

First Minister's Reading Challenge



First Minister's Reading Challenge Year 2 evaluation brief

Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity that believes 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 children escape the poverty cycle.

More information about Scottish Book Trust can be found [here](#), along with a copy of the Annual Review.

Background

The First Minister's Reading Challenge is a programme for P1–7 pupils, funded by Scottish Government and delivered by Scottish Book Trust. The project was launched in September 2017 for P4–7 pupils, and was expanded to include P1–3 pupils in 2017/18.

Research is clear on the impact of reading for pleasure on children's longer-term outcomes: reading for pleasure is positively associated with and contributes to outcomes such as higher levels of future attainment (in literacy and other curriculum areas), personal wellbeing and civic participation.

This programme aims to achieve those positive outcomes for children by encouraging them to develop and sustain the habit of reading for pleasure through supporting the development of reading cultures in schools and communities. Schools that register to take part in the programme can access resources and support for teachers and pupils, and are eligible to submit details of their work around the programme for consideration for an award in a number of categories.

Further information, including an [independent evaluation](#) of the first year of the programme, can be found at www.readingchallenge.scot.

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Outcomes

Primary and secondary outcomes of the programme, as agreed by Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Government and the First Minister's Reading Challenge Advisory Group, are described below.

The evaluation of the second year of the First Minister's Reading Challenge should seek to assess how far progress against the below outcomes can be attributed specifically to participation in the programme. Scottish Book Trust understands that data regarding the secondary outcomes may be difficult to gather and/or assess, and welcomes proposals that suggest creative or innovative ways that progress against these outcomes might be robustly assessed.

In particular, Scottish Book Trust is interested in proposals that investigate one or more of the below areas:

- The impact of the programme on children living in areas of deprivation.
- The impact of the programme on children and families who prior to taking part in the programme did not read for pleasure.
- The impact on teacher knowledge and/or practice around reading for pleasure and/or children's literature.
- How the First Minister's Reading Challenge has been used to support schools to engage parents in their children's learning.
- How the First Minister's Reading Challenge has been used to support pupil voice.

While the evaluation will be used to assess progress against intended outcomes, it should be designed in a way which can capture unintended outcomes. It should also gather evidence which can be used to inform improvement of the project over time.

Primary outcomes

- Project design supports reading for pleasure by:
 - being broad and flexible (allowing all children in P1–7 to be involved in some way)
 - providing the necessary support and resources for teachers to embed reading for pleasure into school life
 - creating opportunities for libraries, parents and other community partners to support reading for pleasure within and beyond the school environment.

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- Reading for pleasure is valued and encouraged.
- Children read for pleasure.
- Children are active readers, making reading choices and developing areas of interest which they pursue, as far as possible, independently.
- Teachers feel empowered to deliver strategies to encourage reading for pleasure in the school environment.
- Teachers and schools integrate reading for pleasure into the curriculum.
- Schools and libraries make effective local partnerships to support reading for pleasure in the school and the wider community.
- Parents understand the value of reading for pleasure and facilitate their children to do so.

Secondary outcomes

- Reading for pleasure supports attainment in relation to literacy and English, as well as the wider curriculum.
- Reading for pleasure supports closing of the attainment gap.

Indicators

Below are some suggestions for indicators which might be measured or studied to help to identify impact in relation to the above outcomes.

Structural

- Inclusion of reading for pleasure in overall school strategies
- Changes to curricula or format of school day
- Provision of reading materials in school
- Incorporation of techniques to support reading for pleasure (including use of author visits)
- School and library links (such as partnerships and library membership)
- School and community links

Behavioural / attitudinal

- Perception of value of reading for pleasure

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- Professional development of teachers (such as confidence in supporting reading for pleasure and use of provided resources)
- Perception or reporting of rates of reading for pleasure (including variations according to characteristics such as additional support needs, participation in Gaelic Medium Education, gender and English as an additional language)
- Parental engagement
- Perception or reporting of attitudes towards reading for pleasure
- Equality of access to reading for pleasure

Educational

- Alignment, in practice, with other policies (national and local) to address literacy, attainment and closing the gap
- Contribution to children's attainment in relation to Curriculum for Excellence benchmarks
- Contribution to strategies to close the attainment gap (particularly in Attainment Challenge schools)

The work

Scottish Book Trust wishes to engage an individual or organisation to undertake this evaluation, as described above.

The work will involve:

- Working with Scottish Book Trust and providing expert advice to refine the specific brief for the evaluation (including which items are in and outside of the scope of work).
- Liaising with key stakeholders to secure their support and involvement, including the First Minister's Reading Challenge Advisory Group and Scottish Government.
- Carrying out fieldwork to gather impact evidence as detailed above.
- Analysing the evidence gathered to make an assessment of impact as detailed above.
- From that analysis, identifying areas of strength and weakness, and providing conclusions that may inform future programme development.
- Providing fortnightly updates while work is ongoing.

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- Delivering findings and conclusions in both the form of a formal written report, and in more accessible and sharable formats, such as video, infographics etc.
- Presenting findings and conclusions to the First Minister's Reading Challenge Advisory Group in November 2018.

Scottish Book Trust will make all gathered data available to the evaluator (as far as is possible within data protection guidelines) and support the evaluator to identify possible areas for fieldwork. Proposals should detail how the evaluators would intend to collect data sets large enough to support robust conclusions.

Consultant skills and knowledge

Scottish Book Trust wishes to engage an evaluator with significant knowledge and experience of:

- The Scottish education sector, including relevant policies and practice.
- Carrying out work with schools, teachers, Local Authorities and children.
- Carrying out programme evaluations for the public and voluntary sectors.
- Assessing the contribution of a programme to outcomes in an environment where a variety of activities may be having an impact on that outcome.

It is essential that all staff carrying out fieldwork have knowledge and experience of working with schools, teachers, children and Local Authorities, and hold valid Basic Disclosure Certificates.

Timelines

Submission of bids	31 May 2018
Selection of evaluator	7 June 2018
Kick off meeting with Scottish Book Trust	12 June 2018
Initial contact with participants to refine brief and set meetings	June 2018
Fieldwork	June, August – September 2018
Interim report	September 2018
Final report	October 2018

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Presentation of findings to FMRC Advisory Group

November 2018

Budget

The budget available for this evaluation, including VAT and any expenses, is no more than £20,000.

Submissions

Tenders should be submitted, by email, to readingchallenge@scottishbooktrust.com by **12pm on 31 May 2018**.

Tenders should include details of the applicant's proposed focus and approach, a description of how the work would be carried out within the timescale, and an indication of the extent to which the scope of the evaluation can cover the identified outcomes. Tenders should also provide a summary of the evaluator's skills, knowledge and experience and include a budget breakdown. Relevant references and testimonials from previous clients should be included where possible.