

READERS COUNT



Information for Prospective Schools

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What is Readers Count?

“Readers Count has enabled our children to acquire phonic knowledge and skills and apply them across the curriculum. In short, it has helped them to become literate.”

Nicky Dowling, Head Teacher, Highfield Primary School, Chester

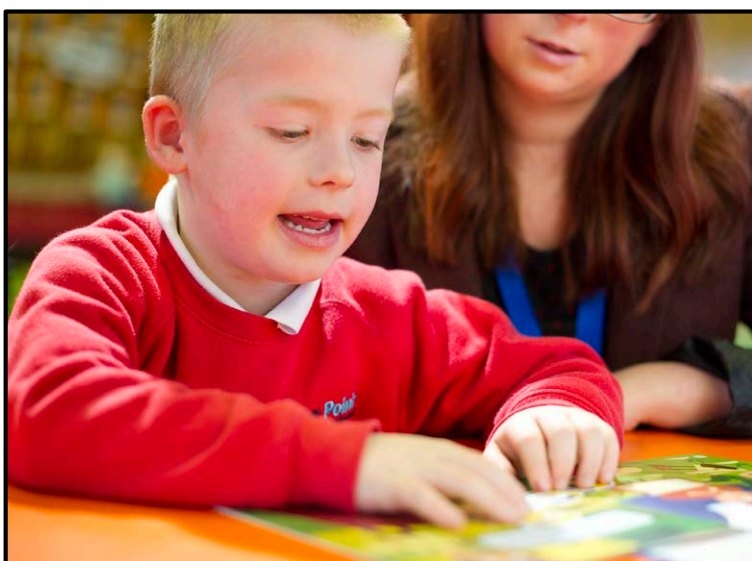
Readers Count™ is Edge Hill University's innovative, intensive intervention for children who really struggle to read. A specially trained teacher helps them develop phonic skills and a love of reading and also supports colleagues and parents to raise reading and writing standards for all children in the school.

Readers Count is a core component of the University's Every Child Counts-Literacy programme, which was chosen by the Department for Education to help primary schools in England to support the lowest attaining pupils. The University also helps schools to raise achievement in numeracy through Every Child Counts-Mathematics

How Readers Count supports individual children

A Readers Count teacher delivers Readers Count lessons to children in Years 1, 2 or 3 who have an insufficient grasp of phonics as the prime approach to decoding and encoding. Through linked embedding sessions, a Readers Count teaching assistant delivers additional support to consolidate learning.

Readers Count helps children to develop their phonics knowledge and skills and their ability to apply them independently in reading and writing across the curriculum. It supports their comprehension through developing talk, reading fluency, and automatic decoding of known words. It aims to build real and significant change in children's reading skills, confidence and enjoyment so that they can make accelerated progress and catch up with their peers.



Every child has a programme of daily support over 3 or 4 months, including at least 3 Readers Count lessons delivered by the teacher and 2 support sessions with the teaching assistant per week. The child continues to take part in their normal class literacy lessons. The teacher teaches children individually while they are in training, and once they are accredited they decide whether to teach each lesson individually or to 2 children together.

Lessons take place in a dedicated teaching area where children use a range of multi-sensory resources and decodable texts. The teacher begins by making a detailed

diagnostic assessment of what each child knows and then plans an individualised programme to help each one to move forward. Lessons focus on developing children's phonic and writing skills, vocabulary and comprehension; they follow a set routine and are rigorous and active. The Readers Count teacher aims to help each child to



become a confident and enthusiastic reader and to develop the skills and positive attitudes needed to continue to make good progress in normal class literacy lessons after completing Readers Count.

The Readers Count teacher receives intensive training and support for 2 terms from a local Every Child Counts Trainer, and termly support thereafter. While being trained, they normally teach 4 children individually per term, on at least 3 mornings or afternoons per week. They liaise closely with the child's class teacher to share information about and plan together for the child's progress, and they meet parents to discuss how they can support their children's learning at home.

How Readers Count teachers support literacy across the school

The Readers Count teacher's expertise equips them to be the school's leading teacher for phonics and early reading, helping colleagues to raise reading and literacy standards for all children. The teacher:

- provides expertise and leadership in early reading and writing, with a specific focus on the principal role of phonics in early reading
- enhances the whole school's provision for early literacy, including alignment with the school's chosen approach to synthetic phonics
- helps to develop the balanced use of phonics to enhance Key Stage 2 teaching of reading and writing
- supports 'lighter touch' interventions provided by teaching assistants for children who need less intensive support than Readers Count.

Readers Count and Ofsted

The Ofsted Handbook requires inspectors to 'consider the extent to which the school intervenes to provide support for pupils, especially those that are at risk of underachieving'. They must ask the school to provide evidence of the progress made by every pupil, with a particular focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups including pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium, and they must hear the weakest readers in Key Stage 1.

Readers Count enables schools to demonstrate strengths on several fronts:

- they can demonstrate that they have provided Readers Count intervention support for the weakest readers and that it has had a high impact
- they can demonstrate that they have integrated the role of the Readers Count teacher into a whole-school strategy for raising the attainment of all readers
- all schools receive regular Readers Count reports, which enable them to monitor and demonstrate the progress made during and after the intervention by individual children and by vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including those eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Readers Count and research

Readers Count is based on research that demonstrates the role of synthetic phonics as an essential tool in the teaching and learning of early reading. It also draws on research that points to the importance of developing vocabulary, comprehension and a love of reading.

The Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit is widely used by schools for information about the most effective ways to support their most vulnerable children. It has ranked about 30 approaches in order, based on an analysis of research evidence. Seven of its nine highest-ranked strategies for primary schools are at the heart of Readers Count, including:

- feedback
- meta-cognition
- early years intervention
- one-to-one tuition
- mastery learning
- phonics.
- small group tuition



What Impact Does it Have?

Impact on children

Over 350 children in Years 1 – 6 have taken part in Readers Count in 90 schools.

Standardised reading tests administered on entry to and exit from the programmes showed that:

- they made an **average Reading Age gain of 14 months** in 4.5 months – over 3 times the expected rate of progress
- this gain was **consistent across both phonics and the reading of whole sentences**
- their **comprehension scores more than doubled**
- class teachers said that **96% of children showed more confidence and interest in reading** at the end of the programme

“The children have made quick progress and their parents say they are now more interested in reading at home.”

Lynn Matthews, Head Teacher, Stansted CE Primary School, Kent

“Adam used to lack confidence and was unable to write independently. After only five weeks (14 lessons) he is now able to structure sentences, spell lots of tricky words, and use his phonic knowledge to tackle unknown words. His mother came to speak to me after four weeks and said she was so pleased with his progress. He now wants to read and write at home. His class teacher says that Adam has developed so much confidence he now joins in discussions and will share his written work with his peers.

Hazel Pedone, Assistant Head Teacher, Acocks Green Primary School, Birmingham

Impact on schools

“The high quality training has helped our Readers Count teacher to become an ‘expert voice’ in our school. She adds capacity and sustainability for vulnerable children who were in danger of falling behind.”

Nicky Dowling, Head Teacher, Highfield Primary School, Chester

“The teaching, support and guidance that I have received from my Phonics Counts trainer has been exceptional. With her support I have developed my own skills and knowledge and now have the confidence to work with my colleagues back in school to help develop their expertise.”

Jane Macmillan, Deputy Head Teacher and Readers Count teacher,
Filey CE Nursery and Infant School, North Yorkshire

How Can We Access Readers Count?

ACCESS THROUGH AN ECC PROVIDER

Readers Count is available as a costed service from local Every Child Counts Literacy providers accredited by Edge Hill University. Your local provider may be a local authority or school. Where there is no local provider, Edge Hill University can also provide Readers Count training directly to schools through a local trainer.

To be put in touch with your local provider, please contact the ECC Literacy team (*see contacts page*).

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

All Readers Count teachers receive intensive training and on-going support from a local ECC trainer and additional support from Edge Hill University.

Training for new teachers

Initial training for a Readers Count teacher lasts for two terms. It is context-based, so the training and teaching run in parallel with each other. It has been carefully designed to ensure that teachers take part in a range of activities that address all aspects of reading knowledge for teaching.

Training for new Readers Count teachers is composed of:

- 6 face-to-face training days over two terms
- follow-up tasks, including teaching and reading
- a face-to-face professional development day in the third term
- 2 supportive school visits from a local trainer
- visits to and from a Learning Partner (another Readers Count teacher)
- keeping a reflective journal
- video analysis of and reflection on their own lessons
- accreditation as a Readers Count teacher if they meet published standards.

The CPD which I've received since becoming a Readers Count teacher is the best I've ever taken part in. I feel very prepared to support and develop the teaching of phonics and reading across the whole school.

Alexa Barber, Readers Count Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher,
Richmond CE Primary School, North Yorkshire

Training for experienced intervention teachers

A shortened training course is available for experienced teachers of other reading interventions. It includes 4 face-to-face training days and 1 school visit.

Existing Reading Recovery teachers who also train for Readers Count can be accredited for both interventions if they meet the standards for each one by delivering them as distinct interventions to individual children.

Ongoing training and support for trained teachers

Trained and accredited teachers will receive every year:

- 3 days of face-to-face professional development led by a trainer
- 1 supportive school visit from a trainer
- reaccreditation as a Readers Count teacher if they meet published standards.

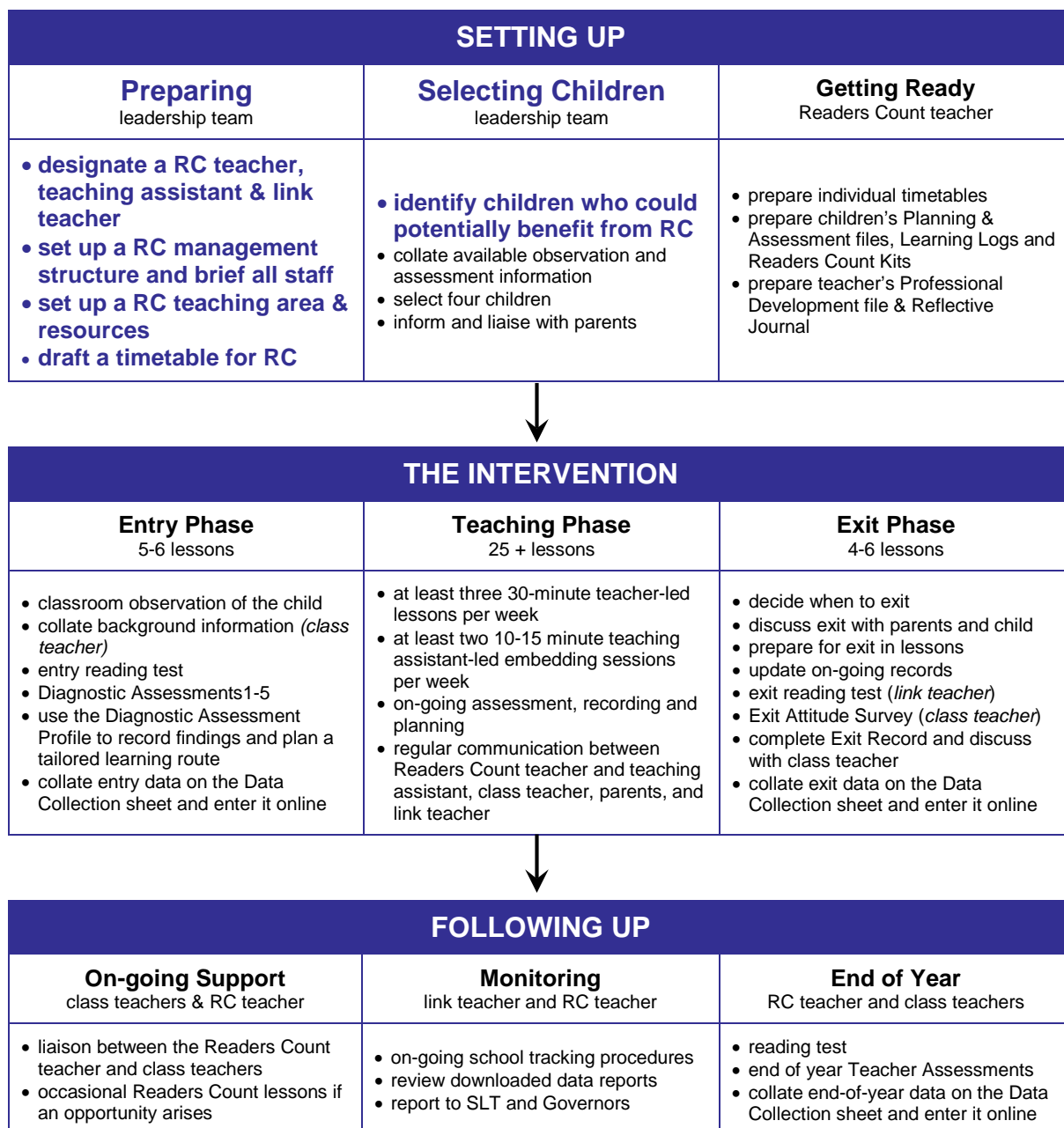
All teachers and schools will also have:

- detailed handbook guidance
- detailed analyses of children's progress to help schools to evaluate impact and to monitor children's progress
- telephone and e-mail support
- online guidance and downloadable resources
- opportunities to submit evidence of their work for academic accreditation and to study online for the MA Education at Edge Hill University.



How Can We Prepare for Readers Count?

This diagram shows all the steps involved in setting up, implementing and following up Readers Count. In the term before a teacher begins their training course and teaches their first group of children, a school can usefully prepare for Readers Count by taking the highlighted Setting Up steps that are explained below.



DESIGNATE STAFF

A Readers Count teacher

You will need to appoint a Readers Count teacher who:

- has Qualified Teacher Status and has passed any relevant statutory induction period
- has the equivalent of at least two years of recent, successful teaching experience at early primary levels.

Some schools choose to designate an existing member of staff, who may be a class teacher and/or a member of the senior management team and who will combine part-time Readers Count teaching with part-time continuation of their previous role. Other schools choose to recruit a new member of staff. A sample job description is in *appendix 1*.

Schools that already employ an experienced reading intervention teacher may decide that this teacher should also train as a Readers Count teacher so that they can take on both roles and deliver appropriate interventions to individual children. Alternatively, they may prefer to appoint a second teacher as the Readers Count teacher.

A Readers Count teacher normally works on a 0.3 to 0.5 timetable. Sample deployment models are in *appendix 2*. Standard performance management and support procedures will apply. As well as attending Readers Count training, the Readers Count teacher should have access to a range of professional development support and training that will inform their teaching and liaison with colleagues. They will also need administrative support for their role, particularly in collecting and analysing data.

A Readers Count teaching assistant

On the days when the child does not receive Readers Count lessons, a teaching assistant working under the direction of the Readers Count teacher or the class teacher will reinforce and consolidate specific aspects of learning from the individual lessons. This will involve a minimum of two 15-minute embedding sessions per week.

The Readers Count teaching assistant should have a sound grasp of synthetic phonics. It may be helpful if s/he also supports the child's reading during class lessons.

A Readers Count link teacher

A Readers Count link teacher is normally an experienced member of the senior leadership team who has influence throughout the school. S/he ensures that Readers Count is effectively supported and managed so that it has the maximum impact on standards for the children who take part in the intervention and across the school. S/he

- supports the Readers Count teacher
- assesses children's progress at the end of the intervention
- facilitates liaison with colleagues and parents
- represents and promotes Readers Count
- maintains an overview of the role of Readers Count in raising standards across the school.

SET UP A MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND BRIEF ALL STAFF

Readers Count will be of maximum benefit to the school if it is specifically managed by the senior management team as an integral part of the school's inclusion /

intervention provision for early literacy. It should dovetail with the school improvement plan for the raising of achievement for all children.

In addition to appointing a Link Teacher (*see above*), the school may also wish to set up a specific early intervention leadership team. This group could manage the process of selecting children to take part in Readers Count and lighter touch interventions, monitoring children's progress and evaluating the outcomes.

Budget

The school may wish to set up a specific budget for Readers Count, to cover the employment and travel expenses of the teacher and setting up the teaching area and resources. It is also helpful to set aside a small budget that the teacher can draw on to provide consumables and personalised resources for each child.

Communicating about Readers Count

A range of people will need to know about Readers Count and the Readers Count teacher, including all staff, parents of children taking part, the school governing body, and external advisers.

Initially, the priority will be to raise awareness of Readers Count and the Readers Count teacher, of their potential benefits to individuals and the school, and of the implications for each person's role. Later, the priorities will be to raise awareness of what children have achieved and to consider the implications for their subsequent teaching, and to gather evidence of and celebrate the wider impact of Readers Count on literacy and inclusion in the school.

Communication strategies could include scheduled 1-to-1 meetings, group meetings and written reports. One of the most powerful strategies is to schedule a rolling programme of observations of Readers Count lessons by governors, managers, teachers and teaching assistants.

Further guidance about communication with parents is given at the start of the training programme.

SET UP A TEACHING AREA AND RESOURCES

A teaching area

You can identify and begin to prepare a Readers Count teaching area. It should:

- be well lit and ventilated and at a comfortable temperature
- have appropriate furniture with a suitable chair for the teacher
- have appropriate resources and some display space to enable the creation of a permanent literacy-rich environment



- have suitable storage to enable easy access to and use of the resources required for Readers Count
- enable children to move around during the lesson as appropriate
- enable active Readers Count lessons to be conducted without disturbing or being disturbed by the work of the school.

Resources

A resource list is in *appendix 3*.

Ensure that there is a range of decodable texts based on the Phonic Phases. These should be for the sole use of the Readers Count intervention and stored for ease of access during Readers Count lessons and embedding sessions.



DRAFT A TIMETABLE

Identify a minimum of three 30-minute periods per week when Readers Count lessons will take place for each child. If four children are supported, this makes a total of 12 x 30 minute lessons, i.e. 6 hours per week of one-to-one teaching.

Considerations for timetabling might include:

- time slots that vary to take account of the school's timetable and the Readers Count teacher's availability
- setting up protocols to ensure that children:
 - arrive on time for their lessons - e.g. a teaching assistant accompanies the child to and from the Readers Count Area
 - arrive with their Readers Count Kit, ready for the lesson
- allowing at least a 5-minute break between lessons, enabling the Readers Count teacher to set up for the next one
- identifying a set time in the week when the Readers Count teacher will be able to liaise with colleagues and parents
- varying the timing of each child's lessons over the week, to minimise disruption to their regular class teaching
- allocating time for the Readers Count teacher to plan and prepare lessons and update assessment.

Sample Timetable					
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Liaison & Prep
	9.00-9.30	9.35-10.05	10.10-10.40	11.00-11.30	11.30-12.00
Monday	Child A	Child B	Child C	Child D	parents/carers
Tuesday	<i>The Readers Count teaching assistant delivers an embedding session for each child to follow up an aspect of a Readers Count lesson.</i>				
Wednesday	Child D	Child C	Child B	Child A	
Thursday	<i>The Readers Count teaching assistant delivers an embedding session for each child to follow up an aspect of a Readers Count lesson.</i>				
Friday	Child C	Child A	Child D	Child B	Class teacher

IDENTIFY CHILDREN WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM READERS COUNT

Readers Count is designed for children in Years 1-3 who have the greatest difficulties in reading and writing and have an insufficient grasp of phonics as the prime approach to decoding and encoding.

The school can use its progress tracking records and attainment summaries in the term **prior to** the start of the intervention to draw up a 'long list' of the children who have the lowest attainment and are therefore possible candidates for Readers Count intervention. A 'Readers Count' child may display some or all of the following traits:

- they have not grasped the alphabetic code nor secured grapheme–phoneme correspondence and are working below age related expectations in the phonic phases
- they have learned some letter-sound relationships, but lack the skills to blend sounds to read words and segment them for spelling
- they are able to decode and read single words but are not yet able to retain the sense of what they have read
- they lack perseverance when faced with multisyllabic words
- they have a tendency to look to adult support to tell them the unknown word
- they have difficulty applying their discrete learning in other contexts
- they do not monitor for comprehension when reading and find it difficult to respond to questions on the text
- they have not secured a bank of tricky words for use in independent reading and writing
- they have visual or auditory perception difficulties
- they have problems with visual and auditory memory
- they lack fluency and expression.

The Readers Count teacher should liaise with a range of colleagues to shortlist and select children for intervention. Suitable colleagues will include:

- the Years 1, 2 and 3 class teachers
- teaching assistants
- the Readers Count link teacher
- the literacy subject leader
- the special educational needs leader
- the inclusion / intervention manager / leading teacher
- the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

At the start of the Readers Count teacher's training programme, s/he will be trained to carry out further assessments before a final choice is made of the children who will take part in Readers Count.

Sample Person Specification and Job Description for a Readers Count Teacher

PERSON SPECIFICATION	
CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES
Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recent experience of teaching primary literacy successfully in the early primary phase including the delivery of daily systematic synthetic phonics sessions
Qualifications and Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified Teacher Status and has passed any statutory induction period Good knowledge of the early literacy agenda including comprehension and vocabulary development with a clear understanding of the four interdependent strands of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Good phonics subject skills knowledge with an understanding of the raised expectations for children's attainment in this area Excellent understanding of curriculum and pedagogical issues relating to literacy, including the inspection and research findings Knowledge of effective strategies to include, and meet the needs of, all pupils within literacy teaching, in particular pupils learning EAL and pupils with SEN Ability to conduct formative and summative assessments, analyse data and evaluate impact
Skills and Abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent classroom practitioner Able to demonstrate an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and confident approach to effective teaching of early communication, language and literacy Demonstrable ability to be adaptable and solve problems Show a willingness to learn, acquire and apply new knowledge and skills Good interpersonal skills including influencing/negotiating skills Excellent organisational and time management skills Good communication skills, both written and oral Confident use of information and communication technology (ICT)
Commitment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To practise equal opportunities in employment and service provision To maintain engagement in professional development linked to the competencies necessary for this post, including regularly making and sharing video recordings of lessons and the upkeep of learning records for individual children To maintain consistently high standards and expectations in all aspects of the post
Personal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to share expertise, skills and knowledge and ability to encourage others to follow suit Ability to be self-managing, make confident and positive decisions Ability to work as a member of a team Openness and willingness to address and discuss relevant issues
Context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Training events will be located in a central venue. It will be necessary to travel to the training centre and to visit other teachers (learning partners) on a regular basis.

Job Description

1. Work with school senior management in the use of school tracking and assessment procedures to identify children in need of Readers Count support.
2. Implement the required assessment procedures for children selected for Readers Count.
3. Plan for and teach Readers Count lessons in keeping with the Standards for Readers Count Teachers.
4. Maintain close and regular links with the class teachers of children receiving Readers Count support to ensure that progress is maintained and independence prompted in whole class lessons.
5. Plan for children's exit from Readers Count and support class teachers and senior management in monitoring the ongoing progress of children who have completed a programme.
6. Maintain clear and evaluative records on each child as a basis for teaching.
7. Communicate with parents/carers, school managers, teachers and teaching assistants: providing documentation and explanations, feedback on lessons and sharing the planning and assessment processes.
8. Ensure that required data for national monitoring of Readers Count is compiled and submitted.
9. Attend and make maximum use of the Readers Count training and professional development, ensuring completion of the professional portfolio and inter-sessional tasks.
10. Keep abreast with developments in literacy teaching; share acquired skills with staff in school and elsewhere.
11. Work with colleagues in school to support effective practice in the teaching of literacy.
12. Welcome other staff to observe Readers Count lessons.
13. Receive and respond to guidance and support visits from a trainer.
14. Receive visits from and make visits to other Readers Count teachers.
15. Make regular video recordings of Readers Count lessons, having first obtained the written consent of parents/carers, and use them to assess children's learning and to promote professional development and discussion with colleagues and parents/carers.
16. Liaise with parents/carers of children involved in Readers Count, including holding initial meetings, promoting full attendance and inviting the parent/carer to observe their child during at least one Readers Count lesson.
17. Ensure that the dedicated Readers Count teaching area is stimulating and motivating and supports active literacy learning.
18. Ensure that resources and materials are maintained.
19. Once experienced in delivering Readers Count, give support for the delivery of additional, lighter touch literacy interventions provided by teaching assistants.
20. Prepare impact reports about the Readers Count programme for the senior management team and governors as required.
21. *If applicable*, work with children in a local cluster of schools to meet the needs of children identified by the cluster.

In addition to the above, undertake other duties within the general character of the post as requested by the school management.

Sample Deployment Models for a Readers Count Teacher

A Readers Count teacher normally works on a 0.3 to 0.5 timetable, but schools also adopt other models, such as the following examples.

SCHOOL A has a new teacher in training who has a 0.4 timetable and gives Readers Count support to 14 children in his/her first year.

- While being trained, s/he teaches 4 children 1-1 for 4 mornings a week in each of the autumn and spring terms.
- When s/he has been accredited, s/he teaches 6 children in flexible group sizes for 4 mornings a week in the summer term.

SCHOOL B has a new teacher in training who has a 0.3 timetable and gives Readers Count support to 8 children in his/her first year.

- S/he teaches 4 children 1-1 for 3 mornings a week in the first half of the year, and another 4 children in the second half.
- She is accredited at the end of the year and will be able to teach children in flexible group sizes in the next year.

SCHOOL C has an accredited teacher who has a 0.5 timetable and gives Readers Count support to 20 children in the year.

- S/he teaches Readers Count for four half days per week. In the autumn term, she gives 1-1 lessons to 4 children who have the greatest difficulty with literacy. In each of the spring and summer terms, she gives mainly 1-2 lessons to 8 children who have moderate difficulties with literacy.
- S/he spends half a day per week supporting teaching assistants to deliver lighter touch interventions in Key Stage 2 and helping class teachers across the school to implement suitable practice adapted from Readers Count.

SCHOOL D has an accredited teacher with a 0.4 timetable who gives Readers Count support to 12 children in the year.

- S/he teaches Readers Count three afternoons per week to 6 children in the first half of the year and another 6 in the second half, in flexible group sizes.
- S/he spends one afternoon per week in the autumn term with selected children in Key Stage 2 who have previously graduated from Readers Count, giving them a combination of 1-1 lessons and in-class support.
- S/he spends one afternoon per week in the spring and summer terms helping class teachers across the school to implement suitable practice adapted from Readers Count.

SCHOOL E is the leading Readers Count school in a cluster of 6 schools. It employs a full-time accredited teacher who gives Readers Count support to up to 48 children across the cluster in the year. The cluster shares the cost of the teacher.

- S/he teaches Readers Count four mornings per week in one school and four afternoons per week in another every term, supporting 4-8 children in group sizes agreed with each school.
- S/he spends one day per week supporting teaching assistants across all schools who deliver lighter touch interventions in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- She helps teachers to raise literacy standards across all schools through a combination of 1-1 support, whole-school support for individual schools, and cluster-wide INSET, e.g. for all Year 2 teachers.

Readers Count Resources

Teachers will need these resources for their teaching and professional development. It will also be helpful to reserve a small budget each term for consumables and for small items that are personalised to children's needs.

Essential Teacher Resources	Children's Readers Count Kits
Laptop and unrestricted internet access for data entry and retrieval and for downloading resources and research materials.	Folder or bag for storage
A small digital camcorder (or video camera) with tripod and microphone.	Learning Log booklet
Teaching Synthetic Phonics: Johnston and Watson ISBN 978-1-84445-121-0	Small whiteboard and pen (magnetic if possible)
Folders for : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher's Professional file Reflective Journal Individual child folders 	Small GPC cards and wallet/box for storage
	GPC chart (blank)
	Phoneme frame
	Tricky word 'key ring'

Essential Teaching Materials	
Decodable readers	Grapheme-Phoneme (GPC) cards, small and large
Magnetic A4 whiteboards with phoneme frame for individual use and suitable pens	Tricky word flashcards
Magnetic letters	Large GPC chart
Large Phoneme Frames	Sticky Notes and clear A4 pockets
Hear Myself Phones	Timer
Readers Count Information Board	Appropriate storage for resources and books
Easel/Flip chart/table top white board; paper and pens	Puppets and small world kits
A range of pencils, pens, coloured pencils, felt pens, crayons	Collections of small objects/pictures for phoneme counting
Phonic Phase word cards	Celebration Board
<i>NB The Phonics and Early Reading Assessment is provided for each school at the start of the training programme.</i>	

If you need clarification of any item on this list, please contact your ECC Trainer or the ECC Literacy Team at Edge Hill University.

ECC-LITERACY TEAM

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