Understanding the impact of the pandemic on literacy provision in schools in Wales.

Research

Understanding the impact of the pandemic on literacy provision in schools in Wales.

Audience   Welsh Government policymakers; practitioners responsible for supporting children with Additional Learning Needs; local authorities; regional consortia; national and local bodies in Wales with an interest in promoting and supporting children and young people's emotional/mental health.

Overview   This report investigates the reading provision for school children in mainstream primary schools and ALN schools prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the pandemic and the current practice. Recommendations are made in response to the findings.

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Action required   The findings and recommendations have been fed back to the Welsh Government for their consideration.

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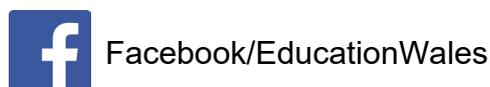
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Explanation of terms

Data collection for this report pre-dated some significant changes in how education in Wales is structured, and how we refer to some learners.

Curriculum for Wales: progression steps

Since this study has been conducted, the term 'Key Stage' is no longer to categorise a particular phase of learning. The term 'progression steps' is now used to describe learners' progress along a continuum of learning from ages 3 to 16 years.

Throughout this report, we use the terms 'Foundation Phase', and 'Key Stages 2 - 4', which reflect the structure and language use at the time of data collection. Please see below for an explanation of the age ranges of learners we are referring to when using these terms.

Foundation phase (previously Key Stage 1): learners between the ages of 3 and 7
Key Stage 2: Learners between the ages of 7 and 11
Key Stage 3: Learners between the ages of 11 and 14
Key Stage 4: Learners between the ages of 14 and 16

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The ALN Act replaces the terms 'special educational needs (SEN)' with 'additional learning needs (ALN)' in Wales. ALN represents a broader category of learners than the typical use of SEN in other UK contexts. However, ALN is used throughout this report, both when reporting on the findings of the current study, and the broader literature and policy context related to learners who would be categorised as those with additional learning needs in Wales.

Hub schools or sites

During the pandemic, some educational provision remained open for vulnerable learners and children of critical workers. However, not every school remained open for this provision. In such cases, learners would be able to attend a Hub school or site rather than their usual school. During the first lockdown, it was reported that only 34% of schools in wales were open for learners who needed to attend; this is a much lower proportion than in England, but higher than in Northern Ireland or Scotland (Sibieta & Cottell, 2020).

1. Executive summary

Presented is a synthesis of data from an online survey and semi-structured interviews, aiming to: 1) explore the teaching of reading in primary and ALN schools pre, during and post pandemic; 2) explore the impact of the pandemic on reading progress and attainment; 3) summarise current practice in relation to current research evidence, and identify key areas for future research.

Although there was additional disruption in the form of further local lockdowns, firebreaks and phased returns in some areas of Wales, there were two distinct periods of widespread school closures that were captured in this study. The first lockdown period was from March – July 2020, and the second lockdown period was January – March 2021.

1.1 Impact of the pandemic on reading provision

Teachers were asked about their reading provision pre, during, and post pandemic. Pre-pandemic, teachers reported use of a wide range of reading interventions, programmes, and resources (36 for Foundation Phase, 52 for KS2, and 11 for ALN schools). 4 Welsh language resources were also identified.

Some of these strategies/resources were predominantly online (mainstream = 23; ALN = 6); some were a combination of online and physical (mainstream = 12; ALN = 1); and some were predominantly physical (mainstream = 21; ALN = 4).

The majority of mainstream teachers reported that reading provision changed for home learners for both lockdown periods, with a less significant change during the second lockdown period.

Universal phonics provision. Teachers strongly agreed that the frequency and length of phonics sessions decreased. This was not the case for all, and more typical phonics provision was achieved by some schools during the second lockdown.

Reading comprehension provision. Teachers strongly agreed that reading comprehension provision changed, but that many learners still received direct teaching of reading comprehension skills.

Targeted provision and differentiation. The majority of mainstream teachers agreed that targeted provision for struggling readers was not possible during both lockdowns. Many indicated that they were able to differentiate work for struggling readers to some extent, however this was more challenging for younger readers, and it was difficult to support the groups most in need; those with ALN and hard to reach families.

Welsh language reading provision. Welsh language reading provision was impacted more negatively than English reading provision during both lockdowns. However, some Welsh medium schools experienced the opposite. Challenges included lack of available Welsh resources, and lack of parental confidence in Welsh.

ALN schools. ALN school teachers unanimously reported provision changed during the pandemic. Pre-pandemic reading provision involved phonics-based reading programs. During lockdown, the use of online programs and physical resources allowed reading provision to continue to some degree, although this was impossible with some learners. Staff felt better prepared to teach remotely during the second lockdown, but technical issues presented challenges.

1.2 Impact of the pandemic on reading progress and attainment

Mainstream teachers reported that the pandemic had a significant negative impact on reading skills, which was worse for learners at home than those in school. A common theme was the issue of reduced Welsh vocabulary and general understanding of the language. ALN teachers also reported a significant negative impact of the pandemic on reading skills, with one school indicating that average reading age had reduced by 27 months following the first lockdown.

1.3 Barriers and facilitators to engagement

Access to resources. Mainstream teachers agreed that lack of access to technology and Wi-Fi presented a barrier to engagement for home learners. 32% of teachers reported they were unable to provide reading materials for learners in need.

Access to skilled support. There was strong agreement from teachers in mainstream schools that not having Welsh language input at home was a significant barrier to engaging with Welsh language reading provision for learners at home. Similarly, the majority agreed that a lack of technological skills in parents or learners themselves was a barrier for many learners, in contrast to the overwhelming disagreement that lack of such skills in teachers or teaching assistants presented a barrier.

Learner motivation and parental engagement. Most mainstream teachers agreed that students lacked interest in home learning. Some schools reported good levels of parental engagement with reading provision, but a marginal majority reported that parents had not enabled struggling readers to meet set targets during lockdown one, although this improved slightly during lockdown 2.

ALN schools. The majority of ALN teachers reported the need to supply equipment to families during lockdown to enable access to online learning. All teachers discussed there were significant conflicting priorities for the families of learners in ALN schools as they navigated various aspects of their care and education provision.

1.4 Ongoing disruption to reading provision and skills

The majority of mainstream teachers reported that the pandemic had not caused ongoing significant disruption to reading provision. They felt that learners' confidence and engagement had improved, and that they had been able to begin to redress the impact on reading skills since the return to school. However, 34% reported that there had been ongoing disruption, reporting challenges related to staff/learner absence,

ongoing restrictions to working environments (such as 'bubbles'), and the need to address more fundamental readiness to learn skills.

Similarly, in ALN schools, challenges were reported relating to behaviour, reading confidence, and competing priorities such as the need to reteach social and communication skills.

1.5 Beyond the pandemic

Many schools continued to use apps and online programmes utilised during lockdown periods to aid reading proficiency and communicate with parent's post-pandemic. They also reported trying to maintain the strong parent-learner relationships developed over lockdown to support learning. Staff suggested that funding for reading resources and training practitioners to run specialised interventions, and the creation of a positive school ethos for reading, are priorities for supporting learners' reading skills post-pandemic.

Teachers also identified a need for greater training in a number of areas; online learning to deliver blended teaching approaches, mental health and wellbeing training, and training to teach the building blocks of reading and phonics for older as well as younger learners. They also identified a need for time to help learners settle back into education; to develop social skills and independence, as well as a need for age-appropriate resources, specifically for older students in ALN schools. Finally, the need for the Welsh Government to provide clearer guidance on the use of phonics programmes (including access and available support), was identified, as well as a need for more comprehensive support and investment of teaching time beyond the early years for ALN learners to develop reading skills.

1.6 Recommendations

Many of the recommendations from this report come directly from participating teachers in mainstream primary and ALN schools across Wales. Further recommendations are made following our synthesis of the broad range of insights provided by the data gathered in this report, including those specific to the pandemic and pandemic recovery, and broader recommendations for policy, practice, and related research. Fourteen recommendations are made.

Applying learning to potential future lockdowns.

1. If schools were to close, or if learning from home becomes more frequent for any groups of learners again, Welsh Government must ensure there is clear, planned provision in place, which allows for the best possible reading provision to continue for learners who are at home.

2. As such, further research is needed to collate and evaluate potentially effective practices for providing support for learners and parents/carers to access the necessary technology and educational platforms. This must include those families and learners who are hard to reach, and those with ALN, with a particular need for close consideration of effective ways to deliver such provision for learners with more complex needs.

3. Similarly, Welsh Government must ensure there are systems in place to provide access to the necessary technology for **all** learners who need it.

Supporting the reading development of learners negatively affected by the pandemic.

4. For learners whose reading skills have been negatively affected by the pandemic, Welsh Government should provide targeted funding and initiatives to further redress this.

5. Learners now in Upper Key Stage 2 and early Key Stage 3 should have access to targeted intervention, that focuses on developing their decoding skills as required. Welsh Government should provide the required additional resources for schools to increase staffing capacity to deliver this intervention work at a larger scale than is typical for these year groups, as well as additional training for teachers of learners in these year groups to enable them to more effectively support their reading development more broadly across the curriculum.

6. Due to the numerous challenges reportedly faced upon the return to school (e.g., social and learning skill deficits), learners across the primary years are likely to need additional support to ensure they develop fluent reading skills within primary school.

7. Disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and learners for whom English is an Additional Language are likely to require even greater levels of additional support to ensure they develop fluent reading skills.

8. Learners in Welsh medium or bilingual schools who are from non-Welsh speaking homes will require further support to ensure the negative effects reported in relation to their Welsh reading, vocabulary, and understanding of the language can be redressed. This issue has particular significance for the Cymraeg 2050 agenda and the related recent census results.

The future of reading provision for learners in Wales: effectively supporting the reading development of learners across Wales.

9. The way reading is taught across Wales needs to be explored further, through further research to audit and evaluate the evidence for the range of approaches being employed.

10. Areas of promising practice need to be identified and evaluated to help inform practice across Wales.

11. Welsh Government should review the evidence driving the implementation of very different policy and practice in Wales, as compared to that in England, to ensure our learners are receiving the best possible support with their reading development.

12. Guidance from Welsh Government is needed to ensure sufficient significance and time is given to the development of a strong foundation in early reading skills, for all learners across mainstream primary and ALN schools in Wales, regardless of age

and stage. This will require further research and collaboration with schools to discuss how effective practice in the teaching of reading can be embedded in the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, which in turn will require funding.

13. To support recommendations 4-8, and recommendation 12, Welsh Government should commission a review of training provision in to relation reading instruction for existing and trainee teachers, including the professional learning offer and Initial Teacher Education provision in this domain.

14. There is a need for better access to age-appropriate reading resources and programmes for learners who might need to access teaching of early reading skills beyond the Foundation Phase and lower Key Stage 2.

15. There is a need for further development of Welsh language reading resources and programmes for all learners, and evaluations of such programmes to ensure the most effective provision possible.

2. Introduction

There is no doubt that school age children have lived through an exceptional period during and following the Covid-19 pandemic. The effects of remote learning on our children's academic ability and health and wellbeing will reverberate for many years to come. When the pandemic first hit, many schools were forced to close, and learning predominantly switched to being taught remotely online (Eivers, Worth & Ghosh, 2020). The amount of schooling-time that was lost due to the pandemic and a range of other factors varied widely between individual students. Sibieta and Cottell (2020) provide an overview of how the four governments of the UK provided differing educational policy response between March and July 2020. The report calculated that during the height of the pandemic, 34% of schools in Wales remained open for vulnerable children and for those whose parents were classed as 'key workers'. In contrast to England, Northern Ireland and Scotland where 71%, 29% and 24% of schools respectively remained open (Sibieta & Cottell, 2020). Provision was delivered via hub sites across Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland as opposed to on an individual school basis as in England, which may account for the variation in numbers.

Along with Numeracy and Digital Competence, Literacy is one of the three mandatory cross-curriculum skills in Wales. Language, communication and reading skills form the bedrock for all learning and it is important that we understand how such skills have been affected by the disruptions caused by the pandemic through assessment and speaking to teachers and school leaders.

Assessment is a fundamental part of Curriculum for Wales and learner progress is now assessed along a continuum of learning from ages 3 to 16 years. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the enforced school closures that ensued, achievement data was not collected in 2020 and 2021. The most recent national reading level results for Key Stage 3 in 2022 was reported to be 84.7% of learners achieving the expected level 5 (the level considered to be the minimum required for learner to be able to access the high school curriculum). Assessments taken pre-covid (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019) revealed that the percentage of learners that achieved the expected level 5 or above was significantly higher (87.4%, 88.9%, 89.8%, & 88.9% respectively) in comparison with 2022 scores (StatsWales, 2022).

This has been further demonstrated in evidence reviews, in which it has been reported that the widespread closure of schools due to the pandemic has resulted in an overall decline in primary school learners' reading ability (Domingue, Dell & Lang, 2022), which is equal to missing a third of a year in education (Ludewig, Kleinkorres & Schaufelberger, 2022). Teachers have also noted a deterioration in learners' listening, speaking and social skills, particularly for vulnerable learners and those in the foundation phase. In the foundation phase, the greatest concern was about learners missing key child developmental milestones that may affect their emotional wellbeing, communication and learning development (Education Policy Institute, 2021b).

Research involving primary school teachers has also highlighted several issues that arose when teaching literacy skills during the pandemic, that may have contributed to this decline in reading ability. This included the lack of in person teaching, which

resulted in reduced opportunities for students to observe emotions and facial expressions, and a lack of opportunity for teaching staff to deliver read aloud stories to their classes (Alsubaie, 2022). Further, it has been suggested that the move to online learning during school closures resulted in lower levels of reading enthusiasm in young learners, who prefer to read physical copies of text, and are unfamiliar with digital reading (Sun, Loh & Nie, 2021). Therefore, there has never been a more important time to gain insight into what type of reading teaching learners received during and following school closures across primary schools in Wales.

Statistics relating to additional learning needs (ALN) schools indicate very low literacy rates. However, we know that there is a considerable attainment gap in reading for children with ALN, which increases across the key stages (DfE, 2018). For example, in 2019 only 64% of learners on the ALN register achieved the expected literacy level 4 or higher by age 11, compared with 99% of learners with no additional learning needs (StatsWales, 2020). For those statemented, only 21% achieved Level 4 or higher. Although it is expected that many children in ALN schools, especially those with more severe intellectual disabilities, will likely not attain National Curriculum levels, such expectations may be influenced to some degree by historic attainment data rather than the potential for developing literacy skills with children with intellectual disabilities (Fletcher-Campbell 2000; Kliewer and Biklen 2001).

Little is known specifically regarding the impact of the pandemic on literacy teaching and attainment in ALN schools. However, we know that those working in ALN schools have faced unique and particularly complex challenges to continue to enable learners to make academic progress, and it is likely that there has been disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on learning for those with Additional Learning Needs.

3. Literature review

3.1 General context of literacy policy and reading provision

Reading skills can impact a person's quality of life, and reading is an essential gateway skill for a child to acquire during their education (DfE, 2015). Reading promotes independence, is essential for tackling the effects of poverty on children (Save the Children, 2014), and is also associated with more positive social and emotional outcomes for children (DfE, 2012). Further, teaching reading at an early stage can increase enjoyment in reading for both pleasure and facts, and avoid reluctant readers (Twist, Jones & Treleaven, 2022).

Since the 1990s, education in Wales has undergone significant changes to its approach to education and literacy provision (Evans, 2022). Between 1999 and 2010, educational policy in Wales was devolved from that in England, with education leaders being afforded the opportunity to make their own decisions around how to teach the curriculum. Between 2010 and 2015, education policy shifted again to a more standardised approach with the re-introduction of national testing, including the introduction of the Welsh Government's '20 point plan', that focused specifically on literacy and numeracy, and the use of statistics to assess students' progress (Andrews, 2011). This came after the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests that assessed the knowledge and core skills of students finishing compulsory schooling revealed that learners in Wales performed significantly below those in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland on measures of literacy, maths and science (NFER, 2010). Between 2015 and 2020 the new curriculum for Wales was developed by teachers and made available to schools to view. The Curriculum for Wales is based around the Welsh Government's 2014 Qualified for Life five-year education plan, which placed a strong focus on pedagogy. The new curriculum is underpinned by the four purposes of the curriculum and six areas of learning and experience, one of which is languages, literacy and communication (Evans, 2022).

Under the new languages, literacy and communication area of learning and experience, literacy is the focus of all learning, and aims to allow learners to express themselves, comprehend written and spoken language, and to convey meaning (gov.wales). The guidance for this area of learning and experience does not mandate that schools in Wales teach literacy in a standardised way, unlike in England and Scotland where it is mandatory that literacy proficiency for Key Stage 1 is centred around systematic synthetic phonics, and where schools are required to complete the Year 1 Phonic Screening Assessment (The learning institute, 2020). Instead, Curriculum for Wales outlines the skills that learners should be able to develop through this area of learning and experience, including the use of phonic strategies to decode words, understanding context cues, knowledge of word roots, word families and syntax. The Literacy and Numeracy Framework provides more detailed guidance alongside this to support learners to make progress in these skills.

3.2 Impacts of the pandemic

3.2.1 Challenging school contexts
While there were difficulties for learners and their families, the impact of the pandemic on school staff has also been significant. Teaching staff and Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) had to quickly mobilise and adapt to new ways of delivering provision in unprecedented circumstances. Schools transitioned to delivery through new applications (e.g., SeeSaw, Google classroom), with classes being held on relatively new technologies, and teachers needed to adapt to use communication technology for pedagogical purposes. The pandemic saw an increase in learners' vulnerabilities and the development of new ones; the schools retained challenging safeguarding responsibilities, and in some cases were even delivering food parcels to families who faced hardship, in addition to delivering equipment, learning materials and maintaining additional hygiene routines and staff safety for in school provision. Some head teachers have reported the difficulty of trying to also respond to requests from governing bodies, such as additional data requests (Hulme, Beauchamp, Clarke & Hamilton, 2021), thus exacerbating the increasing pressures and frustrations surrounding the shifting guidance (Toseeb, Asbury, Code, Fox & Deniz, 2020).

Staff in additional learning needs (ALN) schools (including teachers, support staff and teaching assistants) report notable levels of burnout, with the significant demands on staff in ALN schools evident in the literature before the pandemic (Brittle, 2020). Teachers and SLT were challenged with maintaining social distancing and introducing 'bubbles' of staff and learners to limit the spread. However, this presented additional challenges in ALN schools; learners may have personal care needs, transport arrangements made maintaining bubbles difficult, and many learners were not able to understand the concept of social distancing (Paulauskait, et, al,. 2021). Some staff in ALN schools felt they did not receive adequate guidance for this setting type, where the learners present with some of the most significant needs (Crane et al., 2021).

3.2.2 Provision for learners
The impact of the pandemic on children and young people is still being closely investigated across the globe. Research relating to school closures has so far identified difficulties for learners across many levels. While schools were closed, research indicates that changes in routine, sleep disturbances, and the lack of social interaction affected learner's motivation, wellbeing, and mental health (Panchal et al., 2021). Emerging data suggest that some learners were disproportionately impacted by school closures, for example learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., Twist, Jones, & Treleaven, 2022). While home life and family circumstances played an important role in how learners responded to the pandemic, there were also issues within the education system. The lack of technology (particularly in some parts of Wales), connecting to broadband, having multiple children at home, and the skills of parents were identified as barriers to learners. Demand outweighed supply in some areas, when providing laptops, and some parents expressed feeling stigmatised asking for and receiving laptops (Waters-Davies et al., 2021). Although Wales' response to improve access to online learning via the provision of technology to learners at home has been particularly commended in comparison with the response of other UK nations (Sibieta & Cottell, 2020). Varying degrees of parental

involvement is also perceived to have limited learner's academic progress (William & Stéphan, 2021; Coe, Weidmann, Coleman & Kay, 2020). Pre-pandemic research into parental involvement in home–based learning demonstrates that headteachers and members of the senior management team are central to encouraging high quality levels of parental engagement, suggesting that there is a greater impact on the level of parental involvement in learners' education when it forms part of the ethos of the school delivered as 'a whole school approach' (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). With respect to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a wide variation in the level of learner engagement in home learning and this was due, in part, to varying levels of parental support (Andrew, 2020; Lucas, Nelson & Sims, 2020).

Capturing real time data on provision during remote education is challenging, however, some estimates of remote learning suggest that the average time that learners spent learning was half of normal in-school provision; between 2 and 2.4 hours at home, compared to 4.5 to 6 hours in school (William & Stéphan, 2021). Further, Sibieta and Cottell (2020) reported that Wales, Scotland, the Midlands and Northern England have the lowest home learning hours during the first period of school closures. Remote learning through online platforms was the main mode of delivery, including live and pre-recorded lessons. Some schools also provided learning materials in the form of learning packs, books and worksheets. Real time interactions in the primary and secondary sector of the education system were only a small component of remote learning; a survey conducted with parents in the UK found only 25% of learners had received real time interactions. Paper materials were used more often in the UK, with 34% of parents stating that learning resources were paper based (William & Stéphan, 2021). Montacute and Cullinane (2021) investigated teaching during the pandemic and found that only 4% of teachers were using video conferencing in March 2020 during the first period of school closures, compared with 54% in the second period of school closures.

Waters-Davies et al., (2021) capture the struggles encountered during the pandemic by non-Welsh speaking parents of children who attend Welsh medium schools. Parents reported that they felt that more support and guidance could have been offered to non-Welsh speaking parents to better support their children's learning through the medium of Welsh. Recommendations put forward by the authors included; the provision of guidance notes through the medium of English, identification of accessible online resources, and when learning was occurring remotely, online 'live' lessons could have been recorded and made available for learners to access later if they were unable to join the live lesson (Waters-Davies, Davies, Underwood and Lloyd-Williams, 2021).

For many families, the pandemic caused complex challenges, including significant disruptions to work, education, and social interaction, which impacted negatively on mental well-being (Green, 2021). There is limited information on the link between attainment and social and emotional well-being for learners (Twist, Jones & Treleaven, 2022). However, research suggests that parents, teachers and senior leaders see that learners' well-being and mental health are important components in academic outcomes, and that post-pandemic support for learners' well-being and mental health should be a priority at all levels of the education system (Waters-Davies et al., 2021).

3.2.3 ALN school contexts

The impact of the pandemic for learners, families of learners, and staff in additional learning needs (ALN) schools has been particularly pronounced and complex. While most learners with ALN are educated in mainstream schools, many attend ALN schools that are able to cater for their often complex learning, physical, and medical needs. Learners who attend ALN schools would often be considered at greater risk from Covid-19 due to a higher prevalence of health issues.

Research indicates learners in ALN schools faced increased levels of anxiety from loss of structure, and the lack of social interaction resulted in less academic progress (Banerjee, Khan, & Kesavan, 2021). Many parents reported disrupted sleep patterns and increases in challenging behaviour, leading to concerns around transitioning children back into the school environment (Paulauskaite et al.,2021). This was also seen when learners returned to school, and the difficulty for children and staff having to navigate new rules on spaces and social contact, coupled with new routines (Waters-Davies et al., 2021). Learners with more complex needs and their families faced significant challenges beyond accessing teaching, with additional support services often disrupting provision and support for basic daily needs (Paulauskaite et al., 2021).

In relation to learning at home, parents and carers of children with additional learning needs highlighted the need for specialised advice, structured activities and materials to support learning (Sideropoulos et al., 2021). It has also been reported that 7 in 10 parents of a child with autism found their child had difficulty completing or understanding schoolwork, and that this had resulted in a decline in the child's academic progress (National Autism Society, 2021). Research conducted with parents in Northern Ireland suggested that learners with ALN had difficulty sticking to the suggested routines, keeping children engaged, and difficulty understanding the work set by the school (Bates, Finlay & O'Connor Bones, 2021). Parents have also reported a lack of information about explaining changes to routines with their children, and difficulty in following government guidelines (Paulauskaite et al., 2021), particularly for learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who often rely on routines and established relationships (Rogers et al., 2021).

However, the level of engagement over the school closure has been reported to be low for ALN learners, including learners in mainstream schools with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP or EHC plan) (Lucas, Nelson & Sims, 2020). ALN learners face higher levels of 'digital poverty' than typically developing children, and ALN learners particularly in ALN schools are more likely to be disadvantaged learners, looked after children, and single parent households (Crane et al., 2021; Thomas, 2020). Emerging evidence suggests that learners with ALN made less progress than typically developing children in early years and reception classes based on a sample of 450 learners from the North of England using the Early Years Foundation Profile (EYFSP) (Nash et al., 2022). Further, attendance rates after the first school closures were found to be much lower in ALN schools than in mainstream schools across the UK (Gov, 2020; Sibieta & Cottell, 2021). Research exploring the impact on health and well-being for staff working in ALN schools during the pandemic found that teachers were reporting higher levels of stress associated with a number of additional pressures working in an ALN context (Ueda et al., 2021).

Crane et al., (2021) also reported teachers' concerns around maintaining social distancing between children and having to support the usual personal care of children alongside the additional hygiene demands. Leaders within a cohort of ALN schools in London explained that there was a lack of guidance around opening of schools that was tailored to the ALN school context (Crane et al., 2021).

In addition, the mental health and well–being of ALN learners were found to be disproportionately affected in comparison with their typically developing peers (Theis et al., 2021). Sibieta and Cottell (2020 and 2021) found that all UK nations had failed to adequately support children with ALN during the first lockdown period, and failed to provide sufficient guidance to schools regarding how to deliver education effectively for learners with ALN over the prolonged period of disruption, concluding that this may well have been highly damaging for this group of learners. The pandemic brought increasing demands on families of ALN learners who, in addition to the essential changes that everybody was having to make, were also having to navigate the challenge of catering for additional care needs and having to navigate an inconsistent and uncertain care-service landscape with varying levels of support provided (Rose et al., 2020). Toseeb et al., (2020) reported that parents had felt that many of their children's needs went unmet during the lockdown. Many families chose to educate and manage the complex needs of their children at home despite them having the opportunity to send them into school. However, families reported feeling unprepared and ill equipped to care and cater for their children with ALN at home during the pandemic (Greenway & Eaton-Thomas, 2020). Many parents reported that the level of support from maintained ALN schools could have been better (O'Hagan, 2020), and evidence indicates that there was a significant impact on parental mental health (Rogers et al., 2021).

3.2.4 Reading provision

Due to the disruption caused to education by the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching staff and educators were forced to adapt rapidly to a new era of learning. Without access to the classroom, resources or face-to-face contact a number of novel and creative learning strategies emerged in all areas of the curriculum. In terms of reading provision and literacy instruction, educators and institutions alike introduced numerous strategies that incorporated virtual learning. Reading to children is considered vital to children's reading ability and associated with a number of crucial outcomes (Blewitt, Rump, Shealy, & Cook, 2009; Sipe, 2000; Greene Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Trelease, 2019). Educators reading aloud to their students is a common practice, and for some children, school is the only environment in which this occurs.

As such, concerns were raised about the loss of such an important practice when Covid-19 resulted in school closures. When faced with shifting to a virtual learning environment, teaching staff tried to overcome this barrier by posting online videos of teachers, authors and celebrities reading popular books to children, with interactive features, to engage their students. These were carried out both live, through mediums such as Zoom or Teams, or posted as pre-recorded videos. (Stoetzel & Shedrow, 2021; Furlong et al., 2021). Due to concerns over lack of motivation in self-directed learning, programmes were also developed by institutions that were based around virtual assessment-centred learning, in order to provide students with feedback and a goal to work towards (Sun, Wang & Wang, 2021).

In England, independent reviews commissioned by the Department for Education (Rose, 2006; Rose 2009) outlined the importance of high quality systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) as the main approach to teaching early reading and spelling, and that phonics work should begin for most children at the age of 5 (Parliamentary office of Science and Technology, 2009). Following these findings, the use of SSP in early reading instruction has been strongly advised within the National Curriculum since 2007. In more recent years, this has more formally extended to ALN schools in England, which are currently strongly advised to use an SSP approach with all their learners.

In an evaluation of the change in pedagogy towards SSP in England, Machin et al., (2018) found that there were strong initial effects for learners, which persisted for learners at a greater initial risk of struggling with reading. Their findings therefore indicate that the widespread adoption of SSP can particularly benefit disadvantaged learners.

In many cases, SSP approaches underwent adaptation so that its use continued throughout school closures and the return once again to the classroom. Beaven, Comas-Quinn & Hinton (2022) published a series of case studies demonstrating how educational institutions adapted so that they were able to deliver synthetic phonics throughout the pandemic, and in its wake. At Angel Oak Academy in London, it was reported that when adapting synthetic phonics to virtual learning, staff posted online recordings of phonics sessions for their learners and set them challenges to support their reading development. These lessons were based on sounds already familiar to the children, so that they would retain the knowledge they already possessed. This approach was successful, however, on return to in person learning, it meant that learners were 6 months behind in terms of their literacy development. The academy has now adapted synthetic phonics once again to face-to-face learning and to help catch learners up to their developmental targets. Further, at Bloomfield Learning Centre, staff were required to adapt their usual in person weekly synthetic phonic sessions when school closures were enforced. During Covid-19 the institution set up an online literacy clinic in order to deliver synthetic phonics virtually, that was accessible to students working from home and for students with key worker caregivers. Since the re-opening of schools, the centre has adapted once again to deliver synthetic phonics flexibly, both face-to-face and virtually.

3.2.5 Reading outcomes

With such considerable impacts on educational provision, there have been understandable concerns relating to academic progress over the course of the pandemic. In a report by The Sutton Trust, it was reported that 84% of teachers thought that the pandemic would increase the attainment gap that already existed, with teachers from the most deprived schools predicting that the gap would be substantial (Montacute & Cullinane, 2021). Several reports on the impact of the pandemic on reading attainment of learners in England provide important insights into how the disruption of school closures has impacted outcomes across the border, and to a large extent support teachers' predictions (Rose et al., 2021; Blainey & Hannay, 2021a, Blainey & Hannay, 2021b; DfE, 2021; Twist, Jones & Treleaven, 2022).

This was demonstrated in a report by the Education Endowment Foundation, where it was found that school closures due to the pandemic resulted in a decline in the learning abilities of learners across the board, but in particular, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This has resulted in the achievement gap between disadvantaged learners and their non-disadvantaged peers growing even larger. The report also demonstrated that primary school aged learners, particularly those in Key Stage 1 (Foundation Learning in Wales), experienced the most prominent decline in educational attainment (EEF, 2022).

Twist, Jones & Treleaven (2022) have recently reviewed the evidence relating to the impact of Covid-19 on attainment of learners in England across all the key stages, specifically in relation to reading and mathematics. In summary, the current evidence indicates that all primary year groups were impacted by the school disruption, with both periods of school disruption and closures leading to less progress in reading than would typically be seen over those periods. The impact was more pronounced for younger learners, with several reports indicating that the Covid-gap for reading was greatest Year 1 learners (Blainey et al., 2021b; Rose et al., 2021). As such, Twist, Jones, and Treleaven (2022) make clear that Key Stage 1 learners are in need of intervention and targeted funds. An important element of the concern reported for this age group, although arguably relevant for all age groups, is that developing reading skills at this age is crucial to fostering an enjoyment of reading, and avoiding young learners developing negative attitudes towards and lacking confidence in reading.

Further, disadvantaged learners (those eligible for free school meals; eFSM) were found to have been disproportionately impacted, with attainment data indicating around 7 months less progress in reading than their peers over the 2020-2021 school year. This disadvantage gap stabilised for Year 2 learners and reduced for Year 1 learners by the Summer term, indicating a similar rate of recovery to their peers. However, as Twist, Jones & Treleaven note, with additional resources and initiatives having been heavily focused on disadvantaged learners, this stabilisation rather than a narrowing of the Covid-gap suggests alternative approaches might be required to redress this inequity.

Whilst the current report is not investigating secondary school education, it is important to consider the impact for learners in Key Stage 3, many of whom may have been impacted by the disruption to provision during their final years of primary school. Although Twist, Jones and Treleaven (2022) report a lack of evidence regarding the impact of Covid-19 on attainment for learners in Key Stage 3, they also report some evidence indicating reduced rates of recovery and a greater Covid-gap for Key Stage 3 learners than primary-aged learners at the end of the 2020-2021 school year (DfE, 2021). It is important for us to understand the specific challenges of learners who made the transition from primary to secondary education during the pandemic, and what support for the development of proficient reading skills might be required for these learners.

When investigating the specific impact of the pandemic on outcomes for learners in Wales, it is clear that insufficient evidence exists to be able to draw robust conclusions. However, we do know that learners in Wales had some of the lowest home learning hours across the UK (Sibieta & Cottell, 2020), and some of the lowest

attendance rates in Wales on reopening (under 70% in mid-December of 2020; Sibieta & Cottell, 2021). Therefore, although these reports regarding reading outcomes are based on attainment data from England, we might well anticipate similar impacts on reading for learners in Wales.

3.3 Emerging from the pandemic: policies to support recovery

Understanding how the pandemic has impacted staff and learners across Wales, particularly in relation to the teaching of reading is paramount to the identification and implementation of effective support.

The Welsh government's Renew and Reform: supporting learners' wellbeing and progression (2021) policy lays out the government's priorities and the framework of support in the response to Covid-19 and the period of school closure. The policy aims to build additional human capacity to support learners who have been the most affected. Broadly they include; learners in early years, vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, post-16 learners and those who are transitioning to further and higher education.

The outcomes from this research project are highly relevant to both the Programme for Government and the Renew and Reform Programme (Welsh Government, 2021). For example:

Understanding current issues faced in primary and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) schools in relation to aspects of literacy provision, identifying good practice, and identifying evidence and support needs, will help inform us as to how educational inequalities can be reduced and standards raised in this area. Understanding how the pandemic has impacted staff and learners, particularly in relation to teaching reading, and how staff have responded to the challenges, will help inform what support is needed to ensure learners in both primary and ALN schools develop a secure foundation in literacy skills.

Understanding which provision or programmes were used and the evidence of effectiveness which can be used to target Pupil Development Grant funding to support disadvantaged or vulnerable learners in need.

In addition to the commitments specified in the Renew and Reform policy, the Welsh Government has allocated a total of £150 million in funding between 2021 to 2022, in addition to over £220 million in 2020 to 2021 to further the Recruit, recover, raise standards (RRRS): accelerated learning programme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Gov.Wales, 2021). The RRRS programme will continue to provide additional human capacity in order to support learners in addressing their needs following the pandemic and period of school closures and disruption, to enable schools to identify the learners in greatest need and ensure that they reach their full potential.

Hearing the experiences and perceptions of school staff on how the pandemic has impacted the teaching of reading across schools in Wales will also enable us to explore how schools have utilised capacity within their local and national channels to support their school and their learners.

4. Research aims and questions

Being able to understand the provision, strategies and the challenges faced by education providers will enable the identification of good practice and areas of improvement. This could support the national strategy to recover from Covid-19, while also feeding into changes more broadly with the new Curriculum for Wales.

The current context presents an invaluable opportunity to take stock of current and recently evolved practices, and to identify effective practices and innovations resulting from the adaptations educational practitioners have had to develop in order to continue teaching their learners through unprecedented disruptions. It also presents an opportunity to identify specific areas for further research to enable effective reading provision for learners in primary and ALN schools across Wales.

4.1 Research aims

- To explore the teaching of reading in primary and ALN schools, including pre-pandemic, during the pandemic (i.e., period of extended school closures), and current practice.
- To explore reading progress and attainment for learners in primary and ALN schools during the pandemic.
- To summarise current practice in relation to current research evidence, and identify key areas for future research.

4.2 Research Questions

Q1. How has the teaching of reading in primary and ALN schools in Wales been impacted by the pandemic?

- What programmes/approaches were used in primary and ALN schools before the pandemic, and how were these delivered?
- What programmes/approaches were used during the pandemic, and how were these delivered?
- What programmes/approaches are currently being used, and how are these being delivered?

Q2. How has reading progress and attainment for learners in primary and ALN schools in Wales been impacted by the pandemic?

- How has assessment of reading been impacted by the pandemic?
- What are teacher perceptions of the impact of the pandemic on reading progress and attainment for learners in primary and ALN schools?

Q3. How can current research evidence, insights, and innovations from primary and ALN schools in Wales be utilised to ensure all learners can be effectively supported to improve their reading skills as we work to recover from the pandemic?

5. Methods

5.1 Research design

We used a mixed method research design, allowing us to integrate both quantitative and qualitative components. While quantitative and qualitative research methods come from different epistemological bases, using them in combination as part of a single study is common in contemporary research designs. Employing mixed methods in educational research is particularly useful, as they allow researchers to better capture the complexity inherent in educational contexts. Using quantitative and qualitative approaches in tandem provides a degree of corroboration and convergence between the data gathered, thus strengthening the robustness of the conclusions (Almalki, 2016; Kelle, 2006). In this context, qualitative methods allowed us to capture the breadth of experiences, and invaluable examples of these experiences, for us to reflect on and enhance our understanding.

Research team specialisms
The research team comprised university researchers with specialisms in reading instruction, additional learning needs, intervention research and evaluation, survey methodology, and qualitative research. One member of the team also holds Qualified Teacher Status as a primary school teacher.

5.2 Sampling strategy and recruitment of schools

Mainstream primary schools. For the mainstream primary school survey, a systematic sample design with implicit stratification was used for selecting primary schools out of 1242 schools in Wales (including middle schools with primary aged learners). Schools were selected from an ordered list by local authority (Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynnon Taf, Swansea, Vale of Glamorgan, Torfaen and Wrexham), and within local authority by language medium (Dual stream, English medium, English with significant Welsh, Transitional and Welsh medium) and the percentage of learners in schools eligible for free school meals (eFSM) (mean percentage scores) for 2019/21. Within each school the literacy lead, Foundation Phase, and Key Stage 2 teachers were selected and invited to complete the questionnaire on literacy provision in schools.

The questionnaires were to be completed online with an initial email invitation letter sent to the school headteacher in March 2022, by the regional school consortia in Wales (GwE, EAS, Mid Wales Partnership, CSC, Neath Port Talbot, Partneriaeth), and three follow-up reminders in the form of a Zoom meeting, email and phone call.

Between March and April 2022 schools were invited to an online Zoom session to encourage schools to engage with the CEN surveys. A follow-up reminder email was then sent to the schools in the form of an email in May 2022. This was sent to the schools via the school consortia, and mentioned that the CEN research officers would be contacting schools with a courtesy follow- up reminder call. Between May and June 2022, the final follow-up reminder phone calls were made to the schools to encourage schools to engage with the CEN surveys.

Once a school accepted the CEN project invite, the survey link for the literacy questionnaire was sent to the school headteacher/nominated member of staff to forward on to the relevant teachers in school (i.e., literacy lead, Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 teachers). The survey could be completed in Welsh or English.

The school invitation letters and reminders were undertaken as part of other Bangor University CEN school projects where the headteachers of the selected schools were invited to other CEN projects. Schools were invited to participate in 3 or 4 other projects within this invitation. However, the other projects involved different study populations (e.g., Literacy Leads, Pupil Voice Leads, learners themselves), to minimise the response burden or expectations of individual staff members within each school.

ALN schools. Due to the small number of ALN schools across Wales, no sampling strategy was employed; all 40 ALN schools across Wales were invited to participate in Survey 2, using the same invitation process as schools for Survey 1.

5.3 Participants

Participants for this study were literacy leads and teachers who were responsible for planning or delivering literacy provision before, during and after the pandemic. The participants were working in either a mainstream primary or middle school setting, or an ALN school.

5.3.1 Survey participants
Two surveys were developed, one for primary and middle schools (Survey 1), and one for ALN schools (Survey 2). Further information on both surveys is provided in section 5.4.

In total, 52 mainstream primary schools in Wales participated in Survey 1. This represents a response rate of 6.38%. The response from teachers in participating schools was 12.88%, generating a total of 105 completed questionnaires. Only 15 schools completed all sections of the survey. For 12 schools, only Section 1 (for Literacy Leads) was completed.

Table 1. Survey sections completed by teachers in mainstream primary schools

Language of provision	Total schools	Total completing Section 1 (Literacy Lead)	Total completing Section 2 (Foundation Phase Teacher)	Total completing Section 3 (KS2 Teacher)
Welsh	9	7	1	4
English	42*	36	29	32
Dual stream	1	1	1	1
Total	52	40	30	35

*3 of these schools were English medium with significant Welsh

Seven ALN schools participated in the survey, which represents a response rate of 17.5%. However, no schools completed all sections, and 5 schools only completed Section 1 (for Literacy Leads).

Table 2. Survey sections completed by teachers in ALN schools.

Language of provision	Total schools	Total completing Section 1 (Literacy Lead)	Total completing Section 2 (Foundation Phase / KS2 Teacher)	Total completing Section 3 (KS3 / KS4 Teacher)
Welsh	1	1	1	0
English	6	5	3	2
Total	7	6	4	2

5.3.2 Interview participants

Six interviews were conducted with teachers from mainstream primary schools, 5 of whom had also participated in the survey. A further 3 interviews were conducted with teachers from ALN schools, 2 of whom had also participated in the survey.

Table 3. Interview participants for both mainstream and ALN schools, language of provision, and age group of learners.

School type	Participant ID	Language of provision	Age group of learners*
Mainstream primary	DW	English Medium	Foundation Phase
Mainstream primary	TM	English Medium	Foundation Phase
Mainstream primary	SC	English Medium	Key Stage 2
Mainstream primary	SX	English Medium	Key Stage 2
Mainstream primary	WL	English Medium	Key Stage 2
Mainstream primary	JK	Welsh Medium	Foundation Phase
ALN school	UL	Welsh Medium school for learners between the ages of 3 to 16 years with post-16 provision.	Foundation Phase
ALN school	BD	English Medium for learners between the ages of 3 to 16 years with post-16 provision.	Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4
ALN school	FG	English Medium for learners between the ages of 3 to 16 years with post-16 provision.	Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4

*Taught by the interviewee during the time of the first pandemic

5.4 Data collection methods: Survey

5.4.1 Survey design
Quantitative surveys were developed by the research team, comprising a combination of closed, scaled responses, and open-ended questions to allow for more detailed responses. The surveys were designed to be sequential and clustered to the relevant time points, allowing respondents to report their experiences in chronological order. As the research questions were focused on the impact of Covid-19 on reading provision, the surveys were designed to look at provision before, during, and after the school closures.

To ensure clarity on the time periods being referenced throughout the survey, a visual timeline was provided in each relevant section for respondents to refer to. *(See Appendix B).* This made clear that the questions related specifically to the two main extended school closures; the initial lockdown period from March – July 2020, and the second lockdown period from January – March 2021. Although there was additional disruption in the form of further local lockdowns, firebreaks and phased returns in some areas, there were two distinct periods of widespread school closures that were captured in this study.

Two surveys were developed, one for primary schools, and one for ALN schools. Separate surveys were developed for these primary and ALN schools due to the considerable differences in typical provision, and the likely differences in the nature of the disruption and challenges. Within each survey, three staff members were asked to provide responses. For the primary school survey (Survey 1), respondents were to include: 1) the Literacy Lead; 2) a Foundation Phase teacher, and 3) a Key Stage 2 class teacher. For the ALN school survey (Survey 2), respondents were to include: 1) The Literacy Lead or appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT); 2) a Foundation Phase or Key Stage 2 class teacher, and 3) a Key Stage 3 or 4 class teacher. This was achieved by separating each survey into 3 sections, each to be completed by the relevant member of staff. There were two reasons for taking this approach, both of which related to our piloting of the surveys. First, to reduce the risk of participant fatigue and attrition by sharing the load of responding. Second, to ensure that specific questions relating to reading provision and the perceived and/or measurable impact of the pandemic on reading could be targeted at the most relevant staff member (e.g., avoiding an expectation of a Foundation Phase teacher being able to provide information about the school as a whole). An additional benefit of the approach is that it allowed us to capture experiences from the perspective of three roles in each school.

The content and structure of both surveys was very similar, as outlined below. *(See Appendices A and B).*

Section 1 (to be completed by the Literacy Lead or SLT member) comprised various questions to gather information on the school as a whole, including which year groups and in which language reading instruction begins, the proportion and characteristics of learners who attended school during the pandemic lockdown periods (whether in their school or a different site), the measurable and/or perceived impact of the pandemic on reading attainment across the school, any observed

disproportionate impacts (e.g., beginning readers, learners transitioning to secondary school), and their perspective on the priorities and types of support needed for their learners in relation to their reading development.

Section 2 (to be completed by a foundation stage class teacher, or Key Stage 1 or 2 class teacher for Survey 2) comprised questions regarding reading provision for learners in Key Stage 1 prior to the pandemic (including the main programmes or approaches used), the ways in which provision changed during both of the extended lockdown periods (with a focus on learners at home, though not exclusively), the engagement of learners who were at home, the perceived impacts on the reading attainment of learners in foundation stage, and the extent to which provision and learner progress is still being impacted. As in the previous section, the foundation stage teachers were asked for their perspective on the priorities and types of support needed for their learners in relation to their reading development.

Section 3 (to be completed by a Key Stage 2 class teacher, or a Key Stage 3 or 4 class teacher for Survey 2) included exactly the same content as Section 2 but in relation to the impact of the pandemic on provision and learners in Key Stage 2. The addition of a few questions relating to the impact of the pandemic on older primary school learners, including those transitioning to secondary school.

5.4.2 Survey piloting: primary school survey
Interim survey data analysis informed the types of questions that were incorporated in the interview schedule.

Initial versions of Survey 1 were reviewed by a sample of 6 teachers in Wales, including a Headteacher, a Literacy Lead, and class teachers in foundation phase and key stage 2, for relevance, accuracy and clarity of the wording and terminology. Each reviewer worked through the survey and was then invited to provide feedback to a member of the research team. Feedback included concerns over the length of the survey and level of detail expected in some sections, and some suggestions relating to language use and terminology (e.g., how best to refer to readers who required additional targeted support for reading). A revised version of the survey incorporating this feedback was then further pilot tested, including further feedback from the initial sample of teachers, along with 2 additional teachers who had not been involved in the initial round of review.

5.4.3 Survey piloting: ALN schools
We took a similar approach with Survey 2, with a sample of 3 teachers across 2 ALN schools reviewing the initial version of the survey (including a Headteacher and 2 Literacy leads who were also class teachers in Key Stage 1 and 2) and providing feedback to the research team. Feedback focused predominantly on a need for greater clarity in relation to different levels of reading skills learners may be working on, which is of relevance to the diverse learners represented in ALN school settings. This led to the final version including separate questions relating to provision and the impact of the pandemic for learners working on pre-reading/emergent literacy skills, those working on early reading skills (e.g., phonics), and those working on more advanced reading skills (e.g., reading comprehension).

Translated versions of both surveys were scrutinised by Welsh speaking teachers to ensure the appropriate terminology and nuance to some of the questions had been captured in the translation, with changes being made as necessary to ensure the Welsh and English surveys were likely to be received and interpreted in a similar way.

5.5 Data collection methods: Interviews

5.5.1 Designing, piloting, and conducting the interviews
The interview schedule was closely related to the survey, including the same themes to allow for further exploration and a richer understanding of the context and reading provision in each school, and the experiences and perceptions of the interviewees. We made use of the feedback from the piloting to identify areas that may need further explanation or an encouragement of elaboration in the interviews. A semi-structured interview approach was taken so the researcher could cover specific themes, but space and time was left for interviewees to discuss relevant elements, or for the researchers to explore any topics, perspectives, or experiences that might not have been included in the schedule. Prior to beginning the research interviews, the interview schedule was piloted with two teachers.

5.5.2 Interview sampling and recruitment
For each school, we sought to interview the Literacy Lead (or another suitable member of the SLT for the school), and a class teacher or Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) with responsibility for delivering reading provision. With the exception of one school where both a member of SLT and a class teacher were interviewed together, only one staff member was interviewed in each school.

We utilised two methods of recruiting schools to interview: 1) Inviting survey respondents to express and interest at the end of the survey; 2) directly inviting schools via professional contacts and networks. All expressions of interest were followed up and proceeded to interview with the exception of three instances where the potential participant was no longer able to take part.

5.6 Data analysis

5.6.1 Survey data analysis
Participants' responses to the quantitative survey items were analysed evaluated using descriptive statistics in line with our research questions. A reflective thematic analysis was used to analyse the open-ended responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5.6.2 Interview data analysis
Interview sessions that took place online were video-recorded using a secure online recording platform and interview sessions that took place face-to-face were audio-recorded using a Dictaphone. All recordings were electronically sent to a professional transcription service to be transcribed and were returned in electronic format ready for analysis. We made use of the pre-determined themes relevant to our research and interview questions, as well as inductive exploration of other themes observed in the analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic strategy was

followed to analyse interview data and the open-ended questions that were included in the survey.

Once researchers had familiarised themselves with the whole of the data set, they began generating initial codes which were then cross checked between researchers using a process known as intercoder reliability (ICR). ICR strengthens the trustworthiness of the analysis process (Kurasaki, 2000) by examining the categories and decision processes made by the first researcher. ICR was calculated on a proportion (24%) of the open-ended questions coded. Researchers divided the number of agreements by the total number of agreements plus disagreements. The total score was calculated to be 95.7% agreement between two researchers. The third step involved the researcher organising the codes into separate thematic categories. A theme is defined as a 'patterned response of meaning' with data items and across the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final steps in the process of conducting the thematic analysis involved reviewing, labelling, and defining the final set of sub-themes. The sixth and final stage in the thematic content analysis involved producing the final thematic report.

6. Survey findings

Despite seven ALN schools being represented in the survey, only Section 1 (for the Literacy Lead) was completed in all schools, with considerable missing or incomplete data for the other sections of the survey. As such, for the ALN school survey data, we have reported only the Section 1 quantitative data (capturing the lockdown context and pre-pandemic provision), and the descriptive information and qualitative data from the open-ended responses.

Tables including confidence intervals for all the mainstream primary school analysis can be found in Appendix E.

6.1 Capturing the context of lockdown schooling for both mainstream primary schools and ALN schools

6.1.1 Definitions of 'in school' and the proportion of learners in school

Mainstream primary schools. Whether or not 'in school' referred to the learners' school itself varied across schools and across lockdown periods. During the first lockdown, only 20% of teachers indicated that learners attended the school itself, with the majority attending a hub elsewhere. However, during the second lockdown, 90% of teachers indicated learners who were in school were attending the school itself.

Table 4. Proportion of mainstream primary schools reporting each definition of 'in school' during both the first and second lockdown periods.

Definitions of 'in school'	First lockdown (% of schools)	Second lockdown (% of schools)
School	20	90
Different site/ Hub	60	5
Hub in the school	15	5
On site then Hub	2.5	0
Hub for vulnerable children and online learning for others	2.5	0

95% of mainstream primary schools reported fewer than 25% of their learners were typically in school during the first lockdown, and no schools reported more than 50% of their learners were typically in school during the same period. Between the first and second lockdown, there was an increased proportion of learners in many schools, increasing from fewer than 25% to 25-50%. Only 2% of schools reported over 50% of learners in school, and only in the second lockdown. No schools reported more than 75% of learners in school during either lockdown period.

In both lockdown periods, over 17% of schools reported a higher concentration of the learners in school were Key Stage 2 learners. Conversely, almost 8% of schools reported a higher concentration of Foundation Phase learners in school in the second lockdown. (See Table 8, Appendix C).

Table 5a. Proportion of mainstream primary schools who reported each 'in school' attendance category during each lockdown period.

'in school' attendance category (approximate proportion of learners 'in school')	First lockdown % of schools	Second lockdown % of schools
Fewer than 25%	95.0	67.7
25-50%	5.0	30.1
51-75%	0	2.1

ALN schools. All six ALN schools reported that for all learners attending school during either lockdown period, 'in school' was the school itself, rather than another setting or hub.

Five of the six schools reported that fewer than 25% of learners were in school during the first lockdown, reducing to three schools during the second lockdown, and with one school reporting over 75% of learners typically attending school during the second lockdown.

Table 5b. Proportion of ALN schools who reported each 'in school' attendance category during each lockdown period.

'in school' attendance category (approximate proportion of learners 'in school')	First lockdown (number of schools)	Second lockdown (number of schools)
Fewer than 25%	5	3
25-50%	1	1
51-75%	0	1
>75%	0	1

6.1.2 Characteristics of learners in school

Mainstream primary schools. In both lockdown periods, more than half of schools reported some differences in characteristics of attending pupils, including a higher proportion of looked after children, vulnerable children, learners with Individual

Behaviour Plans, and learners who were struggling with reading. *(See Table 9a, Appendix C)*

ALN schools. A similar proportion of ALN schools reported characteristics of learners who were typically in school were the same as prior to the pandemic during both lockdowns. Other schools indicated higher proportions of looked after children and/or vulnerable children in the first and second lockdown periods, and 2 schools indicated higher proportions of children with social, emotional, and behavioural needs or physical and medical support needs during the second lockdown. *(See Table 9b, Appendix C).*

6.1.3 Prioritisation for places in school

Mainstream primary schools. Various groups of learners were reported to be prioritised for a place in school in both the first and second lockdown periods, and in the majority of schools multiple groups were prioritised. Looked after children, vulnerable children, and children of keyworkers were prioritised in the vast majority of schools in both the first and second lockdown. Children with Additional Learning Needs and learners with an Individual Development Plan were prioritised for a place in many schools during both lockdown periods, however, this was more common in the second lockdown period. *(See Table 10a, Appendix C).*

ALN schools. Prioritisation for a place in ALN schools was very similar across both lockdown periods, with one additional school including children with social, emotional, and behavioural needs during the second lockdown period. *(See Table 10b, Appendix C).*

6.2 Pre-pandemic reading provision

There is a wide variation between schools in Wales in what programmes, interventions and resources are used to teach reading.

6.2.1 Foundation Phase
Foundation Phase teachers were asked about the English literacy provision prior to the pandemic. In total, teachers identified 36 different programmes, interventions, strategies, or resource banks. These included teacher designed strategies, reference to specific printable book series, computer assisted provision, and resources available through Wales' digital platform for learning and teaching known as 'Hwb'. Provision was delivered using physical resources and online computer assisted programmes and apps. *(See Tables 11 and 12, Appendix C).*

6.2.2 Key Stage 2
52 different programmes, interventions, strategies, or resource banks were reportedly used in KS2. KS2 teachers were more likely to discuss teacher designed strategies that focused on higher order skills such as deduction, comprehension, and fluency, delivered through guided reading sessions, whole literacy lessons and teacher designed tasks. *(See Tables 11 and 12, Appendix C).*

6.2.3 Provision pre-pandemic in ALN schools

ALN school teachers reported 11 different programmes, interventions, and resource banks in use before the pandemic. 5 of these were also reported by mainstream schools, and of the remaining 6 that were not reported by mainstream schools, the majority were programmes, interventions, or resources targeting language skills (e.g., ELKLAN). *(See Table 13, Appendix C).*

Table 6. Categorising the English and Welsh programmes and interventions reportedly used across mainstream primary and ALN schools

Programme, intervention or resource category	Mainstream primary schools	ALN schools
Predominantly or exclusively electronic/online	23	6
Combination of electronic/online and physical resources	12	1
Predominantly or exclusively physical resources	21	4

6.3 Impact of the pandemic on provision: survey results

6.3.1 Learners at home: Impact on provision for mainstream primary schools

The vast majority of teachers reported changes in reading provision for learners at home for both the first and second lockdown periods. (*See Figure 1*). However, there was a general trend indicating the impact was reduced in the second lockdown period. For example, the proportion of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that reading provision changed for learners at home reduced from 92% to 87% (with the proportion strongly agreeing reducing considerably, from 42% to 18%).

Universal phonics provision. There was a strong level of agreement across teachers that both the frequency and length of phonics sessions decreased considerably for learners at home, during both lockdown periods. Although this was not the case for all teachers; the proportion disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement that frequency of sessions doubled (from 7% to 14%) and tripled for the statement that length of phonics sessions decreased (from 3% to 9%), indicating that some schools were able to deliver more typical phonics provision during the second lockdown period.
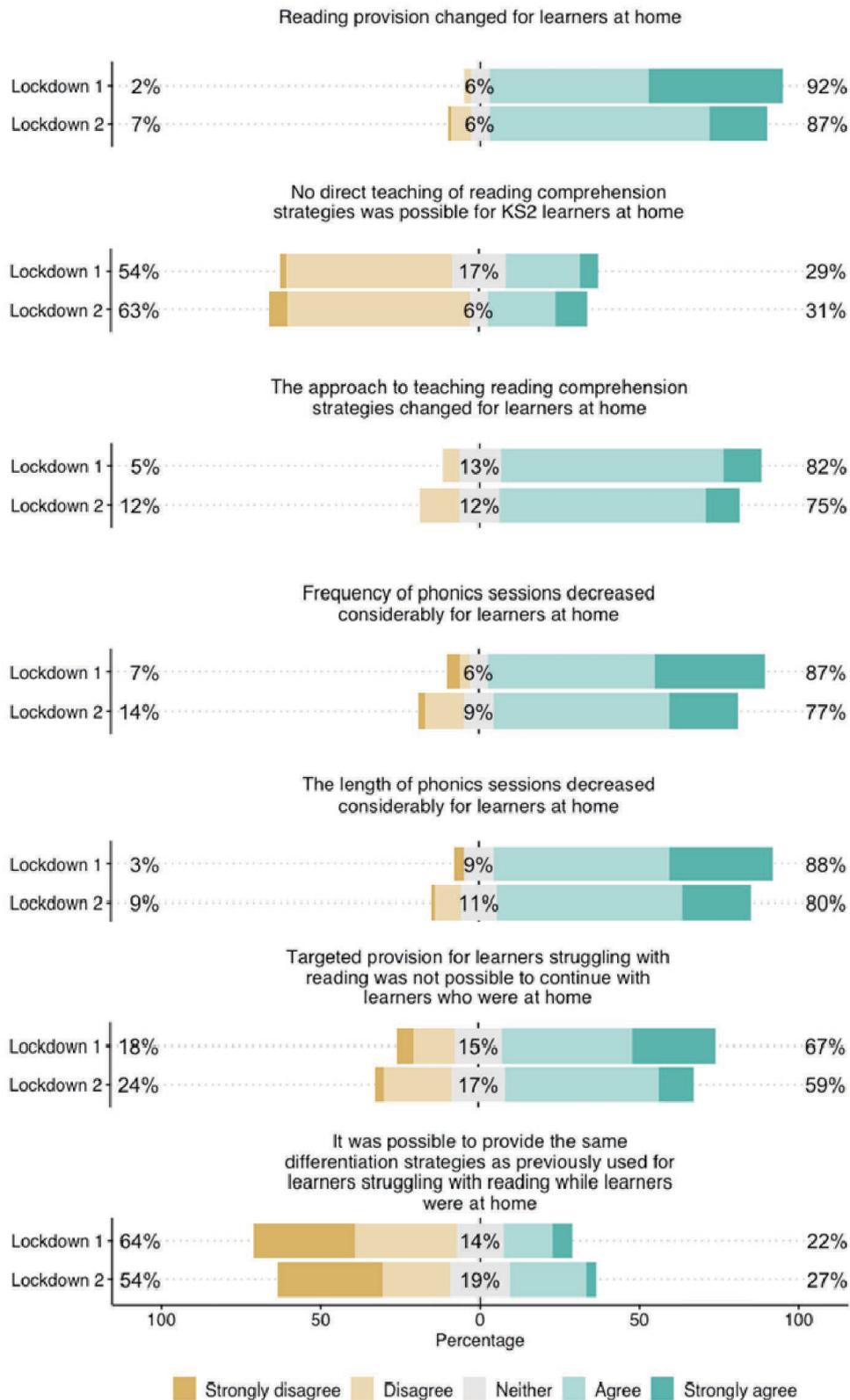
Figure 1. Impact of both lockdowns on literacy provision for learners at home (mainstream primary schools).

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

Reading comprehension provision. There was a strong level of agreement across teachers that the approach to teaching reading comprehension strategies changed during both lockdowns (agreement or strong agreement of 82% and 75% respectively). However, far fewer teachers agreed that they could not directly teach reading comprehension strategies for Key stage 2 learners at home during either lockdown period (disagreement or strong disagreement of 54 % and 63% respectively), indicating that, although the form of the provision changed, many learners still received direct teaching of reading comprehension.

Targeted provision and differentiation. Responses indicate that both targeted provision and differentiation for learners struggling with reading were impacted considerably during both lockdown periods.

67% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that targeted provision for learners struggling with reading was not possible to continue in the first lockdown period, and 59% reported the same for the second lockdown period.

Similarly, 64% of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were able to continue to provide the same differentiation strategies previously used for learners struggling with reading while learners were at home during the first lockdown period, and 54% reported the same for the second lockdown period.

When asked to what extent they were able to continue to differentiate provision for learners struggling with reading who were learning at home, many teachers indicated that they were able to differentiate work for their learners to some extent in both lockdown periods, although this proportion reduced for Foundation Phase teachers between lockdowns and increased for KS2 teachers between lockdowns, indicating additional challenges in doing so for younger learners for the second lockdown period.

Teachers reported a variety of methods in their attempts to differentiate during the lockdown periods, which could be categorised into the following methods:

1. Using levelled reading resources for the appropriate reading ages
2. Reading programmes and apps that automatically differentiated according to learners' performance and/or the level assigned by the teacher
3. The types of questions asked, and tasks set during synchronous and asynchronous lessons
4. The use of caregiver support and frequent contact with caregivers

However, significant challenges were reported in relation to parental engagement, and differentiating for all children who needed it.

"We were completely dependent on parents engaging with us. This was very sporadic."

MKS1/2 20

"[Differentiation was] very limited, often felt those that needed further differentiation and support were the families that were hardest to reach and engaged the least."

MKS1/2 19

"Bug Club was accessible for all KS2 children and staff could recommend suitable levels for the children to read from. However, it was much harder to provide resources for ALN children, especially during the first lockdown where books were not allowed to be sent home/shared."

MKS3/4 32

Welsh language reading provision. Responses indicated that Welsh language reading provision was impacted more negatively than English language reading provision for many learners at home in both the first and second lockdown (77% and 73% agreeing or strongly agreeing, respectively). However, for some Welsh medium schools, English language reading provision was reported to be more negatively impacted (19% and 15% agreeing or strongly agreeing, respectively).
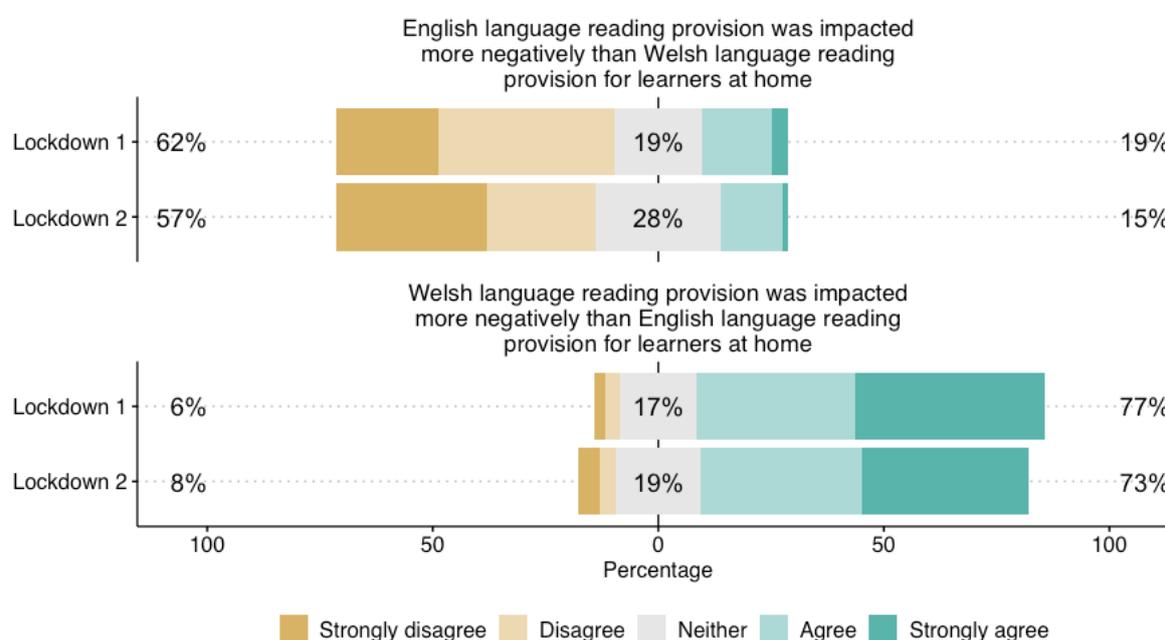
Figure 2. Reported differential impact on English and Welsh medium provision (mainstream primary schools).

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

When asked to elaborate on any differences in how Welsh medium and English medium provision were impacted for learners at home, many teachers reported

issues due to both a lack of resources available in Welsh, and lack of parental skills and confidence in Welsh to support their children with Welsh reading.

"Little Welsh reading was provided as there were very few companies providing this resource."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 5</div>

"Welsh reading was more tricky for learners at home as parents found it more difficult to support their child. Lack of Welsh resources (Welsh as additional language) available at the correct level for learners too. For the pupils who did engage English reading activities were prioritised by parents."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 10</div>

In some cases, teachers indicated that expectations around parental involvement in Welsh reading provision was deemed detrimental to their engagement more generally, which impacted decisions around provision.

"It was really hard to deliver Welsh provision. We did some live lessons but it ended up being easier to go over already taught areas in Welsh rather than introduce new as parental support plummeted for these lessons. There was no reading provision in Welsh."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 29</div>

However, some schools reported some successes with engagement when they provided additional support and resources.

"Some found it hard to access some of the Welsh reading but I recorded myself so they could hear the correct pronunciation and translated everything for parents and learners."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 1</div>

"…we tried to create activities where we could record ourselves saying the words to help the children if and when they needed it."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 4</div>

6.3.2 Impact on provision for learners at home: qualitative data for mainstream and ALN schools

When teachers were asked how they continued to implement reading provision for learners receiving their education at home, four key themes were identified from their responses.

1. The use of literacy-based apps/ programmes/ websites were important in implementing reading provision for learners receiving their education at home.

"Using the online apps stated before and sending home books online from you tube or Powerpoint."

2. The provision of pre-recorded lessons was an important aspect of implementing reading provision for learners receiving their education at home.

"Recording myself reading stories and asking comprehension questions which learners answered. Photographed books for learners to read and record themselves reading using seesaw."

"Phonics cards were sent home. Flashcards for 100 common Word List were sent to some. Live vid and pre-recorded vid conferences/tutorials were posted for parents to coach them how to deliver."

3. Recruiting parent / caregiver support and engagement was an important factor in implementing reading provision for learners receiving their education at home.

"Parents then messaged or sent videos of the children reading. Weekly activities targeting letters and sounds skills posted on this platform too."

"We needed to identify tech skills held by parents. We needed to work with this or boost skills in some cases including helping parent set up i.e., apps, logins and passwords. We needed to work carefully on coaching materials i.e., to ensure parent felt enthused/empowered/confident.... so a bit of subtle pedagogy coaching."

4. The provision of physical literacy resources made available for some learners was an important factor in implementing reading provision for learners receiving their education at home.

"We needed to prep and have physical materials posted or dropped off."

One ALN school indicated a shift in focus relating to more advanced reading skills in response to an obvious decline in comprehension skills.

"During the first phases we were really just responding, surviving and placing big emphasis on wellbeing. But we soon identified, via talking / monitoring work, that students comprehension skills were falling behind. We consciously changed

approach to tackle this by including a comprehension task (sometimes two) into each days schedule. By way of interesting comprehension - read and answer / or video quizzes."

[Code-ALN school KS3/4]

Another way teachers from ALN schools were able to continue the provision for learners receiving their education at home through the creation of physical resources.

"Resource packs sent to learners' homes".

ALN KS3/4 27

"Sent appropriate flash cards and phonics cards home. Engaged parents into online tutorials to teach them how to engage their children with i.e. use of phonics, flashcards for 100 common words, letter formation. Posted tuition videos to parents covering same aim."

ALN KS3/4 49

6.3.3 Learners in school: Impact on provision
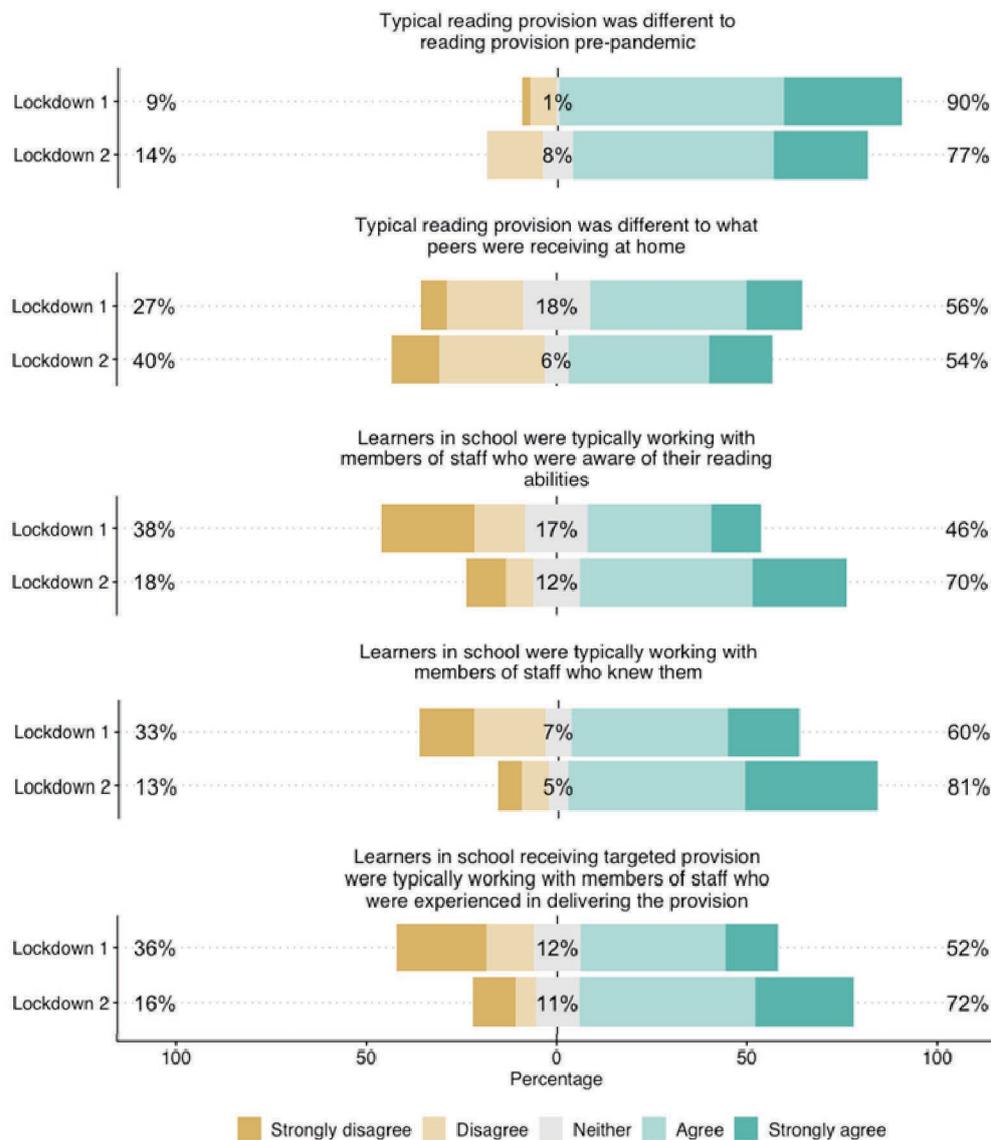
Figure 3. Impact on reading provision for learners in schools (mainstream primary schools).

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

Mainstream primary schools. Teachers reported that typical reading provision for learners in school was different to reading provision before the pandemic, during both the first and second lockdowns (90% Agreement or Strong Agreement; 77% Agreement or Strong Agreement, respectively). However, only a marginal majority reported that in-school provision was different to what peers were receiving at home (56% and 54% Agreement or Strong Agreement, respectively).

Only 60% of teachers reported that learners in school were typically working with members of staff who knew them during the first lockdown, but this increased to 81% for the second lockdown.

Whether learners in school were typically working with members of staff who were aware of their reading abilities, and whether learners receiving targeted provision were typically working with members of staff who were experienced in delivering the provision varied considerably across schools during the first lockdown, with similar proportions of agreement and disagreement. However, both of these aspects of in-school provision improved considerably during the second lockdown (70% and 72% Agreement or Strong Agreement, respectively).

These changes in provision between the first and second lockdown align with the notable increase in learners attending their actual school site if they had a place in school during the second lockdown.

ALN schools. One Foundation Phase/Key Stage 2 teacher reported that they had no readers in school during the lockdown periods. Others across the Key Stages indicated that provision was similarly impacted in home and school, and that the extent of the difference depended on parental engagement. In some cases, it was reported that the difference between provision at home and school was less pronounced during the second lockdown.

6.4 Impact of the pandemic on reading skills for learners at home and in school

6.4.1 Mainstream primary schools (quantitative survey data): impact on reading skills
The majority of teachers reported either a moderate or large negative impact of the pandemic on reading skills for both learners who were at home and learners who were in school, however the proportion of teachers indicating a large negative impact was greater for learners at home than in school (46% and 228% respectively), with a similar pattern for moderate negative impacts (39% and 34% respectively). *(See Figure 4)*. Further, 8% of schools reported no negative impact for learners in school, whereas all schools reported at least a small negative impact for learners at home.
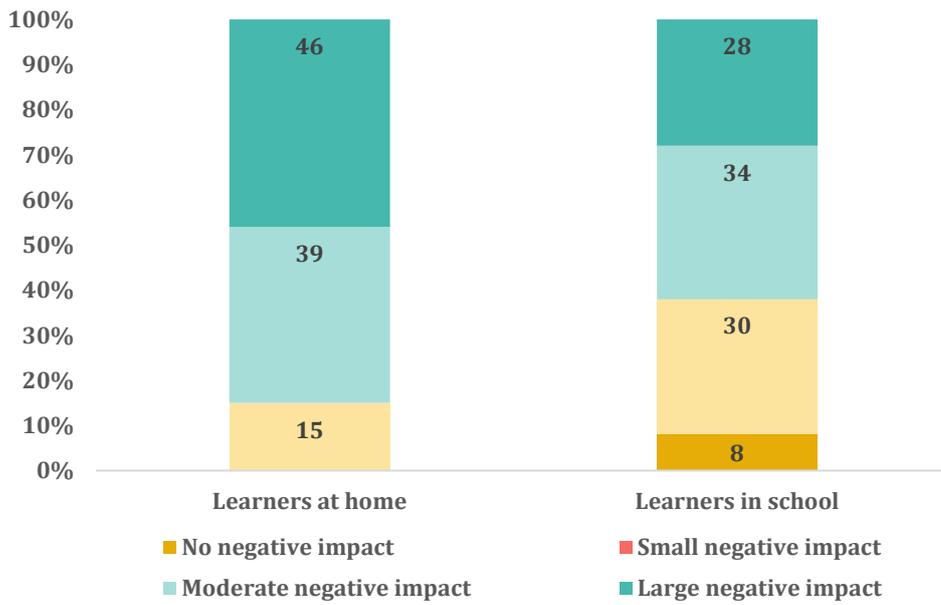
Figure 4. Overall impact of the pandemic on reading skills for learners at home and in school (mainstream primary schools).

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

These responses are further supported by responses when asked to directly compare the impact of the pandemic on the reading skills of learners at home with learners in school, with 48% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the reading skills of learners at home were impacted more negatively. *(See Figure 5).* Similar figures were reported in relation to reading confidence, with 53% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was impacted more negatively for learners at home.
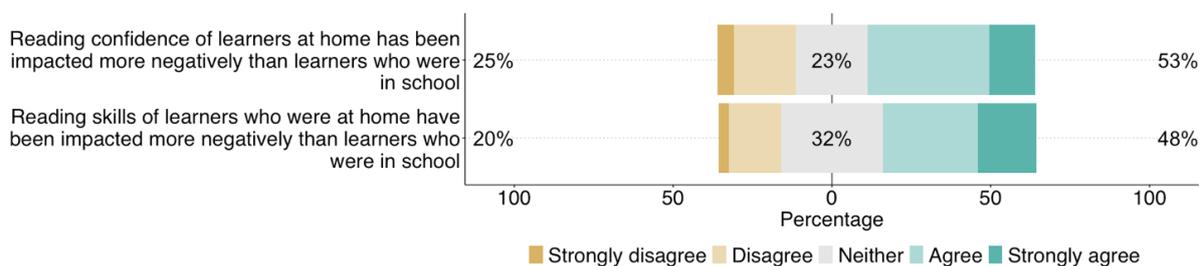
Figure 5. Differential impact on reading skills and confidence for learners at home compared with learners in school (mainstream primary schools).

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

When asked about the differential impact on the reading skills of learners at different stages of reading acquisition, the majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that beginning or struggling readers who were at home during the pandemic were impacted more negatively than beginning or struggling readers who were in school. (*See Figure 6*). Similarly, the vast majority of teachers also agreed that the reading skills of all learners (whether at home or school), who had already developed good decoding skills, were less impacted than beginning readers, and disagreed that learners in the final years of primary school were more negatively impacted than learners in the lower years. On the question of whether learners transitioning to secondary school were negatively impacted more than other learners, the majority of teachers selected the neutral response, indicating that there might have been some impact around learners making this transition that could not be captured by the scaled response.
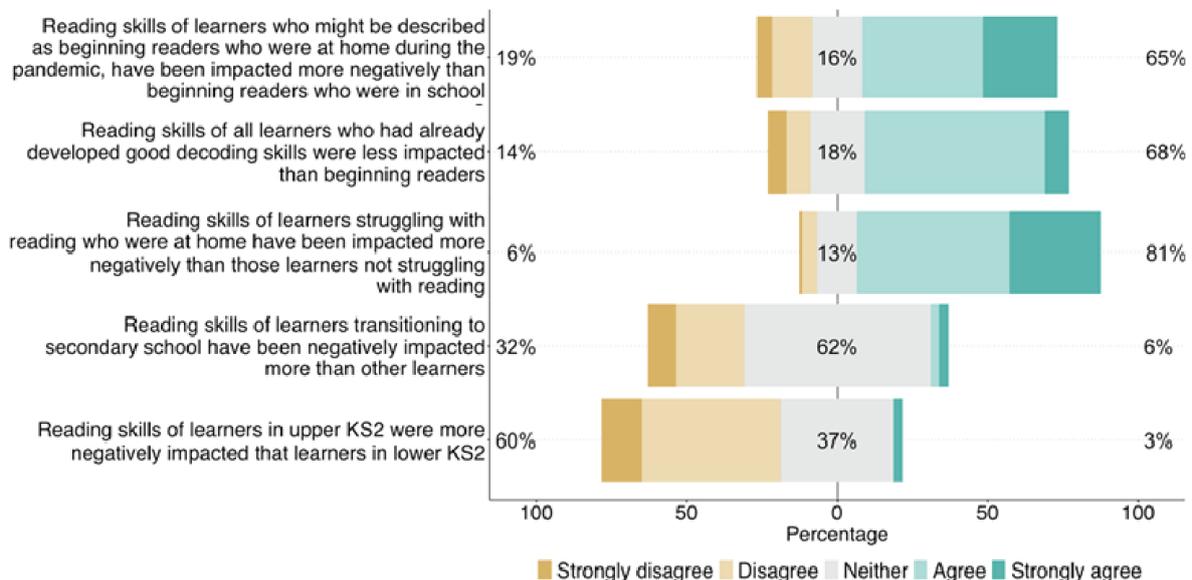
Figure 6. Stage of reading acquisition and impact (mainstream primary schools).
Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

87% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Welsh reading skills of learners from non-Welsh speaking homes, who were learning at home, were more negatively impacted than those from Welsh speaking homes. *(See Figure 7).* The same proportion of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that vulnerable or disadvantaged learners have been impacted more negatively than their peers, and 72% agreed or strongly agreed that learners for whom English is an additional language have been impacted more negatively than their peers.
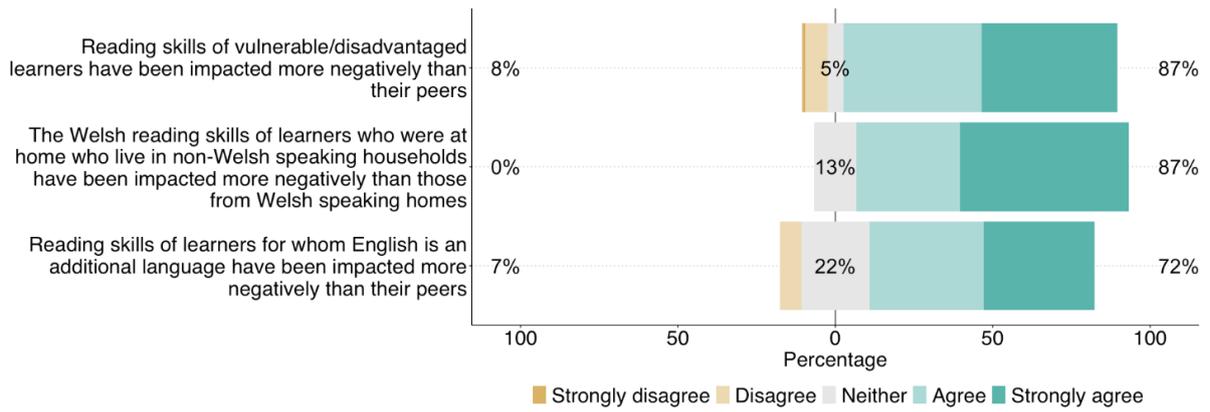
Figure 7. Learner characteristics and impact (mainstream primary schools).

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

6.4.2 Mainstream primary and ALN schools (qualitative survey data): impact on reading skills

Most teachers believed that the pandemic had had a negative impact on learners' reading scores, and that assessment and monitoring of reading skills has been impacted.

"We were unable to accurately monitor and assess reading progress for all learners via remote learning. This has left us with a wide range of reading abilities in all classes."

MKS1/2 13

"No assessment or monitoring was possible through this period."

MKS1/2 8

"Many key, basic skills (that are drilled daily in the classroom) have been forgotten, especially by those with little to no parental engagement at home."

MKS1/2 16

"Some [scores] have slowed but others have made good progress".

SSKS3/4 3

"Assessment and monitoring in itself has easily got back on track. However, evidence is clear from assessment that we are now teaching children whose reading abilities are at least one or two years below the pre-COVID expectations for their age."

MKS1/2 16

"During the lockdowns reading assessment was impossible. Since returning children have been benchmarked to accurately level them. Nearly all children are reading below age expected levels. The more able children - with skilful teaching of reading - are catching up. The children who struggle with reading are still reading below age expected levels"

MKS1/2 14

"Assessment score came down immediately after COVID. This has impacted our interventions groups and we have had to employ more TA's to provide interventions for a larger number of pupils."

MKS1/2 7

> *"Assessment outcomes have been impacted by Covid 19 with levels being lower than expected. Reading has been one of our main focuses on returning to school and helping children and parents to engage with reading again."*

<div align="right">MKS1/2 11</div>

Some teachers did make reference to supporting assessment data:

> *"After each lockdown we needed to assess the children to see if their reading skills acquisition had been reduced from pre-lockdown levels, or whether they had maintained. Very few had made any progress."*

<div align="right">MKS1/2 3</div>

This particular teacher went on to explain how the assessment data was used to inform future reading provision for learners.

> *"Since being back in school we have had to assess the children's phonic knowledge as well. The results meant we had to go back to basics, plugging the gaps that had appeared through sporadic or no engagement whilst at home. Children hadn't all had the same experiences and instruction so we had to take things right back to ensure everyone was on an equal standing."*

<div align="right">MKS1/2 3</div>

The majority of the ALN school teachers said that they believed reading scores had reduced since March 2020. One ALN school Literacy Lead was able to report precise information on the degree of impact on reading and comprehension, although the measure that they had used had not been disclosed.

> *"On average the reading ages dropped by 27 months in reading age and 40 months in comprehension age up until Autumn 2020 following the first lockdowns."*

<div align="right">SSLL 1</div>

Two ALN school teachers explicitly said that there had been no formal assessment monitoring in the school during the pandemic, thus making it difficult to formally assess the impact the pandemic has had on reading.

> *"Because we are a ALN school our reading intervention coordinator who would collate this information hasn't been working across the school as she normally would because we are still working in strict working conditions and wearing PPE etc. We are treated like a care setting not a school."*

<div align="right">SSKS1/2 18</div>

Teachers were asked whether there was a particular subgroup that had been disproportionately impacted in relation to other learners by the disruption. Four subgroups were identified from the Foundation Phase responses, namely younger

learners; learners who were already low attaining; learners from disadvantaged areas, and those who did not engage in home learning. Vulnerable learners were identified as a fifth subgroup from the KS2 responses.

"Beginning readers who did not engage with the reading provision at home made no progress with their reading."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 7</div>

"Early readers who are getting used to phonics and less able readers who may not read on a daily basis."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 17</div>

"I feel the reading abilities of our school as a whole have been affected more than some other schools due to the barriers, we had with home learning as I mentioned earlier - socially and economically deprived area, very high rate of EAL and poor levels of adult literacy, even in home language. A low rate of engagement meant many children went without reading for the whole of both lockdowns."

<div align="right">MKS1/2 2</div>

"..Vulnerable readers (due to lack of consistency - reliant on family members to complete daily reading activities)."

<div align="right">MKS2 19</div>

Responses from ALN school teachers indicated that they believed that learners impacted the most from the lockdown were those who could not access online learning or had no support at home.

When ALN school teachers were asked about how assessment and monitoring of learner progress been impacted by Covid-19, most said that they felt assessment and monitoring had been negatively impacted. For example, teachers stated that there were, 'less formal assessments taking place' during the pandemic. One teacher indicated that assessment and monitoring both at home and in school had been impacted, but to different degrees.

"Tracking progress was difficult during lockdowns as not 100% sure how much support learners were receiving at home, whether limited support or too much support. Assessment and monitoring of those in school not impacted as much but due to rotation of staff it was difficult to maintain the high standards of monitoring we usually do".

<div align="right">SSKS1/2 1</div>

However, the same teacher reported that the pandemic had had some positive impacts on assessment and monitoring of learner progress for older learners.

"I think it changed. We rapidly gained such close contact and appraisal of our cohort of students via phone calls and vid conferences, digital tutorials and digital marking of work. I think we gained a 'feel' for them different to that which we have when in class and face2face. As soon as we received the youngsters back in School, I immediately began engaging work that was monitored to assess skill, audit weaknesses, plan for 'plugging the gaps'."

SSKS1/2 1

Other related skills were reported to be notably affected for learners in ALN schools.

"When we exited lockdown and I received a new cohort .... I could really tell that their skills across the spectrum were negatively affected: fine hand motor control, letter formation, pen grip, mouse skills, comprehension, reading"

[Code – ALN school KS3/4)

6.5 Engagement of learners at home

There was overwhelming agreement with the notion that some learners at home did not engage with the reading provision at all, although 50% also agreed or strongly agreed that most learners engaged to some degree with the reading provision. *(See Figure 8).* A marginal majority of teachers disagreed that learners at home engaged very well with the reading provision, and 15% provided a neutral response for this item.
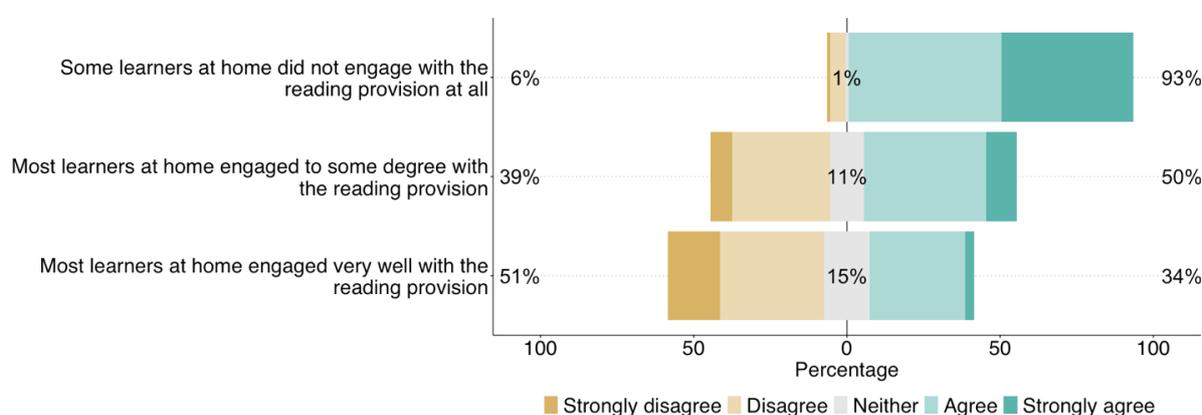
Figure 8. Levels of engagement of learners at home during the pandemic (mainstream primary schools).

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

Despite almost 78% of teachers stating they had been able to provide learners with a suitable device to access their learning from home if required, almost 20% of teachers indicated they had not been able to do this for all learners who needed it. *(See Table 14, Appendix C).* When it came to providing reading materials, only 51%

50

reported they were able to do this for all households, with almost 32% of teachers reporting they were not able to do this for all learners who needed it.

Related to these issues of provision of resources, there was overwhelming agreement that many learners at home faced significant barriers to engagement with reading provision due to a lack of access to the necessary technology, and not having reliable Wi-Fi. *(See Figure 9).*
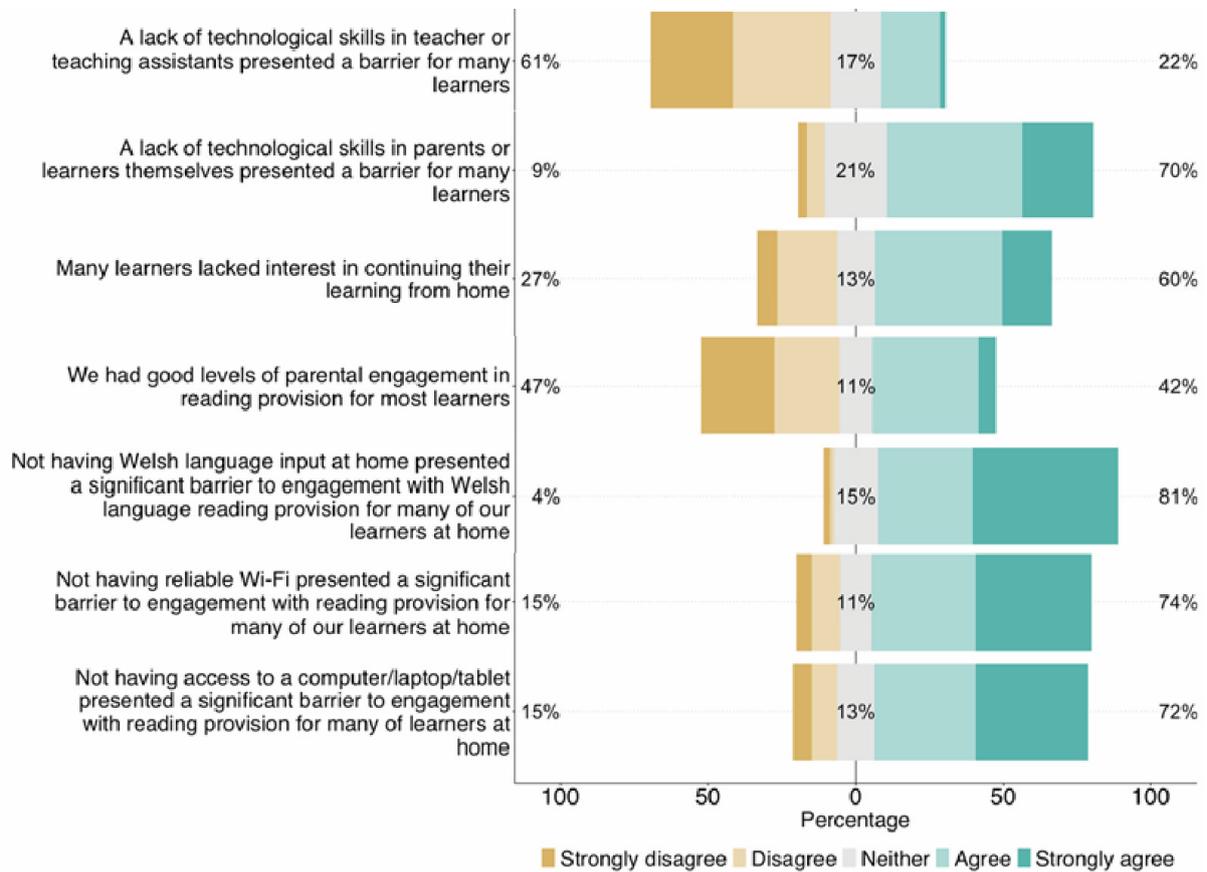
Figure 9. Barriers and facilitators to engagement for learners at home (mainstream primary schools).
Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

Similarly, there was strong agreement that not having Welsh language input at home was a significant barrier to engaging with Welsh language reading provision for learners at home.

The majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that many of their learners lacked interest in continuing their learning from home. However, school experiences of parental engagement varied, with 47% of teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and 42% agreeing or strongly agreeing, that they had good levels of parental engagement in reading provision. Related to this, a marginal majority of teachers indicated disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement relating to parents and carers helping children struggling with reading to meet targets set for

them during the first lockdown phase (just over 50%), with only just over 20% agreeing or strongly agreeing this was the case. This changed to some degree in the second lockdown period, where overall disagreement reduced to just over 40%, and overall agreement increased to over 27%, indicating some improvements in the extent to which parents or carers were able to support struggling learners at home. (*See Table 15, Appendix C*).

The majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that a lack of technological skills in parents or learners themselves was a barrier for many learners, in contrast to the overwhelming disagreement that lack of such skills in teachers or teaching assistants presented a barrier. *(See Figure 9).*

6.6 Ongoing disruption to reading provision and skills

Teachers were asked to consider the 2021-2022 school year and whether they felt that there were ongoing issues related to reading provision following the pandemic. 52% teachers indicated that they did not feel that there had been continued significant disruption to reading provision caused by the pandemic. Overall, teachers felt their learners' confidence and engagement had improved, and that they had been able to begin to redress some of the impact on learners' reading skills. *(See Figure 10).* However, 34% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that there had still been significant disruption to their learners' reading provision during the 2021-2022 school year.
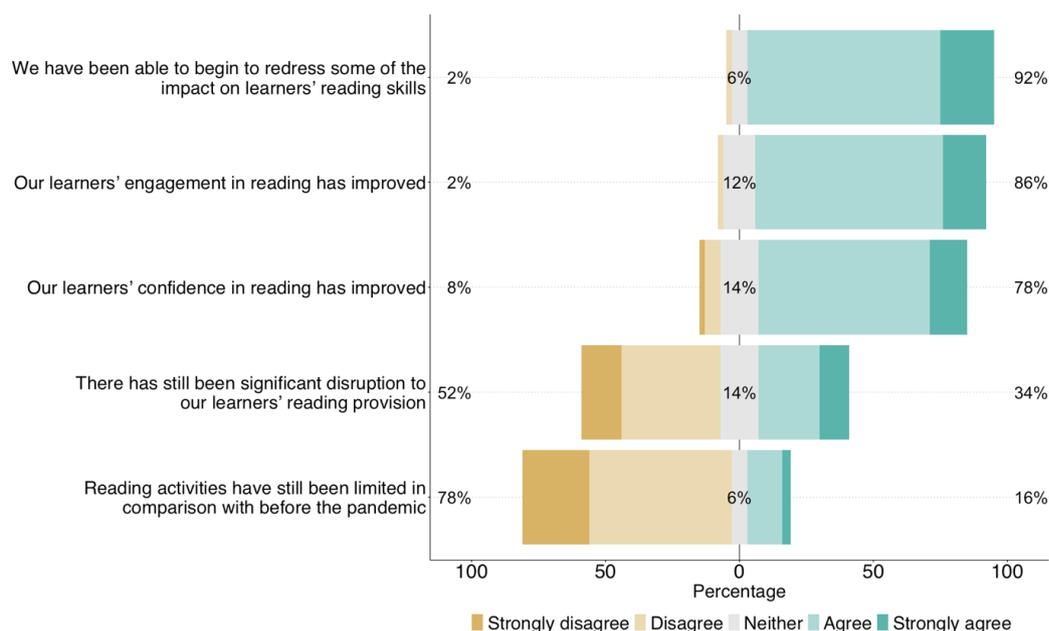
Figure 10. Extent of ongoing disruption and impact on reading provision and skills

Numbers on the left denote proportion of disagreement, numbers on the right denote proportion of agreement, numbers in the middle denote proportion of neither agreement or disagreement for each item. Figure excludes 'not applicable' responses. See tables in Appendix D for Confidence Intervals and Base Numbers.

Some of the challenges reported related to staff and pupil absence and ongoing restrictions.

"We had periods of self-isolation during the summer term 2021 - they were disruptive. Since September 2021 we have staff and children absences due to covid - so some children's progress has been affected."

MKS1/2 14

"Lack of staff due to sickness has meant less opportunities for reading."

MKS1/2 60

"Staffing illness due to COVID. attendance of pupils due to COVID, especially during the spring term."

MKS1/2 7

"Still having to work in rows (in KS2 where I currently work) until recently."

MKS1/2 41

"Working in bubbles, this has meant that we have not been able to arrange pupils in cross year groupings."

MKS1/2 28

Competing priorities and needing to address other needs of learners were also identified as ongoing challenges for redressing reading skill deficits by many teachers. These included more general learner well-being, as well as other challenges for learners returning to the school environment, such as skill deficits in reading and more fundamental readiness to learn skills and stamina for learning.

"Motivation and self-esteem/ confidence to have a go."

MKS1/2 52

"Getting them to sit down and listen and focus."

MKS1/2 7

"Dealing with lack of independence of children."

MKS1/2 41

"Length of focus on an activity"

MKS1/2 6

"Motivating children to learn for a full school day"

MKS1/2 1

"Those learners not engaging at home still aren't engaging. Nothing has changed there."

Challenges with Welsh vocabulary and general understanding of the language were reported by several schools.

Further, the challenges of dealing with the wider disparity in reading ability within their classes was raised by some schools.

"Wider range of abilities in the class as some children's reading progressed dramatically whereas some didn't pick up a book."

Several teachers also raised issues relating to the availability of staffing resources required for the additional support needed for many of their learners.

"Unable to have our fabulous volunteers listening to readers until April 2022."

"..having to work in a limited group and not being able to send out groups of learners for intervention activities, they needed to continue to just have 1:1 intervention."

Similar challenges were reported for learners in ALN schools, with behaviour challenges reported, especially for those who had not been able to access independent learning at home. Confidence in general and in reading were both reported as challenges, as well as having insufficient time dedicated to literacy. Competing priorities and other fundamental skills for learning were also reported to present a challenge.

"Getting them ready to learn again, especially in the primary department. We needed to re-teach social and communication skills, how to sit at a table, to eat with a knife and fork/spoon, to take turns, wean off i-pads/devices, and self-help skills."

6.7 Beyond the pandemic

6.7.1 New practices
When teachers were asked about elements of the provision they had developed during the pandemic that they continued to implement, a core theme was the continued use of educational apps and programmes to aid reading proficiency, and the use of online communication platforms to communicate with parents/caregivers.

> *"We continue to display our planning online each week for the parents to access, including links to stories being read on Youtube. Phonic pattern for that week, hyperlinks to Bug Club etc. We constantly remind parents to access Bug Club at home and try and help them access it where possible involvement"*

MKS1/2 18

> *"We have continued to set reading on Google Classroom through Reading Bugs. Alongside this we have started sending books home for home reading and at looking to implement Accelerated Reader."*

MKS1/2 8

Teachers discussed the continuation of positive parental and carer relationships to support learners.

> *"We always strived for positive and personal relationships between home and school prior to the pandemic, this became a far bigger priority during, and I have aimed to maintain as much of this as possible. Whilst not the same or as extensive as during the pandemic, my relationships with parents are closer than before."*

6.7.2 Priorities and support needs
When school teachers and Literacy Leads were asked what they thought the priorities are for supporting learners' reading skills following the pandemic, two core themes were identified: 1) The need for funding to finance reading resources and additional practitioners to conduct reading intervention and assessments, with a focus on specific approaches to support development of early reading skills and 2) the importance of raising the profile of reading across the school. and creating a positive ethos for reading across the school.

We further subdivided theme 1 into four following subthemes.

1.1 The need for funds to finance reading resources, in school and at home

> *"Additional funding for schools to 'close the gap' for identified children"*

MLL 5

> *"Investment in reading materials in school."*

MKS1/2 3

> *"Free reading resources provided to all learners. With the rise in cost of living family expenditure on reading resources for homes will decrease. Families who receive no financial support will suffer the most"*

> [Code-ALN school KS1/2]

1.2 The need for funds to finance additional practitioners to assess and conduct reading intervention and assessments

> *"Listening to readers regularly within school day and running reading intervention programmes - having the staff to do this is crucial. With many school budgets feeling the pinch, teaching assistants' hours are too few and often used to support pupils with ALN or in need of behavioural support."*

> MLL 32

> *"More teachers and TAs per ratio to help build the gaps. Understanding that assessment is not a priority as pupils need to be given time to gain skills."*

> MKS1/2 4

1.3 The need for skill development and opportunities to practice.

Teachers and Literacy Leads emphasised the need for learner basic reading skills development and opportunities for practice.

> *"Providing opportunities for children to read on a daily basis."*

> MLL 29

> *"Ensuring basic skills/ building blocks are there before pushing learners too hard."*

> MKS1/2 1

> *"Continue daily reading practise both in school and at home. Guided Group reading sessions happen across the school daily…"*

> MLL 10

> *"Educating parents as to how they can support their children more effectively with reading at home.   We have subscribed to an online reading scheme for the next 5 years. Improving children's comprehension levels."*

> MLL 33

1.4 The need for specific approaches.

Teachers and Literacy Leads specifically mentioned the need for specific approaches, with the majority of responses naming phonics, and some specifically systematic synthetic, phonics to be key.

> *"Continue with Synthetic systematic phonics and provide interventions for learners who aren't at the expected stage in reading."*

"… Continue to teach phonics daily across the Foundation phase and into lower KS2.   Children's progress is monitored termly and any children who aren't making expected progress are targeted for support."

MLL 10

"Ensuring phonics and reading skills are fully developed."

MKS1/2 16

"More training in teaching phonics to all SEN teachers"

[Code-ALN school KS1/2]

2. Raising the profile of reading.

Literacy Leads spoke about the importance of raising the profile of reading both within school and at home and creating a positive ethos for reading across the school.

"Raising the profile and teaching of reading with parents."

MLL 11

"…More [dialogue] and talk around reading - guidance to parents - to discuss reading rather than just read print. Reading workshops and reading clubs to be set up. More funding to support those not making the expected progress and falling behind. Pupils need real people and not always technology to support with reading."

MLL 34

"Time to grow their skills and the love of books again."

MKS1/2 11

7. Qualitative interview findings

7.1 Reading programmes

With respect to the type of reading programmes used, all mainstream and ALN school teachers reported using a phonics-based reading programme or approach with their early readers prior to the pandemic. However, the phonics-based approach varied between 1) whether schools used a specific commercially available programme 2) whether they had developed their own school-based approach 3) whether they used an approach developed by the Local Authority / School Consortia, or 4) a mixture of all of these.

7.2 Themes and subthemes from the semi-structured interviews

Similar themes were identified across mainstream and ALN school teachers. See table 7 for a summary of the themes. Examples of these themes and variations between mainstream teachers and ALN school teachers are discussed in the main text.

Table 7. Themes and subthemes from the semi-structured interviews

Theme	Sub-themes

1. Impact on reading provision and learners' reading skills	1.1 Reading provision changed from pre-pandemic to teaching during the pandemic
	    1.1a Teachers and pupils became more confident with online learning during the second lockdown
	    1.1b Reading provision was different for learners at home and learners in school between pre-pandemic to teaching during the pandemic
	1.2 Impact following the pandemic

2. Challenges experienced during and following the pandemic	2.1. Access and understanding of technology
	    2.1a Lack of equipment
	    2.1b Skill deficiencies
	2.2. Motivation & engagement
	2.3 Support from parents/carers
	2.4 Safety issues (ALN only)

3. Overcoming challenges	3.1. Supply of resources and technology 3.2. Parental coaching and support 3.3. Adjusting 3.4 Encouraging engagement 3.5 Understanding of conflicting priorities (ALN only)
4. Looking to the future	4.1 Funding 4.2 Training 4.3 Time to reset and recalibrate 4.4 Policy Change

7.2.1 Superordinate Theme 1: Impact on provision

Teachers reported that the pandemic can impacted reading provision and learners' reading skills, four subthemes were identified: 1.1 Reading provision changed from pre-pandemic to teaching during the pandemic, 1.1a Reading provision was different for between the first and the second lockdown, 1.1b Teachers and pupils became more confident with online learning during the second lockdown and 1.2 Impact following the pandemic.

Theme 1.1: Reading provision changed between pre-pandemic to teaching during the pandemic

Five of the six teachers interviewed said that typical structured reading provision had been dramatically disrupted and had changed significantly between teaching-as-usual pre-pandemic to what was provided during the pandemic. Pre-pandemic, the teaching of reading was reported to be relatively structured; all teachers reported using a phonics-based reading programme/scheme or phonics-based school-developed programme/scheme to teach early reading skills. Teachers talked about typical reading provision being replaced with less structured instruction such as learners being asked to 'read to someone at home' as opposed to receiving specific reading instruction.

A KS2 teacher, WL, explained that their school's pre-pandemic reading provision included a minimum of an hour of targeted daily literacy session where children would be grouped and were given specific reading skills to focus on. Pupils with reading deficits were provided with extra support.

> *"…The children who were below that, I would try and engineer, through support or GEMS or whoever was available, to have extra reading. So, I would try to get them reading at least twice, if not three times, a week with support staff, if available."*

> WL (KS2)

WL went on to explain that during the pandemic the focus on reading reduced in favour of making things easier for parents and carers supporting their children's education from home. A member of the senior leadership team in the school had devised a system for all teachers to adhere to when issuing work for their learners.

> *"She devised a program like a little sheet. We have to keep it simple for our families, and it was literacy, numeracy and project. And the project was, we tried to keep it simple and do cooking and whatever."*

> WL (KS2)

Three of the six teachers said that they read to their learners, either live or using pre-recorded clips. SX recalls providing a pre-recorded video of her reading the class novel every day.

I tried to base some of my tasks on the class novel, as we would call it, to try and get them to listen to me just reading just to get them immersed in the vocabulary.

<div align="right">SX (KS2)</div>

The three teachers working in ALN schools explained that their typical reading provision pre-pandemic was primarily a structured, phonics-based reading programme/scheme or a phonics-based school-developed programme/scheme. All three ALN school teachers also said that provision had changed between pre-pandemic to teaching during the pandemic. Teachers explained that pre-pandemic, teachers reported that a good proportion of instructional time was devoted to reading, either direct teaching of reading skills or learners were practicing reading skills.

"There might be a few, you know, comprehension skills. And we had the odd amazing, fluent, with-expression readers. So, it's more the exception than the rule. They usually tend to be still building on those skills that they've started with, you know, letter recognition, making words, CVC words, beginning to form sentences with help and support."

Theme 1.1a Teachers and pupils became more confident with online learning during the second lockdown

Most teachers said that they felt better prepared to teach remotely during the second lockdown because both learners and staff had become familiar with online teaching and learning, and routines and structures were already in place. The ability to communicate to learners and parents via online educational learning platforms was highlighted by most teachers to be an important aspect in continuing provision.

"The second lockdown was so much easier because everything was up and running. We had the kids back in September, where the thing we made sure happened in the first couple weeks was that every single child knew how to log onto Teams. Every single child knew how to log onto everything. They knew how to access the online portals. They could do everything, so it didn't rely as much on parental involvement. Again, there was still the difficulties with the younger children because they did need that element of support. But, no, it was a much easier experience the second time round."

<div align="right">TM (Foundation Phase)</div>

All three ALN school teachers also reported that they felt better prepared to teach remotely during the second lockdown, because staff and the older learners in particular had become familiar with the procedures and routines associated with online teaching and learning.

"I think some of the parents struggled to do that. And in the end, by the second lockdown, I think we really stopped doing that [setting work on Google Classroom] because it was causing more distress, and tended to do more

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things on Seesaw and just post videos and phone the parents up. But the older ones, by that stage they were getting so proficient…"

<div align="right">BD (KS3 & KS4)</div>

"… I think the other element of it was the structure to the students as we were moving towards the second lockdown, I put a lot of work into making sure that the children knew the platforms how to log in they got the log in crib sheets. They got devices and connectivity dongles and checking what devices they had at home. Giving them laptops and devices in their bags and making sure that they could do these things. Trying to ensure that they could do these things independently. So, in class quite a few of my lessons to the run up to the lock down we were I was drawing the support away from the students so would be helping them to log in to navigate for example to teams to teams video or to google classroom or google meet."

<div align="right">FG (KS3 & KS4)</div>

Theme 1.1b: Reading provision was different for learners at home and learners in school between pre-pandemic to teaching during the pandemic
There was also a great deal of variation between the learners who were predominantly at home during the pandemic and those learners who were coming into school.

"…when they were allowed back, you only had the children of key workers or vulnerable children. So, there was obviously children that needed provision with reading that weren't coming back, so it tended to be the parents that would have provided at home anyway. And the odd couple that we did, you could pick up, but it wasn't many of them. Yes, it was much, much easier. And I think that it wasn't such a big thing for them coming back full time then when everything opened because they'd been used to school. They'd had that routine. They were, obviously, doing the work that was set digitally, like the rest of the class, but they had the support in school."

<div align="right">DW (Foundation Phase)</div>

One teacher who taught in a Welsh medium school discussed the wide variation of reading provision for learners at home and learners in school and talked about the difficulties for non-Welsh speaking families who were supporting their children's Welsh-language schoolwork.

"So, the understanding and the access to the language because they come from English homes, that's been hard. They've missed being able to speak to Welsh to understand the words they're reading. So, they might have the mechanics of reading, but they don't understand what they're reading because they haven't got the language."

<div align="right">JK (Foundation Phase)</div>

All three ALN school teachers reported that a large proportion of learners were home during the lockdown period and not coming into school. The few that did attend

school often did not have the same provision as those children who were learning at home online.

> *"It was very few. It was really just, you know, looked-after children and key worker children. But there weren't very many…we have a very high percentage of free school meals, so there would be a lot of families where parents weren't going out to work. So, it was literally never more than about six to eight pupils."*

<div align="right">BD (KS3 & KS4)</div>

Theme 1.2: Impact following the pandemic
When teachers were asked about whether they believed learners' reading progression had been impacted due to the pandemic. All of the teachers interviewed said that they felt that that there had been a negative impact on learners' reading skills. Teachers also raised concerns about other areas that had been impacted such as, social, behavioural, and emotional skills. However, as this investigation focusses specifically on reading, we will not document on any further details on anything wider.

Two of the teachers who taught Foundation Phase believed that the phonic skills of their learners (including sound recognition, segmenting, decoding and blending) were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

> *"…they've missed a year, a proper year of learning as well, where you would be reminding them of their sounds, of how to develop them in reading. And, you know, at the age of 10 now, they're still struggling to spell quite simple words because they haven't got that basic knowledge of how to write a sound, how to form a sound. So, yeah, it has had a significant knock-on effect."*

<div align="right">TM (Foundation Phase)</div>

Despite the lack of formal monitoring and assessment of reading ability; all teachers discussed a decline in reading levels based on their professional judgement.

> *"I know that normally in Year 6, for example, 90% of the class would be on free choice reading, so they've gone through all of the schemes of work, all of the different stages, and they would be on free choice. And I still have children on stage 12, 13, which we would normally see in Year 4."*

<div align="right">SX (KS2)</div>

7.2.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Challenges experienced during and following the pandemic
Teaching during the pandemic brought about a number of challenges, the main challenge being the adaptation to teaching and learning in different ways. Teachers who were interviewed were asked to recall specific challenges that they encountered during teaching over the pandemic and discussed after-effects that brought about challenges to getting back to normal. All of the teachers interviewed were able to recall examples of challenges that they had encountered. They fell into three sub-themes: 2.1 Technology and resources, Staff 2.2 Parental support, and 2.3

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Motivation & engagement. The latter was identified as a sub-theme was challenge that spanned both teaching during and following the pandemic.

Theme 2.1: Access and understanding of technology
Technological issues were the most cited challenge by the teachers interviewed. This ranged from not having the necessary equipment to learners and parent/carers not knowing how to access or navigate the online learning platforms.

Theme 2.1a: Lack of equipment
Teachers discussed equipment related issues such as learners were having to share technology with other family members and pupils receiving and completing work on a mobile phone which lacked the functionality of a PC computer or laptop.

> *"People would say, "I don't have access to technology." Again, you know, if you've got kids, we've got some large families, they couldn't all share one device, so they were asking for paper copies of things."*

> SC (KS2)

Teachers discussed that learners were having to share technology with others including siblings and the parents themselves.

> *"It was a challenge having enough devices, having everything, but we did. I was quite proud of what we actually did manage to do."*

> DW (Foundation Phase)

Theme 2.1b: Skill deficiencies
All of the teachers interviewed mentioned that technological skill deficits in teaching staff, parents and learners which caused problems when moving to online learning.

> *"..there was just lots of issues. I mean, we made placements for each child, and they had all their digital logins on one card. But you'd still get message after message, "I can't log into this. I can't log into that." So, some parents had to come in, and we had to show them. Sometimes it's not that they can't do it; it's a lack of trying, isn't it, obviously. Or maybe a family, they had a mobile phone, so you can't access all of the functions on a phone, so that was difficult. But maybe they were the ones that weren't telling us they didn't have anything, whereas maybe the ones that had no digital devices were more forthcoming that they didn't have equipment. So they saw a phone as being able to do it, but you can't really do it properly on that.*

> DW (Foundation Phase)

> *"it was upskilling staff. We needed to do lots and lots of training with the teachers too. But they very quickly got on board. The year before the pandemic is where we did have a change in staff where the older ones had retired, so I think that made a difference, whereas maybe if they had still been there, that would have been more difficult for us 'cause they would have been at home as well on their own."*

Theme 2.2: Motivation & engagement

All six teachers interviewed discussed that they had experienced varying levels of engagement from their learners and families of learners. This again was suggested to have been because families lacked equipment and two of the six teachers acknowledged that many parents and carers were also working full time jobs from home while trying to care for their children. Most teachers saw an increase in engagement during the second lockdown. With one teacher suggesting that the engagement dipped in the second.

"It's hard for parents who haven't been trained. Some children have benefitted a lot from being home and have received excellent provision from their parents. Perhaps they're professional parents. Perhaps they're parents who have experience of being in a classroom. Maybe they've been assistants or have worked in a nursery or have worked as a one-to-one or even worked in the community, working with the Brownies or have had experience of being with children. But what was hard for a lot of parents, they themselves were working from home, and they didn't have the time to say, "Right, you go and watch Cyw while I'm in this meeting. Colour in while I'm in this meeting." It wasn't fair to expect parents, so we didn't put pressure on the parents to complete tasks because it was enough to keep safe. It was enough that the children were assured that they were in a safe environment, with nothing to worry about."

JK (Foundation Phase)

"..And those children, the vulnerable children that weren't accessing things, it was constantly contacting the families to see if they would need laptops or iPads. There's an LSA that's in charge of those types of vulnerable families, and she was phoning them all the time. So, they were very supportive with that side of it as well. But, obviously, there's only so much you can do. You can't make them do it. But every provision was made possible."

DW (Foundation Phase)

Teaching during the pandemic brought about a number of challenges for ALN school teachers in particular. Given that the teachers were working with learners with additional and complex learning needs, there were challenges associated with the adaptation to teaching and learning in different ways.

All three ALN school teachers discussed one of the biggest challenges was engagement and suggested that it was difficult for their learners with complex needs to learn in a different context.

"Particularly with the youngsters with ASD they would compartmentalize, this is school, and this is home. They struggled more, ……They were not able to compartmentalize it."

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"One young lady there who didn't engage, very autistic, didn't engage in online learning during the first school closure, I think because what we were asking her to do at home, she'd never done before. Even though, essentially, it was reading fluency, but no, normally she does reading fluency with Mrs J. She doesn't do it with mum."

BD (Foundation Phase)

Theme 2.3: Support from parents/carers

Parental engagement was a consistent theme though out the interviews with all three teachers. While teaches have discussed above parental skills, it was parents being involved that supported the learners' continuation of learning. Teachers identified varying levels of support and engagement from parents and carers and suggested that this was an important element in learners' ongoing attainment.

"It's funny, though, isn't it. Actually, when I look at our more able readers, they tend to come from homes with very, very supportive parents. I don't know whether that was just the case in this class. But when I look at them now, phases fives on that side, all extremely supportive parents. Whereas the others, I'm not saying they weren't supportive, but they weren't able to support in the same way.

BD (Foundation Phase)

"And the majority of parents were really good. [Child A]'s mum was amazing. I had to keep on emailing the next eight sheets, 'cause there's eight in each level. And so the moment she came back, Danielle was all flustered, "She can't possibly have had all of those." So she just chose three from each level just to make sure that she was at that level. But, no, some parents were fantastic"

BD (Foundation Phase)

One teacher suggested that parents were more comfortable supporting their children with reading and would therefore be more likely to select the reading activity to complete over other options.

"The other thing is, reading, I feel, is one of the easier things to do. If there was a science lesson or maths lesson that parents might opt to -- if you had a choice or there was a few activities, reading was the thing we found they tended to do for us just because it's easier to do, isn't it."

Theme 2.4: Safety Issues (ALN school only)

This was a theme identified from the responses from the ALN school teachers only. Two teachers discussed safety issues with online provision, with one teacher suggesting that because of a safeguarding issue they did not deliver live online, while another teacher discussed having to move online provision to a different platform due to a safety concern.

> *"There was one incident in the school where I think a parent had walked through inappropriately, and it was all very difficult. And it got to be nerve-wracking…. I was quite relieved not to do that"*

> UL (Foundation Phase)

> *"I know through lockdown we moved from Teams to Google Meet and ah man the decision to do it was to do with the security of the platform, to do with security breach. One was that we couldn't fade out the background and one that we could. We had to re-coach the youngsters to use the new platform and these are kids with learning difficulties as well."*

> FG (KS3 & KS4)

7.2.3 Super-ordinate theme 3: Overcoming challenges

Teachers discussed numerous ways in which they were able to overcome the challenges brought about by the pandemic. Theme 3: Overcoming challenges, organised into five sub-themes: 3.1 Supply of resources and technology, Staff 3.2 Parental coaching and support, and 3.3 Adjusting. 3.4 Encouraging engagement and 3.5 Understanding of conflicting priorities. The latter theme was identified only for ALN schools.

Theme 3.1: Supply of resources and technology

> *"We did what we could. We had old laptops that we were trying to give to them.*

> SC (KS2)

Two of the three ALN school teachers explained that they needed to supply equipment to families during the lockdown period to enable learners to access online learning.

> *"Giving them laptops and devices in their bags and making sure that they could do these things.."*

> UL (Foundation phase)

Theme 3.2: Parental coaching and support

Three of the six teachers noted that there was a lack of parental knowledge and skills was a challenge that they had to navigate during the first lockdown especially. Some teachers were able to support parents by offering one to one training and provided pre-recorded videos for parents and carers to access if they felt they needed to.

> *"..for a lot of parents, it was trying to engage them with the technology as well, talking them through. Myself and one of the teachers in Foundation Phase, we did lots of self-help guides for parents. We'd produce little videos and recorded ourselves on the screen talking them through how they could access everything just to try and help them. And as I said, some of our children did not have access to technology."*

<div align="right">SX (KS2)</div>

All three teachers discussed the need to engage with parents, to support them to navigate online learning. This up skilling parents came in the form on recorded videos and phone calls to step-by-step instructions on how to access online platforms. Not just to accesses online provision but to be able to teach the skills to the learners:

> *"I had to send little QuickTime videos home to parents to say, "This is how you do it." And we had some examples — I think it was me reading a story — of how they would do it."* TM
> "…with family members and we just went through with the parents on how we do it."

<div align="right">FG (KS2 & KS3)</div>

Theme 3.3: Adjusting

Despite the challenges to teaching and learning caused by the pandemic, all six teachers interviewed reported that they were able to adapt to the new ways of working and some teachers said they had learned new skills along the way.

> *"With the second lockdown, it was so much easier for us because even though we had laptops for the first lockdown, we hadn't used Google Classroom. We'd never used Google Classroom. So even though they were familiar with the Phonics Play activities, and, obviously, Reading Eggs is aired on the laptops, they never used them at home. So actually, we managed to introduce Google Classroom remotely, and that was amazing. There was quite a few videos. I made some QuickTime videos that I sent to parents to say, "This is what you do. Click here. Click that." And can you imagine trying to log on to Google Classroom for the first time."*

Theme 3.4: Encouraging engagement

Half of the teachers interviewed explained how they had attempted to increase pupil and family engagement by making phone calls to parents and carers and sending out messages of support and guidance. One teacher told how she would include encouraging messes in her pre-recorded video clips.

> *"… I would upload videos every single day. So, I'd give like messages to the class to just try and get them engaged."*
>
> SX (KS2)

Another teacher explained that she tried to increase engagement by providing a wider variety of tasks with varying levels of complexity that learners / supporting parents and carers could choose from as opposed to having a single task to complete.

> *"We have to keep it simple for our families, and it was literacy, numeracy and project. And the project was, we tried to keep it simple and do cooking and whatever. But in all honesty, out of a class of 26 children I had, I had one who would look at it. One. So, it didn't even matter what we did with the reading because nobody was accessing it. We put access to like YouTube videos where they could be read a story. We hyperlinked sort of texts so that they could read, but nothing."*
>
> TM (KS2)

One teacher said that holding live synchronous sessions improved engagement.

> *"Massively effective. The children were just more engaged. They loved seeing you and seeing their friends. There were some that it affected with their confidence. They were afraid to speak in that format. But that did progress, so they did get okay by the end. But it was also easier for the parents. Rather than just reading a paragraph or bullet points of you giving instructions, they could see what you were trying to do …."*
>
> DW (Foundation Phase)

SC below talks about the importance of the live sessions and the creation of 'connection' and 'community', explaining that she felt it was beneficial in engagement engaging the learners.

> *"Yeah. Like I said, my majority, that was where I would get the biggest amount of children participating [Reading recorded stories]. Because putting these activities and sheets up and that, obviously it's all typed out. Yeah, there's not that connection there. And because, obviously, for the second lockdown, I'd taught these children for two years, so it was that community to it as well."*
>
> SC (KS2)

Theme 3.5: Understanding of conflicting priorities (ALN schools only)
All the three teachers discussed that there were conflicting priorities for the families of learners. Teachers all showed empathy and understanding to the situation that parents were in.

> *"And for others, it just wasn't so easy. It depended so much, obviously, on parent engagement and the time that their parents had got because some of them were working from home as well."*

> UL (Foundation Phase)

> *"When I think about it, some of them were struggling with both parents still trying to work at the same time."*
> BD (Foundation Phase)

Teaching staff were also having to teach and manage staff while having their own personal situation to navigate.

> *"Difficulties of having own children at home added an extra element of challenge…. But I think, I can understand it, I found it hard. I am long in the tooth teaching now and manage quite well not to take too much home and I viewed it as a pollution of my home environment. I really struggled to keep the balance to keep the balance. And my kids and wife."*

> FG (KS2 & KS3)

7.2.4 Superordinate Theme 4: Looking to the future
Teachers discussed the future needs to support them in moving forward from the pandemic and ensuring that the learners and school system are fully equipped to deal with education going forward. The five main sub-themes that were identified were; 4.1 Funding, 4.2 Training, 4.3 Time to Reset and Recalibrate, 4.4 Age-appropriate resources, and 4.5 Policy Changes and focus on reading.

Theme 4.1: Funding
All teachers identified a need for additional funding to help purchase resources for teaching and learning. Teachers discussed the need for additional staff to run specialised interventions to help children catch up on social and academic skills that were lacking.

> *"….we're going to have to purchase a lot of books to make up this library that you need. So maybe more books in schools so we've actually got more books from early readers up until, well, past Year 6 really because, as I said, we're in a nice area, we've got some children that are reading at age 16. So reading books, for example, stops at Year 6 level. Well, we've got so many children above it, so it's just having a big range of -- just more funding for books."*

> DW (Foundation Phase)

Theme 4.2: Training

Teachers identified the need for training in the area of online learning; they felt that education was changing and maybe they would be teaching through a more blended approach. Teachers also reported additional training needs in relation to mental health and supporting their learners' emotional well-being following the return to school.

> *"…all staff will admit that they really upskilled their ICT skills during lockdown, that there are still staff who feel that they're not competent."*

SC (KS2)

Four teachers identified that staff did not have the adequate skills to teach the building blocks of reading, and this needs to be a focus for the system going forward.

> *"So it is actually training teachers to teach how to read. And it's not just getting the children to read a section of it. How do you actually teach those inference and deductive skills, which they're missing, you know, as well as developing their phonic skills."*

WL (KS2)

> *"And maybe staff such as myself. You know, I teach Year 6. Yes, I've done Reception, but having an understanding of how phonics are taught throughout the school. I think that would help as a teacher as well."*

SC (KS2)

ALN school teachers also discussed the need to develop their own skills to be able to provide education to the learners. Joint working, sharing resources and team teaching were all used, alongside learning to provide education in a different way.

> *"So it was a huge learning curve, not only for us, for me, but also for the pupils, and for their parents."*

BD (Foundation Phase)

> *"…but it was the teaching assistant team as well. Just making sure that they had a device, they knew how to get onto the various things."*

FG (KS2 & KS3)

Theme 4.3: Time to reset and recalibrate

Three teachers discussed needing time for teachers to help learners settle back in to education.

"If they'd have delayed the implementation [of the new Welsh Curriculum for Wales] *for a year or two, that would've really allowed us to focus on getting the kids back to normal."*

TM (KS2)

"Do you know, I think one of them's going to be an understanding that we're not where we should be, and it's going to take time to get back to there. It's not a case of they're back in school; that's fine."

SC (KS2)

"We need time for the Curriculum for Wales to be embedded, in a way, because it's not going to happen overnight. By September, it's like turning a switch; there we go, the new Curriculum for Wales. And looking back, because of the pandemic, the schools have been through enough. Can we just stop for a minute and leave things for another year so that people get a better perspective and better standards for children on the literacy and numeracy challenges and on children's mental health. Because really, our starting point now is back, isn't it."

JK (Foundation Phase)

All teachers talked about learners returning to school lacking in social skills. Two teachers also said that the lack of socialisation during lockdown meant that learners returning to school did not have the skills to be able to play with their peers.

Teachers discussed the need for time to focus on allowing learners time for social interaction.

"They didn't have those socialisation skills that they would've had, and they just missed out so much of the element of fun of learning."

TM (KS2)

"…children have lost their social skills. I see that on a daily basis. They don't know how to socialise with each other. They don't know how to play. So, we're spending a lot of time on the yard, you know, staff playing games with them."

JK (Foundation Phase)

"When they started in Year 3 in September, the Year 3 teachers were like, "It is like having Reception," 'cause they haven't got that social side of things. they've forgotten how to share and how to sit in a chair without -- all this."

SC (KS2)

Teachers were concerned about the wider impacts to learners; all discussed wider skills that were lacking at the learners returned to school. Most commonly cited was learner lack of independence, learners needed more support to complete tasks.

> *"It's just getting that independence back in them, which, you know, the class I taught prior to COVID were becoming very, very independent. And in the space of those two years, they have lost that element of doing things themselves, thinking for themselves. Teachers have been talking about kids saying to them when they get to the end of page, and they don't know what to do. It's like, "You turn the page, and you carry on writing.". And just simple things, "My pen doesn't work." "Well, go to the front of the class and get another pen." But those things just didn't come naturally to them because they've been at home so long and their parents were pretty much doing everything for them, they didn't feel the need to actually think for themselves or do things for themselves. So that's the main thing we found in our school. It's just having that level of independence to tell them to be themselves."*

TM (KS2)

Theme 4.4: Age-appropriate resources

All three teachers in the ALN schools discussed the need to have more resources, and access to digital devices. All three teachers talked at length about the need for specific resources that are age appropriate for their learners. All discussed that there were older learners not able to access material that is of interest to them.

> *"And I think that is the problem that so much of the phonics, the basic phonics instruction that's available on a computer is actually geared to your average five- and six-year-old."*

BD (Foundation Phase)

> *"The same with some of the Reading Eggs. Towards the end, it just gets too complex, so we need to do a little bit more."*

UL (Foundation phase)

Theme 4.5: Policy changes and focus on reading.

Two teachers discussed that reading and approaches to teaching reading were not a focus of the middle and top tier of the education system. Teaches discussed the need for guidance and discussed having a clear strategy to teach reading to learners.

> *"And phonics programmes,…. So, I would like the Welsh Government as well to have one phonics programme that would be consistent. It wouldn't matter that you're in an area with loads of free school meals so you can afford the best programme. It would be nice to have a consistent phonics programme for Wales where they're all having the same then, isn't it."*

The teachers discussed that there needs to be a more comprehensive effort to support ALN learners to develop reading skills, with a policy focus on supporting reading.

> " I mean, I like the new curriculum, but one of the problems is, when they say that there should be equal coverage of all six areas, sometimes I would argue that a class like this with pupils like this, it's much better to concentrate on the literacy most and the numeracy rather than -- oh, maybe obviously, health and wellbeing, but things like humanities or even science and technology. Do you know, if you can read, you can discover more about that when you're older. But if you can't read…. If kids can read, then the whole curriculum's opened up to them. If they can't read… I don't know whether that could be written into the new curriculum somehow.. What they would normally be doing in Year 1 and 2 at primary school, wouldn't they. It needs to be very structured. And I think that has to be written within the new curriculum. If they haven't reached it by Year 2, then schools need to be allowed -- schools almost should be encouraged to give more time to that area so that pupils can catch up. Because the longer you leave it -- you know, there's some young people in this class who we -- most of this class came into this class post-primary school, and that was because they'd fallen behind. But it's almost too late then, isn't it. Do you know what I mean? It takes much longer to catch up, I think. Whereas if they aren't hitting those targets at Year 2, then almost there needs to be a real year's focus in Year 3 or whatever year it needs to be to get them back on track; otherwise, they're forever catching up. And then they're forever catching up in the whole curriculum 'cause they can't access it to the same extent. That's the one thing they need to get right."

BD (KS3 & KS4)

8. Conclusion and limitations

8.1 Summary of findings

Q1. How has the teaching of reading in primary and ALN schools in Wales been impacted by the pandemic?

Impact on reading provision
This study indicates that the pandemic instigated significant disruption to the teaching of reading in primary and ALN schools in Wales.

Most notably, universal phonics provision was pared back for learners at home, with reduced frequency and length of phonics sessions, particularly during the first lockdown period. Targeted provision and differentiation of reading provision were negatively impacted for learners at home, particularly for younger readers, harder to reach families, and learners with ALN. Welsh language reading provision was more negatively impacted than English reading provision, due to both lack of available Welsh resources for schools to draw on, and lack of parental confidence in Welsh.

It is also clear that learners still attending school (or hub sites) during the lockdown periods also experienced negative effects. During the first lockdown in particular, learners attending school were often not taught by staff who were aware of their reading abilities, and often received targeted provision from a staff member who was not experienced in delivering the provision.

ALN schools faced similar challenges, and some more complex challenges, reflecting the profile of learners they teach. In particular, online learning for learners in ALN schools was reported to be challenging, and impossible for some learners – one ALN school teacher reported this was due to a lack of understanding of why they were not in school, leading to distress when expected to engage with teachers and support staff via technology. These challenges perhaps reflect the failings in providing sufficient guidance for schools to effectively support ALN learners (Sibieta & Cottell, 2021).

Engagement with reading provision
Several barriers to engagement with reading provision during the lockdown periods were identified in the surveys and interviews. Despite Wales being commended on their response to providing access to technology for home learning (Sibieta & Cottell, 2020), access to resources was still considered a barrier by many teachers. A lack of Welsh language support at home was reported as a significant barrier to engaging in Welsh language reading provision for many learners, as also reported by Water-Davies et al., (2021). Some schools successfully supported parents to persevere with this, but others took the approach of removing any expectations of engagement in Welsh reading provision to avoid more widespread disengagement.

There were also more general issues of learner motivation and engagement, with teachers often reporting a lack of interest from learners in continuing their learning from home, and parents often not able to effectively support their child's reading development despite support from the school.

ALN schools reported similar challenges, but also discussed the challenges of significant conflicting priorities for the families of learners in ALN schools, particularly for learners with more complex needs.

Q2. How has reading progress and attainment for learners in primary and ALN schools in Wales been impacted by the pandemic?

There is a distinct absence of any data to allow for robust evidence of the impact on reading progress and attainment for learners in primary and ALN schools in Wales as a result of the pandemic. However, mainstream and ALN school teachers reported a significant negative impact of the pandemic on reading skills, which was worse for learners at home than those in school. One ALN school indicated that the average reading age for those with data available had reduced by 27 months following the first lockdown. A common theme for mainstream schools was the issue of reduced Welsh vocabulary and general understanding of the language.
The extent of reported ongoing disruption to reading provision varied, but the majority of mainstream teachers indicated that there was not extensive ongoing disruption during the 2021-22 school year. Further, it was generally reported that learners' confidence and engagement had improved, and that they had been able to begin to redress the impact on reading skills since the return to school. However, 34% of primary schools did report ongoing disruption to reading provision, including the restrictions to working environments (such as 'bubbles'), and the need to address more fundamental readiness to learn skills. ALN schools reported similar ongoing challenges, as well as highlighting the need to reteach social and communication skills for many learners.

Q3. How can current research evidence, insights, and innovations from primary and ALN schools in Wales be utilised to ensure all learners can be effectively supported to improve their reading skills as we work to recover from the pandemic?

Many schools continued to use apps and online programmes adopted during the pandemic to aid reading proficiency and communicate with parents.

Schools are currently using a wide array of reading interventions, strategies and resources to support the reading development of their learners. However, a common theme from both primary and ALN schools was the dissatisfaction and concern relating to the lack of government guidance provided for the teaching of reading, effective approaches, and support to ensure adequate training and delivery for their learners. Further research is required to better understand the provision and decisions around use of approaches and programmes for teaching reading, and to support schools to evaluate the effects of the interventions, strategies, and resources they use.

8.2 Limitations

8.2.1 Survey response rates.
The survey response rates were lower than we had expected, despite the considerable effort in planning for recruitment of schools to the project, and resources given to following up directly with schools invited to participate. The

sampling methodology employed in this study does increase the robustness of the findings despite the response rates being lower than expected, and the inclusion of in-depth interviews with teachers across primary and ALN schools has provided significant additional insights and understanding of how literacy provision and outcomes were affected by the pandemic. However, it is important to note that the response rates do reduce the validity of inference about the population in the current study, particularly in the case of Welsh medium schools, of which very few of the sample population participated.

There are a number of reasons for this, including broader contextual factors, and factors specific to the approach taken in this study. The ongoing and prevalent challenges relating to workload of teachers is very likely to have played a significant role in the reduced response rate for this survey. The very nature of this study led to attempting to recruit teachers to a study at a time of particular ongoing challenges as we attempted to return to our pre-pandemic educational provision. A recent survey of almost 18,000 teachers and support staff in England and Wales highlighted significantly increased workload demands compared with those prior to the pandemic, including worsening levels of staff absence, support staff numbers, specialist staff (i.e., reduced ALN provision), increased additional roles, and increased vacant teaching and support staff posts (National Education Union, 2023). These issues, coupled with the continuing fall in response rates in general population surveys (Luiten, Hox, & de Leeuw, 2020), need to be urgently considered for future research. Unless working conditions and workload issues of teachers improve, we should not expect improvement in response rates for such surveys without increased resources (e.g., increased incentives).

The recruitment approach of inviting schools to participate in multiple survey studies simultaneously could have had a negative effect on the response rates in this study. Although carefully planned to ensure individual teachers were not being asked to respond to more than one survey, the burden (perceived or otherwise) of organisation and the reduced clarity of what was being asked of them might have influenced their willingness to participate. Further, if a school was interested in participating in one project but not the additional 2 or 3 projects, they might have been more likely to decline participation in any of them. This approach should be considered further in future studies, and aligned well with incentives and effective use of known networks and individuals.

The design of the surveys themselves could also have played a role in the low response rate. During the survey development and piloting, the decision was made to separate the survey into three sections to be completed by different members of staff within each participating school, to allow for staff best placed to answer questions relating to the whole school vs. specific groups of learners, and reduce the burden of one staff member responding to a lengthy survey. However, most of the participating schools did not complete all three sections, particularly in the case of ALN schools where very little useful data was captured via the survey data. Future studies should consider reducing the survey length further, inviting one staff member to complete the survey, but providing some of the demographic and school level information ahead of the survey to allow them to gather the necessary information from colleagues as needed.

8.2.2 Lack of outcome data specific to Wales

The lack of available data on reading outcomes in Wales over the course of the pandemic and beyond has limited how well we can understand the impact of the pandemic on the reading development of learners across Wales, and will further impact how well we can monitor the ongoing impact and recovery over the coming years. Teachers have provided useful insights in this study regarding the perceived impact of the pandemic, and the extent to which they have subsequently been able to remediate some of the difficulties. However, the reliance on self-report data and perceptions will hamper our understanding and ongoing monitoring of progress. This presents significant challenges in relation to evaluating the effects of relevant policies, initiatives, and funding programmes in this domain, limiting the extent to which evidence-based decisions can be made regarding effective approaches to supporting the reading development of our learners.

9. Recommendations

Many of the recommendations from this report come directly from participating teachers in mainstream primary and ALN schools across Wales. Further recommendations are made following our synthesis of the broad range of insights provided by the data gathered in this report, including those specific to the pandemic and pandemic recovery, and broader recommendations for policy, practice, and related research. Fourteen recommendations are made.

9.1 Applying learning to potential future lockdowns.

1. If schools were to close, or if learning from home becomes more frequent for any groups of learners again, Welsh Government must ensure there is clear, planned provision in place, which allows for the best possible reading provision to continue for learners who are at home.

2. As such, further research is needed to collate and evaluate potentially effective practices for providing support for learners and parents/carers to access the necessary technology and educational platforms. This must include those families and learners who are hard to reach, and those with ALN, with a particular need for close consideration of effective ways to deliver such provision for learners with more complex needs.

3. Similarly, Welsh Government must ensure there are systems in place to provide access to the necessary technology for **all** learners who need it.

9.2 Supporting the reading development of learners negatively affected by the pandemic.

4. For learners whose reading skills have been negatively affected by the pandemic, Welsh Government should provide targeted funding and initiatives to further redress this.

5. Learners now in Upper Key Stage 2 and early Key Stage 3 should have access to targeted intervention, that focuses on developing their decoding skills as required. Welsh Government should provide the required additional resources for schools to increase staffing capacity to deliver this intervention work at a larger scale than is typical for these year groups, as well as additional training for teachers of learners in these year groups to enable them to more effectively support their reading development more broadly across the curriculum.

6. Due to the numerous challenges reportedly faced upon the return to school (e.g., social and learning skill deficits), learners across the primary years are likely to need additional support to ensure they develop fluent reading skills within primary school.

7. Disadvantaged and vulnerable learners and learners for whom English is an Additional Language are likely to require even greater levels of additional support to ensure they develop fluent reading skills.

8. Learners in Welsh medium or bilingual schools who are from non-Welsh speaking homes will require further support to ensure the negative effects reported in relation to their Welsh reading, vocabulary, and understanding of the language can be redressed. This issue has particular significance for the Cymraeg 2030 agenda and the related recent census results.

9.3 The future of reading provision for learners in Wales: effectively supporting the reading development of learners across Wales.

9. The way reading is taught across Wales needs to be explored further, through further research to audit and evaluate the evidence for the range of approaches being employed.

10. Areas of promising practice need to be identified and evaluated to help inform practice across Wales.

11. Welsh Government should review the evidence driving the implementation of very different policy and practice in Wales, as compared to that in England, to ensure our learners are receiving the best possible support with their reading development.

12. Guidance from Welsh Government is needed to ensure sufficient significance and time is given to the development of a strong foundation in early reading skills, for all learners across mainstream primary and ALN schools in Wales, regardless of age and stage. This will require further research and collaboration with schools to discuss how effective practice in the teaching of reading can be embedded in the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, which in turn will require funding.

13. To support recommendations 4-8, and recommendation 12, Welsh Government should commission a review of training provision in relation to reading instruction for existing and trainee teachers, including the professional learning offer and Initial Teacher Education provision in this domain.

14. There is a need for better access to age-appropriate reading resources and programmes for learners who might need to access teaching of early reading skills beyond the Foundation Phase and lower Key Stage 2.

15. There is a need for further development of Welsh language reading resources and programmes for all learners, and evaluations of such programmes to ensure the most effective provision possible.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Mainstream school survey

APPENDIX B: ALN school survey

APPENDIX C: Visual timeline of the two main lockdown periods

APPENDIX D: Additional Tables

APPENDIX E: Data with Confidence Intervals (mainstream school survey)

APPENDIX A: Mainstream school survey

A1: Section 1 (for Literacy Leads)
A2: Section 2 (for Foundation Phase teachers)
A3: Section 3 (for Key Stage 2 teachers)

A1: Section 1 (for Literacy Leads)

School information

Please provide the name and county of your school. *Please note, your school will not be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research; we will only use this information to gather additional details relating to your school and to ensure we can join up responses from within your school (e.g., literacy leads and class teachers). Only the immediate research team at Bangor University will have access to this information.*

Name:

County:

What is your role in the school? Please select all that apply

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Literacy Lead
ALN Coordinator
KS1 Class teacher
KS2 Class teacher
Other (please specify)

In your school, do you teach reading in both Welsh and English?   Yes   No (English only) No (Welsh only)

In which year group does reading instruction begin in Welsh?   Reception Y1 Y2 Y3 Y4 N/A

In which year group does reading instruction begin in English? Reception Y1 Y2 Y3 Y4 N/A

Initial lockdown period, March to July 2020

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the first Covid-19 lockdown period which occurred between March 2020 and July 2020. During this time, all schools across Wales were required to be closed except for provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

By "in school", we mean learners from your educational setting that attended provision during the lockdown periods either at your own site or in a different location.

Q1. During the initial lockdown period, if learners were classed as in school, were they attending the school itself, or were learners going to a different site?

Q2. a) During the initial lockdown period, approximately what proportion of your learners were typically in school?

Less than 25%
25-50%
51-75%
76%-100%

b) Did this vary across the Key Stages?
No, the proportion was similar across Key Stages
Yes, the proportion was higher in KS1
Yes, the proportion was higher in KS2

Q3. During the same period, were the characteristics of the learners who were typically in school different to before the pandemic? *(please select all that apply and add any additional information in the box provided).*

No, the cohort was mostly the same
Yes, a higher proportion were learners struggling with reading
Yes, a higher proportion were looked after children
Yes, a higher proportion were vulnerable children
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with an Individual Behaviour Plan

Q4. Were there any other differences in the cohort of learners you had <u>in school</u> during this period that you would like to mention?

Q5. During the same period, if any learners were prioritised for a place in school, please select the relevant options below (you can select all that apply)

Additional Learning Needs
Learners with an IEP/IDP
Looked after children
Vulnerable children
Children of key workers
Other (please specify)

Second lockdown period, January - March 2021

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the second Covid-19 lockdown period which occurred between January and March 2021. Once again schools across Wales were required to be closed except for provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

By "<u>in school</u>", we mean learners from <u>your</u> educational setting that attended provision during the lockdown periods either at your own site or in a different location.

Q1. During the second lockdown period, if learners were classed as in school, were they attending the school itself, or were learners going to a different site?

Q2. a) During the second lockdown period, approximately what proportion of your learners were typically in school?

Less than 25%
25-50%
51-75%
76%-100%

b) **Did this vary across the Key Stages?**
No, the proportion was similar across Key Stages
Yes, the proportion was higher in KS1
Yes, the proportion was higher in KS2

Q3. During the second lockdown period, were the characteristics of learners you were typically working with in school different to before the pandemic? (please select all that apply and add any additional information in the box provided).

No, the cohort was mostly the same
Yes, a higher proportion were learners struggling with reading
Yes, a higher proportion were looked after children
Yes, a higher proportion were vulnerable children
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with an Individual Behaviour Plan

Q4. Were there any other differences in the cohort of learners you had in school during this period that you would like to mention?

Q5. During the same period, if any learners were prioritised for a place in school, please select the relevant options below (you can select all that apply)

Additional Learning Needs
Learners with an IEP/IDP
Looked after children
Children of key workers
Vulnerable children
Other (please specify)

Impact on reading attainment

In the following questions, we are interested in the impact of the pandemic on reading attainment in your school. In order for us to understand the extent of the impact and challenges schools and learners are facing, please provide as much detail as you can.

Q1. How have reading scores in your school been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?

Q2. Have any particular year groups or learners been impacted more than others? (E.g., beginning readers, learners with an IDP/IEP for reading, learners transitioning to secondary school) If so, in what ways?

Looking to the future

As we recover from the disruptions of COVID-19, we would like to hear your thoughts on what needs to happen next. The findings of this survey will be shared directly with Welsh Government ministers (anonymously), so this presents an opportunity to have your voice heard and directly impact what is prioritised and what support is provided.

Q1. What do you think the priorities are for supporting your learners' reading skills?

Q2. What support would benefit you and your learners the most over the next few years?

A2: Section 2 (for Foundation Phase teachers)

Please provide the name and county of your school. *Please note, your school will not be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research; we will only use this information to gather additional details relating to your school and to ensure we can join up responses from within your school (e.g., literacy leads and class teachers).*

Name:

County:

What is your role in the school? Please select all that apply

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Literacy Lead
ALN Coordinator
KS1 Class teacher
KS2 Class teacher
Other (please specify)

Reading practices prior to the pandemic

As we enter this new term it marks the second year since the first lockdown in March 2020. In this section, we would like you to think back to the period just prior to the pandemic, around the Autumn term of 2019.

Q1. a) What were the main Welsh reading programmes and interventions that were used in KS1? *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

b) **What were the main English reading programmes and interventions that were used in KS1?** *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

c) Which of the programmes or interventions listed involve computer-assisted instruction (either via a computer, laptop, or tablet)?

Reading practices between March and July 2020 (first lockdown period)

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the period between March and July 2020, during the height of the initial lockdown and school disruption. We know some learners were still attending school during this period (e.g., keyworker children), however, for this section we will ask you about learners in **Key Stage 1 who were receiving their education** **at home**.

Q1.
  A. How did you continue to implement your reading provision for learners receiving their education at home?
  B. What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?
  C. To what extent were you able to continue to differentiate provision for learners struggling with reading who were learning at home?

Q2. What new programmes/approaches were introduced for learners at home during this period? This may include online programmes / families accessing physical reading resources from school.

Q3. Were there any differences in how Welsh medium and English medium reading provision were impacted for learners at home? (e.g., were there any additional challenges adapting and delivering provision for one language over another?)

Q4. Considering learners in KS1 who were _at home_ during the first lockdown, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Reading provision changed for KS1 learners at home

Targeted provision for learners struggling with reading in KS1 was not possible to continue with learners who were at home

Frequency of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS1 learners at home

The length of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS1 learners at home

No direct teaching of phonics was possible for learners at home

The phonics teaching approach changed for learners at home

English language reading provision was impacted more negatively than Welsh language reading provision for learners at home

Welsh language reading provision was impacted more negatively than English language reading provision for learners at home

It was possible to provide the same differentiation strategies as previously used for learners struggling with reading while learners were at home

Parents and carers of children struggling with reading helped their child to meet the targets set for them

In the following questions, we hope to gain an idea of what reading provision looked like for learners in KS1 who remained <u>in school</u> during the second lockdown period (March- July 2020).

Q5. Was provision the same for learners in school as learners at home?
Please describe the difficulties that were encountered and include information on how reading provision changed for learners in KS1 who remained in school, including how targeted provision for those struggling with reading was impacted.

Q6. Considering learners in KS1 who were in school during the first lockdown period, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?
If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Typical reading provision was different to reading provision pre-pandemic

Typical reading provision was different to what peers were receiving at home

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who knew them

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who were aware of their reading abilities

Learners in school receiving targeted provision were typically working with members of staff who were experienced in delivering the provision

Reading practices between January and March 2021

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the period between January and March 2021, during the second major lockdown and school disruption. We know some learners were still attending school during this period (e.g., keyworker children), however, for this section we will ask you about learners in Key Stage 1 who were receiving their education **at home**.

Q1.
  A. **How did you continue to implement your reading provision with learners receiving their education at home?**
  B. **What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?**
  C. **To what extent were you able to continue to differentiate provision for learners struggling with reading who were learning at home?**

Q2. What new programmes/approaches were introduced for learners at home during this period? This may include online programmes / families accessing physical reading resources from school.

Q3. Were there any differences in how Welsh medium and English medium reading provision were impacted for learners at home? *(e.g., were there any additional challenges adapting and delivering provision for one language over another?)*

Q4. Considering learners in KS1 who were <u>at home</u> during the second lockdown period, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Reading provision changed for KS1 learners at home for this second lockdown period

Targeted provision for learners struggling with reading in KS1 was not possible to continue with learners who were at home

Frequency of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS1 learners at home

The length of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS1 learners at home

No direct teaching of phonics was possible for learners at home

The phonics teaching approach changed for learners at home

English language reading provision was impacted more negatively than Welsh language reading provision for learners at home

Welsh language reading provision was impacted more negatively than English language reading provision for learners at home

It was possible to provide the same differentiation strategies as previously used for learners struggling with reading

Parents and carers of children struggling with reading helped their child to meet the targets set for them.

Q5. For learners <u>at home</u> during this second lockdown period, how did reading provision compare with the provision during the first lockdown

period? Please outline whether similar challenges were encountered, similar levels of disruption to provision were experienced, etc.,

In the following questions, we hope to gain an idea of what reading provision looked like for learners in KS1 who remained <u>in school </u>during this period.

Q6. **Was provision the same for learners in school as learners at home?** Please describe the difficulties that were encountered and include information on how reading provision changed for learners in KS1 who remained in school, including how targeted provision for those struggling with reading was impacted.

Q7. **Considering learners in KS1 who were in school during the second lockdown period, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Typical reading provision was different to reading provision pre-pandemic

Typical reading provision was different to what peers were receiving at home

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who knew them

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who were aware of their reading abilities

Learners in school receiving targeted provision were typically working with members of staff who were experienced in delivering the provision

Impact on learners' reading skills and monitoring progress

In the following set of questions, we are trying to understand your experiences of the impact of the pandemic on learners reading skills, and how your ability to monitor progress might have been impacted.

1. **How do you feel the reading skills of <u>learners in KS1 who were typically at home during the lockdowns</u> have been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?**

1	2	3	4

	No negative impact	Small negative impact	Moderate negative impact	Large negative impact

2. How do you feel the reading skills of <u>learners in KS1 who were typically in school during the lockdowns</u> have been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?

1	2	3	4
No negative impact	Small negative impact	Moderate negative impact	Large negative impact

3. **Do you feel the reading abilities of particular year groups or learners have been impacted more than others by the disruption to reading provision?** (e.g., beginning readers, vulnerable learners)

4. **How has your assessment and monitoring of learner progress been impacted by Covid-19? What difficulties has this impact caused in relation to supporting learners' reading development?**

5. **Considering <u>all KS1 learners, whether at home or in school</u>, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Reading skills of learners who were at home have been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school

Reading skills of learners who might be described as beginning readers who were at home during the pandemic, have been impacted more negatively than beginning readers who were in school.

Reading skills of all learners who had already developed good decoding skills were less impacted than beginning readers

The Welsh reading skills of learners who were at home who live in non-Welsh speaking households have been impacted more negatively than those from Welsh speaking homes

Reading confidence of learners at home has been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school

Reading skills of learners struggling with reading who were at home have been impacted more negatively than those without one

Reading skills of vulnerable/disadvantaged learners have been impacted more negatively than their peers

Reading skills of learners for whom English is an additional language have been impacted more negatively than their peers

Engagement of learners who were at home in reading provision

In the following questions, we're interested in your experiences of how your learners who were at home engaged with the reading provision during both lockdown periods.

Q1. What approaches did you need to take to try to engage learners at home in their reading provision?

Q2. Considering your learners who were <u>at home</u> during either of the lockdown periods, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Some learners at home did not engage with the reading provision at all

Most learners at home engaged to some degree with the reading provision

Most learners at home engaged very well with the reading provision

Not having access to a computer/laptop/tablet presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our KS1 learners at home

Not having reliable Wi-Fi presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our KS1 learners at home

Not having Welsh language input at home presented a significant barrier to engagement with Welsh language reading provision for many of our KS1 learners at home.

We had good levels of parental engagement in reading provision for most learners

Many learners lacked interest in continuing their learning from home

A lack of technological skills in parents or learners themselves presented a barrier for many learners

A lack of technological skills in teacher or teaching assistants presented a barrier for many learners

We were able to provide learners with a suitable device to access their learning from home if required

		In some cases, but not
Yes	No	for all learners who needed it

The school were able to supply reading materials to all households

		In some cases, but not
Yes	No	for all learners who needed it

Reading practices between March 2021 – and present day

In the following questions we will ask you about the reading practices from March 2021 to the present day. We are trying to understand what your reading provision has looked like since learners returned to school, and what challenges you have been working through.

Q1.

A. To what extent do you feel you have been able to begin to redress some of the
impact on learners' reading skills?

B. What approaches have you been using to support the reading development of learners over this period, and what ongoing challenges you are facing in relation to this?

Q2. **Considering the period since March 2021, when learners have typically been able to attend school, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

There has still been significant disruption to our learners' reading provision

Reading activities have still been limited in comparison with before the pandemic

Our learners' confidence in reading has improved

Our learners' engagement in reading has improved

We have been able to begin to redress some of the impact on learners' reading skills

Looking to the future

As we recover from the disruptions of COVID-19, we would like to hear your thoughts on what needs to happen next. The findings of this survey will be shared directly with Welsh Government ministers (anonymously), so this presents an opportunity to have your voice heard and directly impact what is prioritised and what support is provided.

Q1. What do you think the priorities are for supporting your learners' reading skills?

Q2. What support would benefit you and your learners the most over the next few years?

A3: Section 3 (for Key Stage 2 teachers)

Please provide the name and county of your school. *Please note, your school will not be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research; we will only use this information to gather additional details relating to your school and to ensure we can join up responses from within your school (e.g., literacy leads and class teachers).*

Name:

County:

What is your role in the school? Please select all that apply

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Literacy Lead
ALN Coordinator
KS2 Class teacher
KS2 Class teacher
Other (please specify)

Reading practices prior to the pandemic

As we enter this new term it marks the second year since the first lockdown in March 2020. In this section, we would like you to think back to the period just prior to the pandemic, around the Autumn term of 2019.

Q1. a) What were the main Welsh reading programmes and interventions that were used in KS2? *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

b) **What were the main English reading programmes and interventions that were used in KS2?** *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

c) Which of the programmes or interventions listed involve computer-assisted instruction (either via a computer, laptop, or tablet)?

Reading practices between March and July 2020 (first lockdown phase)

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the period between March and July 2020, during the height of the initial lockdown and school disruption. We know some learners were still attending school during this period (e.g., keyworker children), however, for this section we will ask you about learners in **Key Stage 2 who were receiving their education at home**.

Q1.

D. How did you continue to implement your reading provision to the learners receiving their education at home?

E. What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?

F. To what extent were you able to continue to differentiate provision for learners struggling with reading who were learning at home?

Q2. What new programmes/approaches were introduced for learners at home during this period? This may include online programmes / families accessing physical reading resources from school.

Q3. Were there any differences in how Welsh medium and English medium reading provision were impacted for learners at home? (e.g., were there any additional challenges adapting and delivering provision for one language over another?)

Q4. Considering learners in KS2 who were <u>at home</u> during the first lockdown period (March – July 2020), to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Reading provision changed for KS2 learners at home

Targeted provision for learners struggling with reading in KS2 was not possible to continue with learners who were at home

Frequency of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS2 learners at home

The length of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS2 learners at home

No direct teaching of phonics was possible for learners at home

The phonics teaching approach changed for learners at home

English language reading provision was impacted more negatively than Welsh language reading provision for learners at home

Welsh language reading provision was impacted more negatively than English language reading provision for learners at home

It was possible to provide the same differentiation strategies as previously used for learners struggling with reading while learners were at home

Parents and carers of children struggling with reading helped their child to meet the targets set for them

No direct teaching of reading comprehension strategies was possible for KS2 learners at home

The approach to teaching reading comprehension strategies changed for learners at home

In the following questions, we hope to gain an idea of what reading provision looked like for learners in KS2 who remained <u>in school </u>during the second lockdown phase (March- July 2020).

Q5. Was provision the same for learners in school as learners at home?
Please describe the difficulties that were encountered and include information on how reading provision changed for learners in KS2 who remained in school, including how targeted provision for those struggling with reading was impacted.

Q6. Considering learners in KS2 who were in school during the first lockdown period, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?
If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Typical reading provision was different to reading provision pre-pandemic

Typical reading provision was different to what peers were receiving at home

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who knew them

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who were aware of their reading abilities

Learners in school receiving targeted provision were typically working with members of staff who were experienced in delivering the provision

Reading practices between January and March 2021

In this section, we would like you to think back to the period between January and March 2021, during the second major lockdown and school disruption. We know some learners were still attending school during this period (e.g., keyworker

children), however, for this section we will ask you about learners in Key Stage 2 who were receiving their education **at home**.

Q1.
    D. How did you continue to implement your reading provision with learners receiving their education at home?
    E. What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?
    F. To what extent were you able to continue to differentiate provision for learners struggling with reading who were learning at home?

Q2. What new programmes/approaches were introduced for learners at home during this period? This may include online programmes / families accessing physical reading resources from school.

Q3. Were there any differences in how Welsh medium and English medium reading provision were impacted for learners at home? *(e.g., were there any additional challenges adapting and delivering provision for one language over another?)*

Q4. Considering learners in KS2 who were <u>at home</u> during the second lockdown period, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Reading provision changed for KS2 learners at home for this second lockdown period

Targeted provision for learners struggling with reading in KS2 was not possible to continue with learners who were at home

Frequency of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS2 learners at home

The length of phonics sessions decreased considerably for KS2 learners at home

No direct teaching of phonics was possible for learners at home

The phonics teaching approach changed for learners at home

English language reading provision was impacted more negatively than Welsh language reading provision for learners at home

Welsh language reading provision was impacted more negatively than English language reading provision for learners at home

It was possible to provide the same differentiation strategies as previously used for learners struggling with reading

Parents and carers of children struggling with reading helped their child to meet the targets set for them.

No direct teaching of reading comprehension strategies was possible for KS2 learners at home

The approach to teaching reading comprehension strategies changed for learners at home

Q5. For learners <u>at home</u> during this second lockdown period, how did reading provision compare with the provision during the first lockdown period? Please outline whether similar challenges were encountered, similar levels of disruption to provision were experienced, etc.,

In the following questions, we hope to gain an idea of what reading provision looked like for learners in KS2 who remained <u>in school</u> during this period.

Q6. **Was provision the same for learners in school as learners at home?** Please describe the difficulties that were encountered and include information on how reading provision changed for learners in KS2 who remained in school, including how targeted provision for those struggling with reading was impacted.

Q7. **Considering learners in KS2 who were in school during the second lockdown period, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Typical reading provision was different to reading provision pre-pandemic

Typical reading provision was different to what peers were receiving at home

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who knew them

Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who were aware of their reading abilities

Learners in school receiving targeted provision were typically working with members of staff who were experienced in delivering the provision

Impact on learners' reading skills and monitoring progress

In the following set of questions, we are trying to understand your experiences of the impact of the pandemic on learners reading skills, and how your ability to monitor progress might have been impacted.

Q1. How do you feel the reading skills of <u>learners in KS2 who were typically at home during the lockdowns</u> have been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?

1	2	3	4
No negative impact	Small negative impact	Moderate negative impact	Large negative impact

Q2. How do you feel the reading skills of <u>learners in KS2 who were typically in school during the lockdowns</u> have been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?

1	2	3	4
No negative impact	Small negative impact	Moderate negative impact	Large negative impact

Q3. Do you feel the reading abilities of particular year groups or learners have been impacted more than others by the disruption to reading provision? (e.g., beginning readers, vulnerable learners, transitioning learners)

Q4. How has your assessment and monitoring of learner progress been impacted by Covid-19? What difficulties has this impact caused in relation to supporting learners' reading development?

Q5. Considering <u>all KS2 learners, whether at home or in school</u>, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Reading skills of learners who were at home have been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school

Reading skills of learners who might be described as beginning readers who were at home during the pandemic, have been impacted more negatively than beginning readers who were in school

Reading skills of all learners who had already developed good decoding skills were less impacted than beginning readers

The Welsh reading skills of learners who were at home who live in non-Welsh speaking households have been impacted more negatively than those from Welsh speaking homes

Reading confidence of learners at home has been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school

Reading skills of struggling readers at home have been impacted more negatively than those not struggling with reading

Reading skills of vulnerable/disadvantaged learners have been impacted more negatively than their peers

Reading skills of learners for whom English is an additional language have been impacted more negatively than their peers

Reading skills of learners transitioning to secondary school have been negatively impacted more than other learners

Reading skills of learners in upper KS2 were more negatively impacted that learners in lower KS2

Engagement of learners who were at home in reading provision

In the following questions, we're interested in your experiences of how your learners who were at home engaged with the reading provision during both lockdown phases.

Q1. What approaches did you need to take to try to engage learners at home in their reading provision?

Q2. Considering your learners who were <u>at home</u> during either of the lockdown phases, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

	Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Some learners at home did not engage with the reading provision at all						
Most learners at home engaged to some degree with the reading provision						
Most learners at home engaged very well with the reading provision						
Not having access to a computer/laptop/tablet presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our KS2 learners at home						
Not having reliable Wi-Fi presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our KS2 learners at home						
Not having Welsh language input at home presented a significant barrier to engagement with Welsh language reading provision for many of our KS2 learners at home.						
We had good levels of parental engagement in reading provision for most learners						
Many learners lacked interest in continuing their learning from home						
A lack of technological skills in parents or learners themselves presented a barrier for many learners						
A lack of technological skills in teacher or teaching assistants presented a barrier for many learners						
We were able to provide learners with a suitable device to access their learning from home if required						

	Yes	No	In some cases, but not for all learners who needed it

The school were able to supply reading materials to all households

	Yes	No	In some cases, but not for all learners who needed it

Reading practices between March 2021 – and present day

In the following questions we will ask you about the reading practices from March 2021 to the present day. We are trying to understand what your reading provision has looked like since learners returned to school, and what challenges you have been working through.

Q1.

B. To what extent do you feel you have been able to begin to redress some of the
impact on learners' reading skills?

B**. What approaches have you been using to support the reading development of learners over this period, and what ongoing challenges you are facing in relation to this?**

Q2. **Considering the period since March 2021, when learners have typically been able to attend school, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

There has still been significant disruption to our learners' reading provision

Reading activities have still been limited in comparison with before the pandemic

Our learners' confidence in reading has improved

Our learners' engagement in reading has improved

We have been able to begin to redress some of the impact on learners' reading skills

Looking to the future

As we recover from the disruptions of COVID-19, we would like to hear your thoughts on what needs to happen next. The findings of this survey will be shared directly with Welsh Government ministers (anonymously), so this presents an opportunity to have your voice heard and directly impact what is prioritised and what support is provided.

What do you think the priorities are for supporting your learners' reading skills?

What support would benefit you and your learners the most over the next few years?

APPENDIX B: ALN School Survey

B1: Section 1 (for Literacy Leads)
B2: Section 2 (for Foundation Phase and/or Key Stage 2 teachers)
B3: Section 3 (for Key Stage 3 and/or Key Stage 4 teachers)

B2: Section 1 (for Literacy Leads)

Section 1: School information

Please provide the name and county of your school. *Please note, your school will not be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research; we will only use this information to gather additional details relating to your school and to ensure we can join up responses from within your school (e.g., literacy leads and class teachers). Only the immediate research team at Bangor University will have access to this information.*

Name of school:

County:

What is your role in the school? Please select all that apply

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Assistant Headteacher
Literacy Lead or equivalent
Head of Department
KS1 Class teacher
KS2 Class teacher
KS3 Class teacher
KS4 Class teacher
Other (please specify)

In your school, do you teach reading in both Welsh and English?   Yes   No (English only) No (Welsh only)

The questions below are intended to give us a general idea of what kind of reading provision your pupils are accessing. We know it is unlikely you'll have precise figures to hand, but just giving us a rough idea will be very useful for helping us understand the context for reading provision in your school.

Approximately what proportion of your learners in Key Stage 1 and 2 are working on emergent literacy/pre-reading skills?

Approximately what proportion of your learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 are working on emergent literacy/pre-reading skills?

Approximately what proportion of your learners in Key Stage 1 and 2 are working on phonics and word recognition skills?

Approximately what proportion of your learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 are working on phonics and word recognition skills?

Approximately what proportion of your learners in Key Stage 1 and 2 are working on more advanced reading skills (e.g., Reading Comprehension)?

Approximately what proportion of your learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 are working on more advanced reading skills (e.g., Reading Comprehension)?

Section 2: Initial lockdown period, March to July 2020

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the first Covid-19 lockdown period which occurred between March 2020 and July 2020. During this time, all schools across Wales were required to be closed except for provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

By "in school", we mean learners from your educational setting that attended provision during the lockdown periods either at your own site or in a different location.

Q1. During the initial lockdown period, if learners were classed as in school, were they attending the school itself, or were learners going to a different site?

Q2. a) During the initial lockdown period, approximately what proportion of your learners were typically in school?

Less than 25%
25-50%
51-75%
76%-100%

Q2. b) Did this vary across the Key Stages? *If so, in what ways (e.g., was the proportion higher in some key stages than others?)*

Q3. During the first lockdown, for learners who were typically in school, was there a higher concentration of any particular needs than would typically be the case when all learners are in school?

No, the cohort was mostly the same
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with physical and medical support needs
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with looked after children
Yes, a higher proportion were vulnerable children
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with social, emotional, and behavioural needs

Q4. Were there any other differences in the cohort of learners you had in school during this period that you would like to mention?

Q5. During the same period, if any learners were prioritised for a place in school, please select the relevant options below (you can select all that apply)

Children with physical and medical support needs
Looked after children
Vulnerable children
Children of key workers
Children with social, emotional, and behavioural needs
Other (please specify)

Section 3: Second lockdown period, January - March 2021

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the second Covid-19 lockdown period which occurred between January and March 2021. Once again schools across Wales were required to be closed except for provision for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

By "in school", we mean learners from your educational setting that attended provision during the lockdown periods either at your own site or in a different location.

Q1. During the second lockdown period, if learners were classed as in school, were they attending the school itself, or were learners going to a different site?

Q2. a) During the second lockdown period, approximately what proportion of your learners were typically in school?

Less than 25%
25-50%
51-75%
76%-100%

b) Did this vary across the Key Stages? If so, in what ways (e.g., was the proportion higher in some key stages than others?)

Q3. During the first lockdown, for learners who were typically in school, was there a higher concentration of any particular needs than would typically be the case when all learners are in school?

No, the cohort was mostly the same
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with physical and medical support needs
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with looked after children
Yes, a higher proportion were vulnerable children
Yes, a higher proportion were learners with social, emotional, and behavioural needs

Q4. Were there any other differences in the cohort of pupils you had in school during this period that you would like to mention?

Q5. During the same period, if any learners were prioritised for a place in school, please select the relevant options below (you can select all that apply)

Children with physical and medical support needs
Looked after children
Vulnerable children
Children with social, emotional, and behavioural needs

Children of key workers

Section 4: Impact on reading attainment

In the following questions, we are interested in the impact of the pandemic on reading attainment in your school. In order for us to understand the extent of the impact and challenges schools and learners are facing, please provide as much detail as you can. We understand you might not have formal assessment data to draw on at this point, in which case, please give an indication of your perceived impact on reading attainment and what you have noticed about the reading progress of your learners.

Q1. How have reading scores in your school been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?

Q2. Have any particular year groups or learners been impacted more than others? *If so, in what ways?*

Section 5: Looking to the future

As we recover from the disruptions of COVID-19, we would like to hear your thoughts on what needs to happen next. The findings of this survey will be shared directly with Welsh Government ministers (anonymously), so this presents an opportunity to have your voice heard and directly impact what is prioritised and what support is provided.

Q1. What do you think the priorities are for supporting your learners' reading skills?

Q2. What support would benefit you and your learners the most over the next few years?

B2: Section 2 (for Foundation Phase and/or Key Stage 2 teachers)

Section 1: School information

Please provide the name and county of your school. *Please note, your school will not be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research; we will only use this information to gather additional details relating to your school and to ensure we can join up responses from within your school (e.g., literacy leads and class teachers). Only the immediate research team at Bangor University will have access to this information.*

Name of school:

County:

What is your role in the school? Please select all that apply

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Assistant Headteacher
Literacy Lead or equivalent
Head of Department
KS1 Class teacher
KS2 Class teacher
KS3 Class teacher
KS4 Class teacher
Other (please specify)

Section 2: Reading practices prior to the pandemic

As we enter this new term it marks the second year since the first lockdown in March 2020. In this section, we would like you to think back to the period just prior to the pandemic, around the Autumn term of 2019. Please answer these questions in relation to provision for Key Stage 1 and 2 learners.

Q1. a) What were the main Welsh reading programmes and interventions that were used? *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

b) **What were the main English reading programmes and interventions that were used?** *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

c) What computer or tablet-based programmes, apps, or resources do you use as part of your reading provision? (e.g., programmes such as NESSY, or any other computer or tablet-based resources to support reading skills or provide practise opportunities)

Section 3: Reading practices during the two main lockdown periods

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the period between <u>March and July 2020</u>, during the height of the <u>initial</u> lockdown and school disruption, and the period between January and March 2021, during the second lockdown period. We know some learners were still attending school during these periods (e.g., keyworker children), however, for this section we will ask you about learners in Key Stage 1 and 2 **who were receiving their education at home**.

Q1. Learners working on emergent literacy/pre-reading skills
   G. For learners who would have been working on emergent literacy/pre-reading skills in school, how did you continue to implement this when they were receiving their education at home?

   H. What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?

   I. How were parents/carers supported to assist with their child's reading?

   J. In what ways did this provision vary between the initial lockdown period and the second lockdown period?

   K. In what ways did challenges vary across Key Stage 1 and 2?

   L. In what ways did challenges vary between the initial lockdown period and the second lockdown period?

Q2. Learners working on phonics and word recognition skills

   A. For learners who would have been working on phonics and word recognition skills in school, how did you continue to implement this when they were receiving their education at home?

   B. What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?

   C. How were parents/carers supported to assist with their child's reading?

   D. In what ways did challenges vary across Key Stage 1 and 2?

Q3. Learners working on more advanced reading skills (e.g., Reading Comprehension)

   A. **For learners who would have been working on more advanced reading skills (e.g., Reading Comprehension) skills in school, how did you**

continue to implement this when they were receiving their education at home?

B. **What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?**

C. **How were parents/carers supported to assist with their child's reading?**

D. **In what ways did challenges vary across Key Stage 1 and 2?**

Q4. What new programmes/approaches were introduced for learners at home during this period? This may include online programmes / families accessing physical reading resources from school.

Q5. Were there any differences in how Welsh medium and English medium reading provision were impacted for learners at home? (e.g., were there any additional challenges adapting and delivering provision for one language over another?)

Q6. A) Was provision the same for learners in school as learners at home?
B) In what ways did this vary between the two lockdown periods?

Q7. A) How did reading provision change for learners who remained in school?
B) In what ways did this vary between the two lockdown periods?

Section 4: Impact on reading attainment

In the following questions, we are interested in the impact of the pandemic on reading attainment in your school. In order for us to understand the extent of the impact and challenges schools and learners are facing, please provide as much detail as you can. We understand you might not have formal assessment data to draw on at this point, in which case, please give an indication of your perceived impact on reading attainment and what you have noticed about the reading progress of your learners.

Q1. How have reading scores in your school been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?

Q2. Have any particular year groups or learners been impacted more than others? *If so, in what ways?*

Q3. A. How has your assessment and monitoring of learner progress been impacted by Covid-19?

B. What difficulties has this impact caused in relation to supporting learners' reading development?

Q4. Considering <u>all learners, whether at home or in school</u>, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Reading skills of learners who were at home have been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school

Reading skills of learners who might be described as beginning readers who were at home during the pandemic, have been impacted more negatively than beginning readers who were in school.

Reading skills of all learners who had already developed good decoding skills were less impacted than beginning readers

The Welsh reading skills of learners who were at home who live in non-Welsh speaking households have been impacted more negatively than those from Welsh speaking homes

Reading confidence of learners at home has been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school

Reading skills of struggling readers who were at home have been impacted more negatively than those who were not struggling readers

Reading skills of vulnerable/disadvantaged learners have been impacted more negatively than their peers

Reading skills of learners for whom English is an additional language have been impacted more negatively than their peers

Learners working on emergent literacy or pre-reading skills have been impacted more negatively than learners working on phonics and word recognition skills

Learners working on phonics and word recognition skills have been impacted more negatively than learners working on more advanced reading skills

Q5. Can you give an example of learners who were able to excel in reading during the lockdown period? *(please give a little detail on why you think this was)*

Section 5: Engagement in reading provision of learners who were at home

In the following questions, we're interested in your experiences of how your learners in Key Stage 1 and 2 who were at home engaged with the reading provision during both lockdown periods.

Q1. What were the most common challenges in engaging learners at home in their reading provision?

Q2. What approaches were necessary to try to engage learners at home in their reading provision?

Q3. In what ways were parents/carers supported to help engage their children in learning at home?

Q4. Considering your learners who were <u>at home</u> during either of the lockdown periods, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Some learners at home did not engage with the reading provision at all

Most learners at home engaged to some degree with the reading provision

Most learners at home engaged very well with the reading provision

Not having access to a computer/laptop/tablet presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our learners at home

Not having reliable Wi-Fi presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our learners at home

Not having Welsh language input at home presented a significant barrier to engagement with Welsh language reading provision for many of our learners at home.

We had good levels of parental engagement in reading provision for most learners

Many learners lacked interest in continuing their learning from home

Many learners were not able to receive the learning support they needed to continue learning from home

A lack of technological skills in learners themselves presented a barrier for many learners

A lack of technological skills in parents presented a barrier for many learners

A lack of technological skills in teachers or teaching assistants presented a barrier for many learners

For many learners, the focus of support was predominantly on health and social care provision rather than educational provision

We were able to provide learners with a suitable device to access their learning from home if required

		In some cases, but not
Yes	No	for all learners who needed it

The school were able to supply reading materials to all households

		In some cases, but not
Yes	No	for all learners who needed it

Section 6: Reading practices between March 2021 – and present day

In the following questions we will ask you about the reading practices from March 2021 to the present day. We are trying to understand what your reading provision has looked like since learners returned to school, and what challenges you have been working through. Please answer these questions in relation to learners in Key Stage 1 and 2.

Q1.
> **C. To what extent do you feel you have been able to begin to redress some of the**
impact on learners' reading skills?

B. What approaches have you been using to support the reading development of learners over this period, and what ongoing challenges you are facing in relation to this?

Q2. **Considering the period since March 2021, when learners have typically been able to attend school, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

1	2	3	4	5

Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

There has still been significant disruption to our learners' reading provision

Reading activities have still been limited in comparison with before the pandemic

Our learners' confidence in reading has improved

Our learners' engagement in reading has improved

We have been able to begin to redress some of the impact on learners' reading skills

Q3. What elements of the provision you developed during the pandemic have you continued to do? *(E.g., aspects of remote/independent learning, parental engagement strategies, etc.,)*

Q4. What has been the biggest challenge for you since learners have returned to school?

Section 7: Looking to the future

As we recover from the disruptions of COVID-19, we would like to hear your thoughts on what needs to happen next. The findings of this survey will be shared directly with Welsh Government ministers (anonymously), so this presents an opportunity to have your voice heard and directly impact what is prioritised and what support is provided.

Q1. What do you think the priorities are for supporting your learners' reading skills?

Q2. What support would benefit you and your learners the most over the next few years?

B3: Section 3 (for Key Stage 3 and/or Key Stage 4 teachers)

Section 1: School information

Please provide the name and county of your school. *Please note, your school will not be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research; we will only use this information to gather additional details relating to your school and to ensure we can join up responses from within your school (e.g., literacy leads and class teachers). Only the immediate research team at Bangor University will have access to this information.*

Name of school:

County:

What is your role in the school? Please select all that apply

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Assistant Headteacher
Literacy Lead or equivalent
Head of Department
KS1 Class teacher
KS2 Class teacher
KS3 Class teacher
KS4 Class teacher
Other (please specify)

Section 2: Reading practices prior to the pandemic

As we enter this new term it marks the second year since the first lockdown in March 2020. In this section, we would like you to think back to the period just prior to the pandemic, around the Autumn term of 2019. Please answer these questions in relation to provision for Key Stage 3 an 4 learners.

Q1. a) What were the main Welsh reading programmes and interventions that were used? *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

b) **What were the main English reading programmes and interventions that were used?** *If you used a school-developed programme, please specify which reading skills are targeted (e.g., decoding skills, reading fluency, language comprehension, reading comprehension strategies, etc.)*

c) **What computer or tablet-based programmes, apps, or resources do you use as part of your reading provision? (e.g., programmes such as NESSY, or any other computer or tablet-based resources to support reading skills or provide practise opportunities)**

Section 3: Reading practices during the two main lockdown periods

The following set of questions will ask you to think back to the period between <u>March and July 2020</u>, during the height of the <u>initial</u> lockdown and school disruption, and the period between January and March 2021, during the second lockdown period. We know some learners were still attending school during these periods (e.g., keyworker children), however, for this section we will ask you about learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 **who were receiving their education** **at home**.

Q1. Learners working on emergent literacy/pre-reading skills

- **For learners who would have been working on emergent literacy/pre-reading skills in school, how did you continue to implement this when they were receiving their education at home?**

- **What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?**

- **How were parents/carers supported to assist with their child's reading?**

- **In what ways did this provision vary between the initial lockdown period and the second lockdown period?**

- **In what ways did challenges vary across Key Stage 3 and 4?**

- **In what ways did challenges vary between the initial lockdown period and the second lockdown period?**

Q2. Learners working on phonics and word recognition skills

- **For learners who would have been working on phonics and word recognition skills in school, how did you continue to implement this when they were receiving their education at home?**

- **What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?**

- **How were parents/carers supported to assist with their child's reading?**

- **In what ways did challenges vary across Key Stage 3 and 4?**

Q3. Learners working on more advanced reading skills (e.g., Reading Comprehension)

- **For learners who would have been working on more advanced reading skills (e.g., Reading Comprehension) skills in school, how did you continue to implement this when they were receiving their education at home?**

- **What adaptations were necessary to deliver this provision for learners at home?**

- **How were parents/carers supported to assist with their child's reading?**

- **In what ways did challenges vary across Key Stage 3 and 4?**

Q4. What new programmes/approaches were introduced for learners at home during this period? This may include online programmes / families accessing physical reading resources from school.

Q5. Were there any differences in how Welsh medium and English medium reading provision were impacted for learners at home? (e.g., were there any additional challenges adapting and delivering provision for one language over another?)

Q6. A) Was provision the same for learners in school as learners at home? B) In what ways did this vary between the two lockdown periods?

Q7. A) How did reading provision change for learners who remained in school? B) In what ways did this vary between the two lockdown periods?

Section 4: Impact on reading attainment

In the following questions, we are interested in the impact of the pandemic on reading attainment in your school. In order for us to understand the extent of the impact and challenges schools and learners are facing, please provide as much detail as you can. We understand you might not have formal assessment data to draw on at this point, in which case, please give an indication of your perceived impact on reading attainment and what you have noticed about the reading progress of your learners.

Q1. How have reading scores in your school been impacted by the disruption since March 2020?

Q2. Have any particular year groups or learners been impacted more than others? *If so, in what ways?*

Q3. How has your assessment and monitoring of learner progress been impacted by Covid-19? What difficulties has this impact caused in relation to supporting learners' reading development?

Q4. Considering all learners, whether at home or in school, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

	Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Reading skills of learners who were at home have been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school						
Reading skills of learners who might be described as beginning readers who were at home during the pandemic, have been impacted more negatively than beginning readers who were in school.						
Reading skills of all learners who had already developed good decoding skills were less impacted than beginning readers						
The Welsh reading skills of learners who were at home who live in non-Welsh speaking households have been impacted more negatively than those from Welsh speaking homes						
Reading confidence of learners at home has been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school						
Reading skills of struggling readers who were at home have been impacted more negatively than those who were not struggling readers						
Reading skills of vulnerable/disadvantaged learners have been impacted more negatively than their peers						
Reading skills of learners for whom English is an additional language have been impacted more negatively than their peers						
Learners working on emergent literacy or pre-reading skills have been impacted more negatively than learners working on phonics and word recognition skills						
Learners working on phonics and word recognition skills have been impacted more negatively than learners working on more advanced reading skills						

Q5. Can you give an example of learners who were able to excel in reading during the lockdown period? *(please give a little detail on why you think this was)*

Section 5: Engagement of learners who were at home in reading provision

In the following questions, we're interested in your experiences of how your learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 who were at home engaged with the reading provision during both lockdown periods.

Q1. What were the most common challenges in engaging learners at home in their reading provision?

Q2. What approaches were necessary to try to engage learners at home in their reading provision?

Q3. In what ways were parents/carers supported to help engage their children in learning at home?

Q4. Considering your learners who were <u>at home</u> during either of the lockdown periods, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Some learners at home did not engage with the reading provision at all

Most learners at home engaged to some degree with the reading provision

Most learners at home engaged very well with the reading provision

Not having access to a computer/laptop/tablet presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our learners at home

Not having reliable Wi-Fi presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our learners at home

Not having Welsh language input at home presented a significant barrier to engagement with Welsh language reading provision for many of our learners at home.

We had good levels of parental engagement in reading provision for most learners

Many learners lacked interest in continuing their learning from home

Many learners were not able to receive the learning support they needed to continue learning from home

A lack of technological skills in learners themselves presented a barrier for many learners

A lack of technological skills in parents presented a barrier for many learners

A lack of technological skills in teachers or teaching assistants presented a barrier for many learners

For many learners, the focus of support was predominantly on health and social care provision rather than educational provision

We were able to provide learners with a suitable device to access their learning from home if required

Yes	No	In some cases, but not for all learners who needed it

The school were able to supply reading materials to all households

Yes	No	In some cases, but not for all learners who needed it

Section 6: Reading practices between March 2021 – and present day

In the following questions we will ask you about the reading practices from March 2021 to the present day. We are trying to understand what your reading provision has looked like since learners returned to school, and what challenges you have been working through. Please answer these questions in relation to learners in Key Stage 3 and 4.

Q1.
   D. To what extent do you feel you have been able to begin to redress some of the
impact on learners' reading skills?

B. What approaches have you been using to support the reading development of learners over this period, and what ongoing challenges you are facing in relation to this?

Q2. **Considering the period since March 2021, when learners have typically been able to attend school, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *If the statements do not apply to your school or teaching, please select 'Not Applicable'.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Not Applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

There has still been significant disruption to our learners' reading provision

Reading activities have still been limited in comparison with before the pandemic

Our learners' confidence in reading has improved

Our learners' engagement in reading has improved

We have been able to begin to redress some of the impact on learners' reading skills

Q3. What elements of the provision you developed during the pandemic have you continued to do? *(E.g., aspects of remote/independent learning, parental engagement strategies, etc.,)*

Q4. What has been the biggest challenge for you since learners have returned to school?

Section 7: Looking to the future

As we recover from the disruptions of COVID-19, we would like to hear your thoughts on what needs to happen next. The findings of this survey will be shared directly with Welsh Government ministers (anonymously), so this presents an opportunity to have your voice heard and directly impact what is prioritised and what support is provided.

Q1. What do you think the priorities are for supporting your learners' reading skills?

Q2. What support would benefit you and your learners the most over the next few years?

APPENDIX B: Visual timeline of the two main lockdown periods

Autumn term 2019	Spring term 2020 to summer term 2020	Autumn term 2020	Spring term 2021	2021 – 2022 School year
Pre-pandemic, schools open as usual	Initial lockdown period March to July	Ongoing pandemic, but schools open as usual	Second lockdown period January - March 2021	Ongoing pandemic, but schools open as usual

Figure 11. Visual timeline of the two main Covid lockdown periods.

APPENDIX C: Additional Tables

Table 8. Proportion of learners reported to be in school from each Key Stage for Mainstream primary schools during both lockdown periods

Proportion of learners in school from each Key Stage	Initial Lockdown % [CI*]	Second Lockdown % [CI]
No, the proportion was similar across Key Stages	82.4 [66.1, 91.9]	75.2 [53.2, 80.1]
Yes, the proportion was higher in KS1	0 [0, 0]	7.9 [2.4, 23.1]
Yes, the proportion was higher in KS2	17.6 [8.1, 33.9]	16.9 [8.1, 31.9]

*Confidence Intervals

Table 9a. Characteristics of learners in mainstream primary school during each lockdown phase in comparison with pre-pandemic characteristics.

Differences in characteristics of learners who were typically in school compared to before the pandemic	First Lockdown % [CI*]	Second Lockdown % [CI]
Cohort mostly the same	45.7 [29.6, 62.7]	45.7 [30.2, 62.1]
Higher proportion of learners struggling with reading	8.7 [2.7, 24.5]	2.8 [0.4, 19.0]
Higher proportion of looked after children	2.3 [0.3, 15.9]	2.8 [0.4, 19.0]
Higher proportion of vulnerable children	11.6 [4.3, 27.6]	11.3 [4.2, 27.0]
Higher proportion of learners with an Individual Behaviour Plan	2.3 [0.3, 15.9]	0 [0, 0]
Other	6.9 [2.4, 18.4]	5.1 [1.2, 19.7]
Higher proportion were LAC *and* Higher proportion were VC	11.6 [4.2, 28.1]	10.7 [3.8, 26.8]
Higher proportion were VC *and* Higher proportion were learners with an IBP	5.2 [1.2, 20.1]	7.9 [2.4, 23.2]
Higher proportion were learners Struggling with Reading *and* Higher proportion were LAC *and* Higher proportion were VC	5.8 [1.4, 21.4]	0 [0, 0]
Higher proportion were LAC *and* higher proportion were VC *and* higher proportion were learners with an IBP	0 [0, 0]	5.1 [1.2, 19.5]
Higher proportion were learners Struggling with Reading *and* higher proportion were VC	0 [0, 0]	8.5 [2.7, 23.9]

Table 9b. Characteristics of learners in ALN schools during each lockdown phase in comparison with pre-pandemic characteristics.

Differences in characteristics of learners who were typically in school compared to before the pandemic	No. of schools First Lockdown	No. of schools Second Lockdown
Cohort mostly the same	2	3
Higher proportion of looked after children	1	
Higher proportion of looked after children *and* vulnerable children	2	1
Higher proportion of learners with social, emotional, and behavioural needs		1
Higher proportion of learners with physical and medical support needs		1

Table 10a. Prioritisation of different learner groups for a place in mainstream primary schools during each lockdown phase.

Prioritisation for a place in school	First Lockdown % [CI]	Second Lockdown % [CI]
Vulnerable children	2.8 [0.4, 18.6]	2.8 [0.4, 18.6]
Children of key workers	9.9 [3.6, 24.7]	2.2 [0.3, 15.2]
Learners with an IEP/IDP, and LAC, and VC, and children of key workers	8.3 [2.6, 23.4]	5.5 [1.3, 20.5]
LAC, and VC, and Children of key workers	26.0 [14.3, 42.5]	30.9 [18.1, 47.6]
Vulnerable children, and children of key workers	23.2 [11.9, 40.3]	25.4 [13.5, 42.7]
ALN, and LAC, and VC, and Children of key workers	8.3 [2.6, 23.4]	5.5 [1.3, 20.5]
ALN, and learners with an IEP/IDP, and LAC, and VC, and Children of key workers	8.8 [3.5, 20.5]	19.9 [9.9, 36.0]
Looked after children, and vulnerable children	2.2 [0.3, 15.2]	0 [0, 0]
ALN, and learners with an IEP/IDP, and VC, and Children of key workers	7.7 [2.3, 22.7]	5.0 [1.1, 19.3]
Looked after children, and Children of key workers	2.8 [0.4, 18.6]	0 [0, 0]
ALN, and learners with an IEP/IDP, and LAC, and VC, and Children of key workers	0 [0, 0]	19.9 [9.9, 36.0]
ALN, and children of key workers, and VC	0 [0, 0]	2.8 [0.4, 18.6]

*Confidence Intervals

Table 10b. Prioritisation of different learner groups for a place in ALN schools during each lockdown phase.

Prioritisation for a place in school	No. of schools First Lockdown	No. of schools Second Lockdown
Looked after children, vulnerable children, Children of Keyworkers	3	2
Looked after children, vulnerable children, Children of Keyworkers, Children with Social, Emotional, and Behavioural Needs	1	2
Vulnerable children, children of Keyworkers	1	1
Children with physical and medical support needs, Looked after children, Vulnerable children, Children of key workers, Children with social, emotional, and behavioural needs	1	1

Table 11. English language reading programmes and interventions used by mainstream primary schools.

Programmes or interventions in bold represent those that were also reported as being used by ALN schools.

*Programme or intervention that is on the UK govt list of validated programmes (5.8% of the total number of programmes or interventions listed here which exclude the school-based interventions in this list i.e NGRT- New Group Reading Test past papers).

Programme / intervention	Website	Electronic/ Online or Physical resources
Accelerated Reader	Accelerated Reader website	Online
Active Learn	Active Learn website	Online
Benchmark	Benchmark website	Physical and online resource
Big Cat guided reading programme	Big Cat guided reading programme website	Physical resource
Bug Club*	Bug Club website	Online
Catch Up Literacy - reading strategies	Catch Up Literacy - reading strategies website	Physical resource
Collins Primary Literacy for reading and spelling and writing	Collins Primary Literacy for reading and spelling and writing website For catalogue: Collins Big Cat catalogue website	Physical and online resource

COMET	No website available	Physical resource
Dandelion Readers (part of PhonicBooks®)	Phonics Books website	Physical resource
EAS Literacy Learning Pathways	The Educational Achievement Service website	No information available
Epic	Epic website	Online resource
Giglets	Giglets website	Online resource
Ginn Look and Say	Amazon website	Physical resource
Guided reading Rigby Scheme	Guided reading Rigby Scheme website	Physical and Online resources
Hairy Letters and Hairy Words	Hairy Letters and Hairy Words website	Online resource
Headsprout	Headsprout website	Online resource
Ictgames	Ictgames website	Online resource

Immersive Reader	Immersive Reader website	Online resource
Jolly Phonics	Jolly Phonics website	Online and Physical resources available
Khan Academy	Khan Academy website	Online resource
Letters and sound games	Letters and sound games website	Physical and online resource
Lighthouse Books	Lighthouse Books website	Online and physical resource
Literacy Catch up sessions		
Literacy pathways	Literacy pathways website	Physical and online resource
Literacy Shed Plus – newspaper, spelling shed	Literacy Shed Plus website	Online resource
MyOn	MyOn website	Online resource
NESSY	Nessy website	Online resource
NGRT- New Group Reading Test past papers	NGRT website	Online adaptive text.
Oxford owl	Oxford owl website	Online resource

Oxford Reading tree	Oxford Reading tree website	Online resource
Oxford Reading Tree (Books and App)	Oxford Reading Tree (Books and App) website	Online resource
PM books	PM books website	Online and physical resource
POPAT: Programme Of Phoneme Awareness Training	POPAT website	Physical – Teachers or staff need to complete the training to access the research.
Premier League Stars	Premier League Stars website	Physical with some online resources
Project X scheme	Project X scheme website	Physical and online resources
Purple Mash	Purple Mash website	Online resource
Rainbow Reading- Targeted at struggling readers	Rainbow Reading website	Physical with CD, for the audio of the books.
Rapid Readers	Rapid Readers website	Physical and some online resources
Read Write Inc*	Read Write Inc website	Online and Physical available
Reading Attack - Helen Bowen	Reading Attack website	No Information

'Reading Bugs' online reading platform	Reading Bugs website	Online and physical resource
Reading Eggs/ eggy spelling	Reading Eggs/ eggy spelling website	Online resource
Reading Recovery Benchmark (PM)(Assessment tool)	Reading Recovery Benchmark website	Physical and online resource
Reading Recovery levels	Reading Recovery levels website	Physical and online resource
Reading Stars	Reading Stars website	Physical resource with some online elements
Repeated Reading	No website available	Physical resource
Seeing AI	Seeing AI website	Online resource
Star Readers	Star Readers website	Online resource
Success in Six in Year 6.	Amazon website	Physical resource
Tackling The Tail of Underachievement	No information available	No information available
Teach your monster to read*	Teach your monster to read website	Online app
Toe-by-Toe	Toe-by-toe website	Physical resource

Topmarks	Topmarks website	Online resource
Usborne	Usborne website	Physical books and some online resources
Word Shark	Word Shark website	Online resource
Word Wasp: Word Articulation, Spelling and Punctuation.	Word Wasp website	Physical and online resource

Table 12. Welsh language reading programmes and interventions used by mainstream primary schools.

Programme / intervention	Description	Website	Electronic/Online or Physical resources
Cyw	Cyw, is a Welsh-language children's television block from S4C aimed at children between the ages of 2-5 years.	Cyw website	Online
Tric a chlic	Tric a chlic, is a Welsh synthetic phonics system.	Tric a chlic website	Online and physical materials available.
Fflic a Fflac	Fflic a Fflac, is a Welsh language television show that also has accompanying physical reading resources available.	Fflic a Fflac website	Online and physical materials available.
Unnamed school / consortia / LEA developed programmes / schemes	None available	None available	None available

Table 13. Additional reading programmes and interventions used by ALN schools.

None of the interventions/programmes reported to be used in ALN schools are on the current UK/Westminster govt list of validated programmes

Programme / intervention	Description	Website	Electronic/Online or Physical resources
Phonics play	Website with interactive phonics games and related resources and teaching ideas	Phonics play website	Online
Education City	Online dashboard with a range of resources to cover all areas of the curriculum	Education City website	Online
Narrative Intervention	Language intervention involving learners telling or re-telling stories with specific language-related features identified for targeting with each learner	N/A (general approach rather than specific commercially available resource)	Physical resources
Language 4 Thinking	Designed to develop learners' language,	Language 4 Thinking website	Physical resources

	verbal reasoning, and thinking skills. Learners aged 4-7, or ALN learners		
Black Sheep Resources	Series of resources designed to develop learners' speech and language skills (targeted for ALN learners)	[Black Sheep Resources website](#)	Electronic/Online and Physical resources
ELKLAN	Speech and language support from age 0. Resources designed for children and adults with ALN	[ELKLAN website](#)	Physical resources

Table 14. Provision of technology and materials for learners at home

We were able to provide learners with a suitable device to access their learning from home if required	% [CI]
Yes	77.7 [65.7, 86.4]
No	2.7 [0.7, 9.6]
In some cases, but not for all learners who needed it	19.6 [11.5, 31.4]
The school were able to supply reading materials to all household	
Yes	51.0 [38.6, 63.4]
No	17.1 [9.4, 29.1]
In some cases, but not for all learners who needed it	31.9 [21.4, 44.4]

Table 15. Reported extent to which parents and carers of struggling readers helped children to meet reading targets

	First Lockdown	Second Lockdown
Parents and carers of children struggling with reading helped their child to meet the targets set for them	n=65	n=61
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	1.7 [0.2, 7.5]	2.8 [0.7, 11,1]
Strongly Disagree	23 [14, 35.3]	21 [12.3, 33.5]
Disagree	27.7 [17.8, 40.4]	19.9 [11.5, 32.3]
Neither agree nor disagree	27 [17.5, 39.2]	28.8 [18.7, 41.7]
Agree	13 [6.5, 24.3]	20.7 [12, 33.2]
Strongly Agree	7.7 [3.1, 17.7]	6.8 [2.5, 17.1]

APPENDIX D: Data with Confidence Intervals and base numbers (mainstream school survey)

Table 16. Impact of the first and second lockdowns on the reading provision for learners at home (mainstream primary schools)

	First lockdown	Second lockdown
Reading provision changed for learners at home	n = 65	n = 62
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	0 [0, 0]	1.4 [0.2, 9.7]
Disagree	1.7 [0.2, 11.5]	5.9 [2.2, 15.3]
Neither agree nor disagree	6.0 [2.2, 15.3]	5.9 [2.2, 15.0]
Agree	50.0 [37.7, 62.3]	68.9 [56.6, 79.0]
Strongly agree	42.3 [30.6, 55.0]	17.8 [10.0, 29.9]
*No direct teaching of reading comprehension strategies was possible for KS2 learners at home	n = 35	n = 33
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	2.5 [0.3, 17.0]	5.9 [1.3, 22.6]
Disagree	51.9 [34.6, 68.7]	56.8 [38.3, 73.6]
Neither agree nor disagree	16.7 [7.4, 33.5]	6.5 [1.5, 23.8]
Agree	22.8 [11.5, 40.2]	20.9 [9.9, 38.8]
Strongly agree	6.2 [1.4, 23.5]	9.8 [3.1, 27.0]
*The approach to teaching reading comprehension strategies changed for learners at home	n = 35	n = 32
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]	3.4 [0.4, 22.3]
Strongly disagree	0 [0, 0]	0 [0, 0]
Disagree	4.9 [1.1, 19.1]	11.5 [4.1, 28.3]
Neither agree nor disagree	12.9 [5.2, 28.5]	12.2 [4.3, 29.7]
Agree	70.4 [53.1, 83.3]	62.8 [44.5, 78.1]
Strongly agree	11.7 [4.1, 29.4]	10.1 [3.2, 27.7]
Frequency of phonics sessions decreased considerably for learners at home	n = 65	n = 62
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	1.7 [0.2, 11.5]	1.8 [0.2, 12.0]
Strongly disagree	4.3 [1.3, 13.2]	1.8 [0.2, 12.0]
Disagree	2.7 [0.7, 10.0]	12.2 [6.1, 23.1]
Neither agree nor disagree	6.3 [2.3, 16.4]	9.1 [4.1, 18.9]
Agree	51.0 [38.4, 63.5]	54.2 [41.4, 66.5]
Strongly agree	34.0 [23.0, 47.0]	21.0 [12.2, 33.6]

The length of phonics sessions decreased considerably for learners at home	n = 65	n = 62
	% [CI]	% [CI]
Not applicable	1.7 [0.2, 11.5]	1.8 [0.2, 12.0]
Strongly disagree	3.0 [0.7, 11.8]	1.4 [0.2, 9.7]
Disagree	0 [0, 0]	7.7 [3.1, 17.6]
Neither agree nor disagree	9.0 [4.0, 19.1]	10.8 [5.2, 21.3]
Agree	53.7 [40.9, 66.0]	57.4 [44.4, 69.4]
Strongly agree	32.7 [21.9, 45.7]	21.0 [12.2, 33.6]
Targeted provision for learners struggling with reading was not possible to continue with learners who were at home	n = 65	n = 62
	% [CI]	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	5.3 [2.0, 13.2]	3.1 [0.7, 12.4]
Disagree	13.0 [6.8, 23.4]	21.0 [12.4, 33.3]
Neither agree nor disagree	14.7 [7.7, 26.2]	16.8 [9.1, 29.0]
Agree	40.7 [29.1, 53.4]	47.9 [35.6, 60.5]
Strongly agree	26.3 [16.6, 39.1]	11.2 [5.3, 22.1]
It was possible to provide the same differentiation strategies as previously used for learners struggling with reading while learners were at home	n = 65	n = 62
	% [CI]	% [CI]
Not applicable	3.3 [0.8, 12.7]	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	31.3 [21.5, 43.3]	33.2 [22.7, 45.8]
Disagree	31.0 [20.5, 43.9]	21.3 [12.7, 33.5]
Neither agree nor disagree	13.7 [7.1, 24.8]	18.5 [10.7, 30.2]
Agree	15.0 [8.1, 26.0]	23.8 [14.5, 36.4]
Strongly agree	5.7 [2.1, 14.4]	3.1 [0.7, 12.3]

*Item assessed only for KS2 teachers

Table 17. Reported differential impact on English and Welsh medium provision (mainstream primary schools)

	First lockdown	Second lockdown
English language reading provision was impacted more negatively than Welsh language reading provision for learners at home	n = 63	n = 60
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	11.0 [5.2, 21.9]	12.6 [6.3, 23.7]
Strongly disagree	20.3 [13.3, 29.8]	28.9 [19.6, 40.3]
Disagree	34.7 [23.9, 47.4]	20.9 [12.4, 33.1]
Neither agree nor disagree	16.8 [9.4, 28.3]	24.2 [14.9, 36.8]
Agree	14.1 [7.3, 25.5]	11.9 [5.7, 23.4]
Strongly agree	3.1 [0.7, 12.2]	1.4 [0.2, 10.0]
Welsh language reading provision was impacted more negatively than English language reading provision for learners at home	n = 65	n = 62
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	11.7 [5.8, 22.0]	15.7 [8.5, 27.3]
Strongly disagree	1.7 [0.2, 11.5]	3.5 [0.9, 13.3]
Disagree	3.3 [0.8, 12.7]	3.1 [0.7, 12.4]
Neither agree nor disagree	15.0 [8.0, 26.2]	16.4 [9.0, 28.2]
Agree	31.0 [20.5, 43.9]	30.4 [19.9, 43.4]
Strongly agree	37.3 [26.3, 49.8]	30.8 [20.7, 43.1]

Table 18. Impact on reading provision for learners in school (mainstream primary schools)

	First lockdown	Second lockdown
Typical reading provision was different to reading provision pre-pandemic	n = 64	n = 62
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	9.8 [4.3, 20.7]	3.5 [0.8, 13.3]
Strongly disagree	1.7 [0.2, 11.6]	0 [0, 0]
Disagree	5.7 [2.3, 13.7]	14.3 [7.4, 25.8]
Neither agree nor disagree	1.3 [0.2, 9.4]	7.7 [3.1, 17.7]
Agree	52.7 [39.9, 65.1]	50.9 [38.3, 63.4]
Strongly agree	28.7 [18.6, 41.6]	23.7 [14.5, 36.3]
Typical reading provision was different to what peers were receiving at home	n = 65	n = 63
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	9.7 [4.3, 20.5]	3.4 [0.8, 13.1]
Strongly disagree	5.7 [2.1, 14.6]	11.7 [5.6, 22.7]
Disagree	17.7 [10.1, 29.0]	26.5 [17.0, 38.8]
Neither agree nor disagree	15.7 [8.5, 27.1]	6.2 [2.3, 15.8]
Agree	37.7 [26.4, 50.5]	36.1 [25.2, 48.5]
Strongly agree	13.7 [7.0, 25.0]	16.2 [8.7, 28.1]
Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who knew them	n = 65	n = 63
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	9.7 [4.3, 20.5]	3.4 [0.8, 13.1]
Strongly disagree	12.7 [6.2, 24.0]	6.2 [2.2, 16.0]
Disagree	17.0 [9.3, 28.9]	6.9 [2.5, 17.4]
Neither agree nor disagree	6.3 [2.3, 16.1]	4.8 [1.5, 14.4]
Agree	37 [25.8, 49.9]	44.7 [32.6, 57.5]
Strongly agree	17.3 [10.0, 28.2]	34.0 [23.3, 46.6]
Learners in school were typically working with members of staff who were aware of their reading abilities	n = 65	n = 63
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	9.7 [4.3, 20.5]	3.4 [0.8, 13.1]
Strongly disagree	22.3 [13.5, 34.7]	9.6 [4.3, 20.3]
Disagree	12.3 [6.1, 23.3]	6.9 [2.5, 17.4]

Neither agree nor disagree	15.3 [8.2, 26.8]	11.7 [5.5, 23.1]
Agree	28.7 [18.7, 41.3]	44.0 [32.2, 56.5]
Strongly agree	11.7 [6.0, 21.4]	24.4 [15.5, 36.2]
Learners in school receiving targeted provision were typically working with members of staff who were experienced in delivering the provision	n = 64	n = 63
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
Not applicable	11.5 [5.4, 22.7]	3.4 [0.8, 13.1]
Strongly disagree	20.6 [12.0, 33.0]	11.0 [5.2, 21.9]
Disagree	10.8 [5.1, 21.6]	5.2 [1.6, 15.4]
Neither agree nor disagree	11.2 [5.2, 22.3]	11.3 [5.3, 22.6]
Agree	34.1 [23.3, 46.9]	44.3 [32.2, 57.1]
Strongly agree	11.8 [6.1, 21.6]	24.7 [15.5, 37.1]

Table 19. Overall impact of the pandemic on reading skills for learners at home and in school (mainstream primary schools)

	Learners at home	Learners in school
Impact on reading skills	n = 64	n = 64
	% [CI]	**% [CI]**
No negative impact	0 [0, 0]	7.5 [3.0, 17.1]
Small negative impact	14.6 [7.7, 26.0]	29.5 [19.4, 42.1]
Moderate negative impact	39.0 [27.9, 51.3]	33.9 [23.0, 46.8]
Large negative impact	46.5 [34.3, 59.0]	29.2 [19.1, 41.9]

Table 20. Differential impact on reading skills and confidence for learners at home compared with learners in school (mainstream primary schools)

Reading skills of learners who were at home have been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school	n = 63
	% [CI]
Not applicable	3.1 [0.7, 12.2]
Strongly disagree	3.1 [0.7, 12.1]
Disagree	16.5 [9.1, 28.2]
Neither agree nor disagree	30.6 [20.1, 43.5]
Agree	28.5 [18.9, 40.6]
Strongly agree	18.2 [10.2, 30.5]
Reading confidence of learners at home has been impacted more negatively than learners who were in school	n = 62
	% [CI]

Not applicable	3.1 [0.7, 12.3]
Strongly disagree	4.9 [1.5, 14.6]
Disagree	19.5 [11.3, 31.5]
Neither agree nor disagree	21.6 [13.0, 33.6]
Agree	36.6 [25.7, 49.1]
Strongly agree	14.3 [7.3, 26.0]

Table 21. Stage of reading acquisition and impact (mainstream primary schools)

Reading skills of learners who might be described as beginning readers who were at home during the pandemic, have been impacted more negatively than beginning readers who were in school.	n = 63
	% [CI]
Not applicable	3.1 [0.7, 12.2]
Strongly disagree	4.5 [1.4, 13.6]
Disagree	13.1 [6.6, 24.3]
Neither agree nor disagree	16.2 [8.6, 28.2]
Agree	39.2 [27.6, 52.0]
Strongly agree	24.1 [14.8, 36.7]
Reading skills of all learners who had already developed good decoding skills were less impacted than beginning readers	n = 63
	% [CI]
Strongly agree	24.1 [14.8, 36.7]
Strongly disagree	6.2 [2.2, 16.1]
Disagree	7.9 [3.3, 17.9]
Neither agree nor disagree	17.5 [9.9, 29.2]
Agree	60.1 [46.9, 72.0]
Strongly agree	8.3 [3.3, 19.0]
Reading skills of learners struggling with reading who were at home have been impacted more negatively than those learners not struggling with reading	n = 63
	% [CI]
Not applicable	1.4 [0.2, 9.6]
Strongly disagree	1.4 [0.2, 9.5]
Disagree	5.2 [1.6, 15.0]
Neither agree nor disagree	12.7 [6.3, 24.1]
Agree	49.5 [37.1, 62.0]
Strongly agree	29.9 [19.5, 42.9]
*Reading skills of learners transitioning to secondary school have been negatively impacted more than other learners	n = 33

	% [CI]
Not applicable	2.6 [0.3, 17.9]
Strongly disagree	9.2 [3.2, 23.5]
Disagree	22.2 [10.9, 40.0]
Neither agree nor disagree	60.1 [41.1, 76.5]
Agree	3.3 [0.4, 21.8]
Strongly agree	2.6 [0.3, 17.9]
*Reading skills of learners in upper KS2 were more negatively impacted that learners in lower KS2	n = 30
	% [CI]
Not applicable	2.9 [0.4, 19.5]
Strongly disagree	12.9 [4.6, 31.6]
Disagree	44.6 [27.1, 63.6]
Neither agree nor disagree	36.7 [20.5, 56.5]
Agree	0 [0, 0]
Strongly agree	2.9 [0.4, 19.5]

*Item included only for KS2 learners

Table 22. Learner characteristics and impact (mainstream primary schools)

The Welsh reading skills of learners who were at home who live in non-Welsh speaking households have been impacted more negatively than those from Welsh speaking homes	n = 62
Not applicable	18.5 [10.7, 30.0]
Strongly disagree	0 [0, 0]
Disagree	0 [0, 0]
Neither agree nor disagree	11.5 [5.5, 22.4]
Agree	26.5 [16.6, 39.5]
Strongly agree	43.6 [31.6, 56.4]
Reading skills of vulnerable/disadvantaged learners have been impacted more negatively than their peers	n = 61
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	1.4 [0.2, 9.8]
Disagree	7.1 [2.7, 17.6]
Neither agree nor disagree	5.0 [1.5, 14.8]
Agree	44.0 [31.8, 56.9]
Strongly agree	42.6 [30.4, 55.7]
Reading skills of learners for whom English is an additional language have been impacted more negatively than their peers	n = 63
	% [CI]
Not applicable	12.4 [6.0, 23.6]
Strongly disagree	0 [0, 0]
Disagree	5.8 [2.1, 15.1]
Neither agree nor disagree	19.2 [11.1, 31.3]

Agree	32.0 [21.2, 45.1]
Strongly agree	30.6 [20.0, 43.7]

Table 23. Levels of engagement of learners at home during the pandemic (mainstream primary schools)

Some learners at home did not engage with the reading provision at all	n = 65
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	1.3 [0.2, 9.3]
Disagree	4.7 [1.4, 14.0]
Neither agree nor disagree	1.3 [0.2, 9.3]
Agree	49.6 [37.5, 61.8]
Strongly agree	43.0 [31.6, 55.3]
Most learners at home engaged to some degree with the reading provision	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	6.4 [2.4, 16.4]
Disagree	32.2 [21.8, 44.7]
Neither agree nor disagree	11.2 [5.4, 21.8]
Agree	40.3 [29.4, 52.3]
Strongly agree	9.8 [4.4, 20.5]
Most learners at home engaged very well with the reading provision	n = 65
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	17.0 [9.6, 28.4]
Disagree	34.3 [23.4, 47.2]
Neither agree nor disagree	14.7 [8.5, 24.1]
Agree	31.0 [21.1, 43.0]
Strongly agree	3.0 [0.7, 11.8]

Table 24. Barriers and facilitators to engagement for learners at home (mainstream primary schools)

Not having access to a computer/laptop/tablet presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of learners at home	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	6.1 [2.2, 15.6]
Strongly disagree	5.7 [2.1, 14.8]
Disagree	7.8 [3.2, 17.7]
Neither agree nor disagree	12.5 [6.2, 23.6]
Agree	32.1 [21.5, 44.9]
Strongly agree	35.8 [25.1, 48.1]
Not having reliable Wi-Fi presented a significant barrier to engagement with reading provision for many of our learners at home	n = 63
	% [CI]
Not applicable	6.2 [2.3, 15.8]
Strongly disagree	4.5 [1.4, 13.6]
Disagree	9.3 [4.1, 19.7]
Neither agree nor disagree	10.3 [4.9, 20.5]
Agree	33.3 [22.4, 46.5]
Strongly agree	36.5 [25.5, 49.1]
Not having Welsh language input at home presented a significant barrier to engagement with Welsh language reading provision for many of our learners at home	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	18.6 [10.7, 30.6]
Strongly disagree	1.7 [0.2, 11.7]
Disagree	1.4 [0.2, 9.4]
Neither agree nor disagree	12.2 [6.1, 22.8]
Agree	26.1 [16.6, 38.6]
Strongly agree	40.0 [28.5, 52.8]
We had good levels of parental engagement in reading provision for most learners	n = 65
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	24.7 [15.7, 36.6]
Disagree	22.3 [14.1, 33.6]
Neither agree nor disagree	11.0 [5.1, 22.0]
Agree	36.0 [25.4, 48.1]
Strongly agree	6.0 [2.2, 15.6]
Many learners lacked interest in continuing their learning from home	n = 65
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	7.3 [3.0, 17.0]
Disagree	20.0 [11.9, 31.7]
Neither agree nor disagree	13.3 [6.9, 24.2]
Agree	42.7 [31.6, 54.6]
Strongly agree	16.7 [9.3, 28.0]
A lack of technological skills in parents or learners themselves presented a barrier for many learners	n = 65
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	2.7 [0.7, 9.5]
Disagree	6.0 [2.2, 15.6]
Neither agree nor disagree	22.0 [13.7, 33.3]
Agree	45.7 [33.7, 58.1]

Strongly agree	23.7 [14.6, 36.0]
A lack of technological skills in teacher or teaching assistants presented a barrier for many learners	n = 65
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	28.3 [19.0, 39.9]
Disagree	33.3 [22.8, 45.8]
Neither agree nor disagree	16.4 [9.0, 28.0]
Agree	20.3 [11.9, 32.6]
Strongly agree	1.7 [0.2, 11.5]

Table 25. Extent of ongoing disruption and impact on reading provision and skills (mainstream primary schools)

There has still been significant disruption to our learners' reading provision	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	15.2 [8.1, 26.9]
Disagree	37.3 [26.0, 50.1]
Neither agree nor disagree	13.9 [7.3, 24.9]
Agree	22.7 [13.8, 35.1]
Strongly agree	10.8 [5.0, 21.9]
Reading activities have still been limited in comparison with before the pandemic	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	25.1 [15.6, 37.8]
Disagree	52.9 [40.3, 65.1]
Neither agree nor disagree	6.4 [2.3, 16.6]
Agree	12.5 [6.2, 23.7]
Strongly agree	3.0 [0.7, 12.0]
Our learners' confidence in reading has improved	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	1.7 [0.2, 11.7]
Disagree	6.4 [2.3, 16.6]
Neither agree nor disagree	14.6 [7.6, 26.1]
Agree	63.7 [51.2, 74.6]
Strongly agree	13.6 [7.0, 24.7]
Our learners' engagement in reading has improved	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	0 [0, 0]
Disagree	1.7 [0.2, 11.7]
Neither agree nor disagree	21.5 [6.1, 23.9]
Agree	69.8 [57.0, 80.1]
Strongly agree	15.9 [8.5, 27.9]
We have been able to begin to redress some of the impact on learners' reading skills	n = 64
	% [CI]
Not applicable	0 [0, 0]
Strongly disagree	0 [0, 0]
Disagree	1.7 [0.2, 11.7]
Neither agree nor disagree	6.4 [2.5, 15.7]
Agree	72.2 [59.9, 81.9]
Strongly agree	19.6 [11.5, 31.5]