

Here's what you can achieve with the First Minister's Reading Challenge

The First Minister's Reading Challenge is a national initiative helping schools, public libraries and community groups to build and sustain reading cultures which encourage young people to develop a life-long love of reading.



“Children’s reading age has improved significantly over the year. Some pupils have improved by up to two years in comparison to their chronological age.”

Teacher

Raise attainment in literacy and across the curriculum

Reading engagement matters and the research provides us with hard evidence. Professor Sue Ellis, Strathclyde University, summarises the importance of developing a culture of reading:

“Low reading engagement is associated with low attainment and that attainment rises amongst pupils who report ‘sometimes reading for pleasure’. For pupils who often read for pleasure, attainment rises again and in this group, and this group only, the attainment gap associated with poverty narrows...”

“The First Minister’s Reading Challenge, in its focus on reading for pleasure, sharing recommendations and personal choice, offers schools across Scotland an opportunity to dedicate themselves to building engagement in reading year on year. Evaluating current practices around reading, learning from the best practice of other schools and creating a reading culture to interest and engage pupils is an ongoing process, but an important one.”

[Read Sue’s full blog here](#)

Teachers and pupils who have taken part in the First Minister’s Reading Challenge have reported improvements in pupil vocabulary, spelling, storytelling, confidence in reading aloud, comprehension and creative writing skills.



Improve pupil health and wellbeing

Developing a love of reading at a young age can give children a life-long interest and is an excellent strategy to help them regulate their emotions and energy. In our 2018 evaluation, teachers, pupils and parents noted the positive impact that building in regular time for reading for pleasure has had on wellbeing.

“It’s nice to read just for fun as well, because when you read a book your mind just gets lost in the journey... and it relaxes me.”

Pupil

“I had quite a difficult class and they needed a lot of ‘calming down’ time between classes and breaks. I’ve been using reading to help this.”

Teacher

Map your progress to your School Improvement Plan

Our toolkit, aligned with HIGIOS?4 and tested by primary and secondary teachers, makes the evaluation process as easy as possible by showing how building a reading culture can be clearly mapped to your School Improvement Plan.

“It helped us to evaluate our impact in relation to our School Improvement Plan and to ensure that we are meeting our objectives for the year in raising attainment in Literacy and Health & Wellbeing. The toolkit is a great balance of providing guidance and ideas without being too prescriptive. This means that we have even more ideas for next year but at the same time we are free to plan in a way that meets the needs of our school and community.”

Teacher

[Access the toolkit here](#)