

South Ayrshire Reads Strategy 2023





**A strategy to develop confident
and skilled readers in South
Ayrshire with a lifelong love of
reading and the confidence to
access all aspects of education,
culture and society.**

Contents

What is South Ayrshire Reads? (SAR)	4
Introduction from Lyndsay McRoberts, Director of Education	5
What is the context for SAR?	6
The South Ayrshire Reads Team	7
What are our intended strategic outcomes?	9
Which policies, research and evidence are the inspiration for our work?	11
How does SAR complement our current Early Years Provision?	12
How does SAR complement our current Primary Provision?	12
How does SAR complement our current Secondary Provision?	13
What opportunities are there for collaboration and cross-sector working?	13
What is the timeline for the planning and implementation of the SAR strategy?	14
What is our commitment to children and young people in South Ayrshire?	15
What is our commitment to Education Staff and Schools in South Ayrshire?	15
What is our commitment to Professional Learning in South Ayrshire?	16
What is our commitment to Families, Parents and Carers in South Ayrshire?	17
How will we use data and information to inform and guide our strategy and evaluate the impact of SAR?	18
How will this work impact on children and young people with Additional Support Needs?	19
How will this work impact on children and young people with Care Experience?	20
How will this work impact on children and young people who speak English as an Additional Language?	20
How will this work impact on children and young people in Specialist Provision?	20
How will this work impact on children and young people who are Young Carers?	21
How will SAR complement existing literacy work in South Ayrshire?	21
Communication Friendly Environments	23
What Recommendations do we have for supporting reading development in children and young people?	24
How does SAR support The Scottish Book Trust Reading Schools Accreditation Programme?	26
Abbreviations	26
References	27

What is South Ayrshire Reads? (SAR)



SAR is an ambitious, focused, long-term plan to effectively develop the reading skills of all learners in a consistent, sustainable way through high-quality pedagogy. Our strategy prioritises relevant professional learning designed to help all education staff implement best practice through a culture of shared knowledge, collaboration and enquiry.

Our Priority

is to raise attainment in literacy and significantly reduce the literacy attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people in South Ayrshire.

Our Strategic Aims are:

To develop confident and skilled readers in South Ayrshire with a lifelong love of reading and the confidence and tools to access all aspects of education, culture and society.

To support and develop all education staff in South Ayrshire to implement best practice through a culture of shared knowledge, collaboration and enquiry.

To promote the implementation of excellent reading curricula and planning in schools and early years centres which prioritise best practice, challenge and adapted teaching for children with additional support needs.

To gather, use and analyse data effectively to drive change and improvement in children's reading skills, reading confidence and reading attainment.



Introduction from Lyndsay McRoberts Director of Education



Learning to read is universally accepted as one of the most important aims of education. It is a gateway to knowledge, understanding and personal growth. It is through reading that we immerse ourselves in the thoughts and experiences of others, broadening our perspectives and developing our self-confidence. The benefits of reading extend far beyond academic achievement - it enhances our cognitive abilities, and strengthens and develops our analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, and critical reasoning. Reading stimulates our creativity and fosters a deep appreciation for language and literature.

As educators, it is our duty to instil a love for reading in our children and young people. By fostering a strong reading culture within our schools, we equip our children and young people with the tools they need to navigate an ever-evolving world. We must encourage them to embrace reading as a lifelong habit, to empower them to become critical thinkers, informed decision-makers and compassionate individuals.

In South Ayrshire, we aim to improve reading outcomes across our local authority, working with our schools to narrow the achievement gap, and empower students with the essential skills they need for lifelong success. Through our work on South Ayrshire Reads we will promote literacy, enhance reading skills and foster a love for reading among children of all ages. By implementing a structured and inclusive approach to reading across all our schools, South Ayrshire children will develop their reading abilities ensuring they flourish and realise their full potential.

Lyndsay McRoberts
Director of Education

**‘Reading is the
gateway skill that
makes all other
learning possible’**

Barack Obama



What is the context for SAR?

Despite a continued focus on literacy and the excellent work that takes place daily in schools and early years centres across South Ayrshire we have not seen the improvements in attainment - particularly for our most deprived children and young people - that we would like to. Along with two-years of disrupted learning due to COVID-19, there are several socio-cultural issues - such as the increased use of smart technology and social media - which have impacted on children's engagement with and achievement in reading.

As an authority, we have taken the decision to use our allocation of the funding (SEF) ¹ that South Ayrshire Council Education will receive as part of the refreshed **Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)** to invest in the development of high-quality, sustainable, comprehensive professional learning programmes focused on the teaching of and development of reading. We have also committed to supporting schools/EYC to renew or refresh their reading resources, as best suited to their contexts. We will do this using the expertise of a newly-appointed South Ayrshire Reads team made up of experienced, skilled and knowledgeable education professionals across the three sectors: early years, primary and secondary.

¹SEF – Strategic Equity Funding

²Reading Schools - Scottish Book Trust

This work will naturally align with the **Scottish Book Trust's Reading Schools** accreditation initiative ² which aims to support, promote and develop a positive reading culture within and across schools and their communities.

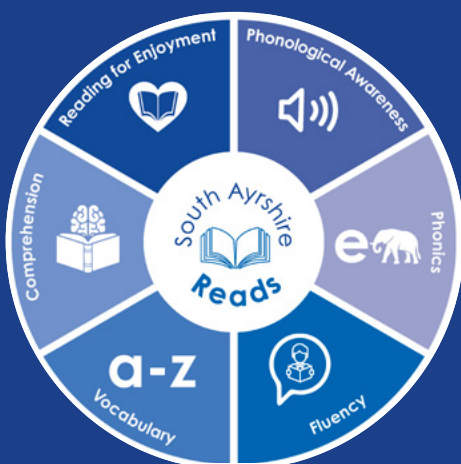
Reading is also an excellent way to develop the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence which are at the heart of Scotland's curriculum:

Successful Learners
Confident Individuals
Responsible Citizens
Effective Contributors



Our work on developing reading will be organised under six themes:

Phonological Awareness
 Phonics
 Fluency
 Vocabulary
 Comprehension
 Reading for Enjoyment



In South Ayrshire we are committed to embedding the **UNCRC** across our Education Services. South Ayrshire Reads aligns with Articles 28 & Article 29:

ARTICLE 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 29 (goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

The South Ayrshire Reads Team



Sally Law, Literacy Co-Ordinator

Sally is a secondary English specialist and lover of all things literacy, language and learning. She has taught English for 20 years in a range of contexts and has significant experience supporting teachers through delivering professional learning to colleagues and within her role in initial teacher education at University of Strathclyde. Sally's current role involves leading the South Ayrshire Reads team to realise the vision of South Ayrshire's reading strategy. She also has strategic responsibility for literacy across South Ayrshire including Gaelic language provision and 1+2. She is hugely interested in the important role of professional learning in improving outcomes for children and young people.



Liz Candlish, Principal Teacher of Literacy

Liz has over 30 years educational experience in a range of contexts from large inner-city establishments in Glasgow, to small rural primaries in Ayrshire. Liz also has cross-sector experience as HT of the Early Years Centre of her hometown. It is from this range of experience that her passion for equipping children and young people with lifelong literacy skills has evolved. Before joining the South Ayrshire Reads team, Liz was seconded officer with the South-West Educational Improvement Collaborative and she will use the experience of adding value by improving pedagogy, enriching learner experience and staff empowerment to support literacy improvement in South Ayrshire.



Deborah Gardiner, Early Years Practitioner

Deborah is an Early Years Practitioner with over 20 years service in early years settings and primary schools where she has gained a wealth of knowledge and practical experience working with children from birth to five years. In her previous role in Primary 1, she was responsible for planning and implementing play-based learning, with a focus on raising attainment in literacy through play. Deborah is committed to improving outcomes for children and her passion for developing literacy and a strong reading foundation in the early level is embedded in her practice.



Megan Hainey, Early Years Practitioner

Megan has over ten years of experience working as an early years practitioner. She has been a play leader within the authority and has successfully led a toddler group where she planned responsively to meet the needs and requests of parents and young children. She has had experience working alongside primary 1 teachers to plan and deliver high-quality and rich literacy experiences for all children. She is passionate and motivated about developing literacy in the early years and is looking forward to doing more of this through South Ayrshire Reads.



Holly McBlane, Principal Teacher of Literacy

Holly has a passion for literacy and the drive to ensure that all learners within South Ayrshire reach their fullest potential. She believes that learning to read is a right, not a privilege. Holly has dedicated her career to building lifelong learners, earning a Master's Degree of Education in Reading and Writing, specializing in breaking down barriers to learning, ensuring we are meeting the needs of all learners. Holly has taught in various countries and taken on many roles including: Primary Teacher, Reading Specialist, Instructional Coach, and Principal Teacher of Inclusion. She brings her energy, creativity and dedication to South Ayrshire Reads.



Jennifer Wallace, Principal Teacher of Literacy

Jennifer has 15 years of teaching experience and has taught at every stage of primary school. She is passionate about inspiring others and working together to improve outcomes for learners. She has led key improvements within schools and taken on leadership roles, including NQT Manager. She has implemented high quality play-based pedagogy within an early years setting and has helped build strong and exciting reading cultures within schools. Jennifer is excited to bring her passion for learning and teaching to the team. She is committed to ensuring children, families and colleagues in South Ayrshire and beyond will develop a lifelong love of reading.



Lindsay Watters, Principal Teacher of Literacy

Lindsay began her teaching career in South Ayrshire before moving overseas, where she first developed a love of children's literature. She has devoted the last 20 years to understanding, teaching and educating others about how children learn to read based on evidence informed research. Lindsay is extremely driven and strives to be an innovative educator who encourages determination, ambition and equality within every child and colleague. She firmly believes that South Ayrshire Reads represents an opportunity for all education staff to be part of an exciting and ambitious plan which will fundamentally improve literacy skills, academic achievement and well-being for hundreds of children and young people across the authority.

What are our intended strategic outcomes?

SAR Long-Term Outcome: is to raise attainment in literacy and significantly reduce the literacy attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people in South Ayrshire and improve outcomes for learners in line with stretch aims as articulated by the Scottish Government.

[Local Authority Core Stretch Aims](#)

Our **short, medium and long-term outcomes** align to The Scottish Attainment Challenge outcomes as presented in the [SAC Theory of Change and Logic Model](#)



Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Leadership		Closing the Gap
All education staff * will be empowered to develop their understanding of the pedagogy which underpins the development of reading skills and to share this knowledge and their practice with colleagues.	Through our focus on high-quality, sustainable professional learning we will create a corps of strong and knowledgeable Reading Leaders and practitioners.	To close the reading attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged CYP in South Ayrshire to enable them to participate fully in their learning, feel included and confident and, contribute effectively out with school.
Professional Learning		Embedded Practices
All education staff will have the opportunity to participate in informative, engaging and CLPL sessions around South Ayrshire Reads and the Six Components of Reading.	All education staff will have completed training and enquiry to develop their knowledge of the development of reading skills with increased emphasis on the nature of reading within the relevant sector.	All South Ayrshire educators will have opportunities to engage in Professional Enquiry in reading-related support and intervention / South Ayrshire Reading and Writing courses will be GTCs Accredited with all participants entitled to Professional Recognition on completion.
Collaboration		
Education staff will have the opportunity to share practice, ideas and collaborate with colleagues and stakeholders locally, regionally, and nationally. All stakeholders will have opportunities to contribute their ideas and opinions through evaluative processes.	A well-established literacy team and wider Reading Leader network will have regular opportunities to share practice, ideas and collaborate with colleagues and stakeholders locally, regionally, and nationally. All stakeholders will have opportunity to contribute to the continued development and improvement of SAR.	A knowledgeable and sustainable literacy network will be permanently in place across South Ayrshire to enable all education staff to collaborate and learn from one another. All South Ayrshire staff will report increased levels of confidence * in implementing evidence-based interventions with high levels of fidelity. (* Linked to baseline survey)

Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Data & Evidence		Educational Outcomes
-Attainment Meetings supported by South Ayrshire's Attainment Advisor -South Ayrshire's Closing the Gap Dashboard -Individual school/centre data and evaluation tracking procedures aligned to South Ayrshire Reads -Dec/June ACEL Data	-Schedule of PL to support literacy-related data analysis -Systems to monitor learner / parent voice -South Ayrshire Reads Self-Evaluation Tools and resources -ACEL trend data	Quantitative, qualitative and observational feedback will demonstrate an increase in motivation, confidence and enjoyment of reading in all children and young people. All education staff in South Ayrshire will report increased levels of knowledge understanding, confidence and capacity to develop excellent reading skills in all learners and to provide tailored and appropriate differentiated instruction to all learners All South Ayrshire Schools will be at some point on the Reading Schools Accreditation journey.
Shared Understanding	Culture & Ethos	
All education staff are encouraged to engage with the implementation of SAR and participate in relevant professional learning opportunities. All stakeholders will have opportunities to engage with the SAR implementation process and contribute their ideas and opinions through evaluative processes.	All education staff will be supported and encouraged to implement best practice through a culture of shared knowledge, collaboration, and enquiry.	
Focus	Learning & Teaching	Our Education System
There is an ambitious, focused, long-term plan in place to effectively develop the reading skills of all learners in a consistent, sustainable way through high-quality pedagogy.	All education staff are supported and encouraged to deliver high-quality teaching, learning and assessment experiences using quality-assured resources related to reading with a focus on achieving equity for all learners.	All education staff will have easy access to high-quality resources and will have regular opportunities to observe and share excellent practice through an established system of model lessons and shared pedagogy.
Readiness to Learn, Engagement & Approaches		Achievement
All stakeholders will have opportunities to engage with the SAR implementation process and contribute their ideas and opinions through evaluative processes.	Reference to self-evaluation, evidence-informed practice, case studies shared across South Ayrshire.	By 2033 ALL children in South Ayrshire will be able to read to a level which allows them to effectively participate in their learning at each stage of school and beyond. * *

* All education staff refers to all adults working within a school community who are responsible for supporting children and young people.

** We will survey primary teachers at the end of the P7 year on their judgements of their learners' readiness to access the secondary school literacy curriculum.

Which policies, research and evidence are the inspiration for our work?



The South Ayrshire Way

Our work is very much aligned to South Ayrshire's values particularly in our **ambitious** attitude for children's literacy achievement and attainment.

National and Global Policy

South Ayrshire Reads is grounded in the principles of the key policies guiding the continued improvement in Scotland's education system:

Scotland's Curriculum:
[Curriculum for Excellence](#)

Closing the Gap:
[Scottish Attainment Challenge](#)

Early Years:
[Realising the Ambition](#)

Care Experienced Children and Young People:
[The Promise](#)

Getting it Right for Every Child:
[GIRFEC Policy Statement 2022](#)

Additional Support Needs:
[All Our Children, All Their Potential \(Morgan\)](#)

Senior Phase Qualifications Review:
[IRQA \(Hayward\)](#)

Preparing for the Future:
[Future Fit Skills \(Skills 4.0\)](#)

Principles and Practice:
[English and Literacy](#)

Children's Rights:
[UNCRC \(Rights of the Child\)](#)

Digital literacy Skills:
[21st Century Readers \(OECD\)](#)

Research around Teaching Reading

There is a huge (and continually growing) body of research and evidence to inform the work of **South Ayrshire Reads**. The following links provide information of the key research, guidance and evidence supporting the ongoing work in this area:

[South Ayrshire Literature Review \(May 2023\)](#)

[UK Literacy Association](#)

[National Improvement Hub](#)

[Research and Enquiry](#)

Resources and Toolkits

Education Scotland Early Reading Resource
(to be published September 2023)

[Scotland's Equity Toolkit](#)



[Improving Literacy KS1](#)



[Improving Literacy KS2](#)



[Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools](#)

[Education Endowment Foundation](#)

[Evidence Based Education](#)

How does SAR complement our current Early Years Provision?



South Ayrshire's Early Years Team is proud of the excellent practice in developing literacy learning in our Early Years settings and is committed to providing our EY colleagues with up-to-date information, training and development opportunities. The new literacy team in place to deliver and support the South Ayrshire Reads strategy will collaborate with our existing team to ensure a consistent approach to literacy learning and will co-create a comprehensive programme of professional learning to upskill EY practitioners and staff to effectively develop reading skills in our youngest learners.

The South Ayrshire Reads team are committed to offering high-quality professional learning in literacy development which is consistent with good practice around play-based learning pedagogy.

The Early Level SAR Team will use milestone data, team-teaching and observations to identify and build on good practice which can be developed and shared across South Ayrshire.

SAR Strategic Lead for Early Level Reading
Lindsay.Watters@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

For further information around play-based pedagogy
[Play Toolkit](#)

How does SAR complement our current Primary Provision?



Children across South Ayrshire already have access to rich and varied literacy learning experiences delivered by committed practitioners with a wide range of knowledge and experiences. Our education staff support the learning and teaching experience with a range of physical and digital resources, and they are well supported to adapt learning and teaching according to learner needs.

Our aim is to collaborate with our schools and primary colleagues to enhance their learning, teaching and assessment practice through high-quality professional learning experiences, access to up-to-date and useful reading resources and, opportunities to share professional experiences with one another.

Over the course of our three-year Strategic Equity funded initiative we will work with individual schools to ensure support is bespoke to their contexts and aligned to their improvement priorities.

SAR Strategic Leads for Primary Reading:

Holly.McBlane@south-ayrshire.gov.uk and Jennifer.Wallace@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

How does SAR complement our current Secondary Provision?

Children and young people in our secondary schools follow a broad literacy-rich curriculum to S3 which provides many opportunities to develop literacy-related skills in a range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Curricular areas across South Ayrshire have had an opportunity to explore the benefits of developing talking and listening activities within their specialist disciplines and have been introduced to the principles of planning literacy around the specific needs of each subject. (Disciplinary Literacy)

The aim of SAR is to provide universal professional learning opportunities to every member of education staff in South Ayrshire in year 1 of implementation; in year 2 there will be a focus on areas of reading more aligned with a secondary curriculum (vocabulary and comprehension); in year 3 there will be sector specific engagement and training for secondary colleagues.

In year 1 of implementation, School Assistants and Pupil Support teachers from secondary schools will receive reading training to support learners in their contexts.

SAR Strategic Lead for Secondary Reading:

Sally.Law@south-ayrshire.gov.uk



What opportunities are there for collaboration and cross-sector working?

In South Ayrshire we are proud of the valuable contribution to reading development that all our stakeholders provide and for that reason the design and development of SAR has been a collaborative process.

Colleagues across many related services have been consulted and had the opportunity to co-create the strategy. Going forward, we will continue to collaborate and consult with our partners to ensure the strategy is fit for purpose and reflects the local context accurately.

Our South Ayrshire Partners						
Head Teachers	Education Staff	Learners	Parent Council Chairs	Principal Teacher Networks	Librarians and Library Assistants	ASN Leadership Group
Early Years Team	Speech and Language Team	Music Services	EAL Team / Adult Literacies Team	Virtual School Team	Literacy Strategy Group	Educational Psychologists



We have also consulted with colleagues from [Education Scotland](#) to ensure our work aligns with current national vision and values and have shared our plans with colleagues from the NRIL (National Response to Improving Literacy Partnership Board)

What is the timeline for the planning and implementation of the SAR strategy?

YEAR 1 2023-2024	YEAR 2 2024-2025	YEAR 3 2025-2026
STRATEGIC FOCUS	STRATEGIC FOCUS	STRATEGIC FOCUS
Phonological Awareness Phonics Fluency	Vocabulary Knowledge Comprehension	Critical Literacy Disciplinary Literacy IDL
Introduction to South Ayrshire Reads August Inservice	Update on South Ayrshire Reads August Inservice	Update on South Ayrshire Reads August Inservice
Engagement Events for Staff (Online & In-Person) Multiple Dates/Times	Engagement Events for New Staff (Online & In-Person) Multiple Dates/Times	Engagement Events for New Staff (Online & In-Person) Multiple Dates/Times
Early Reading Instruction Foundational Training for all primary staff September Twilight (4 September 2023)	Science of Reading Training for all secondary staff / new primary staff / NQTs Refresher Training for Primary Colleagues	Science of Reading Training for parents and partners Refresher Training for South Ayrshire Colleagues
Specific Training Events / Sessions / Courses aligned with strategic focus	Specific Training Events / Sessions / Courses aligned with strategic focus	Specific Training Events / Sessions / Courses aligned with strategic focus
Resource Creation aligned with strategic focus <i>(and integrated with writing, talking and listening)</i>	Resource Creation aligned with strategic focus <i>(and integrated with writing, talking and listening)</i>	Resource Creation aligned with strategic focus <i>(and integrated with writing, talking and listening)</i>
Introduction of Common Reading Assessments Phase 1	Introduction of Common Reading Assessments Phase 2	Introduction of Common Reading Assessments Phase 3
Family Learning Engagement Sessions and Events for parents and partners	Family Learning Engagement Sessions and Events for parents by parents	Family Learning Engagement Sessions and Events for partners by partners
Individual school collaborations / Tests of Change	Individual school collaborations / Tests of Change	Individual school collaborations / Tests of Change
Self-Evaluation and Focus Groups	Self-Evaluation and Focus Groups	Self-Evaluation and Focus Groups
Analysis and Reporting of Progress and Improvement	Analysis and Reporting of Progress and Improvement	Analysis and Reporting of Progress and Improvement

What is our commitment to children and young people in South Ayrshire?

All children in South Ayrshire can expect:

- To have access to books, stories, games and play activities that help develop a love of reading and an understanding of letters, sounds, syllables, rhythm, and rhyme.
- To have access to a wide range of reading material both in class and through school library provision.
- That all their teachers and support staff have received training on the science of reading.
- To have visits from writers, authors and poets to their schools and classrooms.
- To talk about books and stories and share their enjoyment of reading with others.
- To use high-quality teaching and learning resources which support their reading and learning needs including the effective use of digital tools.
- To have access to specific resources and supports that are suited to their level and learning needs including the effective use of digital tools.
- To have opportunities to demonstrate their learning and progress both formally and informally.³

³ Formal demonstration of learning / progress through assessment and / or screening tools

What is our commitment to Education Staff and Schools in South Ayrshire?

All education staff will have access to:

- High quality professional learning related to the teaching of reading, the science of reading and other aspects of literacy.
- High-quality professional learning to support learners not on-track with reading at the typical age and stage of development.
- High-quality resources to support learning and teaching of reading and literacy.
- Up-to-date and relevant research to support their understanding and expertise on the teaching of reading.
- Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues within and across sectors and services.
- Opportunities to share their views through planned consultation processes and focus groups.
- Opportunities for professional enquiry.
- Toolkits and resources to support self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Opportunities for Leadership
- Support to analyse and evaluate reading data to drive change and improvement.



What is our commitment to Professional Learning in South Ayrshire?



We know that high-quality professional learning has a significant impact on improving outcomes for learners. ⁴ We want all our colleagues who work with children and young people to feel knowledgeable, confident and empowered with the opportunity to engage with useful, informative and collaborative professional learning.

We want all education staff to have access to the same knowledge and key messages, so we have designed a professional learning programme which offers universal training along with sector-specific training and options for staff new to South Ayrshire.

We have also designed and planned a programme of literacy professional learning to complement and enhance the universal offering. This programme offers colleagues opportunities to explore areas of interest more thoroughly through collaboration and professional enquiry.

Specialist support and advice is available to all staff through a professional learning MS Team, termly drop-in sessions⁵, a resource Padlet/Wakelet and, via South Ayrshire Reads social media platforms.

Education staff will be informed of additional training, and regional and national messages through school Reading Leaders and termly digital newsletters.

⁴ GTCs <https://www.gtc.org.uk/professional-update/professional-learning/>

⁵ Literacy, inclusion, pupil support, speech and language specialists in attendance

What are the expected criteria for professional learning offered as part of the South Ayrshire Reads strategy?

Each session will have:

- A clear over-arching learning intention
- Supporting digital and photocopiable resources
- Ideas, resources and strategies for immediate use in the learning environment
- Been informed by current research and educational thinking
- Links to further reading
- Been designed to be fully inclusive and accessible
- Opportunities for discussion, collaboration, reflection and evaluation
- A further opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of the topic

Who is responsible for planning and delivering professional learning as part of the South Ayrshire Reads strategy?

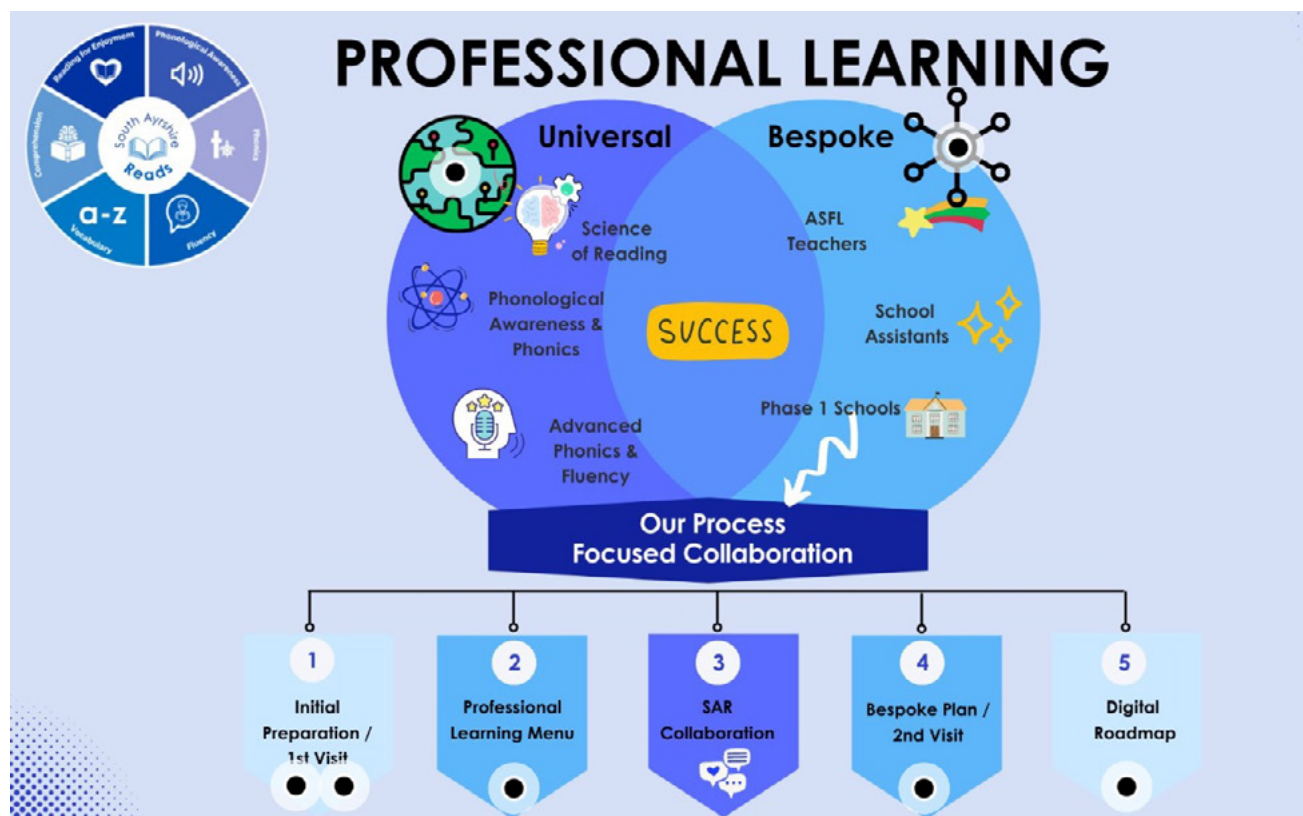
- South Ayrshire Reads Team
- South Ayrshire Education Staff
- Related Services
- External partners from SWEIC and Education Scotland

SAR Strategic Leads for Professional Learning:

Holly.McBlane@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Jennifer.Wallace@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Lindsay.Watters@south-ayrshire.gov.uk



What is our commitment to Families, Parents and Carers in South Ayrshire?

Parents and Carers of children in South Ayrshire can expect:

- To have access to books, stories, games, songs and play activities that help develop a love of reading and an understanding of letters, sounds, syllables rhythm and rhyme.
- Access to resources to support your child's learning at home.
- Opportunities to find out about and discuss your child's literacy learning.
- To be informed of family learning workshops and engagement sessions which support children's reading.
- To up-to-date information about reading, literacy and the science of reading.



How will we use data and information to inform and guide our strategy and evaluate the impact of SAR?

In South Ayrshire we gather, analyse and evaluate a wide range of data and information to help us improve teaching and learning experiences and outcomes for children and young people. To create our strategy, we have considered both quantitative and qualitative data sources such as:

- o Early Years Milestones
- o ACEL (Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels)
- o GL Standardised Assessment Data and Information
- o Senior Phase Leaver and SQA Attainment Data
- o South Ayrshire's Closing the Gap Dashboard
- o Individual School Stretch Aims and Data Packs
- o Data and information pertaining to specific groups and cohorts of learners
- o Evaluation and views ascertained from stakeholder focus groups, professional dialogue and collaboration



We are able to use this data effectively – comparing and contrasting with our overtime attainment and achievement information – to measure our progress against both stretch aims and SAC Logic Model short, medium and long-term outcomes.

Medium-Term Outcomes

We will work in collaboration with our partner schools and related services to measure the impact of bespoke improvement projects related to SAR.

Long Term Outcomes

We intend to measure the impact of SAR year-on-year and over a 12 year period ⁶ by focusing on two cohorts of learners who will experience improvements as a result of our work over their entire BGE (Broad General Education) experience:

Pre-School 2022-2023 cohort (Finishing S4 in 2035)

Pre-school 2023-2024 cohort (Finishing S3 in 2035)

⁶ 2023 - 2035

Sustainability

Although our strategy is funded and planned for a three-year period (2023-2026) our goal is to embed both culture and practice throughout South Ayrshire and develop systems and supports at all levels to ensure we meet our ambitious aims to enable us to significantly reduce the literacy-related attainment gap.



Engagement with Colleagues, Children, Young People, Families and Communities

We are committed to ensuring all our stakeholders have on-going opportunity to engage with SAR and be part of the decision making around improvements. We have consulted widely to develop the SAR strategy and will continue to seek the views and opinions of all.

All stakeholders can contribute to on-going evaluation using this QR code



Click [here](#) for QR code

All stakeholders can make contact using email address southayrshirereads@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

In South Ayrshire we are committed to embedding the UNCRC across our Education Services. South Ayrshire Reads aligns with Article 12:

ARTICLE 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Key Document 2023 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan

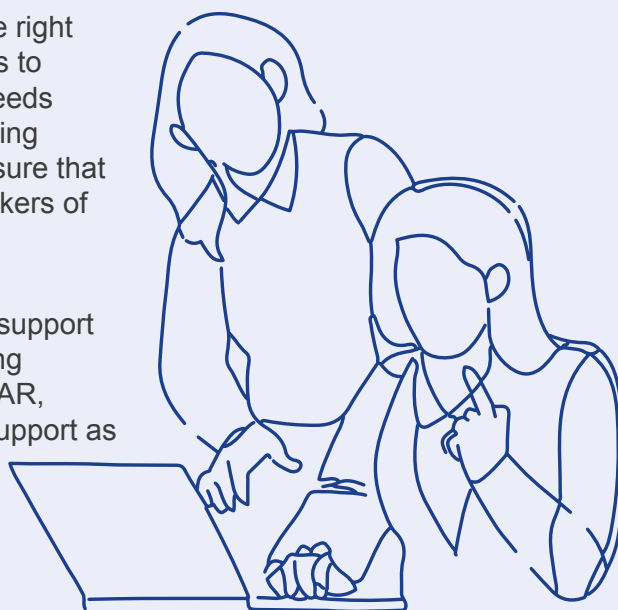
How will this work impact on children and young people with Additional Support Needs?

All children and young people can succeed given the right environment, with the right support and equal access to opportunities. For learners with additional support needs it is imperative that they have access to explicit reading instruction, targeted interventions and support to ensure that they can reach their highest potential (including speakers of English as an Additional Language EAL).

This is clearly aligned within the SAR vision and its commitments to all stakeholders providing bespoke support and training opportunities that focus on understanding and valuing individual needs. Through the work of SAR, educators, families and pupils will gain insight and support as we strive to get it right for all learners.

SAR Strategic Lead for ASN:
Holly.McBlane@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Key document [GIRFEC Policy Statement 2022](#)



How will this work impact on children and young people with Care Experience?

Our Virtual School team work alongside our care experienced children to ensure that they are supported and encouraged to develop to their fullest potential. To ensure equity, Welfare Officers prioritise literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing and endeavour to support children participate and engage in a wide range of experiences that promote learning, development and enjoyment. We recognise that success can be different depending on the individual and the Virtual School team participate in SAR universal engagement and professional learning opportunities and have access to specific training to help them develop reading in a one-to-one environment.

South Ayrshire's Virtual Head Teacher – kimberley@keenan@south-ayrshire.gov.uk – sits on the Literacy Strategy Group which provides governance of our SAR strategy and the progress of the associated work.

Key Document: [The Promise](#)

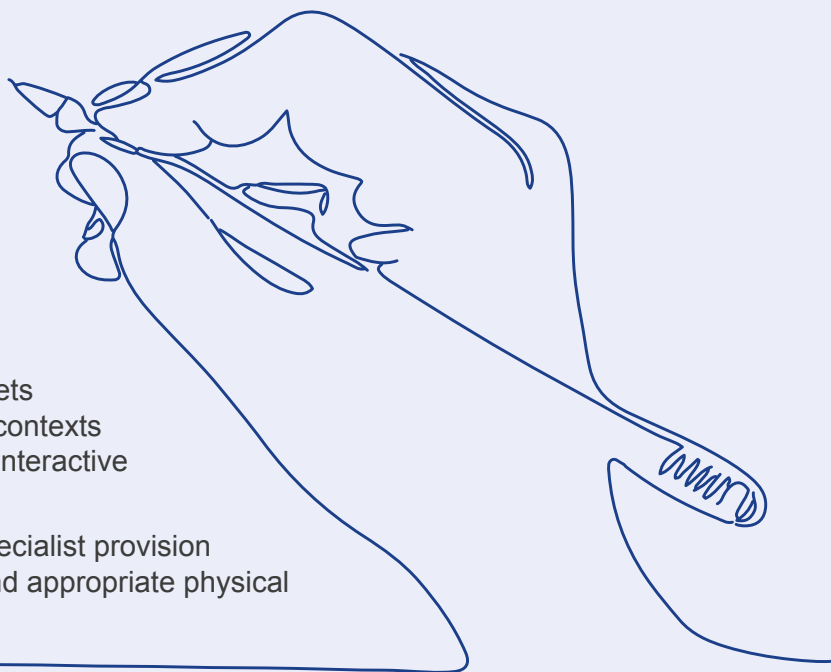


How will this work impact on children and young people in Specialist Provision?

South Ayrshire has a range of specialist facilities to ensure that the needs of all children and young people are met. Many of our learners in specialist provision have specific and complex needs and any work as a result of SAR will seek to complement the already rich and nurturing learning environments and experiences offered.

Part of the aim of SAR is to engage and promote the work of local authors and poets who can work with children in a range of contexts to stimulate ideas and provide enjoyable interactive learning and sensory experiences.

Our aim is to ensure all our children in specialist provision can access a wide range of interesting and appropriate physical and digital texts.



How will this work impact on children and young people who are Young Carers?

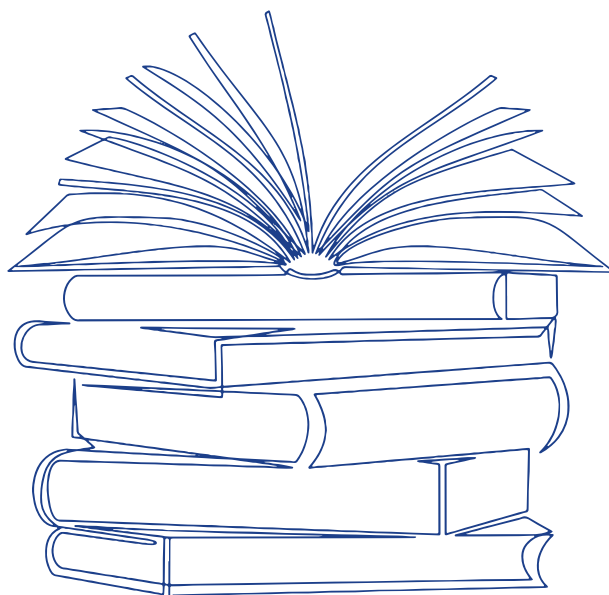
In South Ayrshire, we celebrate our young carers. There is a wide range of support and opportunities available for them and our Young Carers team work across the authority to offer training for staff and inputs to raise awareness for identification (including self-identification) and to tackle stigma and associated stigmas.

Any child or young person identified as a young carer is linked with the Young Carers Champion in their school - a member of the school staff who acts as a point of contact for all young carers in each school.

South Ayrshire Reads includes sessions for YC Champions to ensure they have the information and resources they need to include and support our Young Carers in this work.

South Ayrshire Young Carers Strategy Lead Officer:

Claire.Flanagan@south-ayrshire.gov.uk



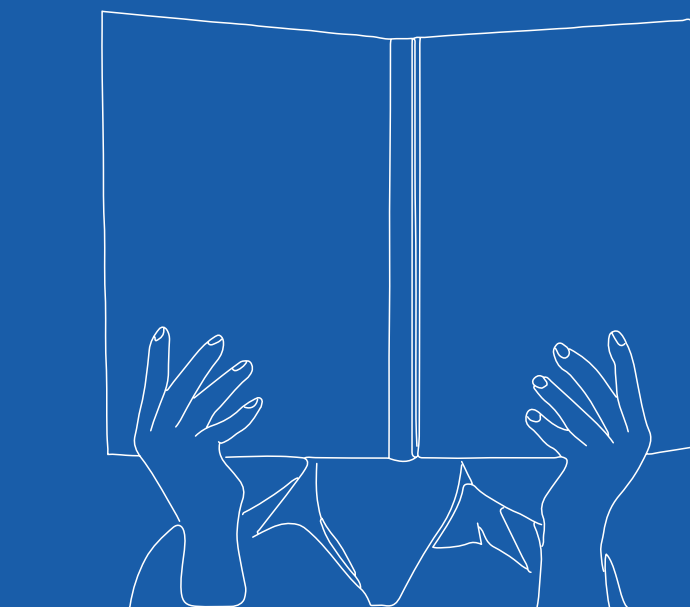
How will SAR complement existing literacy work in South Ayrshire?

There is a huge amount of high-quality literacy work taking place in schools and early years centres across South Ayrshire. Much of the ongoing literacy work is the focus of Practitioner Professional Enquiry and rigorous self-evaluation to measure impact and success. Part of the SAR ethos is to promote this and facilitate opportunities for education staff to observe, team-teach, share-practice, collaborate and celebrate success.

As part of our continuous Professional Learning programme there will be a monthly digital drop-in hosted by the SAR team where colleagues will be encouraged to share their excellent practice, ask questions, share ideas and discuss resources, approaches and up-to-date evidence and research.

In addition to the SAR team there is an existing Literacy Strategy Group made up of a range of stakeholders. The focus of the strategy group is to:

- Provide governance of our SAR strategy and the progress of the work
- Co-create, monitor, and evaluate the progress of the wider South Ayrshire Literacy Action Plan
- Facilitate the work of the National Response to Improving Literacy Partnership Board (NRIL) and report back to all stakeholders





How does SAR complement WRITING?

The strategic focus of South Ayrshire Reads is, of course, reading but we intend to develop writing pedagogy alongside our improvements in reading. Our rationale for this is:

- o Reading, Writing and, Talking & Listening – despite being separate organisers – are inextricably linked particularly in the context of children’s developing literacy skills.
- o Our writing attainment hasn’t made the recovery we anticipated post COVID-19 and is therefore an area of concern for school leaders and practitioners.
- o Practitioners who haven’t engaged in writing professional learning tell us they are less confident to develop the writing skills of their pupils.

Professional Learning

As part of our 2023-2024 Literacy Professional Learning Programme, we launch our new **Confidence and Skill in Writing Course** aimed at practitioners at all levels and stages in their careers. The course will be composed of eight sessions across the school year and will be delivered and facilitated by experienced practitioners, school leaders and professional writers. The course is designed to develop teachers as confident and skilled writers who will in turn use their knowledge and experience (new and existing) to develop confidence and skill in their pupils.

Over time we aim to create a network of writer mentors who can lend support to colleagues who would like to develop their practice. We also intend for the course to lead to Professional Recognition from The [General Teaching Council of Scotland](#).

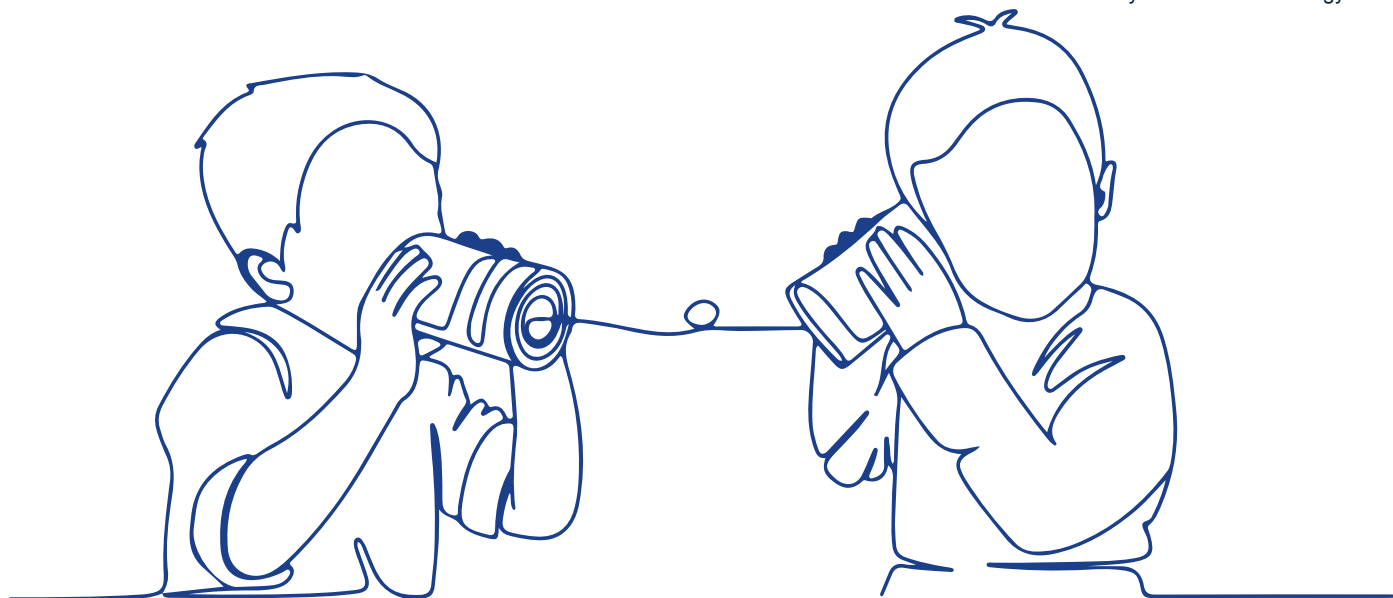
Talk for Writing

Over the past four years South Ayrshire has facilitated a roll-out of [Talk for Writing](#) across four cohorts of schools. Participation in Talk for Writing is at each school’s discretion. Schools involved in the roll-out have undertaken training and are supported by a network of Talk for Writing leads.

Talk for Writing is a fully integrated approach to developing writing skills in children and is informed by quality model texts and a reading spine that children and teachers are encouraged to engage with. Talk is naturally a fundamental aspect of developing the skill of storytelling in learners and our data and evaluation from teachers show improvement across both attainment and confidence of children.

South Ayrshire Strategic Lead for Talk for Writing Louise.Morrison@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Key document [Skills and Progression in Writing](#)



How does SAR complement TALKING & LISTENING?

Opportunity to engage in quality talking and listening experiences which help children develop and progress their skills is fundamental to success in any classroom environment. To ensure an integrated approach, all SAR training and resources will include a focus on talking and listening and how these skills can be best used and developed to enhance the reading and learning experience. We know that sustained achievement in literacy and English is affiliated with learner “motivation and capacity to engage with and complete tasks and assignments.”

⁷ The **CfE Literacy and English Practice Paper** tells us that:

“For this reason, it is important to observe and discuss their enthusiasm for stories, poetry and prose, their interest in words, their preferences in reading, and their enthusiasm for sharing experiences through talk and writing.”

Key Document [Skills and Progression Talking & Listening](#)

SAR Strategic Lead for Writing, Talking and Listening Sally.Law@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

⁷ CfE Literacy and English Principles and Practice

Communication Friendly Environments

“Research has shown that the quality of spoken dialogue in early education and classrooms can significantly improve children’s educational attainment”
(Dockrell et al. 2012)

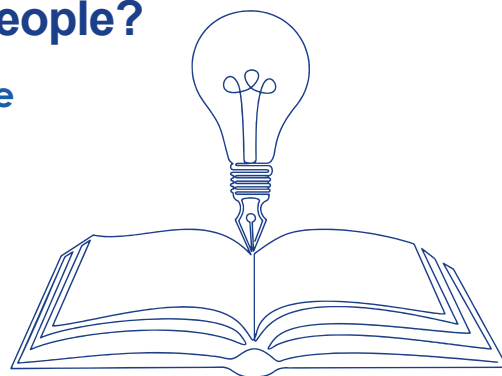
We know that a communication friendly environment should make communication as easy, effective and enjoyable as possible. It should provide opportunities for everyone to talk, listen, understand and take part. Developing a communication friendly environment can also be seen as removing barriers to communication. This improves outcomes for all our learners. As such, a key priority within South Ayrshire which will be delivered through SAR is for us to be a Communication Friendly Authority

This will involve extensive collaboration with our partners in speech and language, outreach and colleagues in educational psychology. As well as supporting all our schools and establishments on their Communication Friendly journey, our approach will involve all stakeholders including parents, carers and families.

What Recommendations do we have for supporting reading development in children and young people?

Recommendations for Children and Young People

- Read and enjoy as many books, plays, poems, and texts as you can.
- Read something every day!
- Be curious about the world around you – ask questions, explore ideas, share ideas, make connections.
- Tell your friends about the books you love.
- Visit libraries and bookshops to find out the books best suited to you and your interests.
- Read aloud – into the mirror, to your family, to your dog! Experiment with your voice, with the sounds we can create with words, with your pace, your rhythm.
- Have fun!



Recommendations for Families, Parents and Carers

- Read books, plays, poems and text from a wide range of resources with your child.
- Explore the Scottish Book Trust [website](#).
- Visit your local library regularly and explore the services offered, such as Book Bug Sessions and Parent Workshops.
- Celebrate and enjoy reading success with your child.
- Encourage your child to make connections between their life and the text they are reading.
- Talk to your child about the world around them.
- Encourage your child to use their imagination through play stories and conversation.
- Discuss text features with your child to help them understand and appreciate what they read.



Recommendations for Education Staff

- Access training to support teaching of reading based on current research and evidence.
- Build a literacy rich environment focusing on interactions, experiences and spaces.
- Ensure a balance of texts from a wide range of genres including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays and songs.
- Encourage oral language and vocabulary development through conversations and interactions.
- As outlined in Curriculum for Excellence, support children's developing reading understanding and skills through a combination of play-based learning and the explicit and systematic teaching of phonics.
- Provide daily opportunities to read aloud including repeated reading, reciprocal reading and reading together (keeping in mind additional support and individualised needs).
- Apply evidence-based assessments to measure impact and evaluate targeted areas of reading. (Phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary and/or comprehension).
- Ask literal, inferential, and evaluative questions to promote higher levels of thinking.

Recommendations for Senior Leaders

- Encourage all staff to engage in South Ayrshire's universal professional learning opportunities related to effective teaching of reading.
- Implement an approach to developing early reading skills that includes the explicit and systematic teaching of phonics.
- Nominate a Reading Leader to co-ordinate and lead on the SAR.
- Use agreed assessment tools to assess, track and monitor key aspects of reading development such as fluency.
- Promote the value and importance of reading to all stakeholders of the school community.
- Evaluate resources and approaches in collaboration with colleagues to ensure they align with the South Ayrshire Reads strategy, are sensitive and responsive to learner needs, are inclusive and, are supported by relevant research and current educational thinking in the teaching and development of reading in children.
- Design and develop a reading curriculum which prioritises best practice and is relevant to your school context and community.

How does SAR support The Scottish Book Trust Reading Schools Accreditation Programme?

The Scottish Book Trust Schools Accreditation Programme has been developed for schools that are committed to building a culture of reading for their learners and communities based on research which demonstrates that reading for pleasure is central to supporting equity and wellbeing. There is also evidence to support that reading for pleasure at all ages and stages can positively impact learner attainment across the curriculum; can develop critical thinking and creativity; fosters empathy, and builds resilience, focus and reading stamina.



These aims and values are aligned to the SAR vision and its commitment to all stakeholders to provide bespoke support, guidance and professional learning opportunities for establishments engaging with the accreditation programme.

The SAR team will be able to collaborate with South Ayrshire Reading Schools to:

- Support their creation and development of a sustainable Reading Culture.
- Promote collaboration by exploring pathways to engage families and the wider community.
- Provide guidance around [Literacy-Rich Environments](#) and how these impact on reading for pleasure and lifelong literacy skills.

Our work will involve collaboration with [The Scottish Book Trust](#), [Education Scotland](#) and members of our local author and writer community.

We also aim to promote Ayrshire's literary heritage and support our local reading community by creating links with local authors, promoting their work, and hosting an annual P7 Burns Supper with Alloway Burns Club.

SAR Strategic Lead for Reading Schools Accreditation Liz.Candlish@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
Supported by Elise.Diamond@south-ayrshire.gov.uk



Abbreviations

ACEL	Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels
ASN	Additional Support Need
Centres	Refers to Early Years Centres
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning
CYP	Children and Young People
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EYC	Early Years Centre
EYP	Early Years Practitioner
EYT	Early Years Teachers
HGIOS	How Good is Our School
NRIL	National Response to Improving Literacy Partnership Board
PL	Professional Learning
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
SAL(T)	Speech and Language (Therapist)
SAR	South Ayrshire Reads
Schools	Refers primary and secondary schools
YC	Young Carer

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