

# The Reading for Pleasure Guide

Parental Engagement

53%

50%

Larger Library Budgets

Whole School Engagement

50%

31%

Prioritised Reading Spaces

The following guide has been created in collaboration with those at the very heart of the reading community, to help you create and drive an all-inclusive and all-accessible reading for pleasure culture in your school.

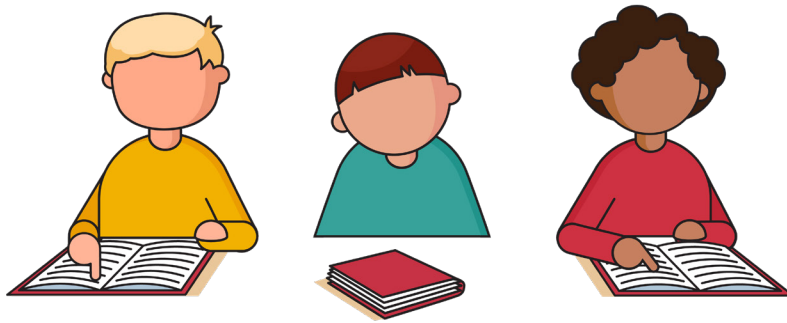
What is reading for pleasure?

Why is it so important?

Reading and it's broader outcomes.

What tools do you need to create a reading culture?

**Lexplore**  
ANALYTICS



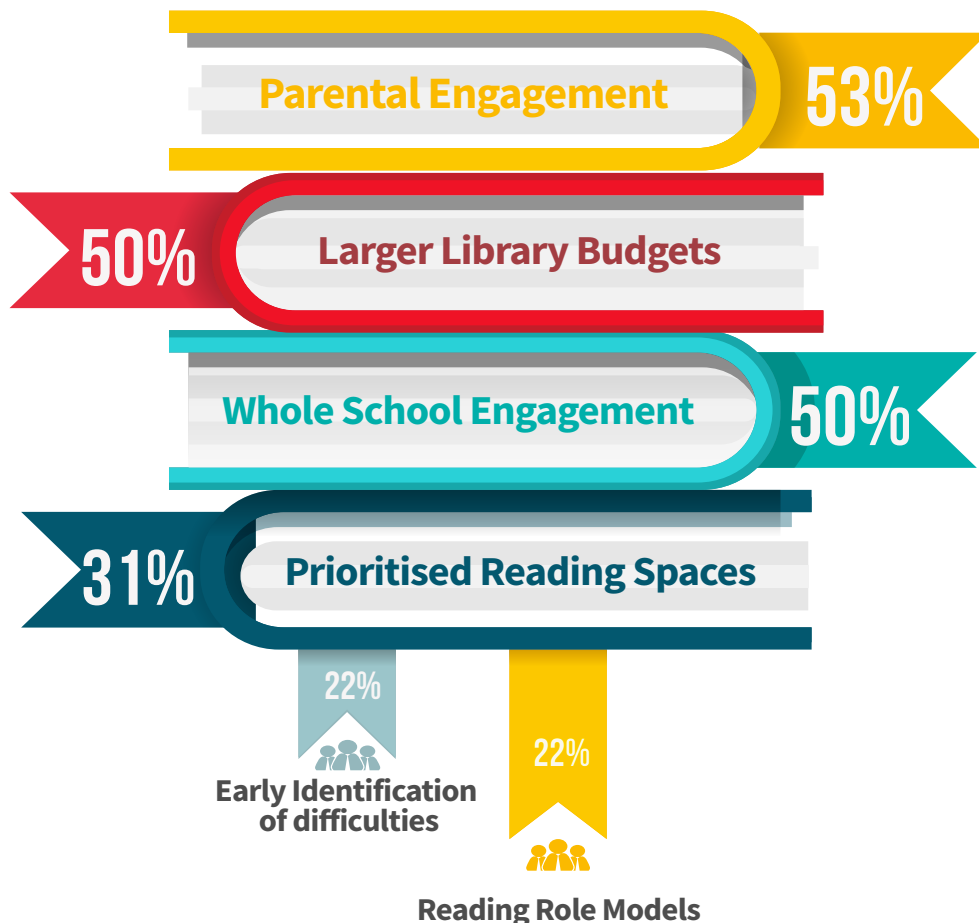
# The Reading for Pleasure Journey

**For the prolific reader, it might be difficult to imagine a time before books. However, it certainly isn't the case that we were all born with an inherent love of literature. In fact, the reading journey is something which is very personal and different for every individual.**

Some children will quickly master the skills required and become voracious readers who devour stories from an early age. Others will find it much more difficult to learn to love reading, and their journey might not be so straight forward.

But how can we ensure every child is given the opportunity and material to develop that all important love of reading, so they can enter a world of words as early as possible?

At this year's 'Building Identities, Building Readers Weekend' we asked librarians, teachers, SENCOs and literacy experts which tools were required to help create and drive a reading for pleasure culture. The following guide will explore several methods to implement the top chosen tools, helping school leaders to create an all-inclusive and all-accessible reading community at the heart of their own school.





# What is reading for Pleasure?

**Although, it is often a phrase we hear and use, it can be difficult to define exactly what reading for pleasure is, and even more difficult to determine when it occurs.**

Those who read for pleasure all read independently but the reasons for this can vary from person to person. For some, books open up new ways for them to see the world and challenge their views by offering them the opportunity to see from a different perspective. For others, books offer an adventure, which can make you laugh or cry as your own emotions become interchangeable with those felt by the characters within the pages.

In a similar way, some readers can find it easy to pinpoint the eureka moment or specific book that opened this world up to them. However, for others the journey which led them to resonate with the wisdom, interest and wonder within books isn't so clear cut. It's in this way,

that reading for pleasure is often something unpredictable, which can creep up on us when we are least expecting it. Whether it's a specific book, character, or person who triggers it, we will all have had or will have that specific moment where we realise that we finally understand why people read for pleasure!

For some the discovery of reading for pleasure comes much later in life, however, is equally as important. From these moments in childhood or even adulthood we are from then on hooked on reading anything from books, to newspapers, to magazines, building our knowledge without even realising. These moments can often remain in our memories much more vividly than the very plots themselves that led us to fall in love with reading.





## Why is it so important?

According to OECD research reading for pleasure may provide the most effective way to level social change and is in fact a more important indicator of academic success than a child's socio-economic background. Their analysis revealed that children from low income families who were highly engaged with reading actually scored higher than children from higher income families who were not engaged with reading.

### But why is this?

Quite simply, reading unlocks a world of knowledge and learning, when children do so simply out of sheer pleasure they provide themselves with the opportunity to practice important skills, as well as build their knowledge and vocabulary beyond the curriculum. Reading widely also provides an invaluable opportunity for children to develop their spelling and punctuation skills. A child who reads often will have a vocabulary of 70,000 words by the age of 17 compared with a vocabulary of just 15,000 words if they do not.

In a school environment which is increasingly content heavy it is this vocabulary difference which makes it more important than ever before that we encourage children to pick up good reading habits early so they can read for pleasure and build their knowledge beyond classroom material.

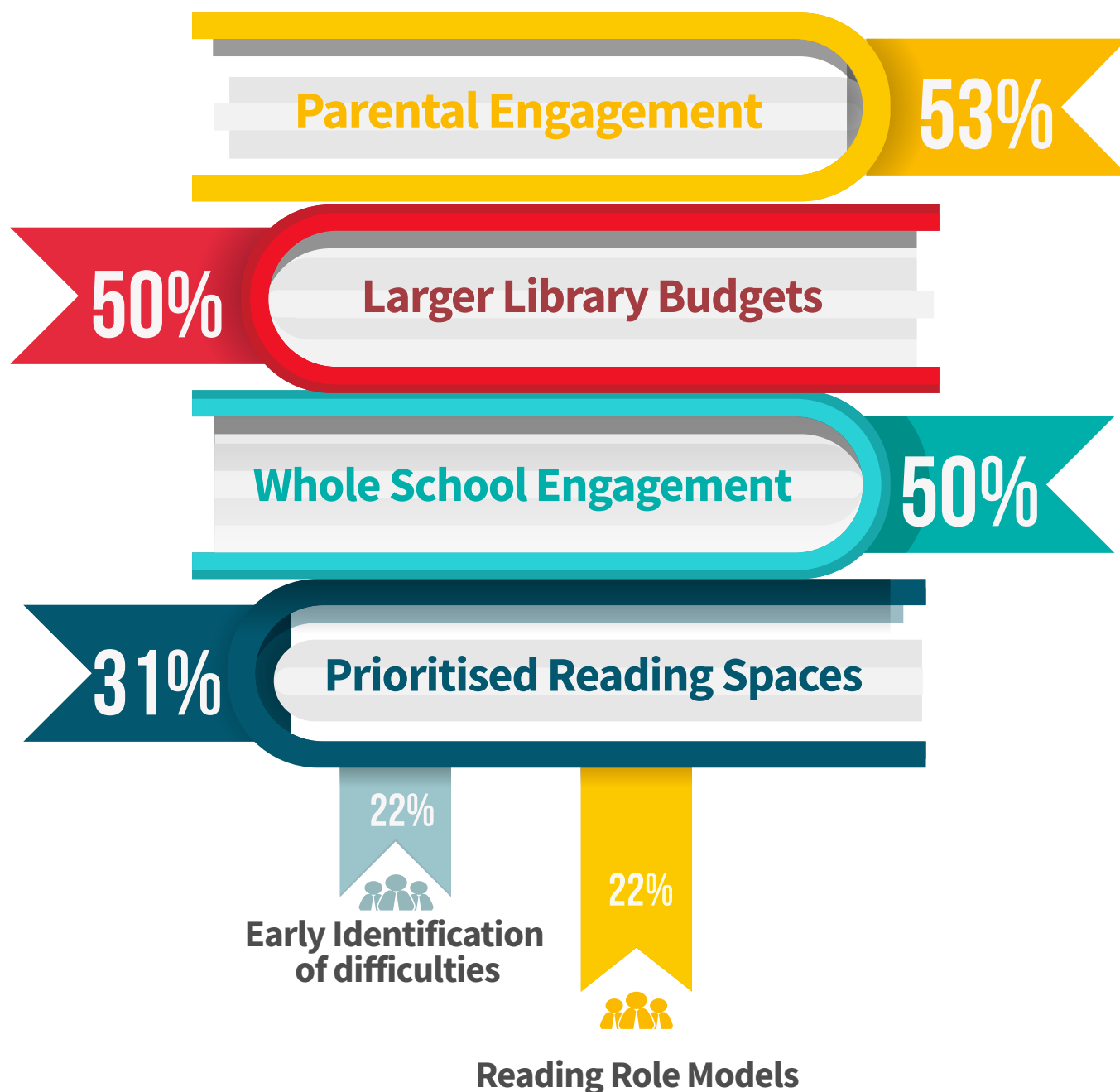
### Broader Outcomes

Today, it is the unfortunate case that we have all no doubt witnessed the alarming rise in the number of young people around us seeking some sort of support when it comes to their mental health and wellbeing. It's therefore important that we recognise that reading for pleasure also have many much broader outcomes beyond simply being a facilitator of academic achievement. With the world of words being a place that some pupils can escape from their worries, learn to deal with complicated emotions, and feel less alone, books can actually be a powerful wellbeing tool within their own right.



# What classroom tools do you need?

This year at the [School Library Association](#) Weekend Course, [Lexplore](#) and [Softlink](#) spoke about wellbeing through reading. Following our presentation we asked those librarians, literacy specialists and teachers attending this very important question...



But with teachers and librarians often facing a magnitude of unpredictable challenges in the classroom, how do you begin to implement these powerful reading for pleasure tools?

We have created the following tips to help you begin to create an important reading culture at the centre of your school community...

# Parental Engagement

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**Encouraging children to read simply for pleasure requires time, patience, and support. It's estimated that children need 5000 hours of practice time to master the complex skills required for them to become strong readers. This cannot be accomplished in the classroom alone; especially with teachers already juggling a demanding curriculum!**

When teaching children to read, we build upon their early knowledge of language acquired through their interactions and experiences. If children do not grow up in language rich environments, they can often find it difficult to keep up with their peers who do, especially when it comes to learning to read.

As highlighted by the education secretary, these early literacy attainment gaps in the classroom can have a devastating impact on social mobility. For the 28% of primary children who start their education behind their peers, it can be extremely difficult to catch up. Their peers don't wait and the gap simply widens. Some of the latest DfE statistics now even suggest those children who do have poor vocabularies at the age of five are twice as likely to be unemployed at the age of 34.

Within schools we can provide children with many opportunities to develop their enthusiasm for reading, however, it is just as important to ensure that children's home environments also support their literacy development.

Those children whose parents are involved with their reading not only begin school with an academic advantage over their peers, but also show much greater emotional resilience, an ability to maintain more positive relationships, as well as present with fewer behavioural problems.

For the families themselves, reading can also provide a wonderful opportunity to spend time adventuring together into a world of books. However, it's no secret that the importance of shared reading can often be overlooked, especially amidst today's many technological distractions. As teachers it is therefore important to openly discuss with parents the incredible impact that even just 15 minutes of home reading can have on their child's development.

Children who see their parents value and engage with reading themselves are also much more likely to read for their own pleasure. It's therefore important for parents to show they value reading by sharing and discussing books with their children.

It's here schools can help! Creating take-home materials including lists of questions to ask, or diaries where shared reading can be recorded, can help to encourage parents to ensure reading is not squeezed out of busy family life.

Schools should also encourage families to join their local library, so they can choose books together, as well as find authors and materials that their children love. During the holidays the library can provide families with opportunities to get involved with literacy initiatives, and help to extend that all important reading culture beyond the classroom.

Our home reading tips can be shared with parents to help improve engagement at home!

## Home reading tips

### Read yourself!

Let your child see you reading. They will imitate your behaviour - books also provide a great way to unwind after work.

### Encourage children to read together!

Reading simpler stories to siblings gives older children an opportunity to practice reading with fluency and expression. They also become important reading role models.

### Make reading part of bedtime!

Even if time cannot be found for reading together every evening, there's still plenty of opportunities to engage with programmes, such as CBeebies Bedtime Stories, every night at 6:50pm.

### Get your child their own Library card!

The library provides a wonderful environment where children can expand their minds and vocabulary for free – borrowing books can also help to teach children an important sense of responsibility!

### The right books!

Help your child choose books which extend their natural fields of interest! Your local library is a great place to start when it comes to selecting books at the appropriate reading level, and your child's teachers will also be happy to help guide your choices.

### Record Achievements!

A visual achievement chart can help motivate your child and give them a sense of accomplishment.

## Questions to ask

### Before Reading...

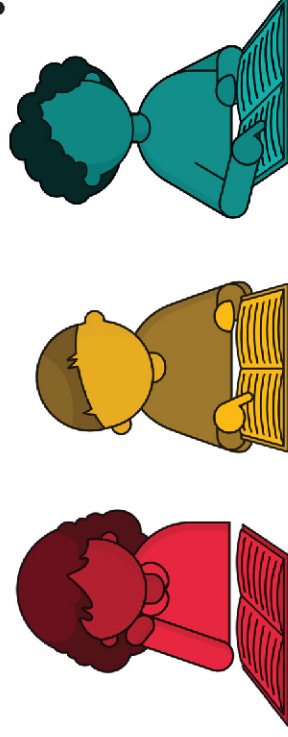
What do you think this story will be about?  
Have you read any other books about...?  
Have you read any other books by...?  
Why did you choose this book?  
Do you like the front cover?

### During Reading...

How do you think... is feeling?  
What do you think is going to happen next?  
How would you feel if that happened?  
How did you work out that word?  
What do you think the author meant by...?  
Why do you think that happened?  
What effect does that rhyme have on...?

### After Reading...

Who was your favourite character... why?  
Did you enjoy the story... why?  
Does this book remind you of any others?  
What was the most interesting part?  
Would you change any part of the book?  
Why do you think the author wrote this book?  
Would you recommend the book... why?



## What if children struggle?

Although undeniably important, reading as a skill is not something which comes naturally for the human brain and some children, as we will all have experienced, do struggle.

Naturally some children will acquire the many skills required to read fluently quicker than others, however, there are children who will experience specific difficulties requiring special support.

If you think your child may have a problem when it comes to reading, it is important to discuss your concerns with teachers at school, who can help tailor a programme of support.

As a parent, there are certain steps you can take to help reluctant and struggling readers from home.

**Try not to worry** - it will naturally take some children longer to master the many complex skills involved.

**Create a reading space** - a private, cosy space can help encourage reluctant readers to relax and enjoy books.

**Reading without realising** - many activities like cooking with recipes make reading fun. They also provide great ways to spend quality time together.

**Don't forget audio books** - They make literature accessible. Children develop important listening skills and engage with material above their reading level.







# 50%

## Larger Library Budgets

**It's no secret that libraries are not statutory requirements for UK schools, and although this sparks a debate within itself, the fact that there are no official figures also makes it very difficult to gain a thorough understanding of school library provisions, staffing and funding across the country.**

The school library provides an essential space where children feel encouraged and able to engage with all areas of the curriculum independently. They can build their own knowledge, learn beyond the syllabus and get involved with fun reading initiatives. For some children the school library also provides an important place of retreat; a place they can feel free to think and relax away from the classroom or playground.

However, with an estimated 88% of schools facing real term budget cuts per pupil, there is no doubt that the funding crisis has impacted their ability to provide children with well-stocked and well-managed library spaces. For schools facing some of the most extreme reductions in funding, the library can often be one of the first resources to be sacrificed.

Although new research from the national literacy trust recently revealed that most primary schools had some sort of library, there was no collective decision on what actually constituted a library. Some schools have dedicated rooms, but other library provisions vary from bookcases in classrooms to individual shelves.

Even though we cannot solve funding problems across the country, there are certain tips we can provide to help schools to create and manage their library spaces without stretching the school budget.

### **Become a member of your local SLS**

Money spent on becoming a member of your local school library service is definitely well spent. They provide extensive resources and materials which help to enrich library spaces. They are also run by experienced librarians who can offer invaluable advice and support.

### **Student involvement**

Librarians are invaluable in schools, providing cross-curricular advice and supporting all children with their reading. Involving pupils in the day-to-day running of the library can help ensure librarians are able to dedicate their time to making the most of the reading resources available. Tasks such as shelving, ordering books, tidying displays etc, can also help give children a sense of responsibility, as well as make the library a space they are invested in and care about.

### **Help from parents and businesses**

Parents are often more than willing to volunteer in the library as a space central to their child's learning. They may also be willing to purchase books, perhaps instead of Christmas presents for staff members. Education businesses often work together to help schools fill their libraries with engaging material. At Lexplore we are excited to offer all our customers a 30% discount on books from Peters, and also work with many other organisations who provide support and materials for our school libraries.



## Whole School Engagement

50%

**The library is the heart of reading for pleasure in school! It's therefore important if we want to create a community to drive this theme, that we ensure the library is an accessible and welcoming resource that the whole school engage with.**

When it comes to whole school engagement, dedicated library staff can be key to driving reading, collaborating with teachers and keeping shelves filled with engaging and relevant materials.

Technology also greatly helps when it comes to making the library an accessible and effective resource within school.

Having a powerful management system not only helps to monitor the borrowing and returning of books but can also drive engagement. LMS systems enable librarians to monitor student profiles, provide engaging book recommendations, and encourage pupils to review their favourite reads.

Regular class visits can also help drive engagement, encouraging pupils to take ownership of the space, selecting their own books and making use of the materials available. They also give teachers an opportunity to show pupils they value reading themselves.

Running regular book groups can also help provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their enthusiasm for reading and share their ideas and passion with other children.

Pupils can also be encouraged to take responsibility by taking on the role of librarians themselves, helping scan in books, stack shelves, and recommend exciting reads to their friends.

31%

## Prioritised Reading Spaces

**Providing children with dedicated and welcoming reading spaces can help inspire them to read for pleasure. However, when space is often limited, creating prioritised reading spaces can be a challenge.**

Welcoming reading spaces are light, comfortable, and well-designed. They foster independent reading and encourage concentration. For some children the library environment can be key in changing their attitudes to reading, and so it is important schools make their reading spaces as welcoming and intriguing as possible.

However, for some schools where funding and space are in short supply, there are some small changes which can easily be implemented and make a huge difference.

With the many distractions of technology, children are likely to turn away from shelves simply filled with book spines. It can be much more welcoming in fact to have fewer books on shelves, provided they face outwards. This makes the library more appealing and inviting when it comes to children choosing material themselves.

Aside from the library, it is important for children to have access to book corners in their classrooms; filled with engaging fiction and non-fiction, which has been carefully selected by teachers and librarians to connect with curriculum content.

**When it comes to creating a reading for pleasure culture which is accessible to all pupils, it is important to remember that teachers can only address any literacy issues if they know what they are in the first place. However, ensuring literacy issues are all spotted at the earliest opportunity is much easier said than done. But that's where new technological innovations can come to the rescue.**

However valuable, reading is not actually a skill which comes naturally to the human brain and some children do struggle.

For these children the classroom can be a daunting place, especially as they get older. The new GCSE English specification now involves reading a larger number of texts dealing with complicated ideas, in what can sometimes be an unfamiliar language. Many other subjects have also become much more content heavy, all requiring children to have strong foundational reading skills. More than ever before it's therefore important to encourage children to develop good reading habits early so they can engage with content and succeed in the classroom and beyond.

But it's no secret that children take in text in different ways and for some the reading journey is not straight forward.

So what can we do? Well the simple answer is to ensure literacy issues are spotted at the earliest opportunity so children can receive the support they need to get back on track with their reading.

However, when teachers and librarians already face a magnitude of day-to-day challenges and different demands, this can be easier said than done.

But that's where new technology can come to the rescue!

Take for instance our new AI assessment developed following over 30 years of peer reviewed research at one of the leading medical institutes in the world.

Our technology monitors how a child's eyes move through text whilst reading, in a fun, non-test like environment. Then from each child's individual eye movement patterns it can objectively analyse the key reading components, and offer teachers a detailed insight into how children process text. In a matter of minutes, the entirely objective assessment makes it possible for teachers to determine attainment instantly as well as highlight any children who might be experiencing specific difficulties, like Dyslexia. These results have often taken teachers entire terms to manually collate using assessments they don't want to mark and children simply don't want to sit.

As well as bringing invaluable objectivity into the assessment process, perhaps one of the greater benefits of the assessment is the huge amount of information it puts at teachers fingertips in relation to a child's reading, including offering the first full analysis of silent reading. This greatly helps when it comes to isolating specific areas requiring more support and also picking up on those easy to miss hyperlexic children.

It's this powerful ability that technology gives teachers to help all pupils access a world of books, including ensuring strong readers are also supported, which makes it so valuable. Technology will never replace the human touch our teachers and librarians bring, but can really help them develop an all-inclusive and all-accessible reading culture within school.

22%

## Reading Role Models

**As teachers, librarians and even parents, it's important to remember that we have the power to inspire children to become readers ourselves. At a young age children are easily influenced, as they learn by replicating behaviours they see around them. When children see us reading and enjoying books they are likely to do the same!**

When it comes to being a reading role model for our children there are many small things we can do to encourage them to pick up a book. It is important to ensure books become a part of their space at home; with magazines, newspapers and other forms of literature readily available. As a parent or teacher you can also share your own reading with children by discussing your favourite books. Buying and borrowing books as a family is also a great way of spending time together and makes reading part of a child's regular routine.

Today, it is also important to remember the controversial, yet undeniably powerful influence that celebrities and online influencers can have on children. At school this influence can be utilised for the better, especially when it comes to reading for pleasure.

There are many initiatives led by footballers, authors, television stars etc, who encourage children to develop good reading habits.

Encouraging children to read in pairs with siblings at home, or friends in school also helps them become role models for each other. By openly discussing books and sharing favourites, children can inspire their friends to read new material and pick up their passion for reading.

At home, encouraging siblings to read together not only helps inspire younger child

to read themselves, but can also help older children develop their skills. Reading simple material gives children an important opportunity to practice reading out loud with expression and fluency, without feeling overwhelmed by difficult vocabulary or content.



# About Lexplore Analytics

Lexplore is a pioneering and mission-driven company, which provides schools with new technology and resources to promote reading development.

At the core of our offering is a ground breaking method of measuring reading attainment, which uses artificial intelligence and eye tracking technology to offer an entirely new insight into literacy.

By measuring when, where, and how a student's eyes move in relation to the words they are reading, our paperless assessment quickly analyses a their skills across key reading components, determines their attainment, and highlights potential barriers in a matter of minutes.

With immediate, fully objective and in-depth results, teachers can then work with our dedicated intervention package to support both emerging and fluent readers in their development.



# Lexplore

## ANALYTICS

A clear view of reading

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