability in Year 8. This pattern also continues as we move up secondary school (Ricketts et al., 2020). Therefore, a teacher can expect broadly the same range of reading knowledge and skills from a Year 5 and Year 8 class. This wide variation presents a real and substantial challenge for even the most experienced teacher, the implication being that we must ensure secondary teachers have the capacity and confidence to support all students, and have information about students in their class who might have reading needs.

Figure 3: Variation and progress in reading is out of step with the increasing challenge (adapted from van der Kleij et al., 2023)



Note: The red lines represent hypothetical increases in the level of challenge that the curriculum brings, with the top panel showing a gradual increase and the bottom panel showing a more qualitative 'jump'.

There is a prevailing narrative that there is a 'slump' in reading as students transition from primary to secondary school (Hopwood et al., 2017; West & Schwerdt, 2012). However, this was not observed in van der Kleij et al. (2023), as seen in Figure 3. Instead, it appears that there is a 'jump' in expectations and in challenge. Figure 3 also shows a hypothetical indication of how the challenge that the curriculum places on reading might increase over time (cf. Deignan et al., 2022). We have also seen that the range of reading abilities in a Year 5 class will be similar to the range seen in a class of older students (e.g. Year 8). Therefore, we can

expect an increasing disconnect between the knowledge and skills that students bring to reading, and the knowledge and skills required by the curriculum.

Promoting reading knowledge and skills in secondary students

The Simple View of Reading and Reading Comprehension House provide a starting point for considering how to increase reading knowledge and skills. Specifically, if we are concerned that a student has reading needs, it is important to establish whether these needs focus on word reading, language comprehension, or both (Ricketts et al., 2022). Word reading and language comprehension needs require very different kinds of support, so identifying needs with this level of precision will allow us to align needs with targeted support. It is clear from the research that for some secondary students reading words accurately and fluently remains a barrier to reading success (Catts et al., 2012; Ricketts et al., 2020; van der Kleij et al., 2022). These students will need support with reading words. However, most secondary students can read with good accuracy and fluency. For these students, language comprehension will be a strong influence on whether they can approach a text, understand it and learn from it (Castles et al., 2018; Lervag et al., 2018). These students will need reading comprehension approaches.

Identifying the type of need and therefore support required is just a starting point. What is lacking is specific guidance on what kind of support to put in place. The Education Endowment Foundation (2021) has produced guidance for secondary reading. This emphasises the importance of using assessments to identify needs and implementing tiered support universally to classes, and to groups or individuals where required. Promising approaches for improving reading in secondary students are emerging (Clarke et al., 2017). However, evidence about what works in secondary is limited. In some cases, it might be appropriate to draw on approaches that are known to be effective in primary school (e.g. phonics, fluency work, reciprocal teaching). However, reading needs may look quite different in secondary. For some students, needs will be longstanding and will have knock-on effects over time (e.g. confidence, attitudes to learning and self as a learner). For other students, needs will have emerged more recently with fresh challenges. Further, primary approaches may not be feasible in the secondary context, and may not be acceptable to secondary teachers and students (e.g. if materials are considered ‘babyish’). We need evidence that shows whether approaches are effective, feasible and acceptable in secondary school.

There is a strong narrative that teaching children to read is the responsibility of primary schools. Indeed, providing access to high-quality teaching and reading

materials in the primary years is crucial and there is a lot of excellent evidence-based practice in primary schools, especially in the early years (Stainthorp, 2020). However, this will not ‘fix’ reading for all individuals. For some, reading needs are severe and are likely driven by genetic risk (Eklund et al., 2015) and underlying language needs (Nation, 2019) that are very difficult to address. For others, reading needs will arise later (Catts et al., 2012) as the demands on the reading system increase (see Figure 3). There is a clear shift in the complexity of the written language that pupils are exposed to as they move from primary to secondary school (Deignan et al., 2022) and yet the knowledge and skills that pupils bring to reading do not increase dramatically (van der Kleij et al., 2023). A pupil who is just about managing to access the curriculum in upper primary may struggle when the challenge increases in secondary school. Early intervention is important, but it will not address such late-emerging reading needs. Importantly, learning to read does not stop at the end of primary but rather is a lifelong endeavour. Therefore, we need reading instruction for all, and targeted approaches for those with reading needs that continue through secondary schooling.

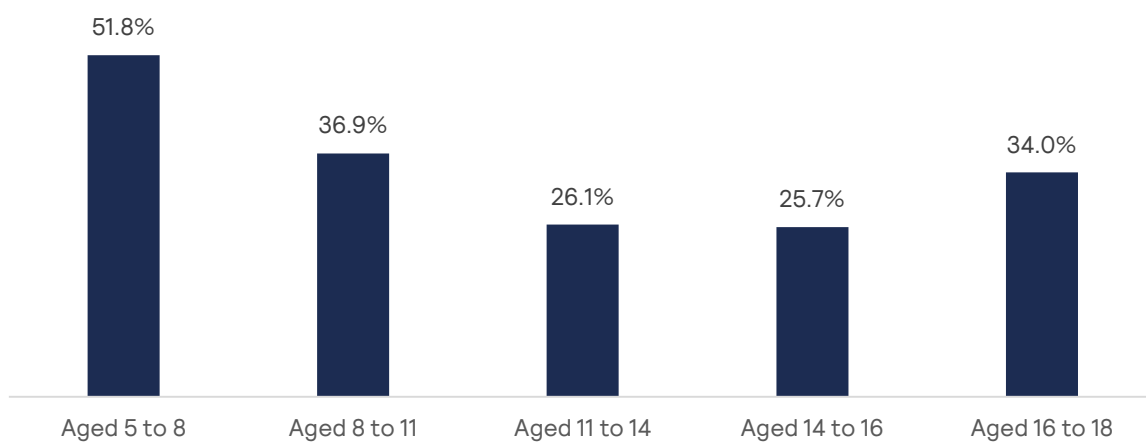
Reading behaviour and affect: What do we know?

So far, we have focused on knowledge and skills. Clearly, there is much more to reading. It also depends on reading behaviour, how much a child reads and what they read, which is linked to interwoven affective factors such as reading enjoyment, motivation and self-efficacy. In what follows, we will summarise literature on reading behaviour and reading affect, focusing on reading frequency, enjoyment and motivation.

Reading behaviour is often captured using measures of reading frequency. Surveys show that reading frequency is associated with age, with the percentage of children and young people reporting reading on a daily basis typically declining in adolescence. A survey of 71,351 children and young people aged 5 to 18 from schools across the UK found that the number who report reading outside of school daily decreases markedly as young people start secondary school (see Figure 4, Clark et al., 2023). Notably, while daily reading levels in free time in 2023 were identical to those seen in 2022, overall there has been a 26% decrease in the number of children and young people aged 8 to 18 who read daily in their free time over the past 18 years, decreasing from 38.1% in 2005 to 28.0% in 2023. This indicates that the dramatic drop in reading frequency is an enduring problem. Children and young people who do not read frequently will miss out on the benefits that come with reading, such as exploring new imaginary worlds, learning new words, empathising

with fictional and non-fictional characters, and gaining insights into contexts that are not part of their lived experience (e.g. geographical locations or cultures).

Figure 4. Percentage of children and young people aged 5 to 18 reporting that they read daily in their free time in 2023 (from Clark et al., 2023)



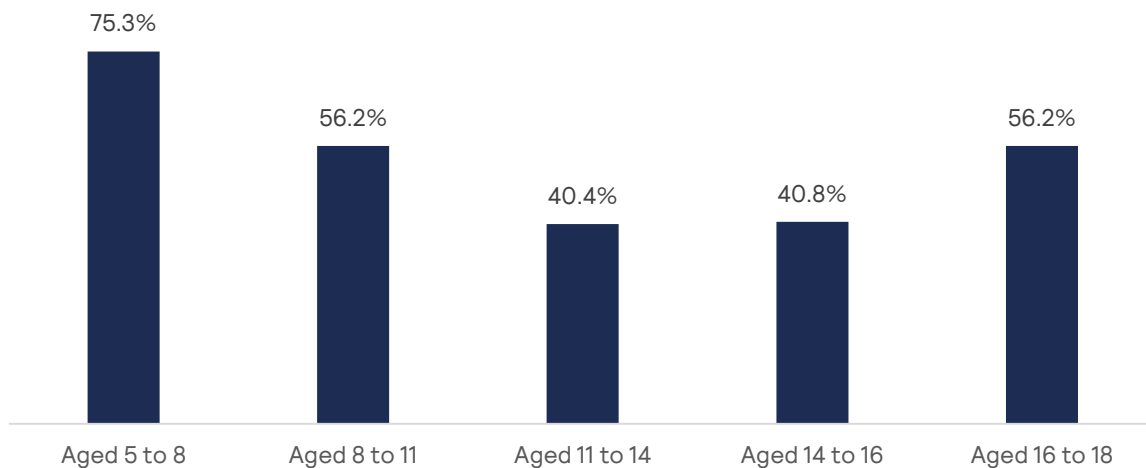
Correlational studies have consistently shown that those who read more are also better readers. Reading frequency is associated with reading performance throughout primary school (see, e.g. Lindorff et al., 2023) and this continues into adolescence (Merga & Roni, 2018; OECD, 2010). Importantly, while overall reading time and frequency is important, daily reading seems to be particularly closely linked to reading ability (Clark & Teravainen-Goff, 2020; OECD, 2011). In this case, daily reading refers to the reading that children and young people do in their free time outside of school.

In these studies, reading skill and reading frequency are measured at one time point, showing associations, but are not conclusive about whether reading skill determines reading frequency or vice versa. Both might also be the case. More revealing are longitudinal studies where reading ability and reading frequency are measured repeatedly in the same children over time. Longitudinal studies tracking reading through childhood and adolescence indicate that the association works both ways depending on the point of development (i.e. age) and the way that reading abilities and reading frequency are measured (Erbeli et al., 2020; Torppa et al., 2020; van der Kleij et al., 2022). Clearly, though, reading ability must come first: children cannot read frequently until they have some level of proficiency. Once some proficiency is achieved, there is a mutually beneficial relationship between

reading ability and reading frequency, which can be characterised as a virtuous circle.

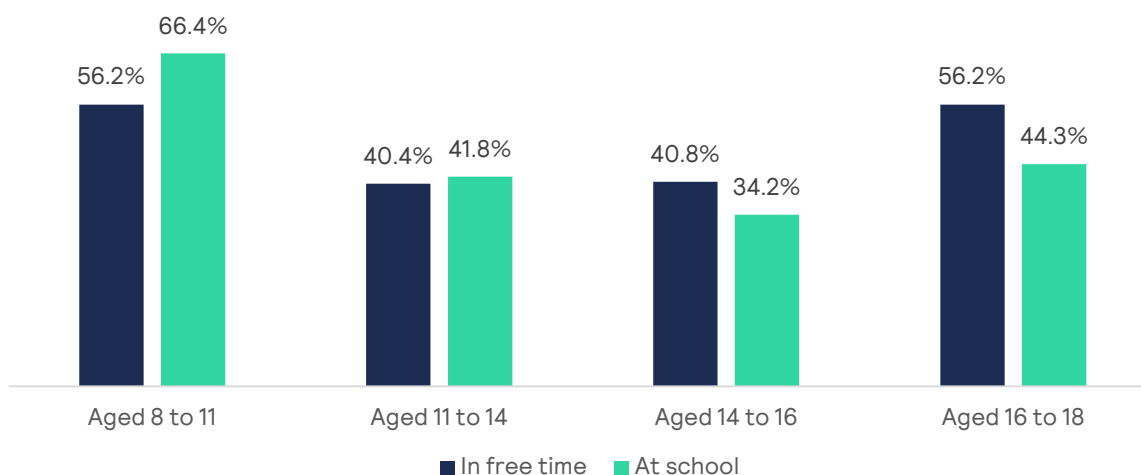
The choice to read regularly is influenced, to an extent, by young people’s feelings about reading (or ‘affect’). One aspect of reading affect can be measured by asking readers whether they enjoy reading. When this is done, there is a similar ‘dip’ to that seen in relation to reading frequency (see Figure 5, Clark et al., 2023).

Figure 5. Percentage of children and young people aged 5 to 18 reporting enjoying reading ‘very much’ or ‘quite a lot’ in their free time in 2023 (from Clark et al., 2023)



Interestingly, age differences increased in reading enjoyment at school for those aged 8 to 18. While the difference in reading enjoyment in free time between those aged 8 to 11 and those aged 14 to 16 was 15.4 percentage points, this doubled to 32.2 percentage points when looking at reading enjoyment at school between those age groups. This is because more children aged 8 to 11 enjoyed reading at school compared with reading in their free time, while fewer of those aged 14 to 16 said the same.

Figure 6. Percentage of children and young people aged 8 to 18 reporting enjoying reading ‘very much’ or ‘quite a lot’ in their free time and at school in 2023 (from Clark et al., 2023)



Reading enjoyment is considered to be closely linked to reading frequency, knowledge and skills. For example, readers are more likely to enjoy books that they can read successfully and, if books are enjoyed, they are more likely to be read and therefore promote skill development (e.g. Kavanagh, 2019; Vu et al. 2022). These aspects of reading are also associated with school attainment. For example, Clark and De Zoysa (2011) found that reading enjoyment and frequency were directly related to reading attainment, yet attitudes towards reading (e.g. I only read when I have to) were only indirectly related to attainment through their relationship with reading frequency. Lastly, data from the National Literacy Trust’s Annual Literacy Survey shows that motivation to read across three main motivational groups (being a curious reader¹, being a mindful reader² and being a social reader³) declines with

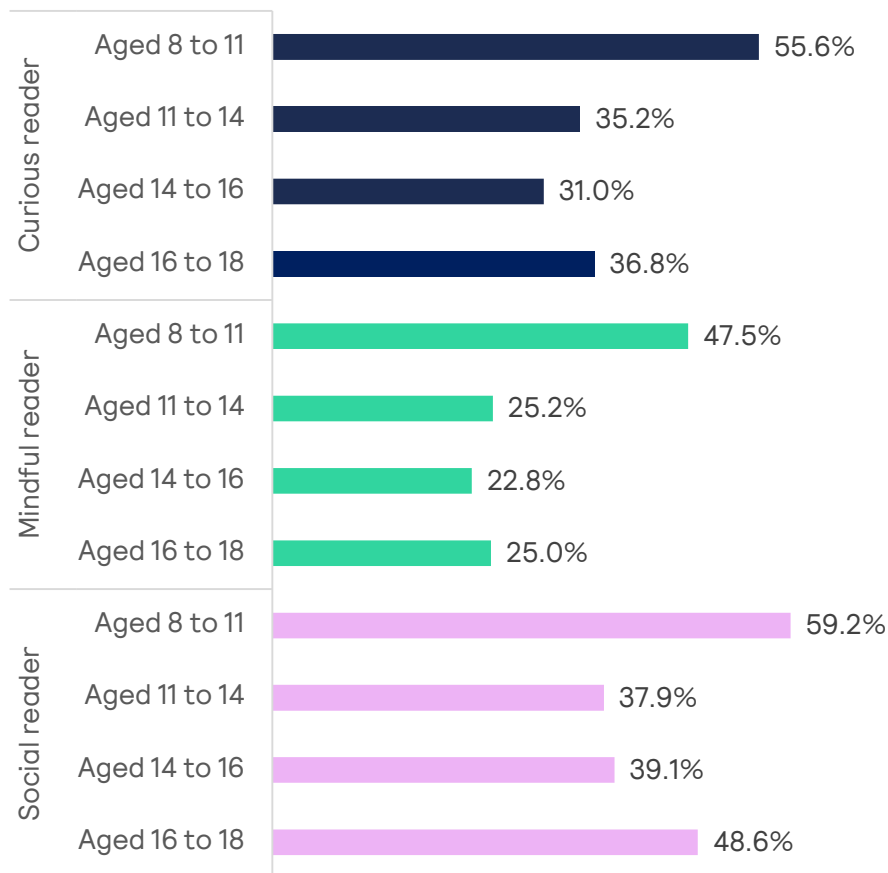
¹ Being a curious reader combines four items (Reading helps me learn about new things, Reading helps me learn about other people and cultures, Reading helps me learn new words, and Reading helps me understand the views of other people. Cronbach’s alpha = .810. Top quartile of responses being described here as the curious reader, 38.5%)

² Being a mindful reader combines four items (Reading makes me feel happy, Reading helps me relax, Reading helps me feel confident, Reading helps me deal with problems, Cronbach’s alpha = .795. Top quartile of responses being described here as the mindful reader (29.0%)

³ Being a social reader combines three items (Reading helps me feel connected with the world, Reading helps me learn more about the issues and causes I am interested in, and Reading helps me spend time with others. Cronbach’s alpha = .786. Top quartile of responses being described here as the social reader (42.3%)

age, although it recovers somewhat for those aged 16 to 18 (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Percentage of children and young people aged 8 to 18 reporting different aspects of reading motivation by age group (from Clark et al., 2023)



The increasing pressure of schoolwork at secondary level has been well documented (see e.g. OECD, 2010), with teenagers themselves suggesting that a lack of time to read is an increasing challenge in adolescence (Webber et al., 2023; Wilkinson et al., 2020). As one young person explained, “When people go into secondary school... reading just kind of plummets, like your interest in reading, because there's so many more things... to worry about, be interested in and focus on...” (Picton et al., 2019). At the same time, young people were more than twice as

likely to agree with the statement “There are lots of things I’d prefer to do in my free time than reading” than “I don’t have time to read” (68.9% vs. 31.1%), suggesting that the increased choice of potential leisure activities may be more of an influencing factor than time in young people’s reading.

In a qualitative study of 15- and 16-year-olds’ motivations for reading or not reading books, some felt that reading was a more effortful activity in leisure time than, for example, watching YouTube or Netflix, while socialising and playing sports were often preferred activities (Wilkinson et al., 2020). Young people also mentioned that some of the extrinsic motivators they may have had when younger (e.g. encouragement from parents and teachers) were less present, while many of the popular reasons for reading (relaxation, learning etc.) were more intrinsically motivated. Some young people felt reading was not ‘cool’, or observed that while it could be hard to find a book to suit their interest, digital devices presented a wider variety of personalised content.

Promoting reading behaviour and affect in secondary students

What can we do to promote reading behaviour and affect in secondary school? Unfortunately, we do not have all of the answers. Nonetheless, mounting research has identified guiding principles for promoting reading for pleasure (Cremin, 2014; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021), such as having access to a choice of books, time to read and opportunities to experience success while reading. Whilst much of the evidence comes from primary children and the primary context, many of these principles can be applied to secondary settings. Indeed, National Literacy Trust training for secondary practitioners recommends that teachers consider approaches and initiatives that promote access to books, choice (including of reading format), independent reading time, and reading for success, as well as encouraging informal book talk, peer-to-peer collaboration and the explicit teaching around these principles for students for whom this may be an unfamiliar concept.

A number of interventions and resources designed to support reading for pleasure in this age group, both in and out of school, include these elements. For example, BookTrust’s *Bookbuzz* foregrounds book choice and ownership (Vardy & Waldron, 2016), and their School Library and Special School Library Packs include sets of books designed to support social reading through reading groups (McNicol & Duggan, 2015, BookTrust, 2014). Scottish Book Trust’s *Bookzilla* app was designed in collaboration with young people, and scaffolds both book choice by helping users find their next read, and encourages success through fun reading challenges

(Hyder, 2020). Also supporting the social aspects of reading, The Reading Agency's *Reading Hack* initiative encourages young people to use their public library, organise activities, volunteer and inspire others to read. In a 2018 evaluation, more than half of participants said it had made them want to read more (OPM, 2018).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research indicates clear reading challenges for secondary students. Students vary widely in the reading knowledge and skills that they bring to the secondary curriculum. Further, many do not have the proficiency that they need to progress and attain well at school or approach everyday tasks like filling in forms and reading instructions with confidence. This sits against a backdrop of lower levels of daily reading, reading enjoyment and reading motivation, compared with primary-aged children. As a society, we must do more to promote reading proficiency, behaviour and affect in secondary students. If we do not, we are complicit in allowing large numbers of young people to leave compulsory education without the reading proficiency that they need to access health and other services, and to work. We also do them a disservice by denying them access to reading experiences that will enable them to participate in culture and community and to be submerged in new worlds and experiences. This is unacceptable.

The primary focus on reading is robust and evidence informed, with an emphasis on teaching systematic synthetic phonics and reading comprehension strategies, promoting spoken language, creating a rich reading culture, supporting children with reading needs and so on. However, the primary reading focus is not enough. Suggestions of a reading 'slump' as students transition from primary to secondary school are not supported by the evidence. Yet, the challenges at secondary school are different and less well acknowledged than those in primary. For example, teachers have increased expectations that students will be able to read independently. Also, curriculum content for core subjects like history and maths becomes more complex, the curriculum expands with new subjects, and the pedagogy that students experience changes. To give just one example, in primary school PE does not typically involve reading whereas at Key Stage 4, PE requires the reading of complex texts that include scientific explanations. Thus, the demands for all students change. Some reading needs will emerge or change as the demands of the curriculum shift at secondary. For example, some students may only just read accurately and fluently enough to access the primary curriculum but they may struggle with the different secondary curriculum. Therefore, universal and targeted support for reading proficiency must be sustained throughout secondary

in a way that acknowledges the shifting demands of the secondary curriculum. Further, our growing understanding of adolescent brain development and behaviour (Blakemore, 2018) suggests that this period is very different from childhood, and we may need dramatically different approaches to promote reading proficiency, behaviour and affect for this age group.

Recent years have brought a number of encouraging developments that spotlight secondary reading and provide guidance, with a welcome focus on promoting spoken language in service of reading proficiency and identifying reading needs, specifying their locus, and aligning needs with appropriate support and interventions (Department for Education, 2023; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021; Ofsted, 2022; Ricketts et al., 2022). Importantly though, we are lacking evidence on how to support reading in secondary schools. There is strong evidence for ‘active ingredients’ of effective reading pedagogy, reading culture and reading interventions (Breadmore et al., 2019; McGeown & Wilkinson, 2021). However, almost all of this evidence centres around primary children and teaching (for exceptions, see Baye et al., 2019) so it is unclear whether it would translate to older students and the secondary context. We also need approaches that consider reading proficiency within the context of reading behaviour and affect. For this, we need a shared focus at secondary school on promoting proficiency and creating a rich reading culture. There are, of course, many examples of excellent practice in both primary and secondary schools to draw on. Approaches must be developed in collaboration with teachers and students to ensure that they are effective, feasible and acceptable in secondary school.

Further reading and links

National Literacy Trust reports

Best, E., Clark, C., Cole, A., Picton, I. & Riad, L. (2023). *Young adults' communication and the gender gap*. London: National Literacy Trust.
https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Young_adults_communication_and_the_gender_gap_kOEsvrj.pdf

Clark, C. & Picton, I. (2019). *Children, young people and digital reading*. London: National Literacy Trust. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-young-people-and-digital-reading/>

Picton, I., Clark, C., O'Keefe, S., Choli, M. & Gliksten, H. (2019). *Improving the literacy skills of disadvantaged teenage boys through the use of technology*. London: National Literacy Trust. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/improving-literacy-skills-disadvantaged-teenage-boys-through-use-technology/>

Picton, I., Clark, C. & Judge, T. (2020). *Video game playing and literacy: A survey of young people aged 11 to 16*. London: National Literacy Trust.
<https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/video-game-playing-and-literacy-survey-young-people-aged-11-16/>

Picton, I., Clark, C., Riad, L. & Cole, A. (2022). *Insights into young people's literacy, critical digital literacy, online communication and wellbeing*. London: National Literacy Trust. https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Young_adults_communication_and_the_gender_gap_kOEsvrj.pdf

Key research papers (all open access):

Castles, A., Rastle, K. & Nation, K. (2018). Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 19(1), 5-51. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1529100618772271>

Wilkinson, K., Andries, V., Howarth, D., Bonsall, J., Sabeti, S. & McGeown, S. (2020). Reading during adolescence: Why adolescents choose (or do not choose) books. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 64(2), 157-166.
<https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jaal.1065>

Ricketts, J., Lervåg, A., Dawson, N., Taylor, L. A. & Hulme, C. (2020). Reading and oral vocabulary development in early adolescence. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 24(5), 380–396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2019.1689244>

van der Kleij, S. W., Burgess, A. P., Ricketts, J. & Shapiro, L. R. (2022). From Bibliophile to Sesquipedalian: Modeling the Role of Reading Experience in Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 26(6), 514–526. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10888438.2022.2068418>

van der Kleij, S. W., Burgess, A. P., Ricketts, J. & Shapiro, L. R. (2023). Tracking vocabulary and reading growth in children from lower and higher socioeconomic backgrounds during the transition from primary to secondary education. *Child Development*, 94, e57–e66. <https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.13862>

Other key reports:

Department for Education (2023). *The Reading Framework*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1186732/The_reading_framework.pdf

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for offering their time and expertise in reviewing this report: Megan Dixon, Catharine Driver, Fiona Oakley, Alex Quigley, Lauren Shapiro, Nisha Tank and Jasmine Tucker.

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Our charity is dedicated to improving the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of those who need it most, giving them the best possible chance of success in school, work and life. We run Literacy Hubs and campaigns in communities where low levels of literacy and social mobility are seriously impacting people's lives. We support schools and early years settings to deliver outstanding literacy provision, and we campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians, businesses and parents. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy and drive our interventions.

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Suggested reference for this report is: Clark, C., Picton, I. & Ricketts, J. (2023) *Reading in Secondary Students: What do we know?* National Literacy Trust and Royal Holloway University of London.

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