



10-Point Checklist: Literacy at Secondary School

1 Do you have accurate up-to-date reading data?

Reading data from entry to secondary school quickly becomes irrelevant. Screening for the whole school should be carried out regularly.

2 Do you know if any poor testing results are due to motivation?

Some students perform poorly because they lack the motivation to work to their best ability. You may be allocating valuable resources unnecessarily.

3 Does your data tell you the domain of difficulty?

Do you know if your low-progress readers have difficulty with decoding? Comprehension? Or both?

4 Do you know the optimum frequency and duration for students to be out of class so that they make progress but still keep up with classwork?

Less than three times a week is not frequent enough for students to make sufficient progress. More than 30 minutes for a lesson means that students are missing out on too much class time.

5 Have you ensured that students are able to catch up on missed classwork?

Teachers should plan for this, for example by allocating a learning buddy to collect resources and share notes.

6 Does your reading intervention enable teachers to tailor lessons to individual needs - or do students have to work through a set programme?

A set programme can result in a student spending unnecessary time on some learning and not enough on areas where they need additional practice. A good programme will provide detailed assessment of each student's profile.

7 Is your measure of progress based on objective data?

Progress measures should be valid, reliable, and sensitive to even small changes. Every lesson should provide data so that the teacher can respond to changes in progress.

8 Does your reading intervention ensure that students make rapid progress?

Students need to make at least three months' progress per month in order to have any hope of catching up. But the longer it takes the more time they miss from other lessons.

9 Are gains sustained over time?

If students fall back after completing a programme, time and resources have been wasted and students, once again, lose confidence and motivation. Sound interventions will demonstrate measurable, sustained gains.

10 Does your reading intervention address the complexities of remediating reading problems at secondary school?

Reading only seems simple when you can do it! Teachers must have a honed repertoire of skills to have rapid, lasting impact.