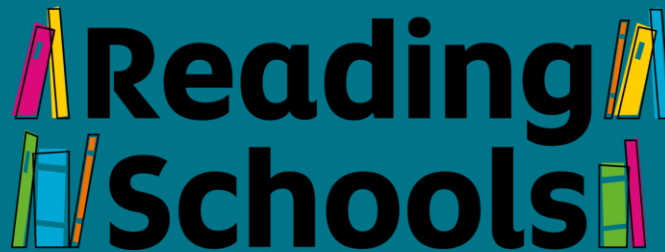


Introduction to Reading Schools, 2026-27

Thank you for joining us. The webinar
will begin shortly.



Today's session

- Joining us today:
 - Clara Owen, Reading Schools Co-ordinator
 - Emily Ilett, School Communities Learning Co-ordinator
- Session outline:
 - The importance of reading for pleasure
 - An introduction to Reading Schools
 - Film featuring participants on their Reading Schools journey
 - The impact of Reading Schools participation
 - Next steps to get involved
 - Questions



Reading for Pleasure (1)

Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's future success (OECD, 2002).

Reading offers:

- Comfort and connection
- Insight and understanding into other worlds and experiences
- Escapism
- Can reduce stress and anxiety
- Models good social skills
- A soothing wind-down to help us to sleep better

Reading is a social and emotional investment, with the potential for invaluable returns.

Reading for Pleasure (2)

Reading for pleasure has been shown to have **benefits on reading skills, spelling, general knowledge and school achievement** (Mol and Bus, 2011). Children also report numerous social benefits including **helping them relax, escape reality and develop empathy for others** (McGeown et al, 2020).

Reading for pleasure is **strongly influenced by relationships between teachers and children and children and families** (Cremin et al, 2009).

Reading for pleasure in all children may support the best possible chance for **good cognitive development and mental health** (Sun Y-J, Sahakian BJ, Langley C, et al., 2024)



Reading for Pleasure: attainment

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development found that **whether or not a child enjoys reading is more important to their educational success than their family background**

OECD. (2002). *Reading for change: performance and engagement across countries: results from PISA 2000*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

The 2009 PISA survey (OECD, 2010) shows that increasing reading engagement could **mitigate 30% of the attainment gap** associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

Sosu, E., & Ellis, S. (2014). *Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

It was found in one study of high school students in the USA that **those who said they read for pleasure showed higher grade averages in not only English, but also Mathematics and Science** subjects.

Whitten *et al.*, (2016). *The impact of Pleasure Reading on Academic Success*. Journal of Multidisciplinary Graduate Research.



Reading for Pleasure: empathy

A 2016 study found that **gaining an understanding of different people, countries and cultures** was seen to be the number one emotional benefit of reading, with as many as 57% of people agreeing that reading makes them **interested in the world outside their own**.

Billington, J. (2016). The untold power of the book. London: Reading Agency.

Two thirds of readers report **strong empathy** versus less than half of non-readers (48%). What's more, people who read for just 30 minutes a week are 23% **more likely to understand other people's feelings**.

Billington, J. (2015). Reading between the lines: the benefits of reading for pleasure. Liverpool: University of Liverpool.

*Books are a window on the wider world for our pupils and a tool to give context to learning. Children are excited about stories and now **show empathy in their responses**.*

Principal teacher, 2024/25 Evaluation



Reading for Pleasure: self-esteem and mental health

The Millennium Cohort Study found that reading for pleasure **increases self-esteem** at age 11, regardless of demographic, socioeconomic, and familial confounders.

Mak, H.W., & Fancourt, D. (2019). *Arts engagement and self-esteem in children: results from a propensity score matching analysis*. Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci. 1449, 36-45.

Children who are the most engaged with literacy **are three times more likely to have higher levels of mental wellbeing** than children who are the least engaged.

Clark, C., & Teravainen-Goff, A. (2018). *Mental wellbeing, reading and writing*. London: National Literacy Trust.

Research Evidence: Reading For Pleasure Impact - Reading Schools



Curriculum improvement cycle

Reading for enjoyment is one of 5 Big Ideas in the updated draft English and Literacy curriculum, with reading for pleasure also significant in developing skills within the other 4 Big Ideas.

'Schools who have participated in Scottish Book Trust's 'Reading Schools' programme have also reported that **intervening to increase young people's reading for enjoyment has impacted positively on learning and attainment and contributed to learners' wellbeing, empathy and creativity.**'

- CIC – Background and Evidence Paper – Literacy and English – May 2026



What is Reading Schools?

A national accreditation framework to recognise and reward schools for building and sustaining a whole-school reading culture in their setting.

- Supported
- Valuable
- Empowering
- Prestigious
- Community
- Fun

Reading Schools offers

- An **accreditation** that champions a **sustainable reading culture** for every school
- A **coherent structure** for all your reading initiatives, through a framework mapped to HGIOS4 to support **school improvement**
- **Resources, training and support** from Scottish Book Trust
- **Professional development and leadership** opportunities for staff
- Ways to champion **learner voice**, leadership and confidence
- **Opportunities to connect** within and across schools, and engage **families and your wider community**

'Links to HGIOS4 make it much easier to gain buy in from other staff and Senior Leadership Team.' **Class teacher, 2023/24 Evaluation**

How it works

- **Core:** the foundational work key to building a reading culture **in** school, focused on sustainable reading routines and the school environment
- **Silver:** additional opportunities for broadening learners' experiences, e.g., engaging with authors, visiting libraries, and bringing in **outside** expertise
- **Gold:** **sharing** your enthusiasm and expertise with your community through, for example, intergenerational book projects or local partnerships with other schools and businesses (Article: [Going for Gold](#))



What it looks like

- [Website](#)
- [Dashboard](#)
- [Framework](#)
- [How It Works](#)
- [Resources](#)
- Action Plan
- Evidence Plan
 - Comment
 - Photos
 - Quotes
- Accreditation!

scottishbooktrust.com

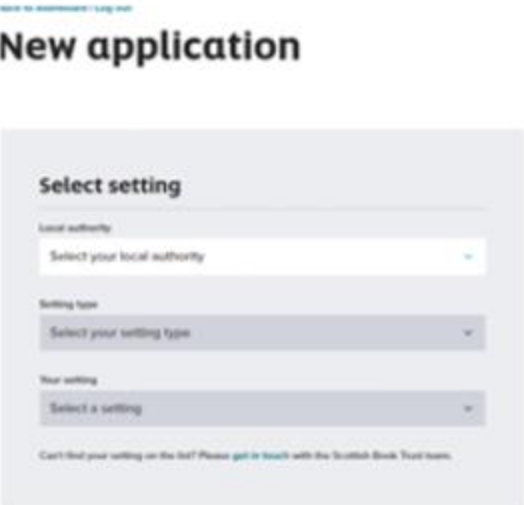


Getting started with our website and resources

Resource 14 August 2023

A webinar short video providing an overview of the Reading Schools website, focussing on the main features and general navigation.

[Read more →](#)



New application

Select setting

Local authority
Select your local authority

Setting type
Select your setting type

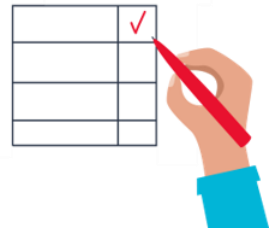
Your setting
Select a setting

Can't find your setting on the list? Please [get in touch](#) with the Scottish Book Trust team.

E-learning Module 2 – Gathering and submitting your evidence

A short, e-learning module supporting the gathering and submitting of evidence for your Reading Schools accreditation

The framework



1.2 Leadership of Learning

1.3 Leadership of Change

1.5 Management of resources
to promote equity

2.2 Curriculum

2.3 Learning, Teaching and
Assessment

2.5 Family Learning

2.7 Partnerships

3.2 Raising Attainment and
Achievement

- Reader role modelling
- Staff development
- School environment
- Access to high quality books
- Interdisciplinary book projects
- Creating social networks
- Engaging with authors
- Responding to reading
- Raising the profile of reading with families
- Rewarding progress and recognising personal achievements

The framework mapped to HGIOS 4 was the key selling point, giving the programme a qualitative rigor and allowing the same consistency of evaluation and improvement planning towards reading for enjoyment as in other areas of the school. Secondary librarian, 2024/25 Evaluation

The framework: how it works

Key Area 1.2.5 – Staff knowledge of contemporary children's literature

Developing staff across the school's knowledge of contemporary children's literature; helping staff to be able to recommend and discuss a range of reading materials relevant to the needs, interests, lives, identities, abilities and experiences of all their learners.

Reading School: Core	Reading School: Silver	Reading School: Gold
Schools should make staff aware of contemporary children's literature by completing the below mandatory action: Making staff aware of contemporary children's literature through signposting to new book lists and other appropriate resources	Sustain Core activity and: Schools should ensure that staff have access to contemporary children's literature to read in one of the below ways, or in another way that suits their setting: - Inviting your local librarian in to talk to staff about new reading materials available to them and ensuring they have a library card - Gifting contemporary children's reading material to each staff member, encouraging them to share across the team - Having a 'borrow box' in the staff room with regularly updated contemporary children's reading materials - Arranging a staff trip to a local bookshop to speak to booksellers about contemporary children's titles	Sustain Core and Silver-level activity and: Schools should create opportunities for staff to explore, share and discuss contemporary children's literature in one of the below ways, or in another way that suits their setting: - Introducing a staff book club - Providing physical areas for discussion, e.g. an interactive display board in the staff room - Providing online spaces for discussion - Taking part in, or establishing, local authority staff book clubs

Schools are asked to provide:

- Comments or observations on at least one activity completed per accreditation level
- A range of quotes from a mix of staff on how their knowledge of contemporary children's literature developed
- Silver** and **Gold** only – Photos of how you ensured access to contemporary children's literature for staff



Bannerman High School

Bannerman High School in Glasgow has started a Senior and Staff book club. The conversations between pupils and staff about books they have both read, or hope to read, have been so interesting. They also run an online book club via a Teams page.

- Scottish Book Trust**
inspiring readers and writers

Impact of participation

From staff:

‘Reading Schools has **given our learners a voice**, a sense of ownership and opportunities to share their love of books with others.

It has brought **enjoyment and engagement to pupils and staff** and has helped reading become a visible and valued **part of our wider school community**.’

- Class Teacher, Primary School

From learners:

‘**I didn't really enjoy reading** because I find it hard but being a [Reading Leader] has been **really good fun** this year. I've really liked **helping the P1's and P2's** when they come to the library and **I've started to read more at home** so that I can tell them what to read next.’

- P6 Reading Leader, Primary School



Impact summary



Feedback from 487 Reading Schools participating in the 2024/25 academic year.

Schools were **unanimous on the positive effects of Reading Schools activity**, many of whom are working towards subsequent accreditations.

Highlights were our **flexible** and **collaborative** framework, the positive impact on **learner engagement**, and the usefulness of the **Action Plan**.

96%

of participating learning professionals said pupils now enjoy reading



Impact of Reading Schools: attainment



In our evaluation:

- **97%** of accredited schools reported that **Reading Schools contributed to pupil attainment**
- **84%** of accredited schools reported that Reading Schools contributed to **reducing the poverty related attainment gap for pupils**

‘As a result of participating in Reading Schools, **attainment in reading in Primary 7 has risen from 67% to 100%**. Children who reported that they don’t like reading or have books at home now have regular access to contemporary children’s literature from the school and public library, with over 40 new library memberships taken out. This has **removed a barrier for families** who may not be able to buy books, reflecting our school’s commitment to equity for all.’ **Principal teacher, primary, 2024/25.**

‘RUAE attainment has improved to a **level above the national average** in both Higher and National 5 cohorts for the first time.’ **School librarian, secondary, 2024/25.**

Impact of Reading Schools: family engagement

[Schools] found that having **Reading Schools** as a focus helped contribute to parent / carer engagement priorities within their School Improvement Plan.

- 88% of accredited Reading Schools felt that the programme had a positive impact on engaging families and communities.

‘We’ve had the **highest numbers for family engagement through our Reading Cafes** than any other events in our school.’ **Principal teacher, primary 2025/26 Evaluation**

‘The volume of **conversations about books, reading and stories** has risen **over the years** we have taken part in Reading Schools. More and more families are chatting about reading, **and we have encountered so much warmth in our local community** when we take reading outside of the school gates. It makes us keen to keep on reaching (and reading!) out.’ **School librarian, secondary, 2025/26 Evaluation**



Impact of Reading Schools: inclusion

‘One of our learners with EAL can **struggle with literacy tasks**, and this can negatively impact on behaviour. Recently we read *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, and in discussion **the insight this child had** and the inferences they had deduced were astute. **It was clear they were able to analyse the images and interpret the meanings on a relatively deep level.** This lived experience of moving to a strange land made them the expert, and it was **wonderful to see them so engaged** and animated in this lesson.’

‘They’re consuming more than just the words – they really understand the underlying message. **They’re able to explain what they’re feeling and why they’re feeling it much more.**’ **Parent feedback, 2022/23 Evaluation**

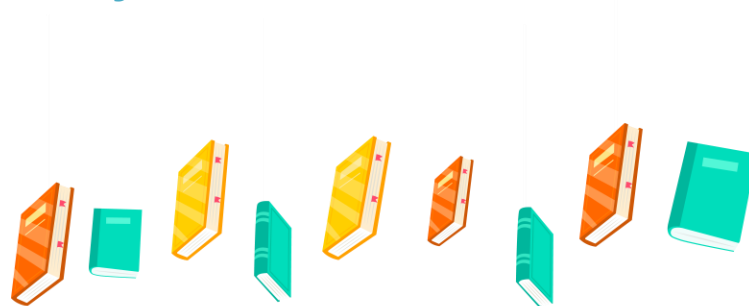
‘Reading Schools helps to **break down stereotypes** and some of the bad connotations of reading in school, like that it’s a chore or a job and not fun at all.’ **Secondary school pupil, 2023/24 Evaluation**



Impact of Reading Schools: wellbeing

‘Reading for pleasure has been **beneficial to our learners in a low SIMD area**, specifically. It has **supported their wellbeing** and allowed them to become **more resilient**, by extending opportunities for downtime and **escaping into their own world.**’ **Class teacher, 2023/24 Evaluation**

‘I think the biggest difference is in pupil Wellbeing, especially for pupils with difficulties in and outside school. It has led to **more conversations, better connections with other pupils (and staff) and noticeably happier young people.**’ **School librarian, secondary, 2024/25 Evaluation**



Why take part?

Most of all it can bring a school together around the power of stories.

‘It’s changed the mindset for a lot of children and now they share a love of reading. That’s the project’s legacy. That impact will be long-term.’
Principal teacher, primary school

Next steps to get started



- **Who?** Decide who will [create your Reading Schools account](#) – they'll be responsible for creating an Action Plan and submitting evidence.
- **What level?** Take the [Level quiz](#) to decide what level of [the Framework](#) you should work towards. [Introductory Shorts](#) available for each Key Area.
- **Which pupils?** Form your **Reading Leadership Group** of pupils and staff from across your school. You can use our [Assembly resource to talk to your pupils about Reading Schools](#) and see who is interested in [collaborating on the Action Planning](#). Start thinking about if you want to make a [funding application](#) together.
- **When?** Decide when and how often you'd like to meet, plan your [CLPL calendar](#) for any sessions you'd like to join, and put [Reading Schools Week](#) into your diary for November.
- **Wider community** – [Add “Reading Schools accreditation” to your School Improvement Plan](#), and let families know you're starting this journey.
- **And we're off..!** – Submit your Action Plan to receive your Welcome Pack and start [evidence collecting for your accreditation](#).

Reading Schools Fund

- Visit www.readingschools.scot/funding
- Open to **all state funded schools and grant-aided specialist provisions** in Scotland, with a **submitted and approved action plan**, who are actively working towards **Reading School accreditation** at **Core**, **Silver** or **Gold** level.
- **Application** plus input from your **Reading Leadership Group** – start discussing this with learners as soon as possible!
- Competitive grants of **up to £500** to be spent on **books or reading materials for your school** and/or **furnishings for reading spaces**
- Open **next week**, application deadline **Thursday 29 October 2026**

“

By giving our Reading Leadership Group responsibility for deciding how to spend the funding, we watched them develop their enthusiasm and leadership skills, not only considering their own interests and wishes, but also reflecting on what the rest of their peers wanted and needed as well.

2024/25 FUNDING FEEDBACK

Reading Schools Week: 16 – 20 November 2026

Reading
Schools
Week



16–20 November 2026

In November 2026, we mark our second national [Reading Schools Week](#) – a **five-day extravaganza** to **celebrate the incredible activity** taking place in Reading Schools across the country. Last year, **over 400 schools** and **100,000 learners got involved** - we can't wait to welcome you next!

Join in and

- **connect and share ideas with thousands of other Reading Schools**
- gift [Read Write Count bags](#)
- **create evidence** for your accreditation
- have **fun** with books and stories!

Open to **all schools** in Scotland, [register now](#) to take part!

You can expect

- **inspirational videos from authors**
- **interactive daily challenges** to get both learners and staff excited
- opportunities to **showcase your pupils' achievements**
- the chance to **win some fantastic prizes**

Be a part of our community

- Visit www.readingschools.scot/community
- Sign up to [our schools newsletter](#)
- Join our [Teachers Hub on Facebook](#)
- Read [Developing and Sustaining Reading for Pleasure: Practitioner enquiry posters](#) and [register interest in taking part in the course](#)
- Get in touch with our Regional Outreach Coordinators:
 - o Ella.mclellan@scottishbooktrust.com (Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire)
 - o Karen.henderson@scottishbooktrust.com (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire)
 - o Jen.grainge@scottishbooktrust.com (Highlands)

Practitioner enquiry poster examples

1. To what extent does the introduction of themed book displays in the construction and role-play areas increase independent engagement with non-fiction texts in a P1/2 classroom?

by Aisha Pollock, P1/2 Class Teacher, Uplawmoor Primary School

This enquiry highlights the importance of embedding non-fiction texts within meaningful play contexts and suggests children are more likely to engage with books when they're linked to hands-on, interest-led learning experiences.

[Download poster 1 →](#)

Scottish Book Trust

We are a national charity that has been bringing the transformational benefits of reading and writing to everyone in Scotland since 1998.



We believe books, reading and writing have the power to change lives. A love of reading **inspires creativity**, improves **employment opportunities**, **mental health** and **wellbeing** and is one of the most effective ways to help **break the poverty cycle**.

Research:

Published – [The value and impact of Scotland's public libraries](#)

Open – [Readers of Scotland](#), 'a research project aimed at exploring readers' experiences', x4 surveys yearly, National Book Tokens to be won..!

scottishbooktrust.com

We are a charity

Lucy has never
shared a bedtime
story with
Winnie-the-Pooh



Too many children in Scotland do not have books at home.
Books bring families together, comfort children and inspire joy.

Donate now to give the life-changing magic of books
to a child like Lucy.

scottishbooktrust.com/donate



Scottish charity, SC027669



Decorations by E.H. Shepherd,
taken from *Winnie-the-Pooh*

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**Scottish
Book Trust**
inspiring readers and writers

Thank you

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