

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 22 November 2023

PE2037/C: Improve literacy attainment through research-informed reading instruction

Thank you for your letter dated 1 November 2023 requesting a copy of the letter to the Scottish Council of Deans of Education on the current provision of ITE in relation to teacher skills and confidence to support children's reading in primary schools referred to in my submission of 11 August.

Zoè Robertson (Chair, Scottish Council of Deans of Education - SCDE) and [redacted] (SCDE representative for the National Response to Improving Literacy) replied to Scottish Government officials on 13 November. The response (attached for your information¹) highlights how student teachers across Scotland are taught about systematic synthetic phonics within a broader understanding of the development and teaching of reading. In relation to phonics, the letter confirms that student teachers are taught key concepts and terminology; about different approaches to phonics and reading instruction; debates in the research literature about synthetic phonics, and; the principles underpinning systematic synthetic phonics.

As indicated in their response letter, the Council of Deans is represented on the National Response to Improving Literacy. Officials from Education Scotland and from Scottish Government Directorate for Education Reform will continue to engage with the SCDE via the National Response to Improving Literacy. The engagement with the SCDE will include the vital role that our ITE institutions play in supporting newly qualified primary teachers to develop the core knowledge, skills and confidence that they need in relation to early reading instruction, including phonics.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

JENNY GILRUTH

ⁱ Note from the clerk – a copy of the SCDE response has been provided to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.