Today, sees the publication of our latest guidance report, *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*. Here, our chief executive, Sir Kevan Collins, introduces it, highlighting its key concept of 'disciplinary literacy', an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum...

Literacy is fundamental for success in school and beyond. Young people who leave school without good literacy skills are held back at every stage of their lives.

Last year, over 120,000 disadvantaged students made the transition from primary to secondary school below the expected standard for reading. The educational prospects for this group are bleak. If their progress mirrors previous cohorts, we would expect just 1-in-10 to achieve passes in English and maths at GCSE, and fewer than 2% to achieve the English Baccalaureate.

What, then, can secondary schools do to help turn this situation around?

Good literacy is, of course, key to academic success across the curriculum. Indeed, a recent EEF evidence review found that the strongest factor affecting pupils’ science attainment is how well they understand written texts.

Historically, however, many secondary school teachers have not seen themselves as literacy experts. Teaching children to read has been the domain of primary schools, or the responsibility of teachers in English department at a push. Some cross-curricular efforts have held promise, but, in most secondary schools, the challenge of literacy today is greater than ever.

Our latest guidance report, *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*, published today, argues for a change in tack. It emphasises that literacy in secondary school should not simply be seen as a basket of general skills. Instead, it must be grounded in the specifics of each subject.

In particular, the report emphasises the importance of ‘disciplinary literacy’, an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject specific, underlining the value of supporting teachers in every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects.

This focus on disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through its own unique language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing, doing, and communicating Science, Art, History, and every other subject in secondary school.

*Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools* offers seven practical, evidence-based recommendations, relevant to all students, based on this key concept of disciplinary literacy. It aims to support teachers in all subjects with strategies to help improve students read, write, and communicate effectively.

To develop the recommendations in this report, we not only reviewed the best available international research, but also consulted with teachers and other experts. It is part of a series providing guidance on literacy and provides a companion to the guidance presented in our reports on *Preparing for Literacy*, *Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1* and *Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2*.

As with all EEF guidance, publication is just the start of how we aim to support schools implement and apply recommendations in their context. We will be working with the sector, and in particular with our colleagues in the EEF’s *Research Schools Network*, to build on them with further training, resources and tools. Watch this space.
And, as ever, we will be looking to support and test the most promising programmes that put the lessons from the research into practice. Our hope is that this guidance will help to support a consistently excellent, evidence-informed education system in England that creates great opportunities for all children and young people, regardless of their family background.