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## Action to improve literacy

### Reading and writing a top priority for teachers and inspections.

Work to improve pupils' reading and writing will be stepped up in schools and inspections, Education Secretary Angela Constance has announced.

Education Scotland inspections will focus on raising attainment in literacy, while ministers will work with partners to set up a new national improvement framework, backed by best international practice.

Teachers will also be given extra learning resources, supported by a strategy for every school to raise the quality of literacy education.

Ms Constance announced the moves as the 2014 Scottish Survey of Literacy was published. It showed that last year around two-thirds of P4 and P7 pupils and 55 per cent of S2 pupils performed well, very well or above the relevant level for their stage in writing.

Around 8 out of 10 pupils at all stages are still performing well or very well in reading, although this was slightly lower than in 2012.

The survey was published as the Scottish Government's Access to Education Fund – which was launched last year, supporting pupils, parents and teachers in more than 300 schools to overcome barriers to learning – opened for a £1.5 million second round of project bids.

The literacy survey, showing data for P4, P7 and S2 pupils, was conducted in May 2014 – since then a programme of action has been developed, including:

- The launch of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, backed by a £100 million Attainment Scotland Fund, to narrow the gap between the least and most deprived areas
- The on-going expansion of the Raising Attainment for All Programme, now covering 23 local authorities and 180 schools and targeting improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- The announcement of a £1.5 million annual Read, Write, Count campaign so that every P1 to P3 child has access to books and materials to improve early literacy
- The Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource to assist teachers and support staff to identify and address any literacy difficulties in P1.

During a visit to Calderwood Primary School in Rutherglen, Ms Constance said:

“Literacy and numeracy are vital skills for our young people. That’s why the survey was commissioned – to get a clear picture at various stages of school. And it is why we all must act on its findings.

“Put simply, while Scottish pupils perform well, these results are not as good as they should be. They demonstrate the need to re-double efforts to ensure that every child can succeed in school and so gain the skills they need for life.

“This Government has already made clear that tackling the attainment gap is a key priority. The £100 million Scottish Attainment Challenge, the Read, Write, Count campaign and Access to Education funding are all designed to drive up standards and close the attainment gap. In addition to these and other actions taken since last year’s survey was conducted, I have also asked Education Scotland to strengthen the focus on literacy as part of their school inspections.

“I also intend to work closely with education partners to establish a national improvement framework. This will give us the data we need to ensure that every child can achieve the high standards set out within Curriculum for Excellence.

“In the last six months I’ve seen excellent work in our schools, to support learners and parents. It is essential that we both promote this positive practice in schools and identify where improvements can and should be made.”

### **Background:**

The Scottish Government announced details of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in February. This will see more than £100 million invested over four years to drive forward improvements in educational outcomes in Scotland’s most disadvantaged communities: <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Smart-money-on-attainment-15d2.aspx>

The Scottish Government announced in December that the Access to Education fund would be run for another year: <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Commitment-to-raising-attainment-for-all-12df.aspx>

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