

# Influences on Key Stage 2 Teachers of Comprehension

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## Abstract

The National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) mandates what primary teachers should teach in their English reading lessons, but it does not advise how to teach reading comprehension. Teachers may therefore be influenced by a variety of factors in their practice. There is much previous research focussing on influences on teachers of mathematics and on the teaching of reading, suggesting teachers can be influenced by their beliefs and environmental factors such as the school climate, personnel, students and resources. This qualitative study extends the existing literature by exploring these influences on the practices of Key Stage 2 teachers of comprehension and the extent of their agency in comprehension teaching. Fourteen Key Stage 2 primary teachers, with a varied range of experience, were interviewed to explore how different influences appear to shape their thinking and practice, how heavily they were influenced by personal beliefs, practical considerations, by demands of policy or by research recommendations, which were the strongest influences and why. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), is extended in Valsiner's (1997) zone theory of child development. Goos' (2013) adaptation of this and Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice (CoP) are used to explore teachers' learning and development through their interactions with social and contextual environments.

The methodology encouraged the use of visual timelines by the interviewees, to prompt and help elaborate their recount of experiences and their perceptions of the influences on their comprehension teaching. Through their narratives, influences were found to be shaping practice in five main areas; using discussion, teaching language comprehension, teaching comprehension skills, teaching children to answer written questions and encouraging enjoyment of reading. Matrices were used to explore cross-case patterns of influence and to show the strongest influences in each area. The influences were split into sub-categories of national, school and personal contexts. Individual matrices for each teacher explored how they felt about their comprehension pedagogy and whether they had agency. The reduced data of teachers' practice and expressed beliefs was compared with a proposed theoretical model of what the research and socioculturalism theory advocate as the skills, knowledge and interactions needed for reading comprehension pedagogy.

The research findings have implications for school CPD and ITE providers with its focus on approaches to teacher learning and development. It is of significance for the reading research community for further development of comprehension teaching. It will be of interest to other researchers using qualitative narrative research techniques.

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## List of Abbreviations

CoP	Communities of Practice
CPD	Continued Professional Development
EAL	English as an Additional Language
KS1/KS2	Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PGDipEd	Post Graduate Diploma in Education
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
ZFM	Zone of Free Movement
ZPA	Zone of Promoted Action
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of Study

#### Introduction

This study initially arose from a practical need to improve my own pedagogy when I was a primary school teacher; I wanted to support children in my class to comprehend texts more effectively. In this chapter I will expand on this initial purpose of the study and explore the original decisions made for the choice of approach used. The National Research Council claims, “quality classroom instruction in kindergarten and the primary grades is the single best weapon against reading failure” (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998:343, cited in Malatesha Joshi *et al*, 2009:393). I aimed for quality instruction but my own knowledge gained from school advisors and from day-to-day teaching at times seemed in conflict. There was little guidance in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) or recent government documents on how to teach comprehension. I felt I was a practitioner lacking knowledge of research, operating in a national policy vacuum. I was curious as to whether other practitioners felt this and where they turned, to support their practice. Later I became a part-time lecturer in Teacher Education and was exposed to and influenced by a growing awareness of research and theory concerning the teaching of reading. McNaughton (2014) suggests Marie Clay’s work implies that to be able to understand the resources of strengths and weaknesses of new learners in reading, teachers need theoretical preparation. I wondered if other teachers felt confusion in their day-to-day roles in the classroom or a lack of theoretical preparation. This chapter will provide a brief history of reading policy in England, in the last 50 years, which indicates a lack of clear guidance for teachers as to how to teach reading comprehension, as a backdrop for the environment primary teachers have been working in.

As an avid reader who had grown up loving books, I felt tensions as a Key Stage 2 (KS2) teacher of comprehension. I felt driven to enable children to pass tests, but uneasy with the subjectiveness of the marking schemes and my perception of the rigidity of acceptable responses. As an English Literature graduate, reading was about the joy of bringing personal interpretations to literature, and learning about other people’s behaviours and thoughts, in line with Van den Broek *et al*’s (cited in Zhu *et al*, 2020:2) conception of reading as a dynamic, complex process including interpreting, imagining and thinking. Yet this seemed to be suppressed in children, as they were encouraged to answer in a way dictated by the mark scheme.

Memories of early training and professional development training suggested teachers should gradually move away from dominating classroom talk and directly leading discourse in the discussion of texts. However, school advisors advised a more didactic approach in the classroom, and lack of time to deliver an over-crowded curriculum meant this appeared a much more pragmatic and efficacious approach if a class was to achieve what was expected in the end of term tests. Gaps in knowledge for the teaching of reading at age-appropriate levels coupled with teaching in our high-stakes assessment climate has a seriously detrimental effect on reading development (Quigley, 2020). My own belief that we could not change the system I was working in but try to do the best I could do within it, to gently subvert school recommendations for the good of children's learning, has made me curious as to how other teachers feel, and how heavily influenced they are by practical considerations. The current system of testing may not necessarily be an accurate measure of children's ability in comprehension, but it is the climate I was required to work in when I started this research, and so my belief was to do the best teaching I could in this culture.

My own reflection on the extent to which I had unquestioningly followed school policy and suggested practice made me wonder to what extent other teachers do. After further informal conversations with colleagues I became interested in the influences shaping teachers' practice, whether teachers perceived they had agency in this area and were at peace with any policy or contextual dictates that they may have been subject to. Therefore, this study explores and analyses the influences on the experiences of others working within a similar culture and context.

This interest developed to inform my research questions:

How are influences shaping the thinking and practice of KS2 teachers of comprehension?

What are the strongest influences and why?

To what extent do teachers perceive they have agency in comprehension teaching?

A case study approach was chosen to generate an in-depth understanding of these complex issues, the case being the influences on teachers of comprehension. Yin (2017) states that case studies are relevant the more the study's research questions require extensive description of a social phenomenon. Schoch (2020) claims that the outcome of a case study is a comprehensive understanding of the bounded unit, helping the reader explore a case so that they can learn from it. I wanted to capture a range of perspectives of the phenomenon and learn from an intensive investigation of the similarities and differences that different teachers revealed about the influences on their practice. Interviews were used in an attempt to generate

extensive description of the teachers' experiences and to learn as much as I could about teachers' perceptions of their agency in their own classrooms.

Until August 2019 I was a practising primary teacher, with 20 years of teaching experience, latterly teaching mainly in KS2 classrooms. I held the post of English lead in school for several years. During these 20 years I have worked in several schools and taught in every phase. I have been seconded to lecture on a Post Graduate Primary ITE course at a university. I am currently teaching Professional Enquiry and English on the Post Graduate Primary ITE courses at a university, encouraging students to critically reflect on practice and explore the relevance of learning theory to practice. My changing roles have affected my positionality in the process of writing this thesis. Initially I straddled the boundaries of both researcher and insider classroom practitioner, trying to identify the best way to support children to understand texts from my own experiences and a slowly developing understanding of the theory behind why comprehension should be taught in ways according to research. More recently I am reflecting on findings from the perspective of an outsider no longer working in a primary school. In this position I feel I am less directly subjected to the accountability culture (Cremin *et al*, 2014:2) and am afforded more time to develop awareness of research and national policy. Because of these experiences I have considered whether we could look at history to learn for the present, identifying good practice and research evidence to use now. The Education Endowment Foundation (2017:2) states "... we believe the best way to break this link between family income and educational attainment is through better use of evidence: looking at what has – and has not – worked in the past can put us in a much better place to judge what is likely to work in the future". Investigating teachers' perceptions of what has worked for them in the past could help suggest ways to support comprehension teaching in the future.

Ford and Opitz (2011) write that their own teaching experiences and work with teachers have helped them to see that teachers use whatever techniques they see that work with their pupils, regardless of how popular the approach is in the professional literature or how current the approach may be. However, Lefstein (2005:338) cites Slavin's (2002) address to the American Educational Research Association annual meeting which claimed that education moved from "fad to fad". I questioned whether we as a profession are moving in cycles of teaching approaches, and if we tend to ignore or forget valuable and research informed teaching approaches when we embrace a new method in teaching and learning for reading. I wanted to probe whether the different influences on teachers did encourage them to use professional knowledge and practical knowledge from the past to inform and drive their

teaching. I wished to explore whether teachers are using what they believe works, and how far they are allowed to practise their own beliefs about teaching reading; their perceptions of agency in the classroom.

Rayner *et al* (2001) claim the most common definition of reading is getting meaning from print or understanding printed words that the reader knows based on spoken language; reading comprehension is an issue of general language comprehension rather than an issue of reading. Truelove *et al* (2014:6) highlight metacognitive skills sustaining reading for meaning; those engaging in comprehension monitoring to check whether the text makes sense are better comprehenders. However, when reflecting on my own experience of teaching comprehension, I found that I was encouraging children to master a set of skills which included inference, prediction and summarisation rather than encouraging children to consciously use flexible strategies to make sense of the text and monitor their own understanding.

The National Curriculum (DfE, 2013:4) states that “Comprehension skills develop through pupils’ experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction.” The statutory requirements (2013:25) in Years 3 and 4 are that pupils should be taught to participate in discussions about books, and to take turns and listen to others. This is enhanced in Years 5 and 6, where children should again participate in discussions, building on and challenging others’ ideas. There is however, no statutory or non-statutory guidance on how to manage, organise and facilitate these discussions in a classroom. There is now recent guidance on managing talk in the classroom in The Reading Framework (DfE, 2022), including suggestions for managing effective pair work and an audit tool for language comprehension. However, this framework is titled ‘Building Foundations for Literacy’ and is focussed on EY and Y1 rather than KS2. Cremin *et al* (2014:3) find that “reading and talk are mutually supportive learning experiences”. Baines *et al* (2003) note that different grouping arrangements can enhance learning for pupils but suggest that when seated in groups talk between pupils is not task enhancing, and the existence of different groupings does not necessarily mean teachers effectively co-ordinate their teaching and learning tasks with them. Measuring the effectiveness of mixed attainment peer support or whole-class teaching is not in the scope of this assignment but exploring the current organisational practice of teachers should give some insight into influences on current thinking and practice in schools.

Government policy and guidance in England for reading pedagogy and lesson structures over the last 50 years is outlined as a backdrop for the narratives of the teachers involved in the study. This thesis is bounded geographically and politically to England as the site of the

research study. The teachers interviewed attended primary school and were working as teachers within these parameters of time. Consequently, government policy may have affected their experience of learning reading comprehension, and their experiences of how they taught it.

In Britain, the 1975 Bullock Report (DES, 1975) “A Language For Life”, was a major report commissioned by the government to consider the teaching of English. Gillard (2008) summarises two of the recommendations; that every school should develop a systematic policy for the development of reading competence in all schools, and that every school should appoint a suitably qualified teacher to support and advise their colleagues in teaching reading. Governmental policy did not dictate how the lessons in reading competence should be taught, or what structure they should take.

Solity and Vousden (2009) claim the controversy of the long-held opposing views in teaching reading between those who championed the use of real books or whole language approach and those who pushed the use of reading schemes or the phonic approach was recognised in the Bullock Report (DES, 1975: 77-78). They claim it commented on those who emphasise the mechanics of reading and those who advocate the value of mature reading from the beginning, trusting that skills will be acquired along the way. In England, the publication of the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) gave considerable impetus to a whole language approach to reading. However, by the late 1980s, teachers taught phonic skills to young children through reading schemes and very rarely used real books (Solity and Vousden, 2009:472).

Dombey (online, no date) claims that during the 1980s, while the war of ideas between the whole language and phonic approach intensified, a new framework, ‘The Simple View of Reading’ (Gough and Tunmer, 1986) was proposed, to reconcile the two opposing views of early literacy teaching. In this reading comprehension (R) is equal to decoding (D) “multiplied by” linguistic comprehension ( $R=D \times C$ ) (Hulme and Snowling, 2011:140). Adequate reading comprehension depends upon the ability to understand spoken language and decode print. Problems in reading comprehension will ensue if either component is deficient. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2022) claim the simple view is a cognitive theory of reading, limited in analysing the craft of the author and that the model omits consideration of motivational, social and cultural factors impacting the experience of learning how to read. Street (2017) expounds the perspective which sees reading invariably taking place in specific sociocultural contexts that give reading its

meaning. The idea of literacy as a social practice will be explored further in the Literature Review in Chapter 2.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 in England included the introduction of the National Curriculum, setting out attainment targets for subjects, and arrangements for assessment. English was one of the three core subjects. A report, 'English for Ages 5-16' (DfES, 1989), emphasised the importance of literature and the role of wide reading in the development of language. The Warwick Evaluation (1994:28) evaluated the implementation of English in the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (1991-1993), finding that "Although teachers recognised the requirement to teach More Advanced Reading Skills, they were uncertain about translating these requirements into practice". These skills included searching for information, employing a variety of reading strategies, for example skimming and scanning, and collating and evaluating information.

By the mid-1990s, concerns increased that the intensity and breadth of the National Curriculum in England restricted the ability of teachers to ensure basic numeracy and literacy (Ofsted, 2002:2). 'The Teaching of Reading in 45 London Primary Schools' (Ofsted, 1996) identified low standards and poor teaching. Fisher (2008:19) claims this report criticised listening to individual readers as a time-wasting and inefficient way for children to practise reading skills, when they should have been developing them. This and other evidence, including international comparisons indicating low achievement in England, led to the establishment of the DfES non-statutory National Literacy Strategy (NLS; Department for education and Employment [DfEE]) in 1998 (Ofsted, 2002:2). The NLS proposed that children had four potential decoding strategies to support them in learning to read, referred to as 'Searchlights'. Street (2017:336) claims the Literacy as social practice approach moves from the NLS's narrow views of the key focus for literacy involving superficial features of rules for phoneme/grapheme relations and grammar rules to greater ideological and social contexts.

Fisher (2008) claims the NLS meant a shift in emphasis towards comprehension over fluency, where guided reading sessions marked a change from listening to individual readers. However, the republished DfES (2001:12) guidance materials advice stated that teaching of guided reading should "focus increasingly on guided silent reading with questions to direct or check up on reading"; silent reading rather than social discussion. It should involve ability groups of 4-6 where pupils have individual copies of a text selected to match the reading level of the group. The initial NLS training failed to provide teachers with an adequate

understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of this new pedagogical approach (Riley, 2001:48). Ofsted (2002) found, despite previous recommendations, that selected texts were not of an appropriate level for children who then struggled or were not sufficiently challenged in the sessions. Further guidance on how to use the approach effectively was published in the DfES (2003) 'Guided Reading: Supporting Transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2'. However, the Ofsted report 'Reading for Purpose and Pleasure' (2004) suggests many teachers were still having difficulties in their understanding of these principles and were not setting challenging or meaningful tasks for the children working independently. Six years after the publication of the NLS, Ofsted (2004: 22) found that for too many teachers, guided reading was still 'little more than pupils reading around the group in turn'. Despite changes in curriculum and lesson structure guidance, teachers in England were still criticised for their lack of understanding of pedagogy, their choice of texts, and their provision of challenge in reading.

The Rose Report (2006), or Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading, made recommendations for the teaching of early reading and for replacing the 'Searchlights' model, in the original literacy framework. It clarified the conceptual framework of the 'simple view of reading' as the two dimensions word recognition and language comprehension. The Rose Report (2006) encouraged the use of synthetic phonics as the most effective approach to the teaching of reading to young pupils, suggesting this form of systematic phonic work offers the majority of beginners the best route to becoming skilled readers. The NLS was revised and incorporated into the Primary National Strategy (PNS; Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2006), rejecting the Searchlights model and reinforcing the role of phonics as the primary decoding skill for beginning readers. In the light of the Rose Report (2006), 'Phonics and early reading: an overview for headteachers, literacy leaders and teachers in schools, and managers and practitioners in Early Years settings' (PNS, 2006) was produced as guidance, advocating that shared and guided reading can help develop phonic skills as well as developing comprehension. It claims the aim of guided reading is "to encourage and extend independent reading skills on new and increasingly challenging texts", and that "The success of the guided reading session depends on the teacher being clear about the purpose of the session and its specific learning objectives" (PNS, 2006:11). Understanding of the aims of teaching reading, providing appropriate texts and challenge are once again promoted in governmental guidance as essential for effective teachers.

Governmental guidance on teaching guided reading in England was discontinued in 2011 (Hanke, 2014), but continued to focus on phonic teaching. In 2012 a phonics screening check



was introduced at the end of Year 1, allowing teachers to identify pupils with a genuine grasp of decoding, and those who need support (DfE, 2015). Despite the phonics schemes and testing, in the Ofsted report of 2012, 'Moving English forward', schools were still criticised for not having "an overall conception of what makes a good reader", and that in many schools there was no coherent policy on reading overall (2012:29). The report notes guided reading as a "potentially useful strategy", but suggests it complement rather than replace what the Inspectors felt were the diminishing but effective strategies of reading stories to younger children, listening to children read, and sharing of complete novels with junior age pupils. Inspectors rarely saw the direct teaching of skills such as skimming and scanning, reading for detail, identifying key points and summarising.

The National Curriculum (DfE, 2014:6) set out skills and processes to be taught at each key stage but points out that as long as the programmes of study are taught, "Schools are free to choose how they organise their school day". Although the skills of comprehension are stressed, there is no guidance on how reading is to be taught, apart from the English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 recommending "Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction" (DfE, 2014: 2). In the document 'Reading: The Next Steps' (DfE, 2015) the government advocates that skills for becoming a mature, confident reader are developed by instilling a love of literature. They announce that to do this they will fund a programme to help primary schools set up book clubs for KS2 pupils, and fund resources to help teachers to encourage children to read and learn poetry. They ask schools to arrange library membership for all Y3 pupils. However, again there is no evidence of guidance for teachers on how they are to instil a love of literature with particular teaching methods, or lesson structures.

Guidance is provided on what children will be tested on and for in 'The English reading test framework National curriculum tests from 2016 For test developers' (Standards and Testing Agency, 2015). This was published for contributors to the English reading Key stage 2 national curriculum test, to ensure an appropriate test is developed, but the website suggests KS2 teachers may find it useful. The framework sets out the content domains, or the elements of the programme of study that are assessed in the reading test.

## **1.2 Wider Context**

Cultural-historical theoretical perspectives informed an exploration of the teachers' learning and development. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), is

extended in Valsiner's (1997) zone theory of child development. I use Goos' (2013) adaptation of this and Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice (CoP) to explore teachers' learning through their interactions with social and contextual environments. As a researcher, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provides a theoretical framework for me to make sense of some of the practices for teaching comprehension. Verenikina (2004:10) writes that "Viewing the child as an active participant in their own learning is at heart of the notion of ZPD." This is a belief I have formulated through professional and practical experience and used to help guide me when teaching and responding to children's misconceptions. Vygotsky proposed that children of varying 'ability' and skills should be encouraged to interact in heterogeneous groups within instructional settings (Eun, 2016); a practice I believe benefits children's academic development and their self-esteem. From experience in the classroom, I have concluded that children's self-efficacy and self-belief can be negatively affected when consistently grouped in the "bottom group" for reading. I have observed benefits of children's exposure to different ideas and skills when students are grouped in mixed attainment groups or pairs and encouraged to interact in discussion. I acknowledge a bias towards this theoretical approach from my understanding of my own learning processes.

Opitz and Ford (2011:225) refer to research-based concerns from the 1990s about ability grouping for guided reading, including negative social stigma and inequitable access to quality instruction. They suggest that the problems with this faulty grouping practice have more to do with the nature of instruction during the small group time, than with the grouping format. When I read a text, listening to others' points of view and shared knowledge helps me understand my own perspective better. Actively vocalising my own responses during interaction with more knowledgeable or more reflective others has increased my confidence in learning situations. I have developed a phrase with children when teaching reading and writing: "Think it, talk it, write it", advocating the social construction of shared knowledge which can then be written down by the individual. In this instance, "Talking it" means ideas and concepts are open to the reaction, support and alteration of others, helping clarify the understanding and position of the speaker and listeners.

### **1.3 My Own Story**

My own experiences as a teacher of reading were initially dictated by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998). Advisors modelled the recommended 'Guided Reading' strategies with small groups differentiated by 'ability' from my class. The next three schools I worked in utilised the process of small groups engaged in guided reading with a

teacher or assistant. Other groups worked on a carousel of related reading activities independently and were not supposed to disturb the practitioners who devoted their attention to the one small group. School policy in recent years demanded more written outcomes from all children and so activities included answering comprehension questions related to a short text, rather than pupils reading quietly to themselves in small groups. The demand for written outcomes here did not align with Rayner *et al's* (2001) claim that reading comprehension is an issue of general language comprehension rather than an issue of reading. I wished to explore whether other teachers were practising or perceived teaching comprehension focussing on written outcomes above the teaching of comprehension as teaching language comprehension.

The ideas from Reciprocal Reading (Palincsar and Brown, 1984) were introduced into the penultimate school I worked in about seven years ago. The research concepts of providing strategy instruction or procedures to deal with text while reading to facilitate comprehension, is manifested in this teaching approach (McKeown *et al*, 2009). The teacher guides pupils to use talk to develop reading comprehension, modelling four strategies of questioning, clarifying, summarising and predicting, for actively bringing meaning to the text and monitoring thinking and learning. The pupils then escalate responsibility for leading dialogues over time, moving to self-regulation (Palincsar, 2013). These four strategies are all now included in the current National Curriculum (2013) statutory guidance for comprehension. I could continue to focus on questioning other groups while the children could run groups of guided reading themselves.

Fuchs and Fuchs (2001) and Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes and Simmons (1997) are cited in Spörer *et al* (2009:272), suggesting that reading in pairs is a way to implement the major features of Reciprocal Teaching in the classroom. Pupils are taught to enact the structured activities of summarising, predicting and reading in partners independently of the teacher. Some class teachers required one of the pupils to be responsible for taking notes of questions raised or any new vocabulary defined. Boulos (2015) cites the research of Dion *et al* (2005) and Fuchs and Fuchs (1995), which suggests children working together supporting each other's learning improves aptitude in a range of different skills. Despite these findings, I had not seen this approach utilised in the majority of my school's classrooms for some years. This is the challenge of the instructional technique to help children develop responsibility for strategic behaviour. Younger, elementary children may find that the responsibility for a group's learning, when they are assigned the role of group leader, may be a cognitive overload (Spörer

*et al*, 2009). I wished to explore whether current teachers advocate this use of peer support in comprehension instruction.

Some years ago, I attended reading comprehension training from a commercial provider and fed back the main ideas in a staff meeting. Two of the more experienced teachers in the meeting noted that the initiatives to teach reading were from the Reciprocal Teaching approach, developed by Palincsar and Brown (1984). This made me question how many effective approaches, or elements of effective teaching are ignored or dismissed when an initiative does not seem to work in its entirety, and how often similar ideas are repackaged as a new approach.

In the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) objectives to be assessed in Years 3-6 were now explanation, retrieval, interpretation, author's choice of words and layout and performance. During staff meetings, these objectives were also highlighted as those questions appearing regularly on Year 6 SATs tests. The penultimate school I worked in found that group work in reading comprehension lessons was not focused and too much time was spent on assessing skills, rather than teaching them. The Mrs P blog (Payne, 2015) also influenced a change in school policy. The blog proposed children are taught to retrieve information from the text, interpret the text and analyse the author's choice of vocabulary in a whole class lesson. The school used specific sessions to teach and apply these skills using visual prompts of a monster character associated with each skill in Year Reception to Year 6. The lesson structure completely changed; children were taught as a whole class with the teacher setting questions based on the above and differentiated for attainment groups where necessary. Guided reading in small groups based on 'ability' was no longer practised. Children often sat in mixed attainment seats and were encouraged to support each other. The impact of this blog on teaching made me think about how comprehension teachers may be influenced by different forms of professional development including traditional training, in-school support and social media.

Gaffney (2017) notes one of the advantages of whole-class reading for the teacher is the reduction in the number of texts the teacher needs to keep track of, if the whole class are reading the same book. She points out that whole-class reading enables those children who are not yet secure in their word-reading skills to access high-quality literature, because the teacher, or other children can read the text to them. The less secure child can then experience more complex sentence structures, stretching vocabulary and complicated characters from more challenging literature. Children should be exposed to texts they may struggle to read independently with books introducing them to rich language and ideas (Clements, 2018).

However, Gaffney (2017) also puts forward a case for keeping what she describes as the currently unfashionable and misunderstood alternative to whole class text teaching – guided reading. She believes smaller group conversations led by the teacher provide better opportunities to gauge and deepen a child’s understanding, where a child can express their developing thoughts to a more knowledgeable other. The children can then be guided back on track by the teacher who knows them well. A teacher could be linguistically dominating over classroom discourse when they interact in whole class teaching (Burns and Myhill, 2004). This seems in contrast to the whole class approach in schools I was working in and again made me wonder about the influences on the organisation of comprehension teaching and whether we were ignoring research as old ideas were thrown out when embracing the new.

#### **1.4 Focus of Study**

The study seeks to understand the influences on teachers of KS2 reading comprehension and how these influences interact in the teachers’ agentic domains, through an exploration of their recent histories, experiences and beliefs about best practice in teaching comprehension to KS2 children. An influence is something that has the capacity to affect or impact the behaviour or development of the teachers. The practice of teachers is determined more by their beliefs than by factors in the school environment such as support from fellow colleagues or management (Nelson, 2000, cited in Abu-Jaber *et al*, 2010:66). A way to examine a teacher’s beliefs is to explore the influence of professional, practical, and personal knowledge (Vacca *et al*, 2011, cited in Friesen and Butera, 2012: 362). Professional knowledge is defined as formal academic training, practical knowledge as information learned from experience on the job and personal knowledge as beliefs developed through a person’s individual and cultural experiences. Zanting *et al* (2003:196) write that practical knowledge integrates knowledge about students, specific teaching situations, the curriculum and pedagogy and that teaching experience develops this knowledge. They claim that by becoming conscious of the way they teach and the reasoning behind it, teachers can profit from the explication and exploration of their practical reflection. This can lead to critical reflection, creating opportunities for change. The study can then be seen to create a space for teachers to reflect on their beliefs, assumptions and practice, creating potential opportunities for professional development. I compared the teachers’ practice and expressed beliefs to what the research and theory advocate as a theoretical ideal for reading comprehension pedagogy.

Finally, the study considered teachers’ perceptions of agency in their comprehension classrooms and if teachers felt tensions in or because of the different areas of influence,

investigating how these influences interacted with teachers' sense of agency. An agent intentionally makes things happen by their own actions (Bandura, 2001:2, cited in van der Heijden *et al*, 2015:682). Beista, Priestley and Robinson (2015:624) claim that UK curriculum policy is beginning to acknowledge how the agency of teachers is important for the quality of education. This agency lies in their active and purposeful contribution to shaping their working lives. When questioning teachers about their beliefs and experiences, I did not make a distinction between teaching within the current political climate and the demands of getting good results or how they ideally believe comprehension should be taught. Fisher (2005) found evidence in literature of conflict between dialogue in the classroom which was intended to empower and allow for a more open interpretation of meanings, and dialogue intended to engage students leading them to commonly pre-determined targets. This resonated with my own experience at times of feeling conflict when aiming to facilitate longitudinal learning for pupils, but understanding the pressure of supporting students to achieve high test scores with pre-determined targets or answers. I did not want my own beliefs to influence data collected.

The standards agenda is the dominating voice in discussion concerning primary literacy education (Cremin *et al*, 2014:2). The agenda leads to teachers feeling disempowered and more limited practice in the classroom (Assaf, 2008, English *et al*, 2002, cited in Cremin *et al*, 2014:2). Widespread teaching to the test and pressures to meet targets for Key Stage SATs has meant an increase in whole-class teaching and instruction to the detriment of interaction and teachers' creativity in the classroom (Allison, 2010). Lefstein (2005:337) cites Foucault's work (1975/1978) that explains how testing technologies function as control and motivation mechanisms. Record keeping and periodic student testing contribute to this control in education (Lefstein, 2005). A teacher's educational responsibility to use opportunities to build on contributions of children and venture into new areas for learning may be hindered by solely remaining fixed on predetermined objectives or answers. I wanted to explore whether teachers were at peace with their practice and whether they felt disempowered or controlled in their roles. Teachers were encouraged to explain if they felt their agency was affected by professional and practical influences and any impacts on their ability to make things happen as they believe it should in the context of teaching comprehension.

The histories and beliefs of the teachers interviewed give voice to the classroom teachers who daily teach comprehension, and offer an opportunity to be listened to. This research intended to give teachers a space to reflect on their own teaching. McDougall (2010:682) cites Goodson (1991) who asserts that listening to the voices of practising teachers is a valuable means of exploring the impact made by policy decisions on day-to-day practice, and that the

importance of this listening should not be overlooked in reform processes. Finally, this study begins to paint a picture of how some reading teachers accommodate their own literacy philosophies within the National Curriculum requirements and school policy, how they manage possible tensions between their own beliefs and the current educational context with the outside pressures of testing and accountability, considering the extent to which these teachers have agency in their comprehension classrooms.

To define whether children understanding texts more effectively means improved test results or other criteria is beyond the scope of this study. The danger of this assumption, and the possibility of then teaching children to pass a test was recognised by the government in the Bew Report (2011:9), “We realise that there are considerable concerns about the current way in which statutory assessment data is used including concern that the system is too ‘high stakes’, which can lead to unintended consequences such as over rehearsal and ‘teaching to the test’.” The context of high stakes testing and teachers’ accountability for results in reading comprehension tests in KS2 is acknowledged as this is the environment teachers interviewed are working within. Quigley (2020) notes that this is the case, that teachers can over-prepare children for SATs, focusing on short excerpts from texts instead of encouraging the build-up of required knowledge children need for comprehension and fluency to become better readers. Such (2021) suggests that teaching to the test is widespread in comprehension teaching, that this is years of ill-judged preparation of children for a final assessment measuring their knowledge of the world, vocabulary and reading fluency.

There is a current debate concerning the place of testing which needs to be acknowledged as part of the backdrop of this study. The National Curriculum assessments, including tests and teacher assessments in reading comprehension, were cancelled for 2021 (DfE, 2021) and 2020. In its findings in a report on ‘Responding to Covid-19’ the International Literacy Centre (UCL, 2020), notes the inequalities caused by the impact of school closure on different communities in this disrupted year and that testing and accountability systems would not be able to deliver fair judgements. However, Christodoulou (2015) points out that there is a huge problem with unconscious bias against disadvantaged pupils in teacher assessment, whereas in tests it is difficult to receive special treatment because each pupil takes the same questions in the same conditions. The results of Burgess and Greaves’s (2019: 24) study suggest that the argument that some written tests should be replaced by teacher assessment may negatively affect the recorded achievements of children from some ethnic minorities and those from poorer families. They highlight the danger of human judgement for some, pointing out how the use of assessment rather than testing may increase attainment gaps between ethnic groups

in later education. This may happen when secondary schools set children depending on earlier recorded attainment and this may then impact on motivation. Encouragingly, Rimfield *et al's* (2019) study finds that exam or test results and teacher assessments correlate highly, although teacher assessments may not always accurately reflect the ability of pupils due to bias or stereotyping by teachers. Such (2021:44) advocates standardised testing and teacher assessment for reading that directly informs teaching. He suggests all children should be assessed for fluency with a words correct per minute score together with a teacher assessment of prosody, and reading ages should be tracked through the use of standardised reading comprehension tests.

In this chapter I have identified the purpose of the study and explored decisions made for the choice of approach. The chapter has provided context for the teaching of comprehension in England in the last 50 years with a brief history of policy and the current debate concerning assessment in primary schools. Context has been presented for my own personal experiences as an educator and my changing positionality during the research process. The theoretical frameworks informing the study's exploration of teachers' development and learning in comprehension teaching have been introduced as well as the focus of the study to establish the thinking and rationale for this thesis.

## **1.5 Overview of the Thesis**

In order to address the research questions, the thesis is structured in the following chapters:

Chapter 2 provides a literature review for my research. This begins with an exploration of the theoretical framework used for this study. It continues with an examination of literature relating to teachers' beliefs, beliefs about reading, how teachers learn and develop and teacher agency. A range of literature related to the aims and delivery of reading comprehension instruction is explored. I propose a theoretical model, based on the four aims of reading comprehension teaching, according to research and socioculturalism. Peer support is suggested as an effective way to support delivery of all four aims. This model informs the study and the structure of the analysis. Finally, a review of research related to peer support is presented.

Chapter 3 sets out the methodology employed to gather the data and answer my research questions, providing the researcher worldview and theoretical perspectives on which the study is based alongside details of the research design and ethical framework. Using a qualitative research design within an interpretivist paradigm, I interviewed 14 KS2 teachers. The



interview questions aimed to explore if and how the interviewees' practice had been influenced by the aims for reading comprehension pedagogy derived from the literature review and presented in the model. Answers were compared with the model to explore how similar to the aims of the theoretical ideal the teachers' practices are.

The findings from the study are presented in Chapter 4. These findings are structured and discussed in relation to the literature reviewed and the theoretical model.

Chapter 5 concludes with how the research questions have been addressed and how the study has provided contributions to knowledge. Implications from the research are discussed and strengths and limitations of the study acknowledged. Potential areas of future research are outlined.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review centres around the overarching theme of influences on teaching reading comprehension, exploring research indicating what is known about how teachers learn and what may influence their practice. The chapter begins by presenting my theoretical framework to support the analysis of influences on primary teachers' learning and development in their teaching of reading comprehension; drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Goos' (2013) adaptation of Valsiner's (1997) zone theory and Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice (CoP). A section explores the idea of literacy as a social practice as this study explores the teaching of comprehension in what can be the very social learning environment of a KS2 classroom. The chapter continues with a section concerning influences on practice and findings from other studies into how qualified teachers learn. My research is based on teachers' perspectives on their own practice and so literature around teachers' beliefs, teachers' beliefs about reading and influences on teacher learning and development is examined. Understanding teachers' belief structures is vital to improving their pedagogy and practice (Pajares, 1992).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was introduced as part of Vygotsky's (1998b) general analysis of child development, (Chaiklin, in Kozulin *et al* (eds), 2003:45) and is the distance between a child's assisted and independent performance (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD consists of emerging higher mental functions and is not an aspect of a child's cognitive development until ages 7 to 12, or school-age years (Gredler, 2012). Working in the zone means that the adult is not simply a model of expert behaviour, teaching the child as a passive recipient (Diaz *et al* in Moll, 1990). Both participants in the dyad share responsibility and knowledge for the task. The child moves from joint to independent problem-solving, developing from other to self-regulation. The crux of Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD is to support children's active role in their own learning and to assist them to become self-regulated, lifelong learners (Verenikina, 2004).

One of the main concepts of Valsiner's zone theory is that children actively participate in their own development, in order to achieve their goals they can change their environment (Goos, 2013). This process is "canalised"; development is directed along paths negotiated by the child interacting with the environment and more mature others. For the purposes of analysing teacher development, I use Bennison and Goos' (2013) adaptation of Valsiner's concept that individuals, or teachers, can be active agents in their own development. I wish to understand

the teachers' perceptions of the extent to which they have agency in their classroom environment of comprehension teaching and whether they can change this. Literature exploring the concept of teacher agency is explored.

Research in reading comprehension is reviewed and it is suggested there are four main aims of comprehension learning and teaching in primary schools. These four aims are to develop: language comprehension, enjoyment of reading, cognitive reading strategies and meta-cognition. Language comprehension, enjoyment of reading and meta-cognition are all developed via the vehicle of social interaction, which includes peer support. These aims and vehicles are used as sub-headings to structure the review of reading comprehension. I have proposed a theoretical model of what reading comprehension teaching should look like according to research and socioculturalism which is presented as Figure 2.1 in section 2.5. A review of research into peer support in reading comprehension was undertaken. The final part of the chapter includes a summary and a justification of the research questions, explaining how this study will add to the research landscape.

To develop an understanding of the strength of teachers' beliefs in practice, and to inform my research, I searched for literature and other studies considering the impact of this in reading. The search terms 'influences on teachers', 'teacher beliefs', 'teacher learning' and 'teacher development' and then 'teacher agency' and 'classroom agency' were used. I began the literature search for reading comprehension using the terms 'history' and 'comprehension teaching'. Although I intended to look at comprehension teaching in England, many of the articles found were from English-speaking countries.

A wide and inclusive search was intended to produce an account of the aims of reading teaching and the different behaviours and beliefs of educators and researchers in England and English-speaking countries. This was enlarged to include 'Vygotsky', 'education', 'reading', 'comprehension', but excluded phonics teaching or word recognition. A further search for 'peer support', 'peer education', and 'peer reading' was performed, to focus on peers working together or supporting each other in education, and to narrow this down to the specific area of reading, where literature on peer support with phonics and word recognition could be excluded.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1.1 Sociocultural Theory**

The sociocultural perspective focuses on how participation in culturally organized activities and social interactions influence psychological development, as individual mental functioning

is linked to institutional, historical and cultural context (Scott and Palincsar, 2013). The sociocultural perspective views cognition as socially distributed (Rowe, 2010). It is a theory of how people think through the creation and use of mediating tools.

Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory is outlined as a backdrop to Valsiner's (1997) zone theory and will be used as a lens to view research recommendations for teachers to use in reading comprehension instruction. This framework provides a conceptual background for discussing the importance of language and the social context of comprehension learning. Vygotsky aimed to define his understanding of learning developmental progression as social and cultural rather than individual phenomena, proposing that the development of a child depends on the interaction between a system of symbolic tools a child acquires from his or her sociocultural environment and the child's individual maturation (Kozulin *et al*, 2003). The ZPD suggests teaching as a process which transforms socially constructed knowledge into that which is owned by the individual. Both adults and children are active agents or co-constructors in the process of a child's development (Verenikina, 2004).

Although my research analyses teachers and their learning, Vygotsky's work has relevance in considering teachers' practice and actions in the classroom environment. Knowledge is constructed through the interaction of a child with their environment (Davis, 2013). Vygotsky (1978) considered language to be the most powerful and important tool of the symbolic tools or signs available to humans (Hasan, 2002, Levont'ev, 2002, Robbins, 2007) and through language, children can transform their behaviour and solve complex problems (Van Der Veer, 2007). Section 2.5.1 establishes the links in research between language comprehension and reading comprehension.

For Vygotsky, development appears first between people on the intermental or social plane, which involves social interaction between people and cultural values, norms and artefacts; it proceeds to the intramental or psychological individual mental functioning plane (Mercer, 1979). Social interaction helps encourage reading for pleasure (Cremin *et al*, 2014), similar to enjoyment of reading, one of the four aims of reading comprehension explored in Section 2.5.2. Self-regulation of activities occurs when the child internalises external behaviours defined partly by the culture, and which now operate as psychological tools for that child (Dixon-Krauss, 1996:10, cited in Verenikina, 2004:10). In section 2.5.4.1 metacognitive reading strategies are defined as self-monitoring and self-regulating activities (Van Keer, 2004; Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005).

The concept of the ZPD is based on mental functions that are maturing, a domain where a child can reach a higher level of performance with the assistance of a more knowledgeable

person (Eun, 2016). Current statutory KS1 and KS2 SATs for reading comprehension in England measure individual performance and do not involve testing a child in collaborative problem-solving tasks. Section 2.6 explores literature recommending peer support, a form of collaboration, for reading comprehension.

### 2.1.1.2 Valsiner's Zone Theory

Goos' (2013) theory is a useful approach adapting Valsiner's (1997) zone theory of child development to examine how individual, contextual and social factors shape the pedagogy of teachers, and to explore interactions between classroom teachers and their professional environments. It allows the interpretation of teacher beliefs and knowledge within a sociocultural framework.

The concept of the ZPD is an ideal illustration of Vygotsky's genetic law (Vygotsky 1931/198:142-5), which stated that self-regulation and higher psychological processes originate in social interaction with a more-able other (Van Der Veer, 2007:83). Valsiner (1997) developed a theoretical framework to understand human development, borrowing Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD and defining it as the set of possibilities for development resulting from individuals' interactions between their environment and people in it (Bennison and Goos, 2013). He proposed two further zones, the Zone of Free Movement (ZFM) and the Zone of Promoted Action (ZPA) (Goos, 2013).

Goos (2013) extends Valsiner's (1997) zone theory to the study of teacher learning and development in structured educational environments, re-interpreting Valsiner's zones from the stance of teacher-as-learner. Goos' zone theory permits analysis of interactions between people and their environments, examining the complexity of teacher learning and development (Bennison and Goos, 2013). Goos' work (2013) is concerned with teachers of mathematics, but it is useful for me to apply her adapted approach as a way to study the complexity of KS2 reading comprehension teachers' learning and development, exploring influences on classroom practice, through the analysis of interactions between the teachers and their environments.

The ZPD depends on the previous experience and knowledge of the individual and is created by and submissive to Valsiner's two additional zones of the ZFM and ZPA (Goos, 2013). The ZFM is the actions the individual is allowed to perform in their environment or professional context. This context could include how the organisational culture perceives good teaching, organisational structures such as timetabling and grouping, assessment and curriculum requirements and perceptions of students' social background, behaviour and beliefs and attitudes (Goos, 2013). The ZPA is the actions or areas in the environment promoted by other

individuals, for example activities such as formal professional development or informal interaction with colleagues that promote certain teaching approaches (Goos and Geiger, 2010). The ZPA can include areas currently outside the ZFM as well as those inside; when certain actions that may be possible currently appear prohibited (Goos, 2013). This approach allows the teacher to reorganise elements of the ZPA and ZFM, directing their own learning by modifying their environment or seeking out professional development, consistent with Valsiner's concept that individuals have agency in their own development (Bennison and Goos, 2013). Thinking about the teacher as learner is helpful in analysing tensions between their knowledge, beliefs and the professional contexts they work in to understand why they may implement or ignore teaching approaches promoted by teacher educators (Goos and Geiger, 2010). My study seeks to understand if reading comprehension teachers feel tensions, whether they implement or ignore approaches recommended in research and what is it that has influenced the teaching approaches they do use.

Tensions can arise when the zones are not aligned or "from dissatisfactions teachers experience when their ZPD does not map onto the ZFM/ZPA complex in ways that promote desired development" (Goos, 2013:523). If change is brought about, aligning the zones by re-organising aspects of the environment (ZFM) or pursuing opportunities for professional development, then these tensions are productive. The change may be expedited by another or it may be self-initiated. Goos' (2013) zone theory is a way to examine any productive tensions arising for the teachers interviewed in my study, and the organisational changes the teachers may have made or looked to change.

Godfrey's (2020) longitudinal study explored eight early career teachers' perceptions of the influences on their teaching of primary mathematics. Despite having taken the same ITE course, she believed varying personal factors and different school contexts would lead to differences in their practice. Godfrey (2020) used Goos' (2013) adaptation of Valsiner's (1997) zone theory to understand teacher's perspectives on their learning. Through narratives and 'influence maps', the study highlighted the personal and complex nature of influences on their practice. The participants were given different sizes and colours of plastic circles to represent the relative sizes of different influences and where they overlapped. Participants were encouraged to match the circles to the impact of the influences, consider the relationships between them and verbalise their thinking as they arranged them.

The ZFM/ZPA complex was used by Blanton, Westbrook and Carter (2005) as a way to understand novice secondary mathematics and science teachers' learning and consequently help to scaffold their learning. They claim that because Valsiner's ZFM/ZPA complex is a

product of the instructional choices of the teacher, what the teacher allows (ZFM) or promotes (ZPA) in the classroom, it externalises the teacher's views and understanding of teaching practices. This provides a way for teacher educators to better understand these teachers' capacity for professional development within their ZPD.

### 2.1.3 Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice (CoP), a theory of what learning is (Farnsworth, Keleanthous and Wenger-Trayner, 2016), can be used to analyse teacher learning. The theory proposes that learning is a social process situated in a cultural and historical context and not solely in the head of the learner (Lave and Wenger, 1991). It places negotiation of meaning at the centre of learning, as opposed to simply acquiring skills and information (Farnsworth, Keleanthous and Wenger-Trayner, 2016). Wenger suggests CoP can facilitate a language for talking about the experience of people as social beings and learning as a human experience (Farnsworth, Keleanthous and Wenger-Trayner, 2016). Teachers in primary schools may have opportunities to learn and negotiate the meaning of effective reading comprehension teaching with other participants of their teaching community.

Lave and Wenger (1991) described a CoP as something that is created over time through a process of legitimate peripheral participation, where newer learners participate differently to longer participating members. The CoP has three interrelated characteristics (Wenger, 1998); a shared domain of interest, a community and practice. Members of a CoP are practitioners developing a shared range of resources including tools, experiences and ways of addressing problems (Busch-Jensen, 2014). The importance of language and interaction, highlighted in Vygotsky's (1978) work, are promoted in CoPs; Kirschner and Kwok-Wing (2007) describe how discourse and dialogue building individual and shared understanding are at the heart of learning in a CoP.

Buysse, Sparkman and Wesley, (2003:266) establish that the use of CoPs as a model for professional development for teachers is well documented in literature. They claim the central principles of this framework are that knowledge is situated in experience and this experience is understood by critically reflecting with others sharing this experience. Warr Pederson's (2016) study collected personal stories and reflections from teachers and researchers involved in Education for Sustainability (EfS) in higher education through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The purpose was to discuss ways in which their participation in an EfS CoP contributed to their professional development and Warr Pederson (2016) felt this reflection on individual journeys would deepen understanding of how engagement and outcomes of peer learning may be impacted by personal value sets. I am collecting personal histories from

teachers of KS2 reading comprehension with varying levels of experience. They may access activities and resources through opportunities for participation in a community of practice, and their interactions could potentially influence organisational learning in their contexts.

#### 2.1.4 Literacy as a Social Practice

This study explores some of the social practices utilised in the teaching of comprehension in KS2 classrooms and the social learning environments teachers can facilitate for learning. Street (2006) claims literacy is a social practice, consistently embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles, and not just a neutral and technical skill. Reading takes place in a certain sociocultural context. Reading and writing are socially situated, they mediate different social activities (Purcell *et al*, 2006). Barton and Hamilton (2000) laid out key aspects of the literacy as social practice model: literacy is a set of social practices, these practices are embedded in wider cultural practices and social goals, they are inferred from events mediated by written texts and varying literacies are associated with varying domains of life. Literacy practices are bigger than print based reading and writing; they are the socioculturally related ways of using written language which involve values, attitudes, beliefs and social relationships (Griswold, McDonnell and Wright, 2005).

Griswold, McDonnell and Wright (2005) claim that since the late 1970s sociologists successfully established the collective nature of authorship, but that the collective nature of readership is not as obvious. They claim most people still envision solitary readers, but this ignores the social infrastructure of reading, that books are social products and the ultimate expression of social literacy is the adult book club. Street (2006) proposes the interaction of teachers and their students is already a social practice impacting the nature of the literacy being learned. Purcell *et al* (2006:35) cite the work of Lewis (2001), who explores how social and cultural considerations and norms shape classroom literacy practices, including peer-led discussions, teacher-led discussions, independent reading and read alouds. These practices may promote the collective nature of readership in current classrooms. They suggest Lewis's (2001) work reflects a shift in the focus of literacy researchers to social norms, status and power from shift in focus from individual understanding. Street (2006) finds those who hold social and political power in a society determine the types of literacy practices considered valid and worth teaching. He recognises multiple literacies, existing within different domains or contexts as a result of differing languages and differing purposes for reading and writing. Children learn the reading processes, roles, ideologies and textual intentions that are valued and demonstrated by their peers, parents and teachers in certain types of literacy events; they are participating in a local literacy (Rowe, 2010). Brandt and Clinton (2002) critique the



social practice view, suggesting that literacy is a contributing player in local practice rather than being wholly produced in it. This study explores the perceptions of teachers to ascertain how far they feel they have power to determine and teach the reading comprehension practices they value in their own classrooms, their ZFM in the school.

## **2.2 Influences**

The following section explores research and studies into the influences on the practice of teachers in primary schools, focusing first on teachers' beliefs about education and then teacher beliefs about reading. It concludes with an examination of reviews of studies into how teachers develop and learn. These are relevant to my research which explores and aims to deepen understanding of the potential influences specifically on practice of KS2 comprehension teachers.

### **2.2.1 Teachers' Beliefs**

Teachers' beliefs are the unspoken assumptions about pupils, teaching strategies, learning, curriculum, classrooms and pedagogy and formed on information from professional literature, CPD, college courses and direct experience (Kagan, 1992, cited in Abu-Jaber *et al*, 2010:65). They are the ideas or knowledge an individual accepts as true (Evans *et al*, 2004, cited in Friesen and Butera, 2012: 362). Beliefs involve judgment and evaluation of the surrounding environment aligned with previous experience; they have been identified as the dominant factor influencing a teacher's behaviour, more influential than knowledge (Gill and Hoffman, 2009, cited in Talbot and Campbell, 2014: 418). Research has established that the influence of beliefs guides actions and interactions of teachers (Speer, 2008, cited in Talbot and Campbell, 2014: 418, Barnes *et al*, 2017), and their judgements and perceptions which affect these classroom behaviours (Bandura, 1986, Clark and Peterson, 1986, cited in Prestridge, 2012:449).

The actions of teachers in a certain environment are a probable result of interdependent relations between professional and personal beliefs, interactions with others in the social context of their work and differing degrees of power and autonomy (Pantic, 2015:760). Experienced teachers commonly practise those reforms and methods that align with their own beliefs; the beliefs interacting with knowledge acquired through professional development (Palak and Walls, 2009 and Speer, 2005, cited in Talbot and Campbell, 2014:418). The beliefs of teachers can be influenced by personal values, pedagogical methods, student learning, belief in their own efficacy and their perspective on classroom experiences. Beliefs can "play

a role in the way in which past experience impacts on the achievement of agency” (Beista, Priestley and Robinson, 2015:628).

Ethnographic case study research was conducted in the ‘Teacher Agency and Curriculum Change Project’ (2011-12) (Beista, Priestley and Robinson, 2015). The project focused on ways in which experienced teachers achieve agency and factors which inhibit or promote agency against the background of the introduction of a new curriculum. Beista, Priestley and Robinson (2015) claim the research finds teachers seem to be driven by short-term goals focussing on process rather than long-term impact, and that possibilities for action to develop a good education are limited by this lack of clear vision of the purposes of education. They find that beliefs are more heavily influenced by recent policy than by the wider meaning of education, suggesting that for their teachers the professional influences are stronger than the personal influences. My study aims to extend this, exploring the professional and personal influences on teachers but also the practical influences which may be considered short-term, in that the teachers are only subject to the influence or dictate of school policy or leader for the time that they are employed by the school.

Teachers’ classroom behaviour is a result of beliefs filtered and shaped by past experience (Roehler, Duffy, Herrmann, Conley, and Johnson (1988), cited in Pajares, 1992:312, Kul, 2018). An influential teacher or critical experience can produce rich memories which may inspire teachers in their own teaching practice (Nespor, 1987, cited in Pajares, 1992:310). Beliefs can be resistant to change because they are formed from many years of experience, either from when teachers were pupils themselves or the different professional contexts they face (Prestridge, 2012). This is consistent with the work of Guskey (1986) who found professional development programmes for staff are frequently unsuccessful in changing attitudes and beliefs of teachers (Prestridge, 2012:321). However, when teachers do use a procedure and observe its positive effect on student achievement, often a great change in attitude is the consequence, leading Guskey (1986) to conclude that changes in behaviour precede changes in beliefs. When creating learning environments, teachers generally behave according to their beliefs and consequently the speed of change of effective educational reforms is linked to the nature of these common beliefs (Handal and Herrington, 2003, cited in Kul, 2018:234).

Fang (1996:59) suggests contextual factors have a powerful influence on teachers’ beliefs and consequently their practice, citing Ashton (1990) who found many teachers decide instruction based on the realities of the classroom, such as social and emotional characteristics, ways in which students learn and text books. Educators should help teachers understand how to apply

theory within the constraints of complex classroom life, and narrative studies of teachers' personal practical knowledge would be helpful, providing different ways of thinking about teacher education and educational reform (Fang, 1996). The affordances of the classroom can be conceptualised as the ZFM for teachers, what is allowed in their environment, either by management of the school, resources available and needs of the children in that class. My study aims to explore influences on teachers' practice in teaching reading comprehension, which may include these contextual factors which could delineate their ZFM.

### 2.2.2 Beliefs About Reading

Cremin *et al* (2012) assert the existence of localised and everyday literacies situated in the context of their use in the home, workplace, school and community and highlight the importance of the beliefs and attitudes that parents and teachers hold about these practices. The work of Mitchell Davis, Konopak and Keadence (1993) examined teachers' beliefs about reading and their decision-making when planning and delivering teaching. They sought to identify potential opportunities and constraints during the process of decision-making and found that there was a lack of consistency between actual instructional practices and the teachers' beliefs. The teachers' beliefs provided some influence but other environmental factors such as school climate, personnel, students and resources affected instructional behaviour. Head teachers' and mentoring teachers' need to follow state mandates could also influence the teachers' instructional decision-making. The authors acknowledge the limitations of the research because of the small number of participants but note that the results generally confirm earlier research findings indicating a school's environmental conditions may hinder teachers' belief systems, referencing the work of Duffy and Anderson (1982), Duffy, Roehler and Johnson (1986), Fraatz (1987) and Wilson *et al* (1991). Recommendations for future research include exploring beliefs and ideal practices of teachers further (Mitchell Davis, Konopak and Keadence, 1993). This is something my study aims to do. Some of these environmental influences are explored further in section 2.2.3, which considers influences on teaching generally. The environmental influences are incorporated in Valsiner's (1997) zone of free movement and zone of promoted action. The school climate, people and resources are elements contributing to what is allowed for the teacher in their classroom, but also what is promoted. For example, a teacher may be allowed to organise different groupings for reading in their own classroom by management, and actions focusing on children with particular needs in reading may be promoted by management as this may be a target in a School Development Plan.

Kinzer (1988, cited in Mitchell Davis, Konopak and Keadence, 1993:106) compared the beliefs and instructional decision-making of pre-service and in-service teachers, exploring whether their thinking was influenced by teaching experience or lack of experience, proposing that regardless of beliefs, most teachers are subject to reading instruction curriculum mandated by the state or district. Therefore, rather than teachers' responses reflecting what they think should be done in classrooms, they reflect what is done in their classrooms. Other researchers, for example, Duffy & Anderson, 1982; Duffy, Roehler, & Johnson, 1986; Fraatz, 1987; Wilson, Konopak, and Readence, 1991 (cited in Mitchell Davis, Konopak and Keadence, 1993:106) support Kinzer and argue that the school and class environment may hinder the enactment of teachers' own belief systems in practice.

Teachers of reading appear to have a rich knowledge of pedagogy, but there is a lack of empirical data which makes it difficult to understand whether the knowledge is from a teacher's concepts of reading, from their professional education, from their personal experience as a student or teacher, or is a combination of all of these (Meloth *et al*, 1989:34). In the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) National Report for England (DfES, 2017), England's teachers reported that they received fewer reading-related hours of professional development than in many other countries. My study aims to find out the extent of different influences, including professional knowledge of reading comprehension research, on KS2 teachers.

Classrooms reveal the different views of reading and expectations for students' learning that teachers have (Paris, Wasik and Turner, 1991, cited in Fang, 1996:51). Those emphasising application of phonic rules and silent reading for comprehension see reading as decoding rules and interpreting text, but those teachers who promote diverse activities such as sharing ideas, drama, writing and storytelling emphasise the aesthetic, creative and strategic aspects of reading. The divergence in the beliefs of teachers about reading varies between the belief that reading is a decoding skill and the belief that reading happens within a social context and is a transactional process between a reader and a text (Richardson *et al*, 1991:561). The varied conceptions teachers have about what constitutes good comprehension in a primary school reader are explored further in the cognitive strategies section, 2.4.3 below.

A study by Richardson *et al* (1991) exploring the relationship between beliefs about teaching reading comprehension and practices in the classroom concluded that unless the beliefs of the teachers align with the theoretical assumptions of the practice, practices without theory may be incorrectly implemented or not implemented at all. Research questions exploring factors affecting belief systems about literacy learning and subsequent teaching practice motivated a

three-year longitudinal study by Grisham (2000). She followed 12 elementary teachers through the first two years of their careers, connecting theoretical conceptions of reading to practice. Grisham (2000:4) used Vacca, Vacca and Gove's (1995) three sources of knowledge contributing to a teacher's belief system and knowledge base; professional, personal and practical. I initially used these sources in the analysis for my data, and this is discussed in Chapter 1 and the data analysis in Chapter 4. As part of her methodology Grisham (2000) encouraged participants to trace their memories of their histories as a literate being in the form of a written autobiography. This is similar to my use of timelines for participants to trace their memories of their histories as teachers of comprehension.

### 2.2.3 Influences on Teacher Learning and Development

Postholm conducted two reviews in 2012 and 2018 of research into teacher learning suggesting influences on teacher learning and development. In the 2012 review she writes that research examined emphasises learning as situated, or happening in the schools where the teachers work. Opfer, Pedder, and Lavicza (2011a, cited in Postholm, 2012: 412) used data from a national survey of 1126 teachers, highlighting the importance of orientation at the school community level, demonstrating how teachers' learning is impacted by both individual and organisational factors. Factors influencing learning suggested in the reviews reflect many of the factors impacting teachers' beliefs and beliefs about reading discussed in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above. Factors influencing teacher learning are collaborative approaches, supportive school leaders, earlier professional experiences, and the importance of teacher autonomy.

#### 2.2.3.1 Collaborative Approaches

Researchers Levine and Marcus (2010) claim an increasing number of research works show participation in co-operating communities is an influence on the practice of teachers and Keung's (2009 cited in Postholm, 2018:11) work on Learning Study, similar to method in Lesson Study, advocates teachers can learn by observing and reflecting on each other's practice in a practice community. In a qualitative case study of 11 Singaporean primary teachers, the researchers Goh and Fang (2017) found that collaborative Lesson Study processes challenged teachers' shared assumptions, enabling them to adapt and improve teaching. Postholm (2012) claims international research suggests the best way for teachers to develop teaching is through learning in co-operation with other teachers in school, with a school administration that supports social learning. This reflects Valsiner's (1997) overlapping zones of free movement; the teachers are allowed to co-operate with others in

their development, and promoted action; the organisational structure promotes social learning across the school.

Cravens and Wang's (2017, cited in Postholm, 2018:8) qualitative study in a Shanghai elementary and middle school found that expert teachers leading their own teaching study group at their schools influenced teachers' professional development by helping teachers to identify areas of teaching that needed improvement. The expert teachers felt that the fact only practitioners could take part in the teaching study groups was a limitation and the researchers argue that schools and university professors should develop relationships to support school professional development. In two New Zealand studies, researchers and teachers collaborated in attempts to improve reading comprehension pedagogy. In Parr's (2005) small-scale, qualitative study in a New Zealand secondary school, three teachers collaborated as colleague-researchers to develop an instructional conversation model to support sustained silent reading practice, moving away from a traditional questioning-type script to talk of shared experiences and exchanged knowledge. Lai *et al* (2011) completed a three-year research and development collaboration among researchers, schools and government to raise reading comprehension levels of achievement for Maōri and Pasifika students in urban schools in New Zealand. They found sustaining accelerating rates of reading comprehension achievement for linguistically and culturally diverse students from socio-economic disadvantaged communities is dependent on the development of professional learning communities focused on critically analysing and refining instruction to meet the needs of students in the community.

#### 2.2.3.2 Supportive School Leaders

In their survey study of 1,259 teachers in 41 primary and secondary schools, China *et al* (2016, cited in Postholm, 2018:7) emphasised how important it is for principals to build trust establishing productive learning environments or communities for their teachers. Kennedy (2011) interviewed 18 staff interested in teachers' CPD through co-operation in general and found how salient it was that school leaders created positive atmospheres in schools for constructive collegial relationships. Rinke and Valli (2010) note the importance of supportive leaders focusing attention on teacher interests and needs contributing to teachers' professional development. They find another factor contributing to this is to have experts among colleagues who can share their competence. This seems reflective of the range of experience of participants in a CoP (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Coburn (2001:145) examined how teachers construct and reconstruct reading policy instruction messages in their professional communities, citing the studies of Spillane (1999) and Hill (1999) who found teachers made sense of policy messages through collegial conversations. The effectiveness of teachers beginning their careers can be supported or diminished by the influence of collegial and administrator attitudes on beginning teachers' beliefs about themselves and the students they teach (Kilgore, Ross and Zbikowski, 1990, cited in Fang, 1996:54). My study explores the potential influence of reading policies on KS2 teachers in their professional communities and other influences including the impact of collegiality.

### 2.2.3.3 Professional Experience and Teacher Autonomy

A qualitative case study of nine teachers in an Australian primary school by Hardy and Edwards-Groves (2016) found that teachers' professional development is influenced by earlier events and experiences in their careers as well as present day school learning. Findings from the study of James and McCormick (2009, cited in Postholm, 2012: 412) of 40 primary and secondary teachers, show that changes occurring in practice are related to values and convictions. The context teachers are in, the stage of their careers, previous practical experience and their own pupils may influence the varying ideas they have about what constitutes good teaching. Timelines were employed in my study as a way to develop understanding of influences on teachers by exploring experiences and event in their careers.

A study by Dingle, Brownell and Leko (2011) aimed to understand how contextual and individual factors influenced the implementation of professional development in word study and fluency teaching. Case-study methodology with three elementary special education teachers found three interconnected themes impacting the teachers' ability to implement professional development content into their reading instruction. These were reading knowledge and pedagogical skills, their motivation to engage in professional development and alter practice and their individual willingness to modify the classroom curriculum. The study can be seen to explore how the teachers developed or altered classroom reading teaching practice in the ZPA, the promoted actions of the professional development.

Feeney's (2016) mixed-methods case study was conducted at one American elementary school with 28 teachers and leaders into aspects supporting or hindering the professional development of teachers in the workplace. The findings show the factors of shared decision making, autonomy in decision making and open communication with the school principal support professional development. This open communication that can be extended as

expressing disagreement in constructive dialogue is important for teacher learning (Postholm, 2018). A qualitative study of 20 Irish teachers in a literacy project found different factors supporting change implementation and sustainability included teacher agency and empowering teachers to create collaborative cultures (King, 2016). A study by Webb *et al* (2009) focused on learning and development in the professional communities of teachers in England and Finland suggests self-determination leads to increased well-being as a teacher. My study investigates teachers' autonomy and empowerment within their comprehension classrooms through the exploration of their perceptions of agency.

## 2.3 Agency

The notion of autonomy, or a child's agency in their development is integral to Valsiner's (1997) zone theory. Goos (2013) adapts this concept to individuals, or teachers as active agents in their learning and development. Agency has been defined as the capacity to act (Priestley, 2015) and an agent intentionally makes things happen by their own actions (Bandura, 2001:2, cited in van der Heijden *et al*, 2015:682). In the ZFM a teacher can make things happen in the classroom or modify their environment by their own actions. Agency is collective, and individuals shape the context as a result of interactions between actors (Archer, 2000, cited in Pantic, 2015:763). Agentic power is demonstrated in the capacity to evaluate and reflect on social contexts and to collaborate with others to bring about transformation.

### 2.3.1 Teachers' Agency

Professional agency is needed to develop the professional learning and identities of teachers in the classroom and at school level (Etelapelto, Vahasantanen, Hokka, and Paloniemi, 2013, cited in van der Heijden *et al*, 2015:681). Toom *et al* (2015) write that the concept of teacher agency indicates the active efforts of teachers to take intentional actions that make a difference in their professional contexts. However, they believe the active professional agency of teachers is more than just personal attributes when coping with challenging professional contexts. It is a creative and purposeful change effort achieved through negotiated construction of shared dilemmas, uncertainties and decisions in pedagogical situations. The concept of teacher professional agency includes collective inquiry shaped by class and school interactions, compliance or resistance to educational structures and educational change resulting from principled action (Quinn and Mittenfelner Carl, 2015:746). Agency is manifested in actions in line with dominant discourses and practices, as well as in situations where teachers challenge or resist them. Teachers may challenge elements of the ZFM, for



example the organisational structures or assessment requirements, or resist elements of the ZPA such as unenthusiastic implementation of formal professional development.

When teachers confront professional discourses and policies in their professional lives, they actively use their own existing sense of self to evaluate, learn from and interpret the new circumstances of their work in their classrooms and schools (Buchanan, 2015). Their professional identities are constantly developing, reformed and remade over the course of their careers, affected by past experiences, their current circumstances and daily practices and reflection on their work. How teachers practise agency at work is influenced by teachers' sense of their professional selves (Vahasantanen and Etelapelto, 2011). Beista, Priestley and Robinson (2015:628) argue that lack of teacher agency may be influenced by teachers' positioning in their professional environments and factors beyond their immediate control. Teachers do have choices, but from limited options which are shaped by relations with larger forces (Buchanan, 2015).

### 2.3.2 Socioculturalism and Agency

The past experiences and current environments of teachers can facilitate, shape and constrain professional agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, Lipponen and Kumpulainen, 2011 in Quinn and Mittenfelner Carl, 2015:746). Past personal experiences and current practical demands in their school environments may shape teachers' agency and consequently influence their practice. Therefore, teachers are needed who are real change agents, willing to learn and change individually and in collaboration with other schools, through their own internal drive to reflect and by meeting external demands (van der Heijden *et al*, 2015:682). Hart Frost (2008:225) suggests sociocultural theorists explain how individual choices and social contexts come together to form a person's trajectory. These present influences are combined with historical events in their lives but do not fully determine a person's identity. Individuals can improvise, taking ownership of instructional decisions in a restricted environment, for example in the ZFM/ZPA complex, and so exercise agency as they carve out their role. An agentic individual demonstrates the capacity to exercise control over motivation and action within a network of socio-structural influences (Pantic, 2015:768). Archer (2000), cited in Pantic, (2015:763) notes that there is a difference between having no effect in a systematic organisation and not having a say in it. Depending on their positions, the teachers may not have felt they had a say in deciding school policy or school organisation, but that does not mean they did not have an effect in the school.

## 2.4 Aims of Learning and Teaching of Comprehension in Primary Schools

The following section will explore research suggesting four areas integral to the effective teaching of reading comprehension in the classroom. Teachers should aim to develop: language comprehension, enjoyment of reading, cognitive reading strategies and meta-cognition. These four aims are used as headings to structure the review of reading comprehension. The modes of instruction that the aims are developed through are used as sub-headings.

#### 2.4.1 Develop Language Comprehension

A review of research suggests language comprehension develops through high quality interaction and teaching vocabulary.

The Reading Framework (DfE, 2021:16) defines comprehension as the way people make sense of sentences and broader language that we read or hear and that language and cognition are developed by interaction with others in a language-rich environment. Such (2021) makes the distinction between listening comprehension and the language comprehension described in the simple view of reading. He summarises that listening comprehension is a vital aspect of children's language capabilities and an essential component of reading instruction. Language comprehension is far more complex, involving listening comprehension and "aspects of comprehension that are uniquely required to gain meaning from written texts" (Such, 2021:52).

##### 2.4.1.1 High quality interaction

Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory developed the concept of the child acquiring the culture of the parents, suggesting culturally-deprived children would benefit from schooling and that elementary school instruction led children to reflect on their mental operations using them efficiently and deliberately (Van Der Veer, 2007). Gallimore and Tharp, (in Moll (ed), 1990:195) claim that in this way effective teaching can create metacognitive skills. Children who have limited emergent home literary experiences, need to build cognitive competences fundamental to text comprehension in the earliest levels of instruction. They assert that a child who does not have early interactions with schooled parents needs to be instructed in building word meanings on the everyday verbal level and be gradually introduced to the linguistic stream of writing. Snowling (2018) refers to language as the foundation of education and suggests those children with poor oral language risk educational failure. Those children who have little experience of rich conversations within interesting, shared activities will have limited vocabulary development and are likely to be at a disadvantage in areas of learning, particularly reading (Reedy, 2018). Language is learned effectively by using it in interaction

and through hearing it spoken and read in conditions which stimulate the child to understand it and use it for their own means (Cremin, 2018).

The home environment is cited as one of the factors impacting what is viewed as a word gap between different children (Oxford Language Report, 2018). High quality parent-child interactions using a variety of vocabulary in different contexts give children a more solid grasp of language as they start school. If this is not dealt with in the early years of education, then this advantage stays with them and the word gap widens as the children grow older. For those pupils who are not exposed to a variety of advanced words at an early age, Lemov *et al* (2016) suggest that teachers must aim to close a gap of at least several thousand words.

The original Hart and Risley (1992) study that first highlighted the word gap has been criticised. Sperry, Sperry and Miller (2019) claim the reported gap in the number of words spoken with children from various social classes only reflects a subset of the total number of words in the verbal environments of the children in the study, with little known about the full home verbal environment of children from different social backgrounds. Michnick Golinkoff *et al* (2019) claim replications on Hart and Risley's (1992) work improved it, including statistical evidence that the effects of socioeconomic status on language growth in children are mediated by parent input. However, all primary teachers surveyed in the Oxford Language Report (2018) felt that this gap in word knowledge resulted in poor comprehension skills and slower progress in reading.

Truelove *et al's* (2014:47) study found support for the hypothesis that difficulties in reading comprehension partly arise from issues with the comprehension of spoken language; their Vygotskian influenced oral language programme intervention impacted positively on children's reading comprehension tests. Therefore, for the student to acquire reading comprehension skill they must apply general language comprehension skills and non-linguistic or conceptual knowledge to written texts. The National Curriculum (2013:4) acknowledges this, stating that "Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world." The Simple View of Reading (Gough and Tunmer, 1986) highlighted the importance of language comprehension, claiming that adequate reading comprehension depends upon the ability to understand spoken language and decode print. Recent government publications 'The Reading Framework' (DfE, 2022) and the Research Review Series: English (DfE, 2022) promote the importance of vocabulary knowledge. The Reading Framework' (DfE, 2022) highlights what they feel is the critical nature of early vocabulary gains and the Research Review Series: English (DfE, 2022)

states there is a positive correlation between a pupil's academic success and the size of their vocabulary.

Past research underlines the underpinning of language and vocabulary for reading; Lemov *et al* (2016) claim teachers must support pupils to master reception and production of language in speaking, reading and writing. Reading and the acquisition of language are closely connected; a child is more likely to understand different texts if they have a rich vocabulary and knowledge of language (Clements, 2018). The relationship is cyclical - as a child reads a wider range of texts more frequently, they will encounter more variety in words and language structures. "Spoken language provides the foundation for reading ... poor comprehenders could also be classed as poor *language* comprehenders" (Truelove *et al*, 2014:15).

#### 2.4.1.2 Teaching Vocabulary

In Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory words that already have meaning for a cultural group's mature members come to have meaning for the younger members of that group through social interaction (Diaz *et al*, in Moll, 1990:157). Through social interaction between teachers and students in the comprehension classroom, children's knowledge and understanding of vocabulary can develop. Lemov, Driggs and Woolway (2016) recommend discussing differences in meaning between similar words and teachers orally modelling new vocabulary in sentences. Cain and Oakhill (2018) comment on the reciprocity of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge; children with good knowledge of vocabulary have better reading comprehension which grows and improves over time. Reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge are interdependent; reading develops children's vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary knowledge supports comprehension (Quinn, Wagner and Petscher, 2015). Children need both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge to comprehend texts (Quinn, Wagner and Petscher, 2015). Lemov *et al* (2016:251) cite Beck, McKeown and Kucan's (2013) claim that depth of pupils' knowledge is a greater predictor of future success than breadth. General vocabulary building and strategies to explore the meaning of unknown words are essential for effective comprehension instruction (Duke and Pearson, 2008/9). Teachers should not assume children may know the meaning of words they may view as simple and use purposeful talk to provide children with a language rich environment (Gross, 2018). Adults should challenge themselves to use vivid and extensive vocabulary in the classroom every day to develop this language filled environment (Reedy, 2018). Quincey (2018) emphasises the importance of children's understanding of language, claiming children without knowledge of words will find communication difficult and struggle to understand and

carry out verbal instructions. They will learn how to mechanically decode words without grasping the meaning of them and never reach pleasure in reading.

#### 2.4.2 Enjoyment of Reading

In the document 'Reading: The Next Steps' (DfE, 2015) the government advocates that skills for becoming a mature, confident reader are developed by instilling a love of literature, but provide no guidance for teachers on how they are to instil a love of literature with particular teaching methods or lesson structures. Unfortunately, Cremin *et al* (2014) find that developing children's engagement and pleasure in reading is often seen as a desirable extra rather than a core responsibility for teachers working in accountability cultures. They note the complexity of creating an effective balance between RfP and reading instruction in schools. However, they acknowledge that their Teachers as Readers (TaR) project (2009) could be argued to have contributed to the high profile of RfP in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), which recognises the pleasure offered by reading in its core aim for the first time in its history. The TaR project found that four practices contributed to an effective reading for pleasure pedagogy. These were independent reading time within a highly social reading environment, informal book-talk and recommendations and reading aloud (Cremin *et al*, 2014).

Hempel-Jorgensen *et al* (2018) claim that even though the English National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) espouses RfP, it predominantly focuses on reading as technical proficiency and as assessed through tests for accountability purposes. In their study into how RfP could disrupt a pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 1991), they selected case study schools due to their reporting RfP as a priority, yet their findings suggest in three of the four schools the understandings of the teachers there were mainly related to reading as technical proficiency. Reading was not recognised as a social practice and volition and pleasure were not conceptualised as central to reading.

A direct link between the balance of RfP and comprehension is highlighted by Truelove *et al* (2014). An enjoyable book promotes attention and sustained interest in a child but a breakdown in comprehension means reading is less pleasurable, leading to less time spent reading and therefore weakened reading skills. In their tripartite conceptualisation of reading model, Clark and Terevainen (2017) link reading enjoyment and reading skills, claiming that children who enjoy reading are more likely to engage in reading more often and seek it out as an activity. The result of this is that they become better at reading. Findings from their Annual Literacy Survey into Children and young people's reading in 2019 (Clark and Terevainen, 2020) continue to demonstrate the relationship between children's enjoyment of reading,

frequency and skill. Independent reading impacts reading ability and successfully supporting children to become expert readers depends in part on their inclination to read independently (Such, 2021).

Enjoyment of reading is found to be developed through reading aloud, organising social reading environments and valuing different perspectives in book talk.

#### 2.4.2.1 Reading Aloud

Older readers link an ongoing love of reading and books with read aloud opportunities (Merga and Ledger, 2019). Children enjoy being read to into and beyond middle school (Albright & Ariail, 2005; Clark & Andreasen, 2014, cited in Merga and Ledger, 2019:134), although this practice may end at home while children are still young. Butler (1980) claims reading aloud is enjoyable for both teachers and students, but suggests teachers can feel guilty about using teaching time to do something that is so much fun, even though it improves reading scores. This guilt may cause teachers to focus on skills teaching rather than the pure enjoyment of listening to a story when reading aloud as Cremin *et al* (2014) found when practitioners read aloud from a text studied as part of the formal literacy curriculum and linked to writing and comprehension activities, their children did not always view it positively.

In the TaR Project (2009), throughout the research year teachers developed an understanding of the cognitive, personal and social benefits of reading aloud. Teachers found it was a way for all pupils to experience literary language, wider vocabulary and sophisticated themes that they would not access in everyday conversation and without exacting literacy demands. Instructional approaches that advocate participation in social systems develop the potentially meaningful ways teachers and students can utilise language and reading and facilitates expanded interpretations of the world (Pacheco, 2010). In the 2012 Ofsted report, ‘Moving English forward’, Inspectors noted the diminishing but effective strategies of reading stories to younger children and sharing complete novels with junior pupils. Reading a text aloud from start to finish allows children to experience the text as a whole and this focus on oral comprehension helps children who have difficulties with decoding access and understand age-appropriate texts (Hart, 2016). Read-alouds help children develop oral comprehension of written language (Duke, Ward and Pearson, 2021).

#### 2.4.2.2 Organising A Social Reading Environment

In the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) there is limited guidance on how reading is to be taught, apart from the English programmes of study recommendation of high-quality discussion (DfE, 2013: 2) and non-statutory guidance (2013:27) that Years 3 and 4 “...should

help to develop, agree on, and evaluate rules for effective discussion.” Lemov *et al* (2016) note the importance of socialising pupils to respond to other pupils in discussion rather than directing answers to their teacher.

The dialogue of social interactions enables children to master cultural tools which develop individual thinking and solving of intellectual problems (Van der Veer 2007, Mercer, 2008). This concept of social processes in education is reflected in Cremin *et al*'s (2014:3) research findings that “reading and talk are mutually supportive learning experiences” and that a “RfP agenda can be developed effectively through the creation of classroom learning communities of reciprocity and interaction”. In the sociocultural approach to mind (Vygotsky, 1986; 1978; Wertsch, 1991), thinking originates in collaborative dialogues (Miller, in Kozulin *et al* (eds), 2003:290). Marchand and Skinner (2007) found that students with a sense of incompetence are likely to try to conceal their lack of proficiency during instructional reading tasks, rather than exhibiting help-seeking behaviours. The teacher must organise and handle the interactions, offering opportunities to all pupils to contribute for a successful outcome (Van den Branden, 2000). For example, if the members of the group do not feel inhibited to display their non-comprehension and perceive the class climate as non-threatening, they will appeal to others for help. To facilitate high quality discussion, where differing perspectives are valued and can be challenged courteously, whole class discussion, paired work, small group work and peer tutoring are potential organisational techniques for a time-challenged teacher.

#### 2.4.2.3 Valuing Different Perspectives in Book Talk

Classroom interaction is viewed as a joint construction of understandings in which the learner actively participates (Fisher, 2005). This view of the social context of learning recognises that text interpretation is about the reader's interpretation of the intentions of the author, and not just finding the correct answers. The diverse perspectives that are brought to the task of reading a text results in subjective and varied interpretations, but a richer, collective understanding can be achieved by discussing a range of views (Truelove *et al*, 2014). Children can gain new ideas about the meaning of a passage by listening to another's interpretation and then building on, revising and questioning their own interpretations. Theoretically, there may be conflict here with the Vygotskian role of the teacher guiding pupils to understand texts and the agency of pupils to develop their interpretation based on their own experiences (Fisher, 2005). This means teachers will have to decide and implement, depending on the extent of their agency, whether they adopt an authoritative stance that results in the achievement of meeting pre-set targets in their instructive interaction or they facilitate dialogic interaction which allows for less prescriptive outcomes and more open text interpretations. McNaughton

(2014) claims the implication of Marie Clay's perspective of highly effective reading teachers is that they are not technicians following a prescribed set of procedures, but adaptive experts who use critical reflection in their decision-making. Lemov *et al* (2016) suggest high performing literary classrooms develop students' ability to hold discussions that value different interpretations. Cremin *et al* (2014) found in their TaR project informal book talk, and therefore potentially high-quality discussion, occurred spontaneously and in informal contexts as well as in organised situations.

Pupils can be empowered by language as they extend their control over it (Brubacher and Payne, in Shlomo Sharan, (ed), 1994:213). For Bohm (1990), dialogue means the aim of talking in a group is to present different views as a way to discover contrasting thoughts (Brubacher and Payne, in Shlomo Sharan, (ed), 1994:213). The group facilitator reminds participants that opposing views may be true, and all group members must relate as equals. Discussion is group talk that aims for convergent thinking, where different views are presented and defended in order to find the best one. Different perspectives engendered in discussion and the competing contributions shape comprehension as a dynamic process where teachers and students exchange ideas in open-ended conversational interactions during which their understandings evolve (Nystrand, 2006). However, Nystrand (2006) claims that teachers do not practise this pedagogy when they decide a sequence of questions and the acceptable answers prior to a comprehension session. Social, interactive discussion and valuing diverse opinions are promoted in the literature as an aim of reading comprehension teaching.

The term Pedagogy of Poverty (PoP) was used by Haberman (1991), highlighting the impoverished pedagogical offer frequently made to children living in low socio-economic US urban contexts (Hempel-Jorgensen *et al*, 2018:1). Pedagogy in low socio-economic school contexts is likely to include teachers with strong control whose role is to transmit knowledge to passively positioned children, compliant to carry out teacher directed tasks and focus on raising assessment scores. Teacher control of classroom talk and reduced peer discussion constrains children's volition and engagement with learning. Hempel-Jorgensen *et al* (2018) claim this pedagogy in the PoP research is very similar to Bernstein's (2000) conceptualisation of performative pedagogy, which he argues predominates in English schools since the late 1980s, because of the emphasis on high stakes assessment and accountability. Performative pedagogy has a strong focus on what students produce in assessed work, for example in reading tests and a transmission mode of teaching. In Hempel-Jorgensen *et al's* (2018) study, they identified practices in English low SES primary schools conforming to characteristics of PoP and performative pedagogy; teachers' strong control



over classroom talk and the setting of tasks requiring pre-defined answers constrained children's volitional engagement with learning. Such (2021) argues that quality classroom discussion of reading depends on teachers guiding discussion after truly listening to students' responses. This may mean guiding students back to key points but also encouraging further thinking and investigating ideas the teacher had not previously thought about.

Guidance is provided on what children will be tested on and for in 'The English reading test framework National curriculum tests from 2016 For test developers' (Standards and Testing Agency, 2015). This was published for contributors to the English reading KS2 National Curriculum test, to ensure an appropriate test is developed, but the KS2: English reading test framework (2015) website suggests KS2 teachers may find it useful. The framework sets out the content domains that are assessed in the reading test. The PIRLS: National Report for England (DfES, 2017), tested Year 5 on comprehension skills and noted pupils performed relatively better on questions requiring higher-level interpreting and evaluating skills, compared to questions requiring retrieval and inferencing skills. A greater proportion of England's pupils report very high confidence in reading, but a greater proportion also report disliking reading, when compared to pupils in other countries. This suggests government recommendations to instil a love of reading may not have been evident in the experiences of these children, but their teachers may have drawn on government guidance on cognitive and content domains for reading tests in the 2016 reading test framework.

#### 2.4.3 Develop Cognitive Reading Strategies

##### 2.4.3.1 Cognition

Vygotsky proposed that whatever process happens in becoming literate, in school children become much more aware of processes they carried out automatically before, after learning to deliberately master specific skills (Van Der Veer, 2007). Instruction therefore fundamentally influences cognitive development by introducing children to a scientific way of thinking and they can become capable of conscious use of certain skills and reasoning. The teacher should inform, correct and encourage a child to explain (Vygotsky, 1934/1987b: 216).

##### 2.4.3.2 Skills

Smith (1965, cited in Dole *et al*, 1991: 240) claimed reading is perceived as a skill which can be broken down into sub skills, for example predicting outcomes or sequencing story events. Dole *et al* (1991) make clear distinctions between strategies and skills, associating skills with lower levels of learning and thinking and the routine application of a large number of subskills to all texts. They define cognitive strategies as behavioural and mental activities, for example re-reading or activating background knowledge. The cognitively based view of

reading comprehension, which understands reading as a complex process, emphasises the interactive and constructive nature of comprehension, where the central goal of the reader is to reproduce a model of meaning from the text (Dole *et al*, 1991; McKeown *et al*, 2009). Both novices and expert readers use their existing knowledge and text clues to maintain understanding. It is not a process where readers are passive recipients of text information, mastering a sequential set of skills. Instruction which emphasised a systematic and piecemeal approach, disregarded the aesthetic wonder of reading, and the components of art and experience (Tierney and Cunningham, 1980). Reading is now viewed as an active process where readers construct a model of meaning intended by the writer and not broken down into subskills (Dole *et al*, 1991). In their 2012 study, Cremin *et al*'s social practice approach to literacy shuns the understanding of literacy as a set of decontextualized skills which they claim is frequently found in the prescribed curricula of schools. The current English Programmes of Study for KS2 statutory guidance (DfE, 2013:26) the schools must follow, highlights the teaching of cognitive skills, urging pupils to read by; "...drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence".

#### 2.4.3.3 Group Teaching

In the early to mid-1980s, cognitively motivated instructional approaches such as Reciprocal Teaching encouraged students to take more responsibility for their own learning and engage in the social nature of reading by teaching strategies to each other (Sarroub and Pearson, 1998). The work of Brown and Palincsar (1989), explicitly linked to Vygotskian theory, provided evidence that teacher-pupil dialogue results in specific learning gains or conceptual change (Mercer, 2008). Brown and Palincsar (1989) reported that elementary children made impressive gains in reading comprehension using a reciprocal teaching approach involving specific dialogue strategies where students were expected to interpret, summarise, explain and justify their answers with evidence. The group process in Reciprocal Teaching engenders student learning from their more knowledgeable peers (Spörer *et al*, 2009). The California Learning Assessment System (1994) emphasised response to literacy formats through a social and reflective approach rather than a skills-based approach. This approach is reflective of Vygotsky's ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), the distance between a child's assisted and independent performance and the concept that self-regulation and higher psychological processes originate in social interaction with a more-able other (Van Der Veer, 2007:83).

Assisting a child to develop reading strategies is identified as one of the essential elements of 'Guided Reading' (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996, cited in Ford and Opitz, 2011:225). Guided

reading is explained in section 1.3. Rayner *et al* (2001:59) discuss the responsive teaching approach manifested in ‘Guided Reading’ (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996), where whole class discussion of a section elicits prior knowledge and vocabulary. The teacher then scaffolds children’s reading of the passage in groups or partners. Rayner *et al* (2001) criticise responsive teaching as ineffective with lower attainers when employed by an unknowledgeable teacher in a large group, acknowledging it can work successfully with a skilled teacher and individual children. Gaffney (2017) notes the difficulty for a teacher to manage the rest of the class while leading guided reading in a small group. She points out that some children will not necessarily get on with self-directed learning and see this as an opportunity to misbehave. Children can find it difficult to co-ordinate turn-taking in conversations in large and small group situations, unless a more able other or adult is there to regulate the interruptions and help them stay focused on a topic (Dorval and Eckerman, 1984, cited in Baines *et al*, 2003:10). This study explores influences on teachers’ organisation of comprehension classrooms and their experiences of group and whole class teaching.

#### 2.4.3.4 Teaching Strategies

Teaching reading strategies give developing readers a one-time boost (Willingham 2006/7) but do not improve general-purpose comprehension skills (Willingham and Lovette, 2014). In Willingham’s (2006/7:43) review of the National Reading Panel’s (2000) evaluation of 16 reading strategies, he finds most target one of the three cognitive processes he claims are important for reading with understanding; monitoring comprehension, relating sentences to each other, or relating the text to what is already known. Although he acknowledges the last 25 years of research on reading comprehension has found that teaching strategies is undoubtably a good idea, he terms them ‘tricks’ that can be learned quickly, require little practice and strategy instruction is not useful for students before they are in the third or fourth grade (KS2 in the UK). Students younger than this are still likely to be learning to decode fluently. Their working memory is occupied by decoding and they do not have enough working memory space available to implement strategies. These ideas are developed by Willingham and Lovette (2014), who cite eight quantitative reviews of strategy instruction, none of which show that more practice in strategy instruction yields advantages. They claim the implication that strategy instruction should be brief is excellent news for reading educators who will have more time in the curriculum to focus on more beneficial activities such as opportunities for reading across wide areas and genres, exploration of content and richer vocabulary instruction.

Strategies encourage the reader to pause and think; they can use strategies to organise their cognitive resources if they recognise they do not understand (Willingham and Lovette, 2014). Strategy instruction cannot support a reader specifically in how to achieve reading comprehension because this depends on connecting meaning of sentences and to be able to do that depends on the content of the sentences (Willingham and Lovette, 2014). The dominant effect of teaching strategies may be that the reader is propelled towards a new understanding of reading, comprehending a meaningful message the writer is attempting to communicate (Willingham, 2006/7). Such (2021) advocates teaching strategies briefly. He suggests they are metacognition for reading, as they encourage children to monitor their own understanding and connect ideas. Dole *et al* (1991) claim comprehension instruction at the beginning of the 1990s was still based on a cognitive view of the reading process, with the goal of instruction being to develop metacognitive awareness over a taught set of strategies students could adapt to different texts. However, research indicates that the strategies students learn cannot be equally applied to every text read (Magliano, Trabasso, and Graesser, 1999; Narvaez, van den Broek, and Ruiz, 1999, cited in Willingham and Lovette, 2014:42). Willingham (2017) proposes that reading comprehension is misunderstood in current education practices, where it is treated as a general skill that can be applied successfully to different texts.

The skills referred to in the current English Programmes of Study for KS2 (DfE, 2013:26) link with current practice in many schools which have adopted the ‘Vipers’ approach. ‘Vipers’ is a range of reading prompts based on the 2016 reading content domains found in the National Curriculum Test Framework documents (2016). According to the Literacy Shed website (2020), it is an acronym for Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval, Sequence and Summarise. Clark and Terevainen (2017) claim initial conceptualisation of reading well focused on assessing reading skills. However, conceptualising reading as consisting of technical and comprehension skills oversimplifies it; affective processes, such as attitudes and subjective feelings, and behaviours need to be considered. This suggests different perceptions of skills such as inferring characters’ feelings may be more than just processes to be assessed to demonstrate a child is good at reading comprehension.

Students do not continue using strategies such as posing and answering questions about a text into adulthood; they understand the aim of reading is to obtain meaning and they monitor their comprehension (Willingham, 2006/7). The concept of reading comprehension being much more than success in decoding and answering questions correctly about six reading domains in the UK’s reading curriculum is found in other research suggesting it is about understanding

written communication can promote interpersonal sensitivity in readers' actual lives. The CLPE (2020) claims it is equally important for children to experience realities different to their own, as well as making connections with protagonists they identify with in books. Reading books beyond their own points of references offers opportunities for readers to challenge prejudice and broaden understanding. Kidd and Castano (2013) claim the cultural practice of reading literary fiction can change how people think about others, expanding readers' knowledge of other people's lives and helping to recognise similarities between each other. They state there is some experimental evidence to suggest that reading literary fiction increases self-reported empathy. Results from Djikic, Oatley and Moldoveanu's (2013) study suggest a role for fiction facilitating the development of empathy in readers. Beveridge (2009) describes how we can explore lives of different individuals by engaging imaginatively with them in novels, seeing the world from another person's viewpoint. Bal and Veltkamp (2013:2) cite Mar *et al* (2006) who argue that fiction reading has profound effects on a reader's empathetic skills, and Oatley (1999), who claims readers sympathise with characters in a story because they identify with the characters and can become emotionally involved while reading. A 2010 study by researchers at the University of Liverpool, Liverpool Primary Care Trust, and The Reader Organisation, investigated the therapeutic benefits of shared reading in relation to depression and well-being. They found the intervention, a social inclusion programme "Get into Reading", helped patients suffering from depression in terms of their emotional, psychological and social well-being, encouraged communication skills and extended their capacity for thought. How teachers conceptualise reading comprehension for children, as supporting them to do well in assessments, or developing their understanding of human behaviour, could influence what strategies or skills they teach and how they teach them in practice.

#### 2.4.3.5 Background Knowledge

Practitioners and theorists advocate encouraging pupils to actively relate prior knowledge to the new information gained from reading, with the assumption that learning is a constructive rather than a reproductive process (Tierney and Cunningham, 1980). Successful comprehenders draw on prior knowledge to help them make sense of a text (Pearson *et al*, 1990, Dole *et al*, 1991, Rayner *et al*, 2001). Background knowledge and vocabulary should be taught and contribute directly to successful reading comprehension (Tierney and Cunningham, 1980, Spörer *et al*, 2009). Prior knowledge and domain and topic knowledge are part of a reader's established schemata; reading comprehension is the processing of information in the text and relating it to these established schemata (Nystrand, 2006).

Orasanu (1986:1) describes the new view of reading as an active search for meaning where readers begin to construct a sensible interpretation of what is written on the page drawing on background knowledge. In the old view the meaning resided in the text which the reader had the task of finding out. The English Programmes of Study for KS2 (DfE, 2013:4) promote drawing on background knowledge, stating, “Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge ... and on knowledge of the world”. The importance of factual knowledge for reading comprehension is stressed by Willingham (2017), who suggests good decoders may score poorly on a test because they lack knowledge the author assumed the reader has. This systematic building of knowledge should be a priority in the design of a curriculum, through instruction and exposure to high quality conversations, books and films (Willingham and Lovett, 2014). Comprehension is dependent on readers making accurate inferences. The author rarely makes explicit how sentences relate, assuming the reader can do this work using their background knowledge (Willingham, 2006, Willingham and Lovett, 2014). The reader will become confused if this background general knowledge concerning the text theme is lacking; subconscious inference making processes fail and the reader has to make a much greater effort to find connections among ideas and words in the text. If the reader has rich background general knowledge they seldom need to interrupt their reading or reread the text to consciously search for connections.

#### 2.4.4 Develop Metacognition

##### 2.4.4.1 Self-Regulation and Self-Efficacy

Proficient readers use both cognitive and metacognitive strategies to facilitate reading comprehension (Van Keer, 2004; Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005). Findings from research on metacomprehension suggest successful readers have a better awareness of the strategies they use while reading than less successful readers (Tierney and Cunningham, 1980). Ford and Opitz (2011) claim research shows children make good progress when they are aware of their reading behaviours. Students must become self-regulating as they construct meaning from text and comprehension monitoring can be instructed (Pearson *et al*, 1990). The National Reading Panel report (2000) recommended comprehension monitoring and co-operative learning as effective comprehension strategies.

Clark and Terevainen (NLT, 2017) recognise the importance of self-regulatory behaviours in their tripartite model of reading. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (2019) claim metacognition and self-regulation approaches have consistently high levels of impact on student progress; students can be taught specific strategies in groups where learners support each other and use discussion to make their thinking explicit. Pupils should be supported in

mediating sophisticated reading materials and to read metacognitively by teachers being explicit about the complexities of academic reading (Quigley, 2020). However, the use of metacognition is only briefly outlined in the current English Programmes of Study for KS2 statutory guidance (DfE, 2013:26); pupils should be taught to understand what they read by “checking that the text makes sense to them, discussing their understanding”.

A major outcome of development that accounts for a transformation of social and cognitive skills in children is the capacity for self-regulation (Diaz *et al* in Moll, 1990). From birth a human infant is immersed in a sociocultural environment, where adult caregiving interactions externally regulate the child’s behaviour. Diaz *et al* in Moll (1990) agree with Vygotsky that regulation of a child’s behaviour is a shared act, where ideally the caregiver can gradually withdraw from a joint activity, encouraging the child’s ownership of the regulatory role. Gallimore and Tharp (in Moll (ed), 1990:181) point out the importance of the instructing voice of the teacher in the transition to self-regulated performer from apprentice. The instructing voice becomes the self-instructing, gradually internalized voice of the learner through this teacher-child interaction. Dole *et al* (1991:255) cite what Vygotsky (1978) called the ‘other-directed’ and ‘self-directed’ stages of understanding, where the teachers steadily diminish scaffolding, and students develop more responsibility for their own learning, developing internal motivation and becoming self-regulated. The crux of Vygotsky’s concept of the ZPD is to support children’s active role in their own learning and to assist them to become self-regulated, lifelong learners (Verenikina, 2004). Exemplary teachers who promote self-regulation have the greatest impact on the performance and achievement of primary pupils (Pressley, 2005, cited in Ford and Opitz, 2011: 225). In reading lessons teachers encourage the students to be responsible for monitoring instead of relying on the teacher as an external monitor (Pearson *et al*, 1990). This study seeks to explore influences on the practices of teachers in the comprehension classroom, if and why they are promoting self-regulation and the use of metacognitive strategies in comprehension lessons.

Instruction in reading strategies alone is not sufficient for effective reading growth, and self-efficacy is an important factor for deeper engagement with the text (Casteel, Isom and Jordan, 2000, cited in Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005:293). Schunk and Zimmerman (2007:7) claim two integral motivational and cognitive variables in reading are self-regulation and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is beliefs of learners in their abilities to accomplish tasks or learning (Bandura, 1997). Modelling is a way to promote pupils’ self-efficacy, and observing a peer succeed in an activity, for example reading aloud in front of others, may lead the observer to believe that if their classmate can succeed, they can as well (Schunk and Zimmerman, 2007).

They may be motivated to try reading aloud a book of comparable difficulty. Adults can teach them skills, but students with high self-efficacy for acquiring the skill, persevere when encountering difficulties and then achieve more highly.

#### 2.4.4.3 Modelling

Teachers should physically model aspects of reading such as predicting and self-correction, and model the mental reasoning occurring in comprehension which develops the student's metacognitive control of the process (Pearson *et al*, 1990; Dole *et al*, 1991). 'What I think about ...reading' (2016) recommends modelling the thought processes of the reader, making links to general knowledge, after reading aloud to the children. The teacher gradually fades their modelling of target comprehension strategies in Reciprocal Teaching as the students assume increasing control over strategy use (Duke and Pearson, 2008/9).

The EEF (2017:4) make recommendations on the teaching of literacy, based on a review of international research, labelling the evidence for teaching reading comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice as 'very extensive'. The EEF suggest how to teach, recommending teaching and modelling specific strategies for pupils to monitor and overcome barriers to comprehension. 'Moderate' evidence is found for the recommendation to support readers to develop fluent reading, which supports comprehension because pupils can focus on comprehending a text rather than concentrating cognitive resources on word recognition (EEF, 2017:4). This can be developed through teachers modelling fluent reading and giving feedback when pupils read the same text back aloud.

Gredler (2012:117) calls the process executed by the child in the ZPD "intellectual imitation". When teaching in the ZPD, Verenikina (2004) proposes looking at how a child's performance is socially mediated to enable internalisation of mental tools, considering the quality of interaction between adult and child for the child to appropriate these tools moving from assisted to independent performance. This study seeks to explore what influences teachers in their provision of mental tools for children and what influences the conditions they create in the classroom to enable the internalisation of these tools.

## 2.5 Conclusion to aims

The recurring themes in comprehension research and recommendations from socioculturalist theory for interactions in an effective classroom suggest a model for what comprehension teaching and learning should aim for in the classroom today (Figure 2.1). This model helped inform the interview schedule for the study.



The model proposes reading comprehension in today’s classroom should aim to develop children’s language comprehension, enjoyment of reading, cognitive reading strategies and metacognition. These aims are impacted by the social nature of reading, more specifically peer support. This emerged as an important vehicle to deliver the aims, and is reviewed in the final part of the Literature Review.

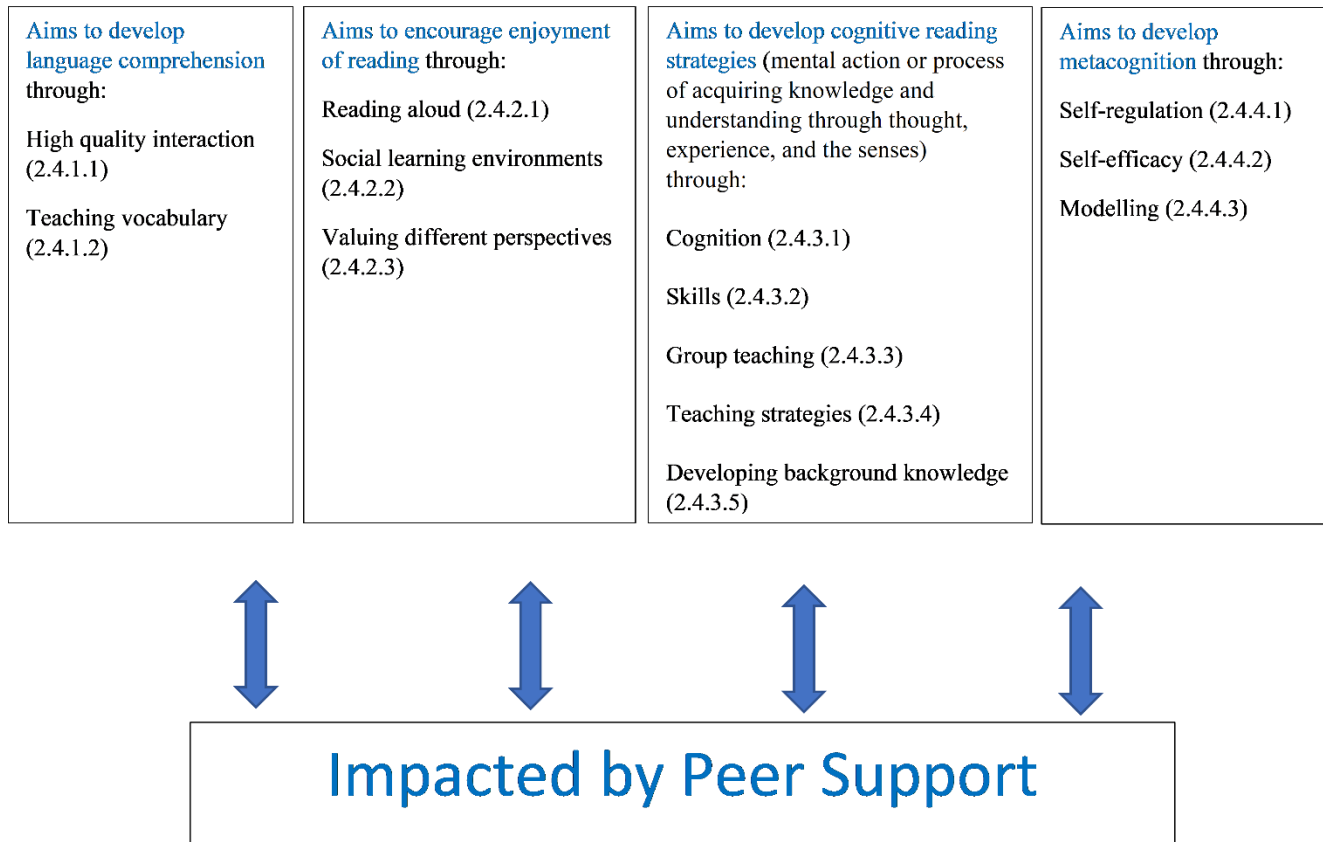


Figure 2.1 Aims of Reading Comprehension According to Research and Socioculturalism

## 2.6 Peer support

Peer assisted learning is a well-known teaching approach where children collaborate in pairs to encourage reading comprehension skills (Topping, 2001, cited in Sporer and Brunstein 2009:289). The National Reading Panel (2000) highlighted this form of cooperative learning as one of the most effective ways to improve reading comprehension, where peers listen to each other’s ideas and support each other in the use of strategies (Truelove *et al*, 2014:48). The use of peers trained to teach new learning alleviates demands on teachers to provide for each individual allowing for better time management (Medcalf, 1995, cited in Topping *et al*, 2011:3). Nystrand (2006:398) recommends peer interaction and discussion to develop

cognition, citing Vygotsky's (1978:158) claim that when a learner elaborates or defends their position to others, this striving to explain can make learners integrate knowledge and so cognitive growth is more likely.

Tutor training results in more effective peer tutoring (Van Keer, 2004; Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005; Topping *et al*, 2012). If untrained, tutoring behaviours may be characterised by inappropriate positive feedback and infrequent correction of errors. Regular structured tutoring programmes are more successful than unstructured programmes (Topping *et al*, 2011). The Reading Framework (DfE, 2021) offers guidance for managing talk in pairs, noting that children all need to practise skills of talking with and listening to a partner. The potential for learning is greater when both students in the pair enjoy the tutoring relationship and there should not be too great a gap in competences (Morrison *et al*, 2000). Webb (1989, cited in Baines *et al*, 2003:15) recommends low and middle ability pupils work together and high and middle ability pupils work together, maintaining differences in knowledge and perspectives but reducing the problem of the annoyance displayed by some high ability pupils when having to support low ability pupils.

The results of a study by Van den Branden (2000) suggest that the efforts a highly proficient pupil has to make when explaining input above the proficiency level of another pupil will profit them as well because the act of attempting to explain challenging words or sentences to another may help narrow down the meaning of the word for the more proficient pupil. In contrast, Miller, (2003:291) cites researchers who have found evidence to suggest peer-led talk in collaborative dialogues has not resulted in productive conversations (e.g. Alvermann, 1996). Parents and educators have raised concerns about the possibility of a detrimental impact of peer support interventions on the academic performance of higher attaining pupils, but research suggests those students in the tutor role may improve their academic performance (Carter and Kennedy, 2006). Tutors benefit even more from the process than the tutees receiving individual tuition, because they are challenged to consider the subject from different perspectives and clarify their own understanding (Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005). Peer tutoring, blended with direct instruction, does not prejudice the progress of low or high performers (Rayner *et al*, 2001). KS2 comprehension teachers are interviewed in this study to investigate how and why peer tutoring is used in current comprehension classrooms. The inclusive aspects and benefits of peer tutoring, according to research, will now be explored.

### 2.6.1 Inclusion

Vygotsky believed in positive integration, developing sociocultural contexts where special instructional methods could be devised to accommodate the various needs of students (Kozulin and Gindis, 2007 cited in Eun, 2016:125). Students of differing attainment learn best when experiencing diverse experiences of social interaction within a heterogeneous classroom that offers a challenging curriculum (Shepard, 1992, cited in Eun, 2016:127). Vygotsky (1993a) proposed children of varying attainment should interact within a heterogeneous group; if grouped with others of similar ability they would be denied opportunities to advance academically (Eun, 2016:127). Simmons *et al* (1995) claim peer tutoring is an effective approach for addressing low-performing and disabled students' needs for individualised instruction. Vygotsky's ideas can be seen reflected in this and in the research of Vaughn *et al* (2001), who emphasize the inclusivity of pairs and small group sizes, claiming students with English as an additional language can be reluctant to respond in large groups. Carter and Kennedy (2006) highlight the practical advantage of peer support for differentiating instruction, facilitating academic participation and meeting individual needs.

### 2.6.2 Potential Benefits of Peer Support

The interaction in peer tutoring positively affects the social and emotional functioning of tutors and tutees (Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005, Topping *et al*, 2011). Research indicates peer support interventions improve social outcomes in education (Carter and Kennedy, 2006) and the self-esteem of pupils may be enhanced when working in a peer support pair (Morrison *et al*, 2000). Charlton (1998) asserts that the academic progress of a pupil is intertwined with their social and emotional functioning. If peer support is well-organised, and monitored regularly, there is evidence to show tutors and tutees benefit through a boost in pupils' self-esteem and greater motivation. Children can develop many social-cognitive and conversational strategies needed for larger group interaction in pairs or threes (Baines *et al*, 2003). Peer-mediated instruction enhances student verbal interaction around learning by improving academic learning time, providing ongoing feedback, monitoring progress and by modelling correct answers (Vaughn *et al*, 2001). The teacher should take on the role of facilitator and coach, diligently monitoring groups and providing feedback (Van Keer, 2004) and ensure students are actively participating, although turning over so much control of learning to students is difficult for some teachers (Vaughn *et al*, 2001).

Diaz *et al* (in Moll, 1990:158) note a potential problem of Vygotsky's ZPD theory for teachers and possible consequences for instruction. They assert that Vygotsky implied that if a less competent child works with a more competent other, or an adult provides information

within a child's ZPD, then development may result. However, they question this outcome when peers interact, pointing out that it should not be assumed that the meaning that is created when two peers interact will be at a higher level, whether the opinions of the more competent child in the dyad will always prevail.

### 2.6.3 Peer Support and Reading Instruction

Interaction with peers encourages the development of reading competence in elementary grades (Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005). In classrooms where there is a strong emphasis on students working alone, students achieve less, and co-operative learning is an important instructional technique in reading comprehension (Tierney and Cunningham, 1980). Through peer tutoring, social interaction among classroom peers where they recognise and resolve discrepancies with texts reduces the chances of passive learners resulting from reliance on teachers as the interpretive authority in comprehension lessons (Van Keer, 2004). Spörer *et al* (2009) assert that research on cognitive strategy instruction in reading suggests peer support procedures effectively stimulate metacognitive activities while pupils share ideas and work together. Benefits of peer learning in reading comprehension are the promotion of social language and the skills of gauging relevance and turn-taking, and the less intimidating situation of a paired session compared to a whole class situation (Truelove *et al*, 2014). Reading comprehension instruction has focused on the use of peer interaction to activate pupils' prior knowledge, and it is important for students to be provided with opportunities to interact with peers using academic vocabulary found in texts (Kissau and Hiller, 2013).

According to Topping *et al* (2011), peer tutoring provides those experiencing difficulties in reading with regular opportunities to learn strategies and to practise skills with constructive and supportive feedback. Rayner *et al* (2001) discuss an approach called Companion Reading as a form of peer tutoring, which they write works well in practice, with low error rates in reading occurring. The teacher can pair high performers with low performers, enhancing the probability of low performers following the example of their partners, and learning good study skills incidentally. Topping *et al* (2011) discuss a similar structured method for supported or assisted reading, the Paired Reading technique which they believe is likely to raise children's confidence and enhance engagement. Pairs talk about books and ensure the tutee understands the content. When a tutee misreads a word, the tutor pauses for four seconds to allow the tutee to self-correct. The tutor demonstrates the correct way to say the word and asks the tutee to repeat it correctly, using praise when the tutee reads hard words and demonstrates the ability to self-correct. Spörer and Brunstein (2009:289) cite the programmatic instructional approach "peer assisted learning strategies" (PALS) (Fuchs,

Fuchs, and Burish, 2000; McMaster, Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006) to promote reading comprehension through three reading activities: Partner Reading, Paragraph Shrinking, and Prediction Relay. Predicting can stimulate metacognitive processes and is an essential strategy used by readers to test their comprehension of a text. If a prediction is true, the reader continues with the text. If it is wrong, the reader must make more effort, through re-reading passages.

Research has demonstrated comprehension is promoted by opportunities for peer tutoring and co-operative activities with texts and that peer interaction creates a powerful learning environment to practise metacognitive skills (Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005). The internalization and self-regulative use of strategies when encountering challenging texts, through the joint construction of text meaning and flexible application of relevant strategies, is the object of this interaction in peer-tutoring and consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social mediated learning.

## 2.7 Conclusion to Literature Review

This section summarises the Literature Review chapter and explains how this study will contribute to the research landscape, justifying the research questions.

I have outlined the theoretical framework used to explore teacher learning and development and the practice of reading comprehension teaching. It draws on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and the concept of the ZPD to explore the importance of language and social interaction, with a focus on peer support, in practice. Valsiner's (1997) zone theory and Goos' (2013) adaptation of this are useful in understanding teacher learning and development in the social context of their schools. Although all subject to the mandates of English National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), the teachers in my study are from different schools. Therefore, they may experience different zones of free movement; the actions permitted in their individual school contexts, and varying zones of promoted action; actions promoted by their reading subject leads or management and dependent on the needs of the different children. Goos' (2013) adaptation highlights how different teachers can alter their environments through productive tensions arising from misalignment of the zones with the teacher's ZPD and their resulting actions. Lave and Wenger's (1991) CoP is relevant to my study as the teachers can be interactive participants of teaching communities. Their experience ranges from the novice to those with more than 20 years' experience. This study extends the literature into teacher learning and development using the two frameworks, focusing on the specific area of reading comprehension in KS2. Figure 2.2 below illustrates how the two frameworks and other

potential influences could impact a teacher's ZPD or their learning and development in teaching reading comprehension.

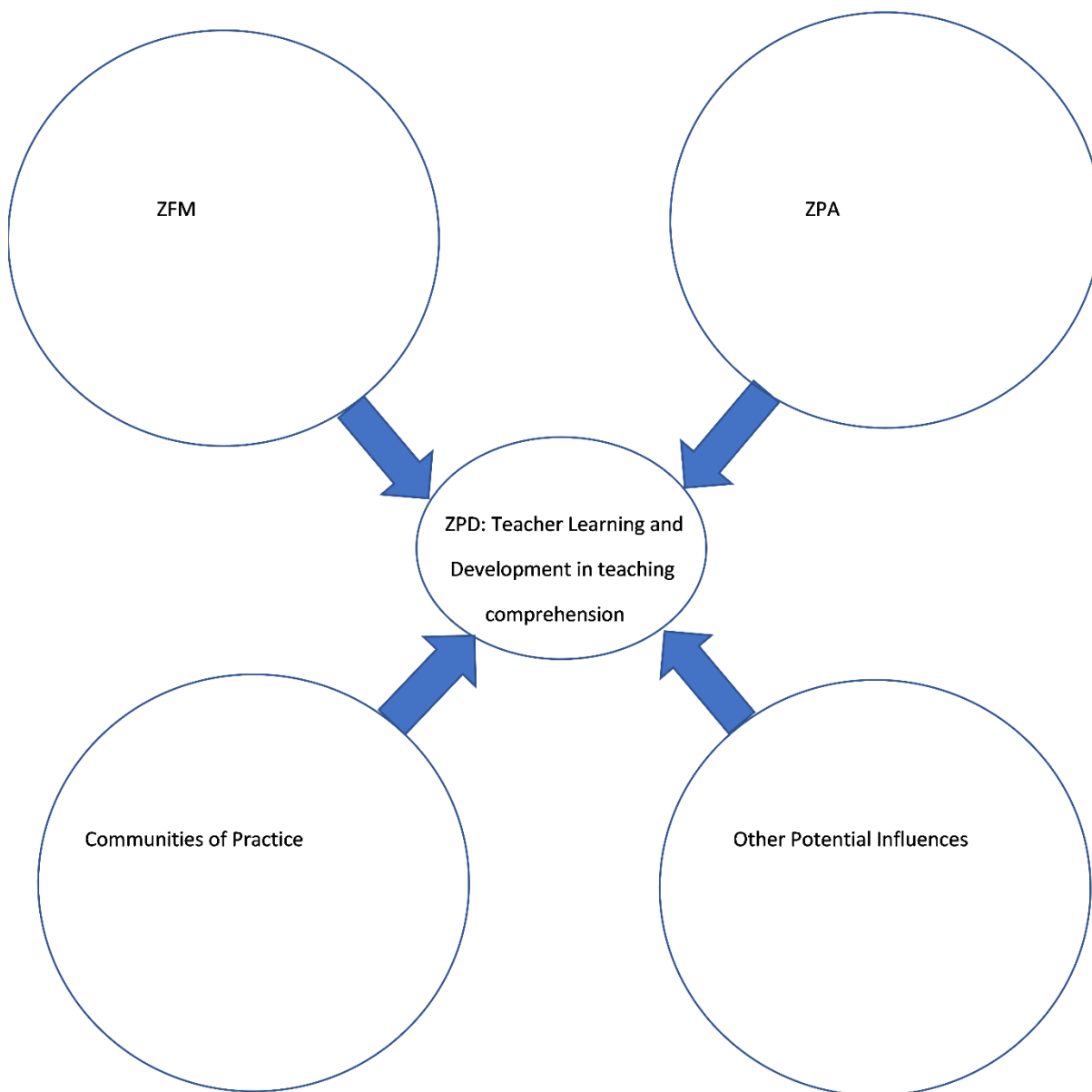


Figure 2.2 Influences on Teacher Learning and Development

My main research question is:

How are influences shaping the thinking and practice of KS2 teachers of comprehension?

Zone theory and CoP view teacher change as affected by social, contextual factors and personal factors of the teachers themselves. The review of research into teacher beliefs and beliefs about reading reveal how these, self-efficacy and varied conceptions about what is good comprehension impact practice. The review of literature around other influences

suggests the importance of the effect of professional environment, the needs and characteristics of children in the environment, professional knowledge, formal training and past experience on practice.

The sub-questions are:

What are the strongest influences and why?

To what extent do teachers perceive they have agency in comprehension teaching?

This study extends the literature by exploring these influences on teachers of reading comprehension and what is not known, the extent of certain influences. I seek to understand the impact of professional knowledge and research into reading comprehension instruction, exploring how similar the teachers' practices are in comparison to the aims of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1) which proposes skills, knowledge and interactions needed according to the research and socioculturalism. The study will contribute to the research landscape around teacher agency as it aims to grasp insight into KS2 teachers' realisations of agency in their comprehension classroom.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss the research design and ontological and epistemological position adopted to answer the research questions which guided the study, in order to state the assumptions I bring to my chosen methodology and to describe my philosophical stance (Crotty, 1998). The methodology chapter aims to “document the rationale behind the research design and data analysis” (Silverman, 2013:354). The rationale for the design and methods chosen to gather and analyse the data collected will be explored. My questions stem from my interest in teachers’ thinking and a wish to gain an understanding of the influences on their teaching of reading.

### 3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Position

“Researchers should begin their inquiry process with philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), how they know what is known (epistemology)” (Cresswell *et al*, 2007:238). Ontology is the study of theories of being and the nature of reality. Epistemology is how one acquires knowledge. The researcher’s stances on their view of reality and how they know reality provide direction for their study (Cresswell, 2018). This research’s ontological position is that reality is socially constructed (Mertens, 2015). I recognise the competing world views framing social inquiry (Thomas, 2013) and have chosen the philosophical stance of interpretivism for the purposes of this study as a framework for thinking about and researching the social world of teachers of comprehension.

Interpretivism proposes a “world of multiple realities that are constructed and co-constructed by the mind(s) and required to be studied as a whole” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:37). This is in contrast with positivism’s assumption that there is one objective reality, outside the mind, which can be studied in parts (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). Reality is subjective and must be observed through the multiple direct experiences of people with multiple perspectives (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). In the world of the classroom where learners and teachers construct meaning, uniform causal links cannot be made as they can be established in the study of natural science (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Thomas (2013:108) claims the main point of interpretivism is the interest in people, their thinking and “how they form ideas about the world”. The “central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen and Manion, 1997:36). Mukherji and Albon (2018:86) describe interpretivist research as being interested in the meanings or reasons different people give for what they do.

Interpretation looks at “patterns which lie behind phenomena in an effort to gain a greater



understanding rather than a universal truth” (Mukherji and Albon, 2018:339). The study aims to understand the experiences in teachers’ personal histories of comprehension teaching and what has shaped and influenced their thinking about effective practice in teaching comprehension by interpreting the meanings or reasons teachers give for what they do in the comprehension classroom.

Crotty (1998) highlights the researcher establishing the epistemological stance within their research which will determine the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted. The epistemology of this research is constructivism. A constructivist approach was employed to develop a greater understanding of influences on teaching comprehension. Throughout the process of research, constructivists inductively develop a pattern of meanings or theory, unlike postpositivists, who begin with a theory (Creswell, 2003). Theories are created after knowledge is gained inductively (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). This study did not begin with a theory, but patterns of meanings were constructed through analysis of individual’s interpretations of teaching comprehension.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Eliciting teachers’ perspectives and histories was key to understanding the influences on teachers’ teaching of comprehension. I used an emerging case study design (Merriam 2009), interviewing 14 teachers in seven schools. The national and school contexts that the teachers were working in were investigated through an examination of school reading and learning policies and recent school Ofsted reports referencing reading.

Data was collected around teachers’ knowledge of research and policy gained partly through training and professional development, knowledge gained from their experiences as teachers and knowledge expressed through their own beliefs concerning pedagogy in this area. Patterns of influence on and between the teachers were identified to develop an account of why these teachers are teaching comprehension in a certain way, and to account for their beliefs concerning effective practice. To develop an understanding of teachers’ experiences and the influences shaping beliefs and practice, teachers were asked questions in interviews and encouraged to narrate personal timelines of their teaching careers. Some questions were prompted by my own experiences in schools and my familiarity with certain pedagogical approaches and groupings. The interviews were guided by the following questions: 1) How were you taught to teach comprehension on your degree, post-graduate course and early years of teaching? 2) How have you been advised to teach comprehension in your professional development and learning, school policy, national policy over the years? 3) What are your

perceptions of the most effective methods of teaching comprehension? Interviewees were encouraged to express their attitudes and how they felt about training and policy as they answered these questions.

### 3.2.1 Case Study

Pacheco (2010:297) cites Creswell (1994:12) who explains that case studies involve a process by which “the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (“the case”) bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group)”, collecting detailed information with different data collection procedures. The case in this study was the influences on the teaching of comprehension. It explores the bounded system of fourteen teachers’ experiences of the teaching of the comprehension in state primary schools over the past 27 years. Thomas (2017) notes that ethnographers make no attempt to deny their own personal knowledge and use their knowledge of social structures and people and how they relate to understand their situation. Although I acknowledge my knowledge and experience of KS2 comprehension teaching and the social structure teachers are part of within a school, this study was not ethnographic in approach in that my participant observation purely involved interviews (Thomas, 2017), and comparison with analysis of written policies, rather than actual observation in the comprehension classroom.

Research is about questions and not necessarily answers (Yin, 2003b:60, cited in Wilson, 2007:26). This study was concerned with discovery of influences on KS2 teachers of comprehension, rather than confirmation of any hypotheses about the teaching of comprehension. Merriam (1998:19) writes that for a case study “The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research”. This study’s aim was to glean insights into the complexity of issues surrounding the teaching of comprehension, and an understanding of some of the influences on teachers in an education system which has been subject to change over the past 30 years, and which could influence future personal practice and research. It did not aim to make conclusive statements about the methods of teaching of comprehension in primary schools.

### 3.2.2 Participants

To understand the influences on KS2 comprehension teachers, it was necessary to obtain a sample of participants with heterogeneous experiences. The teachers were approached purposively, because of my knowledge of their positions as class teachers in KS2. I approached teachers personally and asked contacts I knew at their schools to suggest teachers who would be willing to be involved. I then e-mailed these teachers. I approached the teachers

or their colleagues at Schools B, C, D and G in my role as a teacher. Schools A, E and F are partnership schools working with the University of Birmingham. I approached the teachers at these schools in my role as a link tutor.

The interview schedule was structured in light of emerging themes identified in the literature review and informed by the model (Figure 2.1). Attempts were made to ensure a range of experience in teaching was represented within the group of participants. The study focuses on fourteen teachers currently working in seven public, state-funded Primary schools in three local authorities in the West Midlands. The schools are a range of one, two and three form entry primary and junior schools. To allow others to make judgments of transferability, Krefting (2007) highlights that researchers should provide background information concerning the informants and the context and setting of the research and Mertens (2015) agrees this is a requirement for a constructivist researcher. Therefore, the teachers' genders and years of experience can be seen in Table 3.1 below and brief context provided in short summaries of each of the schools in which they work (Appendix B).

Teacher	School	Gender	Years of Experience
Matthew	School A	M	27
Kitty	School A	F	20
Jo	School B	F	20
Helen	School C	F	19
Lucy	School B	F	8
Kate	School D	F	7
Carl	School E	M	6
Natasha	School E	F	6 Reading Lead
Kerry	School F	F	6 Reading Lead
Rachel	School A	F	6
Walter	School C	M	2
Rae	School C	F	1
Jim	School A	M	1
Simon	School G	M	1

*Table 3.1 Interview Participants*

The first set of interviews were conducted over a period of three months with a total of eight teachers. Three interviewees were approached via e-mail after I asked if they would be willing to take part in the study during contact at CPD leadership training. I approached the head teachers at two other schools, who agreed to ask if any staff were willing to participate. Five teachers from these schools verbally agreed to take part. The outline of the research questions and purpose of the research was given verbally or in the e-mails. Written consent was then obtained from all interviewees (Appendix C). The interviewees participated in an interview lasting approximately 50 minutes to 70 minutes. These interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. The second set of interviews were conducted nine months after the first, over a period of two months. These teachers were approached in my role as a university tutor, having visited their schools to work with students on placements. Again, the purpose and outline of the interview questions were shared verbally or via e-mail. After each interview the interviewees were given the opportunity to check the transcripts and could alert the interviewer to any changes in opinion or belief.

### 3.2.3 Narrative Inquiry

A narrative inquiry approach was used. Wilson (2007:18) cites Kramp (2004:104) who stated that “narrative inquiry serves the researcher who wishes to understand a phenomenon or an experience rather than to formulate a logical or scientific explanation”. Mulholland and Wallace (2003) agree that the aim of narrative inquiry is the understanding of the perspectives of those narrating their experiences, rather than arriving at a reality or truth. The object of narrative research is not to be generalisable (Anderson and Kirkpatrick, 2016), but to “sing up many truths/narratives” (Byrne-Armstrong 2001: 112), cited in Hunter (2010:44). In her rationale for a case study, Cliff Hodges (2010:183) discusses how case studies can be criticised for not meeting the demands of generalisability. She cites Helen Simons (1996:238, 2009), who views the tension arising from the pull towards the detail and their push towards generalisation as one of a case study’s essential strengths. She welcomes this paradox and claims it is crucial to understanding.

Research requires people to question assumptions and perceptions which may be taken for granted in their everyday life; the researcher attempts to step outside “our everyday experience of people, objects and places, and subject them to different sorts of examination” (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002:22). The narrative interview was a tool to assist me in stepping outside of my everyday experience of teachers and teaching comprehension, and subject colleagues to a different sort of examination of their history and the event of teaching reading. Different in that this more formal situation was distinct from chatting about comprehension

teaching on a training day for example. Clough and Nutbrown (2002:45) suggest that “looking at others can help us to reflect on our own experiences”, and compare educational researchers to archaeologists and historians, in that they also aim to understand the origins and policy contexts of the situations they study. Nelson and Harper (2000:6), cited in Wellin (2007:82) suggest we confront our assumptions in the potentially transformative process of interviewing, opening ourselves up to better contextual understandings of topics and conversational partners. One of my original intentions was to improve and so transform my own practice, by exposing my own silent assumptions to the narrated experiences of others.

Meaning is assembled collaboratively in the interview process of narrative production, where participants are constructive practitioners in accounts of the experience being studied (Holstein and Gubrium in Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti and McKinney, eds, 2012:32).

Interviewers and interviewees actively create meaning, together generating data or reasonable accounts of the world (Silverman, 2013: 238). Eckerdal (2013) cites Mishler’s (1986a:123) suggestion for forms of interviewing where interviewees are considered research collaborators and competent observers of their own experiences. The interviewer may lead and analyse the conversation, but Mishler (1986a:119) proposes ways for interviewees to narrate their own stories.

#### 3.2.4 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to BERA’s (2011) ethical guidelines and the University of Birmingham Code of Practice for Research. My ethical Review Form was approved (**ERN\_16-1155**) before I began the research. Key considerations were voluntary participant consent, confidentiality and storage of data. Informed consent was elicited from participants and is outlined in the consent form (Appendix C). The form demonstrates how there was opportunity for participants to ask questions before giving consent and how participants had the right to withdraw at any time. Contextual details including school, age and gender were kept to a minimum to preserve confidentiality of participants. Due to my personal involvement with all interviewees it was vital that I clearly outlined the purpose of the research and that this confidentiality was emphasised and adhered to. Although teaching reading comprehension does not appear to be a sensitive subject, because the participants were being asked to narrate their own histories of teaching it was important to emphasise and adhere to confidentiality in the event that any sensitive or personal issues were shared in the interviews. I wished to avoid a tactless approach in my interviewing which “can be an invasion of privacy and/or upsetting for the informant” (Denscombe, 2017: 222).

Participants were given verbal and written confirmation that data would be kept in safe storage and would not be available to others. Participants were assured pseudonyms would be used and only the amount of years teaching experience and gender would be mentioned. Recordings of the interviews would be kept on the recording device, along with back up data files on a lap-top.

### 3.2.5 Positionality

Cresswell (2003) recommends the researcher clarify bias. In doing so readers will have a better understanding of the researcher's perceptual lens which will enlighten them as to how the researcher arrived at certain assumptions. "You should use your own interests and understandings to help interpret the expressed views and behaviour of others" (Thomas, 2013:109). My own changing position from class teacher to lecturer has been noted in section 1.1. My interest in comprehension teaching has remained constant in both roles. However, I believe my understanding and perspective has altered slightly. "All inquiry reflects the standpoint of the inquirer" (Denzin, 1989:3). As a teacher I believe I was more of an insider when undertaking the research, sympathetic to the demands of the curriculum and government pressures. As a lecturer in Teacher Education I believe my understanding of the wider picture of reading research has developed and approach the study as more of an outsider. Thomas (2013:109) explains how a researcher uses what Geertz (1975) called 'thick description' when understanding behaviour in context and interpreting it using one's own knowledge of the world. I am interpreting interviewees' talk, pauses and gestures using my own knowledge of the social situation and context of teaching comprehension in school and some of the research into reading. In this way I am not attempting to be a neutral bystander (Thomas, 2013).

Denscombe (2017) notes the advantage of direct contact between researcher and interviewee at the point of interview means data can be checked for relevance and accuracy in the process of collection. I was able to probe interviewees further if I felt the answers to questions were unclear. For the purposes of trustworthiness, participants were given the opportunity to review their interview transcript for feedback and any corrections they felt necessary. This was an attempt to ensure the transcripts and quotes were accurate reflections of the teachers' practices, values and experiences.

The data was compared with information from the schools' reading policies and latest Ofsted Reports with any references to the teaching of reading, "so that a broad picture of the phenomenon could emerge through themes and subthemes" (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003; Merriam, 1998). These documents were drawn on as another source of data and would

provide alternative perspectives on comprehension teaching taking place around the time of the study.

The policies were explored using content analysis to compare what was exhorted in school policy to participants' stated beliefs and practice, and whether there was correlation between what the participants said they did and what the school policy effectively required they do. The school policies outline the ways to teach reading and comprehension that were expected in school when written. Silverman (2017) defines content analysis as organising categories and the links between them and counting the number of times the categories are used in a piece of text. Cohen and Manion (2014) state better approaches to content analysis identify appropriate categories and units of analysis reflecting the purpose of the research and the nature of the analysed document. The categories I used were the four aims of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1), as the purpose of the research was to explore influences on practice, and the content analysis sought to explore whether school policy was an influence. Cohen and Manion (2014) claim this kind of analysis can reveal more about the social context and influence of political factors. Policy and Ofsted documents helped frame the school and national contexts for the teaching of comprehension by these teachers and possible influences they were working under. The analysis was used to provide more context for the environment the teachers were working in, and helped me infer whether dominant discourse, government policy or research aims from the theoretical model (Figure 2.1) were reflected in the school policy.

The policies were read after the interviews. This was to ensure I did not make assumptions that the teachers were telling me a pedagogical practice they employed because it was school policy, rather than what happened in their classrooms. I could then compare what can be seen as the teachers' ZFM, or free movement set by any potentially restrictive school policy with how they described their practice. School reading policies were gained via the school websites, or where these were not available, by asking the teachers directly for them (Appendix F). Only School B and D provided specific Reading Policies. School A provided Reading Information on their website, School C, E and F provided English policies with smaller sections on reading and School D did not have a reading policy so I used their Teaching and Learning Policy to compare data.

Thomas (2013) writes that the term content analysis is sometimes used instead of discourse analysis when written text is analysed rather than the spoken word, and that this discourse analysis emphasises the coding aspect of text analysis. I employed the "constant comparative" method (Thomas, 2013:23) as I read through each school policy and coded units of text

according to the four aims of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1). The same approach was used for the Ofsted reports, which provided an external view of how reading and comprehension were taught in the school at the time the inspection took place. The latest Ofsted reports for each school were accessed via the internet after the participants had been interviewed.

The sample size is small (14 teachers from three local authorities) and therefore the research data from the study is not generalisable to other KS2 teachers of comprehension throughout the country. However, the sample does represent a range of years of teaching experience, therefore a variety of experiences in different schools and may be of value to those reflecting on comprehension teaching in KS2 classrooms and the extent and variety of influences on this.

There were limitations to the collection of data from participants as well as finding reading policies. A major limitation was actually getting access to a number of practising KS2 teachers and them agreeing to be interviewed in their busy work lives. Limiting the sample size to teachers in Birmingham, Dudley and Sandwell authorities meant I was able to travel to the schools in a day to interview teachers and the travel costs were not a constraint. There was a drop-out rate of those teachers who initially agreed to be interviewed; when I pursued their initial agreement they did not respond. I then needed to fit the interviews around the participants' schedules and my own work schedule. My identity as a teacher and lecturer known to the participants was a limitation in that the participants may have wanted to present themselves in what they felt was a very positive way.

### **3.3 Data gathering and materials used**

#### 3.3.1 Timelines

Combined narrative/semi-structured interviews were selected as the most appropriate method for this study. Nasr *et al* (2016) claims that in this approach meanings are co-constructed interactionally and contextually (Mishler, 1986), as a result of dialogue and interaction between researchers and participants. The interviews explored how participants “impose order on the flow of experience” (Riessman, 1993:2) through the use of narrative. A focus on narration allows interviewees more impact on gathered material than a traditional question-answer situation (Eckerdal, 2013). Morgan (2008) claims that Erikson (1986:121) first offered a piece of advice to qualitative researchers "to make the familiar strange and interesting again", to describe a “research setting with an objectivity that makes what is most ordinary seem exotic. Making the familiar strange problematizes what is most comfortable”. The participants were encouraged to narrate their personal history of teaching comprehension,



drawing a visual timeline with icons to represent their attitudes to teaching this at different points in their career. I wanted to facilitate the reflection of participants on what my colleagues and I had been teaching on a day to day basis, questioning what was familiar and possibly comfortable for some teachers, via the tools of timelines and interview questions (Appendix A).

This study has been influenced by Cliff Hodges' (2010) 'Rivers of Reading' task, which encouraged students to reflect on their schooling and personal reading histories by drawing a winding river to illustrate critical incidents in their lives related to reading, using the river image metaphor to represent what they think, feel and know, and to encourage them to talk about this. Cliff Hodges (2010:188) writes that this technique is commonly referred to as "rivers of experience", and that the collages charted the trajectories of the readers spatially, allowing for rich description. Although not figuratively winding, the teachers were encouraged to draw a timeline to represent the river of experience in their teaching lives and stimulate talk and reflection on this. The timeline was used to help them illustrate critical incidents in their lives related to the teaching of reading comprehension; for example their experiences during training, as an NQT and at different schools throughout their careers. Although the teachers were not provided with collage materials, they were given pens and paper, and encouraged to use emojis to represent their attitudes at different points in pictorial form.

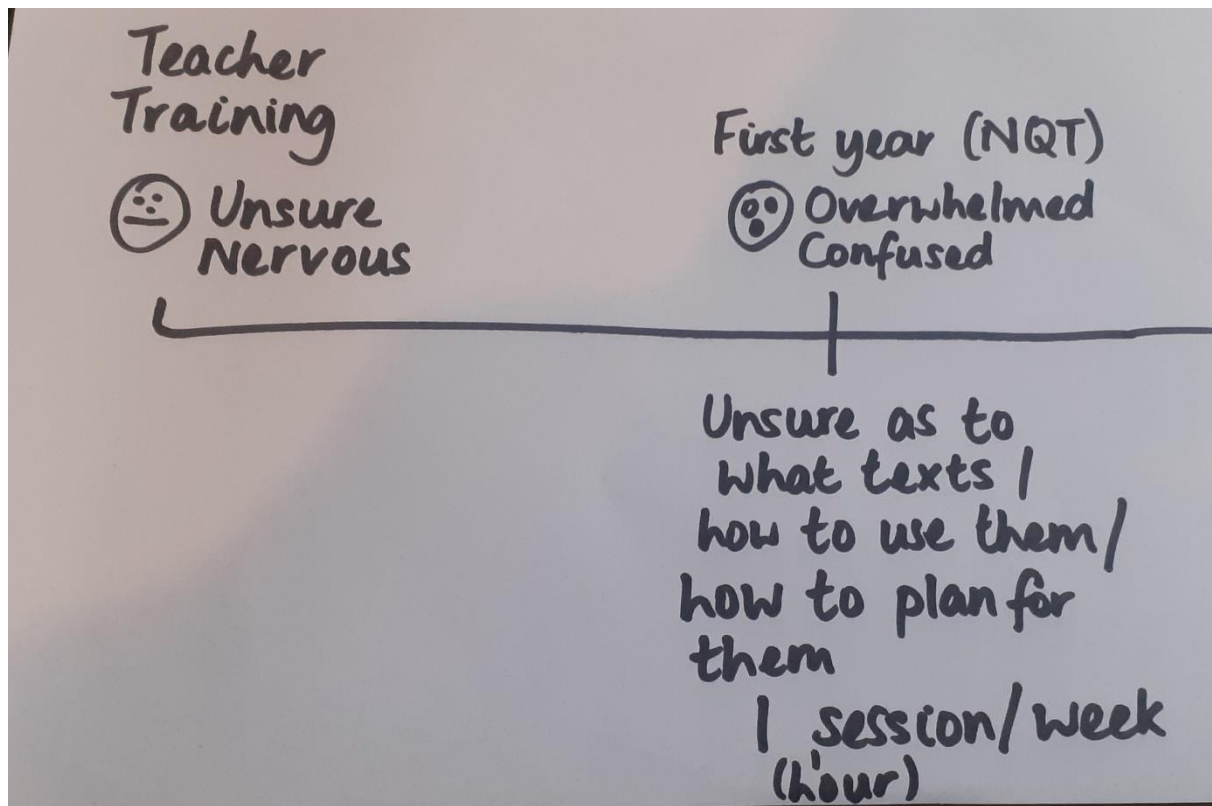


Figure 3.1 An Extract of an Interviewee's Timeline

### 3.3.2 Interviews

Independent semi-structured interviews were used to gain insight into teachers' histories and to generate rich description of their behaviours and attitudes. The interview schedule can be seen in Appendix A. The use of a semi-structured interview meant that in the situation of the interview I could adjust or extend questions as issues and ideas arose. I could try to ensure participants answer questions prepared by repetition, or pursuing a line of questioning, by referring to the answers given, and the visual prompts of the timeline and emojis. I asked short questions inviting participants to respond in detailed narratives of their experiences teaching reading comprehension. Telling stories is a normal part of everyday conversation and if interviewees are given room to speak, they will respond with narratives (Mishler, 1986, cited in Wilson, 2007:69). I aimed to give interviewees this room to speak, by asking them to draw a timeline and emoji images. This was explained to participants as a prompt to give them time to remember and reconstruct how they had been trained to teach, how CPD courses and school policy had dictated how they taught comprehension, and to describe their attitudes and behaviours at these different stages. I also aimed to give time for them to reflect on their own input and ethos concerning teaching comprehension at different points in their careers.

Merriam (1998:72), cited in Wilson (2007:31), suggests the use of interviews “when we cannot observe behaviour, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” and “when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate”. It is obviously not possible to observe feelings and behaviour of teachers in their past experiences of teaching comprehension. Therefore, this approach required the use of semi-structured interviews, and to hold the researcher apart from the participants, to make this distinction clear as I was a practising teacher of comprehension at the time of the first interviews.

Often further questioning is required in narrative interviewing, helping interviewees recall details and changes in thoughts and actions (Mischler 1995, cited in Patterson *et al*, 2012:134). Both interviewer and interviewee gain greater control to jointly construct narratives when there is less structure in the interview guide and innovations in narrative interviewing include combining observation and visual data such as personal timelines to organise rich narrative data (Patterson *et al*, 2012). Gramling and Carr (2004:207) discuss lifelines, a form of timeline which facilitates recollection and sequencing of interesting events in an individual’s life where significance and meaning attached to the events may be shown. The timelines are useful for placing a research issue in the context of other events. They cite Mandelbaum (1973), who claims life histories are used in sociology to enable understanding of the convergence of the life of an individual within a social structure. It was useful to contextualise events in teaching lives with policy and government reports and initiatives produced at the time. Boyd, Hill, Holmes, and Purnell (1998), cited in Patterson *et al* (2012:134) point out the risk of oversimplifying the stories of interviewees with this summarising and quantification of narrative data, and Patterson *et al* (2012) recommend the use of timelines with another data source such as narrative interviews.

Researchers conducting narrative interviews tend to let the interviewee control the direction, pace and content of the interview, and do not set out with a fixed agenda (Anderson and Kirkpatrick, 2016). Although the timeline section of the research tool gave the interviewee the freedom to decide the pace and content of their response to some extent, I did approach the interview with a certain fixed agenda and list of questions because I wanted answers to my research questions. I chose the interview questions with these in mind and was guided by my review of literature. The interview schedule (Appendix A) indicates which sections of the Literature Review helped inform each question asked.

“The ethics of the research interview are that, at minimum, the informant (participant) should not be changed for the worse.....the research interview is not designed to ‘help’ or ‘empower’ or ‘change’ the informant (participant) at all” (Wengraf, 2001:4 cited in Wilson, 2007).

However, Wellin (2007:87) cites Mishler (1986:119) who writes of potential empowerment of interviewees, concluding that ideally, people may be moved to the possibility of action through their narratives. Qualitative researchers need to be aware of their moral and ethical stance which can influence the co-construction process in the narrative inquiry approach (Hunter, 2010:45). I needed to develop an awareness of any agenda promoting the idea of peer support to interviewees, after feeling encouraged when two commented that explicitly teaching peer support skills would be a good idea.

Narrative interviews asking the how, why and what questions can assist researchers in a better understanding of people's behaviours and experiences, more effectively representing the context and integrity of people's lives than questionnaires or graphs (Anderson and Kirkpatrick, 2016). Holt (2010:113) defines narrative data as storied data, incorporating the 'whys', 'hows' and 'whats' of experience, produced through open-ended interviewing techniques, allowing the narrator to produce life stories which may have been restricted using more formulaic interview methods. Many researchers have argued narrative interviews produce more authentic and detailed accounts of people's experiences (Riessman, 1993). I initially believed the interview situation would facilitate my exposure to the authentic self of the interviewee. However, Kvale (1996) notes that this conception of interviewing that assumes interview talk allows researchers to access the authentic selves of the interviewees has been questioned by researchers taking postmodernist and constructionist perspectives to interviews. Silverman (2017:144) cites Atkinson and Silverman (1997:305) who, 20 years ago, noted this assumption that experiential data generated through narrative experience in open-ended interviews is elevated to authentic data. Silverman (2013:202) points out that a retrospective study may not facilitate the discovery of what happened in the past and is likely to present inaccurate information. He claims that this is because present-day interviewees do not necessarily lie, but will "view the past through the lens of the present". However, Roulston (2010:202) cites Mishler's (1986:112) claim that the "critical issue is not the determination of one singular and absolute "truth" but the assessment of the relative plausibility of an interpretation when compared with other specific and potentially alternative interpretations". Historical policy can be examined, but there is no other source to ask to reflect on and verbalise their own history of teaching comprehension, apart from the teacher.

A research project based on interviews is a possible context which makes shared features of the participants' lives prominent (Taylor and Littleton, 2006). The participants recognise this interview situation and bring certain expectations to this culturally rooted communication system. I felt this familiarity with a structure was important in the attempt to create a relaxed

environment to facilitate data collection, as opposed to the use of observation of comprehension learning and teaching in classrooms. From my own experience, many teachers may be uncomfortable with observations and feel the need to perform or the pressure to provide what they consider outstanding teaching in this situation. If the teachers in the sample had consented, this may have meant the teaching was different to everyday practice, or data would not have been gained because of a refusal to participate. Hiller and DiLuzio (2004), in van Enk (2009:1282) suggest that interviews appeal to interviewees because they are given the opportunity to share and talk about personal experiences in a project confirming the significance of the participant's experience. I wanted the research situation to be recognisable, particularly with the introduction of the timeline which may not have been expected by participants, and could have been considered a further intrusion into their personal histories.

A "romantic" conception of interviewing recognizes the place of the researcher in the study, where the interviewer is open about their interests in the topic of research, readily expressing this interest in the interview setting (Kvale, 1996:217). The researchers taking this romantic conception to interviewing emphasise their subjective positions in relation to the participants, demonstrating that they are reflexive researchers. Wilson (2007:27) cites Clandinin and Connelly (2000:62) who warned of the impossibility or self-deception of researchers staying silent or presenting themselves as idealised and moralising in narrative inquiry. An effective interviewer establishes trust and rapport to generate revealing data (Anderson and Kirkpatrick, 2016, Kvale, 1996). It is important to recognise differences and similarities between the researcher and participant to gain rapport in research interviews (Stephens, 2007, cited in Holt, 2010:116). Gramling and Carr (2004:208) cite Bramwell (1984) who advocates empathetic listening for a life review, and Frank (1984) who emphasises the necessity of collaboration and rapport between the person taking the life history and the interviewee. I emphasised a connection between myself and all the research participants, commenting on how long ago it was since I trained, again emphasising my own role as a teacher. Although I did not have the time to establish a deep rapport with interviewees, I did want to build up some relationship, believing that people will talk more freely if they are more relaxed with the other conversant. It felt more natural during the interview, to speak to the interviewee as a fellow practitioner, emphasising my subjectivity as another practising teacher of comprehension.

Talbot and Campbell (2014:418) suggest beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured and warn that the inference made between belief and practice is weak without analysing and gathering data between the stated belief and teacher practice. However, it was not possible to

gather data of the teachers in an environment where agency is not influenced by factors beyond their control where they can practice with complete autonomy. Collecting data based on observation of classroom practice where teachers are subject to school policy and possible dictates of senior leadership, subject leads and national policy did not seem appropriate as the schools may have their own value systems and influences and therefore teachers may be teaching content or in a way that does not align with their personal views of effective practice in teaching comprehension.

I did not want to observe practice and put teachers in a position where they may have felt practice was being judged. All interviewees knew me either in my role as university tutor where I observe students and make a judgement on their practice, or as a school mentor. Part of this role included observing and judging practice of colleagues as part of the school monitoring cycle. Experience in these roles has suggested to me that practitioners may seek to alter or change regular practice and routines when an observer is present. Even though I made clear my new role as a researcher when approaching potential interviewees and indicating this in the consent form, I was concerned observations would not indicate what the interviewee believed was good practice or pedagogy that they used consistently in the teaching of comprehension. I wanted to avoid any situation which may have facilitated a more evaluative stance, for example through observation, because the purpose of the study was not to evaluate teaching.

Research participants may offer what they believe is 'the preferred social response' (Kirk and Miller, 1986, cited in Krefting, 2007:218) and a tendency of interviewees to do this may have threatened the credibility of my study. Krefting (2007) suggests reframing questions and the use of hypothetical situations to help obtain more subjective and potentially authentic responses. Therefore, a more autonomous and unrestricted situation was proposed to the interviewees. Pantic (2015:768) claims teachers' agentic behaviour can be impeded by resistance of those in privileged positions, the feeling of despair that change is possible, and lack of empathy or relationships with those who are marginalized or excluded. The interviewees were questioned as to how they would have comprehension taught in their school if they were a headteacher. Although certain curriculum and assessment restraints still remain for headteachers, this was to suggest a teaching environment where they had the potential for more autonomy and choice in their instruction.

The question was an attempt to facilitate a situation where the influences on these teachers' beliefs could be inferred to some extent. Capturing a person's intentional actions and their interpersonal commitments is very difficult, but the commitments can mark the professional

agency of teachers (Edwards, 2015). The teachers were being asked to articulate what is important to them and what matters in their instruction in an attempt to elicit any personal influences on their teaching of comprehension. Edwards (2015) suggests the ability to do this is an important part of the role of a professional. The study aimed to explore to what extent the teachers interviewed could be viewed as competent agents (Pantic, 2015:762) in the teaching of comprehension by generating descriptions of their actions and intentions and potential to transform teaching in their schools.

In her study of mathematics teachers' instructional decisions, Hart Frost (2008: 226) used a narrative approach giving her participants opportunity to shape the dialogue's direction. In so doing she created a space where "the teacher can express her own sense of agency within the constraints of various influences." The timelines created a space which enabled teachers to indicate attitudes and feelings towards teaching of comprehension. I could then encourage teachers to expand on their feelings of satisfaction, unhappiness or agency within their teaching at these points with prompts during the interview.

Developing teachers' capacity to articulate and transfer their practical knowledge, and how they use it to justify their practices, will help make this knowledge useful for individual and collective agency (Fros, 2012, cited in Pantic, 2015:772). Archer (2000, cited in Pantic, 2015:772), claims an actor's powers of reflexive monitoring of themselves and "society enable them to make commitments and re-commitments". The interview questions intended to ask teachers as social actors to step away from their situation, make sense of it in their explanations of practice and transfer some of their practical knowledge of comprehension teaching, as well as their beliefs, to the interviewer.

### **3.4 Procedure**

#### 3.4.1 Pilot Interviews and Interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted with two participants from a different school. Kvale (1996:202) discusses whether the interviewee and interviewer understand one another's meanings, and whether "quality" data is then generated through this interaction. The pilot interviews were an attempt to measure how well the interview data informed the research questions. Methods should be viewed as being constructed for a purpose, rather than selected for their usefulness (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). I constructed the idea of using timelines as I needed a particular support and prompt for interviewees to expand on their recollections of past histories and experiences. Roulston (2010:201) cites Briggs' (1986) phases for interview

research which are methodologically rigorous, where firstly researchers should conduct preliminary field work to understand the community's linguistic and cultural norms, so they are able to approach participants with questions they understand. The pilot interviewees suggested the use of 'warm up' questions would encourage them to expand on answers with more detailed narration of behaviours and remembrances. These were then included before the interviewee was asked to draw a timeline of their experiences and behaviours. The questions asked participants how they were taught as a child, and how they teach comprehension now.

The initial interviews were conducted on seven school sites in non-teaching time. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis at the interviewee's place of work to encourage the interviewee to feel at ease and expand on their answers. The timeline was introduced to prompt participants to talk freely about their experiences of teaching comprehension, aimed to induce narrative (Wengraf, 2001). Participants were shown an example I had started, to give an idea of the detail needed. Participants drew the timeline and talked me through the history. This was without interruption unless clarification on themes raised was sought by the interviewer. The interviews were guided by the following questions: 1) How were you taught to teach comprehension on your degree or post-graduate course? How did you feel about this? 2) How have you been advised to teach comprehension in your professional training, school policy, national policy over the years? How did you feel about this? 3) What are your perceptions of the most effective methods of teaching comprehension? After the pilot interviews had been transcribed, the interviewees were asked for feedback on the interview and its intended aims outlined in the consent form. The questions and prompts were then revised for the interview schedule (Appendix A). At times, during the interviews I summarised or restated information and questions to verify the accuracy of what I had understood, as a form of member checking (Cresswell, 2007). This continued when, after reading through the interview transcripts certain recounts or answers to questions required further probing or clarification for interviewees Kerry and Kitty. When this happened, the interviewees were contacted via e-mail or in school to develop and check on certain ideas they had raised.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The overarching research question which drove the analysis was 'How are influences shaping the thinking and practice of KS2 teachers of comprehension?' The analysis sought to identify these influences, which was strongest and explore why teachers do what they do when



teaching. The analysis aimed to discover the answer to the final research question, 'To what extent do teachers perceive they have agency in comprehension teaching?'

The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994:10) "three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification." Data reduction occurred as I listened to the recordings and transcribed the interviews word by word. I had made a note of non-verbal communication during the interviews which Denscombe (2017) recommends to help later interpretation of the interview talk. The transcripts can be found in Appendix D.

Thematic analysis provides procedures for generating themes and codes systematically from qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2017). They claim (2017:279) it seeks to understand what participants think and do, identifying patterns in the data in relation to their experience, perspectives and practices. The study wanted to understand the influences on teachers of comprehension and how these affect what they think and do, identifying patterns across the different teachers. Eckerdal (2013) cites Mishler (1986a:47) who defined transcription as an interpretation and representation of the conversation, and so a transformation. The conversations are represented in the analysis with quotes to illustrate the interpretation of the influences. Codes were used as building blocks for themes or larger patterns of meaning explored. These provided a framework to organise and report my deductive analysis and interpretations (Braun and Clarke, 2017).

The "constant comparative" method (Thomas, 2013: 235) was utilised as I read through each written transcript. Units of text were coded according to the research questions, and the theoretical model (Figure 2.1). Categories developed in interaction with the data as it was organised and sorted through data reduction (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I outline the steps taken and the matrices created in the phases during the process of data analysis below.

### 3.5.1 Phase 1 Analysis – Individual Coding

During and after transcribing I broadly analysed and coded the interview data one teacher at a time. I systematically selected relevant key sentences from each transcript for categories taken from the interview questions informed by the Theoretical Model (Figure 2.1) and from the Literature Review. Here I was considering how to partition the data, laying it out to see "what's there" (Miles and Huberman, 1994:240). This first stage of data display allowed me to draw initial conclusions and take action based on understanding (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Common themes and categories emerged from this process of coding. Codes could be grouped according to the three different categories of influence suggested in section 1.2,

personal, practical and professional influences. The categories and teachers' statements within them were colour-coded. An extract from one of the colour-coded and re-ordered interviews can be seen in Appendix E. Further themes were then given a sub-category code, for example, personal influences included beliefs and experiences as a child, practical influences of the school, Academy and Local Authority expectations and professional influences included policy and research. As patterns become evident, themes other than those within the model were identified and could be grouped within these three categories.

Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this process as clustering; I used these themes as categories for a partially ordered descriptive matrix, iteratively sorting events, experiences and beliefs into them. The data were recorded as direct quotes from the teachers' interviews, and I made further notes and questions in the margins as I drew initial conclusions and to prompt further analysis. As codes were grouped into categories, I sought to interview an increasing number of teachers from different schools, focusing questions on the categories that had emerged from analysis, and comparing responses with previous participants. During subsequent readings of the interviews, I noted themes, ideas and points in the margins. From the process of analysing each interview and writing analytical notes, links were observed between the different influences on individual teachers. Themes were mapped to show the interconnections between them, and to explain how ideas were related to one another (Thomas, 2013). A partially ordered descriptive matrix (Table 3.2) outlines the themes and categories assigned through the data reduction process of the interview transcripts.

Area of Influence	Influence	What does it influence?
Professional	Research        Policy	Language Comprehension/Vocabulary  Discussion/Groupings  Skills and Strategies  Role of Teacher/Questioning  Lack of influence? – apart from guidance for test developers  Y6 SATs – final destination?  Impacts on agency?
Practical	School/LA	Own children's needs  School's assessment driving teaching (how to answer question/how to access test)  School policy/ethos (including class organisation)  Impacts on agency?

Table 3.2 Descriptive Matrix of Themes and Categories

### 3.5.2 Phase 2 Analysis- Summary Tables

These personal, practical and professional themes however felt too constricting and there was cross-over between the three categories. The reduction of data did suggest there were contexts of influence which were very similar to these categories. These were personal, school and national contexts. I found that personal, school and national contexts framed and influenced teachers' thinking about effective practice in teaching comprehension. The personal context included the influences from home life and the teachers' own education. The school context included demographics and the needs of the school's own children, school policy and expectations of the Academy or local authority. The national context included policy and assessments.

After conducting the later six interviews, I then analysed each interviewees' answers again on a case by case basis in small summary tables to build up a pen portrait of each of the 14 teachers. This was in order to understand the teachers as holistic beings and capture how their influences may have developed over time, in different settings and with their varying years of experience. Different fonts were used to indicate the different lengths of experience for the different teachers. For example, **Bahnschrift Light Condensed font was used for teachers with 1-2 years of experience** and Calibri (Body) was used for teachers with 19+ years of experience. Similarities and differences among the participants were explored, including whether there was any similarity in the answers from teachers of a similar length of experience. This was to help to investigate whether the social context of the education system had an impact on teachers' thinking and practice during different points in their careers. A matrix for each individual (Appendix H) was used to display the influence and its context, how the teacher views comprehension, how the teacher teaches it and how the teacher feels about this teaching. Table 3.3 below shows the matrix for Kate, a teacher with 7 years of experience, from School D.

Influence Personal/School/ National context	How she sees Reading Comprehension	How she teaches it	How she feels about it
Discussion for understanding at own primary	Discussion is very important; children get exposure to language and need this for those who cannot record ideas	Uses pictures/video prompts for language development  Teaches reading across the curriculum	More could be done in school to develop peer support, in her mixed attainment class organisation  High attainers can dominate
Speaking to other schools  What has worked for them	I can't show what's in my head, it is different to teaching writing or a maths skill	Focus on skill	Do same as now, hated carousel, loves having book each but wants time to hear individuals
Social Media  Reaction to SATs results  Ofsted visit	Beyond question/answer even though you want them to do this for SATs	RIC questions – these are ones SATs test for, uses same text for all in lessons as all are tested on same text	After SATs have freedom to experiment

Table 1.3 Small Summary Matrix for Kate

### 3.5.3 Phase 3 Analysis – Cross Case Patterns

After reducing the data in this form what emerged were cross case patterns. Significant statements from the data revealed a pattern of five areas of teaching that seemed to be important or valued by the teachers when they discussed their pedagogy. These areas were discussion, language comprehension, teaching skills, teaching how to answer written questions and enjoyment in learning. These were then used as a starting point for the matrix (Table 3.4) which involves analysing each data reduction from the small summary matrices and sorting the data into section headings for each of the five areas of teaching. These headings indicated what the teachers said that showed they valued this area, how they taught this area and what were the influences on their teaching of this area. These influences were split into the sub-categories of national, school and personal contexts. In order to generate explanations and draw conclusions as to the influences impacting on what and how the teachers taught, the data was displayed into this more well-ordered matrix (Table 3.4) (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The categories were colour-coded and ordered with the strongest influences implied by intensity of feelings and more frequent references appearing first. Table 3.4 below shows an example of a well-ordered matrix with data for Kitty, a teacher with 20 years of experience from School A, and Kerry, a teacher with 6 years of experience from School F.

What has influenced teaching of language comprehension?		Personal/School/National Contexts
What I <b>say</b> that shows importance of lang comp in my comprehension classroom	What I <b>do</b> that shows importance of lang comp in my comprehension classroom	What I say that indicates Influences
<p>Kitty – I never dumb down language ever ...children read it for the first time in a book and don't know what it means cause people aren't using it in spoken language.</p> <p>Kitty - Guided reading sessions where teach comp according to level of child level of book they levelled at but doing that <b>never</b> exposing them to the higher level lang or material really appropriate for age.</p> <p>Kitty - First year at secondary comp something I struggled with, particularly vocabulary. came from a background where my parents didn't really use extensive vocabulary</p>	<p>(picture/video prompts): it (whole class teaching) began with pictures. we'd ask questions what they thought was happening ...they'd have texts to read and they'd be creating a picture.</p>	<p>1. Personal-home Found it so hard as a child to read, because so many words I didn't know, look back in school, chdn who I would have classed as being really smart were always ones who would have read and who had parents who spoke 'posh' ...better acquisition of English than I did</p> <p>1. Personal-own primary/secondary ...Y7 teacher, spend time after school explaining to me what vocabulary meant, ...vocab became key for my teaching as a result of that Biggest influence is those teachers that I remember that went above and beyond to make sure that I could achieve because my parents couldn't support me</p>
<p>Kerry – lang comp needs come first before any comp, basic instructions, push reading across curri, inference of pics, Art Work, moving away from learn comp in Eng, use pics, songs, vids, poems, skills we're doing without me say we're learning inference, start doing it naturally, my dream goal</p>	<p>highlight words don't know meaning of ...code words 'Word Aware', CPA approach teaching vocab. assign picture...short definition assign action next lesson get dictionaries find short definition for words haven't looked at</p>	<p>2. School- Experience as a teacher: lang. comp, children's experiences, children don't know words, context of words Experience as a teacher – lang. comp. I think that is key because to be able to apply it to a text, child in my class hasn't moved book band since Y3, doesn't always understand basic language instructions, I'll say, 'Can you get me the red book?' He'll say, 'Red book?'</p>

Table 3.4 Example of a Well-ordered Matrix

### 3.5.4 Phase 4 Analysis – Pen Portraits of Happiness with Teaching

Some conflict emerged between the 'teaching how to answer questions' and 'enjoyment in reading' areas. This led into the investigation of whether the teachers were happy or unhappy with their teaching and why. Individual matrices were constructed for each teacher to explore what they taught for each area of comprehension and how they felt about their pedagogy. Feelings of happiness with their teaching or resentment for approaches that were imposed

were interpreted using quotes from the interviews. These pen portraits for each teacher examined what they said that described how they felt about an area, how they taught this area and what they said that indicated the influence on each area. An extract from Kerry’s pen portrait matrix can be seen in Table 3.5 below. Kerry is a teacher with 6 years of experience from School F.

What and how they feel about it (Influences on teaching r.c. generally, happiness with teaching? Agency?)	How they teach it	Influences – aware/unaware/not acknowledge?
<p>Enjoyment (cosy experience): after lunch we’ll have Everyone Reading In Class .... We used to read a banded book when they’d come in and I can remember seeing this boy, and I was like, ‘Are you reading that?’ ‘Yeah, yeah’. And I’m like ‘It’s upside down!’ We needed to change it because they weren’t enjoying it. They had the option to read that but actually the pleasure of reading was something we wanted to encompass again ....</p>	<p>... so read what’s in the book corner, sit in your book corner, some children sit under the table and read and that’s fine and that’s cosy, where do you like reading?</p>	<p>4.Experience at own primary school: I just remember there being a love of reading across the school ... we had a corridor top to bottom with books, just endless amounts of books ... in between each classroom ...there was a little sort of cosy area with little shelves and things with books on the sides and little cushions where you could go and read.</p>

Table 3.5 Extract from Matrix Exploring Agency of Kerry

Having deconstructed the data thematically, I then reconstructed it to explore the influences on individuals for each case.

### 3.5.5 Phase 5 Analysis – Comparison of Data with Policies and Ofsted Reports

The final round of data analysis involved returning to the interview transcripts to compare the reduced data with the interview data and relevant theory and research discussed in the Literature Review. This was also to ascertain priorities they did not have which were highlighted in the research and literature. Comparisons were made with school reading policies and recent Ofsted reports for each of the schools mentioning the teaching of reading (Appendix G). This comparison helped test meanings emerging from the data “for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their “confirmability” – that is their validity” (Miles and Huberman, 1994:11). Conclusions were made to construct a narrative explaining why teachers do what they do in their comprehension teaching, considering the social context of the education system in which they have gained experiences.

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the methodological decisions and plan of action taken for this study. The methods for the research design were justified. Ethical issues, participant choice and researcher bias were examined. The stages and order of data analysis were clearly outlined. In Chapter 4 I will present the analysis and findings using headings generated from the matrices used in Phases 2, 3 and 4. In Chapter 5 I consider the strength and limitations of the research design.



## Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents and forms a discussion of the findings from the 14 semi-structured interviews. The findings have been broken down in order to answer the three research questions. For the first question, “How are influences shaping the thinking and practice of KS2 teachers of comprehension?”, influences were found to be shaping teachers’ practice in five main areas. The data is discussed in relation to these areas. These areas are *using discussion, teaching language comprehension, teaching comprehension skills, teaching children to answer written questions* and *encouraging enjoyment of reading*. The influences appear in three contexts. The personal context includes influences of teachers’ childhood homes and their primary education. The school context includes the influences of experiences as teachers, training and school policy. The national context includes the influences of SATs, assessment questions, year group expectations and social media. During the analysis influences were perceived through participants’ description of current and past practice as well as through direct answers to questions regarding influence.

The data is examined in response to the research sub-questions “What are the strongest influences?” and “Why?” The strength of influence was indicated by the number of teachers suggesting this influence, and by force of feeling expressed by certain interviewees concerning an influence. The findings are supported by quotations from the interviewees. Comparisons are made with school reading policies (Appendix F) to examine if individual thinking or practice align and therefore may be affected by school policy dictates.

Comparisons are made with the school’s latest Ofsted reports where the teaching of reading was mentioned, providing a further source for triangulation of data. Depending on the date of the report, they may confirm, to a limited extent, what does happen in some comprehension classrooms.

Influences on thinking and practice that interviewees revealed are compared with the theoretical model in the Literature Review (Figure 2.1) which proposes the skills, knowledge and interactions needed according to the research and socioculturalism. This comparison was to explore how similar to the aims of the theoretical ideal the teachers’ practices are. The model proposes four aims for reading comprehension; to develop language comprehension, enjoyment of reading, cognitive reading strategies and metacognition. What teachers do not say concerning their comprehension teaching is considered, that is whether there are gaps in their training, understanding or practice that the theoretical model promotes. A narrative is constructed to help explain why teachers do what they do. The narrative only considers the

individuals here but could suggest a wider picture of comprehension teaching in classrooms in England.

Tensions emerged, particularly between two areas of practice – teaching children to answer written questions and encouraging enjoyment of reading. These tensions are explored and lead into a section discussing teacher agency, and the happiness teachers feel with their comprehension teaching.

Short summaries of the schools and information from school policies where the participants taught are provided below to give context to the discussion of findings.

#### School A Teachers Matthew, Kitty, Rachel and Jim

School A is a large three-form entry junior (7-11) school and part of a Multi Academy Trust. It was rated ‘good’ by Ofsted in June 2019. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average, the proportion of children with SEND is average and the proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is well above average (Ofsted, 2019).

The school teaches comprehension in daily lessons using the VIPERS (Literacy Shed, 2020) approach. The school website states that the school reads in groups to develop reading skills and spend time talking about books to improve comprehension skills. It lists the comprehension skills being developed as prediction, finding the main idea, sequencing, summarising, point of view and purpose, finding information, is it a fact or opinion, finding similarities and differences, understanding words, inferring, considering cause and effect and concluding.

#### School B Teachers Lucy and Jo

School B is a smaller than average one form entry primary school. It was rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in April 2013. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average, and the number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of children who speak English as an additional language is well-below the national average (Ofsted, 2015).

The school teaches comprehension through daily guided reading sessions and in discrete English lessons. According to the Reading Policy, lessons are organised to allow children to discuss their ideas. Skills are developed through which children can give critical responses to moral questions and they will have the opportunity to understand and appreciate a range of texts from their own literacy heritage and texts from other cultures. The Reading Policy states that reading is a multi-sensory approach to getting at meaning, that competency is key to

independent learning, that it is crucial in developing self-confidence and motivation and so all staff should give this a high priority. The arrangements for assessment levels and who they are reported to are included in the policy.

#### School C Teachers Helen, Walter and Rae

School C is an average-sized one-form entry primary school, rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in 2015. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are well above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average (Ofsted, 2015).

The school teach comprehension through guided reading sessions and bi-weekly specific comprehension lessons. The English Policy highlights the importance of effective communication and how children in the school develop skills of participating effectively in group discussions, listening and responding to literature and giving and receiving instructions. It emphasises the school’s focus on vocabulary teaching with its own section in the policy, stating that it needs to be active and systematic. The policy states that pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure through reading partners, quiet reading time and listening to an adult read.

#### School D Teacher Kate

School D is an average-sized one-form entry primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher, at around 60%, than the national average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is average. Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium in this school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average (Ofsted 2014).

The school teaches comprehension through whole class reading lessons. The Teaching and Learning policy states reading is taught through a range of strategies including Reading for Pleasure, class texts, access to the school library and reading homework when they take home books from schemes and what they term as ‘real books’ by popular authors. The policy claims the school enjoys celebrating themed days to promote a love of reading and invites authors in to share their stories.

#### School E Teachers Natasha and Carl

School E is an average-sized primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 and is part of a multi-academy company. Although pupils at the school come from 19 different ethnic groups, the majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an

additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average (Ofsted, 2019).

The school teaches comprehension through guided reading sessions using a carousel approach. The English Policy explains how teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, where children have opportunities to discuss texts in detail. The policy highlights the importance of language, and how pupils make the link between speaking and listening and reading and writing. It states that the teaching of English ensures all pupils become confident in the use of spoken and written language, that the school encourages all readers to read at home to support a lifelong love of reading and recognises the value of adults reading aloud to children to improve their use of language. The school policy also notes that book-banded 'real books' are used as well as reading scheme books.

#### School F Teacher Kerry

School F is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, with pupils of Asian heritage being the largest group. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The school provides specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs (Ofsted, 2014).

The school teaches comprehension in whole-class English lessons. The English Policy explains how they teach children to understand what they have read over a four-day approach or method, which helps children make connections, build awareness of authors and explore the use of vocabulary. According to the policy, the current subject focus is to develop the habit of reading widely and often for pleasure and for information, creating readers for life. It claims the school wants children to be confident, successful readers who take pleasure in reading. To achieve this they have created an environment where children feel comfortable when enjoying books and have created 'Biscuits and Books' groups where children and teachers talk spontaneously about favourite books in a reading community. They provide workshops and 'Fun Friday' sessions to support parents in helping children to read.

#### School G Teacher Simon

School G is an average-sized one-form entry primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. An above-average proportion, just under half of the pupils, is of minority ethnic heritage. Nearly a third speak English as an additional language, a well-above average proportion, with many Polish speakers. There is an above-

average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal time is above average (Ofsted, 2012).

The school teaches comprehension through guided reading sessions and the teachers can choose to teach discrete comprehension lessons. The Parent Handout for reading explains how years one to five study two books in detail each year and encourages parents to discuss the book with them at home. Tips are provided to support the children with reading which include reading to them often, helping the child understand the vocabulary, and developing their child's ability to predict, question, summarise and infer meaning. The aim of School G is clearly stated which is to promote a love of reading whilst teaching them the skills of phonics, decoding, fluency and comprehension. The school runs weekly minibus trips to the local library and has outdoor libraries on the front and back playgrounds. The handout explains how the school follows a programme of reciprocal reading, where children become 'book detectives', taking on roles, working as a team to understand the text, and learning to predict, ask questions, clarify meanings and summarise passages. It is explained how classes have paired up as 'reading buddies' to read the same text together and complete different activities based on their chosen books.

#### **4.1 Using discussion**

All 14 teachers utilised discussion in their comprehension pedagogy. Three different sub-categories emerged; talking about texts, how organisation of the class affects the quality of talking about texts and children supporting each other in talking about texts. The strongest influences on all three sub-categories of discussion were in the school context. As can be seen in the chart below teachers' experiences dominated the shaping of practice. School training had influenced four teachers' use of certain structures for discussion.

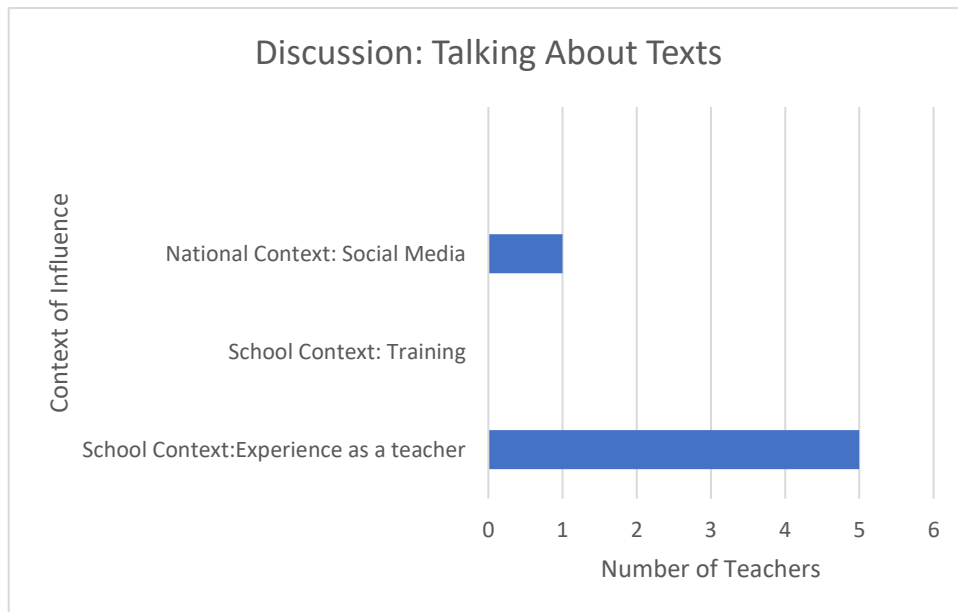


Figure 4.1 Discussion: Talking About Texts - Number of Teachers Influenced by Different Contexts

#### 4.1.1 Talking About Texts

Eight teachers indicated how experiences in the classroom had influenced the value they placed on talking about texts. Helen, Lucy, Kate and Kerry recalled how discussion had exposed children and teachers to new concepts. Helen and Kerry enthusiastically commented on the creativity of children when talking about texts; picking out ideas and coming up with questions the teacher would not have thought of; “Children give us their interpretations and actually some of them I’m like I didn’t even think of that interpretation, where did you get that idea from?!” (Kerry, Interview 1).

Kerry has also been influenced heavily by social media – a different influence in a national context but with a similar effect on her prioritisation of text discussion in practice. She explained different websites she had visited and how these promoted children talking about texts and offering their own interpretations. Thinking and practice of these teachers indicates they aim to develop language comprehension through quality interaction constructing joint understandings (Fisher, 2005), discussing a range of views (Truelove *et al*, 2014) and valuing different interpretations (Lemov *et al*, 2016). In their encouragement of creative, inquiring discussions, Kerry and Helen contrast dramatically with the linguistically dominating teacher of classroom discourse that Burns and Myhill (2004) suggest in their consideration of interaction in whole class teaching.

Although unacknowledged, school policy may have had an influence on Carl and Lucy’s focus on talk. Lucy’s school policy (School B, Appendix F) claims children take part in small

group reading sessions to broaden comprehension skills but also to provide opportunities for speaking and listening. Carl's school's Speaking and Listening policy (School E, Appendix F) exhorts children to discuss and interact during activities, and the Reading policy for children to share reading with others. The 2019 Ofsted report for his school confirms the policy dictates are enacted in class, stating that pupils are given opportunities to engage in thoughtful discussion.

Lucy and Kate have found this interactive discussion exposes children to increased understanding with word meanings. Lucy commented that lower attaining children in a group will be silent and she wants children to inspire and "feed off each other" through discussion (Lucy, Interview 1). In complete contrast to what she sees as stimulus, Carl's experiences mean he has found discussion can induce passivity in some groups he feels need more practice writing their own answers rather than sitting around listening to others. However, he does feel talking about texts is useful for his middle attaining children who need to share ideas.

None of the teachers referenced training or theory concerning the social context view of learning and it is their experiences in the classroom that have driven their focus on discussion. Nevertheless, their thinking and practice conform to a view of teaching and learning derived from Vygotsky (1978), where the teacher attempts to develop a student's knowledge by directing the student's thinking via activity and questions, rather than trying to transmit knowledge directly (Orasanu, 1986).

#### 4.1.2 Organisation of Class Affects Quality of Talking About Texts and Learning

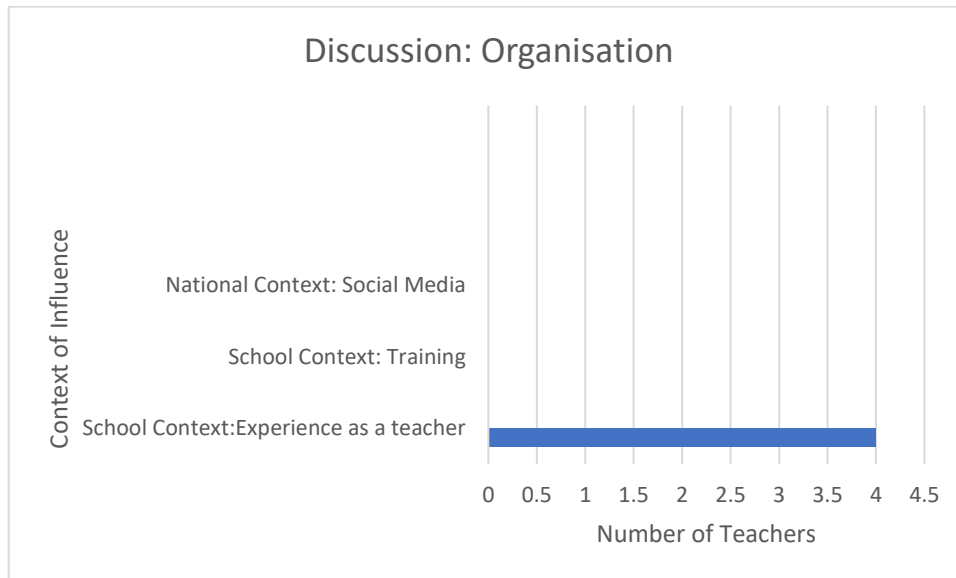


Figure 4.2 Discussion: Organisation of Class Affects Quality of Talking About Texts and Learning - Number of Teachers Influenced by Different Contexts

Six interviewees reflected very negatively on their experiences of a carousel style organisational structure. Kate suggested these approaches keep coming around, “I’m sure in 10/15 years we’ll be back doing carousels, I’ll make sure I’m not in the classroom then!” (Lucy, Interview 1). Kitty remarked on the strength of feeling children felt about the new organisational approach which had changed from carousel to whole class,

“...when you say it’s reading they’re like “Yeah!” ...whereas if you’d have asked me a couple of years ago they’d have been like “hmmmmn” because you’ve got to sit with a group”. (Kitty, Interview 1).

There was a sense that the carousel approach lacked focus and those children engaged in independent work interrupted the teacher so frequently the quality of learning was adversely affected. Helen and Kerry had to monitor noise level and therefore break off from their teaching. Carl uses the carousel approach and had been slightly influenced by observing a carousel reading lesson in another school, saying the thing he had taken from this was that the teacher declared no child “...was to interfere with her or disrupt them. When you’ve got that time with them, that time is precious to those children.” (Carl, Interview 1). His school policy proposes that children will have time to discuss texts in detail during guided reading, emphasising the importance of this valued reading session which needs concentration without disturbances. (School E, Appendix F).

Kitty referred to interruptions which had affected the quality of her teaching. Now, using a whole class approach, she feels like she is teaching them properly. Rae called the carousel



style “chaotic”. (Rae, Interview 1). Kerry claimed the children actually thought, “...when we’re with Miss we’ve got to read and afterwards we can do what we want, spellings and have a natter”. (Kerry, Interview 2). Jim felt this too, stating bluntly that he did not like the idea of working with only one group of six for 15/20 minutes “...while 24 in the class were having a doss”. (Jim, Interview 1). These views align with the suggestion of Baines *et al* (2003:10) that assigning independent work to pupils sat in groups may be detrimental to their learning as pupils can be drawn off-task easily.

#### 4.1.3 Children Supporting Each Other In Talking About Texts

The context of school was dominant in influencing this aspect of practice. It was teachers’ experiences in classrooms but also training provided by schools that impacted their use of children supporting each other in talk.

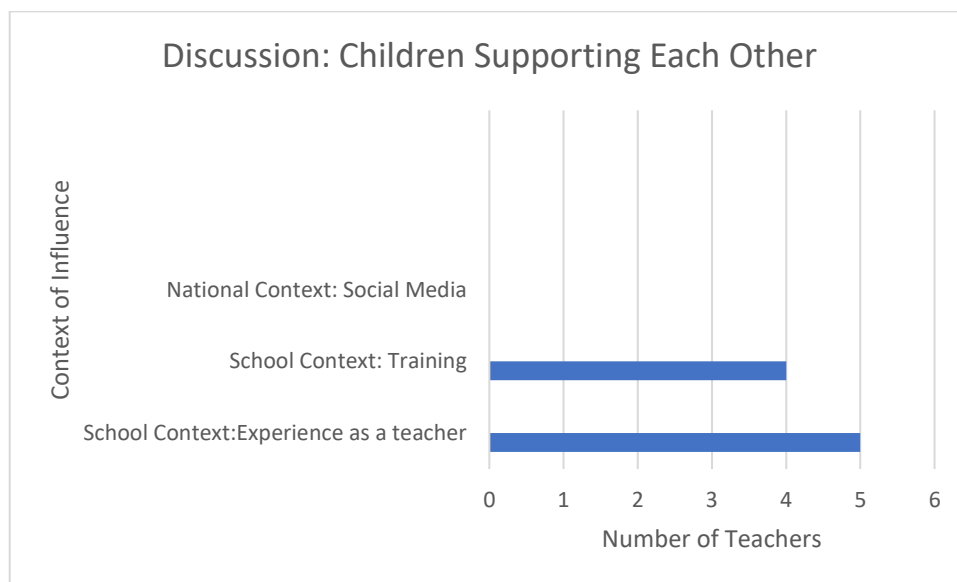


Figure 4.3 Discussion: Children Supporting Each Other in Talking About Texts - Number of Teachers Influenced in Different Contexts

All 14 of the teachers answered affirmatively as to whether they encouraged peer support, but to differing degrees. A conspicuous inference from the interviews was that personal beliefs concerning provision for different needs derived from classroom experience drove their encouragement of children to support each other in pairs when talking about texts. Matthew, Simon, Carl and Kate advocated knowing personalities well to be able to pair up children appropriately. All four felt children’s confidence should be nurtured to support one another effectively, particularly in quieter and low-attaining children. Kate implied text talk had made her aware of what needed to be done in current whole class practice. She was very conscious she needed to encourage all children to contribute their points when it was whole class

teaching because she had seen how higher attainers could dominate discussions. Their concern aligns with Van Keer (2004), Vaughn *et al* (2001) and Van den Branden's (2000) proposal that teachers need to actively monitor roles and participation of all students.

Carl pointed out that he has found that talk partnering more able children with others has benefits for all children, "...[it] lifts expectations. It works both ways, a non-academic child may give a different perspective on a question somebody very intelligent might not see." (Carl, Interview 1). Lucy emphasised how she values children supporting each other as she fondly recounted her experiences with pupils; "They ask politely, kindly [for help], because they care, they're working in a pair, they support each other". (Lucy, Interview 1). When talking about peer support in her class, Jo claimed, "It's about tolerance of each other and respect". (Jo, Interview 1). This recognition of the values of courtesy and turn-taking echo Topping *et al*'s (2011) claim that the social interaction engendered by peer tutoring is as important as the perceived academic gains and is noted by Truelove *et al* (2014) as a benefit of peer learning in reading comprehension.

With four of the teachers it was difficult to ascertain how their practice in this area had been influenced. Simon, Jo, Natasha and Rae discussed how they did facilitate children supporting each other when talking about texts. When prompted as to whether they taught peer support strategies to children, they all felt that peer support was something that happened naturally without needing instruction. Jo said, "I must but I don't notice." (Jo, Interview 1). Simon claimed, "It comes through modelling, something I'm oblivious to, I do without realising". (Simon, Interview 1). Although Simon suggests he is unaware he is doing this, he may be affected by the school's history of modelling communication skills and his school's parental handout. The school's 2012 Ofsted report praised communication skills as well as the emphasis on discussion skills. The handout informs the parents of a system of reading buddies from different classes.

The interview question gave Natasha and Rae an opportunity to reflect on their pedagogy. Rae commented, "I think maybe they just know how to but probably don't really" (Rae, Interview 1), and Natasha pondered, "Not really...I don't know how well they're doing that, when in a group by themselves, I'll have a think about that actually, it's a good question" (Natasha, Interview 1). A clear definition of peer support may have helped the interviewees in their answers as to whether they promoted this. Rae, one of the least experienced interviewees, was the only interviewee who asked me to clarify what was meant by peer support.

For four of the teachers it was clear school training had been a great influence on their use of children supporting each other in talking about texts. Kitty, Rachel and Jim described aspects

of Kagan training (Kagan, 2020) they utilised in comprehension in their school to promote peer support. According to their website (Kagan, 2020) this training aims to help teachers build teams of learners in classrooms to enhance student achievement and engagement through the development of social skills and communication skills strategies. The school's website confirms that the children, "...spend time talking about the books to improve our comprehension skills" (School X, 2019). Kitty uses the structure of Round Robin, which she feels encourages a group to listen to everyone's ideas and then make a collective decision on the correct answer. Jim feels the structures work, "...really well 'cause only one teacher in class and they can't be everywhere at once so it helps to have the highers supporting." (Jim, Interview 1).

Rachel's practice has been influenced by Kagan training but also by her experiences seeing results in lessons. She uses the structures and has been happily surprised by the impact on her children with SEND, "...thinking oh probably won't be able to do this one but actually ..they do really well. You can put a bit of a cap on them" (Rachel, Interview 1). She is pleased with initially more reticent children who now join in appropriately with talking about texts. Her comments resonate with Eun's (2016:125) claim that Vygotsky believed children with special needs should be exposed to the same curricular challenges as those without special needs.

These three teachers appear to agree with Nystrand (2006) who cites Vygotsky's (1978:158) proposal that cognitive growth is more likely when learners integrate knowledge through the process of explaining to others. All teachers from different schools and with a range of experience are promoting language comprehension and cognitive development through collaborative dialogue and peer support. However, none of the teachers acknowledge, or they may be unaware of, how tutoring peers can practise independent application strategies to acquire metacognitive monitoring (Van Keer, 2004). This metacognition is the fourth aim of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1). Two teachers from different schools, Simon and Jim, spoke positively about the roles and independence demonstrated by children in classrooms where they had experienced the 'Reciprocal Reading' (Palincsar and Brown, 1989) approach. Simon referred to the cognitive skills of summarising and questioning the participants may develop, but neither teacher proclaimed how the active monitoring of the reading process of another reader may facilitate the acquisition of self-monitoring skills (Van Keer and Verhaeghe, 2005).

Rachel notes how her children need to be trained to use the Kagan structures productively when talking to peers, "The first instinct if you say talk to your partner it will be 'bleugh bleugh bleugh'" (Rachel, Interview 1). Van Keer and Verhaeghe (2005) claim that tutor

training is necessary for effective peer tutoring, and Topping *et al* (2011) advocate structured tutoring programmes.

Kerry taught at a different school, but Kagan training had heavily influenced her teaching. She taught peer support strategies using Kagan structures stating, “Amazing, I love Kagan”. In her role as Reading Lead, she promoted in-school training to influence colleagues’ practice, sharing ideas for how children can support each other in talking about texts through a ‘Teaching and Learning spotlight night’ and by modelling lessons. Kerry’s position as Reading Lead had affected the influence she wielded in the school on the use of peer support. She encouraged staff to use different peer support strategies to encourage talk, “Because I’ve been in charge I’m like ‘guys break it up a little’... I’ll give ideas.” (Kerry, Interview 1).

There is an overwhelming influence of classroom experience on this area. This may possibly be due to the little training focussed on theory of why discussion should be utilised in pedagogy that is available. Those teachers who had experienced ‘Reciprocal Reading’ (Palincsar and Brown, 1989) and Kagan training (Kaganonline, 2020) did seem to offer reasons such as independence, cognitive skills and support to develop learning that discussion within these teaching structures can bring. Kerry had looked beyond her classroom experience and school training to social media and bloggers. However, the general lack of reference to learning theories by most of the teachers implies a lack of knowledge of theory and outside influence on pedagogy. There was little indication of rationales for promoting discussion from the 14 teachers, apart from those discussed above. Four teachers felt talking about texts exposed children to new concepts and better understanding of word meanings. Seven of the teachers may have recounted how organisation of the class affected the quality of work and discussion, but they did not propose why this discussion was so important. Therefore, it seems the strongest influence on discussion is teacher experience because the teachers have had to rely on learning about effective pedagogy in this way.

## **4.2 Language Comprehension**

The biggest influence on the greatest number of teachers for this area was again teachers’ classroom experiences. The impact of SATs, in the national context, shaped some teachers’ thinking and practice for teaching language comprehension. The personal context of home life and her own primary education had a major impact on one interviewee.

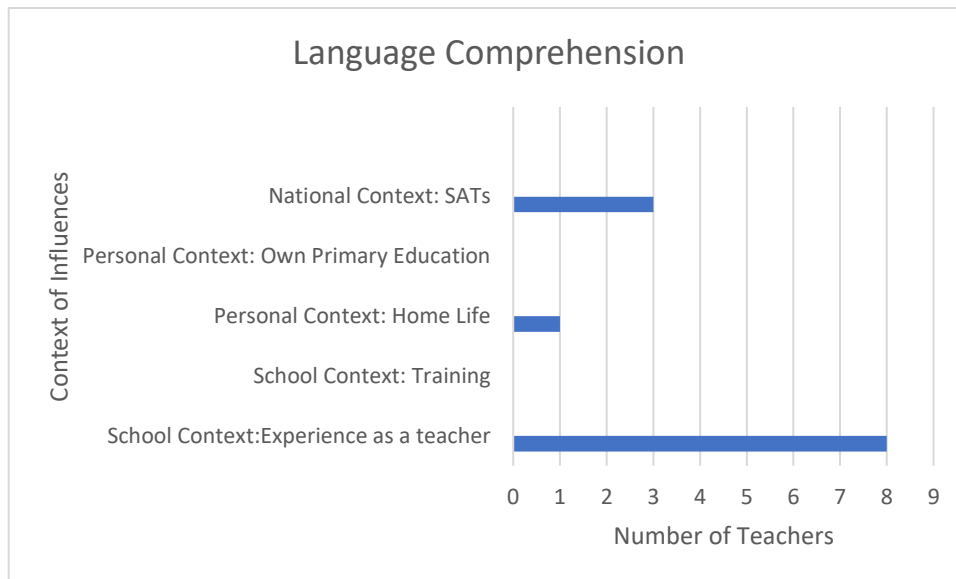


Figure 4.4 Language Comprehension - Number of Teachers Influenced by Different Contexts

Nine teachers recounted their experiences with children who struggled to understand language. They suggested three reasons for children’s difficulties: because the children did not know words, because the children had limited experiences and because they spoke English as an Additional Language (EAL). Kerry stated, “...language comprehension needs to come first before any other comprehension, the basic instructions” (Kerry, Interview 1). She illustrated this by explaining how ‘Ben’ has remained on the same book band for almost two years, because he does not understand simple instructions in spoken language. This challenge is highlighted by Quincey (2018); children without knowledge of words will struggle to understand verbal instructions. Kerry re-establishes the importance she gives language comprehension on the school website, opening the subject vision of reading with an outline of the National Curriculum’s (2013:3) aim to equip pupils “with a strong command of spoken and written language”. The website claims children are taught how to understand what they have read, by encouraging pupils to highlight ‘cold words’, which they find difficult to define (School F, 2019).

Five teachers described a range of practices to suggest they view comprehension as more than a discrete lesson, but as a concept to be developed holistically by promoting language development. These five teachers all had varying years of experience. Kerry advocates teaching reading across the curriculum, using artwork and videos to encourage inference, claiming this is her dream for her school’s future. Matthew discussed how he taught reading throughout the curriculum, using Talk For Writing (Corbett and Strong, 2011) and asking questions in topic lessons. His school website (School A, 2019) confirms this is school policy,

stating that classes will read in different lessons and for different purposes such as researching in history.

Kate claimed she linked reading skills to other areas of the curriculum, "...showing children that reading's not just done in a reading lesson, it's done in history and geography" (Kate, Interview 1). Kitty's practice had been impacted by her attendance at deaf awareness training that looked at comprehension through pictures. Helen and Simon use drama to develop language comprehension. Simon uses this for initial understanding and for children who struggle with their confidence. In his school's Ofsted report (School G, 2012), pupils were commended for using well-chosen vocabulary to articulate ideas. Although this report is not recent, his school's current Reading At Home (School G, Appendix F) advice encourages parents to help their children understand the vocabulary in books to use themselves.

The practice of these teachers aligns with Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory stating that through language, children can transform their behaviour and solve complex problems (Van Der Veer, 2007). The calibre of teacher and child interaction using language across the curriculum described by the teachers suggests their practice follows the first proposed aim of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1) - language comprehension.

In total seven teachers explicated how children often do not know word meanings. Matthew explained why he concentrated a lot of teaching time on vocabulary and tricky phrases such as 'jam-packed' and 'chock-full'. He referred to a child in his year five class who could read 90% of words in a text but, "...didn't know scooby about what the words meant" (Matthew, Interview 1). Kitty's value for language comprehension is apparent when she describes how her school practice includes an extra session on vocabulary, because colleagues have, "...recognised it's vocabulary that's let a lot of children down. [They don't understand a] lot of words we'd be expecting them to understand like cheerful for year three" (Kitty, Interview 1). Gross (2018) warns teachers against assuming children know the meaning of words they may view as simple.

Rachel and Natasha's comments on their experiences in classes with high proportions of children with EAL indicate this has influenced practice. They both focus on difficulties children have with language in teaching. Rachel feels children's understanding and use of vocabulary is a whole-school issue, "I think it's their families, vocabulary keeps coming up, it's not just in reading, in writing" (Rachel, Interview 1). Natasha explained her approach, "I've got a high percentage of EAL in this class, so it's a lot of are there any words you don't understand?... Looking at the language." (Natasha, Interview 1). The English policy, which Natasha as English Lead has revised, confirms her thinking in its rationale: that all pupils

‘...are taught to become confident and skilled in the use of spoken and written language.’

(School E, Appendix F).

Teachers’ recognition of the centrality of vocabulary work aligns with claims that reading and language acquisition are closely linked, that children are more likely to understand texts with improved language knowledge and richer vocabulary and the reciprocity and interdependence of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge (Quinn, Wagner and Petscher, 2015; Cain and Oakhill, 2018). The importance of teaching vocabulary has been recommended in research for at least four decades (Tierney and Cunningham, 1980; Just and Carpenter, 1992, Spörer *et al*, 2009) and the impact of the depth of vocabulary understanding on achievement for all has been highlighted in the more recent 2018 Oxford Language Report. Although teachers’ comments strongly suggest their practice is impacted by direct experiences with children, their thinking echoes this body of substantial research. It would therefore seem unlikely that the teachers have not been influenced by this, albeit unwittingly. Both Rachel and Kerry recalled looking at social media concerning teaching reading. Therefore, although they do not vocalise explicit links, this may have been an influence on their promotion of vocabulary development.

Three teachers explained how their careers in the classroom had demonstrated the importance of children’s own experiences in developing vocabulary, background knowledge and language comprehension. Echoing the idea of teachers’ incorrect assumptions concerning word understanding above, Rae recalled how she was looking at the word ‘winch’ with her class;

“...the children looked at me as if to say, “What’s a winch?” I’ve never heard that word before... sometimes take for granted children know what these things are, that they’ve had these experiences, but they often haven’t”. (Rae, Interview 1).

This has influenced her practice in that she feels her class need to talk about different experiences as she supports the build-up of vocabulary. Helen described how using children’s experiences helps them to understand exactly what is going on in a text. She begins her ‘inference circle’ lessons using a hook such as a video. In a poetry lesson Helen used the stimulus of a shark picture, “...one of children... had been in a cage with the sharks, so the discussion and the speech and language was brilliant” (Helen, Interview 1). Here words that already have meaning for the mature members of a cultural group, come to have meaning for younger members through social interaction in the classroom (Diaz *et al* in Moll, 1990:157). This drawing on background knowledge for comprehension is promoted in the English Programmes of Study for KS2 (DfE, 2013). Helen’s focus on word meaning may be swayed

by her school policy which emphasises how essential the teaching of English language is (School C, Appendix F). The policy has a section on vocabulary, claiming this development needs to be progressive through in-depth word-based lessons.

Kitty's practice and what she describes as her philosophy, is taking children on as many trips as possible to give them life experiences. She is heavily influenced by experiences working as a teacher, stating, "We bring a lot of our world into books, if you have not got much world experience, it is really hard to bring it in and to comprehend" (Kitty, Interview 2). A child she has taught struggled on a test paper but has good language comprehension due to the talk and experiences provided in his home life,

"...he's got a lot of life experiences of things ... in terms of his comprehension and understanding he's got a lot of empathy, so whenever you talk about a character's feelings he always gives really good answers to those type of questions and he does have really good understanding of vocabulary". (Kitty, Interview 2)

Helen also commented on how children do not know words that you would assume they would and makes references to home language experiences. It is really important for her that unfamiliar words are explored because, "Children from an area like this, who don't have elaborate speech at home, it's more closed, they don't have experience of it" (Helen, Interview 1). Her school's Ofsted report (School C, 2014) praised the questioning by additional adults, as very helpful for pupils who are EAL as it extended their use of vocabulary.

Kitty was adamant in her statement, "I never dumb down language ever" (Kitty, Interview 1). Reedy (2018) recommends adults use extensive vocabulary to develop a language rich environment. Kitty's own experiences at home have a huge influence on her teaching of language comprehension. She recounted how she had found it very hard to read as a child because she did not know many words. As a teacher she sees how children now read a word for the first time in a book and do not know the meaning because they have not heard it used in spoken language. Kitty noted certain reading approaches where comprehension is taught to groups of the same attainment levels mean they are never exposed to higher level language.

As a child Kitty considered certain children 'smart' and feels they, "...were always ones that would have read and who had parents who spoke 'posh' ... they had a better acquisition of English than I did." (Kitty, Interview 1) Kitty comments on the fact that her parents did not use extensive vocabulary and could not support her, and the biggest influence on her own teaching is the teachers who went above and beyond to make sure she could achieve. She



recalls her year seven teacher spending time after school teaching her different vocabulary and consequently vocabulary has been key for her teaching. The home environment is cited as an important factor impacting what is viewed as a word gap between different children (OUP, 2018). Fortunately, Kitty has escaped the disadvantage experienced by those pre-school children who did not experience parent-child interactions to develop a solid grasp of language, but for others the OUP (2018) states this word gap will widen if not dealt with in the early years of education.

Van der Veer (2007) claims Vygotsky developed the concept of the child acquiring the culture of the parents and suggested culturally deprived children benefit from schooling. Kitty's beliefs are similar to those found in Cremin *et al's* (2012) social practice approach to literacy, which asserts the importance of the beliefs and attitudes that parents and teachers hold about literacy practices. It shuns the understanding of literacy as a set of decontextualized skills, as Kitty's approach to reading comprehension appears to adopt a more holistic approach of language understanding rather than discretely taught lesson skills.

Although only referred to by three teachers, the national context of SATs was an influence that shaped teaching practice in language comprehension. Natasha and Helen highlighted difficulties with children not knowing words in the SATs. Natasha noted the language of these tests made it hard for children who had not come across certain words before, and Helen pointed out "...the big thing at the moment with the SATs is the [children's] lack of vocabulary" (Helen, Interview 1) and that children were stumbling on vocabulary questions. Jim's awareness of varied topics that may come up in SATs mean he is very happy for his class to have detailed discussions to develop background knowledge;

"We go off on a bit of a tangent talking about French restaurants and French food so they're getting, I hope, that wider education alongside the reading ... I know in this year's SATs they did have questions on bees and time and stuff and it's not necessarily topics they will touch on so I think the more we can discuss in lessons the better" (Jim, Interview 1).

Language comprehension is developed by these teachers through high quality social interaction, discussion of a wide range of topics to develop background knowledge and the specific teaching of vocabulary. The approach may encourage a child to begin to self-regulate, working out word meanings for themselves. The child may be internalising these processes after being taught and practising them in the social situation of the classroom. Verenikina (2004:10) explains Vygotsky's (1962) assertion that internalisation is the process whereby higher mental functions go through an initially external social stage before becoming an internal function.

Classroom experience of children’s difficulties with vocabulary and lack of background knowledge around text content is the main influence here. Teachers discuss word knowledge connecting this with restricted exposure to life experiences and rich language at home, for their children and in the case of Kitty, for themselves. It is therefore not surprising that the influence of SATs is apparent, as Willingham (2006) highlights the relatedness of background general knowledge and success in comprehension.

**4.3 Teaching Skills**

All teachers promoted the idea that there exists a specific set of reading skills that they teach, echoing Smith (1965), cited in Dole *et al* (1991: 240), who explains reading as a skill broken down into sub-skills that can be taught to mastery. The biggest single influence on this area of pedagogy was SATs, with five of the teachers indicating how this affected their practice. Influences in the context of school were also substantial. These influences were teachers’ experiences in the classroom, influences from other schools and school training and school policy. The personal context of home life and their own primary education had a major impact on two of the teachers.

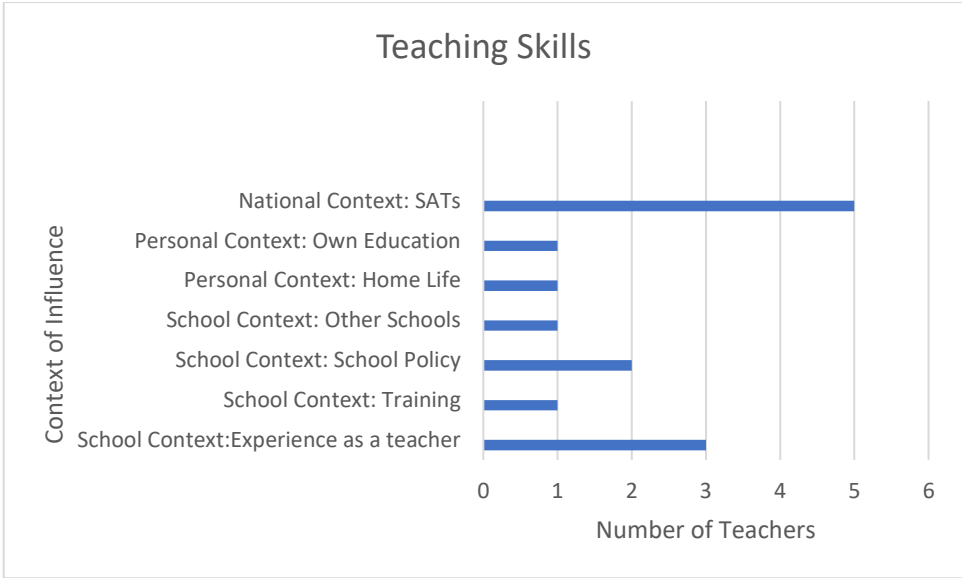


Figure 4.5 Teaching Skills - Number of Teachers Influenced by Different Skills

**4.3.1 SATs**

Jim, Kate and Natasha were very open in declaring how SATs assessment helped drive practice. Jim, a Year 5 teacher, remarked on how his class were going to practise a Year six SATS paper this year, so he would mainly concentrate on teaching the skills tested for in the paper. Kate’s lessons start with retrieval, inference or author’s choice type questions,

“...because those are the questions ...the skills that are most often tested for.” (Kate, Interview 1). SATs drives Natasha’s practice in teaching certain skills because they are, “...the skills they’re going to be tested on eventually, so I home in on those”. SATs drive her use of books in her whole class sessions. Natasha stated she uses the “...same text for all of them because all in the end use the same text” (Natasha, Interview 1); the end being the SATs test. Her comments about all children taking the same KS2 test echo Christodolou’s (2015) proposal that in exams or tests, all pupils are treated the same and therefore no child gets special treatment. When asked about the approaches she would employ if she were headteacher, she pragmatically answered that it would depend on children and results. Her ideal teaching situation would again be led by SATs.

Lucy enthusiastically described the realisation when she discovered the significance of SATs results for her teaching, “...when I realised in year six wow this is important” (Lucy, Interview 1). This came after her Year six class had sat their first challenging SATs paper; she felt being in Year six helped her understand where the children have to get to. She found a way to help children access the papers was through breaking it down into key skills. Although they did not teach or have experience in Year six, Rae and Walter’s exposure to the SATs reading paper had influenced practice. Rae commented on how she wants to get her class used to inference and prediction questions because there are a lot of these questions in the KS2 paper and, “...it wouldn’t become a bit alien when they go into the test” (Rae, Interview 1). She would continue this if she were a headteacher. As a headteacher, Walter advises a similar exposure to pulling apart SATs questions, although his enthusiasm is far more muted than Lucy’s when he suggests this driving force on his teaching. Walter claims he still wants the love of reading, but he needs to teach skills to prepare children for what he calls the “unfortunate reality” (Walter, Interview 1) of SATs.

Governmental guidance was a major influence on teaching skills for four teachers, Carl, Rachel, Walter and Rae. Content domains are described in ‘The English reading test framework National curriculum tests from 2016 For test developers’ (Standards and Testing Agency, 2015). Only Natasha referred directly to this document, but Carl, Rae and Walter referred to content domains. Walter described CPD he had received as learning about the content domains. Even though this document (2015:4) states “It is not designed to be used to guide teaching and learning”, it became apparent from many of interviewees’ comments that it was. The reading test framework explicitly references cognitive domains in the National Curriculum (2013), but interviewees did not directly refer to cognition or metacognition; two of the aims of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1).

#### 4.3.2 Experience as a Teacher

Lucy, Jo and Rachel's approach to teaching skills has been determined by their experiences as teachers. Lucy confidently declared that the knowledge to teach the skill sets she believes children need to access the SATs has come from her own motivation; "That isn't anything I picked up off the courses, it's just me going home one night and thinking right we can change this, what can we do?" (Lucy, Interview 1). Rachel reflected on the oddity of a previous school's approach to skills teaching, "...but there was no skills progression, it was really, really strange...it wasn't really teaching anything reading skillswise" (Rachel, Interview 1).

Jo said how, in her experience of children, they will try and take a short cut, relying on memory skills rather than looking back at the text in detail to find answers. Because of this, she explicitly models how to find information in the text to support opinions, "... so you have to model that. They don't just learn that"(Jo, Interview 1). Jo, Kate, Helen, Lucy and Rachel explained how they model learning comprehension behaviours that children then imitate. Pearson *et al* (1990) and Dole *et al* (1991) propose teachers should physically model aspects of reading such as prediction and model mental reasoning which develops the student's metacognitive control of the process of comprehension. Jo, Kate, Lucy and Rachel model where you find answers in the text, back up opinions or work out unfamiliar words. Rachel complimented her deputy's practice because she "thinks aloud" when teaching reading. Diaz *et al* (in Moll, 1990) claim that working in Vygotsky's ZPD means that the adult is not simply a model of expert behaviour, and the child a passive recipient. The child shares active responsibility, developing from other to self-regulation. Although these four teachers are modelling mental reasoning, only Jo explicitly referred to where she has purposefully developed pupils' metacognition and self-regulation as well as their cognitive skills. This will be discussed further below.

Jim recounted how impressed he was on a placement where practitioners had used a range of stimuli including video clips to teach reading skills. He had been so inspired by the Reciprocal Reading at his placement that he had spoken to his English Lead about it, but "...they weren't a fan, so that's why we stuck with VIPERS" (Jim, Interview 1). His teaching is also determined by school policy, which follows this VIPERS (The Literacy Shed, 2020) approach and pupils are taught two lessons a week based on a skill. Jim is in the same school as Kitty, who is very positive about the influence of this school training delivered by the English Lead. Kitty said, "I feel I've got more of an understanding in how to teach comprehension rather than giving them a list of questions to answer and [I] actually teach skills" (Kitty, Interview

1). The clarity Kitty feels is reflected in her school's website which defines different comprehension skills developed in lessons for parents (School A, 2019).

Simon's teaching of skills is influenced by his school which tells him to focus on a specific skill every week. His school's Parent Handout (School G, Appendix F) re-iterates the emphasis placed on skills teaching, informing families that Year Two children upwards learn skills like inference and summarising in a discreet weekly lesson and recommending parents support their children's ability in these skills at home. Simon may be directed by school policy but he seems to agree with it and expressed a very strong personal view on how skills should be taught, "It needs to be as much child led as possible after the skills are taught" (Simon, Interview 1). Children are trained to lead Reciprocal Reading sessions every day at his school, choosing the book they would like to focus on. Pearson *et al* (1990) suggest teachers can develop internal motivation and self-regulation in students by introducing the idea of students being in control of their own learning into lessons and encourage them to be responsible for monitoring reading. Despite this practice, Simon did not articulate how this self-regulation could be a metacognitive skill for the children. Simon claimed reading comprehension was a very sophisticated set of skills but things he could not really explain. He described them as something that, "I already know how to do without knowing how. They are skills I've picked up on and some people take for granted, adults." (Simon, Interview 1).

Kate also referred to the curious nature of teaching reading skills; something an adult can do almost without thinking. Kate's experience in the classroom has influenced her thinking. She commented,

"Reading's quite a strange thing to teach, quite hard, the skills of skimming and scanning to retrieve information and understand what I'm reading, I can't show them what's going on inside my head to be able to do that ...It's quite difficult to say I'm going to teach this skill today". (Kate, Interview 1).

Her school policy (School D, Appendix F) defines reading itself as a skill. She may also be subject to the influence from other schools. Kate describes how her school is in a reading development group and other schools have come to observe her teach reading starters. Kate suggests how changes in approaches are due to "word of mouth" between teachers.

Simon and Kate's challenges in being able to define or pin down how their brains accomplish these processes suggest an awareness of the need to support the children with metacognition, or self-monitoring strategies to self-regulate their cognitive reading skills. There is no conscious or intentional use of skills but strategies are used with metacognitive awareness, as

good readers regulate and modify strategies to repair misunderstandings in reading (Dole *et al*, 1991). Ford and Opitz (2011: 225), claim research shows children make good progress when they are aware of their reading behaviours. All of the teachers refer to skills teaching in their pedagogy, but only Jo pointedly referred to encouraging the development of self-monitoring or this awareness of reading behaviours. She indicated her dislike of peers jumping in and telling another child a word that has been read incorrectly. Jo wanted the child to read the sentence again;

“Because then they know that there’s something wasn’t quite right about either the way they’ve read it, or the way they’ve pronounced the word or their understanding or their expression ... and then normally they will self-correct”. (Jo, Interview 1).

Jo claimed the skill of re-reading needs to be explicitly taught emphasising the importance of going back to the text and encouraging children to appreciate a first reading is not enough to provide deep understanding. Monitoring comprehension involves the reader asking themselves why something is important and whether they need to read the entire text (Just and Carpenter, 1992). The absence of responses around metacognition may also be because the use of metacognition is only outlined in the English Programmes of Study for KS2 statutory guidance (DfE, 2013); pupils should check the text makes sense to them, whereas guidance to teach cognitive skill of inference is more precise. Although all teachers are educating children to master specific comprehension skills in interaction with their instructors, there does not appear to be an emphasis on children developing conscious control of their understanding of texts, even though Pearson *et al* (1990) claim that metacognitive ability does not necessarily follow a developmental pattern and that comprehension monitoring can be instructed.

SATs and experience as teachers were more equal influences for this area of pedagogy. The influence of SATs suggests teachers want and need children to learn skills to pass tests, and the influence of their classroom experiences implies these teachers understand children need to develop cognitive skills to really understand what they are reading. This dichotomy of drivers may be because research into cognitive processes involved in reading and the testing of reading are so long established in educational research and practice. This was revealed in the Literature Review (2.5.3). As far back as the 1950s, reading was perceived as a skill which could be broken down into sub skills which included predicting outcomes and sequencing events in a story (Smith, 1965, cited in Dole *et al*, 1991: 240). These are some of the cognitive skills evident in the 14 teachers’ description of their current practice. Teaching cognitive strategies and developing metacognition are recommended in the aims of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1). Metacognition was only explicitly referenced by one of the most

experienced teachers, Jo. It may be that her length of time in the classroom, and therefore increased experience with children's reading and their needs is the reason why her practice aligns more closely with the theoretical model (Figure 2.1).

#### 4.3.3 Personal Context

Kerry's home life affected her current practice. As a child, her parents took her on weekly library trips, where the librarian asked her questions and recommended different books, "...that's something that I think helped me with my comprehension skills because she'd say things like the themes, oh what do you think this word means, or what do you think about the character? ... so I think that was my influence." (Kerry, Interview 1).

She was enthusiastic in declaring the importance of this on pedagogy, explaining how the librarian made Kerry realise she needed to think about reading as she did it. Like Lucy, Kerry believes there is a method to teaching reading, and different types of questions teachers should be asking children about texts. Her school's Ofsted report (2014) suggests there is a tradition of effective skills teaching in the school, stating that Year 6 pupils read widely and acquire excellent skills which encourage them to read for pleasure and information.

Helen conveyed the same sense of warm animation for this approach to textual analysis, "I love pulling it apart with the kids and I love getting the kids to be detectives" (Helen, Interview 1). Her current practice reflects the enjoyment she found in learning the skill of inference for A Level Literature. She considered how she is teaching the same skill to her Year 5 class which she learnt as a sixth-former 30 years ago. This also made her cautious about current skills teaching, "...we're now doing that in primary which flags huge alarm bells...why wasn't it being done earlier then or are we pushing them too much?" (Helen, Interview 1).

### **4.4 Teaching Children to Answer Written Questions**

The national context of assessment completely dominated influences on practice in teaching children to answer written questions. Six teachers indicated SATs drove pedagogy and six teachers similarly implied questions from year group or commercial tests dictated their focus. Two teachers explained year or phase expectations as drivers for practice.

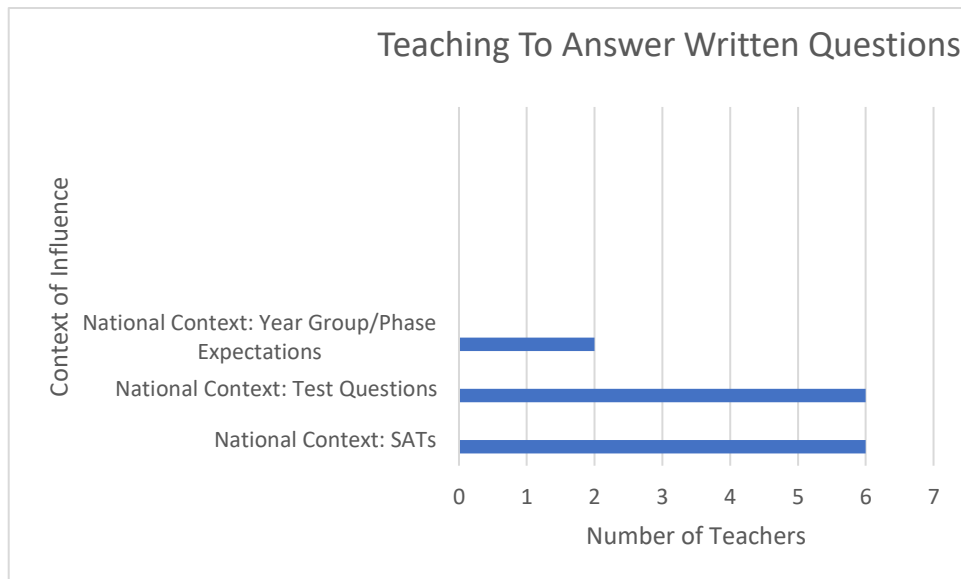


Figure 4.6 Teaching Children to Answer Written Questions - Number of Teachers Influenced by Different Contexts

#### 4.4.1 SATs – the final destination?

Teachers with a range of experience, Kitty, Helen, Kate, Lucy, Kerry and Jim, all explained how they taught pupils to answer SATs style questions. Helen and Kerry’s explanations suggested this influence was not necessarily something they wanted to admit to, but pragmatically taught children the necessary techniques to succeed. Helen described how her lessons were “geared up to” (Helen, Interview 1) looking at KS2 SATs type questions and how she was training them to spot whether the questions were a three mark question or a one mark question. Dispiritedly, she admitted it was “a bit soulless.” Like Helen, Kerry and Lucy encourage children to think about mark schemes. Kerry gets children to assign marks to what they think each question is worth. Kerry actually lowered her voice, suggesting she was almost embarrassed, “...the third session is where we’ll look at (the dreaded) SATs style questions.” (Kerry, Interview 1). In direct contrast Jim displayed an unquestioning stance regarding the influence of SATs. When reflecting on a teaching placement in Year 2 he recalled, “They were ready for SATS at the end of the year because I suppose in Year 2 that is the goal isn’t it?” (Jim, Interview 1).

The extent of the influence of SATs suggested teachers almost felt comprehension had a final destination, the end of KS2. Longitudinal learning in the subject was mentioned rarely. This seemingly short-term view of comprehension learning contrasts with Lemov *et al* (2016) who claim the reading teacher’s job is to prepare children for college and university rather than just primary school tests. Verenikina (2004) claims the crux of Vygotsky’s concept of the ZPD is to support children’s active role in their own learning and to assist them to become self-



regulated, lifelong learners. Although the practical context of assessment was referred to as a tough world, teachers seemed to accept the extent of this influence, without questioning why or if this driving force was appropriate. However, according to the ‘What I think about ...reading’ (2016) website, teachers cannot be judged censoriously here, as they are acting on their moral imperative to prepare children for success in examinations within our education system.

Kate acknowledges the prevalent influence of SATs, preparing children to be proficient in answering these written questions. Her children read books of a similar difficulty because they will encounter this in the statutory assessments,

“... when you test them they’re all being tested on same text, there’s no point in giving some of my children easier texts because it’s just going to be more of a shock, they need to be exposed to challenging texts and understand this is the standard”. (Kate, Interview 1).

Kate explains how the whole school has been subject to the hold of SATs tests after an Ofsted Report (2015) downgraded them from Outstanding to Good and after a drop in SATs results. After the Ofsted Kate remembers a huge focus on comprehension where staff meetings looked at previous SATs questions. She is quite critical of this reaction, and thinks the school went over the top; “...the school should have stepped back and thought, what are we doing well?” (Kate, Interview 1). Although she asserts that her own teaching goes beyond preparing children just to answer SATs questions, she implies this is an endpoint for teaching, “We now try to think beyond question, answer, even though that’s where you want them to be at the end for the SATs”.

Instruction that ultimately aims for children’s independent and self-regulated, successful completion of questions in a test, can be viewed as what Diaz *et al* in Moll (1990) argue is a major outcome of development that accounts for a transformation of cognitive and social skills in children. The adult caregiver, in this case the teacher, externally regulates the child’s behaviour in test situations, gradually withdrawing from the joint activity, facilitating the child’s ownership of the regulatory role in tests. The voices of the teachers are the instructing voices that Gallimore and Tharp (in Moll (ed), 1990:181) propose become the gradually internalised, self-instructing voice of their students, guiding them to choose which questions to answer, understand what is being asked of them, and how many marks to attribute to different questions.

Lucy is once again forthright about her pedagogical style when teaching children to answer written questions. She links what she claims as very positive consequences of this approach directly to the successful Year 6 SATs. She did quickly add, “It’s not just about the SATs result, it’s the children, they looked at reading completely differently” (Lucy, Interview 1), suggesting she feels that a teacher should not necessarily admit so openly that teaching is driven by SATs data. Lucy indicated this again when talking in detail about a very black and white method she uses to teach children “the skills of how to access the test, the text” (Lucy, Interview 1). She quickly altered how the skills were needed to access books, whereas her initial wording suggests how the SATs test may be galvanising her approach. She compares her formulaic method to how maths lessons are taught, “...with every question for maths you teach them how to solve, there’s a method or pattern you can teach them to be able to solve that sum. The same is true about reading comprehension questions.” (Lucy, Interview 1). This is at variance with Willingham’s (2017) proposal that reading comprehension has been misunderstood as a general skill that can be successfully applied to different texts.

Truelove *et al* (2014) write that the understanding of different texts is subjective, yet Lucy’s comments suggest she may not believe this is the case as she teaches children to align their answers with the test writers’ understanding. She states that in previous years, if children had to predict what was going to happen in a story, “...they get so creative with their answers. But it’s teaching them the skill that, going back to don’t make up anything, always relate it back to the text” (Lucy, Interview 1).

This method approach contrasts with Kate and Simon who see comprehension as something more complex than a taught set of skills and find it difficult to explain to children what is going on in their heads during this cognitive process. Kitty recognised a difference between success in answering written questions and success in comprehension. She commented on teaching in Year 6 when all she did was SATs papers, “Yes they improved but it was because it was test techniques, it wasn’t necessarily because their comprehension got better, they just got better at the style of questions.” (Kitty, Interview 1). This echoes the claims of Sarroub and Pearson (1998); that teaching to the test was prevalent with the mastery approach to teaching comprehension in the 1970s, producing an increase in test scores but not necessarily better readers. Carl implies limitations of using test questions when recounting his experiences with classes of differing abilities. With his current class who are very able readers, he suggests those children with better comprehension need to be moved on from purely test questions, challenging their understanding further with questions from the teacher.

#### 4.4.2 Test Questions – Tricks and Tips

The idea of answering different styles of questions is prevalent among those teachers whose practice involves teaching children how to answer written questions for tests. Teachers with a range of experience, Matthew, Kitty, Rachel, Carl, Natasha and Jim, indicated the very strong influence of assessment. Barnes *et al* (2017:107) suggest teachers' beliefs about assessments can serve as guides for the actions of teachers and influence their decisions about the motivational strategies or instructional techniques they use. As teachers know assessments are used to hold the school and individual teachers accountable, it is therefore unsurprising that this is such a major influence on this area of instruction.

Kitty said she taught children “tricks and tips” (Kitty, Interview 1). For example, if the test question is an inference type question, children are taught they need to look for clues in the text. Willingham (2006/7) terms reading comprehension strategies ‘tricks’ that can be learned quickly. Carl claims he will get the children to think about “...what style of question is it asking answers for, where to pick up marks if it is a test” (Carl, Interview 1). Natasha was particularly pleased with her lower attaining children, who attempted test questions independently after she had worked with them pinpointing the easier ones to try.

Three teachers in the same school, Matthew, Rachel and Jim, indicated the influence of tests on informal school teaching policy. None of the school policies reference teaching children to be successful in tests or SATs in their rationales or subject visions. All three teachers related how they provided specific types of questions to target the needs of their children that were revealed in assessments. Matthew described how the breakdown of the PIRA reading test results indicated that boys were not reaching ARE for the inference questions. Because of this data he was now trying to pick boy-friendly texts full of inference. Both Rachel and Jim claimed their children struggled with question instructions, for example ticking two boxes instead of one, and therefore they were phrasing questions in the style of assessments. Jim said this was, “So when they got to PIRA One they didn't freak out, they learnt test technique” (Jim, Interview 1). Jim claimed their deputy was worried and said she did not want to see this focused upon in every lesson. It seems the deputy, who is also the Reading Lead, may believe that practice and success in PIRA test questions are not the only factors indicating true success in reading comprehension.

Natasha and Carl, in the same school, noted the advantage of children answering written questions as a more accurate indication of attainment than oral questioning. This implied their value for assessments and the strength of this influence on teaching. Carl believes those less confident may not speak up in guided reading sessions, “It's good to get individual responses

I think, written, ...so I've got a good understanding of where they're at" (Carl, Interview 1). Natasha bases her reading groups on the results of the half-termly reading tests, "In the session they might work with a friend, so it might not be a true reflection of what truly [they] would have written down, the test is more a true reflection". She believes, "...because it's more of a fair assessment isn't it, the independent reading tests unfortunately, bless them" (Natasha, Interview 1). The use of 'unfortunately' and 'bless them' indicated that she knew this was not an enjoyable practice for the children, but a necessity. Carl and Natasha's comments reflect Brown (2004, cited in Barnes *et al*, 2017:107) who argues that teachers must be able to trust assessment information if it is to inform learning and teaching.

End of year expectations have an influence on two teachers from the same school; Jo and Lucy. Jo refers to these positively as they let her know where she has got to get the children. Lucy talked about how most of the training the school were having for reading referred back to government expectations of what children had to achieve and she could not remember the training being "massively creative" (Lucy, Interview 1). Rachel claimed she and her colleagues had turned to social media because they did not attend training anymore. The Literacy Lead at their school had taken a good look at reading provision because their data was not very strong and then a few of the teachers visited Facebook groups where teachers "...will post what's gone really well with their class, or what's influenced data" (Rachel, Interview 1).

It is difficult to ascertain why SATs is the dominant influence on this area of pedagogy apart from the unspoken understanding of the educational context they are working within; children need to do well in SATs and assessments because the teacher and their school are accountable. What was interesting about this influence was the acceptance of this pedagogical area. There was little questioning about how important teaching written questions emulating assessment styles should be in the curriculum. Some comments were made elaborating on how this area was not necessarily enjoyable for children, but not on its integral role in current reading pedagogy. Comments on enjoyment will be discussed further in the next section. Teaching children to answer written questions in the style of assessments is not found in the aims of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1). Some teachers implied that being taught how to write answers for assessments was not something to boast about, but little dissent against the system was vocalised. It is what the teachers did not say here that is of interest.

## 4.5 Encouraging Enjoyment of Reading

Experiences as teachers was the strongest influence on encouraging enjoyment. Three teachers spoke about their own primary education and how they had enjoyed reading, suggesting this personal context also influenced practice. The strength of personal context was further established as three teachers articulated a love of books and teaching comprehension. One teacher's practice seemed to be influenced by Ofsted's expectations of the promotion of reading for enjoyment in her school. Some tension began to emerge between two areas of practice: exhortation of children needing to enjoy reading and the necessity of teaching children to answer written questions accurately.

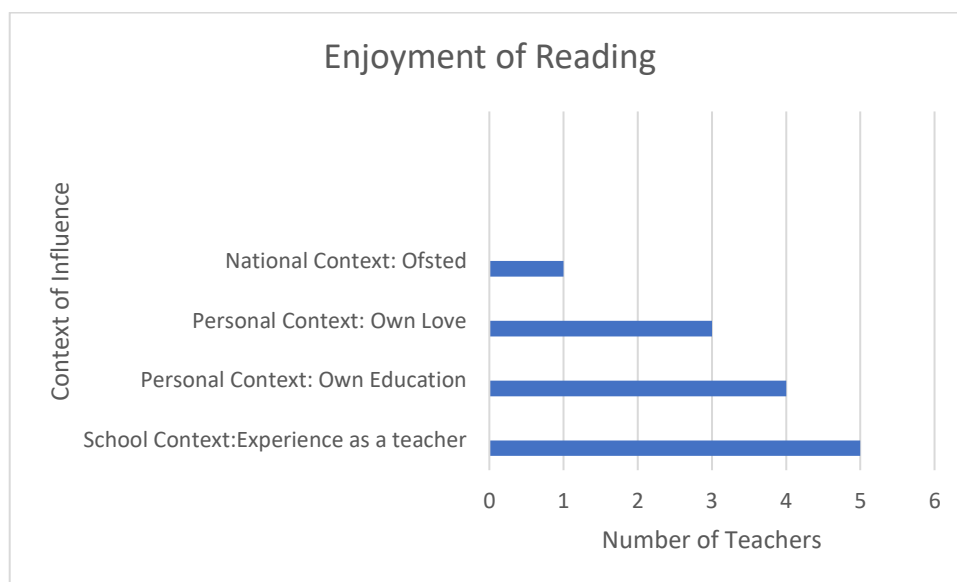


Figure 4.7 Encouraging Enjoyment of Reading - Number of Teachers Influenced by Different Contexts

### 4.5.1 Experiences as a Teacher

Five teachers commented on their experiences with children. Kitty, Rachel, Natasha and Jim all spoke enthusiastically about approaches or initiatives they had taken or seen to encourage a love of reading in children. In contrast, Jo spoke rather sadly about the effect of assessment on children's enjoyment of reading,

“I don't know how I would change it but I would, it's a really difficult one. It needs to be made enjoyable, but a lot tell you they don't enjoy it, a lot who are less academic, because it's all about how many marks you get passing the test. Sad but true.” (Jo, Interview 1).

She has tried to encourage enjoyment by telling her children to bring in any book that they would like every afternoon. However, they still pick the same book off the school shelves. She is a little despondent, partly blaming the fast-paced culture we live in where children will

flick away on an I-Pad but do not have the perseverance to read a book and sustain a level of concentration. She reasoned,

“That’s obviously because one, it’s probably not within their routine, and their home life, and two, they’re on the go all the time, so it’s easier to have an I-Pad than a book in the car or whatever, don’t ask me, it just seems to be to some of them a bit of a chore.” (Jo, Interview 1).

Jo elaborated on how she told the children that a lot of the adults read, not because they are going to be tested for it, but because reading brings them enjoyment or offers them an opportunity to escape into a different world. She explained: “The bottom line is as an adult reader, okay you might need it for your job, but most of us will be more likely to read for pleasure” (Jo, Interview 1). Rachel equated questioning about a book with when children go on a trip and must write a hated recount afterwards. Rachel pointed out, “We don’t do it as adults do we, you might have a think about certain questions or chat to someone about it but you don’t have to sit there and tick boxes” (Rachel, Interview 1). Research has indicated that an effective reading instruction environment is one where students demonstrate similarly positive emotions such as enthusiasm and self-belief, and have the opportunity to be successful in academic activities (Tierney and Cunningham, 1980; Pearson *et al*, 1990).

Kitty recalled a class thoroughly enjoying a Harry Potter book and the impact of reading a book they loved on their engagement. Rachel and Jim both commented on the effect an enjoyable book had on Year 6 children. Jim claimed the children produced the best piece of work all year because they were engaged in the book. He had been inspired by a teaching placement which had used books children really wanted to read. Rachel reiterated this enjoyment and claimed, “That’s meant that when they are doing the reading sessions they are kind of like ‘Yes, yes!’” (Rachel, Interview 1). Their school’s Ofsted (2019) report partly confirms this, stating that the children read often and enjoy reading to adults.

Rachel’s thinking appeared to have been heavily influenced by previous experience at a school spending half a term on a class book. She called this ‘book study’ where the class engaged in a variety of creative activities around it which developed a love of reading. The most successful teachers consistently use sustained engagement with books as central to their reading instruction, rather than a diet of passages and excerpts (Lemov *et al*, 2016). Rachel commented on how children are so used to reading books and then answering questions that this can put them off reading, “They don’t often just read it for the pleasure of reading it.” (Rachel, Interview 1). Her practice has been affected by her beliefs in that she reads to her class daily when time and they enjoy just listening rather than having to answer questions.

Jim spoke about how the school was pushing RfP. When asked why it was being pushed, he responded,

“Because we have a higher proportion of EAL children for a start so I think they want to increase the reading comprehension certainly of those children. Also I think our reading data isn’t quite at national average yet” (Jim, Interview 1),

seemingly recognising that RfP affects attainment data. However, answering questions may still be a more prominent influence on Jim than his desire to promote enjoyment. He described how he is going to put questions up on the board for the children to answer during their 15 minute quiet reading session, “...so they’ve actually got more of a purpose to read. Because I think that at the moment someone can get a book out after lunch and just sort of wasting time until they move into the afternoon lesson.” (Jim, Interview 1). Lucy echoed this idea of needing purpose for reading but equates it with enjoyment. She compared her current practice in reading comprehension lessons favourably to the past, claiming the children look forward to these lessons, whereas years before, “the kids almost deflated a bit, because they’d think it’s quite boring...they enjoy it, because I think they understand the purpose of it” (Lucy, Interview 1).

Kitty and Natasha make a correlation between being able to answer questions and enjoyment, but their experiences suggest promoting enjoyment may be the more important factor. Kitty was very direct in her acknowledgement of links between encouraging enjoyment and the growth of understanding in children. She wryly commented, “I know people are saying they are encouraging reading for pleasure but I don’t think that is always the case. When you’ve got them loving reading, then they’re able to comprehend.” (Kitty, Interview 1). Natasha claimed, “If children love reading they are more willing to read so more willing to ask and answer questions.” (Natasha, Interview 1). This echoes Clark and Terevainen’s (2017) findings, that children who enjoy reading are more likely to engage in it more often and as a result become more proficient and Cremin’s (2019) idea of the will influencing the skill to read. Natasha’s belief is reiterated in the school policy (School E, Appendix F) which she has written, “We encourage all readers to read at home as this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading”.

Kitty and Natasha view RfP as facilitating comprehension and enabling children to develop skills in asking questions. Rachel described almost the opposite process, where she had taught able children who already had reading skills so she could indulge in a love of reading with the sort of children;

“... that do well anyway, very supportive parents ..., the group I was reading with could really get into a book and it did feel a bit more reading for pleasure, even though it wasn't target skills”. (Rachel, Interview 1).

RfP as a benefit of working in a certain demographic rather than a principal driving force in teaching supports Cremin *et al's* (2014) findings that the development of children's pleasure in reading is often a desirable add-on rather than a main responsibility for teachers working in accountability cultures.

However, Rachel was clear in identifying a link between attainment and RfP. She said she did not know what the link was but every year it was always her more able children who read the most. She continued,

“When I was writing their reports in reading I was trying to think why is it important that they read but I guess it's that exposure to vocabulary and imagination ...it's always been, my best writers are the ones who are the best readers and they're the ones who will bring in books from home and talk about when they've been to the library.” (Rachel, Interview 1).

Rachel also indicated that Ofsted affected this area of practice. She spoke about how the school's SMT told teachers that Ofsted inspectors would look for how the school promotes RfP.

The value of reading aloud is recognised and promoted in Natasha and Carl's school policy (School E, Appendix F) and Helen, Walter and Rae's school policy (School C, Appendix F). However, Kitty, Rachel, Walter and Helen were the only teachers who mentioned reading aloud to their classes, implying that the majority of teachers have not been impacted by the findings of the TaR project (Cremin *et al*, 2014) which found social, personal and cognitive benefits to reading aloud to children an important part of RfP.

#### 4.5.2 Personal Context – Own Education

Kitty, Kerry and Walter's own experiences as pupils seem to have influenced their practice in encouraging enjoyment. Kitty described early primary experiences with great distaste. She had to do a book review and answer questions on a book correctly or read the book again; “I absolutely hated reading because of doing those tests.” (Kitty, Interview 1). She now really enjoys reading books, reading to her class every day and changing the book if they are not enjoying it. In contrast Kerry and Walter remembered early reading experiences warmly. Kerry's memory of the promotion of the love of reading in her primary school seems to have directly influenced her current practice;



“We had a corridor top to bottom with books, just endless amounts of books...there was a little sort of cosy area with little shelves and things with books on the sides and little cushions where you could go and read.” (Kerry, Interview 1).

She described how recently her school wanted to encompass RfP again so children were encouraged to read in the book corner, under the table or in a cosy place. The school webpage (School F, 2019) confirms this philosophy, where children take pleasure in reading;

“...Whether this be between a bundle of cushions, sharing a favourite book with a friend, lying on a blanket outside or even under the teacher’s desk! We want to create Readers for life.”

The school promote a ‘Biscuits and Books’ social group where children and teachers can share their love of reading as a community. Walter made the link between his own primary education and his passion for reading clear; “I’ve certainly got a really strong love of reading and I think that stemmed from that experience of just exploring loads of different books with the teacher.” (Walter, Interview 1).

#### 4.5.3 Personal Context – Own Love of Reading and Teaching Reading

Love of reading and love for teaching reading have affected four teachers. Lucy was ardent when describing her approach to reading sessions, stating that she loves teaching comprehension, “I can be inspiring, get excited, rev them up, I can stop them mid-sentence ‘Oh, why do you think that’, ... you want everyone having a go where possible” (Lucy, Interview 1). This love and confidence in her teacher persona have influenced practice. She described how children enjoy this as she reads to the children like an actor and can put so much more emphasis in places, “If it’s a story you’re reading you use so much passion, because the kids are enthralled with what you’re reading to them”. She obviously enjoyed the sessions too, “They love being in little groups, they appreciate the time with you. They’re very sweet.” (Lucy, Interview 1). Kate was rather more low-key but commented on how the children enjoyed the whole class approach to reading and “I enjoyed it as well” (Kate, Interview 1).

Kitty stated how she really enjoys reading books now, but in her early years at home, her mum did not enjoy reading, “I didn’t see any grown-ups reading so it never made me want to read” (Kitty, Interview 1). She recalled particular teachers who read to her at primary school and can still recount the ‘Naughty Little Sister’ (Edwards, 1969) stories she heard. Helen expressed how she loved analysing books with the children. Emphasising enjoyment of reading seems to be crucial for these teachers, which is encouraging when considering the

findings of The PIRLS: National Report for England (DfES, 2017) which found a greater proportion of England's pupils report disliking reading, when compared to pupils in other countries.

#### 4.6 Tensions

Certain tensions emerged between desires to promote enjoyment of reading and the need to teach children to achieve in written tests. Rachel highlighted the issue,

“That’s the problem, we’re meant to be promoting reading for pleasure ... At the same time they’ve got to show they can answer these questions and it’s opposite ends of the scale. I would say that’s really hard and as a teacher I want my class to have best results but I also want them to leave me and enjoy reading.” (Rachel, Interview 1).

Jo drew a straight-faced emoji next to a school where she was a Year 2 teacher, explaining unease,

“...because it was motivated by tests and exams, making kids jump through hoops, so they could get the mark on the paper. How many marks is that worth? ...It’s all very training them.” (Jo, Interview 1).

Walter recalled his own primary education where he connected love for reading with a lack of demand for written answers, describing small group time looking at books in depth,

“It made us all really excited to read the book, because there wasn’t so much focus on the writing outcomes ... discussing it and it really did make us want to read on really, just carry on that reading.” (Walter, Interview 1).

This has directly influenced his thinking – as a head teacher he would advocate more discussion and fewer written answers because the written outcomes take away from the focus on reading.

Matthew believed the biggest influence on his teaching was a fantastic consultant who had shown him how to manage his tensions at the time of the National Literacy Strategy;

“...this was the first time actually someone codified these are the strategies you need to be teaching and being explicit...for her to come and say yes you’ve got to do that but still do it by keeping the love of reading.” (Matthew, Interview 1).

Jo, Matthew, Rachel and Walter have been teaching for two to 30 years. Therefore, there does not seem to be a link between the amount of experience and the sociocultural context they

have worked in impacting on their feelings of constraint with written outcomes and tests. Analysis found no noticeable similarity between answers from teachers of comparable lengths of experience in any area of comprehension teaching. Therefore, it could not be concluded that the social context of education had a particular impact on these teachers' thinking and practice at different points, apart from the current influence of assessment.

The feelings of tension and peace the teachers may have with what they are teaching will be explored further in 4.7. This section will examine whether the teachers suggested they had agency in their teaching of comprehension and if tensions were productive, resulting in the teachers changing their teaching environment or pursuing professional development opportunities (Goos, 2013).

#### **4.7 Agency in Comprehension Teaching**

My third research question was "To what extent do the teachers perceive they have agency in comprehension teaching?" Matrices were constructed for each individual teacher to explore how they felt about each area of comprehension identified and if and how they taught this. These pen portraits were used to examine what was said and implied. Feelings of happiness with their teaching or resentment about approaches imposed were interpreted using interview quotes. The alignment between how they felt about teaching comprehension and whether they were able to do this in practice suggests the extent to which teachers have agency in their teaching. The extent to which they modified their environments, or their ZFM, due to new knowledge or learning, indicates the extent of their agency, in line with Valsiner's (1997) zone theory.

Data from the pen portraits suggests the teachers are all change agents, as all have changed their teaching either individually or in collaboration with colleagues in response to changes in teaching approaches in different schools. This reflects van der Heijden *et al's*, (2015) claim that teachers are needed who are real change agents, that is those willing to learn and change individually and in collaboration with other schools, through their own internal drive to reflect and by meeting external demands. The internal drive to reflect is more challenging to infer from teachers' responses. As discussed in 'Answering Written Questions' (4.1.4), the teachers did not seem to openly question the ethics of an assessment driven environment and this lack of doubt suggests an acceptance of this social situation. It appears teachers want to support children to become successful readers by meeting the external demands of widely accepted standards in assessment.

This section will explore to what extent, if any, did the context of an environment heavily driven by assessment constrain teachers' thinking or actions. A form of professional agency for teachers is resistance – where they push back through rejection, negotiation or reconfiguration of school policies with which they disagree (Pantic, 2015:710). Teachers did not seem to push back against policy or the influence of assessment, although Kerry, Jim and Rachel are all reconfiguring approaches to reading in schools. Kerry and Natasha, as Reading Leads, certainly indicate they have scope to make professional decisions and change. Sociocultural theorists explain how individual choices and social contexts come together to form a person's trajectory. Individuals can improvise, taking ownership of instructional decisions in a restricted environment and so exercise agency as they carve out their role (Hart Frost, 2008:225). Kerry, Jim and Kate in particular seem to be carving out their roles in leading or supporting the development of reading in what can be seen as the restrictive environment of the English National Curriculum (2013), which is part of the ZFM in schools. They are establishing some of the promoted actions in the ZPAs in their schools.

Kate and Simon are happy to be in schools where they are not dictated to but given liberty to try things out and find what works, in effect, giving them agency in their teaching of skills. The ZPA in their schools promotes trying out new ideas. As a head teacher Simon would teach in a similar way to the way his school is doing now, making sure teachers are allowed to vary their approach. Simon believes,

“Teachers should be trusted with choosing correct approaches in schools as well rather than necessarily saying this is the way things need to be done in schools .... and thankfully at this school I was given the opportunity to teach something a bit different.” (Simon, Interview 1).

Kate also feels her school experiments; “I do think that we're a school that likes to try things out and see if they work or not.” (Kate, Interview 1). Her school has taken part in a research study group and the English Lead embedded an approach taken from a blog.

Beliefs of a teacher have been identified as the dominant factor, above social environment, resources and formal training, which influence a teacher's behaviour (Gill and Hoffman, 2009, cited in Talbot and Campbell, 2014:418). Few teachers, with the exception of Kitty's and Kerry's declarations about how crucial it is to teach language comprehension and an extensive vocabulary, explicitly stated their beliefs concerning the best ways to teach reading comprehension. However, according to Gill and Hoffman (2009, cited in Talbot and Campbell, 2014:418), beliefs can be influenced by personal values, pedagogical methods, student learning and their perspective on classroom experiences. Therefore, although their

beliefs are not stated, they can be inferred for certain areas of practice through the compelling impact of classroom and personal experiences on their teaching of discussion, language comprehension and enjoyment. Teachers were found to have agency where they indicated they had improved understanding of how to teach comprehension, where they were happy with current practice in contrast to past and where this happiness linked to learning from peers and collegial support.

Simon demonstrated value for different methods, acknowledging how his school could integrate initiatives from other schools. He appears happy and feels much more confident in his current teaching, but admits, “Not to say there are no areas for improvement now! There’s always new ideas out there.” (Simon, Interview 1). Kwakman (2003, cited in van der Heijden *et al*, 2015:682) suggests teachers’ attitudes towards new approaches have a greater influence on their development and learning than school contexts. It may be that Simon’s outward looking attitude to what is being practised elsewhere means his teaching will develop beyond the influences of his own school practice and he will achieve even greater agency in the future.

#### 4.7.1 Agency in Using Discussion

Kate indicated she had agency in teaching children to talk about texts. She believed discussion was the most important thing in her comprehension pedagogy and explained how she tries to build this in lessons. Walter indicates discontent with the lack of focus on this area in his school, and would like more talking about texts in a group.

Comments of four teachers about groupings suggests they have a strong sense of agency in the way they organise learning. Carl indicated he had some agency in the way he chooses the composition of his groups to encourage contributions of those less confident. However, his dismissive tone concerning the use of daily guided reading groups indicated he felt a lack of control. He believes deploying staff to one class to work with different groups on one dedicated day a week would facilitate a better quality of discussion and has more worth than the current muddled organisation of, “trying to scrap resources together, and [say] sit down, right you lot quiet and read.” (Carl, Interview 1).

Laura and Natasha agree with how their children are grouped in ability groups for guided reading. Natasha is aware of many other organisational approaches, and is in a position to impose change, but feels her school needs a simple old school carousel routine. Laura would use ability groups if she were a headteacher and demonstrates further autonomy as she chooses to mix up abilities when children are working independently. Simon demonstrates a similar level of agency, deciding on groupings and pairings to promote self-esteem.

Kerry clearly identifies her position as Reading Lead and this is probably the reason she is one of the teachers who appears to have the most agency. She loves Kagan (Kagan, 2019) structures in reading lessons, developing her school's use of talk partners to promote children supporting each other in talking about texts "...because I've been in charge of reading." (Kerry, Interview 1). Jim is another advocate for Kagan structures and is happy with his school's adoption of this. Rachel describes her use of Kagan structures in a more moderate tone; "... you do notice there are the same children who will just sit at the back and won't answer but we're really specific, they'll be partner A and partner B." (Rachel, Interview 1). Her tempered comment indicates that she is not unhappy with the school approach. Lucy's positioning of her classroom as the start of children supporting each other in talking about texts suggests her sense of agency; "...peer support is encouraged from day one anyway when they get to me... you've got to train their mind that they're working in a pair." (Lucy, Interview 1).

Kate can choose how she groups children to support each other in talking about texts but acknowledges the difficulty of high ability pupils potentially dominating discussion. She demonstrates frustration with her lack of influence over the rest of the school getting children to support each other; she feels more could be done so the lower ability do not feel as though they cannot support anybody. Walter similarly has agency in the way he chooses to organise groupings for discussion, encouraging mixed ability pairs to support one another.

#### 4.7.2 Agency in Teaching Language Comprehension

Five teachers imply they have agency in teaching language comprehension. Kerry as reading lead indicates agency, speaking positively about her school's emphasis on the teaching of language comprehension through daily 'Word Aware' vocabulary sessions. Kerry is pushing for comprehension to be taught across the curriculum and has started promoting teaching through the use of pictures and videos as well as texts. Kitty exhibits agency in teaching vocabulary as practice in her school aligns with her beliefs. She states that vocabulary has been key for her teaching as a result of her personal experiences as a pupil and describes the 15 minute daily vocabulary sessions in all classes. One of her philosophies is that children need life experiences and this follows through in her practice as she takes her classes on as many trips as possible. Matthew demonstrates his agency in that he has adapted the school's whole class approach by providing an intervention for children with SEND who struggle with vocabulary. As an NQT in the same school Jim has not instigated change himself but is very pleased change has taken place with more discussion around different topics. Rae's statements

that she can pick up on unknown words in discussion in her small group sessions and would continue to do this if she were a headteacher indicate how her teaching aligns with her beliefs.

It is really important to Helen to look at vocabulary in every reading session and she uses previous training from another school in 'The Inference Circle' approach. This independence suggests agency and her animation when describing how the approach develops vocabulary understanding indicates satisfaction with her way of teaching, "I might act that word out, so flounce for instance, I'll be flouncing around the classroom, and get some of the kids to flounce, can you brush your hair flouncing?!" (Helen, Interview 1).

#### 4.7.3 Agency in Teaching Skills

There was little evidence of resistance to dominant practices in the interviewees, however agency was manifested in the principled actions they described. Five teachers demonstrated they have agency and were happy with current practice through comments concerning their improved understanding of how to teach skills. Kitty, Rachel and Kate are happy because they feel they are actually teaching and getting children to understand a reading skill in lessons. Kate would want to continue with the approach she has now if she were a head teacher in her own school, focussing on a specific skill in a lesson. Kate feels comprehension skills are used all the time, for example in geography and history lessons, and would like to go further in her agentic control of her teaching, linking comprehension skills to other areas of the curriculum, "...showing children that reading's not just done in a reading lesson." (Kate, Interview 1). This is reminiscent of Kerry's dream regarding cross-curricular teaching.

Lucy, Rachel and Simon appear particularly at peace with their approach to teaching skills. Lucy takes the role of initiator of school-wide practice, confidently describing the impact of breaking down SATs papers into key skills; "...what I did was I changed the expectation of reading [it] now has gone up." (Lucy, Interview 1). Rachel and her colleagues have driven change from previous practice; "...it wasn't really teaching anything reading skillwise and we kind of realised well if you're teaching maths and literacy whole class why aren't we teaching reading whole class." (Rachel, Interview 1). Simon claimed that as a headteacher he would have comprehension skills taught in a similar way to his current practice using child-led Reciprocal Reading.

Matthew and Jim noted minor frustrations with current approaches imposed by their schools. Because of these restrictions in their ZFM, their potential development is limited. Matthew feels that VIPERS lessons mean he is not able to extend the more able and he feels the less able can only be supported through questioning or working with their peers. Jim had been

very impressed with his experience of Reciprocal Reading on a placement and suggested it to the Literacy Lead but it was not taken up.

#### 4.7.4 Agency in Teaching Children to Answer Written Questions

Although identified as an important area, all teachers tended to describe what they did, rather than stating any beliefs or philosophies about teaching how to answer written questions.

Therefore, it was difficult to ascertain to what extent the teachers perceived they had agency with this. Three teachers, Carl, Helen and Jim, detailed how they adapted pedagogy for certain cohorts, suggesting some independence in this sphere and productive tensions. Carl had had concerns in the previous year about whether a class were answering written questions accurately and so changed the timetable to rigorously complete two comprehension exercises a week. Helen, in line with the rest of her school, looks at SATs type questions, but adapts the way she approaches this to engage her class, by being detectives and delving into questions in detail. Jim had incorporated mini written tests to familiarise the children with question styles. The answers of Rae and Walter to the head teacher question suggested they are happy with their school's approach to classes looking at SATs style questions. Both would continue with this if they were head teachers.

#### 4.7.5 Agency in Encouraging Enjoyment

The individual actions that seven teachers took to encourage enjoyment in reading indicated their independence, particularly when other teachers from the same school did not claim the same. Kitty stated she thinks it is very important to read to children and reads to her KS2 class every day. Walter reads a class book for five minutes at the end of the day to build a love of reading. The two reading leads promoted enjoyment of reading across their schools; Kerry introducing the option of reading in cosy areas and Natasha ordering books for book corners and organising book fairs.

Three teachers, Jim, Walter and Rachel mentioned the importance of the type of texts to encourage enjoyment. Jim appears to have agency in this area because he has drawn attention to the lack of engaging texts provided by the school and is going to source books the children find interesting. Walter is able to choose books that the children enjoy for his guided reading sessions. By contrast, Rachel does not have agency; she identifies a problem with the lack of interesting books, or books that the children could choose themselves, but does not indicate that she can do anything about it.

Two of the more experienced teachers, Matthew and Jo, express their discontent with the way they are unable to promote enjoyment. They are not demonstrating professional agency through resistance (Pantic, 2015:710), because they are not pushing back against policy.



Rather, they are expressing sadness with the situation. Matthew would like time to go into a book in a lot more detail and try and “pass on a love of reading that is not just an activity to be completed.” (Matthew, Interview 1). Dispiritedly, Jo admits how her lack of knowledge seems to be affecting her agency in trying to make reading more enjoyable. She has encouraged children to bring in their own books for ERIC but they pick the same book every time; “I don’t know how I would change it but I would.” (Jo, Interview 1).

#### 4.7.6 Agency Because of New Organisation

Three teachers compared their current contentment with dissatisfaction with past organisational approaches. Kitty and Rachel mention previous challenges of trying to plan different texts or activities for various groups in the carousel. As Reading Lead, Kerry drove the changes from this system across school, clearly demonstrating agency. Rachel is a lot happier now her school have moved to whole class teaching as she hated the stressful carousel approach. This happiness with her teaching is inferred from her answer to the head teacher question – she would continue with the whole class, mixed attainment, inclusion of SEND children and age-related texts approach currently used. Rachel indicated her involvement in changes, using the pronoun ‘we’ when recalling how the school had heard rumours about outdated guided reading, used facebook groups and “...that’s when we decided this year to go fully whole class.” (Rachel, Interview 1).

#### 4.7.7 Happiness Linked with Collegial Support

Where four teachers described how they had learnt from their own colleagues, there was a common theme of developed confidence or happiness. Simon had had the opportunity to observe colleagues teach Reciprocal Reading (Brown and Palincsar, 1989) so now felt he was much better at this. Modelled lessons, training from co-ordinators and clear policies meant Helen was very happy and supported at a previous school. The deputy at Rachel’s school had influenced her “...because she thinks out loud and really gets them to think about what they’re doing.” (Rachel, Interview 1). Teachers from other schools had come to observe Kate. These teachers can be seen to be involved in informal CoP, where the shared domain of interest (Wenger, 1998) is to improve reading comprehension teaching and learning how to develop their teaching is distributed among participants with varying expertise in their school community (Hanks, 1991, cited in Buisse, Sparkman and Wesley, 2003:263).

The heavy influence of this in-school collegial support on professional development aligns with Ramnarain (2016:603) who cites studies that have shown how the implementation of curriculum reform is affected by the availability of professional support from within school and outside agencies. The teachers must have the active support of colleagues in their

professional learning community, which Helen, Kate, Rachel and Simon had as they were supported to develop as teachers of reading.

A lack of collegiality meant a lack of confidence in Rachel's teaching. She really struggled in a one form entry school where there were few staff available to learn from, although this made her develop independently, "It did make me think outside the box, so I read around a lot." Despite this reading she still relied on her limited experience as a teacher to influence practice; when she was made Literacy Lead, she continued with the carousel style "...because that's all I knew." (Rachel, Interview 1). At an early point on her career timeline, Helen reiterated that same feeling of conforming her teaching to the norm, because she did not know any differently, "When you know nothing at all, you just go with what's going on." (Helen, Interview 1). A deficiency of help from a school Matthew taught in meant he had to devise his own approach, "There wasn't any support or training from the leads, it was a case of sink or swim, but then I suddenly found that okay, I found a way." (Matthew, Interview 1).

#### 4.7.8 Discontent – Lack of Agency

Beista, Priestley and Robinson (2015) argue that lack of teacher agency may be influenced by teachers' positioning in their professional environments and factors beyond their immediate control. Buchanan (2015) suggests teachers do have choices, but from limited options which are shaped by relations with larger forces. These larger forces may be perceived as the ZFM and ZPA in their professional environment (Goos, 2013). There was only one voice of dissent indicating a teacher felt his agency was limited. Carl suggested he was quite unhappy with organisation, "...the way it's managed, it could be done better." (Carl, Interview 1). He believed too much time was spent on guided reading unnecessarily; his tone indicated he had made suggestions but these had not been listened to, "It would be easier to do a comprehension as a lesson, unfortunately that's not acceptable. (Laughs) That's not good enough ... But ask the powers that be, they may say different." (Carl, Interview 1). Agency happens through the interaction of an individual's capacity and their material and social conditions, but individuals may fail to achieve agency if conditions are difficult (Pantic, 2015, Priestley, 2015, Beista, Priestley and Robinson, 2015). Although Carl does not state his situation is difficult, he implies his position is challenging because he has little say in pedagogical approaches.

#### 4.7.9 Criticisms of the Past

The variety of different approaches in practice discussed by the interviewees adhere to Rayner *et al* (2001) and Duke and Pearson's (2008) proposal of the need for balance in instruction, integrating explicit teaching of comprehension strategies and reading for meaning, expounded

10 and 20 years ago. Yet the interviewees' negative perceptions about past teaching experiences, where they may have lacked access to a range of challenging texts to provide this balance, and where they felt skills were not taught explicitly, imply that they do not believe they have been influenced by research and policy from the past.

Lucy suggested there has been a change in status for comprehension. On her timeline seven years ago, she suggests it was not rated as important, in that it was a subject commonly left for a supply teacher; "... cause they could just open a book, say read that and answer the questions." (Lucy, Interview 1). Similarly, Matthew referred to comprehension teaching when he was a child as "a cop out lesson...Being taught was a misnomer." (Matthew, Interview 1).

Lucy believes skills were not taught explicitly in the past, "'We're going to answer questions about a text' would almost be the target', whereas now it's can I answer inference questions about the text, ... and specific skills". Lucy described her hour session as "open questions...completely different to the old fashioned, head in a book, reading, answering questions." (Lucy, Interview 1). Although Lucy took a derogatory tone to describe past practice in schools, it may be that she has just experienced different practice to the pedagogy she is using now. Other teachers may not have experienced the "head in a book, answering questions" approach. The Literature Review indicated that the interactive use of open questions was practised in the past, particularly during the 80s in Reciprocal Teaching (Brown and Palincsar, 1989), and so this could be termed an old-fashioned approach. This raises the question – why these teachers are not provided with opportunities to learn from past research and practice to take forward into current practice and why must they be so reliant on their own experiences.

Poor performance in assessments or low SATS results and a lower Ofsted grading resulted in a higher profile for comprehension teaching in Kate's school. An extra weekly comprehension lesson was introduced but Kate criticised her school for what she felt was the school's own lack of critical thinking, or theory behind actions taken to improve pedagogy, "It was not done under any theory of oh this part of reading isn't being taught very well so let's try and address that, it was more like, we obviously need to do more reading so here's something to just throw at people and get them to do it." (Kate, Interview 1).

Archer (2000), cited in Pantic, (2015:763) notes that there is a difference between having no effect in a systematic organisation and not having a say in it. Teachers may not have felt they had a say in deciding responsive school policy or school organisation, but that does not mean they did not have an effect in the school. Kate had little initial control over the response to the influences of SATs results and Ofsted judgments. However, teachers from other schools are

now coming to observe her lessons, which suggests her teaching is valued and is having a substantial impact in school.

#### **4.8 How These Teachers Learn**

Teachers made comments about influences, or lack of influence on their comprehension teaching in general. Rachel and Lucy were both negative about out of school training they had attended and Rachel's school did not have any money now to send staff on training. Her professional development was influenced by ideas from Facebook and Twitter. Rachel claimed, "I haven't been anywhere and thought, 'Oh yeah this is it! Even courses I've been on I've never left feeling really excited about teaching at all.'" (Rachel, Interview 1). Helen criticised a school for the lack of training; "...there was nothing to help me at all. And that was mostly to do with the management, because it comes from the top down doesn't it, from bringing people in, to training." (Helen, Interview 1). Apart from these few comments, a lack of formal training does not seem to be an issue for most teachers in this study, despite the PIRLS: National Report for England's (DfES, 2017) claim that England's teachers received fewer reading-related hours of professional development than many other countries. This may be because the teachers are not missing what they have never had experience of.

Jo and Matthew, two of the most experienced teachers, did not recall theory from any training they had received during their careers. Both explained pragmatic reasons for this – choosing to put the children first and using ideas that work. Guskey (2002) notes that experienced teachers are unlikely to commit to a new pedagogical approach until they have observed it working with their own pupils. As a busy teacher Jo used theory or training on a need to know basis, "...when you've got 30 kids in front of you with the best will in the world, those children need you at this moment, you know things get buried on your desk." (Jo, Interview 1). Matthew regarded theory and training with a blunt practicality, "Tell me how it works, because I need to make it work. Don't give me half an hour of theory which puts me to sleep." He clarified the reason why his school had adopted the VIPERS approach which one of their Academy schools had taken on board, because it worked in terms of SATs attainment; "...their results for a similar area are much better than ours." (Matthew, Interview 1). Rachel noted how she accessed on-line sites where other teachers posted "what works" (Rachel, Interview 1). Figure 4.8 summarises how Rachel's learning and development in teaching reading comprehension have been impacted by the two frameworks used to analyse teacher development in this study, and other influences on the five areas identified in comprehension teaching. This was referred to in Chapter 2, Figure 2.2, and the size of the arrows and circles

in the figure below indicate the extent of the impact on her zone of development. The ZFM in her school, her experience as a teacher and her beliefs, appeared to have a greater impact than the ZPA in school and the online Community of Practice she was involved in. Her school had a very clear lesson structure for reading comprehension which the teachers followed, and Rachel stated how she felt about children enjoying reading. The promoted actions in school, the formal Kagan training (Kagan, 2020) and the informal modelling from a colleague seemed to support development but to a lesser extent. Involvement in what can be seen as online CoPs had initiated her learning about changes in practice.

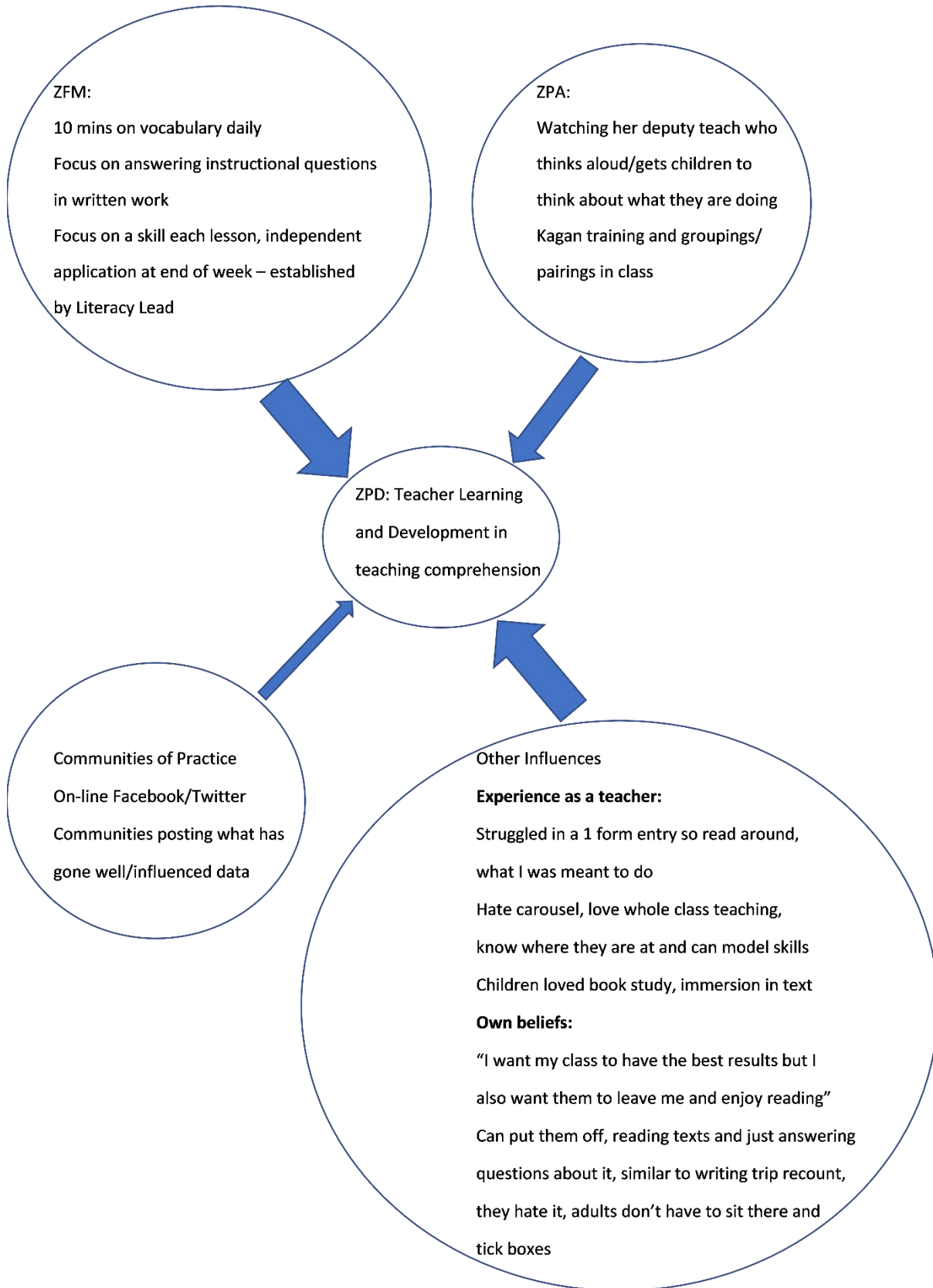


Figure 4.8 Influences on Rachel's Learning and Development

This chapter has analysed findings from interviews to answer the first two research questions; how influences are shaping the thinking and practice of the 14 KS2 teachers of comprehension and what are the strongest influences. It has analysed the extent the teachers perceive they have agency in the different areas, addressing the third research question. The chapter has explored the impact of some of these influences, and the two theoretical frameworks on one teacher's learning and development. Chapter 5 will conclude the study, discussing the findings in relation to their implications for future ways forward in teaching comprehension and further research.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore influences on teachers of comprehension and to develop an account for why these teachers teach in the way they do. Varying influences were found in five areas. In this chapter, section 5.1 provides the main findings for the first two research questions, “How are influences shaping the thinking and practice of KS2 teachers of comprehension?” and “What are the strongest influences and why?” It addresses these questions in relation to two individuals, Kitty and Lucy, summing up the strongest influences on their particular practice. The section then provides an overarching model (Figure 5.3) illustrating the strengths of influences for all 14 teachers. The study set out to examine how current organisational practices, including peer support, engendered the social process of discussion. This emerged as one of the five areas of pedagogy the teachers described and the influences on these practices are reviewed in 5.1. Conclusions to the final research question, “To what extent do teachers perceive they have agency in comprehension teaching?” are stated in section 5.2. I investigated whether teachers had agency in their teaching and whether they accommodated their own literacy philosophies with the requirements of school policy, the National Curriculum (2013) and accountability.

As noted in section 1.1, my own positionality has changed throughout the study. Research situations can be dynamic and a researcher must analyse themselves in the context of the research (Krefting, 1991). Reflexivity is the awareness that the researcher’s values, background, and previous experience with the phenomenon can affect the research process (Cope, 2014). Initially I considered myself an insider practitioner and researcher, subject to the high-stakes assessment culture in schools. Latterly, I have become a full-time lecturer and therefore adopted an outsider role. Because I am less directly affected by this assessment culture, I believe my interest in any differences between recommendations from research and practice has been heightened. I have become more conscious of what should be taught according to research, rather than what can be taught in the circumstances I found myself when teaching in school. This has affected my reflections on my method and implications for the future. These are discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.6.

The discussion of findings (5.1) and implications for the future (5.6) sections reference research around the understanding of how teachers learn and develop their practice. Teachers’ personal histories and prior teaching experience cannot be changed, but professional development opportunities can be suggested. This chapter will contribute ways forward in developing the teaching of comprehension in KS2, through suggestions for teacher learning



and development, with reference to Figure 2.2, illustrating how the two frameworks and other potential influences can impact a teacher's ZPD or their learning and development.

In section 1.4 I suggested the study could be seen to create a space for teachers to critically reflect on practice. The interviews facilitated this space but it is challenging to determine whether critical reflection occurred, apart from two teachers' voiced re-assessment of whether children learned peer support strategies in their classroom. The opportunity for critical reflection is explored in the implications for future section (5.6).

5.1 How are influences shaping the thinking and practice of KS2 teachers of comprehension? What are the strongest influences and why?

The findings of this study reveal that influences were shaping teachers' practice in five main areas of comprehension teaching. These influences were located in three contexts; national (policy and assessment), school (demographics, needs of children, school policy) and personal (home life as child and own primary school). Influences in school and personal contexts were more prevalent than in the national context overall, but each area of teaching was affected differently. The following section will summarise the influences on two of the individual interviewees, Kitty and Lucy. A model will be used to present the different influences on the two teachers. This model will then be utilised to illustrate the varying strength of influences on the whole group of 14 teachers.

#### 5.1.1 Influences on Kitty

Kitty referenced all five of the areas of comprehension teaching in her responses, but the influences were most apparent in her teaching of language comprehension and encouraging enjoyment of reading. These influences appeared in the personal context: her childhood and own schooling, and in the school context: her experience as a teacher. Kitty stated that the biggest influence on her teaching is teachers who, "...went above and beyond to make sure that I could achieve because my parents couldn't support me". Kitty noted she struggled with vocabulary until a Year 7 teacher supported her. Because of this vocabulary teaching is key for her practice. She never dumbs down language, unlike teachers she knows who substitute simpler words rather than explaining what complicated words mean when reading.

Experiences as a teacher are also highly influential on her teaching of language comprehension. Her philosophy is to take children on as many trips as possible, providing life experiences to help them identify with what they read. Because her school knows vocabulary is a particular issue for their children, Kitty teaches a daily vocabulary session. Kitty's stress on the importance of high-quality language interaction with adults for her and for her children

echo Snowling's (2018) reference to language as the foundation of education and warning that those children with poor oral language risk educational failure.

Kitty's home life is a major influence on how she encourages enjoyment of reading. She believes the consequences of not seeing any grown-ups reading and the fact that her mum did not enjoy reading were that she did not want to read as a child. Kitty does not feel enough emphasis is put on reading for pleasure in education and is adamant that she reads to the class daily, changing the book if the class is not enjoying it, to encourage her children to want to read. Her practice follows the second aim of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1) and mirrors the claims of Clark and Terevainen (2017) that children who enjoy reading are more likely to seek it out and read more frequently.

The main influence on talking about texts for Kitty seems to be in the school context of Kagan Training (Kagan, 2020), as her children are taught to use these techniques in comprehension lessons. Kitty's experiences as a teacher have impacted her approach to teaching skills. She compares her greater understanding of how to teach comprehension now with lists of questions given to children in previous years. She is using a scheme which teaches skills, and then instructs the children in tricks and tips for the different domains. Her very early experiences as a teacher appear to have influenced her sceptical approach to teaching children to answer written questions. On a Year 6 placement her children were constantly given SATs reading tests and improved, but "...it wasn't necessarily because the comprehension got better, they just got better at the style of questions". The dominating influence of Kitty's own education is apparent here too. Kitty hated reading at primary school because she was made to answer written questions at the end of reading books. She condemns this method as unsuccessful because she was never actually taught how to answer them, entering secondary school with a low reading age. Figure 5.1 summarises the influences shaping Kitty's practice. The sizes of the arrows represent the extent of the influence on the area of practice.

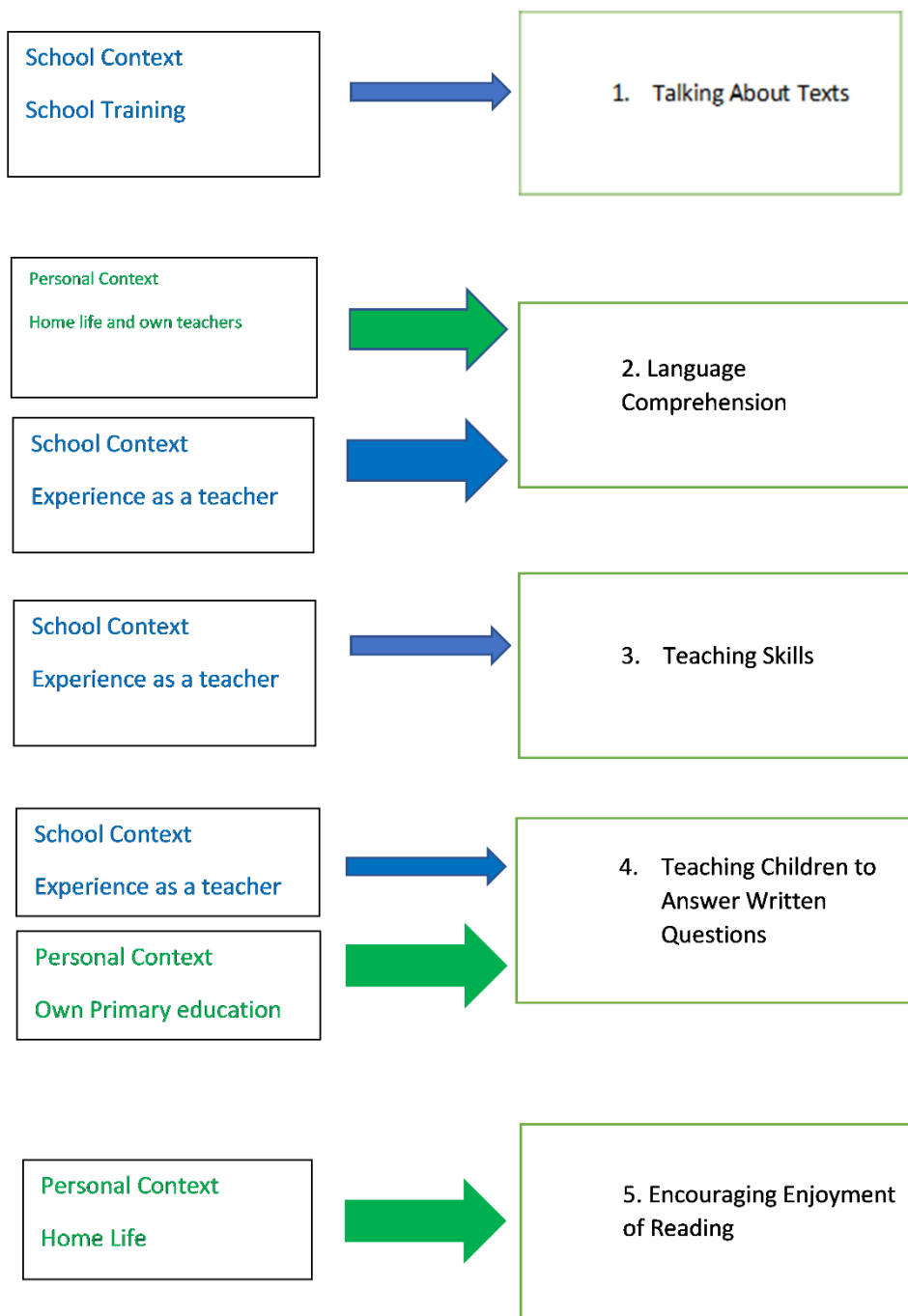


Figure 5.1 Influences on Kitty's Areas of Teaching

### 5.1.2 Influences on Lucy

The very strong influences on Lucy's teaching in the three areas she discussed were her experience as a teacher and SATs and tests. Lucy did not refer explicitly to talking about texts or the teaching of language comprehension. The area of teaching skills seemed to be wholly influenced by Lucy's experience as a teacher and she spoke enthusiastically about recent successes in her Year 6 classroom. She teaches lessons focussing on specific skills, comparing these to how she teaches maths and using a method applicable to all texts to solve certain

styles of questions. This contrasts with Such's (2021) assertion that inference is not a transferable, generic skill. Lucy openly acknowledges the driving force SATs have been in teaching skills; "So the biggie for me has been going up to Year 6 ... looked in detail via the SATs at comprehension skills".

The SATs and her move to Year 6 are also powerful influences on how she teaches children to answer written questions. It became a project for Lucy when she first saw how hard the comprehension papers were, "...it was a bit of my baby" and was determined to help the children access written papers. This aim is not outlined in her school policy or as an aim of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1). Lucy twice referenced mark schemes and how many marks an answer is worth indicating testing generally impacts her approach in this area.

Lucy declares that to provide children with key skills to answer written questions, you must teach them the skills of how to access the test and the text, suggesting her full awareness and immersion in the current accountability culture (Cremin *et al*, 2014). Her confidence in teaching this area is clear; she describes the approach that she developed as being purely down to her own initiative, which has "... made the world of difference to the children's achievement and their confidence". Lucy claims she has not picked up or been influenced by any training or CPD. She appears to be embracing rather than challenging the ZFM of assessment requirements. Lucy does not seem to be collaborating with others, or engaged with any community of practice. However, she can be seen as what van der Heijden *et al*, (2015:682) describe as a real change agent, willing to learn and change individually through her own internal drive to reflect on what will work for her children and meeting the external demands of national assessments.

The only influence on Lucy's approach to encouraging enjoyment of reading seems to be her more recent experiences that have worked for her as a teacher. Although Lucy tends to refer to enjoyment of reading in comprehension sessions, rather than independent reading, it is not hard to imagine her enthusiasm and implied love of teaching comprehension being infectious and having the positive impact she describes. Lucy exhorts how she can be inspiring, excited and "rev them up", enthraling children as she reads aloud like a passionate actor in consistently interactive lessons which her children love. Figure 5.2 summarises the influences shaping Lucy's practice. She did not refer to the areas of Talking about Texts or Language Comprehension.

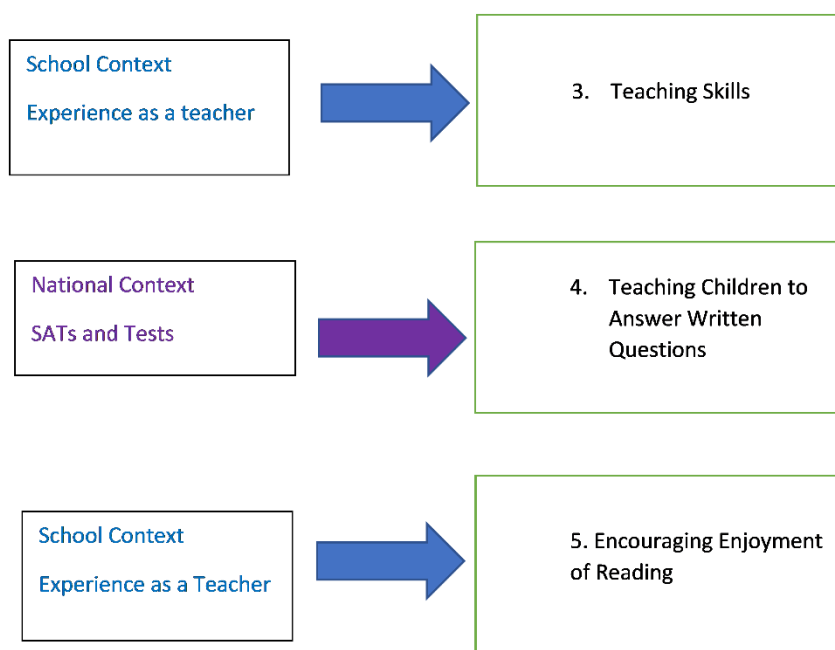


Figure 5.2 Influences on Lucy's Areas of Teaching

The two teachers show clear differences in influences on their teaching, yet neither indicated the tensions that surfaced for other teachers, between teaching children to answer written questions and encouraging enjoyment of reading. These tensions, noticeably apparent for Rachel and Jo, are indicated with a red arrow between the two areas of practice in Figure 5.3. This lack of tension, and confidence in what they teach, suggests Kitty and Lucy perceive they have agency in their comprehension teaching. They both assert their relish for reading: for Kitty it is more how interesting and exciting books can engage her children and for Lucy it is more how her interesting and exciting teaching approach helps her children make progress in comprehension.

Lucy openly acknowledges the influence of assessments and her SATs Year group on her teaching, but gives little credence to any other person or organisation impacting her approach. Kitty currently teaches Year 3, which may partly explain why national assessments are not such a strong influence. It is interesting how Lucy's responses suggest overwhelming confidence in her own devised teaching approaches. Kitty noted different school training that she had interwoven in her teaching; she is not resisting elements of promoted action. Lucy makes little mention of how her own education or childhood has impacted practice, whereas for Kitty this personal context is an extremely strong influence. Kitty's more nuanced model illustrates the varied strands of acknowledged influences on her teaching.

In Figure 5.3 below I summarise the influences shaping practice in the five areas for 14 teachers. The size of the arrows represents the number of teachers influenced, for example the size of the large blue arrow indicates the influence of experience as teachers on a number of interviewees in three areas of teaching comprehension. Green represents personal context (influences from home life and teachers' own education), blue represents the school context (demographics and the needs of the school's own children, school policy and expectations of the Academy or local authority) and purple represents the national context (policy and assessments).

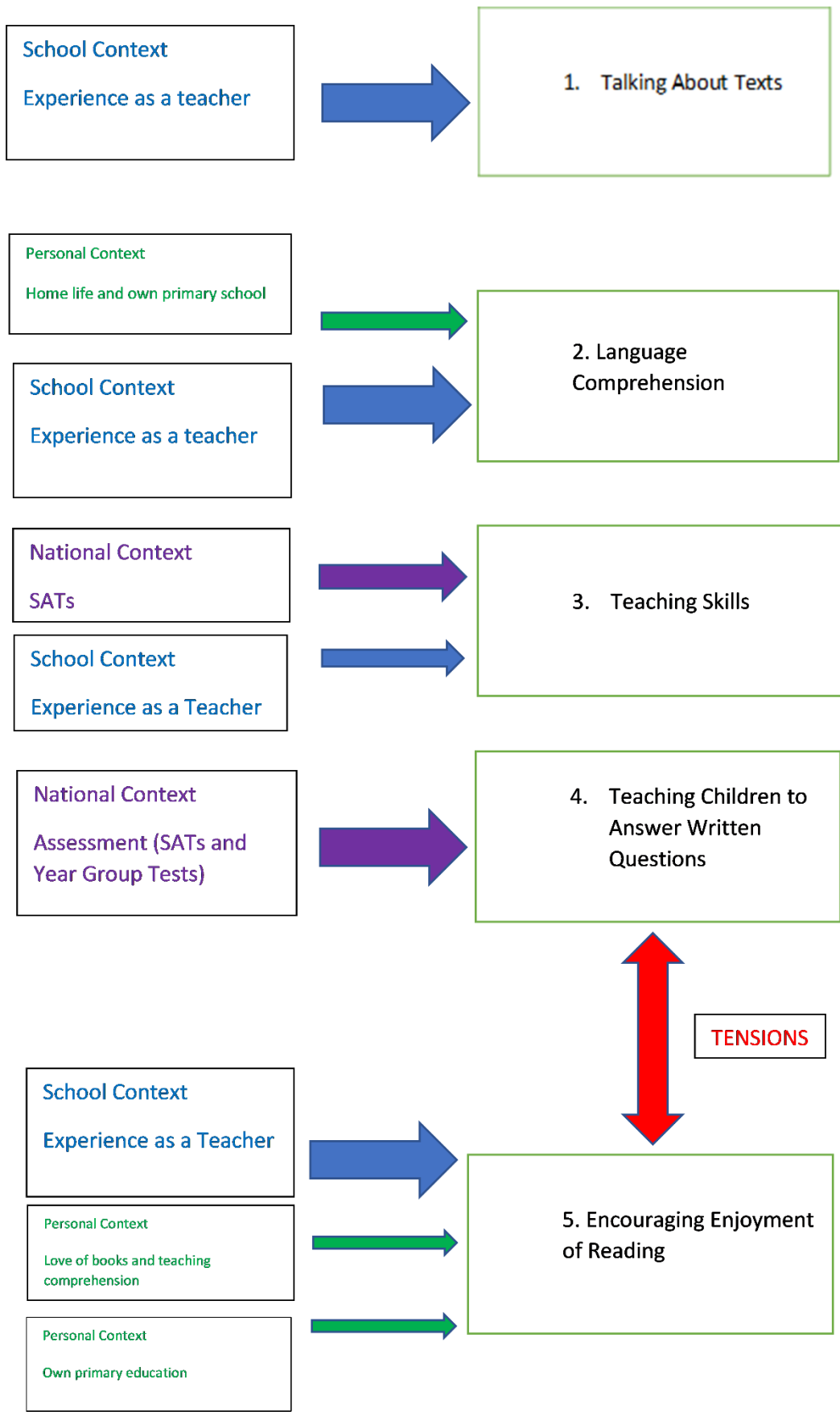


Figure 5.3 Main Influences on Five Areas

### 5.1.3 Talking About Texts

The overwhelming influence of classroom experience on this area could be because the teachers did not have knowledge of theory supporting the use of discussion. The teachers may have then had to rely on experience to support their own development of the social nature of reading. There was little indication of rationales for promoting discussion, apart from those who had experienced Reciprocal Teaching (Palincsar and Brown, 1989) and Kagan training (Kaganonline, 2020). Kerry had looked beyond classroom experience and school training to social media. Kerry is taking part in what Jones and Dexter (2014:370) term a professional learning network and what can be seen as a CoP; participation in Twitter and blogs providing quick access to information and teachers' successes in practice. However, the general lack of reference to learning theories by most of the teachers implied a lack of knowledge of theory and outside influence on pedagogy.

Eight teachers promoted 'Talking about texts' because of their experiences in the classroom and one because of their exposure to research through social media. Although none of the teachers spoke of any theory concerning the social context view of learning, their thinking and practice conform to a view of teaching and learning derived from Vygotsky (1978), where the teacher attempts to develop a student's knowledge through activity and questions, rather than trying to transmit knowledge directly (Orasanu, 1986). Therefore, this study suggests teachers may have been influenced by socioculturalist theory but may not be aware of this.

#### 5.1.3.1 Organisation of Class Affects Quality of Talking About Texts and Learning

Six interviewees reflected very negatively on their experiences of a carousel style organisational structure because of experiences as teachers. Findings suggest that practicality or what works for them, is an important influence. The findings align with Guskey (2002), who claims that teachers tend to be pragmatic and his (2002) model of teacher change that proposes teachers' experience of successful implementation changes their beliefs and attitudes.

#### 5.1.3.2 Children Supporting Each Other In Talking About Texts

It was teachers' experiences in classrooms but also training provided by schools that impacted their use of children supporting each other in talk. All teachers answered affirmatively as to whether they encouraged peer support and personal beliefs around nurture formed from experience with children and school training in Kagan structures (Kaganonline, 2020) influenced this. This was the only area where school training was an influence, highlighting the lack of influence school training has on comprehension teachers overall. It may have been an influence here because three of the interviewees worked in the same school and so



belonged to a learning community (Jones and Dexter, 2014:370), based on the theory of CoP (Wenger, 1998). The teachers had been provided with training but planned together to use Kagan structures in lessons. The fourth interviewee was promoting the use of these structures in her own school learning community.

Findings suggest these teachers agree with Nystrand (2006) who cites Vygotsky's (1978:158) proposal that cognitive growth is more likely when learners integrate knowledge by explaining to others. All of the teachers from different schools and with a range of experience are promoting language comprehension and cognitive development through collaborative dialogue and peer support. However, the study finds that none of the teachers acknowledge, or they may be unaware of, how tutoring peers can practise independent application strategies to acquire regulation skills and metacognitive monitoring (Van Keer, 2004), the fourth aim of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1).

#### 5.1.4 Language Comprehension

Practice is overwhelmingly impacted by direct experiences with children, and little reference is made to research into the importance of developing a richer vocabulary and language acquisition. The calibre of teacher and child interaction using language across the curriculum suggests their practice fully follows the first proposed aim of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1). The main driver here was teachers' experiences with children struggling to understand language and one teacher's enormous influence of her upbringing. Findings support the idea that teachers' practice aligns with Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory stating that through language, children can transform their behaviour (Van Der Veer, 2007).

It can be concluded that these teachers understood vocabulary as language comprehension, promoting more than mere word meanings but the effect well-chosen words can have. Findings suggest teachers view comprehension as a holistic concept rather than just something to be taught so children improve in writing correct answers in discrete lessons. The teachers' thinking aligns with Willingham's (2006/7) proposal about students' understanding that the aim of reading is to obtain meaning, that we do not continue using strategies such as posing and answering questions about a text into adulthood.

Despite the Literature Review presenting decades of research advocating the importance of discussion and language comprehension, teachers are having to rely on what they can learn themselves by doing, rather than drawing on or being exposed to what has already been found out to work. In her review of Teachers' Professional Development, Postholm (2012:405) cites the study of Schechter (2010), who stated that learning based on successful stories from

practice may help bring together successful practices with reforms in national policy. Tiller (2006, cited in Postholm, 2012:405) emphasises the importance of practical experiences but also teachers' metacognition. Teachers should learn from experiences, processing them to lead to new and deeper knowledge. In this way they will have a meta-perspective on their own teaching practice. Therefore, teachers may benefit from training which incorporates Vygotskian theory but with real-life examples from schools demonstrating the impact of a focus on language development. Teachers should be encouraged to engage in meta-reflection on their facilitation of these practices encouraging the social nature of reading, just as the theoretical model (Figure 2.1) exhorts the teaching of metacognitive skills for reading.

#### 5.1.5 Teaching Skills

The large influence of SATs on Teaching Skills suggests the understandable importance teachers place on children learning skills to pass tests. The second highest influence is their classroom experiences, implying teachers understand children need to develop cognitive skills to comprehend. With all 14 teachers referencing teaching skills it appears that all teachers are looking at ways to develop cognition in their teaching. With only one teacher developing pupils' metacognition and self-regulation alongside cognitive skills the study suggests there is a large gap in achieving the fourth aim of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1), metacognition.

Findings indicate there may be little knowledge of research concerning the importance of developing metacognition. Rather than compartmentalising comprehension into skills teaching in specific lessons, teachers could benefit from training in teaching and modelling metacognition, to develop learning in all areas. An understanding of socioculturalist theory may support this as Diaz *et al* (in Moll, 1990) claim that working in Vygotsky's ZPD means that the child shares active responsibility with the adult who models expert behaviour, developing from other to self-regulation.

#### 5.1.6 Teaching Children to Answer Written Questions

The national context of assessment was the only apparent influence on teaching children to answer written questions. Teaching children to be successful in tests is not found in the aims of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1) or outlined in any of the school policies or subject visions. However, it would be naive and demonstrate a misunderstanding of the current accountability culture (Cremin *et al*, 2014) if I were to suggest success in this area of pedagogy was not important for a teacher to be deemed effective. Some of the teachers may not have wanted to highlight they were so heavily influenced by assessment. Findings of this study contrast with findings from the International Literacy Centre's (2020) Response to COVID-19 report, which states that teachers said repeatedly one positive outcome of the crisis

would be the end of testing, in particular the KS2 SATs. Although the teachers in this study were not interviewed during the Covid crisis, there was no questioning of whether SATs or testing should exist.

The findings imply SATs is conceived as a final destination, rather than teaching comprehension as a life-long skill. This can be linked with the previous implication from the 'Teaching Skills' section of teaching metacognition. Instruction which aims for children's independence and self-regulation does not necessarily have a final destination as learning continues throughout life. An awareness of socioculturalism may support teachers in this, as Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD is to support children's active role in their own learning and to assist them to become self-regulated, lifelong learners (Verenikina, 2004).

#### 5.1.7 Encouraging Enjoyment of Reading

The strongest influence on encouraging enjoyment was experience in the classroom, with teachers' personal love of reading and their own primary experiences also affecting practice. Tensions and potential discord between enjoying reading and needing to teach children to achieve in tests by answering written questions emerged. This research found that although reading aloud is promoted in five school policies, only four teachers explained how they read aloud. Findings imply teachers' experiences, in their classrooms and as children themselves, are relied upon for direction as to what to focus on in classrooms. The teachers may be unaware of the research findings of the benefits of RfP or there is a conflict in allocating time to this. Findings confirm earlier work by Cremin *et al* (2015) that RfP, or promoting enjoyment in reading is still an "add on", or something that only a few of these teachers feel free to do. The study contributes to an understanding of the competing demands on teachers and the need for teacher learning and development, for senior leaders as well as classroom teachers, to address this tension, utilising research informed ways that teachers believe work in the classroom.

## 5.2 Agency in Comprehension Teaching

There were no negative emojis on any of the teachers' timelines to indicate a lack of peace with current practice. Only one teacher was actively pushing back against current practice by stating what he would like to do which was in direct contrast to his school's organisational approach. In the five areas of pedagogy explored, enjoyment in reading was the area where the most teachers suggested they had agency. The actions taken by teachers can be seen as a result of productive tensions that Goos (2013) identifies. Seven teachers took individual

actions to encourage enjoyment in reading. After this it was discussion where teachers demonstrated the most individual control.

Different practices described by five teachers implied they have agency in teaching language comprehension. Five demonstrated they were happy with current practice through comments concerning their improved understanding of how to teach skills. It was difficult to ascertain to what extent the teachers had agency in teaching children to answer written questions, as teachers did not state any beliefs. Three teachers adapted pedagogy in this for certain cohorts, suggesting some independence.

The study found teachers perceived they had agency where they indicated they had improved understanding of how to teach comprehension, where they were happy with current practice in contrast to past organisational approaches and where this happiness linked to learning from peers and collegial support. These findings build on Opfer, Pedder and Lavicza's (2011b, cited in Postholm, 2012:412) study which explored the effect on teacher development of positive school culture and schools supporting teacher learning as a community.

### **5.3 Reflections on Method**

A major impact on my approach was my own developing positionality and perspective as the project progressed. Initially I viewed myself as an insider, a fellow teacher of comprehension and in the Methodology chapter I outlined reasons for not observing practice. These were because I did not want to put teachers in a position where they may have felt practice was being judged and practitioners may change regular practice in front of an observer. Instead, I encouraged teachers to talk about their practice in more depth, to elaborate on specific examples. This can be seen in the interview transcripts in Appendix D, for example Rachel, when talking about book study. On reflection my empathy for the teachers' situations may have been a projection of my own concerns about being observed as a practitioner. This was a limitation in the design and I feel I underestimated teachers' integrity and ultimately what I could learn from this tool. As I became a full-time lecturer, I began to view myself as more of a researcher. Although I believe I should still have been aware teachers may alter regular practice when being observed I could have used the observations as stimulus for interview questions and to compare what teachers said to what they did in the classroom, exploring the extent beliefs aligned with practice.

This study has given me more understanding and an increased humility concerning the way to teach Primary English. At the outset I emphasised an understanding of the real world of teaching, adopting a pragmatist stance. In my day-to-day lecturing I continued this posture, by

modelling or demonstrating teaching approaches I had seen or experienced that I believed worked. I did not pay enough regard to being research informed. Cohen and Manion (1994: 1-2) note the “limitations of personal experience in the form of ‘common-sense knowing’”. They explain how the uneven progress of education in the Western world has largely been attributed to over dependence on experience rather than applying the principles of research to educational issues. I now believe I have a better understanding of the efficacy of being a research-informed teacher to help learners learn, rather than teaching comprehension effectively in order to do well in assessment. In brutal honesty this was probably my driving influence, even if I believed it was not, conveniently labelling the direction I took as the real world.

## **5.4 Strengths and Limitations**

The strengths and limitations of this study are examined using the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) use “trustworthiness,” as an alternative term replacing the positivistic terms of generalisability, validity and reliability for qualitative work within the constructivist paradigm (Loh, 2013:3). This study assumed there are multiple realities that are socially constructed. The task of the researcher is to adequately represent the multiple realities divulged by the research participants (Krefting, 1991) and that inquirers relinquish assumptions regarding seeking generalisations. Schwandt (2007:12) claims Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four trustworthiness criteria, credibility, transferability, dependability and neutrality are an approach “to thinking about the problem of justifying interpretations”.

### **5.4.1 Credibility**

Credibility is the term for truth value usually obtained from learning about human experiences perceived and lived by participants familiar with the phenomenon studied (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Krefting, 1991:215). To address credibility Lincoln and Guba (1986:16) advise prolonged engagement with phenonema or respondents to assess the main points and triangulation of data using different methods and sources. Prolonged engagement is developing affinity with research participants to encourage rich responses (Cope, 2014). The interviewees were engaged in in-depth interviews and creating timelines and analysis of school policy and Ofsted reports were employed as different methods and sources. Krefting (1991) suggests credibility can be enhanced within the interviewing process through expanding and reframing questions and the expansion and reframing of questions to drill deeper can be seen in the interview transcripts in Appendix D. When necessary, phone calls were made to check back and clarify points made.

Member checking is the process of testing the researcher's data, analytic categories and interpretations with informants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), ensuring the researcher translates informants' perspectives into data accurately. Research materials were revealed to the interviewees when they were sent the interview transcripts to check to decrease chances of misrepresentation. Kornbluh (2015) highlights how important member checks are to combatting challenges to establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research, enabling researchers to investigate alternative explanations and recognise their own personal bias. She notes that this is because of the assumption that researchers can begin a study with a specific position, influenced by subjective experiences, which could potentially influence analysis. When the researcher describes experiences as a researcher, credibility is heightened (Cope, 2014). In the introduction to this chapter, I acknowledge my developing experiences as a researcher and changing positionality.

Miles and Huberman (1994:274) ask questions to determine the credibility of a study, such as is the account convincing and comprehensive? Are areas of uncertainty identified? Findings are organised in a comprehensive structure in Chapter 4. An area of uncertainty is highlighted here. The study used school reading policies, Ofsted Reports and information from school websites in an attempt to provide a broader picture of comprehension teaching in interviewees' schools and to help frame school and National contexts for influences. At times analysis has shown interviewees' answers correlated with wording in policies, or Ofsted's comments, particularly with two teachers who were also Reading Leads. However, only one of the Ofsted reports was published in the last two years and therefore did not necessarily indicate the current situation. Although teachers used the plural pronoun 'We' when commenting on practices, no teachers explicitly acknowledged that they were guided by school policy. Teachers rarely referred to school policy, except to provide me with the policies or websites when I asked for these. Consequently, there was a lack of evidence to firmly conclude any teacher was heavily influenced by what was stated in their school policy. Another area of uncertainty discovered was whether teachers' ages or length of experience impacted influences on teaching. No indication was found that it did, but there was an absence of negative cases to indicate that it did not. Negative case analysis enhances credibility (Krefting, 1991). This would be an active search for negative instances to develop insights until no further negative instances are found. The assiduous search for negative instances is evident in the four phases of analysis and matrices displayed in section 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

#### 5.4.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to findings that are applicable to different groups or in other environments (Cope, 2014). To increase transferability Guba and Lincoln (1986:16) suggest the researcher collect thick descriptive data and report them with sufficient detail about the context that will allow judgements about the degree of fit or similarity to be made by the reader or others who wish to apply findings elsewhere. I transcribed the raw data into the interview transcripts word for word, including changes in voice tone and responses, for example Kerry's interview, Appendix D.

Miles and Huberman (1994:278) ask whether the original sample of persons, processes or settings are fully described to be able to make sufficient comparisons with different samples, and cite Maxwell (1992b) who questions whether the study's transferable theory is made explicit. They suggest the report advise settings where the findings could be usefully tested further and that the study needs to let the reader know whether the users of the findings have learned or developed and what it has done for the participants, the researcher and its consumers. The years of experience, school and gender of the participants in the sample for this study are outlined in Table 3.1. The study has generated theory in the implications and contribution section, explicitly discussed in section 5.5 and recommends further research with different participants, for example senior leaders, in section 5.6.

#### 5.4.3 Dependability

Mertens (2015:398) cites Guba and Lincoln (1989) who identify dependability as the interpretivist paradigm's parallel standard for reliability. This is whether the research procedure is unchanging over time and stable across methods and researchers, whether the research questions are clear and if components of the study design are consistent with these questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I completed two rounds of interviews. The three research questions for this study were made clear in Chapter 1 and consistently referred to throughout the study. The interview questions were formulated using these questions and the Literature Review in Chapter 2. Appendix A presents the interview questions and clearly indicates how these link with sections from the Literature Review. In Chapters 4 and 5, the research questions are used as headings to structure the discussion of findings and conclusion. Miles and Huberman (1994:278) highlight that paradigms and analytic constructs should be identified, making the point that reliability depends partly on its links with theory. Section 3.1 explicates this study's ontological and epistemological stance and assumptions.

#### 5.4.4 Confirmability

Miles and Huberman (1994) write of the issue of neutrality or confirmability; the degree to which the conclusions are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher, or being explicit about existing inescapable biases. Confirmability can be demonstrated by the researcher exemplifying that data represents informants' responses, that findings were a direct result of the data and explaining how interpretations were arrived at (Cope, 2014). Participant quotes enable the reader to grasp the intrinsic nature of the experience and emerging themes and conclusions are linked with these exhibits of displayed or condensed data.

The four phases of analysis are part of an audit trail, which Cope (2014) claims is a key strategy to strengthen credibility of qualitative research. The trail is a collection of materials including interview transcripts, data analysis and reporting strategies performed in the research process documenting the researcher's decisions and assumptions to supply evidence to the reader. This was developed further by engaging in critical discussions with my supervisors. The trail and rich quotes from the interviewees, allow the reader to critique the study's credibility and endorse the interpretations (Cope, 2014), by allowing the interpretations to be traced back to their sources. This verifies to some extent that findings of this study are shaped more by participants than by researcher.

### **5.5 Contribution to Knowledge**

The thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge in that it devises an original framework to examine teachers' perceptions of the influences in their teaching of reading comprehension. It extends the literature into teacher learning and development using Goos' adaptation of Valsiner's zone theory and CoP, focusing on the specific area of reading comprehension in KS2. The thesis provides an understanding of the impact of professional knowledge and research into reading comprehension instruction on this group of teachers, and contributes to the research landscape around teacher agency as it gained insight into these KS2 teachers' perceptions of the realisation of agency in their comprehension classroom. The sample size is small and I am attempting to offer thick description in which Denzin (1989:83) claims "... the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard", and therefore may resonate with other KS2 teachers of comprehension. The insights gained and recommendations below may be of value to those reflecting on the broader picture of comprehension teaching in KS2.



The most significant influence across all five areas of comprehension teaching is teachers' experience. This suggests teachers are relying heavily on their experiences to develop or adapt a proscribed way to teach comprehension. It raises the question as to where teachers will turn when they come to teach new children or a new concept. An approach may be tried which research has already found ineffective, and this could be a waste of the teacher's and learner's valuable time. There appears to be a gap in the support available currently in teacher learning and development for reading comprehension. Jones and Dexter, (2014:368), cite Hill *et al*, (2009) who claim that when training is available, most teachers only engage in the minimal professional learning required and report that these experiences only reinforce existing practices. They explain that the content and format of the training is often dictated by people other than teachers it is designed for, ignoring the teacher voice and wasting opportunities to capitalise on teacher experience. A key principle in developing ownership in adult learning is acknowledging them as the centre of decision-making regarding change (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 2005). Therefore, more support is needed but adaptations to the delivery and content of learning and development training are needed. This study contributes ideas for professional development that could be created, as well as how it could be delivered. This will be discussed further below. As the data revealed, teachers are more influenced by in-school and school-to-school training and by what they 'know' works rather than outside providers. Figure 4.8 exemplified the impact of the two theoretical frameworks and other influences on the learning and development of one teacher, Rachel. Her zone of development was most affected by her experiences as a teacher, own beliefs and what was allowed in her zone of free movement in school. There was a smaller but important impact from the online CoPs that she was involved in, where teachers contributed ideas for 'what works'.

Quigley (2020:10) claims that now there is a gap in teacher knowledge and most teachers have "cobbled together" training on reading comprehension, fluency and vocabulary instruction. Kate and Kerry provided rich data and had agency in their teaching. They did not articulate ideas put together hastily but appeared research informed. As teacher educators, we could share the approach of these teachers with our PGDipEd students, encouraging them to remain research-informed throughout their careers. Sales, Traver and Garcia (2011) point out the importance of co-operation between university teacher educators and teachers in school as a way of training teachers in their practice.

After exploring the correlation between teachers' experiences and ideas suggested in research, it is a challenge to consider how this research evidence could be made widely available to schools through different forms of teacher learning and development so that it is effectively

embedded. Possibly research is not accessible, due to time constraints on leaders and teachers or a lack of awareness of what is out there, for example the impact of metacognition on reading skill. Fullan (2007:153, cited in Postholm, 2018:1) proposes that the only education that ultimately changes classroom practice is professional learning in context. Therefore, this study suggests learning and development approaches for teachers in collaboration with university educators and primary school teachers for content and format, engaging the teacher voice in a network of collegial support. The content would build on research evidence from areas highlighted in the theoretical model (Figure 2.1), particularly in metacognition, peer support and language development.

Expert teacher colleagues, sourced from our partnership network, would help align theory with what they have found works in the classroom. Just as we, as teacher educators, currently encourage students to reflect on and link experiences with theory and research, the learning and development programme would encourage qualified teachers to do this, engaging in collaborative conversations with colleagues, rather than relying on pure experience to formulate approaches to teaching comprehension in isolation. This could involve collaboration with the new English hubs or a FutureLearn course for comprehension teaching, developing a comprehension focused CoP. It could be delivered as part of the Early Career Framework (DfE, 2019) for teaching, providing research-informed training for qualified teachers, but the format of delivery based on what we understand about how teachers learn. Baxan and Broad (2017) claim that connecting practice and theory in practice, and developing metacognitive capacities, lie at the heart of teacher learning. Teachers would be encouraged to make adaptive and evidence-based decisions in context. A key opportunity for further research would then be to study the effectiveness of the learning and development opportunities recommended.

Teachers are teaching the break-down of reading skills as they have in previous decades but the enjoyment of reading does not appear to be promoted in the same conscientious way. The study indicates there is not an overall acknowledgment of the importance of RfP in the development of long-term readers. The desire to read and capacity as readers, “the will and the skill” (Cremin *et al*, 2014:3) for reading still seem to be very separate in classrooms rather than intertwined. As exemplified in Figure 4.8, Influences on Rachel’s Learning and Development, the zone of development for teachers is highly subject to the ZFM in schools, a pattern repeated for the other teachers. It may be beneficial for senior leaders to be given training highlighting how RfP impacts on attainment in assessment, alongside examples of schools where this has been implemented successfully. This could mean these classroom

teachers would then be working within a ZFM regarding RfP, or at least it would be promoted action and they may then have the confidence to carve out specific time for it. Postholm (2012:412) cites Opfer and Pedder's (2011) study that concluded the most important factors for a school's good results are the capacity to support professional learning.

Experience may be such a prevalent influence because there has been no recent guidance from the government. The Literature Review (2.4.3) explores how the English Programmes of Study (DfE, 2013) outline cognitive strategies, but not metacognitive strategies, and how the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014:6) provides little guidance on how reading is to be taught. Matthew, the most experienced teacher, commented on how he felt there had been no government directive since the NLS to say how to teach reading. Consequently, "there is no real joined up thinking ...so every school is finding their own path, finding their own way". By exposing teachers to research-informed joined up thinking and demonstrations of approaches that work by colleagues, teachers may feel more confident and agentic in their domains.

## **5.6 Implications for Future Research**

The concept of SATs as a final destination (4.4.1) is a concern. Further research into the prevalence of this idea and how to address it so comprehension is developed for life-long learning would be useful. A longitudinal study could be undertaken to track the comprehension learning of KS2 children, exploring how development continues to secondary school. Educational assessment authors seem to assume fairness in educational assessment applies to the test-takers only, but there can be issues of fairness to the users of assessment outcomes (Nisbet, 2020). The KS2 SATs results may determine the teaching group into which pupils are put when they start secondary school. Burgess and Greaves (2019) found using teacher assessment instead of testing detrimentally affected recorded achievements for poorer children and children from some ethnic minorities, and echo concerns about secondary schools, or the assessment users, setting children based on this and consequently increasing attainment gaps. A longitudinal study could explore how and if children continue to demonstrate reading strategies in secondary school and be expanded to examine the possible impact of setting and teacher expectations on reading comprehension.

Responses of some interviewees touched on what reading comprehension actually is and how they see it; as a holistic concept or discrete lesson. This raised further questions about teachers' understanding of reading comprehension and how it is valued. It would be useful to explore primary teachers' definitions of what reading comprehension is and why they believe

it is taught; because the curriculum or school demands it or whether teachers see value in teaching it.

Findings suggest there is a gap in teachers' education concerning the teaching of metacognitive strategies which children could apply across the curriculum and for longitudinal learning. This is an area to explore in the future – promoting children's conscious control of understanding of language and written language, by teaching metacognitive strategies for learning which can be applied to all areas of the curriculum. Further work could address the impact of actively teaching metacognitive strategies across the curriculum on attainment in reading in KS2. It would be useful to investigate reading leaders and head teachers' perspectives and how they feel their agency is limited in regard to promoting language comprehension and reading enjoyment in schools, to build a stronger picture of the challenges and potential ways forward in teaching reading comprehension. Such (2021) suggests that school leaders, with the pressure of assessment data, can encourage the use of ineffective practices such as teaching inference as a generic skill.

## **5.7 Concluding Remarks**

I chose a focus for this research initially with the aim of becoming a better KS2 reading teacher. I believe the journey I have undertaken has given me a growing understanding of how teachers learn and a far more developed understanding of teaching comprehension. Ultimately this supports me in my role as a teacher educator, lecturing in primary English, supporting trainee teachers to learn and Early Career Teachers through my department's involvement in writing units for the Early Career Framework. I have found the research extremely interesting, particularly the interaction with teachers at different stages of their careers and their personal histories and current attitudes to teaching. What has been most fascinating is the similarities in experiences or views that have been expressed by professionals in very different contexts. I have grown as a researcher, reaching a breakthrough in the use of matrices (Miles and Huberman, 1994) to help wield the mass of data into a comprehensive analysis. A challenge was finding appropriate theoretical frameworks. I began by exploring the history of comprehension teaching but my focus was influences on teachers and therefore how they learned and developed their teaching. Wider reading meant another breakthrough with the realisation that Valsiner's (1997) zone theory was applicable to my area of interest.

From a systematic and detailed analysis of the thoughts and reflections of 14 teachers, my study has presented insight into the strengths of different influences on five areas of comprehension teaching. I have provided an awareness of teachers' perceptions of their

agency in these different areas, despite constraints of their environments and on their actions and how there appears a general acceptance of the teachers' school environments and actions promoted there. I now wish to use this knowledge in my practice, as I interact with my own colleagues supporting teachers to learn and as a background for researching more about the teaching and learning of reading.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Interview Schedule Linked to Literature Review Sections

#### Interview Schedule

I invite you to tell me the story of your life as a teacher of reading comprehension; all the events and experiences that were important to you. Please take the time you need. I'll take some notes for after you've finished telling me about your experiences. I'll listen and won't interrupt during the session. Any questions?

#### A) History of their reading lives

**1. Do you remember being taught reading comprehension at primary school?**

**2. How were you taught it?**

Is there anything/any approach that you felt helped you learn?

#### B) What is current practice? How has it changed?

**3. Can you describe the approach that you currently use?**

How often is it taught a week?

**4. Have you always taught reading comprehension lessons?**

**5. Is it encouraged at home with homework?**

**6. How is your classroom organised for this?**

In ability groups, mixed ability groups, whole class?

**7. Do you use discussion as a teaching strategy? If so, how?**

**8. Do you encourage peer support? If so, how?**

**9. Have you taught peer support strategies to the children?**

#### C) History of their teaching of reading

**10. How long is it since you qualified as a teacher?**

**11. Have you any memories of being trained in how to teach comprehension on your ITT?**

**12. Please can you draw a timeline with emojis to describe your attitudes towards reading comprehension at different stages in your career?**

How did you feel about that?

Do you know why this was introduced?

How successful do you feel it was in terms of teaching reading?

**13. When you had any training for teaching reading comprehension, has there been any theory or research explained to you?**

**14. Any reference to government policy when you had your training?**

**15. What practices did you find the most effective for teaching comprehension?**

D) Implications

**16. If you were to go to a different school as headteacher and could implement your own approach to teaching reading comprehension without any constraints, what would you recommend, how would you go about it?**

**17. How would you organise the classes for this?**

Question	Literature Review Section
1.Do you remember being taught reading comprehension at primary school?	2.2.3 Influences on Teacher Learning and Development
2.How were you taught it?	2.2.3 Influences on Teacher Learning and Development
3.Can you describe the approach that you currently use?	2.4 Aims of Learning and Teaching Comprehension in Primary Schools
4.Have you always taught reading comprehension lessons?	2.4 Aims of Learning and Teaching Comprehension in Primary Schools
5.Is it encouraged at home with homework?	2.4 Aims of Learning and Teaching Comprehension in Primary Schools
6.How is your classroom organised for this?	2.4.3.3 Group Teaching 2.6 Peer Support
7. Do you use discussion as a teaching strategy? If so, how?	2.4.1 Develop Language Comprehension
8.Do you encourage peer support? If so, how?	2.6 Peer support
9.Have you taught peer support strategies to the children?	2.6 Peer support
10.How long is it since you qualified as a teacher?	
11.Have you any memories of being trained in how to teach comprehension on your ITT?	2.4 Aims of Learning and Teaching Comprehension in Primary Schools
12.Please can you draw a timeline ....?	2.2.3 Influences on Teacher Learning and Development
13.When you had any training, was any theory or research explained to you?	2.2.3 Influences on Teacher Learning and Development
14.Any reference to government policy when you had any training?	2.2.3 Influences on Teacher Learning and Development
15.What practices did you find the most effective for teaching comprehension?	2.2.1 Teachers' Beliefs 2.2.2 Beliefs About Reading
16.If you were to go to a different school as a headteacher, ... how would you go about it?	2.3 Agency
17.How would you organise your classes for this?	2.3 Agency



## **Appendix B – Short Summaries of Schools**

### School A

School A is a large three-form entry junior (7-11) school and part of a Multi Academy Trust. It was rated ‘good’ by Ofsted in June 2019. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average, the proportion of children with SEND is average and the proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is well above average (Ofsted, 2019).

The school teaches comprehension in daily lessons using the VIPERS (Literacy Shed, 2020) approach. The school website states that the school reads in groups to develop reading skills and spend time talking about books to improve comprehension skills. It lists the comprehension skills being developed as prediction, finding the main idea, sequencing, summarising, point of view and purpose, finding information, is it a fact or opinion, finding similarities and differences, understanding words, inferring, considering cause and effect and concluding.

### School B

School B is a smaller than average one form entry primary school. It was rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in April 2013. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average, and the number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of children who speak English as an additional language is well-below the national average (Ofsted, 2015).

The school teaches comprehension through daily guided reading sessions and in discrete English lessons. According to the Reading Policy, lessons are organised to allow children to discuss their ideas. Skills are developed through which children can give critical responses to moral questions and they will have the opportunity to understand and appreciate a range of texts from their own literacy heritage and texts from other cultures. The Reading Policy states that reading is a multi-sensory approach to getting at meaning, that competency is key to independent learning, that it is crucial in developing self-confidence and motivation and so all staff should give this a high priority. The arrangements for assessment levels and who they are reported to are included in the policy.

### School C

School C is an average-sized one-form entry primary school, rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in 2015. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are well above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average (Ofsted, 2015).

The school teach comprehension through guided reading sessions and bi-weekly specific comprehension lessons. The English Policy highlights the importance of effective communication and how children in the school develop skills of participating effectively in group discussions, listening and responding to literature and giving and receiving instructions. It emphasises the school’s focus on vocabulary teaching with its own section in the policy, stating that it needs to be active and systematic. The policy states that pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure through reading partners, quiet reading time and listening to an adult read.

### School D

School D is an average-sized one-form entry primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher, at around 60%, than the national average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is average. Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium in this school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average (Ofsted 2014).

The school teaches comprehension through whole class reading lessons. The Teaching and Learning policy states reading is taught through a range of strategies including Reading for Pleasure, class texts, access to the school library and reading homework when they take home books from schemes and what they term as ‘real books’ by popular authors. The policy claims the school enjoys celebrating themed days to promote a love of reading and invites authors in to share their stories.

### School E

School E is an average-sized primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 and is part of a multi-academy company. Although pupils at the school come from 19 different ethnic groups, the majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average (Ofsted, 2019).

The school teaches comprehension through guided reading sessions using a carousel approach. The English Policy explains how teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, where children have opportunities to discuss texts in detail. The policy highlights the importance of language, and how pupils make the link between speaking and listening and reading and writing. It states that the teaching of English ensures all pupils become confident in the use of spoken and written language, that the school encourages all readers to read at home to support a lifelong love of reading and recognises the value of adults reading aloud to children to improve their use of language. The school policy also notes that book-banded ‘real books’ are used as well as reading scheme books.

### School F

School F is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, with pupils of Asian heritage being the largest group. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The school provides specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs (Ofsted, 2014).

The school teaches comprehension in whole-class English lessons. The English Policy explains how they teach children to understand what they have read over a four-day approach or method, which helps children make connections, build awareness of authors and explore the use of vocabulary. According to the policy, the current subject focus is to develop the habit of reading widely and often for pleasure and for information, creating readers for life. It claims the school wants children to be confident, successful readers who take pleasure in reading. To achieve this they have created an environment where children feel comfortable when enjoying books and have created ‘Biscuits and Books’ groups where children and teachers talk spontaneously about favourite books in a reading community. They provide workshops and ‘Fun Friday’ sessions to support parents in helping children to read.

### School G

School G is an average-sized one-form entry primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. An above-average proportion, just under half of the pupils, is of minority ethnic heritage. Nearly a third speak English as an additional language, a well-above average proportion, with many Polish speakers. There is an above-average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal time is above average (Ofsted, 2012).

The school teaches comprehension through guided reading sessions and the teachers can choose to teach discrete comprehension lessons. The Parent Handout for reading explains how years one to five study two books in detail each year and encourages parents to discuss the book with them at home. Tips are provided to support the children with reading which include reading to them often, helping the child understand the vocabulary, and developing their child's ability to predict, question, summarise and infer meaning. The aim of School G is clearly stated which is to promote a love of reading whilst teaching them the skills of phonics, decoding, fluency and comprehension. The school runs weekly minibus trips to the local library and has outdoor libraries on the front and back playgrounds. The handout explains how the school follows a programme of reciprocal reading, where children become 'book detectives', taking on roles, working as a team to understand the text, and learning to predict, ask questions, clarify meanings and summarise passages. It is explained how classes have paired up as 'reading buddies' to read the same text together and complete different activities based on their chosen books.

## Appendix C – Information and Consent Form

### Participant Information

#### Mixed ability groupings in Primary English comprehension lessons

I am an Ed D student in the Department of Education at the University of Birmingham. I am conducting a research project investigating teachers' perceptions of if and how seating arrangements can affect the learning of primary children during comprehension/reading lessons. The project aims to explore teachers' practice and perceptions of the effects of mixed ability pairing/small grouping in the English primary curriculum.

In order to do this I would like to interview key stage 2 teachers who utilise different pairings/groupings of children in their comprehension lessons, and their perceptions of if and how this affects children's learning.

I am writing to ask if you would like to be interviewed for this project. If so, I would be delighted to come and discuss the project with you in more detail.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Best wishes,

Beth

Beth Marley

## Consent Form

The information which you supply or which may be collected as part of this research project will be entered into a filing system or database and will only be accessed by Beth Marley. The information will only be used for the purpose of research. No identifiable personal data will be published.

### Statements of Understanding/Consent

- I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.
- I understand that **data will be stored and retained according to the University's Code of Practice for Research (available at [http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP\\_Research.pdf](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP_Research.pdf))**, and that data will be transferred from an encrypted USB storage device to secure University computer system and then data on USB storage device will be deleted.
- If I withdraw my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed. **I understand the deadline for participant withdrawal will be within 2 weeks after my interview has taken place.**

Please tick one of the following:

- Based upon the above, I agree to be interviewed and recorded.
- Based on the above I do not agree to be interviewed and recorded.

Name of interviewee:

Date:

Signature:

## Appendix D – Interview Transcript Example

Me: Do you remember being taught reading comprehension at primary school yourself?

K: I don't necessarily remember the teaching of it, I can remember the particular books that we read at school, and that we would sort of do your question, answer, question answer, but in terms of how we sort of teach it now, I don't remember sort of having reading lessons so to speak

Me: Right

K: It was always you know you went and got a new reading book and you went and sat with the teacher and you read the book, talk about the book and then you would read aloud to one another and you'd talk about it that way. And we would do question, answer, question, answer, but I would say that now we try to think beyond the thought of question, answer, question, answer, even though that's sort of where you want them to be at the end for like SATs and things.

Me: So just a vague memory and non-specific lessons?

K: Yeah, yeah yeah. I can remember like the particular books that we read but not necessarily how the comprehension strategies were taught to us.

Me: Right, right, ummm so that was my next question, how were you actually taught comprehension but you had

K: No I remember a lot of discussion, that's the main thing, and it was always at home as well, you know, because comprehension has to be done at home as well and it was always the understanding of the book, it was always being asked questions and things like that so I remember more about the actual discussion part of discussing a book and what had happened and understanding that, discussing that as opposed to really writing things down.

Me: So did school give you homework to take home to discuss or was that your family's

K: Family's questions. But I presume that at some point there would have been, you know, suggestions from staff as to the sort of things that parents could ask children to help them remember you know to ask them particular types of questions

Me: Right

K: but I presume they would have, your parents would probably ask simpler questions than you would probably get at school because at school you were meant to be looking for more specific things.

Me: Right, okay, thank you. So now thinking about current practice, can you describe the approach you currently use to teach reading comprehension.

K: Yeah, so we recently changed our approach so we now do a whole class text rather than it being based on ability so we are all reading the same text and then what we'll do is we'll pick a particular reading skill, you know a type, whether we're looking at retrieving or inferring um that will be the objective. An activity will be planned around that and then the way that we sort of differentiate it might be through a slightly different task, or it might be through support, so we're all reading the same book, we're all on the same page, so to speak and we can give support there and we also do a reading activity at the beginning called 'Read with RIC' which came from the Mrs P blog, so its lots of prompts, picture prompts, video prompts, and the way that they have done it, which we haven't adopted is, they've split the reading into reading domains, and three of them are retrieval, inference

and choice, so an author's choice. And at the start of every lesson we begin with one of those, or a picture prompt and they have 3 questions they have to answer those because those are the questions that are most often are, the skills that most often are tested for. So all the children in KS2 and in year 2 they are starting to do that. So that's the beginning of the lesson. Then we go into the book and we discuss the skill we were looking at, and then they would do an activity based on that.

Me: How often, how often does that happen ?

K: We're doing that um once a week. So we still call that guided reading. So a guided reading session about once a week and its for about an hour, whereas previously we used to do the carousel bit which I never really liked.

Me: Yeah, okay (laughs) I'll ask you about that later. (Kathleen laughs). Thank you. So have you always taught reading comprehension, can you remember from when you started teaching?

K: I don't, when I started teaching, I used to teach in KS1 um, and I never really remember sort of teaching reading. We used to do you know small books in small groups, that sort of guided reading thing where you take a little group and you talk to them about the book, it was more verbal, and then when I came here, after there was a bit more of a focus on reading and the assistant head at the time tried to introduce that on top of guided reading we also did reading skills comprehension lessons once a week but I personally found that difficult um because comprehension is comprehension its not always you know the way in which you deliver it, you've got to think outside the box to sort of really engage the children with it and the one thing I'm always second guessing is like the ability, the level of the text to the ability of the children being able to match that well so they got something out of it, rather than it being something too easy.

Me: Right. So when was that, when you said the assistant head introduced it?

K: That was introduced after OFSTED, so that was in June 2014 that she introduced this sort of separate book where it was just pure, it was like your question, answer sort of things and that was because Ofsted had, because of data, brought up that reading was a weakness, because children hadn't performed very well in terms of the KS1 and 2 assessments, and it was linked back to reading and the types of questions, so there was a big push by the assistant head to give the children lots of practice for them to be able to answer those types of questions because unfortunately it all just seemed to fall quite heavily on to them, what you get in Year 6 and what you get in Year 2 and that.

Me: So that was quite a few years ago then

K: Yeah, and then that sort of filtered away again and then we were still sort of in the carousel way of doing guided reading.

ME: Oh yeah, right, yes.

K: And that its only with, was it last, I think it was sort of last Summer term, so Summer 2017, um Lisa, who's the Year 4 teacher and the um English lead, she took over from MP who left in the January, and she brought it in, because she thought that it was a really good way of moving away from the carousel which can be quite bitty and I don't think personally you get the most out of the children and its quite hard to assess them and actually having one book that's challenging for everybody and you can obviously put the support in for your children that maybe struggle with either the reading element or the actual comprehension part and I think that that works better. I feel like I'm teaching reading whereas when we did the carousel I didn't feel like I was teaching reading I just felt like I was going through a process.

Me: Right, thank you, so with um how long is it since you qualified as a teacher?

K: I qualified in 2011, so I think I'm into my seventh year of teaching.

Me: So that's a good long period so have you any memories of being trained to teach reading from your teacher training? Was it a PGDipEd or?

K: I did a PGCE. I don't remember, sort of any, there must have been, I know that we had like the English lessons, we had a lot about the theory of reading, and sort of the box where you've got your good comprehension, your poor comprehension, your good fluency and your poor fluency, and where children sat in that. So there was a lot of theory around reading but not actual practical things. I don't feel there was anything that I saw from my PGCE in reading that I took through into my actual practice.

Me: Right, so for going from that, can you, and it sounds a bizarre request so, but take as much time, could you draw a timeline of um, you might want to use emojis or smiley faces or something, to describe your attitudes towards teaching comprehension at different stages. I did this, this is what I did for me to give an idea because some people have looked at me bizarrely when I said that, but just then to talk about it teacher training I can't remember anything (K. laughs) but I know that must have been a long time ago (K: Yeah) My first school it was Reception I felt quite happy because it was mainly decoding and then Big Book classwork and discussions for understanding. But I felt very comfortable doing that and then when I went to a different school, there was no planning to follow so um that's how I did it (K: Yeah, yeah) but just take your time.

K: So yeah I'm going to start with what you did on that first one, teacher training. (Me laughs). Let's think, so I was in year 2 and year 1, lots of phonics. I think at this point here, this, sort of I was handed a load of planning, I, as you are when you move into a new year group, that Y4 teacher was moving into Year 6 so I just got given all his planning ready for the new term, and it was a bit like, first of all got there find all the books, find some of them, and you look at the format of the planning, and I think jumping from one key stage to another was a bit mind-blowing

Me: Right

K: Cause then I moved to year 5. I've done a lot of year groups, um, I think I was, I'm going to put indifferent, .....that's a smiley face (laughs), um, Going to have to go on to the next one (next piece of paper), So that was my first year in year 6 and now I'd say I think as well having the stress of SATs and the pressure there with the reading, because I knew my class, and as we were practising they were weak in their reading, and we did lots of practice, umm we looked at test questions and we did the skills and things, but still their SATs final results in reading were lower than anything else. I don't know whether that was because, I don't know what it was, it was just them, it wasn't a particularly big surprise to me that they hadn't performed as well.

Me: So you hadn't necessarily changed your teaching approach to comprehension?

K: No, the change had only really happened um, after SATs where I trialled Reading with RIC and whole school whole class texts. What I did used to do in Year 6 was because I was very much of the opinion that when you test them they're all being tested on the same text, so there's no point in giving some of my children easier texts because it's just going to be more of a shock to them, they need to be exposed to the challenging texts and they need to understand that this is the standard and you've got to try, we've got to work hard together to get you there, so I only had like maybe one group that needed a very separate book. Um but I think that after SATs it gave me the freedom to sort of experiment a bit more, and just say right we'll have a go with this. And they seemed to enjoy it, and I enjoyed it as well, and like I said, I felt like I was actually teaching rather than just going through the rigmarole of half an hour of sitting with a group and talking to them and then moving to the next group and so on. Umm how do I feel now? I'll put another smiley face, umm, we've got more texts in school, which I think makes a difference, we were asked what texts, you know you've



got to have 3 texts for your class, what do you want? Whereas we've been asked that previously in the past, the stuff's never been ordered or things have changed, whereas now I've got 30 books of each text that I'm reading so I feel that I can deliver the lessons, and I know that the children that half the lesson isn't going to be them needing to access a text or anything like that. I think that's about it.

Me: So with the 3 texts, is that one a term, do you have a class book a term?

K: Yeah, so what we've done, what Lisa's, she's bought us a 'Reading Explorers' book which is basically random sort of texts and questions based around the sort of reading skills um and then she wanted us to have a text as well because she was very conscious of the fact that 9 times out of 10 its going to be a fiction book, um, and you're going to be looking at that, and of course that's important but you also need the skills for non-fiction as well so she wanted to provide us with a resource that we could use, so the idea is that we use that book for some of the weeks, either before or at the start of a term or at the end of the term, ideally it would last half a term but I've found with Year 6 books they tend to last a lot longer, because you do spend a lot more, you look in-depth, rather than just sort of saying, I know, you know, with Key Stage 1 you do a book a week or a book every couple of weeks and then you move on, whereas in key stage 2 you need them to be able to read at length for a sustained period of time and for them to look at the text as well.

Me: So you do that text at the beginning and end, but are you doing other texts as well?

K: Yeah, so we'll be looking at other texts throughout our English lessons as well. Well so I've, so we've done Skellig. We've been doing since just before half term, we're coming to the end of that. So when we're doing our guided reading session, that's what our, our work is based on. However we're accessing other texts through our English genres, and making sure that we're building teaching of reading and comprehension into that as well.

Me: Oh

K: They are getting access to other texts as well. They've got a main text that they're focussing on, but if we're not doing Skellig then they might do a comprehension that's based on poetry or they might do one that's based on non-fiction. We're building the reading skills as well into our English genre lessons as well.

Me: And those are the RIC skills?

K: The RIC skills are your reading so we do the RIC skills when we do the guided reading there's almost like a starter activity, your retrieving, your inference, but then we try and pick some of those skills out as well in the English genre lessons.

Me: Right, okay, so this is, you're very happy about this? (pointing to smiley face on timeline)

K: I think so, I think so yeah. I think reading's always, it's quite a strange thing to teach, it's quite hard to, I've said this to my class, like the skills of like skimming and scanning to retrieve information and understand what you're reading, I can't show them what's going on inside my head to be able to do that, and it's quite hard to sometimes to model the skills of comprehension and teach the skills of comprehension. It obviously happens over a sustained period of time but it's different to the teaching of a writing skill or the teaching of a maths skill which can be quite explicit, it can be focussed. Your reading skills, you're using them all the time as well, um, you know, you're using them in your history or your geography or your science so, it's always been one of those where I've thought it's quite difficult to say I am going to teach this skill today. And in fact your basic skills are done so early on, in your reception, year 1, year 2, you're just building upon them, so you're not necessarily teaching something brand new, you're just deepening their understanding and exposing them to maybe little bits that they didn't know before so you know instead of saying how's this

person feeling, being able to pick out the information that tells you that, or look at the words that the author's used and sort of talk about those in more detail.

Me: Yeah. So going back to here (points to timeline) because it's concentrated there, can you talk more through your, well, we've said about teacher training, but here more where you said about the change of key stage, did policy change and can you remember why it changed then?

K: I think, because of the Ofsted that was when there was a huge focus on the reading and particularly the comprehension. We had lots of staff meetings where we sat and we looked at previous papers and we looked at how many questions were looking at the different sorts of skills that you needed for reading, and how we could then build those into lessons. I think, because of what Ofsted said we sort of went over the top with the reading, umm it was you know you were doing your guided reading, and because we were doing it as a carousel you were sort of doing 5 mini sessions a week. Plus we were having to do a comprehension based lesson

Me: Right

K: and then plus we were also having to do our English genre as well and I think this was too much all at once and actually we probably should have stepped back and looked at, and thought, what are we doing well? And what's the key thing we need to focus on rather than just trying to throw in another reading lesson, maybe trying to see how reading was built in, and I don't necessarily think that reading wasn't being taught well, because when I had my lesson observation for Ofsted, part of my lesson was do with reading, and the Ofsted inspectors were really pleased with what they saw, I just think it was the way that the data went, and obviously then there's a bit of like a snap reaction for a school, they think I've got to throw everything at it. It just got a bit overwhelming, because I'd moved schools as well, you know, you're going into a new, I went into a new key stage, a new school where there are already lots of systems and you're trying to catch up and make sure you're doing, you want to make sure that you're doing the right thing and that's because schools obviously do things differently, they all have their own little ways.

Me: So was the, when it was the reaction to Ofsted, talked about the theory, talking about theory on teacher training, was there any theory explained behind why things were brought in or

K: Umm, not really why things were brought in. Again they went over the same, that same diagram with the comprehension and your fluency

Me: The simple view of reading?

K: Yeah, yeah a lot of that was brought in and actually when they, when they analysed the data, it was one, it was one of those things that it wasn't necessarily the teaching and learning that was the reason for it, it was groups of children like pupil premium, and SEN children and that sort of thing. So I don't think that when that lesson was brought in, it was done under any theory of oh this part of reading isn't being taught very well so let's try and address that, it was more like, we obviously need to do more reading so here's something to just throw at people and get them to do it.

Me: Right, right,

K: In my opinion anyway.

Me: Yeah, but that's what I want! (K. laughs, Yeah.). Thank you, right so at any point in here (pointing to timeline) do you believe, you mention Mrs P's blog, that people have said, (K. uhmmm), but again that's someone's blog, has it ever been introduced when you've had new approaches a theoretical basis for this, or a research basis, or a governmental policy basis?

K: Not really, it's usually people, you know, school, staff have been and spoken to other schools. You might have, the odd, you know, educational expert's name thrown in, you know, that's sort of sometimes to back up somebody's point. It's never explained to us really in detail. And I think that maybe, if it was, I don't know, I think that sometimes you get so many things thrown at you it's hard to be on board with everything. That, the Mrs P blog, that sort of appealed to me because I thought actually it's something quite easy that I can embed into my, and I know that with her, she's written on her blog about how effective she's found it. So we've just tried it and it seems to have been effective for us but as you said there was no sort of educational theory or government thinking behind it as to why we introduced it, it was something that our English lead saw, she liked, she wanted to give it a go and we sort of rolled with it because it's worked well for us.

Me: I'm interested in it, yeah, because it's come to our school and people are mentioning it and I'm wondering where it's come from, why do we all know about it (laughs)

K: Yeah, it must have, yeah a lot of it's word of mouth isn't it, with things like that, and that's why schools go and like help each other, Lisa's like running a reading development group at the moment, and that's with other schools looking at their approach to reading so they came to observe me teach one of these Read With RIC starters and then a sort of whole class based thing, because I think the move is now to try and do that rather than have, I think that maybe the carousel has maybe had its time, but things come round so I'm sure in 10/15 years time we'll be back doing carousels (I laugh), I'll make sure I'm not in the classroom then! (both laugh)

Me: So the Read with RIC, they came to watch you do that? The picture starter that ..

K: They came to see the picture starter and then they came to see the rest of the lesson. So that lesson I focussed on children being able to use the text to express a view, and I set up a debate, using Skellig, took the text and a particular chapter or 2, and I asked them to use the text to find evidence as to whether Skellig was an angel or not an angel. I put them in groups and then they had to debate with each other. So they saw the read with RIC, which is a very, sort of takes 5 or 10 minutes for them to sort of settle down, answer the questions, we usually then talk through the answers, umm there's been a couple of times where the choice questions, where I've asked why has the author done this, or why has somebody chosen this picture, they find that quite difficult, so I'll sometimes go back to that bit, and explain and model an answer as to what you would be looking for in the text, so we always have a bit of a discussion around the Read With RIC. With the Read with RIC, this Mrs P., she's split it into different reading areas, we haven't fully adopted that yet. We've got the posters up in our classrooms, so there's like reading, interpreting, performing, choice, reviewing, umm but I know that she now uses that for assessment, whereas we don't use that for assessment at the moment. We use the Read with RIC bit, and then we do our whole class guided reading, but then the assessment bit, that's the bit that I get stuck on with reading (Me: Right) because I find the government's sort of assessment criteria for reading, you've obviously got end of key stage statements, which are vague, at best, but then the learning ladders that we've got, the year 1 and 2 are identical, the year 3 and 4 are identical, and years 5 and 6 are, and that's because when the government published their new curriculum it was split into years 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6 and we're getting to the point now where we've, because we've been using the curriculum now for sort of 3 years or so, we've got a pretty good understanding of the writing and the maths and we've sort of changed our learning ladders to how they were, because we've realised they were very much coverage ladders rather than assessment ladders. So we've changed those, but we've got to a point with the reading where actually, you're better to ask me where I think the child is as opposed to looking at a Learning Ladder.

Me: Right.

K: Because the skills are things, I don't think you can say, right they can do that skill, it's the end of, tick, and tick it off, they're something that are ongoing. If everything's been ticked off in year 5, do you just start over again but with a more difficult book in year 6? I don't know, that's our main thing at the moment. It's developing the assessment, she's got some expert coming in tomorrow, so I'm going to sit in and see what she's got to say about reading, reading and assessment. I don't know what her name is but Lisa's brought her in for her reading development group and because I'm around she said come and sit in and see what we can do.

Me: Ah, interesting. So with the Mrs P assessment, how does she, how does

K: She's got like, it's like a sheet with like the symbols on, then she's sort of got the statements for the national curriculum, and she's got them sort of written underneath and how they're linked to these different areas that she's come up with. From what I can see, she just highlights them off, but to me then, it just looks like a learning ladder, just with pictures on. It's how you say, if that child was a 5 secure, and the learning ladder for year 6 is completely identical, how do you, is it just the level of text and the level of understanding but should the learning ladder reflect that, because technically I think if it's a learning ladder in year 5 and it's all highlighted then year 6 they're pretty much sorted.

Me: Yeah, so can you, so is it you can say, umm, you can understand inference in Goldilocks, I don't know, the bears were angry with Goldilocks, as opposed to did you understand inference in Dracula. (K: Yeah). So that's the way she does it?

K: Yeah, it still gives you that. Again I, that form, okay, it looks nice, maybe it's more user friendly, but like you said you could use it for Goldilocks, you could use it for Dracula, and you'd get 2 completely different results wouldn't you with the same child.

Me: Yes, right. Yes I have to look that up. So that's it, then that's your area at the moment is the assess

K: Is the development of how we assess it. Because at the moment it feels like the learning ladders are just there to say that we've got something in place, and we do do things, like I've used tests, and we've got like progress tests to sort of measure progress, but I think reading's quite, you can look in their books to see their understanding of the texts and things like that. With this new approach, you do make sure that you are covering all of the skills because I think otherwise with reading you either do retrieval or inference, sometimes you might look at a bit of language and that's it. Sometimes you might do things over and over again. Whereas this, could be added to all skills, so I feel like I'm covering the teaching of reading and all the different elements better. But it's how that then translates into effectively assessing it and being really confident and having a tool to actually help you. It shouldn't be, it shouldn't be that I know in my head and I'm making the tool match, the tool should help me make the decision, rather than the other way round.

Me: Yeah. That makes a lot of sense, yeah.

K: It's just, it's bizarre, but there doesn't seem to be any simple way around it. I don't know what other schools are doing (Me: But you might get more tomorrow from) I'm hoping so, I'll let Lisa deal with that, she's the English lead (laughs)

ME: Okay, thank you. So, theory wasn't necessarily explained if there was any, yeah. Right so with your organisation, so you've talked about now it's whole class, and before it was the carousel, (K: Yeah), do you, it seems like an obvious question, but do you use discussion as a teaching strategy, and if so how do you organise this or how did you through your history?

K: Umm I think that when I started, so in Year 2 and Year 1, that's the, that's the most important thing is the discussion because a lot of the time you've got children that maybe can't, can't record their own, their thoughts or ideas, they find it easier to talk, and talking about their reading is

obviously really important. With the carousel, umm, discussion always used because once the teacher, because once I was there with my group, there was no point in me talking, there wasn't enough time for me to talk to them and then get them to write down so I would have a question, or some questions, with some sort of a focus that I would ask them. They would have, I tried to plan it so they had done the reading previously, maybe in the session beforehand. They then, they then could just quickly look over it, and we would have a discussion and I would spend time quickly scribbling down notes of what they'd said because that's was my evidence. Now, even though we've moved to this whole school whole class approach, and they do do something in their books pretty much every week we still have the discussion about the text and I try and plan in activities where, where discussion is amazing, so when I did the debate, a lot, most of that lesson, was discussion. I even forgot to take photos, we were so much in the discussion, and then we came back and they did small discussions and then we did a discussion as a whole class, um and I think the discussion part's really important because it exposes some children to ideas that they may not have had themselves so children interpret texts on different levels and some of the children, being able to discuss the text, I think, allows them to try and unpick other people's thinking, um, and the one thing I find is that with language, children discussing language and what it means and that exposes some children who probably wouldn't even have asked the meanings of words or what a particular person was thinking, so I do think that the discussion is really important. I try and, I try and build that into any lesson that I do because I think that you need the discussion part of it. They need to talk through their ideas and share.

Me: And how would you organise that discussion? I mean do you have particularly, you talked about with carousel it was ability groupings. Now with your class is it ability, mixed ability?

K: Umm, mixed ability most of the time. We've moved away from sort of seating by ability, so I always try and do mixed ability. I've got home tables which are mixed ability so I use those quite a lot. Sometimes I will group children deliberately, umm, because of the mix of class I've got, just to make sure I've got, you know, sometimes I'll say to children, find somebody who can help you or you find somebody that you can help, so sort of matching your lower ability pupils with your higher ability and working it that way so that they do get a bit of a mix because otherwise you get the great discussion from your higher ability pupils. But then, it's hard because even with your, if you've got a high ability pupil in the group they can sometimes become quite dominant and then your other children can take a seat back. I'm very conscious of the fact that I need to pick up on those children to get their points and when you do whole class discussion you tend to go for the children who want to volunteer answers as opposed to those ones who just sit there, so most of the time I use mixed ability.

Me: Is that a school policy or is that your

K: We've moved more towards that now, umm, with the sort of idea of children being able to choose their own level of activities which is what we do now. We sort of didn't see the point of having a set, because before it would be right if you're on this table you're doing this activity, if you're on this table you're doing that activity whereas now the children can choose the level of activity they want, they may still go and choose to sit on a table where there is an adult to support them or I might say if you're doing this challenge then you need to come and work with me. Umm, so yeah, as a school we've sort of moved towards more of the children choosing the level of challenge that they want to sort of tackle, and the classroom sort of being a bit more fluid, so sometimes I'll be over on one table and I'll have a particular group, it might be that the others who are then sort of sat mixed ability and my teaching assistant is then maybe rotating round or then she's maybe got a group or then they're just working and we're going around picking on particular children that we know might need a bit of support but may not necessarily say or picking those children who have maybe not picked the correct activity and will need a bit more guidance.

Me: Right, and would you um, with um, the groupings and the peer support, when you said they're helping each other, do they get taught peer support strategies at all?

K: Its something that's sort of, I think that's done um, through school. I do think more could be done with that, with sort of how to support your peers, um, particularly in reading and writing as well. All the children, if I asked them to go and support a child lower down the school, they would know how to do that, but they find supporting their own peers more difficult, and you don't want your lower ability pupils to feel like they can't support anybody because, whereas, I think sometimes they feel like that, that I'm always the one that's got to be supported. And in writing as well, a lot of them feel well I can't spell so I can't go through anyone else's work but talking about that you have got a particular strength, it might be vocabulary, it might be noticing capital letters and full stops. So I do, I think some of your higher ability pupils do feel equipped to do that than lower ability pupils at times.

Me: Right, and with the, again with the groupings, it's come, it's generally the way the school's going, is it research based, has it been explained that we're doing this because?

K: We have had, I think we had some, I don't know if it was, it wasn't training, Elaine sort of talked to us about different approaches. I took part in a research study group a couple of years ago with some other schools. One of the things that they looked at was giving the children a choice of challenge and then we all had to present our findings on our project to a group of headteachers so I picked something from that that I liked and our headteacher was there at the time. And I think she went and did a bit more research on it and she's very good with buying these educational text books and things, that have ideas and stuff in, and talked to us about that. So I do think that there was some sort of theory behind that but again I think it was probably something that was done quite early on, there was only maybe a bit of evidence and we've sort of run with it, just to see how it works. I do think that we're a school that likes to try things out and see if they work or not.

Me: Yes, it's exciting to be here.

K: Yeah

Me: Thank you. Right so now, apologise if this is a bit repetitive. I'm trying to touch on everything. You have talked a lot about your experiences. Could you say now overall what practices do you think are the most effective in teaching comprehension.

K: Umm, I think a little and often approach. (Me: Right) is important. I do think that the actual, there's sometimes the word reading part sometimes gets overlooked, particularly in Key stage 2, because in key stage 1 there was a real emphasis on listening to children read and having that discussion. I mean them having that one to one time. Whereas when you get to key stage 2 that becomes even more difficult, quite often you have to have, you have a helper or a volunteer to come and listen to the children. Umm, but I think that that's really important because you can teach them to understand the text but fluency's incredibly important. If you haven't got fluency you're going to find it hard to understand what's going on overall in a text. That's one thing I think is really important but I'm not sure how you necessarily get that built into a teacher's day. Maybe it's me just being selfish and saying I want to sit and listen to the children read but a lot of it is we were told that once children have got the basics of reading it is about them reading to themselves and, um, I think, focussing on key skills and revisiting those skills as well, linking them to other areas of the curriculum as well, showing children that reading's not just done in a reading lesson, it's done in your history lessons, its' done in your geography lessons, and the skills explicit in other areas of the curriculum.

Me: Right okay thank you. And again, you've mentioned this just before, but what suggestions would you have based on your experiences teaching reading if you went to a school and you were the head what suggestions would you have as to how you would want people to organise the classes?

K: I think I would want to go to the approach that we are using now. This whole class approach, with a challenging text that maybe children haven't accessed before, this focus on a skill, a specific skill in a lesson, like I would do in an Engl-, in a writing, or a genre lesson, because I feel like I actually teach reading then, rather than, even though having a discussion is obviously teaching reading, but I do feel like I can say at the end, right they understood that skill, I can see that they understood that skill, whereas at the end of a discussion you've sort of just got a page of notes and its so intense that it's a bit like, and you go back to those notes, and you think well I don't even know what we were maybe looking at or what does that mean because I've scribbled it down so quickly, whereas in their books, once we've done that activity altogether, I find that it's easier for me to understand their learning and understanding the way that we do it now, rather than having 3 different books on the go with 3 different groups.

Me: Right, how would you suggest organising the class with the ability – mixed or peer support?

K: I'd say mixed ability, again, sometimes there are children that are an exception to that. I taught, it was last year because I had a group that were quite poor readers – they had to have a separate book for the first couple of terms, because they wouldn't have been able to understand the themes that were running through the book and the vocabulary, umm, but I do think that if you can make, but then mainly with more time, say if that class came along 3 years on I could maybe still use the same text book, adapt it, maybe give them extra things because it was, that was before we sort of went to this Read with RIC and whole class book thing. I think being new to year 6 and then having that that group of children, it was sort of, sometimes you have to find your feet in a year group before you can figure out what works well and how you can tweak things to meet the needs of the children the best way that you possibly can, but I think definitely having that hour session plus linking all your reading skills into the other parts of the curriculum and trying to, finding appropriate texts as well, whether that's the research of your English lead, or, um, asking other schools as to the sort of texts that they use.

Me: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else that you wanted to say about teaching, teaching reading that we haven't talked about?

K: No, I don't think so, I think that's everything. I hope it's been useful.

## Appendix E – Colour Coded Personal, Practical and Professional Influences Extract

### PERSONAL – GREEN

### PRACTICAL – RED

### PROFESSIONAL - BLUE

Kitty - 5.1 i) lang comp - For us in year 3, it (whole class teaching) began with pictures. So our comprehension lessons started with pictures where we started to develop comprehension and the pictures were, we'd ask questions where, like, what they thought was happening in the picture, why they thought the people were there, making predictions about the texts, um, and then it went on where the children had to say things about how they thought the characters felt or things about, because it was like a thought bubble, and then we had hearts, so how were they feeling, what were they thinking. So we started to think about the characters and the bigger pictures of the characters. Then we started looking at where they'd have texts to read and they'd be creating a picture. So there'd be texts where there would be kind of description and they'd have to get all of those facts and then draw the picture of whatever it was that was being spoken about to show what had been understood. So one of the ones that sticks in my mind was about a broken down house and it talked about the yellow door, the broken windows, so when you looked at the children's pictures you were looking for the facts that were given in the texts and that showed you whether they'd understood because there was one that said that there was a path of daffodils leading up to the front door. So if they drew pictures of daffodils leading up to the front door obviously they'd understood that part of it.

I had some deaf awareness training that looked at comprehension through pictures and I actually started with pictures we had some training here, and that was training in comprehension and that was deaf comprehension, it was about, a lot of the children at that time had had years of um not being able to hear because this was in the time that those children wouldn't have been diagnosed as being deaf, until maybe the age of 3, because the newborn screening wouldn't have come in for those children that I would have had at that age. So I don't know when it came in but they wouldn't have had cochineal implants until they were about 3 so they would have had 3 years without language. And so it talked about what you'd expect from children of their age to know the name of, the nouns of for example, they didn't know the nouns of, so sometimes when they were reading, the comprehension wasn't there because they didn't understand what we would take for granted a child of that age would understand and you'd have to specifically teach them the vocabulary of nouns in order for them to comprehend and understand.

And 5.1 lang comp? - Me: And again with the vocabulary do you feel that, it's making an assumption, but the higher attainers, is that, do they tend to have a higher vocabulary, so that's ...

Kitty: Not always, not always. Particularly in this class, like I've got a boy in this class who academically scores quite poorly in all areas of his curriculum, but actually in my reading comprehension classes he's probably the best person with giving answers and I think that's to do with his, not to stereotype but, he's got older parents who take a lot of time where they talk a lot to him and they do a lot with him so they take him out a lot of places, he's got a lot of life experiences of things. Yes he struggles, like in terms of academics, but actually in terms of his comprehension and understanding he's got a lot of empathy, so whenever you talk about a character's feelings he always gives really good answers to those type of questions and he does have really good understanding of vocabulary. Because I can almost guarantee if I put a word on the board he'll know what it means so he's a classic example where actually he's not a high ability child and yet he, in terms of the actual sessions is one of the best people to have in a session, but he would probably struggle on a reading paper, a test paper because of the speed in which he would read at and that would be what would let him down, because sometimes if you're reading very slowly, you lose the meaning of what you



are reading, and that would be what he would lose. So he's actually been chosen to do Beanstalk Reading, have you heard of Beanstalk reading? Me: Yes. So he's doing Beanstalk reading which is going to help his fluency and hopefully get that speed up because his comprehension is actually quite good. It's just his ability to read and answer all the questions in the short amount of time that they usually get within a test and that's what he'd struggle with doing.

Kitty - 5.1 i) vocab/word gap - what we've been doing since September is we're doing whole class reading sessions. Last year we were doing guided reading sessions where we teach comp according to the level of the child on whatever level of book that they would have been levelled at. But doing that you're exposing children obviously to a particular level of book and never exposing them to the higher level language or the material that's really appropriate for their age, so the school has adopted like a whole school approach, a whole class teaching of reading.

Karina - 5.1 iii) prof influences on groupings - my next question is do you encourage peer support, are they taught specific peer support strategies?

K: Um no but we follow the Kagan structures. Yes and no because they are taught in terms of how to be a rally coach, and that would probably be the right one that you would be thinking of as peer support, so children are specifically taught how to rally coach a partner.

Me: Can you explain that rally coaching?

K: So rally coaching is where you'll have a specific thing that they're supposed to be learning and whilst one observes one doing it and offers advice, they don't do it, so they're not taking over, they are observing and almost supporting when things go wrong rather than just taking over, and if they're doing things well they're taught to encourage and say "Yes that's the right answer or I agree with you" and obviously in year 3 it's slightly a challenge because they find it hard not to butt in and tell them when they are making a mistake, but that is something we're working on but I suppose the other one really is when we do Round Robin. It's when you're sharing an idea as a group. So one person speaks and the next person can build on that and the next person can, so it encourages them to listen to everybody's ideas. Then sometimes at the end of that they might have to make a decision as a group as to which one will be the correct answer to give. So it might not really be their own answer but they need to think and justify why they've chosen whatever they have done, they've chosen.

5.1 iii) they're in mixed ability pairs, and the reason for that is you've got somebody who obviously can read and someone perhaps that's a little bit weaker, um, to support and aid reading because they're encouraged to read in pairs so they take it in turns to read a sentence at a time of the text, so they are encouraged to listen to each other and obviously to support each other with reading.

5.1 v) prof development - only recent training, but not teacher training. So the recent training was from our head of English who has delivered the Vipers reading sessions and helped us with developing comprehension, helped us with developing inference and all those sorts of things, but all the training I can ever remember has come from that, and I had some deaf awareness training that looked at comprehension through pictures and I actually started with pictures

5.1 v) INTERESTING BECAUSE SHE NOT SEEM INFLUENCED BY THIS - Me: Have you ever had any training, have they mentioned at all, because other teachers have brought this up, something about governmental guidance for the SATs and SATs questioning, there's been a paper, that hasn't been brought up to you? K: Possibly, but I was in the Early Years for 7 years, I don't know whether. Me: oh it's more recent – in last 3 years. K: I was still in the Early Years then and if it had I probably wouldn't have taken much notice. Perhaps I should have (laughs). Like Carl? And Matthew? So not practically influenced, more personal

5.1 v) prof learning/development - I did have some training once with Ros Wilson, so I got to go to a school where she was behind some glass, and it's like one of those prison cells, and it's a 2 way glass and we watched her do a guided reading group and I know that was trying to support teaching of guided reading and I remember that because I remember going to watch it and as children do, they were very aware that there were other people there's a group of teachers on the other side of the mirror, but it was just, it was really enjoyable to watch because of them playing up for the audience, but also the fact that the actual session was a really nice session and she deliberately chose a particular group of boys that were quite a challenge to show that the session could still run even if you had more of a challenging group so I remember that but I don't remember like any massive scheme coming in and amazing me or anything. Gap in training And I remember her (Ros Wilson) coming in and doing some stuff with us and then she introduced a reading recovery programme that our school adopted at the time to try and help children that were behind catch up with reading and that was based on understanding the comprehension.

Kitty - 5.2 ii) assessment - The third placement it was a year 6 and all I did was SATs papers so I just did SATs reading tests and yes they improved but they improved because it was test techniques, it wasn't necessarily because the comprehension that got better, they just got better at the style of questions. important

Kitty - 5.2 i) own children - And then now we do something called VIPERS so we focus on Vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval, and summarising and sequencing. So the children are taught through a series of 4 sessions taught across the week where they have half an hour reading where we focus on reading a class book. Children that would struggle to read a year 3 level text are taken out separately to read books that are more appropriate for them to read. If they are reading but they are not comprehending at that level, they stay within the classroom because if they can't read the text then it really limits them to understand so if they're still at the stage, and I'm talking special special level, you know where they're only just beginning to blend or they don't know all the sounds, that type of child that would be taken out for phonic books rather than the year 3 curriculum. And then we have a focus every day where we will ask either vocabulary questions or inference questions or prediction or explanation or summarise and sequencing and retrieval. And then basically we teach the children tricks and tips so for example, the children know that a vocabulary question, if they've got a vocab word and it's saying what does this word mean, then they need to find the word in the text, then they need to read the sentence that the word is in, then they need to try and replace the word with another word, but still make the sentence make sense. If it was an inference question, the children are taught that they have to look for clues, and they have to think and say why. So they have a stem sentence of 'I think ....and because'. And then when it gets to the p and the prediction again that's an 'I think' because they need to tell us why they thought what they thought. So what has made them think that. With the explanation they know there'll be some kind of evidence within the text that they'll need to use as part of their explanation to explain. Retrieval – with the children you'll say 'What's retrieval' and they'll say 'Get it from the text!' so they're taught to underline the answers in the text. And then summarising and sequencing they are asked to find the sentences within the text to underline them and then put them in order or put them in sequence of whatever events are happening. But on the Thursday, because our last session is on the Thursday, they have like an independent practice. So we do the teaching on the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and then on the Thursday they put into practice all the things that we've been doing so what we've started to notice is the progress of comprehension throughout the weeks are the types of questions that the children are getting. And also on the Wednesday the children do text marking, marking of the text, again still with the Vipers so they're looking for vocabulary or they're looking for inference clues but they're going to actually make marks on the text. I think VIPERS is a scheme that our head of English went on and adopted for the school and I think it's a scheme that's out there. But it's not a written scheme, we're using a format that we make up the questions.

Me: So each class teacher makes up the questions? K: Yes

We don't do all of the different strands every single day so it might be like on a Monday we focus on vocabulary and prediction and retrieval and the next day we might just do vocabulary and retrieval and sequencing and it's like that, but throughout the week you'll have covered all of them, and in their independent tasks they will cover all of them

Kitty - 5.2 i) Own children - vocab/word gap - Because we know vocabulary's such a problem for the children at this school in particular, we've now added an extra vocabulary session in, so we have a 15 minute vocabulary session every day where we concentrate on one word. Like today the word was cheerful, then we look at the word in quite a depth so we ask children if they understand that word at the beginning of the lesson, then we tell the children what that word means, we get them to count the phonemes in the word, we get them to tell us the word class of word, so what type of word it is, and we look at whether it's got a root word or a suffix, we look in depth at what the suffixes and prefixes do to words, then we tell them the context of that word, we put it in sentences for them, then we get them to act that word out so they come up with their own little actions that go with it and then they have to put that word in a sentence of their own choice. So they write their own sentence using that word. And then different weeks we do different activities but the 2 activities in year 3 we focus on is something called the ladder and we've worked on the odd one out. So the ladder one is where you've got a list of words that all roughly mean the same type of thing as your chosen word and the children get to decide which is the weakest one of those words so for cheerful for example happy would be at the bottom then you might have ecstatic or something at the top. So you might have the ecstatic word at the top because that would be a more powerful word. And like the activity we did today was an odd one out so you had a list of words that all meant cheerful except one. So it was like happy, cheerful, carefree, something else and then it was like upset. So then the children would have to identify the word that wouldn't have the same meaning. Whole school. Because we've recognised that actually it's the vocabulary that's let a lot of the children down. A lot of the words that we'd be expecting them to understand like cheerful for year 3, not all of them know it, and there's quite a lot of words that you would expect them to know, but they don't know them.

Kitty - 5.2 v) school policy/ethos - So I was in the juniors a lot here. This is where it became a lot more structured. So guided reading was very structured, we had a set pattern of things we did, set activities we did every day, like we had to do a vocabulary one, we did a dictionary one, then we did one where they had to highlight any words they didn't understand from the text and then they had a specific like comprehension quiz that they did and that was quite structured and I felt like I knew what I was doing with that. I think our head of English literally said what she wanted us to do and it was going to be set out like this, you were going to work with a carousel of groups, your TA was going to work with a group twice a week, you were going to work with your target group twice a week and it was like that and you were going to do guided reading. So that was very structured and it was quite a few years of that. But then it got into the point where hang on how do you help those children who are not doing so well, hence the comprehension training for the deaf children, and like now I feel so much more positive about it, about the reading, because of the whole class reading, not trying to plan separate groups of books, we're working, we're focusing on one book, everybody's together who's working on it and actually we're starting to see that in the tests appropriate to the level of their age, that actually they're scoring better, any children who are in my target group, so now my target group I'll have specific, um, we've got a developing comprehension scheme that's on our computers that has a list of texts and a list of questions but it also teaches the skills of comprehension so it might be it teaches you how to make predictions or it teaches you how to choose appropriate vocabulary or it teaches you trying to think off the top of my head, it might be inference and then it will go through, you'll have the text, like a teaching session that tells you how to teach that particular skill and then you'll have a practise page that you'll do with the children and

then they have an independent page that they do by themselves and so that's how I help my target group. So my children who I feel are not moving forward as quickly as the whole class, that's what I do with them, so that's like a developing comprehension type of thing. We had training here, from the head of English. I feel that I've got more of an understanding in how to teach comprehension rather than giving them a list of questions to answer and actually teach the skills behind it, like those Vipers, like teaching them the vocabulary.

Kitty - 5.3 i) own experience - in my first year at secondary school, because comprehension was something that I struggled with because, particularly down to vocabulary. I came from a background where my parents didn't really use extensive vocabulary and after spending a year with a Year 7 teacher, whose name was Mrs \_\_\_\_\_, she'd spend time after school actually teaching me what vocabulary meant, and within that year I went from 8 years 10 months up to 16 years, just through focus on vocabulary within comprehension. So vocabulary for me has been a key for my teaching as a result of that. I never, ever, what I would call dumb down language ever. If I were to use a word that perhaps the children haven't heard before I would encourage them to always ask me what it means. That's the same with my own children at home. I'll try and use as many words that I possibly can, and same when you're reading books. I know teachers that read books to children, who, when it's a complicated word they make it a simpler word rather than just explaining what that complicated word means. Um and as a result some words have disappeared from spoken language and you will only come across them when you read them and then of course children read it for the first time in a book and don't know what it means because people aren't using it in spoken language. It literally was a Ginn reader, it was a reading scheme so you read a book and then had questions to answer at the end of that book and that would be marked, and depending on how many you got right, depending on whether you went on the next book, or you read that book again, which was very boring if you had to read the book again. Then when you got to the end of the level, I always remember doing a book review of it, where it had some questions at the bottom to answer, comprehension questions about the story, and I hated reading because of doing that. I absolutely hated reading because of doing those tests.

Kitty - 5.3 i) and ii) enjoyment - I remember one of my assignments, because I did expressive English as my degree. One of my assignments was I had to read 100 children's books and we had to review them and say how we would use them to teach different elements of I suppose the National Curriculum at the time, because I qualified in 2000 so that would have been around 1998, so just as the new curriculum was coming out so we had to look at the books and think about what part of the national curriculum could we have taught via that book, but I don't remember being taught anything, I just remember doing that activity, because I really enjoy doing it. I really enjoy reading the books.

Kitty - 5.3 i) own experiences - in terms of being taught to answer those types of questions, we were never really taught, it was through experience of answering those questions and which ones you got right and which ones you got wrong that I learnt to get better. Which wasn't very successful because I went to secondary school with a lower than my age reading ability, so I actually ended up in secondary school education with a reading age of 8 years 10 months

Kitty - 5.3 i) - I can remember particular teachers that did (read to me in primary school). I had a teacher called Mrs Hill I was telling my children today in the class about who read my Naughty Little Sister stories and I can still recount some of them just through remembering her tell me those stories. But I don't remember being read to in the later part of primary school, I do at secondary school. So definitely at primary school it stopped for a short time. Definitely in years 5 and 6 I don't remember it at all, but I do remember from year 7 and year 8 but it was done in a different way. We'd all have the same book and we'd all be looking at the same text together and reading as a class and it was more an intense book look if you like.

Kitty - 5.3 i) and iv) For me it was, my mum did read to me, but, she, I don't mean to be rude to my mum but my mum came from a very poor sort of background. My nan wouldn't have been the sort of nan who read stories to my mum and definitely books would never have been talked about. Like my family would never have read, you know I don't remember anyone in my childhood sitting reading a book, ever, the most I can remember reading is my dad reading The Sun, and that is literally what I can remember about reading and although my mum read when we were small and would have read children's books, as I got older where you'd need to be reading chapter books and stuff, that didn't happen because my mum didn't really enjoy reading and I didn't see any grown-ups reading so it never made me want to read. So I suppose with my own children at

home now I am reading and I read to them a lot. But I've got 2 sons, one who loves reading and will sit and will read for hours, but the other one who's not interested in it at all. And he will only read when he really has to, whereas my youngest he'd sit for hours reading and book and really want to read it. Like when I'm having to close a chapter book with him it's a tantrum to go to bed. So I think the fact that I know the significance of reading, when I look back in school, the children who I would have classed as being really smart were always the ones that would have read and who had parents who spoke what I would have called 'posh' parents who had a better acquisition of English than I did. I remember them using lots of words I'd never heard of like one of them was, like my friend Robert used to use the word thus – I'd never heard of it! And innuendos, what's that? You know, but if I'd gone home to my mum and said what's an innuendo, my mum wouldn't have known, she actually wouldn't have known what it meant, so the only way I actually got to understand vocabulary was by asking questions and by saying what's that word mean, now I love if people use a word that I don't know, because I google it straight away and find out what it means, and it's like, if I'd have had the ability to have done that as a child then I could have pushed my own learning forward. I had to always try and find someone who could explain and tell me more, because I didn't have that at home, and it's not that my mum didn't want to, she didn't have the ability to do that herself. She went to school and left with no GCSEs and my dad was kicked out at 15 to get a job because his mum and dad didn't have any money. You know they were both forced into work early and I know that was the done thing at their age but academically, it was a drive, I wanted to be a teacher because of some of the teachers that I met along my way who actually I suppose supported me on the journey that I wanted to be on and particularly reading was always a struggle and I remember finding it so hard as a child to read, because there were so many words I didn't know and I also struggle a lot with spelling because I didn't read enough, so that's why I think it's important to read to children and it's like I read every day to my class and I say to them you know, if we're not enjoying the book we'll read one they want to enjoy because there's no point sitting there reading a book that you don't enjoy and you've got children that go home and get their parents to buy the book because they want to read on ahead of you. That's when you know you've done it, you know, and I think the biggest influence is those teachers that I remember that went above and beyond to make sure that I could achieve because my parents couldn't support me and quite quickly I would have been academically above them, probably by the time I got to year 9 anyway so neither of them could have been able to do a reading paper that I could have done.

Kitty - 5.3 ii) enjoyment My second placement I did and I was able to read Harry Potter, the Philosopher's stone, so I'll just put HP, to that class and we did a lot of work around comprehension on that and that was brilliant because I remember leaving that school on the last afternoon, I read the last few chapters because the kids were that interested in the book. Me: Did their levels of comprehension improve? K: Definitely, because they were really into it and the children wanted to go and read on and things like that and there was a lot of discussion in the classroom about what could happen next and things and obviously at that point in the time Harry Potter wasn't very big and people didn't know about it so there wasn't places to find out stuff so it was all contributions that came from them about what was happening in the story and me having to go and find a bit more about it because it was so new. So that was interesting.

Kitty - 5.3 ii) enjoyment - I think that these children really enjoyed, when we were actually doing comprehension on a book that they really loved, and these children enjoyed the sessions because they have the same kind of structure every day, they know what's coming and like when you say it's reading they're like "Yeah!" They like it, and, whereas if you'd have asked me a couple of years ago they'd have been like "hmmnn" coz you've got to sit with a group and as a teacher it was hard to try and plan for 5 different groups, sometimes 6, and try and hold all of those books in your head and plan for all of them and those activities, and whilst you were working with that group, plan for all the other children something to do that would keep them busy so you could actually work with that group and quite often they're so egotistical, even in year 3, that they'd bother you and interrupt you so you didn't actually get the quality that you needed, um, whereas now we're all doing the same thing together except those children obviously still phonic based really, so they're all, it's a lesson, it's a proper lesson together so you could actually feel like you're teaching them properly without being distracted by things, by children.

Kitty - 5.3 ii) enjoyment - I think that it's important to love reading so I think that not enough emphasis is put on the enjoyment of reading and reading for pleasure. I know people are saying they're encouraging reading for pleasure but I don't think that is always the case so for me getting children to love books, want to be reading books, giving them cliff hangers, that's the start. Once they're actually really enjoying reading, then they'll want to comprehend and understand and then when you've got them loving reading, then they'll be able to comprehend.

Kitty - 5.3 v) personal philosophies - Then it went into guided reading as my NQT. There I was completely baffled because there were like trying to plan for all of these groups of children and I had a year 5 class where my ranges went from P Levels up to I'd got level 5s in one class and I'd got at that point, 4 hearing resource based children, so children who were deaf, and the special needs, that was just like probably one of the most challenging years when it came to trying to develop comprehension. Also all the children with EAL, so language, the language was quite difficult for them to understand. Even the text types. They had no experience of the wider world or anything. So you know we bring a lot of our world into books, if you haven't really got much world experience, it's really hard to bring it in, and to understand, to comprehend, I mean one of my philosophies in terms of helping comprehension understanding is actually to go on as many trips as you possibly can because it's only then that you can understand, and whatever year group I've ever been in that's what I do – I take them on as many trips as possible to give them the life experiences that they can then put into their reading, because without life experiences you can't do it.

## Appendix F – School Policies

### School A Reading Information

Bug Club and Rapid Phonics are two schemes that we use to teach reading. We read in groups to develop our reading skills and spend time talking about the books to improve our comprehension skills. Both Rapid Phonics and Bug Club are available online so that the children can read them at home too and answer questions.

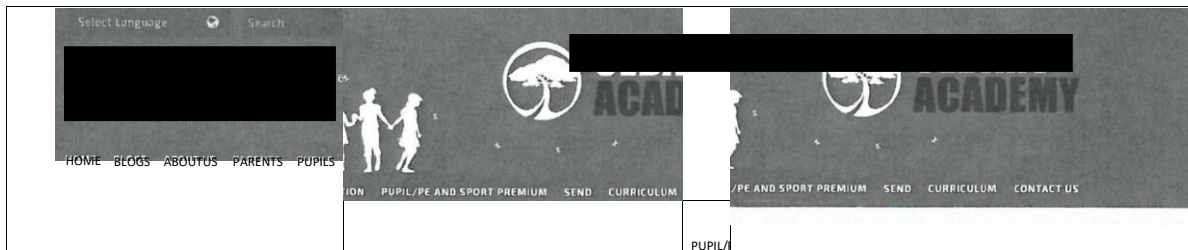
The comprehension skills we are developing are:

- Prediction — What do we think the book is about or what will happen in the book?
- The Main Idea — What the book is about?
- Sequencing — Putting events and ideas in the order they appear in the book or by importance.
- Summarising — Saying what has happened or what the book is telling you in as few words as possible.
- Point of View and Purpose — Why has the book been written, who for and what is the author trying to get the reader to think?
- Finding information — Looking for key words to find information.
- Fact or Opinion — Is the idea a fact that we can prove or an opinion?
- Similarities and Differences — Are the characters, settings and themes similar or different?  
How is this book different to others or similar to something else you have read?
- Understanding words — Working out what words mean in different sentences. Inferring — Reading between the lines and deciding what is most likely to be true based on clues in the text.
- Cause and effect — Why did an event happen? What caused this?

Concluding — Making decisions about information, events and preferences.

We will also be reading at other times in different lessons and for different purposes such as researching in history, reading instructions in science or reading word problems in maths.





PARENTS

READING - HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

E-SAFETY

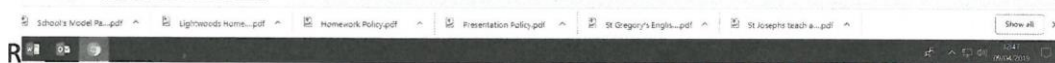
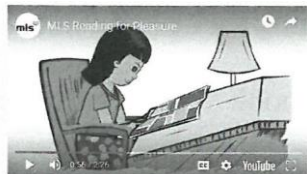
MATHS MASTERY - HOW OUR APPROACH HAS CHANGED

READING - HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

GROWTH MINDSET

ASSESSMENT

Active Reading



Reading For Pleasure page for parents.



Reading Policy 2017-18

"Bringing out the best in everyone for the benefit of all in the Spirit of Christ. "

### Policy Statement

This Policy sets out to inform interested parties of the teaching and learning of reading within the school according to the details outlined in the National Curriculum Document for English. Interested parties are Teachers, Governors, Parents, LEA and OFSTED Inspectors. All staff members were involved in the drawing up of this policy. It is intended that this policy be reviewed every two years.

### The Aims and Objectives

Reading is a multi-sensory approach to getting at meaning. It is not simply the decoding of black marks on the page but involves the ability to read, with understanding, a wide range of different types of texts including fiction, non-fiction, real world texts such as labels, captions and lists, and print in the environment. Competence in reading is the key to independent learning and therefore the teaching of reading is to be given a high priority by all staff. Success in reading has a direct effect upon progress in most other areas of the curriculum and is crucial in developing children's self-confidence and motivation.

The aims of reading are:

- To enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners
- To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands ●  
To develop confident, independent readers through an appropriate focus on word, sentence and text level knowledge.
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts.
- To develop and extend the children's vocabulary through shared and guided reading.
- To help children enjoy reading and recognise its value.
- To improve the children's ability to make inferences about a text and comprehend language choices made by the author/s.

### Planning of Reading

Reading is part of the English curriculum, which is a core subject in the National curriculum. The National Literacy Framework is used as a basis for implementing the statutory requirements. The key objectives relating to reading will be reflected in long term, medium term and short term planning.

Medium term planning - based on the Read, Write Inc Phonics in KS1 and Literacy and Language in KS2. These provide details relating to the main teaching objectives.

Short term (Weekly) plans - list specific objectives for each lesson and give details of how the lessons are to be taught. These plans are kept in the Staff area of the intranet so that they can be accessed by other staff members.

Reading is taught in the Foundation Stage as an integral part of the school's work.

Children and teachers work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for Foundation Stage children. The National Curriculum is used alongside the Early Learning Goals ensuring continuity and progression from one framework to the other.

#### Teaching and Learning Style

All 2014 National Curriculum statements must be covered at least once in each key stage.

Our reading books contain a range of commercially produced schemes which are all supplemented with a range of good quality paperbacks. The reading scheme gives children the opportunity to practise their developing reading skills with texts which have appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure. However, children will also have access to a range of other books, with varying levels of difficulty, which they will be encouraged to read for pleasure and information.

Children are phonic knowledge using Read, Write Inc in Foundation and K.S.1 and this is supported with Literacy and Language in K.S.2.

All children have access to the library at least once a week allowing them to change their books on a regular basis.

In KS1 children are grouped according to their phonic knowledge for Literacy lessons. In KS2 children are taught in their normal class groups, although some children from Y3 still working on RWI Phonics attend their lessons with a KS1 group.

There is extra time outside of the Literacy hour to develop reading skills.

All teachers are responsible for the planning and teaching of reading within their class.

#### Inclusion

Children with learning difficulties in reading are given the appropriate help and support within the classroom. Materials are available to teachers for help with these children.

The books which our children read are chosen carefully so that issues related to equal opportunities are handled sensitively.

The interests of both girls and boys are taken into consideration when reading activities and materials are selected.

We ensure that the books and literature available to children represent as wide a range of cultures as possible.

## Guided reading:

In KS2 all pupils take part in daily guided reading sessions with their class teacher and TIA. This involves class taking part in a small group focused reading session with their class teacher (on a weekly rota) to broaden their reading comprehension skills as well as giving them opportunity for speaking and listening.

Year 3 — 11.45am-12.10pm

Year 4 — 11.45am-  
12.10pm Year 5 —  
1.00pm-1.20pm  
Year 6 — 11.45am-12.10pm

## Home/School Links

Particular emphasis is placed on building a strong sense of home/school partnership. The support and encouragement of parents is sought and valued.

Parents are helped to see that they have a vital role to play in their child's reading development and they are shown ways in which they can foster a love of reading in their children.

Children take home books to share and enjoy with their parents. A home/school reading diary accompanies their books with parents being encouraged to comment on their child's progress and response to the book.

All reading books have been levelled and are stored near the relevant classrooms.

The School library books are catalogued through 'Junior Librarian' programme and logged in and out by the school librarian or trained library assistants.

Each classroom has an additional stock of books for the purpose of their class book corners, display or book foci.

In KS2, Pupils are encouraged to bring in their own age appropriate books from home to share in 'free reading' sessions. Books are monitored by staff.

The school uses Dudley Library Services which loan books throughout the year.

## Links with other areas of the curriculum.

The skills that children develop in reading are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

A class visit to Birmingham Library is an optional extra-curricular activity offered to our pupils. We also encourage parents to take their children to their local libraries.

Children are encouraged to read and interpret a range of text types across all areas of the curriculum, allowing their knowledge and vocabulary to be developed and extended further.

The teaching of reading develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literacy heritage and texts from other cultures.

The organisation of lessons will allow children to work together and provide them with a chance to discuss their ideas and results.

### ICT Provision

When planning reading related activities a consideration will be made to the ICT provision in school, developing resources and a shared common area for staff to share good practice.

The extensive use of ICT will involve children in reading a range of text types for a range of purposes. The use of the Internet will provide another source of information across all curriculum areas.

The use of ICT, graded texts and taped materials are available for all children who experience difficulty in reading activities.

The use of ICT will be incorporated into the teaching of reading for specific reading skills and activities, accommodating all ability levels.

Assessment: Teacher assessments against the national curriculum will be made. Reading will be assessed during Autumn and Spring Terms using the NFER materials with a reading age being recorded. Many on-going teacher assessments will be made in reading conferences, through careful observation and home/school diaries.

### K.S.1

Teachers make informal assessment of children's reading throughout the year. This includes the government set end of phase SATs in year 2.

Formal assessment is made looking reading over a term and general comprehension skills. The teacher assessment is recorded in Target Tracker. In Year 2 children take part in the SATs test which, although does not give an overall level for writing, does aid the teacher and support their final writing teacher assessment. Year 1 take part in the Phonics Screening during the Summer Term. This is a government test and scores are reported to parents.

### K.S.2

Teachers keep records of ongoing assessments in their Blue Mark Books eg: spelling tests, homework, writing assessments, reading test results

# xxxxx Primary School

CRC Article 29 (goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

## English Policy

This policy also should be read alongside the new National Curriculum in England (published September 2013) and other documents from the Standards and testing Agency. Our Curriculum overview, medium and short term planning can help support this policy. at these relevant schemes of work:

### Rationale:

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school.

At School we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is necessarily cross-curricular and a constant through-out school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' (p6 National Curriculum) that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (PIO National Curriculum)

We are an inclusive school, we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey and in whatever circumstances. We use one to one support, small groups and cross-phase work to help with this. We plan teaching opportunities to help those for whom English is an additional language and those with disabilities outlined in the SEN code of practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised'

(p13)

### 1. Spoken Language:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be 'taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently in Standard English' (p10) They should:

- Justify ideas with reasons
- Ask questions to check understanding
- Develop vocabulary and build knowledge • Negotiate
- Evaluate and build on the ideas of others
- Select the appropriate register for effective communication
- Give well structured descriptions and explanations
- Speculate, hypothesise and explore ideas
- Organise their ideas prior to writing

#### 4.1 Our aims and connected provision

We encourage our pupils to speak clearly and confidently and articulate their views and opinions. We teach that children need to express themselves orally in an appropriate way, matching their style and response to audience and purpose.

Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions.

Ways in which we support this include:

- Activities which are planned to encourage full and active participation by all children, irrespective of ability
- Children with specific speech and language and auditory problems will be identified and specialist help sought, where appropriate
- Public speaking competition
- Mass
- School Plays
- Class debates
- Weekly assembly
- Events within the community
- School Council
- Drama / role play

#### 2. Reading:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Reading is singled out as of extreme importance since through it 'pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (p13) Reading allows pupils to 'acquire knowledge' and to 'build on what they already know' (p13).

Schools are expected to have library facilities and support and encourage reading at home.

The 2014 Curriculum divides reading skills into two dimensions:

- Word reading/ decoding
- Comprehension

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and writing, grammar and vocabulary. We also understand that reading is a developmental process and part of life-long learning and we encourage and praise children at every stage of it.

#### 2.1 Our aims and connected provision

- Pupils learn to read easily and fluently through daily phonics in Key Stage One and regular reading to adults in school.
- Pupils develop skills in reading for understanding using the Reading scheme.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, library visits and high quality attractive books in classrooms.
- Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read and the various methods outlined above.

- Pupils also need to read to find information in all lessons and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every term.
- Pupils often look at books in guided reading sessions

### 3. Writing:

The National Curriculum states that pupils should:

- Develop the stamina and skills to write at length
- Use accurate spelling and punctuation
- Be grammatically correct
- Write in a range of ways and purposes including narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations
- Write to support their understanding and consolidation of what they have heard or read

The 2014 Curriculum divides writing skills into dimensions:

#### •Transcription (spelling and handwriting)

- Composition (articulating ideas in speech and writing)

We recognise that both these elements are essential to success and we support the acquisition of both sets of skills through various methods. We recognise that these areas are clearly linked to the other aspects of English learning: speaking and listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary.

#### 3.1 Our aims and connected provision

- We correct grammatical error orally/ written work (where appropriate)
- We have a systematic approach, we revisit key learning and build upon it in all areas from phonics, through to grammar and spelling
- We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice
- We provide writing frames to support the least confident
- We provide time for planning, editing and revising
- We mark extended pieces of work in-depth and set targets with the pupil
- We encourage joined handwriting to support spelling and speed
- We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view
- Support for pupils with learning and motor difficulties
- Meetings with parents to help them support their child

### 4. Vocabulary Development:

The National Curriculum makes clear that learning vocabulary is key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' (PI 1) since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- Active
- Progressive/ systematic
- Making links from known words
- Develop understanding of shades of meaning
- Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations
- Subject specific- accurate mathematical and scientific words

#### 4.1 Our aims and connected provision:

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- Spelling lists/ key words to take home and learn • Display of key words linked to topics and subjects
- Using the correct vocabulary orally
- In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns
- Using dictionaries, thesaurus and similar programmes
- Using the Power of Reading and other texts to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have
- Carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils
- Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate

## 5. Planning and Assessment:

### 5.1 Planning:

- Long term overviews can be found online for Key Stages One and Two
- Schemes of work for phonics and grammar and spelling are used to ensure developmental learning building on prior knowledge
- Short term planning is flexible allowing for assessment for learning after each session/ group of sessions
- Pupils may be streamed by ability for some sessions/ types of homework/ support
- Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium funding will be given additional English support which is tracked and monitored termly
- Pupils with EAL will be given additional English support which is tracked and monitored termly

### 5.2 Assessment:

- Staff assess pupils learning during and as part of every session, they adapt their practice accordingly
- Weekly Writing tasks are levelled and this is tracked
- Formal assessments of Reading Comprehension ability are carried out, tracked and monitored at least termly
- Writing levels are assessed. These are tracked termly
- Staff attend moderating sessions within county including the local cluster
- End of Key Stage Assessments are analysed by the Co-ordinator and Head and Deputy Headteacher and feed into the school SEF, development plan and performance management

## 6. Professional development:

- Staff are expected to attend relevant courses during the school year • Moderation takes place in house and with other schools

## 7. Specific groups:

- Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly, pupils who are slow moving or making little or no progress are discussed and plans made



## School D Teaching and Learning Policy

xxxxx PRIMARY SCHOOL

### TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

The Staff at xxxxx Primary School are committed to enabling children to achieve their true potential through effective Teaching and Learning.

#### ETHOS IS BASED ON

- An Environment that is safe, secure, stimulating, supportive, motivational and consistent throughout the school.
- Quality Teaching and Learning to raising standards, based on:
  - Planning based on a knowledge and assessment of pupils.
  - A range of teaching styles and methods. Including research, inquiry and independent work.
  - Use of a range of environments, education visits, studying offsite, outdoor work, visitors, creative and independent.
  - Cross curricular based learning opportunities.
  - High expectations of attainment and behaviour that are consistent throughout the school
  - Developing independence and skills for life long learning. Emphasis on assessment for learning. Children's choice and child initiated learning.
  - Promoting positive and respectful relationships amongst staff, pupils, parents and the community taking into account children's ECM.
- Take account of diversity, culture and community cohesion.

#### Equal opportunities and Racial and gender equality statement

The school will promote equality of opportunity and racial equality for all pupils through teaching and learning activities and access to activities and opportunities.

Please refer to the schools Equal opportunity and Racial/Gender Equality Policy and the schools Inclusion Policy.

The policy is based on the following areas:-

Relationships

The Learning Environment and organisation Planning

Lesson Organisation

An outstanding Lesson

Assessment

Staff Development

National Curriculum

Commitment of all members of the school community to a shared understanding of the aims, ethos and practices of the school. Staff working as a team towards shared goals networking and developing practice. A consistent approach to standards and behaviour ensuring that all pupils feel confident and valued and safe. Developing pupils' creativity, imagination, critical thinking and independence. Relationships take account of and value pupils: ethnicity, gender, culture and special needs & G&T both physical and educational and provide equal access and opportunity for all pupils.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: This includes the school environment as well as the extended environment where learning may take place, home, community, places of interest visited etc. It also involves other people as well as teachers and support staff, it includes parents, visitors, the wider community, visitors and staff on school visits

#### Staff Work as a team

- Use consistent approaches and strategies throughout the school
- Provide a safe, secure, stimulating learning environment
- Use available time and resources effectively
- Facilitate ECM Agenda
- Promote basic skills for lifelong learning, E, M & ICT.

Pupils: Are encouraged to be confident, work hard and have high expectations

- Are able to work individually, in pairs, groups, or as part of a whole class ● Are able to respond to a variety of learning situations
- Work independently making choices to support lifelong learning. Child initiated. ● Encourage to have a pupil voice.

#### Parents:

- Home/school links — parents are encouraged to become partners in their children's educational development
- Involvement through Parent Support Worker, Governor representation and Friends of xxxx.

#### Local Community:

- Wherever possible links with the community will be utilised to extend and develop the children's education and experiences
- Full use will be made of existing resources in the local environment
- The school places a high priority on educational visits to enhance and develop learning
- Community facility (sports) use of school to provide extended school services.

- Display

Displays are a visual recognition that pupil's work is valued and recognised whatever their ability

- It gives pupil's a sense of belonging and ownership in the work they and their peers produce
- It reinforces the learning within the classroom providing a visual aid to work covered
- It creates an interactive and stimulating environment enthusing children to learn
  - It provides working walls to allow interaction with learning, asking questions and drafting answers.
- School partnerships with local artists to promote creativity and provide stimulating environment.

What should be displayed

- Children's work regardless of their ability
- Working walls to develop interaction with learning.
- Artefacts
- Exemplar material
- Commercially produced material
- Reflect a multicultural society
- Pupils Independent Learning should be celebrated. ● Pupil targets.

What should displays look like o Displays should be colourful and interesting.

- They should be relevant to the work being covered within the class or school ● There should be a balance of work from different curriculum areas as well as a balance of types of displays
- They should be interactive and informative including working walls. ● Children should be encouraged to contribute ideas

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

### Physical

The classroom environment should be safe, clean and tidy and well organised Staff should ensure that

- Effective use is made of the available space, with adequate space between the desks to enable the teacher and pupils to move around the room easily and safely.
- Carpet area in all classes.
- All classes make use of new technology.
- All pupils have a clear view of the teacher, board and other resources
- Desks and chairs are of a suitable size for the age of the pupils. Pupils are able to sit comfortably
- Classroom organisation considers the requirements of pupils who may have special needs
- Specific learning areas are created wherever possible but will include Literacy, Numeracy, Theme work and ICT as a minimum and Independent activities. ● Furniture layout is suitable for the task and purpose of the lesson

### Curricular

- Lessons should have clear learning objectives based on assessment be well paced and make effective use of the time available o Pupils are organised to maximise their learning within the lesson ensuring that learning objectives are assessed by adults and pupils.

- A range of teaching styles is used depending on subject, pupil abilities and pupil needs
- All children should have equal access to the lesson regardless of ability race or gender.
- There are high standards of behaviour and high expectations of the pupils within the lesson
- A purposeful working environment is established within each lesson

## PLANNING

### Long term

Long term planning involves staff, governors, parents and the community

- There are clear school aims that contain a strong commitment to standards and ethos
- Parents are given an overall curriculum structure for the year
- Policies and schemes of work are all IT based on the schools portal, including assessment and recording. Resources ensure appropriate whole school time allocation for each subject as well as ensuring the curriculum coverage. ● There is a whole school policy and a cycle for monitoring and evaluation of policy and practice that informs future development

### Medium Term

Medium term planning is completed termly for all curricular areas.

Cross curricular planning is also linked to medium term plans. Some curricular subjects are blocked across the year. This planning is IT based on school portal.

- Planning is detailed and thorough but flexible
- Clear progression is shown
- Prior attainment is taken into account when planning is undertaken

An agreed framework establishes a detailed specification for each unit/module of work and sets out

- Learning objectives
- Activities
- Teaching strategies to be used
- Resources to be used

- I.T. and cross curricular links
- Assessment tasks

### Short Term

Detailed weekly plans are submitted for literacy and numeracy indicating:

- Learning Objectives
- Activities
- Differentiation
- Resources and the use of ICT ● Organisation
- Assessment/Evaluation. Used to inform future planning.

For all other curriculum areas weekly objectives are set down on a weekly planner

- Plans are evaluated against the agreed long term and medium term planning, school policies, schemes of work, the rates of pupils progress and their attainment.
- There is regular monitoring and effective evaluation by senior management and curriculum leaders.
- A termly work scrutiny monitors curriculum delivery and learning.

## LESSON ORGANISATION

### Lesson structure

- Clear shared objectives
- Regular use of key language and questions
- Clear explanation of new concepts and ideas o Stimulating introduction of resources, activities or ideas ● Use of AforL throughout.
- Review and plenary session related to objectives

### Key Elements

- Timing and well-paced
- Wide range of learning experiences
- Balance of teacher instruction and a range of effective questioning, pupil activity and independence
- Planned in accordance with assessment information
- Effective planning
- Targets shared with the children
- On-going assessment of children's work by adults and pupils through AforL and App.
- Effective use of a range of learning styles (VAK)

## AN OUTSTANDING LESSON

- Clear objectives shared with the children
- Introduction of key vocabulary
- Teacher to use a variety higher and lower order questions
- Target individuals, pairs or small groups with specific questions
- Brief, interesting introduction — lead quickly to the children's activity — maintain suitable pace
- Review of previous knowledge relevant to this new lesson
- Support staff to give targeted help to identified pupils and are appropriately used
- Teachers assess understanding of tasks and activities.
- Clear explanation of activity
- Emphasis of key vocabulary
- Variety of resources/techniques
- All pupils involved actively through carefully planned questioning ● Differentiation — pupils' work is well matched to their needs and abilities
- Children to be made aware of time scales
- Make use of A of L opportunities, learning styles, range of stimulating and varied activities e.g. paired work, envoying, independent activities, investigations and outdoor learning. ● Activities matched to learning objective
- Clear time scales and expectation for the completion of work
- Appropriate grouping of children
- Planned progression in the development of independent learning
- Groups know when they are required to work independently, or with support
- Resources to be readily accessible including ICT

- Reviews at relevant points in the lesson ● Plenary related to learning objectives
- Pupils to be encouraged to develop ability to reflect on their own learning ● Both teacher and pupils involved in plenary ● Use of plenary for assessment.
- Link plenary to future work or home learning.

- Pupils to be aware when, and in what form, plenary will take place
- Reinforce main elements of lesson, including key vocabulary
- Deal with errors and misconceptions made, which occur during the lesson

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment starts with careful planning so that the whole school is working together with the aim of maximising all children's potential.

Long, Medium and Short term plans will be based on pupil achievement from past assessment together with statutory National Curriculum, Literacy/Numeracy strategies and schemes of work.

Planning is vital to provide a well-structured and relevant curriculum.

Medium and Short term plans should outline assessments to be undertaken to assess pupil performance and understanding.

Assessment for Learning will underpin the work providing continuous assessment for both teachers and pupils.

### Informal Assessment

- Regular assessment via observation and marking during lessons will allow monitoring of pupils progress. This formative assessment will be used to inform future planning.
- Involvement of children through AfOrL self-peer assessment of work and through measuring against the learning objectives/targets given at the start of each lesson and targets shared with pupils each term.
- Group activities where children both support and help each other and selfreview.
- Specific feedback to individuals with regards to pieces of work undertaken.

### Formal Assessment

These are structured tests aimed at assessing pupils

- Reception Baseline/End of year
- SATS — Statutory — Year 2 and 6 - Non-statutory years 3,4, and 5
- Age related testing throughout the year in years 1 - 6
- Salford Reading tests — KSI & KS2
- Science — Unit modular testing
- Writing assessments — on-going —all year groups
- Assessment of targets set for individuals / groups in Literacy, Numeracy and Science — all year groups.
- Reception assessments (Learning Journey evidence) — early learning goals. .EYFS profile.

### Marking

- Marking in line with the marking policy

### Recording

Formal Assessment on the schools tracking program. These results are recorded and closely monitored by SMT to highlight areas of weakness or concern. They are also used



by teachers to monitor progress throughout the Key Stage. Termly tracking of pupils takes place to monitor ARE progress  
Other assessment is recorded by class teachers for their own on-going monitoring of their class. The information gained is used to set future targets, to inform SEN and G&T coordinator of any specific concerns and to help teachers organise and plan future work for their class.

Records are shared between staff, when a class moves to another year group, and during meetings for moderation and where specific concerns occur with regards to individual children.

Target setting is closely linked to assessment so that targets set are challenging but manageable.

Information gained from assessment is used to monitor teachers own practice to ensure appropriate standards are being met and linked to school and teacher performance.

Monitoring of policy will take place by the following groups

Executive head teacher

Head Teacher

SLT/SMT

Curriculum coordinators

Class teachers

Governors

LA support advisors

Review Policy

- All up-to-date with what outstanding should include. o Planning — Consistency
- Re-visit AforL strategies
- Visit Questions & Thinking skills.
- Higher ability — planning ■ Independent Learning
- Outdoor Learning
- Themes - update; creative outcome for all
  
- English and mathematics
- Well mapped and use of ICT
- Links to home learning/learning logs.
- Curriculum map for parents termly.
- Targets for pupil English and mathematics



## English Policy

This policy is underpinned by the schools mission statement: 'Loving and Learning'

### RATIONALE

At xxxxx school the teaching and learning of English ensures that all pupils regardless of their ability are taught to become confident and skilled in the use of spoken and written language. This policy has been written to meet the requirements as set out in the framework of the 2014 National Curriculum.

### AIMS

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Spoken language, Reading Writing, Spellings Grammar and Punctuation. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

### PURPOSE

1. Pupils make the link between Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing.
2. Pupils learn to speak confidently and to listen and respond sensitively to each other using the appropriate forms of speech.
3. Pupils develop an interest and pleasure in reading becoming fluent and independent.
4. Pupils see writing as an important means of communication and an enjoyable activity in its own right.

### GUIDELINES

1. Pupils are taught by a variety of methods that are appropriate to their age and ability.
2. Through the English scheme of learning pupils should encounter a range of activities that engage and develop their competence in all areas of English.
3. Pupils use ICT to support and enhance their learning.
4. The adults in the school provide positive role models in all areas of English.

## APPROACHES TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING

### Rationale

It is the aim of the school to equip the pupils with the skills they need, to listen and respond to others, to discuss and interact during class and group activities and participate in drama activities.

The strands of Speaking; Listening; group discussion and Interaction, and drama permeate the whole curriculum. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise

reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

### Purpose:

1. To provide a positive environment that enables them to develop and improve their speaking and listening skills.
2. To enable all pupils to develop listening and questioning skills.
3. To use their skills for presenting information/opinions to a range of audiences effectively.

### Guidelines

#### Foundation Stage:

- Develop spoken language through role play.
- Listen attentively and respond. ● Interact with others.

#### Key Stage 1:

- Begin to speak clearly, fluently and confidently. ● Listen, understand and respond to others. o Join in and participate as members of a group. o Participate in drama activities.

#### Key Stage 2:

- Speak adapting speech for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Listen and respond appropriately to others.
- Talk effectively as a member of a group.
- Take part in individual and group presentations. ● Speak clearly, fluently and audibly.

## APPROACHES TO READING

### Rationale

Pupils need to be taught the skills which enable them to become fluent readers who read for enjoyment and are able to access information from a range of sources to enhance their learning.

Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opportunity to develop reading strategies and to discuss texts in detail during guided reading sessions. Independent reading provides time for both assessment and 1-1 teaching. Regular phonics lessons in Foundation Stage and KS1 enable children to decode efficiently. This is continued into KS2 where necessary.

A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers as well as book banded 'real books' used for guided reading. Support staff engage in reading activities to ensure that children have more frequent opportunities to read with adults.

Children in the Foundation Stage and KSI classes take home a book from the 'Oxford Reading Scheme'. In addition to this children have the opportunity to choose a book from the class library. Each child has a reading folder and a home school reading record that teachers and parents can use to share information about a child's reading. Parents are encouraged to read with their child

at least four times a week. Information is given on how to support their child in reading at reading workshops and consultation meetings.

In Key Stage 2 children also take books home from the scheme and from the 'free readers' selection. We encourage all readers to read at home as this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading. Throughout the Key Stage children become more independent in recording what they have read in their reading journals.

We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children, in order to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.

#### Purpose

1. Pupils have access to fiction and non-fiction texts.
2. Use ICT texts effectively.
3. Share reading with others.

#### Guidelines

##### Foundation Stage:

- Have a variety of books read to them.
- Choose books to share with others.
- Teach phonics systematically.

##### Key Stage 1:

- Continue with teaching of phonics
- Use a range of strategies to make sense of what is read.
- Access a range of texts and learn how they are organized.
- Begin to build up fluency.

##### Key Stage 2

- Continue to develop strategies for reading.
- Examine and understand a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Access information from different sources including ICT.
- Read aloud fluently.
- Express their personal preferences for books.

## APPROACHES TO WRITING

### Rationale

The aim is for pupils to learn that communication through the written word is an important skill.

We aim to develop the children's ability to produce well structured, detailed writing in which the meaning is made clear and which engages the interest of the reader. Attention is paid throughout the school to the formal structures of English, grammatical detail, punctuation and spelling. Staff model writing strategies and the use of phonics and spelling strategies in shared writing sessions. A writing Intervention strategy is used to target specific needs of both groups and individuals, whilst children have opportunities to write at length in extended independent writing sessions at the end of each unit.

The children are given frequent opportunities in school to write in different contexts using quality texts as a model and for a variety of purposes and audiences. There are many opportunities for children to improve their writing inspired by drama techniques and film clips. They may be asked to produce their writing on their own or as part of group. Children will also be given the opportunity to use ICT for their writing. We use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme in school to help children develop fluent, clear and legible joined up writing. Children work hard to write in pen during lower key stage 2, this encourages them to take care in their presentation and pride in their work.

### Purposes

1. To use written language effectively.
2. To write confidently and appropriately in different situations.
3. To use ICT.

### Guidelines

#### Foundation Stage:

- Differentiate between print and pictures.
- Make connections between speech and writing. ● Begin to understand the symbolic nature of writing.
- Write own name.
- Link phonics to spelling.
- Begin to hold a pencil effectively.

#### Key Stage 1:

- Use texts as models for writing, developing vocabulary.
- Write sentences.
- Use some simple punctuation accurately.
- Learn a range of spelling strategies. ● Form letters correctly joining some letters ● Write legibly.

#### Key Stage 2:

- Develop writing skills for a range of purposes through planning drafting, revising, proof reading and presenting.
- Use a range of punctuation accurately.

- Continue to learn spelling rules and strategies.
- Write fluently and legibly in both joined and printed styles.
- Use standard English.
- Develop a good knowledge of language structure.

#### CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES

Staff seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum.

#### THE USE OF ICT

We recognise the important role ICT has to play in our school in the development of Literacy skills. ICT is used on a daily basis to enhance the teaching of literacy and to give all children the opportunity to experience, read and write multimodal texts and develop visual literacy.

#### ASSESSMENT AND TARGET SETTING

Formal assessments take place five times a year during 'I Can Do It Weeks' and rates of progress are tracked and discussed with the Senior Leadership team. The results of assessments are used to inform planning. The key function of all assessments is to inform the staff (and parents) of the children's progress and the subsequent provision required in order to achieve their targets.

#### INCLUSION

We aim to provide for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities. We will identify which pupils or groups of pupils are under-achieving and take steps to improve their attainment. Gifted children will be identified and suitable learning challenges provided.

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In order to engage all children, cultural diversity, home languages, gender and religious beliefs are all celebrated. Our curriculum includes a wide range of texts and other resources which represent the diversity and backgrounds of all our children.

We believe in 'valuing what the child brings to school' and recognise the importance of supporting a child's first language, not only to foster self-esteem, but to assist in the learning of English.

#### ROLE OF SUBJECT LEADER

The Subject Leader is responsible for improving the standards of teaching and learning in Literacy through:

- monitoring and evaluating Literacy:– pupil progress – provision of Literacy – the quality of the Learning Environment, ● taking the lead in policy development, ● auditing and supporting colleagues in their CPD, ● purchasing and organising resources,
- Keeping up to date with recent curriculum developments.

#### MONITORING

English is monitored within the school's published framework for monitoring the core subjects. The co-ordinator and SLT are responsible for ensuring the findings of monitoring lead to positive change and improvement.

#### TRAINING

The coordinator and SLT organise INSET and training according to the needs of the school improvement plan. Staff individual needs are assessed through performance management meetings, staff meetings, personal interaction and lesson observations. The SLT and coordinator are responsible for meeting staff training needs in order to ensure that provision is of continued high quality.

#### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We aim to involve parents directly in the life of the school, and thus in the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding in English. Parents are involved in hearing children read, and are encouraged to discuss books with them.

There are opportunities each term when parents can discuss their children's progress with their teacher. Theme letters provide information about the English curriculum and how parents can support their children. Parents are encouraged to read both with and to their children at home in order to promote reading. Parents are welcomed into school to support reading in the classroom.

#### CONCLUSION

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy – Assessment
- Feedback and Marking policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- ICT Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy – Health and Safety Policy

## School F English Policy

### Unlocking Futures

#### English Policy

##### Introduction

We know that by laying the foundations of the English language during the children's learning at xxxxxxxx, we are providing our children with the ability to use the skills orally and through reading and writing, to benefit themselves and society in the future.

Teachers should develop pupils' spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.

##### Spoken language

Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others; and select the appropriate register for effective communication. They should be taught to give wellstructured descriptions and explanations and develop their understanding through speculating, hypothesising and exploring ideas. This will enable them to clarify their thinking as well as organise their ideas for writing.

##### Reading and writing

Teachers should develop pupils' reading and writing in all subjects to support their acquisition of knowledge. Pupils should be taught to read fluently, understand extended prose (both fiction and non-fiction) and be encouraged to read for pleasure. Schools should do everything to promote wider reading. They should provide library facilities and set ambitious expectations for reading at home. Pupils should develop the stamina and skills to write at length, with accurate spelling and punctuation. They should be taught to expand the range of their writing and the variety of the grammar they use. The writing they do should include narratives, explanations, descriptions, comparisons, summaries and evaluations: such writing supports them in rehearsing, understanding and consolidating what they have heard or read.

##### Vocabulary development

Pupils' acquisition and command of vocabulary are key to their learning and progress across the whole curriculum. Teachers should therefore develop vocabulary actively, building systematically on pupils' current knowledge. They should increase pupils' store of words in genera; simultaneously, they should also make links between known and new vocabulary and discuss the shades of meaning in similar words. In this way, pupils expand the vocabulary choices that are available to them when they write. In addition, it is vital for pupils' comprehension that they understand the meanings of words they meet in their reading across all subjects, and older pupils should be taught the meaning of instruction verbs that they may meet in examination questions.



It is particularly important to induct pupils into the language which defines each subject in its own right, such as accurate mathematical and scientific language. How we teach

## Reading Aims

To develop our pupils as readers, we:

- Encourage the pupils to use a range of strategies which will help them to read with meaning, fluency, accuracy and expression.
- Encourage the pupils to use appropriate strategies to understand and respond to what they read, including using inference and deduction where appropriate ● Encourage reading independently and for pleasure
- Help them to understand how the format and language changes with different genre
- Teach them to appreciate the tools of the writer and the techniques used to involve the reader in the text and to build on these strategies in their own writing
- Encourage the pupils to reflect on their reading and offer a personal response to a wide range of texts.

The materials we provide will be of high quality and differentiated to cater for the individual needs of the children in our school. They will be chosen to promote positive role models, and will include dual language books.

Children will be encouraged to take books home. Home Reading Diaries are given to each child, and parents/guardians are encouraged to read with their children. Certificates are rewarded to children when they have read 20, 40, 60, and 80 times as well as a book presented to them when they have achieved 100 times.

A Guided Reading session takes place each week. Children are grouped for reading according to ability and read at an appropriate level. During the Guided Reading session, the teacher reads with a different group of children for a period of approximately twenty minutes, asking questions, discussing the text, and teaching reading and comprehension strategies. Teachers model and demonstrate extracting meaning from text. When the children are not reading with the teacher they read independently from a wide range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction or complete tasks set by the teacher to support reading. Where children are identified as needing extra support, appropriate interventions are put in place to support their progress in reading. As children move through Key Stage Two, teachers will provide more opportunities for children to respond to comprehension questions and will set appropriate tasks to develop children's ability in answering these questions.

The school library has a variety of texts that are available for loan to the pupils. An appropriate author is selected for each term and a range of their books are stocked for loan. Displays, posters, signs, labels, worksheets, textbooks, computer software, the internet and Smart boards are all an integral part of school life and all demand different levels of reading.

## Writing Aims

To develop our pupils as writers, we:

- Teach children to write effectively for a range of purposes and a range of readers, adapting their vocabulary and style as appropriate
- Encourage children to write with interest, commitment and enjoyment
- Provide children with stimulating and creative opportunities to develop the content of their writing, which include the use of drama and speaking and listening activities
  - Use teacher modelling as a means to understanding the writing process and how to write in a variety of forms such as stories, poems, reports and letters
  - Show children how to evaluate and improve their own writing including using peer marking and up-levelling
- Use spelling, punctuation and syntax accurately and with confidence
  - Provide opportunities for applying their writing skills in other curriculum areas to ensure expectations in writing are maintained across the curriculum.

Children are given opportunities to evaluate and reflect on their own work in order that they may develop their own sense of achievement. Teachers ensure that children know how to improve their work by continually reinforcing elements of good writing and showing children skills that will make their writing better. They give clear feedback of achievement and provide opportunities to improve through a 'gap task'. Through ongoing assessments of children's writing, teachers are able to evaluate how children are improving and use this information to provide learning opportunities that develop children's writing further (Please see Marking and Feedback Policy for additional information).

Whilst following the Literacy Strategy children are given opportunities to write in a wide range of genres and become familiar with the features of each. When looking at examples of good pieces of writing within each genre, success criteria are created to enable children to understand the features and assess themselves (self-assessment) and each other (peer-assessment). As part of the Primary Framework for Literacy teachers also use a range of strategies including modelled writing or shared writing.

Teachers also ensure that writing is underpinned by good oral practice. 'Talk for Writing' strategies are used to help children understand how language changes when writing for different contexts and different purposes and to develop children's application of language in their own writing.

## Spelling Aims

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- Attempt words for themselves using a range of strategies and develop an understanding of spelling patterns and rules
- Write an increasingly wide range of words from memory, particularly 'Tricky Words'
- Use a variety of resources to help with spelling e.g. Sound Discovery, Letters and Sounds, dictionaries, word banks, classroom environment, computer spell-checks

Phonics and spellings are taught daily in differentiated ability groups for a period of approximately twenty minutes. Teachers follow the Sound Discovery Syllabus. In Key Stage Two, where

appropriate, this includes sentence level work to develop children's understanding of grammar. Teachers correct spelling and punctuation using the Marking and Feedback Policy.

### Handwriting Aims (Also see Handwriting Policy)

We aim for pupils to be able to:

- Form letters correctly, using lower and upper case letters appropriately
- Begin to use a joined style from Year 2
- Use a correct and comfortable pencil/pen grip
- Use a handwriting pen in Key Stage Two as a reward for neat, cursive writing

Teachers use the joined up style on the board, handwritten labels and when marking, and are encouraged to use the Jarman writing font on the Interactive Whiteboards.

### Phonics

We use DFE Letters and Sounds Programme, a rigorous and detailed programme that guides children through six phases of phonological development. This approach ensures consistency in the teaching, learning and progression in children's phonics learning. The phonics planning gives opportunity for sounds to be revised, new sounds to be taught, children to read and write words and apply their learning through a game/activity.

As children progress in their phonic knowledge children will move on from learning letters and the sounds that they make, to using and applying this knowledge to read and write words, then into reading and writing sentences. We give the children the opportunity to use and apply their phonic learning through games and activities so that they then use this in their independent reading and written work.

All children (Nursery-year 2) have a daily phonics session of 15-20 minutes. In EYFS as children enter the school they are assessed as to their phonemic awareness and then grouped accordingly. In EYFS a focus on developing children's phonic awareness and Phase 1 skills is also taught within the daily provision during free flow sessions. In KSI children are grouped according to their ability and are streamed across the stage.

Teachers carry out regular assessments of pupils' developments in phonic learning, to ensure that small group teaching is appropriate to individual needs. At the end of Year 1, children are required to take the Phonics Screening Check, to test whether they have secure application of phonic decoding in reading. Children who do not meet the required standard in Year 1, will take the Phonics Screening Check again in Year 2.

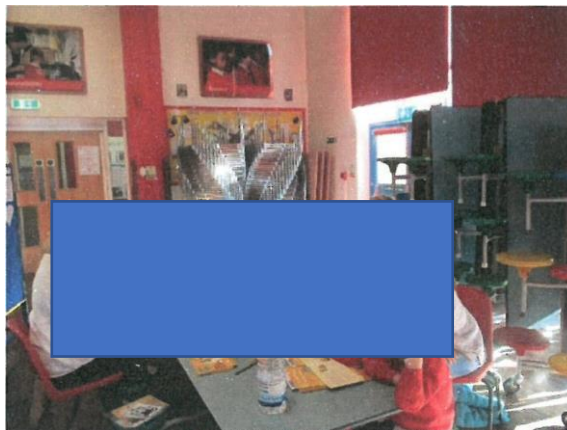
### Monitoring, Assessment and Feedback

Monitoring, assessment and feedback are in keeping with the whole school policies (Marking and Feedback, Assessment).

## School G Parent Handout and Reading Information

### Reading at xxxxx Primary School

Our aim at xxxxx is to promote a love of reading within children throughout the school whilst teaching them the important skills of phonics, de-coding, fluency and comprehension.



An RWI lesson with our younger children

### Libraries

We now have outdoor libraries on both the front and back playgrounds. Children are welcome to borrow a book from either of these libraries. They may take the books home and return them when they are finished.

We run weekly trips on the minibus to the local library on Monday lunch times. Children from year 2 upwards are welcome to go along.



The KS2 Outdoor Library

### Book Literacy

Year groups 1 to 5 will study two books in detail during each academic year. They will do lots

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of activities related to these texts. Please ask your child which book they are studying and encourage them to talk about it at home. However, we would rather the children don't 'read ahead' or watch a film version of the story while it is being read in class, as this could spoil the plot.



### Year 2 are reading The Worst Witch

Comprehension and Reciprocal Reading From year 1, children will begin to look at unseen texts and build their comprehension skills

i.e. the ability to understand what they have read. From year 2 upwards, the children do a weekly comprehension lesson in class. They will learn skills like skim reading, quoting from a text, inference and summarising.

We also follow a programme called reciprocal reading where children learn different, specific roles and work as a team to gain a full understanding of a text. They learn to predict, ask questions, clarify meanings and summarise passages. They become book detectives'.

#### Homework

All children will be given a weekly comprehension task this year as part of their homework. Feel free to support your child as appropriate. Read it to them first if it helps or share the reading. Support them to read the questions carefully so that they understand what they need to do and help them to find the right quotes or clues from the text to answer the questions.

#### Reading

At xxxxx we love to read!

We begin teaching reading with a focus on phonics and we use Ruth Miskin's Read Write Inc (RWI) programme. The foundations are laid in Nursery where the focus is, first of all, on developing careful and accurate listening and having fun with sounds, words and sentences. The children learn good reading behaviour by imitating our teachers' excellent models. Our children are encouraged to 'read' words and captions around our text rich learning environment and to compose their own. Our young children soon learn to share our love for reading.

The phonics programme continues in Reception and into Key Stage 1.

Parents occasionally join their children for phonic sessions so that they are better able to help their children at home. The children are assessed every half term in order to effectively track progress and are grouped accordingly. Our phonics screening check results are strong each year and continue to stay above the national average.

Once children are off the programme in Year 2, they continue with Ruth Miskin's Literacy and Language in order to prepare them for Literacy lessons in Key Stage 2.

During the Early Years and Key Stage 1, children not only take an RWI phonics book home for practise, they are also given reading books weekly to continue their reading development at home with their families. Most of these books are Oxford Reading Tree books, and children are assessed half-terminly to ensure they are on the correct reading band.

In Key Stage 2, children are given the opportunity to change their own books within their reading band and once they get to a certain reading age they become a 'free reader' meaning they can choose any book from the school library. In addition to this we take a group of children (Years 2 to 6) to visit the local library every week. Children sign their names up on a list in the corridor if they wish to visit the library and can return or change them when they have finished reading.

We have recently introduced a new approach to whole class reading. The following classes have paired up to read together and complete different activities based on their chosen books.

- Years 1 and 2 - The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss
- Years 3 and 4 - Grandpa's Great Escape by David Walliams
- Years 5 and 6 - Wonder by R J Palacio

Children show great enthusiasm in these reading sessions and look forward to spending time with their 'reading buddies'. Each classroom has a display or a working wall based on their class books.

Also see: [Reading Handout for Parents \(pdf\)](#)

### Reading at Home

Our expectation is that all children read for around 10 minutes on average every day. We understand that families are busy so this doesn't have to be done every day. They might read for 30 minutes one night, then not at all the next two days for example.

Until children become fluent, confident readers who read for pleasure, it is important to read with your child as much as possible. If they are on scheme 00

s, the children do need to get through them and they might need some support with reading some words or understanding the meaning of the text.

Here are some tips to support children with reading:

- Read to them often, to model how books should be read
- Share books of interest together
- Discuss pictures, front covers and the blurb as well as the text itself
- Read books the children have chosen themselves in addition to the given scheme books
- Try to develop your child's ability to predict, question, summarise and infer meaning rather than just re-telling the whole story
- Help your child understand the vocabulary so that they can then use it themselves

Remember that the most important thing \_\_\_\_\_  
is for the children to enjoy books and reading

## Appendix G – School Policy and Ofsted Report Matrix

Plan for analysis structure – used these to draw diagrams to show biggest influences on each area using numbers.

Biggest influences:

Discussion and Language Comprehension = Experience as a teacher (School context)

Teaching skills and how to answer written questions = SATs and assessment (National context)

Enjoyment = Own love of reading/teaching now and as child (Personal context)

### 1) Discussion

Area	Context	Influence	Teachers (in order of experience)	Area in School Policy?	Area in Ofsted Report?
1. Talking about texts	a) School	Experience as a teacher	Helen, Kate, Kerry, Carl Jim		
	b) National	Social Media	Kerry		
2. Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts	a) School	Experience as a teacher	Matthew Lucy, Kate, Carl Simon (Jo, Natasha, Rae “they can do”)		
		Training	Kitty Kerry, Rachel Jim		
3. Organisation of class affects talking about texts/learning	a) School	Experience as a teacher	Kitty, Helen Kate, Carl, Kerry Jim, Rae (Natasha – whole class affects t. talking about questions)		

### 2) Language Comprehension



Area	Context	Influence	Teachers (in order of experience)	Area in School Policy?	Area in Ofsted Report?
Language Comprehension	Personal	Home Life	Kitty		
		Own Education	Kitty		
	School	Experience as a teacher – knowing their children	Matthew, Kitty, Helen Kerry, Natasha, Rachel Rae, Simon		
	National	SATs	Helen Rachel Jim		

### 3) Teaching Skills

Area	Context	Influence	Teachers (in order of experience)	Area in School Policy?	Area in Ofsted Report?
Teaching Skills	Personal	Home Life	Kerry		
		Own Education	Helen		
	School	Experience as a teacher	Jo Lucy		
		Learning from other schools	Kate Jim		
		Training	Jim		
		Policy	Simon		
National	SATs	Lucy, Kate, Natasha Walter, Rae			

### 4) Teaching How To Answer Written Questions

Area	Context	Influence	Teachers (in order of experience)	Area in School Policy?	Area in Ofsted Report?
How to answer written questions	National	SATs	Kitty, Helen Lucy, Kate, Kerry Jim		
		Test questions	Matthew, Kitty Carl, Natasha, Rachel Jim		
		End of year/key stage expectations	Jo Lucy		

#### 5) Enjoyment

Area	Context	Influence	Teachers (in order years of experience)	Area in School Policy?	Area in Ofsted Report?
Enjoyment	Personal	Own Education	Kitty Kerry, Rachel Walter		
		Own love of reading/teaching reading	Kitty, Helen Lucy		
	School	Experience as a teacher	Mark, Kitty, Jo Rachel Jim		
	National	Ofsted	Rachel		
Ask and Answer questions		Natasha			

Area	School Policy	Ofsted April 2019
1) Discussion a) Talking about texts  b) Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts  c) Organisation of class affects talking about texts/learning	<a href="https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/">https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/</a> Bug Club and Rapid Phonics are two schemes that we use to teach reading. We read in groups to develop our reading skills and spend time talking about the books to improve our comprehension skills.	
2) Language Comprehension	<a href="https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/">https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/</a> We will also reading at other times in different lessons and for different purposes such as researching in history, reading instructions in science or reading word problems in maths.	
3) Skills	<a href="https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/">https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/</a> We read in groups to develop our reading skills and spend time talking about the books to improve our comprehension skills. The comprehension skills we are developing are: Prediction – What do we think the book is about or what will happen in the book? The Main Idea – What the book is about? Sequencing – Putting events and ideas in the order they appear in the book or by importance. Summarising – Saying what has happened or what the book is telling you in as few words as possible. Point of view and purpose – Why has the book been written, who for and what is the author trying to get the reader to think? Finding information – Looking for key words to find information Fact or Opinion- Is the idea a fact that we can prove or and opinion? Similarities and Differences – Are the characters, settings and themes similar or different? How is this book different to others or similar to something else you have read? Understanding words – Working out what words mean in different sentences. Inferring – Reading between the lines and deciding what is most likely to be true based on clues in the text. Cause and Effect – Why did an event happen? What caused this? Concluding – Making decisions about info, events and preferences.	
4) How to answer written questions		
5) Enjoyment	<a href="https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/">https://www.SCHOOLA.org/curriculum/literacy/</a> Reading for Pleasure page for parents (video) – Reading How to help your child on school website	The teaching of reading is effective. Pupils read well and with fluency. They read often and enjoy reading to adults. Pupils are supported by staff to choose appropriate books to read at home.

## School B Reading Policy and Ofsted Report

Area	School Policy	Ofsted April 2013
<p>1) Discussion</p> <p>a) Talking about texts</p> <p>b) Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts</p> <p>c) Organisation of class affects talking about texts/learning</p>	<p>G.R. – in ks2 all pupils take part in daily guided reading sessions with their class teacher and TA. This involves class taking part in a small group focused reading session with their class teacher (on a weekly rota) to broaden their reading comp skills as well as giving them opportunity for speaking and listening.</p> <p>Links with other areas of the curriculum: The organisation of lessons will allow children to work together and provide them with a chance to discuss their ideas and results.</p>	<p>Pupils cooperate and work together extremely well to support each other’s learning. This collaborative learning develops their speaking and listening skills and ensures that pupils are confident in speaking publicly</p>
<p>2) Language Comprehension</p>	<p>Reading is a multi-sensory approach to getting at meaning. Competence in reading is the key to independent learning and therefore the teaching of reading is to be given a high priority by all staff. Success in reading has a direct effect upon progress in most other areas of the curriculum and is crucial in developing children’s self-confidence and motivation.</p> <p>The aims of reading are: To enable children to speak clearly and audibly in ways which take account of their listeners To enable children to adapt their speech to a wide range of circumstances and demands To develop and extend the children’s vocabulary through shared and guided reading There is extra time outside of the Literacy hour to develop reading skills.</p> <p>Links with other areas of the curric: The skills that children develop in reading are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curric. The children’s skills in reading enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school. Chdn are encouraged to read and interpret a range of text types across all areas of the curric, allowing their knowledge and vocab to be developed and extended further.</p>	<p>Pupils practise and apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills well when learning in other subjects, such as the work on the Romans and Egyptians.</p>
<p>3) Skills</p>	<p>The aims of reading are: To improve children’s ability to make inferences about a text and comprehend language choices made by the author/s.</p> <p>Links with other areas of the curric: The teaching of reading develops skills through which our children can give critical responses to the moral questions they meet in their work. Their understanding and appreciation of a range of texts brings them into contact with their own literacy heritage and texts from other cultures. ICT provision – the use of ICT will be incorporated into the teaching of reading for specific reading skills and activities, accommodating all ability levels.</p>	
<p>4) How to answer written questions</p>	<p>At the end of each term teachers must enter a teacher assessment level on Target Tracker for each child: Autumn 1, Autumn 2, Spring 1, Spring</p>	

	<p>2, Summer 1, Summer 2. Year 6 pupils take part in SAT tests during May. In addition TA is communicated to parents in writing at the end of Autumn 2 and reviewed with parent and child at the Spring Parents Evening. Both the final TA and the Test results are reported to parents at the end of the year. Y6 results in Tests and Teacher Assessments are also transferred to High Schools and reported to NCA.</p>	
<p>5) Enjoyment</p>	<p>The aims of reading are:  To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers through contact with challenging and lengthy texts  To help children enjoy reading and recognise its value  T and L style – The reading scheme gives children the opportunity to practise their developing reading skills with texts which have appropriate vocab and sentence structure. However, children will also have access to a range of other books, with varying levels of difficulty, which they will be encouraged to read for pleasure and information.  Home/School links – Parents are helped to see that they have a vital role to play in their child’s reading development and they are shown ways in which they can foster a love of reading in their children.  Children take home books to share and enjoy with their parents.  In ks2, pupils are encouraged to bring in their own <b>age appropriate</b> books from home to share in ‘free reading’ sessions. Books are monitored by staff.</p>	

## School C English Policy and Ofsted Report

Area	School Policy	Ofsted April 2015
<p>1. Discussion</p> <p>a) Talking about texts</p> <p>b) Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts</p> <p>c) Organisation of class affects talking about texts/learning</p>	<p>Pupils often look at books in guided reading sessions</p>	
<p>2. Language Comprehension</p>	<p>Rationale : The NC (2014) clearly states that teaching the Eng lang is an essential, if not the most essential role of a primary school. At school we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. Listening and responding to literature, giving and receiving instructions. They develop the skills of participating effectively in group discussions. Aims: Pupils are encouraged to read widely, through our use of differing class texts, library visits and high quality attractive books in classrooms.</p> <p>(section for vocabulary development) Vocab teaching needs to be: active, progressive/systematic, making links from known words, develop understanding of shades of meaning, include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations, subject specific – accurate mathematical and scientific words</p> <p>Aims/provision : spelling lists, display of key words, using the correct vocab orally, in-depth word based lessons looking at patterns, using dictionaries, thesaurus, using the Power of Reading and other texts to explore vocab choices and effect they have, carrying out systematic testing and providing feedback to pupils</p>	<p>Additional adults in the classroom work very effectively alongside class teachers. They are meticulously briefed as to the learning that is to take place. They follow the class teachers' lead in the way they draw pupils to an understanding through questioning rather than always providing the answer. This is particularly helpful for pupils who speak English as an additional language as it extends their use of vocabulary.</p>
<p>3. Skills</p>	<p>Pupils develop skills in reading for understanding using the Reading scheme.</p>	
<p>4. How to answer written questions</p>	<p>Pupils also need to read to find info in all lessons (is this lang comp?) and comprehension is assessed in a formal way every term</p>	
<p>5. Enjoyment</p>	<p>Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure using reading partners, quiet reading time, listening to an adult read</p>	<p>Reading is taught very well throughout the school. The school has changed the way it teaches reading to older pupils by giving them more opportunity to read a complete text, rather than extracts, during lessons. This is developing a greater love of books and pupils spoke enthusiastically about the books they were reading at the time of the inspection.</p>

## School D Reading Policy and Ofsted Report

Area	School Policy	Ofsted January 2014
1) Discussion a) Talking about texts  b) Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts  c) Organisation of class affects talking about textslearning		
2) Language Comprehension		
3) Skills	<p><a href="https://www.SCHOOLD.sandwell.sch.uk/page/?title=Phonics%2C+Spelling+%26amp%3B+Reading&amp;pid=42">https://www.SCHOOLD.sandwell.sch.uk/page/?title=Phonics%2C+Spelling+%26amp%3B+Reading&amp;pid=42</a></p> <p>At xxxx reading is a skill taught, practised and promoted throughout the school, across the whole curriculum and through a range of strategies:</p> <p>Reading for pleasure</p> <p>Reading homework</p> <p>Phonics lessons</p> <p>Guided Reading</p> <p>Reading comprehension</p> <p>The study of a range of genres of text</p> <p>Class Texts</p> <p>Reading for the wider curriculum, related to topics</p> <p>Access to the school library</p> <p>Reading materials have been compiled from a range of different schemes including Collins Big Cat, Ginn, Sky Racer and Oxford Reading Project X. Other texts, not linked to a scheme, by well-known authors, are also studied to ensure children experience a wealth of literature.</p> <p>The children also have access to a range of books to read individually and take home for reading homework. These include fiction, non-fiction and poetry books from the Oxford Reading Tree, Collins Big Cat Phonics and 'real books' by popular authors.</p>	<p>Make sure more pupils make accelerated progress, particularly in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2, through: developing pupils' higher order skills in reading and comprehension so they interrogate texts by scanning and skimming for information more effectively page 3</p> <p>In the end of Key Stage 2 assessments taken by Year 6 pupils in 2013, pupils did particularly well in writing and the spelling and grammar test. They did not, however, perform as well in reading because some pupils found it difficult to skim and scan text quickly to extract key information. Pupils currently in the school are making better progress in reading but too few pupils are making rapid progress in comprehension skills. Page 4</p> <p>The teaching of reading is not as effective as the teaching of writing because comprehension skills are not always taught skilfully enough to enable pupils to develop deeper understanding of the texts they read. Page 5</p>
4) How to answer written questions		
6) Enjoyment	<p><a href="https://www.xxxxxxx.SCHOOLD.sch.uk/page/?title=Phonics%2C+Spelling+%26amp%3B+Reading&amp;pid=42">https://www.xxxxxxx.SCHOOLD.sch.uk/page/?title=Phonics%2C+Spelling+%26amp%3B+Reading&amp;pid=42</a></p> <p>We also enjoy celebrating themed days to promote a love of reading, such as World Book Day which is held each March. We also invite authors in from time to time to share their stories with the children and encourage creative writing.</p>	

## School E English Policy and Ofsted Report

Area	School Policy	Ofsted March 2019
<p>1) Discussion</p> <p>a) Talking about texts</p> <p>b) Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts</p> <p>c) Organisation of class affects talking about texts/learning</p>	<p>Approaches to S and L Rationale – It is the aim of the school to equip the pupils with the skills they need, to listen and respond to others, to discuss and interact during class and group activities and participate in drama activities. Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all pupils in order to raise reading and writing standards.</p> <p>Approaches to reading – purpose – Share reading with others.</p> <p>Guidelines – Express their personal preference for books.</p> <p>Teachers model reading strategies during shared reading sessions, whilst children have the opp to develop reading strats and to discuss texts in detail during guided reading sessions. Independent reading provides time for both assessment and 1-1 teaching.</p>	<p>Many lessons are inspiring. They foster pupils' curiosity and build on pupils' prior learning. Teachers often give pupils opportunities to engage in thoughtful discussion. This helps pupils to think carefully and to live up to the very high expectations placed on them. Pg 5</p>
<p>2) Language Comprehension</p>	<p>Rationale – At School E the teaching and learning of English ensures that all pupils regardless of their ability are taught to become confident and skilled in the use of spoken and written language.</p> <p>Aims – pupils will be given opps to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curric, with opps to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.</p> <p>Purpose – 1. Pupils make the link between Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing.</p>	
<p>3) Skills</p>	<p>We encourage all readers to read at home as this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading.</p>	
<p>4) How to answer written questions</p>		
<p>5) Enjoyment</p>	<p>Purpose – 3. Pupils develop an interest and pleasure in reading becoming fluent and independent.</p> <p>Approaches to Reading Rationale – Pupils need to be taught the skills which enable them to become fluent readers who read for enjoyment and are able to access information from a range of sources to enhance their learning.</p> <p>A range of reading schemes are used to support early readers as well as book-banded 'real books' used for guided reading.</p> <p>We encourage all readers to read at home as this not only helps to develop inferential skills, but also supports a lifelong love of reading.</p> <p>We recognise the value of adults (both in school and at home) reading aloud to children, in order for them to improve their grasp of story language, enthuse them with a love of books and inspire them as writers.</p>	<p>Reading is also taught very effectively. Most pupils quickly develop a love of reading. They benefit from access to a wide range of good-quality literary and other texts. – page 4</p> <p>Pupils read regularly and widely during their time at school. They develop into fluent and confident readers. Most have very good comprehension and infer meaning in a way appropriate for their age. Page 6</p>



## School F Reading Policy

Area	School Policy	Ofsted September 2014
<p>1) Discussion</p> <p>a) Talking about texts</p> <p>b) Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts</p> <p>c) Organisation of class affects talking about texts/learning</p>	<p><a href="https://SCHOOLF-sandwell.frogos.net/app/os#!website/curriculum/subjects/reading">https://SCHOOLF-sandwell.frogos.net/app/os#!website/curriculum/subjects/reading</a></p> <p><b>Current Subject Focus:</b></p> <p><i>To develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information</i></p> <p><b>Strengths of Subject:</b></p> <p>Access to a variety of high-quality texts. Children have a hunger for new vocabulary. Pupils have the opportunities to take part in lots of book-related activities.</p> <p><b>Day 4</b> – Finally, after extensive class discussions and quality modelling, children then answer questions in the form of a ‘Book Worm Challenge’ about the text they have studied over the week.</p>	
<p>2) Language Comprehension</p>	<p><b>Subject Vision:</b> <i>The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.</i></p> <p>Alongside the teaching of decoding, children are also taught how to understand what they have read. At School F, we ensure this is established through our whole class reading approach, which takes places over four days. <b>Day 1</b> – On the first day, children are introduced to quality text through an exciting hook. Pupils are then encouraged to highlight ‘cold words’. Cold words are words which the children find difficult to define. Through the use of micro-drama, pictures and actions, children are then taught the meanings of these words so they can confidently apply them in other contexts. <b>Day 2</b> – In this session, the teacher models the reading of the text through Echo Reading. This is where the children repeat the reading, correctly using pace, punctuation and pronunciation. As well as reading the text, the teacher will also facilitate class discussions by asking questions which encourage the children to make connections and deepen their understanding.</p> <p>We have found through this method that our children make connections, building awareness of authors and exploring the use of vocabulary.</p>	
<p>3) Skills</p>	<p><b>Our approach</b> We know reading is amongst one of the most important skills your child will learn to do at School F, so we want to make it a skill they continue to build on in future.</p>	<p>From a low starting point on entry, pupils have not yet caught up by Key Stage 1, and in both Year 1 and 2 pupils’ performance in the national phonics screening check has been below that of most schools due to pupils’ weak language and communication skills. However, their progress in learning to read is rapid so that they soon catch up through Key Stage 2. As a result, and by Year 6 pupils read widely and acquire excellent skills which</p>

		encourage them to read for both pleasure and information.
4) How to answer written questions	<b>Day 3</b> – During this session, the teacher models how to effectively answer comprehension questions. The children are encouraged to highlight evidence from the text which supports answers.	
5) Enjoyment	<p>Here we want our children to become confident and successful readers who take pleasure in reading. In order to achieve this, we create an environment where children feel comfortable when enjoying their favourite books. Whether this be between a bundle of cushions, sharing a favourite book with a friend, lying on a blanket outside or even under the teacher’s desk! We want to create Readers for life.</p> <p>We believe that our parents and carers are vital in helping their children learn to read, therefore we provide opportunities to support you by sharing many of the strategies we use at school through our workshops and 'Fun Friday' sessions.</p> <p>At our school reading is not just for children, which is why we have created 'Biscuits and Books' groups where children and teachers can both share their love of reading. This is an opportunity for communities to explore texts in greater depth, share favourites and talk spontaneously about their reading. This buzz for books can also be achieved at home. Follow the links below to find out more:</p>	

## School G Reading Policy and Ofsted Report

Area	School Policy	Ofsted February 2012
1) Discussion a) Talking about texts b) Chdn supporting each other in talking about texts c) Organisation of class affects talking about texts/learning	Parent Handout Book Literacy. Year groups 1 to 5 will study two books in detail during each academic year. They will do lots of activities related to these texts. Please ask your child which book they are studying and encourage them to talk about it at home. However, we would rather the children don't 'read ahead' or watch a film version of the story while it is being read I class, as this could spoil the plot. Reading at Home Here are some tips to support children with reading: Discuss pictures, front covers and the blurb as well as the text itself	By the end of Year 6, the great majority of pupils are reading at levels that are above, and sometimes considerably above, average. They use advanced vocabulary to create mood by linking ideas and communication skills are celebrated in all lessons. However, this correct emphasis on discussion skills means that pupils do not always get sufficient practice to develop the quality of their handwriting skills and presentation sometimes suffers.
2) Language Comprehension	Reading at Home Here are some tips to support children with reading: Read to them often, to model how books should be read Share books of interest together Help your child understand the vocabulary so that they can then use it themselves	Pupils can articulate their ideas using well-chosen vocabulary
3) Skills	Parent Handout Comp and Reciprocal Reading – From year 1, children will begin to look at unseen texts and build their comprehension skills i.e. the ability to understand what they have read. From year 2 upwards, the children do a weekly comp lesson in class. They will learn skills like skim reading, quoting from a text, inference and summarising. We also follow a programme called reciprocal reading where children learn different, specific roles and work as a team to gain a full understanding of a text. They learn to predict, ask questions, clarify meanings and summarise passages. They become 'book detectives'. Reading at Home Here are some tips to support children with reading: Try to develop your child's ability to predict, question, summarise and infer meaning rather than just retelling the whole story.	
4) How to answer written questions		
5) Enjoyment	<a href="https://www.SCHOOLG.sandwell.sch.uk/reading.htm">https://www.SCHOOLG.sandwell.sch.uk/reading.htm</a> At School G we love to read! We have recently introduced a new approach to whole class reading. The following classes have paired up to read together and complete different activities based on their chosen books. Years 1 and 2 – the Cat in the Hat by Dr Seuss Years 3 and 4 – Grandpa's Great Escape by David Walliams Years 5 and 6 – Wonder by R. J. Palacio Children show great enthusiasm in these reading sessions and look forward to spending time with their 'reading buddies'. Each classroom has a display or a working wall based on their class books. Reading Handout for Parents Our aim at School G is to promote a love of reading within children throughout the school whilst	

	<p>teaching them the important skills of phonics, decoding, fluency and comprehension.</p> <p>We run weekly trips on the minibus to the local library on Monday lunch times. Children from year 2 upwards are welcome to go along. We now have outdoor libraries on both the front and back playgrounds. Children are welcome to borrow a book from either of these libraries.</p> <p>Reading at Home</p> <p>Until children become fluent, confident readers who read for pleasure, it is important to read with your child as much as possible. If they are on scheme books, the children do need to get through them and they might need some support with reading some words or understanding the meaning of the text.</p> <p>Remember that the most important thing is for the children to enjoy books and reading</p>	
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## Appendix H

### Matthew

Influences	How they see it	How they do it
<p>1. In house training/school training – it works, from lead, self-taught</p> <p>Matthews (it works): It was just brought in, I think it came from Acocks Green, their results for a similar area are much better than ours, this is the approach they use to raise standards in reading, this whole class reading. So we've dropped the guided reading, we do a lot more of this whole class reading and using this Vipers approach. Me: any theory explained behind it? Matthew: If there was, I wasn't paying attention (laughs). Like Carl, Kitty in attitude I think it was very much that this is what a similar school to us, in similar catchment, who have got similar pupils but their results are better, so what are they doing that we're not doing? Or they've got this approach and that seems to be working for them so let's try, and does it work for us – it appears to be working for us, it appears to moving the kids forward,</p> <p>....That sort of went out of the window again the same time as the NLS, and again schools sort of just jockeyed along, carried along, this is what is working for us, if it's not working for us we'll change it. ...I think it's to do with the PIRA review, the world-wide, the global ratings, we're compared to Shanghai and Singapore, so they thought right we need to change, we need to do something differently, we need to do something the way that they are doing it. I think it might be a knee jerk reaction, I think it's a little bit of throwing the baby out with the bath water. Instead of taking what's good from out teaching and adding to it I think they've gone a little bit too far into following other strategies.</p> <p>Matthew (from English/reading lead): the English lead saw it at a different school, and thought that's a good idea, I think we can bring that in.</p> <p>Matthew (self-taught): There wasn't any support or training from the leads, it was a case of sink or swim, but then I suddenly found that okay, I found a way. I found a way of doing it, I got into it, it was great.</p>	<p>1. Change to how taught before as a child: Cop-out lesson</p> <p>Matthew (cop out lesson): Is there anything that you can remember from primary school that has influenced your teaching now or has influenced you that you don't want to do that? My memory of it primary school was very much looking back in now it was the teacher's cop out lesson where they don't have to do anything. It was a case of ok we're doing our reading lab lesson now if you're on blue go and get your blue card, you went and sat down, you read it, questions to answer, you answered the questions, sometimes the teacher would Matthew them, sometimes the teacher would give you the answers and you'd Matthew the answers yourself, pretty much a teacher cop out lesson. So looking back on it very little explicit teaching of comprehension, more implicit. Teaching of reading, the actual mechanics of reading, yes we did and I remember back in infant school being taught sort of the different reading strategies, it was phonics and decoding that we were taught to do, very little on the actual comprehension side. That was more implied, if you can read, almost even if you can read you can answer the questions, very little teaching of this is how you, this is where you look to for a key word, this is how you skim and scan. Being taught was a misnomer, we used to something called Reading Labs. There was some reading comp taught but it very much be the whole class, so very much pitched towards the middle, rather than differentiated, so here's a reading comp activity, as a class we'd read this, and the teacher would ask all the questions and then you'd sit down and go through the questions in our books. it was very much a written response, it wasn't a case of any tick boxes, or put a circle around this or fill this table in, so they were basic retrieval questions or inference questions. There was very little on vocabulary, there might be the odd question, nothing on authorial intent, nothing on why did the author choose these words, why is the author put a simile in here and it was very much geared towards the fiction side rather than non-fiction.</p>	<p>1. Through language comp: teaching skills across curriculum</p> <p>Matthew (teach reading skills across curriculum): Even though we teach reading throughout the curriculum, even when we are doing our Talk for Writing we are reading our model text, we would still be asking them questions, well what does that word mean, this is authorial intent, so how does the author tell us that Peter's scared? It doesn't say Peter's scared, how do I know Peter's scared, can you infer why, even though it's not in a reading lesson, we'll still be teaching reading through that, and in our topic lessons in the afternoons as well, so there's still reading going on in those lessons, so if you're going to summarise that paragraph, what would that paragraph be?</p>
<p>3. CPD outside training: it works</p> <p>Matthew (it works): Me: So during that time (pre NLS and after), in any of the training, was there any theory about the whole books/phonics approach to reading explained or did you know that anyway or did that ever come out in any training?</p> <p>Matthew: I can't remember any time</p>	<p>2. Something enjoyable: time to pass on love of reading</p> <p>Matthew (Have time to pass on love of reading that is not activity to complete): I would like to see we have some time to sit down with a group, with a book and go into that book in a lot more detail, and have some time to try and pass on a love</p>	<p>5. Through assessment preparation: types of qus. they getting wrong</p> <p>Matthew (types of questions they are getting wrong): we do the PIRA reading tests every term and then data's submitted and we have a look at a year group ... but we can look at it on a break down of the questions. It was very much</p>

<p>when it was said explicitly this is the theory of it. It was more a case of this is what we want you to do, go off and do it. it was very much, this wasn't working, so we've changed it now, because this Walter work. But no this is the theory behind it, and to be fair, as a class teacher at the time, I wouldn't have been too much interested in the theory behind it, okay, this is what I've got to do, how am I going to do it, don't really need to know that, don't bore me to death with half an hour of theory about something if I've got to go away and do it. Tell me how it works, because I need to make it work. Give me 5 minutes of theory that I can understand, that's fine. Don't give me half an hour of theory which puts me to sleep, but doesn't actually help me be a better teacher. I was very much about training, pragmatic. If I walked into the training and came out a better teacher, if the answer was yes then it was good training. If the answer was no then it wasn't.</p>	<p>of reading that is not just an activity to be completed</p>	<p>that it was the inference type of questions which the children aren't reaching ARE, that's the ones they were getting wrong. The retrieval questions they could do, the sequencing questions pretty much they're okay on. Where they weren't getting it, where they were losing Matthews on, that was the inference. They were unable to identify from the text the hidden clues, what we would call reading between the lines. you identify specifics for some pupils, like I've got A., who's in my group, he's got ADHD, he's got autism, he cannot pick up inference, so even though he'll get retrieval questions correct, he won't understand an inference, he won't understand what the questions are asking him to do, he'll just copy huge chunks of the text, so I'll be talking to him, I'll be focussing specific questions for A., what does the question mean? Where do you need to go for the information? What does that tell you? How do you know? Structure the question for him so he'll be able to answer the question correctly. Teachers Walter generate it (the questions). Because there are 3 of us in the year group, SEND kids are taken out and they'll do a text at a lower level, more appropriate for them. From our data we know that it needs to be inference, from our data we know that it needs to be boys, so we're trying to pick texts that Walter have inference in and are boy-friendly.</p>
<p>7. National Training: Show you how to do it Matthew: We had these books come out 100 Literacy hours and it was very much we're looking at snippets of books, were not looking at whole books, the Ginn as well, we weren't looking at whole books, we're looking at individual little snippets of books and we start doing that. That started then that settled down and this is how we do it now, so we're going to teach groups every day and more training once that came in and National Literacy Leads and Literacy specialists who'd come in show you this is how you do your guided reading lesson. We had staff insets where we had experts come in and say right this is how you're going to teach reading and that was useful. So from that I thought yeah okay, I feel a lot more happy now.</p>		<p>6. Through teaching vocab: vocab affects comp, teach word meanings Matthew (vocab affects comp): We tried doing it as a whole class and we tried keeping them in but the texts we were using were so far above, even though we were pitching it at the middle, it was so far above their comprehension, bless him D. in my class, he could read 90% of the words that we were using but he didn't know a scooby about what the words meant so the SEND gets taken out. Matthew (teach word meanings): I'll always start once we read the text, it's always going to be okay we've read that any words you don't understand. Now I didn't understand this, who thinks this, what does this phrase mean? Couple of examples, one text we're reading mentioned choc full and jam packed. And discussing those with the children, what does that mean? It's not talking about jam it's not talking about chocolate which a lot of the kids thought. Oh it's talking about chocolate. Why? Because it says choc, that's not what it meant. So we look back at it, talk about the vocabulary, then we focus on each of those individual areas, (Vipers)</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: Matthew: A Vipers lesson, it still feels a little bit, teaching to the middle, not able to extend the more able, or less able, apart from being supported through questioning or through working with their</p>

		peers. Matthew: you always try and pair your stronger readers with your weaker readers, especially if you've got that target group of children who aren't ARE yet, so you always try and make sure if it's inference they're struggling on you put them with somebody who's good at answering inference. And it's to have that discussion about the text.
		8. Through mixed attainment peer discussion: Kagan Matthew: Try not to have the very top with the very bottom because the gap's too big then. and also look at personalities and how I'm not putting those 2 together! ... shoulder partners, we sometimes use a rally robin, my turn, your time, a round robin, so they go round the table, sometimes it's a timed pair share, so you've got 30 seconds to explain what you think is right. Now your time's up now, it's your partner's turn. So you encourage that discussion. It works well with some pupils, obviously some need to be encouraged to discuss with their partners.
		9. Benefits of small groups: Matthew: Currently we do whole class reading which is sort of going back a little bit, aiming at the middle but you have mixed ability pairs. Still miss the guided reading, still miss the time to sit down and read with a group of children and explore a book, even though we are going through whole texts with them.

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<p>1. In house/school training: Kitty (no comp training): only recent training, but not teacher training. Kitty (from English/reading lead): recent training was from our head of English who has delivered the Vipers reading sessions and helped us with developing comprehension, developing inference, but all the training I can ever remember has come from that, and the deaf awareness training</p>	<p>2. Something enjoyable: Kitty (Once they enjoy they'll want to comprehend): I think that it's important to love reading so I think that not enough emphasis is put on the enjoyment of reading and reading for pleasure. I know people are saying they're encouraging reading for pleasure but I don't think that is always the case so for me getting children to love books, want to be reading books, giving them cliff hangers, that's the start. Once they're actually really enjoying reading, then they'll want to comprehend and understand and then when you've got them loving reading, then they'll be able to comprehend. second placement I was able to read Harry Potter, the Philosopher's stone, to that class and we did a lot of work around comprehension on that and that was brilliant because I remember leaving that school on the last afternoon, I read the last few chapters because the kids were that interested in the book. Me: Did their levels of comprehension improve? K: Definitely, because they were really into it and the children wanted to go and read on and things like that and there was a lot of discussion in the classroom about what could happen next and things</p>	<p>2. Through enjoyment: (7)</p>
<p>3. CPD outside training: No influence from courses (2) Kitty (no influence from courses): I had some deaf awareness training that looked at comprehension through pictures and I actually started with pictures we had some training here, and that was training in comprehension and that was deaf comprehension, a lot of the children at that time had had years of not being able to hear because this was in the time that those children wouldn't have been diagnosed as being deaf, until maybe the age of 3, because the newborn screening wouldn't have come in for those children that I would have had at that age. they wouldn't have had cochlear implants until they were about 3 so they would have had 3 years without language. And so it talked about what you'd expect from children of their age to know the name of the nouns for example, so sometimes when they were reading, the comprehension wasn't there because they didn't understand what we would take for granted a child of that age would understand and you'd have to specifically teach them the vocabulary of nouns in order for them to comprehend and understand. training once with Ros Wilson ...she was behind some glass, and we watched her do a guided reading group, ...was really enjoyable to watch because of them playing up for the audience, but also the fact that the actual session was a really nice session and she deliberately chose a particular group of boys that were quite a challenge to show that the session could still run even if you</p>	<p>3. Should be taught in proper lesson: (7) Kitty (proper teaching lesson): it's a proper lesson together so you could actually feel like you're teaching them properly without being distracted by things, by children.</p>	<p>1. Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12) Kitty (teaching specific skills explicitly): we've got a developing comprehension scheme that has a list of texts and a list of questions but it also teaches the skills of comprehension so it teaches you how to make predictions or it teaches you how to choose appropriate vocabulary or it teaches you trying to think off the top of my head, it might be inference and then it Walter go through a teaching session that tells you how to teach that particular skill and then you'll have a practise page that you'll do with the children and then they have an independent page. We had training here, from the head of English. I feel that I've got more of an understanding in how to teach comprehension rather than giving them a list of questions to answer and actually teach the skills behind it. VIPERS so we focus on Vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval, and summarising and sequencing. children are taught through a series of 4 sessions across the week where they have half an hour reading where we focus on reading a class book. Children that would struggle to read a year 3 level text are taken out separately to read books that are more appropriate. If they are reading but they are not comprehending at that level, they stay within the classroom because if they can't read the text then it really limits them to understand so if they're still at the stage, and I'm talking special special level, you know where they're only just</p>



<p>had more of a challenging group ... but I don't remember any massive scheme coming in and amazing me or anything. Gap in training And I remember her (Ros Wilson) coming in and then she introduced a reading recovery programme that our school adopted at the time to try and help children that were behind catch up with reading and that was based on understanding the comprehension.</p>		<p>beginning to blend or they don't know all the sounds, that type of child that would be taken out for phonic books rather than the year 3 curriculum. we have a focus every day where we Walter ask either vocabulary questions or inference questions or prediction or explanation or summarise and sequencing and retrieval. And then basically we teach the children tricks and tips so for example, the children know that a vocabulary question, if they've got a vocab word and it's saying what does this word mean, then they need to find the word in the text, then they need to read the sentence that the word is in, then they need to try and replace the word with another word, but still make the sentence make sense. If it was an inference question, the children are taught that they have to look for clues, and they have to think and say why. So they have a stem sentence of 'I think ...and because'. prediction again that's an 'I think' because they need to tell us why they thought what they thought. With the explanation they know there'll be some kind of evidence within the text that they'll need to use as part of their explanation to explain. Retrieval – with the children you'll say 'What's retrieval' and they'll say 'Get it from the text!' so they're taught to underline the answers in the text. summarising and sequencing they are asked to find the sentences within the text to underline them and then put them in order or put them in sequence of whatever events are happening. But on the Thursday independent practice. what we've started to notice is the progress of comprehension throughout the weeks are the types of questions that the children are getting.</p>
<p>4.Experience at own primary school: (4) Kitty (teachers): in my first year at secondary school, because comprehension was something that I struggled with, particularly down to vocabulary. I came from a background where my parents didn't really use extensive vocabulary and after spending a year with a Year 7 teacher, she'd spend time after school actually teaching me what vocabulary meant, and within that year I went from 8 years 10 months up to 16 years, just through focus on vocabulary within comprehension. So vocabulary for me has been a key for my teaching as a result of that. I never, ever, what I would call dumb down language ever. If I were to use a word that perhaps the children haven't heard before I would encourage them to always ask me what it means. That's the same with my own children at home. I'll try and use as many words that I possibly can, and same when you're reading books. I know teachers that read books to children, who, when it's a complicated word they make it a simpler word rather than just explaining what that complicated word means and as a result some words</p>	<p>4.As lang comp: (6) Kitty (lang comp): he struggles in terms of academics, but in terms of his comprehension and understanding he's got a lot of empathy, so whenever you talk about a character's feelings he always gives really good answers to those type of questions and he does have really good understanding of vocabulary ... terms of the actual sessions is one of the best people to have in a session, but he would probably struggle on a test paper because of the speed in which he would read at and that would be what would let him down, because sometimes if you 're reading very slowly, you lose the meaning of what you are reading</p>	<p>3.Benefits of whole class: Kitty (not planning separate books): now I feel so much more positive about it, because of the whole class reading, not trying to plan separate groups of books, we're working, we're focusing on one book, everybody's together who's working on it and actually we're starting to see that in the tests appropriate to the level of their age, that actually they're scoring better. I think that these children really enjoyed, when we were actually doing comprehension on a book that they really loved, and these children enjoyed the sessions because they have the same kind of structure every day, they know what's coming and like when you say it's reading they're like "Yeah!" They like it, and, whereas if you'd have asked me a couple of years ago they'd have been like "hmmnn" coz you've got to sit with a group and as a teacher it was hard to try and plan for 5 different groups, sometimes 6, and try and hold all of those books in your head and plan for all of them and those activities, and whilst you were working with that group, plan for all the other children something to do that would</p>

<p>have disappeared from spoken language and you Walter only come across them when you read them and then of course children read it for the first time in a book and don't know what it means because people aren't using it in spoken language. I can remember particular teachers that did (read to me in primary school). I had a teacher called Helenill who read my Naughty Little Sister stories and I can still recount some of them just through remembering her tell me those stories. But I don't remember being read to in the later part of primary school, I do at secondary school. So definitely at primary school it stopped for a short time. Definitely in years 5 and 6 I don't remember it at all, but I do remember from year 7 and year 8 but it was done in a different way. We'd all have the same book and we'd all be looking at the same text together and reading as a class and it was more an intense book look if you like.</p> <p>Kitty (methods): It was a Ginn reader, it was a reading scheme so you read a book and then had questions to answer at the end of that book and that would be Matthewed, and depending on how many you got right, depending on whether you went on the next book, which was very boring if you had to read the book again. Then when you got to the end of the level, I always remember doing a book review of it, where it had some questions at the bottom to answer, comprehension questions about the story, and I hated reading because of doing that. I absolutely hated reading because of doing those tests. In terms of being taught to answer those types of questions, we were never really taught, it was through experience of answering those questions and which ones you got right and which ones you got wrong that I learnt to get better. Which wasn't very successful because I went to secondary school with a lower than my age reading ability, so I actually ended up in secondary school education with a reading age of 8 years 10 months</p> <p>Kitty (enjoyment) - I did expressive English as my degree. One of my assignments was to read 100 children's books and we had to review them and say how we would use them to teach different elements of the National Curriculum at the time, (1998), but I don't remember being taught anything, I just remember doing that activity, because I really enjoy doing it. I really enjoy reading the books.</p>		<p>keep them busy so you could actually work with that group and quite often they're so egotistical, that they'd bother you and interrupt you so you didn't actually get the quality that you needed,</p>
<p>6.Experiences growing up/home (2) Kitty: my mum did read to me ... but my mum came from a very poor sort of background. My nan wouldn't have been the sort of nan who read stories to my mum and definitely books would never have been talked about. I don't remember anyone in my childhood sitting reading a book, ever, the most I can remember reading is my dad reading The Sun, and that is literally what I can remember about</p>	<p>7.Relates to experience: (2) Kitty: one of my philosophies in terms of helping comprehension understanding is to go on as many trips as you possibly can because it's only then that you can understand, I take them on as many trips as possible to give them the life experiences that they can then put into their reading, because without life experiences you can't do it.</p>	<p>4.Thru lang comp: (8) Kitty (picture/video prompts): it (whole class teaching) began with pictures. we started to develop comprehension and we'd ask questions what they thought was happening in the picture, why they thought the people were there, making predictions about the texts and then it went on where the children had to say things about how they thought the characters felt, what were they thinking.</p>

<p>reading and although my mum read when we were small and would have read children's books, as I got older where you'd need to be reading chapter books, that didn't happen because my mum didn't really enjoy reading and I didn't see any grown-ups reading so it never made me want to read. So I suppose with my own children at home now I am reading and I read to them a lot. But I've got 2 sons, one who loves reading and Walter sit and Walter read for hours, but the other one who's not interested in it at all. And he Walter only read when he really has to, whereas my youngest he'd sit for hours reading and book and really want to read it. when I'm having to close a chapter book with him it's a tantrum to go to bed. So I think the fact that I know the significance of reading, when I look back in school, the children who I would have classed as being really smart were always the ones that would have read and who had parents who spoke what I would have called 'posh' parents who had a better acquisition of English than I did. I remember them using lots of words I'd never heard of, like my friend Robert used to use the word thus – I'd never heard of it! And innuendos, what's that? but if I'd gone home to my mum and said what's an innuendo, my mum wouldn't have known, she actually wouldn't have known what it meant, so the only way I actually got to understand vocabulary was by asking questions and by saying what's that word mean, now I love if people use a word that I don't know, because I google it straight away and find out what it means, if I'd have had the ability to have done that as a child then I could have pushed my own learning forward. I had to always try and find someone who could explain and tell me more, because I didn't have that at home, and it's not that my mum didn't want to, she didn't have the ability to do that herself. She went to school and left with no GCSEs and my dad was kicked out at 15 to get a job because his mum and dad didn't have any money. You know they were both forced into work early and I know that was the done thing at their age but academically, it was a drive, I wanted to be a teacher because of some of the teachers that I met along my way who I suppose supported me on the journey that I wanted to be on and particularly reading was always a struggle and I remember finding it so hard as a child to read, because there were so many words I didn't know and I also struggle a lot with spelling because I didn't read enough, so that's why I think it's important to read to children and it's like I read every day to my class and I say to them you know, if we're not enjoying the book we'll read one they want to enjoy because there's no point sitting there reading a book that you don't enjoy and you've got children that go home and get their parents to buy the book because they want to read on ahead</p>	<p>Kitty: all the children with EAL, so the language was quite difficult for them to understand. Even the text types. They had no experience of the wider world or anything. So you know we bring a lot of our world into books, if you haven't really got much world experience, it's really hard to bring it in, and to understand, to comprehend he's got older parents who take a lot of time where they talk a lot to him and they do a lot with him so they take him out a lot of places, he's got a lot of life experiences of things.</p>	<p>Then we started looking at where they'd have texts to read and they'd be creating a picture. there'd be texts where there would be description and they'd have to get all of those facts and then draw the picture of whatever it was that was being spoken about to show what had been understood - there was one that said that there was a path of daffodils leading up to the front door. So if they drew pictures of daffodils leading up to the front door obviously they'd understood that part of it.</p>
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<p>of you. That's when you know you've done it, you know, and I think the biggest influence is those teachers that I remember that went above and beyond to make sure that I could achieve because my parents couldn't support me and quite quickly I would have been academically above them, probably by the time I got to year 9 anyway so neither of them could have been able to do a reading paper that I could have done.</p>		
		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14) Kitty: The third placement it was a year 6 and all I did was SATs papers so I just did SATs reading tests and yes they improved but they improved because it was test techniques, it wasn't necessarily because the comprehension that got better, they just got better at the style of questions.</p>
		<p>6.Through teaching vocab: (11) Kitty (exposure to higher vocabulary): we're doing whole class reading sessions. guided reading sessions where we teach comp according to the level of the child on whatever level of book that they would have been levelled at. But doing that you're exposing children obviously to a particular level of book and never exposing them to the higher level language or the material that's really appropriate for their age. Because we know vocabulary's such a problem for the children at this school in particular, we've now added an extra vocabulary session in, so we have a 15 minute vocabulary session every day where we concentrate on one word. today the word was cheerful, then we look at the word in quite a depth so we ask children if they understand that word at the beginning of the lesson, then we tell the children what that word means, we get them to count the phonemes in the word, we get them to tell us the word class of word, whether it's got a root word or a suffix, we look in depth at what the suffixes and pre-fixes do to words, then we tell them the context of that word, we put it in sentences for them, then we get them to act that word out so they come up with their own little actions that go with it and then they have to put that word in a sentence of their own choice. 2 activities. the ladder one is where you've got a list of words that all roughly mean the same type of thing as your chosen word and the children get to decide which is the weakest one of those words. odd one out - you had a list of words that all meant cheerful except one. ... Whole school. Because we've recognised that actually it's the vocabulary that's let a lot of the children down. A lot of the words that we'd be expecting them to understand like cheerful for year 3, not all of them know it.</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12) Kitty (explicitly taught kagan): children are specifically taught how to rally coach a</p>

		<p>partner. rally coaching - a specific thing that they're supposed to be learning and whilst one observes one doing it and offers advice, they are observing and almost supporting when things go wrong rather than just taking over, and if they're doing things well they're taught to encourage and say "Yes that's the right answer or I agree with you" and obviously in year 3 it's slightly a challenge because they find it hard not to butt in and tell them when they are making a mistake, but that is something we're working on ...</p> <p>Round Robin - sharing an idea as a group. one person speaks and the next person can build on that and the next person can, so it encourages them to listen to everybody's ideas. sometimes at the end they might have to make a decision as a group as to which one Walter be the correct answer to give. So it might not really be their own answer but they need to think and justify why they've chosen whatever they have done.</p> <p>they're in mixed ability pairs, reason for that is you've got somebody who obviously can read and someone perhaps that's a little bit weaker, to support and aid reading because they're encouraged to read in pairs so they take it in turns to read a sentence at a time of the text, so they are encouraged to listen to each other</p>
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Influences	How they see it	What they do
<p>1. In house/school training: (12) Helen (from English/reading lead): so second school, this had clear policies about what to do. It was a very supportive school so there was 3 class intake so there were 2 other teachers. the head of KS2 and obviously of the phase, and she, lovely, lovely lady, very supportive, we planned together, and that helped me enormously actually. Like Jim and Kerry I was very happy there. We all discussed what we were going to do. We all did it together, and obviously tweaked it for our individual classes. so they did internally, the co-ordinators did teaching training as well. So they'd come round to classes and do model lessons. I can remember one of the modelled lessons with the poor teacher who was doing it who was actually very good, just kept getting interrupted because it was a year 2 class, but that was good - I got to see her lower down in the school and I think it's good that you go down and you see the beginnings of teaching. last year I had a child in my class, year 5, and she came to me in year 4 with just about being able to do CVCs at a low ability year 1 level so the training of key stage 2 teachers to do work in the bottom end of the school is so important, I mean it's not comprehension but phonics as well, you know that carried on up into key stage 2, so I'm here in upper key stage 2 and I know all about phonics and the letter and sounds and all of that aspect, so when these children come up and this child, this MLD child can't even break down a CVC word, then I've got stuff to fall back on, my interventions, it's very easy for interventions because I know what they should have done and that goes for everything, for the comprehension, for everything, particularly, so I can say right he's got that gap, this intervention needs to happen</p> <p>Helen (self-taught): I don't remember even thinking anything about comprehension, how awful is that? I just have no feeling at all about it. I think I didn't know enough to be scared. You know when you know nothing at all, you just go with what's going on. I'll put NQT, because there was nothing to help me at all. And that was mostly to do with the management, because it comes from the top down doesn't it, from bringing people in, to training</p>	<p>1. Change to how taught before as a child: (12) Helen (do for primary inference what did for A Level): The level that it was taught in secondary school was from a book and it was questions similar to what we would do here in primary or that we used to do in primary which is really really bizarre isn't it when you think about it. We do so much more now, than back in my day, ... and they were mostly literal and deductive questions. when I came to do it at A Level, Literature, then inference, which I found quite easy, I like to look at things and pick them apart, but that is the first time we really started to say well which country do you think this poem is from and you know take it apart. So we're now doing that in primary which flags huge alarm bells for all sorts of reasons, why wasn't it being done earlier then or are we pushing too much, and maybe not doing the ground work enough at the ground deductive particularly. I love doing it, and I love pulling it apart with the kids and I love getting the kids to be detectives. it's bizarre that stuff I'm now doing in primary for inference, I did at A' Level. ability groups... was once a week, we used to have all these signs on the table, independent work, If I'm stuck I Walter .....and a list of things to do. it was a tight ship and it had to be to make the carousel work... it was noisy, that was the only thing, and you were interrupted a lot.</p>	<p>4. Thru lang comp: (8) Helen (picture/video prompts): the inference circle - first thing is you have a hook so that could be a photo, or a video, toy and talk about it, talk about their experiences so just bringing them in a bit. I did a poem and it was about a shark, and so we had a picture of the shark in the water, what do you think about it. What feelings does it bring to you, where would you find one? Have you seen one? when I did that lesson, one of the children had been to America, and had been in a cage with the sharks, so the discussion and the speech and language was brilliant. Then the children read the text. I have a part of the text, about 3 sentences, I've typed it all out but I'll just leave a box for them, and they'll fill that in and decide what they can put in there. So then their understanding, exactly what's going on, what people might be feeling, what they might say in that situation, so they're immersing themselves into that situation, so in the box it could be anything, it could be dialogue, it could be description, it could be one word, Bang!, and then we discuss about that, and why, it's all inference really, and then at the end we might do a freeze frame of it, so we would choose a scene and it probably would be, I call it a hidden sentence, so they'll then freeze frame it into that, and then the usual so you know tap them on the shoulder, and then they ask a question</p>
<p>3. CPD outside training: (6) Helen (RR/Kagan): No, apart from the fact that the Literacy Project was about to come out wasn't it? Dudley, any new thing going, it always pilots, so that when I was in teaching practices, both schools</p>	<p>5. Needs a method to be learnt: (5) Helen (opposite to method/creativity?): we talk about questions that you could ask and what you want to know more about and kids are great aren't they? Because they come out with such a wide range of</p>	<p>5. Through assessment preparation: (14) Helen (how to answer SATs test questions): what I tend to do is an inference question we talk through how we can answer those questions, so one week it might be more comprehension</p>

<p>were piloting the literacy strategy, so I had the training there, that was informally with the teacher telling me this is what we're doing. The reciprocal reading is really bizarre, we had an Inset last year, she'd obviously got this old inset on reciprocal reading, she did it then (laughs). We didn't take it up. I did happen to mention to M. (head) afterwards that it had been tried out 15 years previous and had landed flat on its face and so we didn't bring it on. And when you hear it, it sounds great, you really want to do it, and the younger teachers are like yeah we're going to make badges, and we did all that, but it fell flat on its face so we didn't carry it on here, we added an extra half hour instead</p>	<p>questions that you wouldn't even think of and it can be what they want to ask the author about the story, why did you use that word or why did you do that, So we have an hour for guided reading, so that would take probably about half an hour, and then the other part of it would be some actual work in the books, so what I tend to do is an inference question and we talk through how we can answer those questions, so one week it might be more comprehension based as you get in the SATs. But the second session is half an hour long, and the half hour one is from the same text so we don't do the whole inference again, and it Walter be more question related whilst the first one, Walter be doing tables and charts, as I've said about the paragraph and drawing it out, it sounds dry, but they like it, they like thinking more ideas, and they like to outdo it, I mean that's part of how you teach, isn't it, that you're trying to spark their imagination so from the outside it might, I'm saying it it sounds very dry but it isn't! It's not dry, honest! (laughs).</p>	<p>based, as you get in the SATs. I'm looking at the KS2 year 6 SATs types of questions, so it is geared up to that, which can be a little bit soulless, however, putting it into the inference circle, which they love, they love the kind of psychology of that, being detectives, so technically it could be one question, but we really delve into it in great detail. It Walter be an inference question, always with the top group, with the others it Walter obviously be more deductive, middle group a mixture of both. I'm training them because they answer it but on a very, you know it's a 3 Matthew question, a 1 Matthew, a very basic answer. Now we're using conjunctions, to draw out more. they'll say their answer and I think de de de de da because ..... also, however .....furthermore, so they've got a list there to really extend their answers.</p>
<p>9.Lack in ITT: (9) Helen (no comp training): no, nothing in university. Because reading's not important is it? (laughs)</p>		<p>6.Through teaching vocab: (11) Helen (exposure to higher level vocabulary): In the Inference Circle you read it twice, the second time you're circling the words, so any unfamiliar words you circle, and this is the big thing at the moment with SATs is the lack of vocabulary. The knowledge, you must know that, the questions, the vocab questions, are the ones that children all children are stumbling on, but children from an area like this, who don't have the elaborate speech at home, you know, its more closed, they don't have the experience of it. So then we look at the unfamiliar words, and the EAL children as well, that's a massive part of teaching reading in this area and I've only ever taught in EAL schools, with high EAL children and then it's looking at the different cues, so the contextual cues, grammatical cues, looking at words, and is there a familiar word within that, that maybe they could have a clue about. Read the whole sentence, can you place that word with another one that would still make sense. So then, and they bring up words that you would assume they'd know like Kitty, some quite simple words as well, even up at the top end here, so that's quite an eye opener, it's really important that I do that in every reading session that we do. Every we time do any reading for anything, so learning objective on the board, look for unfamiliar words there. then they have to write a sentence so I might act that word out, so flounce for instance, I'll be flouncing around the classroom, and get some of the kids to flounce, can you brush your hair flouncing. then they write the sentence, a sentence of their own. Nothing with the</p>

		text at all, just to show that they understand the words. – so lang comp too?
		10.Through different types of texts: (5) Helen (wide ranging): the actual anthologies, the texts which are used, are high quality, range from modern to classical, so they get the full range of that, the shark poem it was a Tennyson one, and when we do something it tends to linked to the writing too, and we'll look at other similar poems Helen seems well-read – does there seem gap in research on Teachers As Readers and gap in teachers being actual readers (like Kerry says we've got to pretend we're readers!)



Influences	How they see it	How they do it
<p>2.Experience as a teacher: (7) Jo (modern life): in the world that we live in, some children still read but a lot of them they don't read in our culture, because it's all I-Pad, fast paced, they'll sit and flick away on an I-Pad but they don't really have the perseverance, some of them in my class who are struggling with reading comp to actually read a book and sustain their level of concentration. That's obviously because 1, it's probably not within their routine, and their home life, and 2, they're on the go all the time, so it's easier to have an I-Pad than a book in the car or whatever, it just seems to be a bit of a chore.</p>	<p>2.Something enjoyable: (9) Jo (a lot tell you they don't enjoy because about passing test): It needs to be made enjoyable, but a lot of them Walter tell you that they don't enjoy it, a lot of the ones who are less academic, because it's all about how many Matthews you get passing the test. Sadly, .... isn't it? Sad but true.</p>	<p>2.Through enjoyment: (7) Jo (any choice ERIC): You know, every afternoon, I've said to them you can bring in your own book, you can bring in whatever you like, as long as you're reading, even then some of them don't, they just pick the same picture book off the shelf, they think they're fooling me, but you know, I have to concentrate on the group in front of me at that time, because they're my focus. I don't know how I would change it but I would, it's a really difficult one.</p>
<p>3.CPD outside training: (6) Jo (common sense): I think a lot of it was common sense, because even when I got the job I didn't know how to do it, no-one taught me, I just learnt as I went along, really. I've had Read, Write, Inc training in the infants here, and I loved that because it's really focused, and it's like a fool's guide really to what you've got to teach and how you should be teaching it. (like Matthew – being told how to teach helps you) Any reference to government policy when you've had training? J: There could have been, I mean we get so many initiatives every day. I use it on a need to know basis. There could well have been but I mean there's something new every day in this job and when you've got 30 kids in front of you with the best Walter in the world, those children need you at this moment, you know things get buried on your desk.</p>	<p>1.Change to how taught before as a child: (12) Jo (no specific skills taught): I did feel what those children benefitted from, either very small group or 1 to 1, because they're going to aren't they, rather than being lost in the sea of a class, or not getting anything at home. (Writing) yeah, nothing zilch. You would have thought wouldn't you that it would be vital? That's '95 actually. no planning in those days. We did have guided reading, which is the same as what I do now. Again no training, no questions, no focus really, it was very similar to how I do it now, but there was no recording of it apart from the page number, the book, there were no specific skills that you were looking to impart to the children. It was all very common sense, you know, you discuss the characters, the story, as you saw fit, as the adult kind of thing, and a lot of it was about decoding and accuracy of the text J: Yeah, I've built up my level of experience, I don't know about expertise, but experience, I'm more experienced, so yeah, I feel experienced, I'm not saying I've got it perfected, and more confident because of that. I think that's more to do with the fact that I've been teaching 21 years, you know, so that's bound to</p>	<p>1.Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12) Jo (teaching specific skills explicitly): ask them to find it and prove it and show me where you found that, why do you think that or where does it tell you that, where can you find that information to back up your opinion, so you have to model that. They don't just learn that. that has to be taught explicitly to them, and in my experience of children, they Walter try to take the short cut, and they Walter try to rely on memory skills rather than going back and looking in detail at what it says and that tells us, I know that because it tells me there. So all of that has to be modelled, and taught, and they have to be brought back to it constantly, so it's find it and prove it, show me where you know that, show me which part of the text gives me the evidence for that.</p>
		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14) Jo (how to answer SATs test questions): we use a whole range of things, Comp Box, homework texts, guided group reading and now we use the targets, target tracker, learning objectives, because I know I've got to go on that computer, and record their progress, so that focuses me. I use those in my teaching so that does focus me, because if you know where you've got to get them to, then, you can take each of those or have them in your head or have them in front of you, and it does focus you. so at the Oratory, it's not quite as big a smile as here. J: Yes, because it was motivated by tests and exams, you know, making kids jump through hoops, so they could get the Matthew on the paper. How many Matthews is that worth? 1. How many Matthews is that worth? 2. So you've</p>

		<p>got to put 2 things then. it's all very training them but also when I went there, I didn't have any infant experience of teaching children so again that's quite feeling my own way in the dark until I felt like I'd picked it up</p>
		<p>6. Through teaching vocab: (11)          Jo (teach word meanings): I do have a focus in my head, sometimes its comprehension, sometimes it's word meaning or knowledge. Or I might say, "If I take that word out of that sentence, what word could I replace it with that means the same or similar, so that's synonyms. when they come in from lunch they know that I have a focus group on the carpet every day, and the rest of them read their own book independently, silently, for about 20/25 minutes, and then I read with them and we just read round in a circle, a page each, but then I stop them at various points, and ask them about characters, motivation, how do you know, we talk about language, choice of words, why's the author used that word. Today we were looking at, because we've been doing it in class, direct speech, and the punctuation inside the inverted commas, and why don't you need a speech verb in there in that dialogue. We've talked about why the author used 'cannoned' when a ball's rebound off a school wall. Why's he chosen that word out of all the other words and .... one of them said, 'oh it's because it gives you an idea of the force that the ball was travelling at.</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12)          Jo (they can do, but not taught explicitly: they can do, and they do it naturally, rather than jump in though, because I'm not a fan of that, and I don't like children to jump in and tell another child the word, if they've read it incorrectly, I would say to them, Walter you just read that sentence again. Because then they know that there's something wasn't quite right about either the way they've read it, or the way they've pronounced the word or their understanding or their expression or something and then normally they Walter self-correct then, and if they make the mistake the second time, one of the other children Walter help them, or tell them the word. Me: So have you taught those strategies explicitly then? J: Well if it occurs, and it does occur where you'll get a child who'll jump in every time and tell them the word. I mean that would be irritating for me as a reader Jo, Rachel see themselves as readers, when I first started teaching we used to say we'll raise the flag if someone hasn't read accurately, but then you got kids doing that all the time. So if it's obvious that they've read something wrong, would you just have another go at that, would you just read that sentence again. And then the next time hopefully</p>

		<p>they'll focus on it and they'll think perhaps I haven't read something quite right. And the second time they normally self-correct. If they don't, myself or the children, I Walter ask the children and they Walter tell them. But it's in a supportive way, rather than, you've read that wrong kind of way. And would you start teaching that in September? J: as soon as they come into my class, because it's all about tolerance of each other, and respect, isn't it? You'll get within a group, some children who are more confident at reading aloud than other children, I must do it but I don't notice sometimes that I'm doing it, but I always say, oh no, don't do that because they knew that word, and anybody can make a mistake. And I was giving them the chance to go back over it again to see where they made their mistake and to correct. So they know I like them to find their own error or mistake. I just do it in the group, the group I'm with at the time. right from the beginning I do that, to stop the know-it-alls from jumping in! (Laughs)</p>

Influences	How they see it	What they do
<p>1. In house/school training: (12) Kerry (it works): we had a teaching and learning spotlight night where all the teachers shared ideas that they really liked and what works in their class and that's when we shared the Kagan strategies we used, but then it becomes something, if a teacher's used to using it, they'll use it. Some of them Walter just use talk partners, but because I've been in charge of reading I've kind of whittled that down 'guys you can use this method break it up a little bit' so it doesn't become too monotonous. Me: Is it becoming more school policy then? K: Yes definitely. It's not written down but when I'm going in and doing talks and giving feedback I'll give ideas or when I'm modelling lessons I'll show how to break that talk up, so it's different ways that children discuss ideas.</p>	<p>2. Something enjoyable: (9) Kerry (cosy experience): after lunch we'll have Everyone Reading In Class .... We used to read a banded book when they'd come in and I can remember seeing this boy, and I was like, 'Are you reading that?' 'Yeah, yeah'. And I'm like 'It's upside down!' We needed to change it because they weren't enjoying it. They had the option to read that but actually the pleasure of reading was something we wanted to encompass again so read what's in the book corner, sit in your book corner, some children sit under the table and read and that's fine and that's cosy, where do you like reading? Note repetition of cosy from experience of pleasure in reading at own primary school</p>	<p>2. Through enjoyment: (7) Kerry (any choice ERIC): after lunch we'll have Everyone Reading In Class, at that point it Walter be any text, they'll read with their partners, the Guinness World Book of Records is a big one in our class, they'll come in through the door and I'm like you can't take it! It's the same children every day but that's where we look at the pleasure of reading and you can read whatever you like, discuss it with a group conceptions like 'right when we're with Miss we've got to read and afterwards we can do what we want, we can do some spellings and just have a little natter (like Jim' comments) because the carousel reading even down in KS1 I felt like I was always just monitoring noise level because I was saying 'guys you need to keep it down, I can't hear my group. I had the little peg so you can't disturb me when I'm wearing the peg' whereas now, because I'm the reading leader we've actually turned it all around, we do the whole school approach,</p>
<p>3. CPD outside training: (6) Kerry (RR/Kagan): I was in West Brom then Dudley borough, we had the training. It is amazing and I do love Kagan.</p>	<p>4. As lang comp: (6) Kerry (lang comp): Earlier when you mentioned language comprehension I think that is key because being able to apply it to a text, because there's a child in my class who hasn't moved book bands since year 3, but his language comprehension, he doesn't understand basic language instructions so if I was to give him an instruction, can you go and get me the red book, he'll always say 'the red book?' It's like that language comprehension needs to come first before any other comprehension, the basic instructions.</p>	<p>4. Thru lang comp: (8) Kerry (picture prompts for teaching reading skills across curriculum): I'm actually trying to push for reading across the curriculum, it wouldn't just be in reading, it would be the inference of pictures etcetera. For example I was talking to the RE lead recently about using Art Work, so linking the picture of the Last Supper, put that up before your discussion of whatever you're teaching in RE, and just have it there and what can we infer from the picture, so actually moving away from just it's done in English, we learn comprehension in English, it's something we master across the curriculum, not just say right it's reading now, we've got half an hour of reading, let's get your guided reading books out and that would disappear and we'd actually start doing it naturally! (laughs) so actually pictures, we do use songs as well for guided reading, we use pictures, songs, videos, poems. Again that would be my dream is just to have it filtered throughout so those skills we're doing without me having to say well we're learning inference well let's start doing it naturally, let's use pictures, it's my dream and goal.</p>
<p>4. Experience at own primary school: (4) Kerry: (enjoyment) - I just remember there being a love of reading across the school ... we had a corridor top to bottom with books, just endless amounts of books ... inbetween each classroom ...there was a little sort of cosy area with little shelves and things with books on the sides and little cushions where you could go and read.</p>	<p>5. Needs a method to be learnt: (5) Kerry (method): it's only when I've started looking at reading when I started teaching reading and I thought there's actually a method to this, there's different types of questions we need to be asking so I think that was my influence, as in growing up knowing what my parents had done, and my librarian and then coming to teaching knowing actually it's not as basic as that,</p>	<p>1. Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12) Kerry (teaching specific skills/domain explicitly): the fourth session that's the last one of the week, where we share the questions, they'll swap with a partner who Walter answer their question, they'll Matthew it, we have a worm challenge where they'll be 4 questions on that text. The first one Walter be word meaning so</p>

	<p>there's lots of things you need to cover in reading. The children are always interesting, because they'll pick out things that you don't notice. I think for me, the comprehension is coming from one to one readers because you're actually engaging in a text and you're looking at the pictures together, obviously the person with the knowledge is feeding the questions, but looking at their reactions as well, when I know when someone is panicking about, oh, I don't really that question, they'll look at you, so you're like 'Oh so what do you think about ...?' and they're 'Err, she was happy?' You're just guessing and trying to look at my face! (laughs) I would say those methods have been helpful and actually getting the children to underline bits from the evidence that they are looking at has helped me to change my style in teaching because I know well actually there's some misconceptions there, they're not understanding this aspect because they're underlining some random things just because they have to. And let's look at it together, and doing it together has been helpful, that's why we encouraged it into the whole class reading because you can see ooh what they interpret from that, and obviously help scaffolding it so they're able to achieve.</p>	<p>it's highlighting that again, the other 3 Walter be based on the domain you were focusing on in the week. If it's inference it Walter be inference questions and we do try and differentiate that which has been interesting, that's the bit that we're like should we differentiate? Do we keep it as just one? So for year 5 and 6 they have one sheet full of questions which are all types of questions, summarising, predicting, all sorts, whereas lower down we're just focusing on the domain so they understand what they are doing, are they inferring, what does a retrieval look like, what are we doing when we are retrieving?</p>
<p>5.Social Media/Blogs (3) Kerry (what works/how to improve): A team (who developed new approach). When I took over reading it was carousel ... I would like to introduce whole class and she (headteacher) said yes I have heard lots about it and there was lots of research, there was lots of buzz around let's move to whole class, I did a lot of research into this, it wasn't just plucked out of the air. There's the Guided Reading Layers -there's the red book, I can't remember who's written it, through that there's lots of discussion about teaching word meaning, and then going into domains and that book discussion. we use Twitter a lot. Lots of Mrs P who had already discussed it as well, the blogger and then there's Ashley Booth, I looked at his research as well. he'll analyse a year of guided reading and think about how to improve it, so it's always an ongoing discussion and we'll put up a blog about what I need to do that's different.</p>		<p>3.Benefits of whole class: (9) Kerry (not planning for separate levels): even by my 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of teaching I was starting to have a dislike towards the carousel reading mainly because of the number of groups that I used to have. I'd have at least 8 or 9 groups because of the varied reading levels which just used to make it a horrible task!... there'd be at least 2 groups that I'd never get to because I'd have to catch up in assemblies and things. Kerry (all children now get reading input): When I first started at this school 2 years ago we were using the carousel guided reading groups and we'd have a group of texts, sometimes if you're lucky 6 books, if not, one between 2, you'd plan key questions and there'd be holding activities or something that linked to the text so it was quite chaotic because that was always my experience of carousel reading and I might be a bit biased here but I didn't like it because I felt like reading was just given this 2 hours on the timetable and it was blocked together and I thought children had</p>
<p>6.Experiences growing up/home (2) Kerry: ...taking home flash cards every Friday and I used to read them to my dad who actually didn't have an understanding of English so I taught him how to read them so it was a weird set-up. He'd listen to me read and I'd then encourage him to</p>		<p>6.Through teaching vocab: (11) Kerry (teach word meanings): first session we show an extract to the children, it's whole class, we read it through to the children and they'll have a blue highlighter pen which they highlight any words that they don't know the meaning</p>

<p>read along with me which was my memories of growing up reading. The library was just behind my house so we used to take weekly trips to the library and I remember my librarian always used to ask me questions because she had read every text, that's what I thought, she just knew everything about books! So she'd always say 'Oh what did you think about this one?' so it's that book recommendation, that's something that I think helped me with my comprehension skills because she'd say things like the themes, she'd mention themes of books and she'd actually open it and say oh what do you think this word means, or what do you think about this character? She made me think about while I was reading I needed to think about what I was reading and be able to explain that to my parents as well because my mum, she's fluent in English as well, again she used to ask me questions, but I remember them being very much like, so what's the character doing now and they were very basic questions, and it's only when I've started looking at reading when I started teaching reading and I thought there's actually a method to this (like Lucy here!!), you have to be able to, there's different types of questions we need to be asking so I think that was my influence, as in growing up knowing what my parents had done, and my librarian and then coming to teaching knowing actually it's not as basic as that, there's lots of things you need to cover in reading</p>		<p>of and we call them our code words. And through our sequence we'll identify those code words using a 'Word Aware', it's a CPA approach of teaching vocabulary. I'll pre-read the text and obviously plan that week, but we pick up 4 or 5 words that I think they'll find a bit tricky and in that session I'll assign a picture to them sometimes using 'In Print' which is symbols etc or it might be better to use a google image and then I'll give them a short definition and we Walter look at what letter it begins with, what it rhymes with, the definition is and also assign an action to the word, it really embeds that message, we'll make a list of them in the class, so the next lesson they'll get the dictionaries to find a short definition for the words we haven't looked at. The second session is recapping the words, show me the action of resided or something, a word that we've picked up on and then we Walter echo read, so I'll read the text through showing them, modelling pace, punctuation and then they Walter echo the sentence back to me, so we're hoping it shows them the flow of reading because some of them are very stutter with their reading and obviously can lack that expression</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12) Kerry (explicitly taught kagan): Encourage peer support strategies? Yes absolutely. In their reading they might have My Turn, your Turn, and they'll read to their partner and the other partner Walter read it back or echo their reading or even asking questions about the text, what questions have you got about the text that you would like to find out. With their talking partner, and a lot of it is Kagan, when they do that Stand up, pair up, so they all get out of their seats, have a question on the board, right go and discuss with someone else in the class. Have a think what this question is right go round, find a partner, discuss that question. The Hand Up, Stand up, pair up res on groupings Kagan strategies I've picked up from a previous school. So I've come in and I've used them in class and I know that Miss A uses the same structures, and because you're planning together you tend to work with your partner who then starts using those structures</p>
		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14) Kerry (how to answer SATs test questions): The third session is where we'll (the dreaded) &lt;lowers voice here&gt; look at SATs style questions based on the text. we'll read it through this time, popcorn reader, or I'll select children who are reading to the class, or the TA, we change</p>

		<p>it up so it doesn't get boring, we play reading games, read the text again to recap the words, when they come across one of the words they were learning they say yeah, and do the actions for it or shout out the definitions so it's really practical again. And then I'll model how to answer SATs style questions. they'll have their green pen and they'll underline the evidence they think will support that answer so that's together we'll create WAGOLLS for these questions. they'll write their own question for a partner to start off the next lesson, they'll assign marks what they think, and we always look at what makes a reflective question, do you think that's going to give you enough evidence</p>
		<p>8.Through mixed attainment peer discussion: (8)  Kerry: It's mixed ability on the tables and that's what we have across the board, so for maths etc. and even on their tables we use Kagan style groups, so we have someone who always takes the lead actually, organises the group a little bit. And that one will normally lead the discussion on the table which is interesting, sometimes when we have the guided reading questions I'll say right I want you guys to pick a question each on your tables, they'll be four, and I want you to discuss that with your group and then we'll come back and dip into that discussion, so it's always breaking it off into different ways. We don't have specific groups for the reading, because it's whole class It's their home tables that Walter be the same for maths and English and obviously sometimes there's a group that will be stronger in maths, but then we know that when it comes to reading and writing we need to circulate around that table to give that additional support so we work very closely with our TAs to ensure we pick up that. and as we're reading through I'll stop or my TA will read with me because we'll take it in turns and we'll drip feed them the questions in to create like a class discussion which is led by the children so we do go off on tangents which is completely fine but through that book discussion, which is my favourite part, it's just open-ended, the children give us their interpretations and actually some of them I'm like I didn't even think of that interpretation, where did you get that idea from?! But because we use the P, so they are giving their point, back it up with evidence and explain it really well, and other children want to build on that what they've said, or I want to challenge what they've said, because actually I think de de de duh. So actually it's a really good discussion session.</p>
		<p>13.1:1 Readers (2)  Kerry: we do have one to one readers, that's when we'll get the skills of reading embedded and we can hear them one to</p>

		one on their book band. we have some children who we read with 3 times a week, depending on where they're at in terms of age related expectations and then we have children who are PP children who don't get to read as often, we'll have them 3 x a week.
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Influences	How they see it	How they do it
<p>1. In house/school training: (12) Lucy (self-taught): I mean lately, the skill sets they need to access the SATs and all of that, that isn't anything I picked up off the courses, it's just me going home one night and thinking right we can change this, what can we do? And then over the space of a few weeks, getting ideas together, brainstorming, going to Carltime saying can I do this, de de de de, trying it, putting it in class, putting it in key stage 2, putting it in whole school level ... it's not really the courses that did that.</p>	<p>6. Not as lang comp: (3) Lucy - I think when I first started, I always took it as a lot of emphasis on the importance of reading, not necessarily comprehension, book, text, being able to read, reading a text and understanding it</p>	<p>9. Benefits of small groups: (6) Lucy (enjoy small groups): group work, they'll be a book between 2. I'll get them to read one at a time, I'm not there to hear them read, I'm giving them the opportunity to read but then when they're in the middle of, I'll stop them and say, that was a powerful sentence wasn't it, what did the author do there, what words did the author use that were powerful there? I'm the base for questions but I ask them verbally. They enjoy that too. I'll say quietly right you're going to be working with Mrs X today (in main activity), and they get excited. And I say you're going to be working with me today, and they get excited. Because they love being in little groups, they appreciate the time with you almost. They're very sweet.</p>
<p>2. Experience as a teacher: (7)</p>	<p>3. Should be taught in proper lesson: (7) Lucy (proper teaching lesson): when I teach, in school I've put into place that we break down a comprehension and you look at it as an explicit lesson, not as you know before it would be 'we're going to answer questions about a text' would almost be the target', whereas now it's can I answer inference questions about the text, can I do find it prove its with a text can I interpret an author's language in a text, and specific skills we're looking at to break it down but I don't remember that explicit learning with regards to learning reading comprehension when I was a child.</p>	<p>3. Benefits of whole class: (9) Lucy (all children get input in comp lesson): It has to be at least one reading comprehension lesson every week now. If there's time for more, or if it fits in that there's more, because we do cross-curricular, thematic curriculum, they'll read through their text, , they can talk to their partner about it as well, then they turn it over, and they have a go at answering the questions and they pull the text apart and ....they're quite fun. they're really challenging texts, because technically speaking they're doing their explicit reading comprehension every week,</p>
<p>3. CPD outside training: (6) Lucy (end of ks2 expectations): most of the training we're doing now for writing, reading, always is referred back to the government, the expectations of the government. I can't remember being on a reading comp course and it being massively creative, I just remember it being this is what's expected, they've got to achieve this this and this.... By the end of year 6, end of key stage 2 expectations. I just remember going on some courses but that was very just black and white government expectations.</p>	<p>5. Needs a method to be learnt: (5) Lucy (method): I always very much compare it to how I teach my maths lessons, ... with every question for maths that you teach them how to solve, there's a method or a pattern that you can teach them to be able to solve that sum. Well I figure that the same is actually true about reading comprehension questions. And once I started to think about that, I started to explore that, started to look at it in more detail. When it's an opinionated text though, sometimes before with the children, if they had to predict what was going to happen next, a child's automatic reaction is to be creative, whereas actually, rather than saying I think the pirate ship is going to sink because I think it's going to get hit by a wave, you know, they get so creative with their answers. But it's teaching them the skill that, going back to don't make up anything, always relate it back to the text, so prediction questions we'll say to them, say what you think Walter happen next but then back it up with why you think that, and give a piece of evidence to prove it, and it's always going back to those key things, and it works, it applies to everything, so it's very explicit teaching So this very black and white method of this</p>	<p>1. Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12) Lucy (teaching specific skills explicitly): you know it was a bit of my baby, when I went up to year 6, and when they sat that first SATs paper. And I looked at it and I said there's got to be another way of helping these children to access these papers cause they found it so hard. Actually it just came down to breaking it down to the key skills. what I did was I changed the expectation of reading now has gone up so anything that we would have perhaps put in year 5, before, all those text books we've bumped down to year 4. first thing is choose your lesson, an explicit lesson. we always say the children need to know what they're aiming for by the end of the lesson. Can I do this and how do I do this? I would certainly say first of all choose your target, are you going to look at inference, are you going to look at finding one Matthew answer or are you going to look at use of author's language, are you going to look at prediction, first of all choose your target that you're going to share with the children, so it's explicit.</p>

	<p>is how you solve this, use this method to solve this type of question, you know it allows so many more children to access the questions and learn how to access the text and it's been really successful</p>	
	<p>1.Change to how taught before as a child: (12)  Lucy (teachers cop out lesson): when I was supply, I guess reading comp was always one that people would leave, they felt it was an easy gap-filler for a supply teacher I found, cause they could just open a book, say read that and answer the questions.  Lucy (no specific skills taught): We always had school books and I always remember looking forward to changing my reading book, so that to me would suggest that reading when I was at school, was definitely a key important part, but for some reason I can't remember doing the reading comprehension. You know, and again I don't know why, looking at how they do it now, whether it's more of an explicit thing these days than it was back then I'm not too sure.  Lucy (think beyond question/answer): I think being in year 6 gave me the opportunity to really look at the reading comp, because you're looking at where they've got to get to, and as a new teacher, when I started teaching, you'd think oh we'll do a reading comprehension today, you'd find a book, you'd find a text, question 1-10, off you go. And you'd think, that was reading comp, but it isn't at all, it's completely different, and it's been really successful, and we had a really good SATS result last year. It's not just about the SATs result, it's the children, they looked at reading completely differently.  Lucy (driven by assessment, SATs final destination): then getting into year 6 it really, it opened my eyes to it, but not necessarily just on a year 6 SATs level. when I realised in year 6 wow this is the important, I then thought gosh we'd better do something because I know what's down below me now. So we'd better sort this out from the bottom up. It was that kind of feeling I had.  Lucy (change in status): now I teach it to the extent we teach reading comprehension, I can't remember it ever being like that when it was, back when I was a child. And I don't think that's a reflection on anything to do with the school, I think it's how things have changed with regards to the importance of where it is on the curriculum. I always remember there was a big focus when I was at school myself on reading your reading book, you know that was always encouraged, and, I always remember I really enjoyed reading my reading books.</p>	<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12)  Lucy (I do it but it doesn't seem explicit): peer support is encouraged from day one anyway when they get to me. It's about saying that we're going on journey together this year and we've got to help each other and sometimes you're gonna get stuck but we're going to help each other, so it's that whole mindset of we're going to help each other in every walk of life this year. But the way you get them on board to support, you can just watch them as well, obviously you always get the odd sillies, or some that start chatting, but we nip it in the bud straight away. But they genuinely just get on with it, it's just positive encouragement.  any particular strategies explicitly taught to children? L: what we say is, when you're doing your work, first of all, the rule is, support means support if it's needed. So that's explained to them first off, you don't have to be on question one together, you don't have to be on the same question. So once they understand that then you explain to them, you're getting on independently, but you've got paired support. it's teaching them you don't just interrupt, teach ask them politely, I'm stuck on question 3, have you done that one yet, could you help me. So we teach them to ask kindly, would you mind helping me, if they can't do it after their partner's explained it to them, they don't just copy their partner's answer and just move on, then at that point it has to have adult intervention. And if they don't put their hands up and ask for help, their partners do it for them, their partners Walter say 'so and so', because they care, it's that caring nature, and in the end, there the strategies that we use and we teach them in September, what paired support is and how to conduct that support. I never make them work in silence unless it's needed. it's like with the reading comp, you've got to train them, you've got to train their mind that they're working in a pair, they support each other, but they're not to copy each other and it's that mindset, and they do get on board. It can be a bit tricky, however, sometimes we have had mixed groups for focus groups, because it sometimes it can get a bit like the lowers Walter think that they don't inspire each other because some of our lower abilities, they lack confidence. You end up sat in a silent group. What you want is children to feed off other children and confidence.</p>
<p>9.Lack in ITT: (9)  Lucy (nothing practical she took into practice): I don't feel I learnt anything about real teaching until I was on placement in a school. It was all on the placements that you really learnt. I just</p>		<p>11.Through ability groups: (2)  - for convenience  Lucy (for convenience?): they're kind of grouped according to ability because it makes it easier to sit and work with them. I mean it changes every half term, and then</p>

<p>think you can't beat practical experience for teaching. I think the things we learnt about the child psychology were probably ... if you were in a given situation they might be helpful, but it wasn't until I worked with children that I really understood children. I don't think you can prep people for that. I'm a practical person, I have to see and touch to understand, which I guess is like the children isn't it at times.</p>		<p>there's some that we move every week depending on progress, but it helps to have each group. they don't know they're grouped by anyone in particular because I do find, especially in year 6, they're more conscious of their ability, I'm with the low ability group or the higher ability, I know the higher ability, they can get a little bit cocky, like we're the big 'uns, so we've got them kind of sat in a way that we know that particular half term it's going to be helpful to them. so it'd be the same, it would be ability. It depends, you get to know your children, it depends on the text. And it's not always low abilities that are in groups. we make it so if I sat with a group last week for reading comp, and I think they can have a go at that. I might sit with the highers, and really teach them how to get into the nooks and crannies of those higher level questions. although reading comp isn't taught every single day as an explicit literacy, although we do it in the guided session, anyone sat with us is generally a grouped ability, but those that are left on the tables, we Walter mix them up, so you could have a higher ability sat with a lower ability. And they do well together, and can explain to each other and can talk about the text. We get a gut feeling that this group are going to need support, just go by the text. It's kind of in your head you've got a bit of a rota, well I sat with that group last time, let's have a go with this group. Everybody gets a chance, highers, middles, lowers, everybody gets the chance to have the teacher.</p>
		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14)  Lucy (how to answer test questions): if I'm going to teach interpreting an author's language, and let's say it's a 3 Matthew question, the children Walter automatically assume to get 3 Matthews, you need to say either waffle on about what you think, or you need to just make 3 points. Whereas actually, for that style of question, we say to the children there's a method to this, so it's what do I think, why do I think it, where's my evidence ... and you say to the children, how many Matthews is that worth? by teaching them the method, it doesn't matter what text they give and whether it be fact or fiction, non-fiction, they apply the method of how to solve the certain styles of questions.  Lucy (how to answer test questions): what I've done is I've taken the reading strategy, because I think every school has always had the approach of you would almost have this umbrella target of can I answer questions about a particular text, when actually to get the children the key skills that they need to be able to answer the questions, you've got to teach them the skills of how to access the text, the text. As a class they'll be looking at right, can I answer prediction questions, and then very very specific, and that's made the world of difference to the children's achievement and their confidence as well, especially children who aren't that creative with reading, or they're not very good at</p>

		<p>necessarily picking up a book and being able to, they can read out loud in the class, but for some reason their brains don't always absorb as they're reading. Some people naturally do that, some people don't.</p> <p>Lucy: so the biggie for me has been going up to year 6. So really looked in detail via the SATs at comprehension skills and access for the children then given the opportunity to review and change on whole school level, so that's it in a nutshell.</p>
		<p>2.Through enjoyment: (7)</p> <p>Lucy (kids look forward to comp now): the kids look forward, but I think years before, it was a bit more, if you've got reading comp, the kids almost deflated a bit, because they'd think it's quite boring, and really, they enjoy it, because I think they understand the purpose of it.</p>
		<p>12.Through dialogue with teacher (2)</p> <p>Lucy (dialogue with teacher/interaction): I think I find it easier to teach them reading comprehension in school rather than at home. Because at home, they just don't focus as much at home on homework because they've spent all day at school. Whereas when I'm in class with them doing a reading comp, because I'm there I can be inspiring and get excited and you know, rev them up if we're doing an exciting story and I can stop them mid-sentence and go 'Oh, what do you think that,' you know, whereas I can't do that when they take it home.</p> <p>When you do a whole class reading, you can get them read it on their own, however, if they're reading on their own you can't jump in and intervene, what did the author mean by that? you want everyone having a go where possible, at least, 5,6,7 children, give them a small paragraph to read and then stop. What did you think of that? And what do you think? Open questions. True reading comp is open questions, not yes,nos, because then, even the kids that would just normally fall asleep, you know they've got to be engaged. And actually they quite enjoy it, having the dialogue with you. And then it's about discussing the text, I like to read to the children because, it's like being an actor isn't it, you can put so much more emphasis in places. If it's a story you're reading you use so much passion and, because the kids are enthralled with what you're reading to them and giving them the opportunities. So I say right, this is the greater depth task, I think you can all get on to it. You need to get on to it de, de, de.</p> <p>then it's important that the children understand the questions. Never say right do questions 1 – 10 and then leave them. So you have a focus group, so I'll have my 6 children, Mrs X Walter have her 6 children, she might be on the landing, and then discussion. So they discuss the text and pull it apart, make notes if they want to. But then, if someone'll put their hand up and say 'ooh I'm stuck with this question', I say 'children can you help me?' and straight away, they'll all look as a class. And then someone Walter have already have done it,</p>

		<p>and they'll explain it. So I say reading comp, it's actually not head in a book silent, it's one interactive lesson. I love teaching reading comp. It's so interactive, but you've got to make it interactive from start to finish. then we do allow time at the end, not to literally black and white answer the questions, but we Walter go through the questions, on a whole class level, because they like to explain, ...it's just this constant hour, open questions, toing and froing around them, and they get engaged with that, they love that, and that's completely different to the old fashioned, head in a book, reading, answering questions</p>
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<p>1. In house/school training: (12)  Rachel (from English/reading lead) : I think our deputy, I've watched her teach reading a few times, and that has influenced me quite a lot because she thinks out loud and she really gets the children to think about what they're doing, so that was a really good one.  Rachel (self-taught): I think that I really struggled in my first school, you know being on my own in a 1 form entry, it did make me think outside the box, so I read around a lot, what I'm meant to be doing.</p>	<p>2. Something enjoyable: (9)  Rachel (books they enjoy) - I would like each child to have their own copy of the book, because that's something we don't have and obviously it's expensive but you can use them year after year. But I think just having the whole book in their hands would be really beneficial. And having a rethink about what texts we are giving them and what texts they do read because I know in Year 6 they were reading a book called 'Holes' and they really, really enjoyed it and they've done lots of work around that and that's meant that when they are doing the reading sessions they are kind of like 'Yes, yes!' whereas I don't hear them looking forward to our reading sessions particularly. They're not like 'oh no' but I don't hear them go 'Yes we're doing reading!' or anything and I think that is the text that we are using. I think if we were using kind of more interesting or ones they chose themselves, or they've got a bit of ownership over it by having their own book, I think they would be a lot more kind of willing to read and different texts like that. Doing that (book study) for the whole year is crazy but if you've got a half term, it might be a really nice idea to just do something different for that half term and do it as a whole school thing because you do get lovely work out of it and the children love it and they were coming up with different books that they had read and had a similar theme and really taking time to explore the book.  R(why you think reading for pleasure is important?) I always think about my more able children and every year it's always been the children that read the most so I don't know what the link is and I don't know why. when I was writing their reports in reading I was trying to think why is it important that they read but I guess its that exposure to vocabulary and imagination and things like that. it's always been, my best writers are the ones who are the best readers and they're the ones who will bring in books from home and talk about when they've been to the library so I don't know what the connection is but I just think it's got to be.</p>	<p>3. Benefits of whole class: (9)  Rachel (not planning separate things):...last year was the carousel style. I absolutely hated it because it's really stressful having 6 things on the go. So everyday you'd have to think of 6 different things that all the children had to be doing. Then get the things ready for your group, so they would be doing some questions with you based on what they'd read, they had to be prepared in advance, really stressful, just in itself that took ages. And because there weren't enough books to share amongst the classes, we couldn't share planning or anything like that so we were all trying to do our own thing, it was really bitty. So that's when at the end of last year we decided to move to whole class teaching this year so I'm a lot happier now</p>
<p>2. Experience as a teacher: (7)  Rachel (enjoyment): What practices did you find the most effective in teaching comprehension? R: What I will say about that year 2 placement was the book study, even though it was a bit wishy washy doing all your planning from one book, they were so immersed in it and and they took so much pleasure in it ... we did a bog baby once, and they made bog babies, they really did immerse themselves in the story or in the text or whatever it was we were reading. So I will say I think that was a really big advantage because I think here sometimes we are giving them the text that they are reading whole class and some</p>	<p>3. Should be taught in proper lesson: (7)  Rachel (proper teaching lesson): Year 2 was a really strange placement because it was very, there was no long term planning, there was no medium term planning, there was nothing for me to cling on to as a student and everything was seen as just random lessons and it was seen as 'Ooh this term we're going to following this book' and we were doing the Flotsam book and we decided to do this whole half term, which was lovely, on a book and all your activities were but there were was no skills progression it was really, really strange, so that was my experience with that, I never taught a</p>	<p>1. Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12)  Rachel (teaching specific skills explicitly):  Me: Why are you happier now? (agency?)  R: I just feel like I know the class better as readers. Even though they're still whole class and they're all mixed up I feel a bit more like in maths and literacy where I know exactly what stage's everyone's at and what I need to do to move children on. I feel we get so much more partner talk out of it and I'm actually teaching skills and modelling to them how I would find answers in the text, how I'd read, how I'd uncode, or how I'd work out unfamiliar words and things like that and</p>

<p>children don't like it, or it might be a bit boring to them so I will say that was a great way to get them engaged in what they were reading and a love of reading there. It was hard as a teacher because you were literally thinking you know what have I got to do make a bog baby out of ...but the children did really enjoy it, they really loved it. Every half term they would have a different book and then they would read it.</p>	<p>reading lesson, or reading comprehension lesson during that placement Every day for half an hour it feels like a proper lesson and they've learnt how to do something and when they're applying it independently on Friday, I can see who hasn't quite got it for the week, or what to focus on the week after so it works so much better.</p>	<p>yes it just feels like I'm really aware of where my class is. 3 lessons teacher directed and we focus on the skills so they have vocabulary, inference, retrieval, prediction, explain, retrieve and sequence and summarise, so we focus on those skills within the lessons, whatever we think the need is. we have one text that we would focus on all week and the first we'd focus on different kinds of questions. On the Tuesday we might look at inference types of questions. On the Wednesday we might do retrievals, we really focus on one skill in each session and by the end of the week we look at the next piece of text and the children will do that independently and they kind of add to the questions with a range of skills and they will do that independently so it's very much a lot of talking, a lot of ping pong style back and forth and really encouraging thinking out loud, you know not just taking the answers for it but really finding the evidence in the text, how do you know that, where have you got the evidence for that from, why do you think that?</p>
<p>3.CPD outside training: (6) Rachel (no influences from courses): I don't think anything's really influenced me, I haven't been anywhere yet and thought 'oh yeah this is it!' Even courses I've been on, I've never kind of left feeling really excited about teaching at all. Yes and that was kind of early on, first couple of years really. I think there was one on boys' reading, that was quite good but it's hard to remember because it's so long ago now. And yes, since then they don't really have any money to send us on courses and things. Whereas I do remember going on courses like back here (points to timeline early on). I went on some really helpful ones. We don't go on them anymore. I think it was more like literacy but they would touch on the reading. I'm pretty sure I went on a reading course I do remember that. Me: You've mentioned about Ofsted so looking for the reading for pleasure so anything else? R: No, it's kind of just really the Ofsted reading for pleasure, yes. We just get told every now and then (by SMT) that that's what they'll be looking for when they come.</p>	<p>1.Change to how taught before as a child: (12) Rachel (no specific skills taught): last year ....while you were with one group all the other children would be getting on with an activity that I don't think was really based on, it wasn't really teaching anything reading skillwise and we kind of realised well if you're teaching maths and literacy whole class why aren't we teaching reading whole class, what's the point of doing the same thing 5 times in a smaller group. RH ... the children there, they're the sort of children that would do well anyway and they've got very supportive parents and all we did there in reading lessons, all the children would read silently and you were with a group and you'd just read with them and you'd throw in the occasional question when you're reading with them, just off the top of your head. I didn't know any different really, it was quite nice because, it sounds bad, because they were all really quiet, the group that I was reading with could really get into a book and it did feel a bit more reading for pleasure, even though it wasn't target skills, so it was okay there.</p>	<p>6.Through teaching vocab: (11) Rachel (vocab affects comp): do you think there is any particular reason why their vocabulary ...? Yes I think that it's kind of the area that we're in and I know it sounds bad but I think it's their families and things like that, vocabulary keeps coming up and it's not just in the reading it's in the writing as well so that's a bit of a whole school issue with their understanding and use of vocabulary. So in the text if they don't understand 6 words out of the paragraph, then it's gone, they can't do it. Rachel (teaching word meaning): maybe on the Monday we'd focus on the vocabulary in the text and unpicking that so they understand what they are actually reading. we do a 10 minute session of vocabulary every day and they learn a new word every day so we literally teach them a word, so today it was callous, and we looked at examples of the word in and could they write their own. I think it's part of the literacy (policy), it's kind of both because we want to see it in their writing and we also want them to, when they read their texts, we want them to understand more of it.</p>
<p>5.Social Media/Blogs (3) Rachel (what works): from that guided reading carousel of activities so I think a few of us started to pick up online, because we're in teacher facebook groups, and obviously with our data, you know the data wasn't too strong so I think the literacy lead had a good look at the reading and that's why we went to focusing on a skill in each lesson and then an independent application at the end of the week. there's a facebook group with all the teachers in the UK, well I feel like there's loads of them</p>		<p>8.Through mixed attainment peer discussion: (8) Rachel: The only children that do go out are the EAL children and they go for their own smaller group because they wouldn't be able to access this text but even the SEND children are sat in mixed groups and they're expected to read the text and decode it an everything. ....So we have the very lowest, I know we don't call them that – lower, middle, highs, but we have the lowest of the low children with a high middle, and then we have a low middle</p>

<p>basically and a lot of them will post what's gone really well with their class, or what's influenced the data, because we don't really go on training so much anymore so quite a lot of things we find are through the facebook group, or twitter, there's a few hashtags that you can put in and so we were just hearing rumours or murmurs of this is working really well, guided reading's really outdated and then we looked at how we taught reading and that's when we decided this year to go fully whole class. So we started off with just doing one session a week was whole class and now every session a week is whole class and there's no guided groups at all.</p>		<p>with a high ability child, so everyone, apart from the highest high ability children is sat by someone that is a higher ability than them. So they are not too far apart in terms of ability, just enough so that one of them will be able to lead a conversation or correct them if they're wrong and things like that. I think as well it's about the conversation they have with each other and the way you sit the tables is you have like your lower, your higher middle, ...obviously you have to change it sometimes for behaviour because it's impossible sometimes with all the characters you've got but it is quite specific the way they do the seating with Kagan. Yes do you know what I don't think they really went into the research side of things. I don't think they did so we never really had the kind of scientific evidence behind it explained but it was more kind of to encourage partners to work together better. So we have the structures there, they've got like Rally Robin, it's to make sure everyone gets a say and not some children aren't just sat at the back you know not being involved or engaged at all.</p>
<p>8. Teacher Agency (3)  Rachel - Definitely whole class, definitely mixed ability and I think any of the children that really struggle, so very low SEND they need to at least be able to access what you're doing as a whole class and age related texts. If it is a case of they actually cannot understand then they probably need intervention outside the classroom, but I've so surprised with my SEND children thinking oh they probably won't be able to do this one but actually when I'm looking at their books and when they're talking about it and I'm asking them questions they do really well. I think you can put a bit of a cap on them thinking oh they can't do that but actually they can. I think whole class is the key and focusing on a small skill every lesson rather than trying to fit in loads of different types.  Rachel - I think that's the problem, we're meant to be promoting reading for pleasure, a love for it and things like that, that's what you want. And then at the same time they've got to show that they can answer these questions and it's like the opposite ends of the scale. And I would say that's really hard and as a teacher I want my class to have the best results but I also want them to leave me and enjoy reading. I think it sometimes can just put them off because they are so used to reading texts and just answering questions about it. They don't often just read it for the pleasure of reading it. If we get time I try to read at the end of the day and they really enjoy just listening to me read and not asking questions about what they've read so not saying 'oh what's this character thinking?' just purely reading for the sake of it. I think it's you know when children go on a trip and they've got to write a recount about it,</p>		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12)  Rachel (explicitly taught kagan): that's the way we do it, through the Kagan structures, because you do notice there are the same children who will just sit at the back and won't answer but we're really specific, they'll be partner A and partner B. we'll say partner A you need to speak now or partner A you need to do this. What did partner A tell you, so we know everyone is having a go. at the start of term we would introduce their first instinct if you say talk to your partner it Walter be like 'bleugh bleugh bleugh' like that to each other and not even listen so we do have to remind them quite a lot to say we're going to do this and this is how we do it, yeah they just want to blab it straight away.</p>



<p>they hate it and it's the same thing with reading, you don't want to read something, we don't do it as adults do we like Jo's comment about reading as adults, you might have a think about certain questions or chat to someone about it but you don't have to sit there and tick boxes so yes, I do think it is a little bit of a drain.</p>		
		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14) Rachel (how to answer test questions): a lot of the questions we do are instructional questions because we've found a lot of them don't really read the question properly and they're not ticking in the right place, they're not circling, and vocabulary keeps coming up as well. There's one that's a whole school issue. when we looked through them, a lot of the children, they'd have a question like tick one, or match something and they would match it to 2 different things. They wouldn't underline it so we try and have all the questions as opposed to just like a question and then they've got to write the answer in.</p>

<p>2.Experience as a teacher: (7)                  Natasha (dependent on children/EAL):                  So I don't know if that might change for this cohort might not be as strong for instance with the high EAL, and the EAL is rising in the cohort. So that would be interesting, in a few years to see, the way I've been doing it with the daily practice, works well. However if I went to a school where there was really high EAL and reading comprehension was poor, then I would probably consider doing it in whole class comprehension and teaching specifically how to find answers in a text and using clues. using inference, so I would probably, every day encourage the teachers to show a whole text on the screen and do it interactively with the children, and then the children, the teacher highlighting key words, whereas my class, I find that the smaller group works better, but if most of the children needed that support, that's what I would say to the teachers, until the whole school reading was better and the children could read better and do it more independently. So I think it would depend on the school. It's quite difficult, because obviously I've only ever known this school doing well in reading. I've been and heard of lots of other schools, and one school I know they do pair reading, so like mixed ability. So a more able child might read a paragraph and ask a question to the low ability child and they would help them find the answer in the text.</p>	<p>6.Not as lang comp: (3)                  Natasha - My last placement was in year 1, that was the most comfortable because I learnt a lot of phonics, and like you said, chopping and blending, they did Ruth Miskin, so it was quite heavy, with the 'use this word in a sentence' looking at language, but we didn't really do so much comprehension or guided reading or anything like that.</p>	<p>9.Benefits of small groups: (6)                  Natasha(carousel):I've heard about loads and loads of different approaches, but I think here we just needed something simple, a carousel, old school routine and that's what everyone needs to be doing that.</p>
<p>9.Lack in ITT: (9)                  Natasha (specific lecturer taught questioning): remember there was a specific lecturer who was really good, LM, and I remember her talking to us about the kind of questions that we should be asking children. We had to practise on each other. I remember doing a lot of phonics, and a lot of grammar, not so much comprehension heavy, it was more like if we did it was fiction, stories.</p>	<p>2.Something enjoyable: (9)                  Natasha (Once they enjoy they'll want to comprehend): I think if children love reading they're more Waltering to read so they're more Waltering to ask and answer questions. And I think it's about promoting asking questions, I find some of them are really good at going, oh, what does that mean, oh I think this is going to happen next. And obviously you have to prompt more other children</p>	<p>3.Benefits of whole class: (9)                  Natasha (all children get input in comp lesson): ....but also as whole class in English lessons So I do that kind of whole class, and we'll do a lesson on inference if we're doing a fiction. So I'll weave it in our normal English lessons as well, as guided reading separate. So I kind of just weave it into the curriculum, there's not a set one particular comprehension lesson a week. It Walter be whenever it's appropriate in the route of the unit, Mainly at the start of the unit when we first start reading the text, understanding the text.</p>
	<p>1.Change to how taught before as a child: (12)                  Natasha (now more than question/answer) - But I do remember reading texts and then answering questions, mostly like having to do it by yourself, and getting read texts as a whole class, I remember doing that, and the teacher answering, asking questions as they go along, kind of more informal comprehension. remember the whole class, we just sat in our normal place. We all had the books to share and follow the teacher, that kind of thing and asking questions to the whole class as you go through.</p>	<p>1.Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12)                  Natasha (teaching specific skills – inference): I'll use the Wordsmith planning and adapt it, but usually when we start a text, they'll be an inference, looking particularly at using our clues in the text, inference and language. next week, we'll be doing particularly language, looking at new words in the new text, and using dictionaries</p>

		<p>6.Through teaching vocab: (11)  Natasha (teaching word meaning): recently I've been focusing on the domain of the language, looking at the words. So we talk about what the words mean. I've got a high percentage of EAL in this class, so it's a lot of like, a lot of are there any words that you don't understand? What does this word mean? Can you use it in a sentence? So looking at the language, and I'll read with them and we'll go through the text. so even tho doesn't see it as lang comp, she is actually teaching it in this way? her first lesson is to use inference, they're going to using the clues from the text to say what they know about the characters so far, and then the second lesson they're summarizing what they've read. So that's the other domain. Oh so then I'm looking at the language. So we'll be looking at the words so far, so all that is under the reading domains, but not necessarily a comprehension lesson. the SATS were hard in Year 6 weren't they? It was the language isn't it? If they don't come across a word before. they find reading tests hard generally I think. We did a text yesterday and there was blemish, so it talked about the blemishes on fruit and vegetables and it said the weather often leaves brown patches on the fruit, these blemishes de de de da. So it kind of told you what they were, but not directly. And a couple of them were 'oh yeah, they're the brown patches on the skin'. And a girl was like 'does it mean destroyed?' And I said oh good guess. So they are trying to use their previous knowledge of words, but I think teaching inference is the hardest, using the clues and the text, where there's not an immediate answer, so screaming at them (laughs).</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12)  Natasha (they can do, but not taught explicitly): this class are pretty good, they can whisper and still get on with their work. If it gets too loud and I can't hear my group obviously I say you have to be quieter now, spellings I would prefer them to work independently so I can assess where their spellings are at. But when they're doing their comprehension, I think it's helpful for them if they work and ask their friends. Taught peer support strategies explicitly? No, not really, I've taught them strategies for spelling particularly, but not so much for reading. I think they just naturally quite good at helping each other ...when we do group work, if one of them's struggling, I'll say to another child point to the paragraph that it's in, or tell them one of the words to give them a clue. But I don't know how well they're doing that, when they're in the group by themselves, so yeah, I'll have a think about that actually, it's a good question.</p>
		<p>11.Through ability groups: (2)  - for convenience</p>

		<p>Natasha (for convenience?): They're in ability groups, but, sometimes, depending on the lesson, I'll put them in their guided reading groups, if they're doing a comprehension lesson or an inference lesson, I keep them in their guided reading groups and I differentiate the questions. But if, my writing groups, I've got the most able table and the special needs table, and then the others are mixed up, so I like that, because I think for writing more so, I think they can pinch ideas off each other, and I might sit a more able child with a middley, to help them with their spellings and stuff, but that's more for writing really, but comprehension I might differentiate the questions. But then again sometimes I let them sit in their home places and that's completely mixed ability, I might think actually I'll keep them in those places because they can work well together, it's not always the same. Guided reading is always the same so they get into that routine because if I start mixing that up, this group Walter already have done the text etcetera, so that has to be. Does attainment groupings link in with assessment below?</p>
		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14)  Natasha (how to answer test questions): every half term I give them a reading test. We use PIRA reading tests termly, and I just normally use a Twinkl one in October and February, but they are harder, so I take the Matthews with a pinch of salt. And then I base their guided reading groups on that, because it's more of a fair assessment isn't it, the independent reading tests unfortunately, bless them. But I am pleased because in October, the first time we did one, my lowers really struggled. I had to sit with them and prompt the words and if they couldn't read a word I said leave that one. I had to sort of try and pinpoint the questions that they should try and answer, that were easier. But then in December, they were able to attempt it independently so I was pleased with that. then I went to year 2 straight after, so then it was a big learning curve, because I had to learn the styles of the tests and the questions, and delving more into inference skills, really, but then I did 3 years in year 2. By the end of that I could just roll it off my tongue in the session they might work with a friend, so it might not be a true reflection of what they truly would have written down, so that's why I suppose the test is a bit more a true reflection of their understanding, and an unknown text isn't it? Like Carl here I use the same text for all of them because they all in the end have to use the same text.  Natasha (focus on area the SATs test for): course with Ruth Leaske, works for Minerva Learning, its what the Year 6 SATs are based on, questions, inference, retrieve and record information, language, word choice, summarise, she gave us a list, and you can get them on the government website if you google key stage 2 reading domains, they're the skills that they're going to be tested on</p>

		<p>eventually, so I kind of hone in on those, so I tend to focus on retrieve and record information, check that it makes sense, identify how language, structure and presentation contribute, summarise paragraphs, and then obviously some of them are more fiction, so predict what might happen, infer characters' feelings, So they're not the domains So she said to us we should all know the 7 domains, Inference is one of them, prediction is another, inference prediction, summarize, I can't remember. Retrieval it's all those sort of skills language and the test is split into those domains. Each question is one of those domains. what practice would you continue or introduce as head? N: I think it would depend on the children and the results, the school's general results, so for us in year 6, their reading always comes out quite highly so for some reason years. I don't know whether that might change.</p>
		<p>10.Through different types of texts: (5) Natasha (scheme not random texts): we didn't have anything, people were picking and choosing random texts. I think the text is vital for the children's understanding, comprehension and writing and it all interlinks. people are just kind of saying 'oh I'll do this this week and I'll do that that week', and so I implemented a scheme</p>
		<p>2.Through enjoyment: (7) Natasha (enjoy scheme and book fairs provided): I've ordered loads of books for the book corners, we do the book fairs to make sure that the children are enjoying reading more, and I think, as far as I'm aware, that when I speak to a different class teacher that the children enjoy the texts from the scheme as well, so hopefully the whole, I think reading lifts comprehension</p>

<p>1.In house/school training: (12)          Carl (speaking to other schools): I think, if staff were deployed to a class, you'd have much more quality conversation with your 5 or 6 children that you're working with, when you've got a dedicated half an hour/40 minutes just on 1 day a week. It has more worth, than what it does do trying to scrap resources together, and sit down, right you lot quiet and read, you need to talk less          Carl (self taught as result of no training/monitoring from management lead): So you're scrapping around for things, trying to formulate your own questions, and, because I wasn't being monitored, dedicated my time elsewhere, and it probably got a bit neglected, if I'm honest. I think if the tools are there to help, it makes things much easier. I'll put down monitoring as well, because it keeps me on my toes, and it's embedded into routines as well.</p>	<p>4.As lang comp: (6)          Carl (oral instead of written response): But I think the scheme in terms of understanding where the children are at comprehension wise, offers a lot, because the responses they give in their class work, whilst you're doing these comprehension activities kind of give you scope for understanding whether or not they get things or not. So when you come to do guided reading, you can kind of gauge who's going to offer the most and who needs that little bit more support and deeper questioning. because I think for those children who can't articulate themselves through the written response, guided reading has value          Carl (contradiction here too) But it's when they go off independently, I feel more so than anything else that they need the practice of answering questions, articulating their own style, rather than just sitting around listening to others as well, what do they think, and I think sometimes a guided reading approach can hinder the progress of others, because then somebody more confident to speak out in front of the others then asking individually what they're thinking, so it's good to get those individual responses I think, written, so I've got a good understanding of where they're at. And then through the assessment process that we've got in school, they can work really well. BUT CARL NOT AGREE WITH IT – GAP HERE</p>	<p>9.Benefits of small groups: (6)          Carl (enjoy small group time with teacher): I suppose the only thing I took from that was the fact that the teacher said when she was working with that group for guided reading, nobody else was to interfere with her and the children disrupt them. And that's kind of stuck with me a little bit because I do think when you've got that time with them, that time is precious to those children. And if everybody gets that across the week, that's fair deal.</p>
<p>7.National Training: (2)          Carl (outside provider): I think the only time we've ever had anybody come in and say is Ruth Leaske, She came in and did a couple of sessions last year. I think that's the only time I've ever thought, oh right, I can see related to what you've said, because you've got something to back it up with. Some of the stuff was government based, and then the company she worked for had done research as well. I can't remember what it was called.</p>	<p>1.Change to how taught before as a child: (12)          Carl (think beyond question/answer):I don't remember being taught it. I remember just going over the answers, that side of things, but it was more get on with it, give it a go and we'll reassess from there. I suppose it was more for the teacher than what it was for us, in terms of their understanding of where we were at. It was never like now when we go over questions and types of questions, you know inference and deduction and all that side of things, the language was never exposed like that. It was either you were right or you were wrong, and this is the right answer, this is how you should have answered it I suppose. often it would just mirror the way SATs were done I suppose, and it would often be probably a shorter text than the length of what children are expected to read today.</p>	<p>Through mixed attainment peer discussion:          Carl: You know I do want the mix between the middle ability and the more able children because I think that the more able children lift, you know, those middle attainers, they lift their expectations I think sometimes. And I do think it works both ways. Then you've maybe a non-academic, a different perspective on a question that somebody very intelligent, academically might not see and I do think that's important, particularly with inference questions, I think that's quite important. Generally there is a less able group that I do keep as a group, and since Carlmas we've allowed some of them to overlap a little bit and move them around slightly, just because we think that the confidence level of some children speaking out in a group situation needs to be nurtured a bit more so than what their understanding of reading might be. So somebody who's really able might not want to speak out so you don't get any evidence for them. Change that, put them in a group where everyone's a little bit quieter, they might be more forthcoming and want to share an answer with you. And that's worked well, but then I suppose I'm myself, and the member of support staff, we're quite</p>

		<p>loud people, so we don't really allow that quietness to last for too long (laughs).          Carl - Usually I'll say right, there are certain questions where you might need to share on that. There are certain questions that you definitely do not need to talk to one another about, and again I suppose that depends on the group, their ability and what I know they're capable of. But like for example the more able children when it comes to those really deeper thought questions when they've got to interpret and put their own spin on things, I try to encourage them to do that on their own, kind of you're banned, you can't talk about that question, whereas the middle ability children, I think they need that to get to share ideas, just to get a better idea in their own head of what their response is going to look like to a question.</p>
<p>9.Lack in ITT: (9)          Carl (can't remember because too much to take in): But the contact time we had on PGCE, there was so much to cram into such a small space of time, it went straight out of my head. I can't really remember anything on reading, which looking back is shocking really.</p>	<p>As something not to be discussed with peers:          Carl: When it comes to the comprehension I don't mind (peer support discussion), because I think if they're really struggling on a particular question to share it with the others, that's not a bad thing, and then when it comes to the other activities generally they're quite independent activities anyway. So if a lot of them are not noisy, and it's not interrupting or distracting anything, then that's not a problem to me.          As discrete lesson given quality time:          Carl - I would say I think there should be a stand alone comprehension lesson done a week, and that could be a part of your English, and it could be there's another activity that's bolted on to the end of that, that could be related to whatever else you're doing on the other 4 days. But that should be as evidence in books and, you know, that Walter be monitored on a half termly basis. And the children Walter be assessed on that, on a half termly basis. Then, in terms of comprehension through guided reading, because I think for those children who can't articulate themselves through the written response, guided reading has value, but I think that the way it's managed, could be done better ... but like staff are used for phonics, they should be used for guided reading. You know, 20/30 minutes a day, all support staff get together, go to one class, and that class is done that day, and then reading records can be kept on top of throughout the week ... here, a lot of time is spent on guided reading unnecessarily, particularly when standards are very good anyway, and I'm saying this before there was an emphasis on guided reading here. It's a pattern that's quite common. We have good support from parents, you know the expectations, what we expect reading wise outside of school, for actually giving time to reading and monitoring reading records, I can't see reading taking a dip, because of</p>	<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14)          Carl (how to answer test questions):          There was a stage last year where I was concerned about how the class that I had then were answering questions in the way that they understood what the question was asking. So we very rigidly did a comprehension cycle where we did 2 a week. We'd read through the text together, they'd read through it independently, read the text together, and then we'd look at a series of probably 8 questions, we'd take 2 questions at a time, read through the question, what is it asking, can anybody find the evidence to support their answers, and then they'd have to write their answers independently. Then we'd do the next 2 questions, we did that for about 6-8 weeks and eventually, their reading scores at the end of last year were pretty good. I'm not saying that was the only factor, because they were already quite able readers, it was just their understanding of the text that needed to be developed, the understanding of the questions that they were dealing with. Whereas this year, a very able cohort of children when it comes to reading, it's been a case of, I suppose, challenging their understanding that little bit more, and moving that on through questioning, not just from the text, you know the set of questions, it would be questions from myself or support in class. often I'll do a text, whether it's fiction or non-fiction or poetry, and do make sure I see each group throughout the week, once a week, we'll go through a comprehension text and go through questions, how would you answer that, what style of question is it asking answers for, where could you pick up Matthews if it was a test for example          Not driven by assessment here? - Carl -          And then second year, I just never really seemed to do it. It wasn't a rooted expectation, because reading was so good across the school, I think. I suppose</p>

	<p>not doing 20 minutes of guided reading a day, for 5 days a week.</p> <p>Carl - if I've got staff I'll probably try and get a couple of groups done between so it's not as onerous for the rest of the week ... Sometimes it would just be easier to do a comprehension as a lesson, but unfortunately that's not acceptable, apparently so. (Laughs). That's not good enough. Difference in how he sees it to how he is allowed to do it. I think in terms of the children having a deeper understanding of a question, if you were able to open a question out to the whole class, and create that discussion point and you're getting different view points on it, it might trigger or stir some sort of a different or improved response from children who might have an understanding maybe. And I think if we could dedicate maybe a lesson to reading and comprehension a week, I do think that would have a benefit. I think sometimes when we do the guided reading because it's expected to be done, and on a regular basis as it is, it can be quite rushed at times, and the children feel that at times as well I think. Whereas you know that 20 minutes half an hour is crucial in the day, it's a massive chunk of time really. To get other things done, and I think sometimes they see that as well we've got this to do, we've got this to do, just as the teacher does sometimes. So I see some worth in using it as a stand alone lesson. But ask the powers that be, they may say different. And my argument is, guided reading does it really need to be done when we're doing so much comprehension based work, on such a regular basis, and then the rest of the time that you might be using it for guided reading, or activities related to it, could be used for that extra writing time that we need. And yeah, I think there is a time and a place for just sitting down and doing comprehension and just going through it and I agree with that totally. But I think the scheme in terms of, in terms of understanding where the children are at comprehension wise, offers a lot, because the responses they give in their class work, on a day to day basis, whilst you're doing these comprehension activities kind of give you scope for understanding whether or not they get things or not. So when you come to do guided reading, you can kind of gauge who's going to offer the most and who needs that little bit more support and deeper questioning I suppose</p>	<p>just snoozed my time away when it came to reading, you know, I probably did more stand alone comprehensions, because there wasn't the expectation to do guided reading as such</p>
		<p>10.Through different types of texts: (5)          Carl (wide ranging): Cracking comprehension we usually use. The Wordsmith stuff, you'll get different viewpoints on this, because I've spoken to other people in the MAC, in the region who use it, I really rate the texts that they use ...They're very engaging for the children....in terms of exploring characters and emotions, and dialogue, narrative, non-narrative, fictional texts,</p>



		poetry, it covers such a broad spectrum, and in-depth.
		2.Through enjoyment: (7) Carl (enjoy scheme provided): the resources they provide online, that run alongside it, are very good. The photocopies or just the level programs they use to look into characters and settings and all that sort of thing, it's good fun, it is good.
		12.Through dialogue with teacher (2) Carl (dialogue with teacher): in terms of actually teaching how to answer questions, really the only way they get that is to have a dialogue with me when we do a bit of guided reading, that's probably why I think a lesson dedicated to comprehension has more worth. Because I think if everybody is getting it at the same time, it kind of embeds it that little bit more.

<p>3.CPD outside training: (6)  Rae (different stages they should be at?) - we've recently been on a guided reading training and looked at different activities. We have looked through the process of how children develop as readers, so I have got some theory behind it, and you kind of know where they should be at different stages so having that information you know what you need to put in to get them to that stage, but I suppose not like facts and figures and stuff, not like data not as much. we've had training recently by Collette Higgins, I think she's a primary advisor for reading, and she's going to be coming into our school in the new year. Me: And she was the one who talked about the different stages? Rh: Yeah, which I've never gone through before</p>	<p>7.Relates to experience: (2)  Rae: I think sometimes you take for granted that children know what these things are, they've had these experiences but they often haven't and you have to be able to talk about that. (winch)</p>	<p>9.Benefits of small groups: (6)  Rae (focused in smaller groups) - they're more focused and effective because they are in smaller groups and they are all looking at the text at the same time. We've not got some children looking at different things. Everybody is with an adult, looking at a text, unpicking it, reading it, understanding it</p>
<p>9.Lack in ITT: (9)  Rae (no comp training): degree. it was more reading, more reading as opposed to reading comprehension, how to bring them I suppose a love for reading as opposed to how to teach them comprehension.</p>	<p>3.Should be taught in proper lesson: (7)  Rae (specific learning objective): I think really focused learning objective, that really is specific to what you are doing in that lesson, I've found before, sometimes I could be in the middle of a lesson of doing guided reading, with one learning objective and then as I start to be within the lesson, I think, oh well actually that's what we're looking at, so really looking over what you want them to do.</p>	<p>3.Benefits of whole class: (9)  Rae (not planning separate things/chaotic, but she does like small groups)- my final placement, a little bit confused, a bit puzzled, still not really sure. The texts often weren't really relevant to the lesson we were teaching, it would often be a bit of a rush, you could never always find the books that you wanted to teach, there wasn't always a set of books, always a bit chaotic. Often the children would be with a teacher for one day, and then they'd move on to something else a different day, so they'd be reading the text with the teacher, onto some understanding questions, and then the next day they'd be answering questions and the day after they'd be reading off the bookshelf and they'd do some colouring. more like a carousel, so everybody was reading with the teacher in some stage within the week, and then often the questions weren't always that relevant, and it was almost just looking at the text, understanding the text, rather than unpicking parts of the text. It wasn't really looking at any vocab, or anything like that, so it was really quite a chaotic way to do it, I couldn't always get my head round how we were having to do it. I feel a lot more confident and I feel I can deliver it better because I know that's what we're doing and that's what we're focusing on, the carousel I found very chaotic, whereas this I find a better structure to it.</p>
		<p>1.Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12)  Rae (teaching specific skills explicitly): we do guided reading twice a week, one session is that group session where the children are looking usually at the same text in different ways. Sometimes they might answer true and false questions of what they've read, other times they'd be looking at meanings of words they've found. Really focusing on different content domains, and then they answer questions on that text often in that session. And the</p>

		<p>second session I do a whole class session where I might pick up another content domain and do different questions on that content domain, they might be looking at inference from the text, they could be picking up key words that they've found, it's prediction, I just pick different ones each week.</p>
		<p>6. Through teaching vocab: (11)  Rae (vocab affects comp): ...where you can pick up on that, because if they don't know what those words mean they're never going to be able to understand it in a text. We go through a lot of that, looking at key words, ... Small groups would be a really good one, because you can actually have that, you can have that discussion and that support a lot more. with an adult, obviously a small group with an adult.  Rae: They've got to work out whether that statement was within the text, sometimes that's a bit tricky because that's the reading between the lines sometimes, it's not always clear if that was in there, they've got to infer that that was in there from what they've read. True and false we do that. We do meanings of words. So there might be some tricky words in the text which they might not have ever come across before and they have to match them to the meaning. Reading the text I find the most effective because there's sometimes words within the texts. Like there was one text a few weeks ago, we were looking at the word, we were looking at a helicopter and a winch. The children looked at me as if to say, "What's a winch?" I've never heard that word before. And I find that, those small groups a lot better, because you can actually pick up on words. So because I had the computer we just typed in winch and we were able to look at one. But within that small group session, that's the time where you can do those things,</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12)  Rae (yes but more could be done): I often put a question up on the main board, and I say right can you discuss this with the person next to you for 5 minutes, 2 minutes, , and then we have like a feedback mini-session so we can discuss what they've been looking at. Me: How do you encourage that support between each other? Rh: I suppose with them listening to each other's feedback, getting them to maybe build upon what's been said already, so say somebody's said a point, but we need a little bit more in-depth, then I might ask, oh can we build upon that point, what can we find, what else can we find, I get them to build on what's been said and move it forward a little bit more. peer support, are the strategies ever taught explicitly to children? I suppose not really, I suppose I don't teach it specifically, I think maybe they would just know how to but probably don't really. That's quite a hard thing.</p>

		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14)  Rae (How to answer SATs test questions): they mainly look at inference, prediction, lots of things like find and copy a word that means sad, they might have to pick out something that's a different word but they know that that means sad, because that's a lot of the key stage 2 reading paper, with different questions, we'll often take questions from that reading paper and put them into my own, for the text we're looking at they like the find and copy is really good because that builds up their vocab of different words. they might know that that means sad but they need to find another word so it might mean upset, distressed. – (if you were headteacher?) - I think good focus, especially in Key stage 2, looking at the key stage 2 reading paper, that's really been insightful. We did that in a staff meeting a few weeks ago, we went through the reading paper and actually saw the kind of questions the children in year 6 have to answer. Because then you can start to bring that in slowly into your lessons and get them used to those kind of questions and it wouldn't become a bit alien when they go into the test.</p>
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<p>1. In house/school training: (12) Simon (nothing practical he took into practice): ITT - Nothing specifically no. There was a lot of theory behind teaching and learning, but in terms of strategies to teach reading comp and things like that it wasn't tailored to it I don't think, the way it was set out, the year. Anything that I've picked up in terms of reading comprehension teaching it has been on teaching practices, Things I've seen, some things that have worked well I've picked up and some things haven't, you know it's just something that's tried and forgotten</p>	<p>5. Needs a method to be learnt: (5) Simon - I think reading comprehension is, it's a very sophisticated set of skills anyway, I see it as much more, it needs to be as much child led as possible after the skills are taught and there needs to be a regular sort of thing that's not necessarily taught but there needs to be consistently used in school throughout the week so it should be every single day. I think its skills that I use without thinking. It's little things like phonics, I mean phonics for me when I was back in school I know it's completely different to the way it's taught now. Read Write Inc wasn't even around and it's skills that I already know how to do without knowing how I know how to do it. It's skills that I've picked up on and it's like some people may in fact take it for granted – adults – but it's something I can't really explain. I know how to do it and when I go to teach it and learn how to teach it I understand thinking 'Oh I do that, I do it without even thinking'.</p>	<p>3. Benefits of whole class: (9) Simon (all children get input in comp lesson): every week we have to have a reading comprehension lesson that's discreetly taught a skill, and then every single day we have the children lead it as well in their small groups and they choose a book that they'd like to focus on</p>
<p>2. Experience as a teacher: (7) Simon (reciprocal r.): It's hard to get to grips with what works and what doesn't as well. Year 3, new year group ... I was a bit apprehensive, and new approaches introduced in the school like reciprocal reading. It seemed a little bit baffling at first as well, just how many different jobs there were, how we're going to be doing it so regularly, I wasn't too sure how the children would cope with the responsibility. now the children know what to expect, they know the jobs, they know how to do the jobs, and I've had the opportunity to observe other teachers, more so in key stage 2 this time. So now I'm much better with it. Me: And Read Write Inc, did they mention any theory behind? Sh: No, it was much more, since there was so much to get through the day, it was much more kind of telling us the way things should be taught really like Jo and Matthew's comments Simon - Yes I feel much more confident now. Not to say there's no areas for improvement at all! Of course there is, there's always new ideas and things out there, particularly other schools I would imagine they'll have their own approach that may work well or they might work with some of the approaches we use and complement one another.</p>	<p>As Child led Simon: Well, in terms of thinking back to university, I remember looking so much into personalizing children's learning and things like that as well, and that comes through it being child led as well and what they're interested in as well, what they'd like to be taught as well and children definitely in my class anyway, they much prefer the responsibility being left on them, to have the job and them to lead that job, because it's a big responsibility, But I think as much as possible it needs to be child led with skills being taught from the teacher but children understanding that they're taking responsibility for their own learning and it's their job to carry out the skills. It goes beyond lesson time really as well. What makes you teachers do things, is it your personal or is it because you are told you have to by the school? I think with that it's a bit of both, because I do believe that it needs to be child led as much as possible. ideally it would be like that in the vast majority of their learning but it can be tricky in some areas as well. But once skills are taught in reading comp and they know how to do it, it's a case of being able to access texts that are challenging for them and repeating the skills that they've been taught in the past with simpler texts.</p>	<p>4. Thru lang comp: (8) Simon (non-written response): year 1 - some of the things that they did, that was much more beneficial for them, which it has its place in key stage 2 at times, a lot of the role play, freeze frames. the idea of it in year 1 would be that they need that initial understanding of the text because a lot of them struggle to read anyway, never mind the reading comp, so a lot of it's freeze frames, facial expressions, acting role play. Something like inference I think would be really good because they need to act out the actions and they can start understanding how they need to be feeling if they are doing, even little things like dropping shoulders... which is brilliant with children who struggle a bit more with confidence, just in terms of general ability as well if they struggle with reading comp. It helps them visualise what's actually going on. Whereas all the write up's very abstract isn't it whereas when they can have something a bit more hands on and they can be a part of the story or whatever text it may be, I think it helps a lot more.</p>
<p>8. Teacher Agency (3) Simon: I'd have it similar to the way we're doing it now because I think it's important the children are given that responsibility and not rely on the teacher as much as you use the skills that they've been taught and I think it should be an everyday occurrence thing as well. It should be at least a lesson in the week where it is taught, specifically a certain skill and really emphasised with all the children as well. I think that approach should vary and I</p>		<p>1. Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12) Simon (teaching specific skills explicitly):: One is the summariser, so that's another key skill in reading comp as well, where they're in charge of just summarising what they've read up to a point ... each child has a different job each session and they constantly revisit the skills that have been taught during the week as well. ...Even in reading comp that we have in lessons, ... using as many skills as possible just to</p>

<p>think that teachers should be trusted with choosing the correct approaches in schools as well rather than necessarily saying this is the way things need to be done in schools. Is Simon really the only one who specifically mentions agency? Reciprocal reading's great, and I think that's a good thing to have across the school because at the moment in every class it seems to be working but in year 1 as well, one thing that I really really loved was things like Talk For Writing and things like that and thankfully at this school I was given the opportunity to teach something a bit different and in a different way however, I am aware that there are some schools where there are certain ways to teach different things but with children of different ages and different learning styles and things like that I think it's great to experiment and try different things with them. So I'd say that there should be a structure to a degree, but there should be an opportunity to have a bit of freedom and kind of play around with which ways Walter work the best with your class as well.</p>		<p>keep it fresh, constantly always practising those same skills... every single week we teach a specific skill so we look at the objectives for our year groups and we do break it down week by week and the focus for that week. (school) do say just focus on a specific skill every week and that's where I go kind of behind the scenes and just see which skills I could teach and which fit best with different texts. (agency?)</p>
		<p>8. Through mixed attainment peer discussion: (8) Simon: mixed ability reading then moving into the ability groups to work on the questions and you group them, you partner them with a high ability/ low ability. Why is that? the reason behind it is not all children that tend to be low ability, but some do tend to lack confidence as well, and it's because they, children are cleverer than I think some people give them credit for. They know when they tend to be in the lower end in terms of ability groups as well. It gives them that opportunity to work with someone different, it's not always the same children, and it's a self-esteem booster as well, when they're working with someone different rather than the same children they know that they're in the group that they're in. initially we tend to put them in mixed ability groups when we read the text as a class so we can kind of get that understanding behind it but on the actual task itself that's when they get set in ability groups.</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12) Simon (I do it but it doesn't seem explicit) and (modelling): Me: With that paired working together, how do you encourage that peer support, Sh; That's one thing that can be tricky as well but it depends on some of the characters that are in the class. Some children have that sort of personality, I'd describe them as humble, you know that they are on the top end of the abilities but they're much more Waltering to support as well, Waltering to help out they want to have the responsibility of having another peer buddy. That's where it's a case of carefully selecting those children that won't do</p>

		<p>more harm than good because you do get some children that's much more confident in themselves that they don't really support another child. They're happy that they get, they're flying through the work, but they don't support the other child.</p> <p>Me: So do you have to teach those peer support skills explicitly? Sh: Not necessarily, because I think it does normally come through modelling as well and I think maybe it's something I'm oblivious to and maybe it's something that I do without realising as well, just kind of reinforcing it with particular children. But it normally comes through modelling because the children do follow through the sort of strategies that you use to become more familiar with texts and answering questions. Sh: That's just me, it's definitely not down as a school policy. Not to say, there wouldn't be other teachers that may have a similar approach in their class as well. Simon (organisation, agency?)- Me: so with that organisation of the mixed ability and then moving them into ability groups is that your choice or is that school policy? That's something that I decided to use. I'm not too sure if any other teacher uses a similar approach across school but it was something that I did see in one of my teaching practices to use just so there were children that aren't as confident with reading comp and they are not always sitting in the same sort of groups with the same ability but they get to sit next to someone who's much more confident so they cannot lead the way but kind of guide them a little bit more.</p>
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<p>4.Experience at own primary school: (4)  Walter (enjoyment) - we used to go out in small groups into the library, where we'd go through the book, and answer questions on them. It was quite fun to be fair because we used to be like a little time away, we were in a small group, go for a bit more in depth look at the books we were reading. we used to go out with the teacher and the TA would stay with the rest of the class and when it wasn't your turn to go out you'd stay in there and we'd have question sheets about the texts that we'd read the day before or whatever it was and we'd have a go at answering them. Out in the groups it was more activity based things and more like verbal communication levels from the text. we'd answer 1 or 2 questions of written outcomes but apart from that we were in a small group work outside a class there wasn't much written work it was mainly just like the verbal feedback and the activity. We were given different activities, it was mainly a bit of role play and think about how the characters were feeling and so on, a bit of hot-seating, but I only remember them being quite short sessions, We used to go out once a week, the teacher would have a different group every day, but they were about 20 minute sessions at a time. So they weren't very long, but they were quite fun, you know, it made us all really excited to read the book, because there wasn't so much focus on the writing outcomes you know when we were with the teacher it was more involved with the text and thinking about it and discussing it and it really did make us want to read on really, just carry on that reading. I've certainly got a really strong love of reading and I think that stemmed from that experience of just exploring loads of different books with the teacher. approaches about getting them wanting to do the reading, getting them involved with the text as well. I personally still think that's quite a big thing to develop with the children because if they've got no love for wanting to read, if they don't want to read they're not going to put any effort into it and want to do it, then that Walter affect the comprehension side, because if they don't want to do it they're not going to look at the questions properly, answer the questions properly, care about what the text is asking.</p>	<p>4.As lang comp: (6)  Walter (oral rather than written response/exposure to language): Less of a focus on a written outcome, maybe even just looking at a comprehension question, just talking about it as a group and answering as a group, particularly down my end of key stage 2, year 3, because the written outcome, sometimes it takes away from the fact that they are focusing on the reading and they just see it as another English lesson as opposed to thinking about because they'll just rush to answer the question as opposed to thinking about the text and referring back to it and using it to help them answer. I would like mixed ability groups all the time because I think that then gives them exposure to the different discussion techniques, the different languages, and their peers might use the different ideas, it gives them a greater exposure to that. I think really more sessions than the hour one a week, shorter ones, maybe half an hour every day, like a bit of guided reading every day, and the first part of that would be focusing on the text and discussing it</p>	
<p>8.Teacher Agency (3)  Walter: I think maybe shorter sessions but more often, so every day, with a greater focus on reading the text and pulling apart comp questions, again I'll go back to I use example ones from the SATs, because when they get to year 6, that's what they're going to be tested on.</p>	<p>6.Not as lang comp: (3)  Walter - I can't say there was anything really about the teaching of comprehension, we focused more on developing understanding of the text, and, the actual ability to do the reading. what it is they are reading, we did do a little bit talking about how you can start to pluck that out with your questioning, but not so much in terms of answering comprehension questions written and so on, there was more of a</p>	



	focus on the writing side of English, than the reading.	
	2. Something enjoyable: (9) Walter (Once they enjoy they'll want to comprehend): I personally still think that's quite a big thing to develop with the children because if they've got no love for wanting to read, if they don't want to read they're not going to put any effort into it and want to do it, then that Walter affect the comprehension side, because if they don't want to do it they're not going to look at the questions properly, answer the questions properly, care about what the text is asking.	
	1. Change to how taught before as a child: (12) Walter (teach specific skills): generally just quite unsure what was expected, how to go about it, how to develop the skills for the children, and that led to me in my first year, in my NQT year, feeling a bit overwhelmed, a bit confused by it all, I was unsure as to which text to use, how to use them, how to plan for them, what it was exactly I was meant to be delivering to the children and helping them to develop and that was when we only had one session a week then, we had one hour. In the second year last year I felt a little bit happier with what was expected, we had a new scheme of work for the writing in English bought in, and with that scheme, the Collins, we had texts which linked to the units, so the links were made clearer to me, what texts I can use when, and what it is we need to be doing, more understanding of the skills that the kids need, and more understanding of what it is I need to do to help develop those skills and how to work on them with them	1. Through teaching specific skills explicitly (12) Walter (teaching specific skills explicitly): we received training as a school and we looked at the main strands in the curriculum. They aren't obviously put as the content domains but what it is expecting the children to be able to do ... so it's the different skills they need to use With the reading that they build in, information retrieval, prediction, vocabulary, language use by the author, inference, we focus it around those to help build those skills up. first session we'll look at one of the content domains, so inference or prediction, and we'll focus on that and we'll read the story or part of the story together, we pull it apart, we stop every few sentences and we discuss what's going on, how characters are feeling, what sort of things are going on in the story, like using the clues in the text to figure out what happens next .... This year.... I understand what skills are needed by the children as well I feel like I've got a great understanding of how to develop them, so how to question them, what sort of questions to ask them to help them get on
		8. Through mixed attainment peer discussion: (8) Walter: When we do that half an hour session it's mixed ability as well, we do it as a class altogether and what we'll do is they'll be sitting in mixed ability pairs and so on and working together, and we'll just talk through some example ones on the board, talk about the language used, and expecting, which is similar to the ones they've got in their books and then they can work with their partners, cause that gives them a chance not only to have a go at answering the questions. so a lower child might be sat next to higher child, and they've got, they're exposed obviously to greater language they can use to answer the questions, that child can help them think about what it is they need to write down for their answer, if they're a bit stuck, but it also gives them a chance as, because their questions are on different books it gives them a chance

		<p>like to discuss as well so an inference question about what an author meant, whereas one child who's read that text Walter know straight away what that meant, another person might not, so as well as them being able to answer it and say what is meant, it gives them a chance to talk and discuss and explain why they think that as well so I think those extra sessions has made quite a big difference this year, just being able just to take time.</p>
		<p>7. Using peer support strategies: (12)  Walter (yes but more could be done): do you encourage peer support in your lessons? Walter: yes, I do try to. it goes in all of the lessons, but in comp, if they come and tell me that they've finished, they'll get told to check their answers but then it's also see if anyone would like any help, and so they'll go round and see if anyone wants any support, or if they want a bit of help, and if I've helped them once, and they put their hand up again so they want help again and they're still stuck, I'll say to them why don't you chat to, see if your partner can help you. I have flag things and a set of instructions depending on whether it's working with a teacher or independent work on that table and there's a flag for each table, and a set of steps that they can follow if they get a bit stuck. So on the independent work one, it is re-read the question, have another go, have a play, have a think, chat to the people around you and then the final one is ask the teacher and it helps them with that peer support because I think sometimes they're worried to talk to each other because they'll be told off for talking whereas that is telling them, no it's okay, you can talk to each other, you can share ideas and discuss it. it's more so just have a discussion, talk about your ideas and explain rather than taught specifically how to.</p>
		<p>5.Through assessment preparation: (14)  Walter (how to answer SATs questions): to I use example ones from the SATs, because when they get to year 6, that's what they're going to be tested on. They also use all of the skills, the questions, they use all of the skills which they need to develop. So it gives them exposure to what they need to learn and what they need to look for and how to do it. Being able to talk them through the process of how to do that really helps their understanding as opposed to just giving them the question, and expecting them to know straight away what it is they've got to do. Because when they come up to me and year 3 they can have a set of reading questions in front of them, even just simple retrieval information ones next to them, and they won't bother to read the text, they'll just put whatever they think is right</p>

		<p>Walter (all do same test in end) :  Obviously we still want the love of reading there with the main session but just take a little bit of time just to help prepare them for the unfortunate reality which is they'll have to take SATs in year 6, so obviously they'll need those skills to be able to answer those questions.</p>
		<p>2. Through enjoyment: (7)  Walter (class book and enjoy different authors): we have a class book separately which we read about 5 minutes at the end of the day when we get chance, because we're doing that to try and build that love of reading, that wanting them to get to read the stories themselves. In the guided reading sessions we have we're working through some books, so things like Horrid Henry, Dirty Bertie, and really enjoy ones like that, Roald Dahl</p>