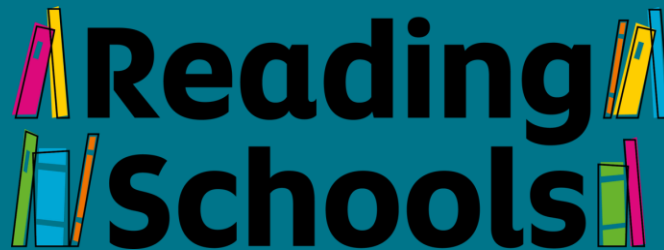


Inspiring and sustaining Reading for Pleasure in Secondary Schools

A shared practice showcase

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



Today's session

- Joining us today:
 - Liam McCallum, Reading Schools Project Manager

Special guests:

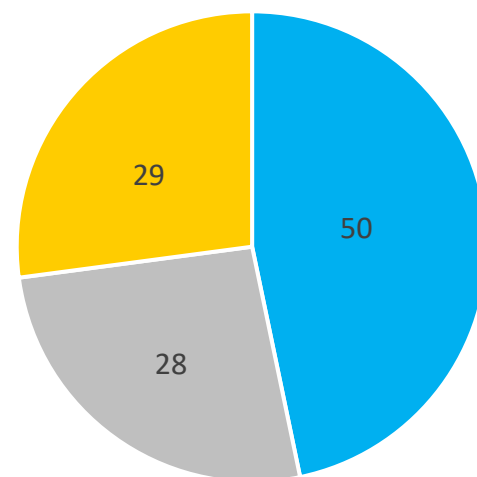
- ★ Dr Charlotte Webber, Literacy Lab, Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh
 - ★ Susan Brownlie, St Andrew's and St Bride's High School, South Lanarkshire
 - ★ Elaine Coleman & Leigh-Ann Dingwall, Queen Anne High School, Fife
- Session outline:
 - Reading Schools engagement – secondary schools
 - Reading Schools evaluation and process survey findings
 - Presentation – 'Inspiring and sustaining reading for pleasure in secondary schools'
 - Interview with our guest speakers about their Reading Schools journeys
 - Reading Schools and Scottish Book Trust opportunities and resources
 - Questions



Reading Schools engagement

- ★ **107** accredited secondary schools
[**58** progressing to next level of accreditation]
- ★ **125** working towards first accreditation
- ★ **232** secondary schools across Scotland
- ★ **64%** of Scotland's secondary schools

Accredited schools



■ Core ■ Silver ■ Gold



Reading Schools findings (1)

“This programme has been amazing, it really helped us to create a **positive buzz** around reading for pleasure.”

- [Secondary English teacher](#)

“It is a **totally flexible experience** where you can decide your Action Plan around the school community within which you work.”

- [Secondary pupil support teacher](#)

“It is good to be able to **really collaborate meaningfully** with different departments to build a culture of reading for pleasure.”

- [Secondary school librarian](#)

“Links to HGIOS make it much **easier to gain buy-in** from other staff and Senior Leadership Team.”

- [Secondary class teacher](#)

- ★ 2023/2024
- ★ 421 survey responses
- ★ 8 school visits
- ★ Partner and stakeholder interviews



Reading Schools findings (2)

“Reading Schools is **better suited** to primary school settings, there should be a **separate programme** for secondary schools.”

“More secondary based sections... some **are tricky to implement** and keep consistent due to the structure of the secondary school timetable and the **demands on teachers** in a secondary school.”

“... a focus on **handling transition** and supporting secondary school reading... a **wider range of activities** that secondary school could get involved in.”

“...more guides, help with running pupil groups... pupils are **a bit overwhelmed** with the framework so **something targeted** at them would be helpful.”



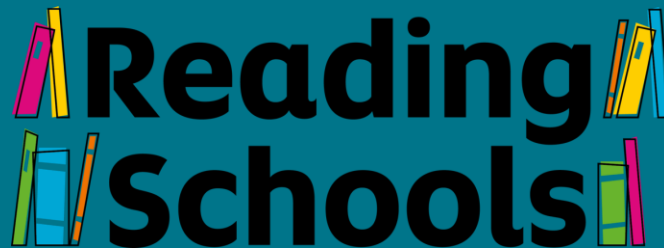


Guest Presentation

Special Guest

Dr Charlotte Webber

Literacy Lab, University of Edinburgh





Inspiring and sustaining reading for pleasure in secondary schools

Dr Charlotte Webber

Literacy Lab, Moray House School of Education and Sport,
University of Edinburgh

cwebber@ed.ac.uk

Children and young people's reading in 2024

- 1 in 3 (34.6%) of 8-18-year-olds said they enjoy reading, the lowest level reported since 2005 and the steepest year-on-year drop (8.8%).
- This decline was over twice as much for 11-14-year-olds in comparison to 8-11-year-olds.
- Only 1 in 5 (20.5%) 8-18-year-olds said they read something daily in their free time, a 7.5% drop from 2023.



Picton, I., Clark, C., Cole, A. & Oram, N. (2024) Children and Young People's Reading in 2024. National Literacy Trust Report.
https://nlt.cdn.ngo/media/documents/Children_and_young_peoples_reading_in_2024_Report.pdf

The Young People's Reading Project

Exploring young people's perspectives on their reasons for reading (or not reading) and on how can we inspire and sustain reading enjoyment and engagement.

Interviews with young people

- 46 adolescents (13-15 years old) from 6 Scottish secondary schools
- Interviewed by adult researcher or a peer from the Young People's Advisory Panel
- Answered questions about the barriers and motivators they perceive to reading for enjoyment



Read about the project on Scottish Book Trust's website: [The Young People's Reading Project](#)

Young people said their reading motivation is influenced by...

- Access
- Choice
- Autonomy
- Social factors
- Relatable messaging
- Environment
- Time

Access – having reliable access books in different formats and genres

“well, this is going to sound really bad but, like, our school library, it doesn't get updated a lot ... I feel like if you update that and gave us more access to different kinds of books that would help out.”



- Updating library and home book stock
- Regular library visits
- Making it easier to find recommendations
- Being gifted books to have at home
- Make books cheaper to buy
- Book subscription service

Links to Reading Schools framework:

Key Area 1.5.1 – Access to high-quality reading materials

Key Area 2.2.1 – Regular opportunities to read for pleasure

Key Area 2.3.1 – Modelling reading behaviours

Key Area 2.5.1 – Raising the profile of reading with families

Choice – having the skills, experience and confidence to choose books they’re likely to enjoy

“Because we're forced to read a lot of, like, old books like old poetry, like Shakespeare and everything, that we're not really interested in. So, like, when you're forced to read stuff like that it makes us think negatively of reading as a whole.”



- Match interests to particular texts
- Make it easier to find recommendations based on interests
- Provide more experience with different books and genres
- Be able to access reliable information about likelihood of enjoying a book before starting it

Links to Reading Schools framework:

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

Key Area 2.2.1 – Regular opportunities to read for pleasure

Key Area 2.3.4 – Opportunities for learners to respond to what they’re reading

Autonomy – feeling in control of what, when, why and how they read

“In school, it feels more like you're getting told to do it, which like, makes me feel like, ‘oh, why am I even doing it?’ There's not really any point because at that point I don't, really ... I don't have the motivation to read.”



- Having more time in the school day for extended, free reading
- Having a reading routine which fits around their lives
- Linking reading to personal goals
- Setting their own standards for success
- Not feeling pressured to read at times they don't 'feel like it'

Links to Reading Schools framework:

Key Area 1.2.1 – Reading Leadership Group

Key Area 1.2.2 – Learner role modelling

Key Area 2.2.1 – Regular opportunities to read for pleasure

Social factors – connecting with others about books



- Talking to friends, parents and teachers about reading
- Modelling: seeing teachers, parents, friends and celebrities reading
- Challenging perceptions that reading isn't a social activity
- Linking reading with social media
- Book clubs (based on interest, not skill level)

“Yeah, there's like a specific group of my friends that read a lot of books and recommend me their books. And then, yeah, like, we all borrow each other's books. It's like a tiny book club. So, you want to read it to, like, be able to talk about it with them.”

Links to Reading Schools framework:

Key Area 1.2.2 – Learner role modelling

Key Area 2.3.2 – Staff led meaningful conversations around books

Key Area 2.3.3 – Creating learner social networks

Relatable messaging – information about books/reading is relevant

“If someone I look up to would say ‘read more, it's good for you’, then probably would read a bit more. So, I-, uh, I like rugby and stuff, so I’d say if my favourite sports person ... were to say ‘reading really helps with rugby’, I’d probably starting reading a bit more.”



- Peer-to-peer recommendation and book discussion
- Utilising social media
- Link reading to young people’s own goals (rather than only adult-defined goals)
- Share genuine enjoyment for books

Links to Reading Schools framework:

Key Area 2.3.2 –Staff led meaningful conversations around books

Key Area 2.3.3 – Creating learner social networks

Key Area 2.3.4 – Opportunities for learners to respond to what they’re reading

Environment – having comfortable, distraction-free spaces to read in



- Include young people in text choice/lesson planning
- Provide more extended opportunities for reading in school
- Provide comfortable spaces for reading
- Support reading skills, but don't (only) use reading levels to determine text recommendation

“Yeah, and having somewhere that’s, like, comfortable and not, like, plastic chairs to sit on and that. And it’s like not, not like it’s, like, formal, you know like what you do in, like, Reg and English...so like, if it was a nicer environment you know, like, cosier.”

Links to Reading Schools framework:

Key Area 1.3.1 – Whole-school action plan

Key Area 1.3.2 – School environment

Key Area 2.2.1 – Regular opportunities to read for pleasure

Time – fitting reading into busy schedules

“Some people prefer to watch TV...it's more interesting with, like, you can see people's facial reactions. Like, it's more, like, fun, I guess. And then, it's just- it's a bit more, like, engaging and not as hard. But like, when you're reading...it's like, to get through it can be quite, like, tiring, I guess.”



- Having more time in the school day for extended reading
- Having a reading routine
- Link reading to personal goals
- Having access to audiobooks and online texts to read ‘on the go’

Links to Reading Schools framework:

Key Area 2.2.1 – Regular opportunities to read for pleasure

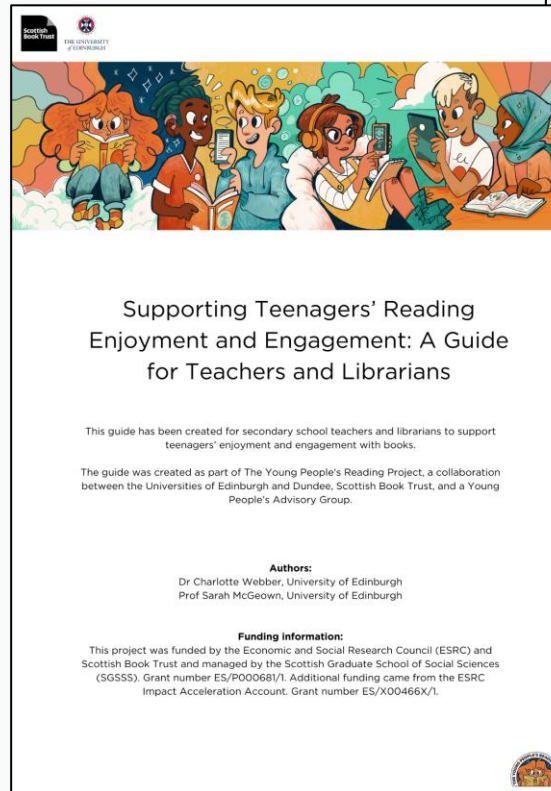
Key Area 2.3.1 – Modelling reading behaviours

Key Area 3.2.1 – Rewarding progress and recognising personal achievements

Guide for teachers and librarians

- Teenagers' perspectives on why reading for enjoyment is/could be important to them
- Teenagers' perspectives on what stops them from reading for enjoyment
- Teenagers' perspectives on what could help them to read more
- Suggestions for how to apply the findings in your classroom or school library setting

Access via **Scottish Book Trust website:**
[Supporting Teenagers Reading Enjoyment and Engagement Guide](#)



Relatable messaging

Teenagers told us that it was important to see reading being promoted, but that it should be promoted in ways which resonate with them and which are genuine and relatable.

They said that the messages they receive from adults about reading didn't always align with their own goals for reading. To make messaging more relevant, they suggested:

- Being given information about how reading can support a variety of outcomes which are relevant to them (e.g., mental health and wellbeing, learning about others)
- Being recommended books by friends or teachers whose opinions they trust
- Being recommended books on social media or other sources which use language they are familiar with
- Seeing those they respect and look up to being genuinely positive about reading

"They do need to advertise reading a little more...it's the same thing over and over again if they do advertise it like, you know, is it way to escape or something like that, which is true, but it's on every single poster or every single advertisement."

"If someone I look up to would say 'read more, it's good for you', then probably would read a bit more."

How to make the messaging around reading more relatable to teenagers:

- Link reading to their own goals and interests - ask pupils themselves what outcomes from reading they would value most and centre your messaging around these
- Look for existing messages from sources which are more relatable to teenagers (e.g., using Tiktok recommendations)

Ideas from practitioners:

- Build book lists based on pupil recommendations
- Improve staff knowledge of current trending books on social media - even if they're not in the library, you could recommend similar titles
- Display books recommended by social media
- Support pupils to make short 'Booktok-style' video reviews
- Encourage pupils to write book reviews for one another, emphasising why others will enjoy the book
- Particularly highlight the mental health and wellbeing benefits of reading for pleasure
- Organise author visits
- Support pupils to reflect on their own goals for reading, for example through reading journals or discussion

Additional resources

Adolescents' perspectives on the barriers to reading for pleasure

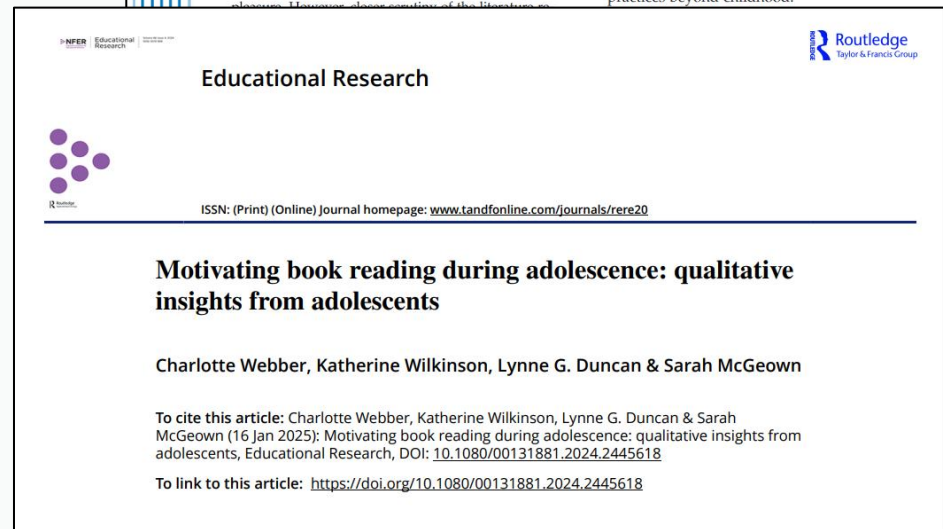
Webber, C., Wilkinson, K., Duncan, L. G., & McGeown, S. (2023) *Literacy*, 58(2), 204-215.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12359>

Motivating book reading during adolescence: Qualitative insights from adolescents

Webber, C., Wilkinson, K., Duncan, L. G., & McGeown, S. (2025) *Educational Research*, 1-19.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2024.2445618>



tele
bed
ive
rd,
34).
ing
es-
on

The Young People's Advisory Panel

Teagan, Harry, Hannah, Sofia, Emily and Ava

Supervisory Team

Prof Sarah McGeown, University of Edinburgh

Katherine Wilkinson, Scottish Book Trust

Dr Lynne Duncan, University of Dundee

Funders

ESRC/SGSSS (Grant Ref: ES/P000681/1)

Scottish Book Trust

ESRC Impact Acceleration Account. (Grant ref ES/X00466X/1)



University
of Dundee



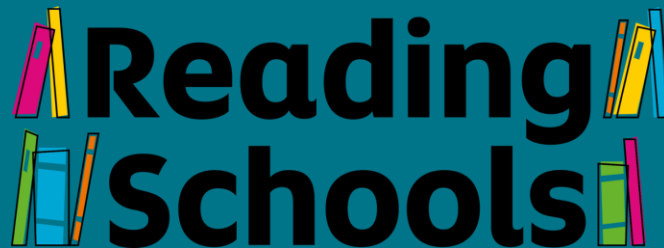


Interview Section (1)

Special Guest

Susan Brownlie

St Andrew's and St Bride's High School



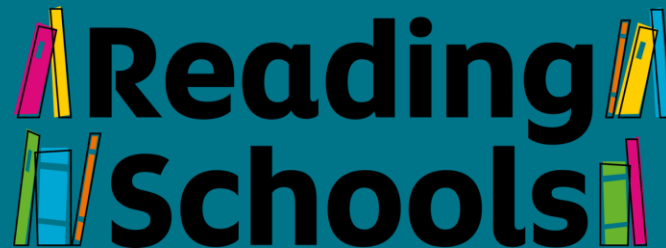


Interview Section (2)

Special Guests

Elaine Coleman & Leigh-Ann Dingwall

Queen Anne High School



Resources and shared practice

www.readingschools.scot/resources

- Reading Schools **On-demand Shared Practice showcases** with speakers from schools across the country [*Filter **Resources** by type: Training videos*]
- **Reading Schools Community** space – **editions for primary and secondary schools**
- Reading Schools **case studies and articles**, such as -
 - ★ **Perth secondary schools' authority-wide book festival**
 - ★ **Supporting teen reading at Forfar Academy**
 - ★ **IDL book projects at Cathkin High School**
- Resources to better **understand reading identities** and to introduce **quick and easy activities**
- **Attitude surveys** to use with staff, learners and families

Support through Scottish Book Trust: events and funding



- **Authors Live**
 - Access and [watch Authors Live](#) in class
 - Access the [on-demand library](#) for previous broadcasts together with our [accompanying resources](#)
- **Live Literature funded events [applications open now!]**
 - [Part funded](#) – next deadline **23 May deadline** for 2 June panel
 - [Article to support your Live Literature event](#)
- **Reading Schools Fund**
 - [2025/26 fund will open for applications in September](#)

Support through Scottish Book Trust: programmes and resources

- [Storydeck](#)
 - Request your three free deck and access accompanying resources
- [Creative writing with Brian Conaghan](#)
 - Four lesson plans and accompanying resources
- [Bookzilla app](#) and [book lists](#) for appropriate age-and-stage
- [Book discussion guides](#)
 - Run your own secondary school book club
- [Scottish Book Trust website](#) articles and resources to support and encourage positive reader confidence and engagement
 - Explore [articles written by Dr Charlotte Webber](#)



Upcoming Reading Schools support and other opportunities

- Reading Schools **'Start and Spark' sessions** (4.30-5.30pm):
 - **'Family Spark' Wednesday 5 March**
- **School Improvement Planning with Reading Schools** – Wednesday 12 March, 4.30-5.30pm

Our April to June 2025 CLPL schedule will be available soon:

[Follow Scottish Book Trust on Eventbrite for further details](#)

We appreciate your feedback

Please take a second to [complete our quick survey](#) on your experiences of this Shared Practice: family engagement session.



You can find details of [the recent changes we've made based on your feedback!](#) Thank you for your time.

scottishbooktrust.com

Thank you

liam.mccallum@scottishbooktrust.com

readingschools@scottishbooktrust.com

