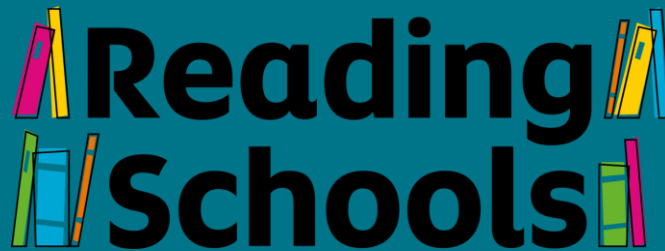


# Introduction to Reading Schools, 2025-26

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



# Today's session

- Joining us today:
  - Clara Owen, Reading Schools Co-ordinator
  - Liam McCallum, Reading Schools Project Manager
- Session outline:
  - The importance of reading for pleasure
  - An introduction to the Reading Schools programme
  - Film 'premiere', featuring participants on their Reading Schools journey
  - The impact of Reading Schools participation
  - Next steps to get involved
  - Questions



# 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](#)

scottishbooktrust.com



**Scottish  
Book Trust**  
inspiring readers and writers

# 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 of 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.





# 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.



- Easy
- Valuable
- Empowering
- Prestigious
- Community
- Fun

# Reading Schools offers

- An **accreditation** that champions the **reading culture** for every school
- A **coherent structure** for all your reading initiatives, through a framework mapped to HGIOS 4 to support **school improvement** and HMIE inspections
- **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](#))


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# What it looks like

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

scottishbooktrust.com



The screenshot shows the Reading Schools website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Reading Schools' and links for 'About' and 'Contact us'. The main heading is 'Helping schools build and sustain a reading culture'. Below this, a subheading reads: 'An accreditation programme for schools that are committed to building a culture of reading for their learners and communities. It is brought to you by Scottish Book Trust.' There are two buttons: 'Sign up' and 'How it works'.

## 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 →](#)

[Back to dashboard](#) | [Log out](#)

## New application

### Select setting

Local authority

Select your local authority ▼

Setting type

Select your setting type ▼

Your setting

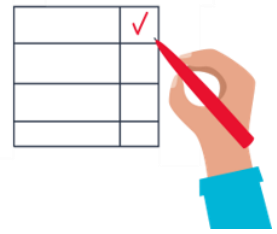
Select a setting ▼

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
<p>Schools should make staff aware of contemporary children’s literature by completing the below <b>mandatory action</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making staff aware of contemporary children’s literature through signposting to new book lists and other appropriate resources</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sustain Core activity</b> and:</p> <p>Schools should ensure that staff have access to contemporary children’s literature to read in <b>one of the below ways, or in another way that suits their setting</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inviting your local librarian in to talk to staff about new reading materials available to them and ensuring they have a library card</li> <li>Gifting contemporary children’s reading material to each staff member, encouraging them to share across the team</li> <li>Having a ‘borrow box’ in the staff room with regularly updated contemporary children’s reading materials</li> <li>Arranging a staff trip to a local bookshop to speak to booksellers about contemporary children’s titles</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sustain Core and Silver-level activity</b> and:</p> <p>Schools should create opportunities for staff to explore, share and discuss contemporary children’s literature in <b>one of the below ways, or in another way that suits their setting</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing a staff book club</li> <li>Providing physical areas for discussion, e.g. an interactive display board in the staff room</li> <li>Providing online spaces for discussion</li> <li>Taking part in, or establishing, local authority staff book clubs</li> </ul>

### 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

### ExemplarS Edition 2

#### 1.2.3 Staff being seen as readers themselves



ExemplarS Edition 2:  
Primary Reading Schools

[Read more →](#)



ExemplarS Edition 2:  
Secondary Reading Schools

[Read more →](#)



### Northmuir Primary

Mr Laird, the janitor at Northmuir Primary in Angus, was presented with the ‘Staff Bookworm of the Term’ award by the P1 Reading Champions.



### 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.

# Opportunities

- Links with local / national schools
- Community events
- [Author Ambassadors](#)
- Reading Schools Week, 2–6 February 2026
- [Funding opportunities](#)



Join the  
**#ReadingSchools**  
Community



## Celebrating Literacy and Achievement in East Dunbartonshire

Article 19 June 2025

Inspiring pupils, teachers and communities in East Dunbartonshire

[Read more →](#)



## Building cluster connections through Read, Write, Count with the First Minister and Reading Schools

Article 7 February 2025

Hear from Morgan Academy in Dundee about the creative ways they have developed their reading culture and engaged the whole school community with their library.

[Read more →](#)

## Reading Schools visit the Isle of Lewis

Building connections between schools, libraries and communities in the Western Isles.

Type: Announcements

Audience: Gaelic Medium Education (GME), Rural



Total accredited Reading Schools:

608

★  
Early Learning and  
Childcare  
7

★  
Core  
250

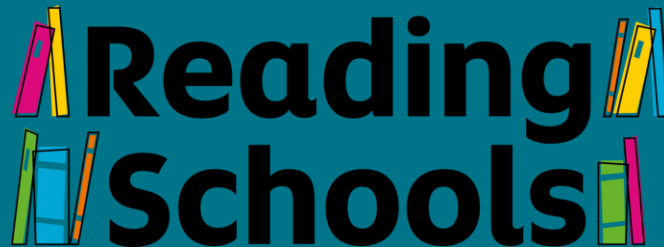
★  
Silver  
189

★  
Gold  
162

📍 561 schools are currently working towards their first accreditation.

# Reading Schools Film Premiere

*Featuring 2024/25 Reading Schools  
participants – teachers, senior management,  
librarians, pupils and parents.*







# Impact of participation

## On staff:

'From making it the heart of our reading culture in each classroom, to encouraging and **sharing a love of reading with the community**, our work has underpinned our drive to make [our school] a Reading School. From working with individuals to whole stages across more than one school, we have all benefitted from being part of the programme. We have seen **improvements in attainment, attitudes and participation** which have meant not only has the work been successful, but **sustainable** too.'

**- Head Teacher, Primary School**

## On learners:

'I have **gained so much confidence and become so proud** of the fact that I enjoy reading [. . .] I also **thoroughly enjoyed** the aspect of interacting with younger pupils, and **it felt empowering** to leave them with inspiration on what to read but also who to be when they are S6s themselves.'

**- S6 Reading Leader, Secondary School**



# A clear map for improvement

“We were **inspected by HMIE** and they spent a significant amount of time talking to us about the Reading Schools programme and how **our young people, staff and community were benefitting** from it; they absolutely **loved the fact that the school was devoting so much time and energy to this project** and reaping the benefits.”

**- Linda Nisbet, Whitburn Academy**



# Impact of Reading Schools: attainment



In our 2024/25 evaluation;

- **99%** (247) of Granted schools reported that **Reading Schools contributed to pupil attainment**
- **92%** (220) of Granted 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 in the Evaluation]* found that having **Reading Schools as a focus helped contribute to the parental engagement priority within their School Improvement Plan**. Through Reading Schools they have invited parents to read-along sessions, held sharing sessions on reading and writing, ran workshops around gifting the Bookbug and Read, Write, Count bags, asked for parent/carer volunteers to share stories about their work and their culture, and shared bedtime stories for parents to read with their children.

**“Feedback from families has been very positive**, and parents tell us that their children now talk about books and what they've read. The workshops for families on reading run by our DHT have become very popular.” **Class teacher, primary, 2024/25 Evaluation.**

Recording: Shared Practice – Engaging Families

Resource: My Life as a Reader discussion prompt

scottishbooktrust.com



# 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**

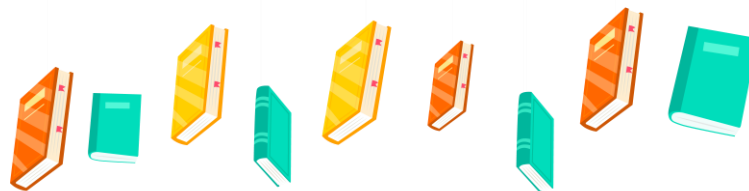


# Impact of Reading Schools: wellbeing

All accredited Reading Schools in the 2024/25 Evaluation found that the programme positively contributed to pupil Wellbeing, with 41% reporting that this impact was “a lot”.

“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 online Reading Schools account](#) – they'll be responsible for creating an Action Plan and uploading evidence. You can have as many contributors as you like, so it's worth sharing the load!
- **What level?** Take the [Level quiz](#) to get a sense of what level of [the Framework](#) you should work towards. [Introductory Shorts](#) available for every Key Area.
- **Which pupils?** Start pulling together your **Reading Leadership Group** of pupils and staff from across your school who can shape your delivery. You can use our [Assembly resource to talk to your pupils about Reading Schools](#) and see who is interested in joining and [collaborating on the Action Planning](#).
- **When?** Decide when you'd next like to meet to discuss what you'd like to deliver, and plan your [CLPL calendar](#) for any sessions you'd like to join.
- **Wider community** – [Add "Reading Schools accreditation" to your School Improvement Plan](#), and let families know you're starting this journey and why! You'll need to get them involved.
- **And we're off..!** – Submit your Action Plan to receive your Welcome Pack and start [evidence collecting for your accreditation](#) journey!

# Be a part of our community

- Visit [www.readingschools.scot/community](http://www.readingschools.scot/community)
- Join [the Scottish Book Trust Schools Teams network](#)
- Read [Developing and Sustaining Reading for Pleasure: Practitioner enquiry posters](#)

“

My Reading Leadership Group really appreciated the chance to share what they have been doing – it made my group feel like they had a bigger worth than just being a school group, because they are a part of a bigger picture across Scotland! It created a buzz in school and others are starting to prick their ears up and wanting to get involved.

CLASS TEACHER, PRIMARY SCHOOL

Have an idea of your own to share?

Get in touch →

## How do you become a part of our Reading Schools community?

That's easy – register with Reading Schools to get your application started, and explore the website or join our [live and recorded webinars](#) to meet other schools. Look out for opportunities to get involved in fun events with your Reading Leadership Group throughout the term, too!

Ready to sign up?

Register here →

## 1. What impact does the use of audiobooks have on children's level of enjoyment when reading?

This enquiry focused on the impact of using audiobooks through Bug Club, finding that children's enjoyment of reading increased and they were more confidently engaging in discussion about the texts.

Download poster 1 →

## 2. Will a refreshed whole school approach to library time improve motivation for reading?

by Hannah Guy, Principal Teacher, Argyll and Bute

After revamping the school library with input from pupils, Hannah Guy found that pupils across the school were much more positive about spending time in the library and found books they liked more easily.

Download poster 2 →

## 3. Does having access to reading for pleasure books in the playground contribute to an increase in reading enjoyment for primary aged children?

by Linda McGregor, Principal Teacher, Highland

After introducing 'book trolleys' into the playground twice a week, Linda McGregor reflected on the impact on learners' reading for pleasure and found an increase in enjoyment amongst the infant classes.

Download poster 3 →

# Reading Schools Fund

- Visit [www.readingschools.scot/funding](http://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 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 **now**, application deadline **31 October 2025** 🍁

“

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

# Upcoming Reading Schools PL

- The Reading Schools self-paced e-learning modules:
  - [Introduction to Reading Schools](#)
  - [Gathering and submitting your evidence](#)
- Shared practice events:
  - [Shared Reading: A practice to support reading for pleasure](#) – Wednesday 29 October, 4.30-5.30pm
- Start and Spark support sessions (4.30-5.30pm):
  - Wednesday 1 October – [evidencing your activity](#)
  - *On the first Wednesday of the month, live community discussion*
- Other [Scottish Book Trust Professional Learning](#):
  - [SLG Scotland x Scottish Book Trust: Making the most of your Story Deck](#) – Wednesday 17 September, 4-5pm
  - [Running a Paired Reading Project: Read Write Count with the First Minister](#) – Tuesday 30 September, 4-5pm



# Any questions..?

Pop them in the chat or unmute and speak with us!



# We appreciate your feedback

Please take a second to complete our quick survey here:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T  
H57YKL](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T<br/>H57YKL)



You can find details of [the changes we've made based on your feedback](#) on our website!

# Thank you

[clara.owen@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:clara.owen@scottishbooktrust.com)

[liam.mccallum@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:liam.mccallum@scottishbooktrust.com)

[readingschools@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:readingschools@scottishbooktrust.com)

