The Government is committed to changing the way children learn to read, to improve achievement and set students up for success.

To enable that change, the Minister of Education announced on 2 May 2024 that all state and state-integrated schools will teach reading using evidence-based structured literacy approaches from next year.

New government funding has been confirmed to help teachers use evidence-based, structured approaches to teaching, which will also extend to accelerative learning supports and resources.

Surveys indicate that approximately 85% of English-medium primary schools have already engaged in some structured literacy professional development and will be able to build on this foundation.

What is happening to the Reading Recovery and Early Literacy Supports programme?

Funding and delivery of Reading Recovery and Early Literacy Support (RR&ELS) will continue until the end of the 2024 school year.

From the beginning of 2025, that funding will be reprioritised to targeted supports that align with structured approaches to teaching.

This will support teachers to use consistent practices for teaching literacy.

How can schools provide additional supports for students’ early literacy learning?

Staffing for additional early literacy learning supports will be provided through the annual staffing allocations, reprioritised towards targeted supports for structured approaches to literacy.

We will communicate with schools about how to apply for 2025 staffing later this year.

The Ministry of Education is also working on the design of other targeted and tailored supports for structured literacy, and we will engage with the sector throughout their development.

What should schools do for the rest of 2024?

If schools are currently using RR&ELS, we are asking that they continue to deliver the programme using their trained RR&ELS teacher and the support of their RR&ELS tutor.

How do providers manage the change?

Contracts with providers for training and support (including tutor service delivery) will continue to the end of their term in early 2025, as agreed in the statements of work.

Providers will be responsible for the redeployment of staff associated with these contracts (e.g., Reading Recovery tutors), in accordance with their employment agreements.

Those staff are encouraged to undertake professional learning in structured literacy if they wish to do so.

What opportunities do RR&ELS staff have for further professional learning?

Alongside other staff, teachers currently allocated to RR&ELS can undertake Ministry-funded professional learning for structured approaches to literacy.

- RR&ELS teachers who have not yet done BSLA are encouraged to apply for the current cohort through their schools. Applications are open from 6 to 30 May 2024, and training will take place in Terms 3 and 4 2024.

- The new structured literacy PLD will initially be available to Year 0-3 teachers, starting with those who have not yet had any training in structured teaching approaches. It will extend to Year 4-6 teachers once the Year 0-3 teacher cohort is covered.

More information on how to access this PLD will be provided on our PLD website.

How will schools manage the change?

RR&ELS teachers are currently employed by their school boards, subject to the school being granted RR&ELS funding in the annual application process.

Where school boards and principals will need to manage the transition of their RR&ELS staff, they may want to contact NZSTA or employment.relations@education.govt.nz