

# EDUCATION JOURNAL

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## **Literacy: Teaching Methods**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [53560] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the report published by Newman University in April 2020 entitled, Independent research into the impact of the systematic synthetic phonics government policy on literacy courses at institutions delivering initial teacher education in England; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:** All trainee teachers must meet the Teachers' Standards (2011) in order to achieve Qualified Teacher Status, including for those training to teach early reading to demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics. The Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework (2019) sets out a core minimum entitlement that every trainee must receive. To ensure that all trainees receive this entitlement, the new ITT Core Content Framework is mandatory (through the ITT Criteria) so all providers will need to ensure their ITT programmes encompass the entitlement in full. The framework specifies that trainees must learn that systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective approach for teaching pupils to decode. The framework does not set out the full curriculum for trainee teachers, ITT providers may wish to integrate additional analysis and critique of theory, research and expert practice as they deem appropriate. The Department contracted the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to provide an independent review of all the peer-reviewed evidence on what constitutes good teaching. This includes the latest evidence and research on approaches to literacy. There is sound evidence that systematic synthetic phonics is a highly effective method for teaching early reading. The Department is clear that in future we will review the ITT Core Content Framework and the ECF together in light of the best evidence, as it emerges. In 2016, England achieved its highest ever score in reading, moving from joint 10th place to joint 8<sup>th</sup> place in the International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) ranking. This follows a greater focus on reading in the primary curriculum and a particular focus on phonics. In 2019, 82% of pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the phonics screening check, compared to just 58% when the check was introduced in 2012. In 2018 the Department launched the English Hubs Programme, which supports nearly

3,000 schools across England to improve their teaching of reading through systematic synthetic phonics, early language development and reading for pleasure.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [53561] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by Newman University entitled Independent research into the impact of the systematic synthetic phonics government policy on literacy courses at institutions delivering initial teacher education in England, published April 2020, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the conclusions from that report (a) that there needs to be a balanced approach to early reading development and (b) that any divergence from Government and Ofsted policies which focus on systematic synthetic phonics will become more difficult if the proposed draft initial teacher education (ITE) framework is ratified.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [53562] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of teacher trainees learning approaches to literacy which have been successful in other countries and other parts of the UK other than systematic synthetic phonics.

**Nick Gibb:** The Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework (2019) sets out a core minimum entitlement that every trainee must receive. To ensure all trainees receive this entitlement, the new ITT Core Content Framework is mandatory (through the ITT criteria) so all providers will need to ensure their ITT programmes encompass the entitlement in full. The framework does not set out the full curriculum for trainee teachers and it leaves room for providers to integrate additional analysis and critique of theory, research and expert practice as they deem appropriate. In designing their curricula, providers should carefully craft the experiences and activities detailed in the ITT Core Content Framework into a coherent sequence that supports trainees to succeed in the classroom. It is important to stress that the ITT Core Content Framework does not replace the Teachers' Standards (2011), which remain as the bar that all teachers need to meet in order to achieve Qualified Teacher Status. Providers are therefore obliged to ensure their courses will ensure their trainees are able to demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics. The department contracted Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to provide an independent review of all the peer reviewed evidence on what makes good teaching. This includes the latest evidence and research on approaches to literacy. There is sound evidence that systematic phonics is a highly effective method for teaching early reading. In 2016, England achieved its highest ever score in reading, moving from joint 10th to joint 8th in the progress in International Reading Literacy Study ranking. This follows a greater focus on reading in the primary curriculum, and a particular focus on phonics. In 2019, 82% of pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the phonics screening check, compared to just 58% when the check was introduced in 2012. In 2018 we launched a £26.3m English Hubs Programme. The English Hubs programme is supporting nearly 3000 schools across England to improve their teaching of reading through systematic synthetic phonics, early language development, and reading for pleasure.

*Wednesday 10 June 2020*