

# TEACHING & LEARNING NEWSLETTER



January 2026

Happy New Year! This issue of the Teaching & Learning Newsletter is dedicated to 2026: The National Year of Reading.

As well as sharing our exciting plans to celebrate and promote reading throughout the year, we'd also like to share some advice and tips on how you can support reading at home.

## Why is reading good for you?

- ✓ People who read more get better at it
- ✓ There is a link between reading for pleasure during childhood and doing well academically
- ✓ Reading helps to develop empathy-recognising and understanding the feelings of others
- ✓ Reading develops our vocabulary
- ✓ Reading sparks our imagination and creativity
- ✓ Reading supports our well-being, feelings of confidence and positive mental health
- ✓ Reading with others and talking about what we've read supports our social skills and relationships with others
- ✓ It is even linked to higher quality sleep!



Watch the launch video  
by The National Literacy  
Trust...

If you're into it, read into  
it: Go All In.

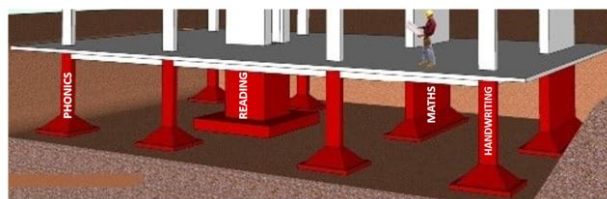


2026 is the National Year of Reading and we will be celebrating this throughout the year with a calendar of themed events to promote a love of reading in our school community.

<p>January</p>  <p>Launch Challenge: 26 in 26</p> <p>HAPPY NATIONAL YEAR OF READING!</p>	<p>February</p>  <p>FROM BOOK TO SCREEN</p>	<p>March</p>  <p>Murder Mystery</p>
<p>April</p>  <p>TWO WEEK TALES</p>	<p>May</p>  <p>Ani-MAY</p>	<p>June</p>  <p>Poetry &amp; Spoken Word</p>
<p>July</p>  <p>Summer Reading Challenge</p>	<p>August</p>  <p>Summer Reading Challenge</p>	<p>September</p>  <p>NEW BEGINNINGS</p>
<p>October</p>  <p>CULTURAL READING FESTIVAL</p>	<p>November</p>  <p>Non-Fiction November</p>	<p>December</p>  <p>THE JOY OF READING</p>

**Have You Got The SIMS Parent App?**  
Interim and written reports will be published to parents and carers using the SIMS Parent app. You'll also get notifications of any behaviour and achievement logs each day.  
Contact us at [office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk) if you need help to access the SIMS Parent app.

Students enjoy a full timetable of different subjects. (Check our [Curriculum](#) page for information about what students learn.) But there are some underpinning foundations of knowledge and skills which support learning across all subjects.



WHEN THESE SKILLS ARE STRONG AND SECURE,  
IT MAKES LEARNING EASIER

Reading is one of these foundations and there are some key strategies that we can use in lessons and at home to help students to develop and secure their skills.

1. Using **phonics** to decode words accurately
2. Developing reading **fluency**
3. Talking about reading to develop **comprehension**

## 1. Using Phonics to Decode Words Accurately:

We use the Read Write Inc. Fresh Start phonics programme in school.

This QR code takes you to a video which explains the idea behind phonics.



<http://schools.ruthmiskin.com/training/view/VukE2lce/7RwAu7hk>

NB. Access to this video is part of our subscription to the programme. However, it expires on 23/5/26.

If you would like further access to the video, email [office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk) and we will refresh the link.

## Supporting Reading at Home

Where more than one letter makes one sound, these are referred to as 'Best Friends' e.g. sh, ph.

Students should look for these before using 'Sound Talk' to decode the rest of the word.

'Sound Talk' just means saying the sound for each of the letters in the word.

Use phonics to decode the word

**Best Friends + Sound Talk + Say The Word**



**Best Friends:** more than one letter making one sound e.g. sh, ph, ay



**Sound Talk:** you say each sound separately



**Say the Word:** putting the sounds together, say the word in full

### Split Diagram



a-e (as in pale or phrase)

e-e (as in theme or evening)

i-e (as in bike or smile)

o-e (as in stone or code)

u-e (as in June or rude)

ay	ee	igh	ow	oo
<b>a-e</b>	<b>e-e</b>	<b>i-e</b>	<b>o-e</b>	<b>u-e</b>
ai	ea	y	oa	ew
eigh	e	ie	o	ue
a	y	i	oe	ou
ei	ey			
ey	ei			
aigh	ie			

Some of the sounds have a space between them- for example, those with the red box around them in the table above.

These sounds are best friends because more than one letter makes up one sound, but the letters aren't next to each other.

Students will refer to these as 'chatty friends' as they can't sit next to each other!

Students use this sound chart to decode the sounds in words. The letters in the same box make the same sound e.g. c, k, ck, ch and que all make a [k] sound in the words **cake**, **kit**, **duck**, **chaos** and **technique**.

### Read Write Inc. Spelling – Sounds Chart

#### Consonant sounds

b bb	c k ck ch que	ch tch	d dd	f ff ph	g gg gu gue	h	j g ge dge	l ll le	m mm mb	n nn kn gn	ng nk
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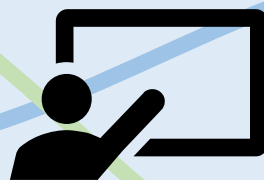
p pp	qu	r rr wr	s ss se c ce sc	sh si ti ci ch	t tt	th	v ve	w wh	x	y	z zz s se
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#### Vowel sounds

a	e ea	i y	o a	u o ou	ay a-e ai eigh a ei ey aigh	ee e-e ea e y ey ei ie	igh i-e y ie i	ow o-e oa o oe	oo u-e ew ue oe ou
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oo	ar a	or ore oor aw au a ar	air are ear	ir ur er or	ou ow	oy oi	ire	ear eer	ure
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I read...



Model reading aloud to your child. Show them how you use the punctuation to support your phrasing; show them how to use phonics to decode tricky words; show them how you correct a mistake if you misread something.

We read...



Echo

Read a short section of text aloud, modelling fluent reading, then get your child to 'echo' you by reading it back to you. They should try to mirror your expression and phrasing. Talk about why you might go louder or quieter, pause or place stress at particular points.

You read...



Tennis

After modelling and echoing, get your child to read more independently. They could read to you or you could take turns (tennis!), swapping at each full stop or new paragraph. Remember to reread sections so that fluency is secure.

## 2. Developing Reading Fluency

Reading without fluency is hard! Students focus so much on decoding the individual words that they lose the meaning in what they're reading. To support reading fluency, we use:  
I read (modelling reading to students)  
We read (echo reading)  
You read (individual reading or reading 'tennis')  
When practising reading fluently, it is important to **repeatedly reread** the same text.

Where every student is  
and **successful today**  
and **prepared for tomorrow.**  
**Aspire. Believe. Achieve.**

## 3. Talking about reading to develop comprehension

Once you have practised reading fluently, talk about what you're reading to develop understanding and comprehension. The sequence of **Predict**, **Clarify**, **Question** and **Summarise** can help to structure this.

#### Predict

I think... I bet... I predict...  
I imagine... I suppose...

#### Clarify

Are there any words that you don't know? What strategies can you use to clarify meaning? Look them up.

#### Question

Ask and answer questions about the text to explore understanding

#### Summarise

Draw together key information, events and ideas from the text