

# Enjoying Reading

**public library partnerships with schools**



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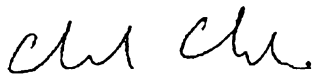
**public library partnerships with schools**

We hope you will find this Enjoying Reading kit useful. We want you to use it to help forge stronger links between your libraries and your local schools. The idea, as the title suggests, is to help children really enjoy reading.

We're very aware that you who work in public libraries - and school library services - do an important job in nurturing children's love of reading. That's why we need to make sure your skills and resources have a big role in the work of schools.

The work that libraries do with readers is of great value to schools. It helps to raise standards in schools, and it encourages creativity.

As you know, there are public libraries in every community, with a vast range of materials, expert staff, links with the creative community and imaginative ways of encouraging children to read. These are precious assets. We hope this kit will help every child benefit from the full package of reading support that comes when schools, public libraries and school library services work together.



**CHARLES CLARKE**  
Secretary of State for Education and Skills



**TESSA JOWELL**  
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

# Enjoying Reading

**public library partnerships with schools**

Section 1: Why? Public libraries and schools - why work together

Section 2: How? Public libraries and schools - making it work

Section 3: How? The Summer Reading Challenge

Section 4: How? Developing Reading Communities

Section 5: How? Orange Chatterbooks

C.D. and Summer Reading Challenge Advocacy Brochure

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The Reading Agency (TRA) is the strategic national development agency for public libraries' work with readers.  
Our mission is to inspire a reading nation by working in new ways with readers, writers, libraries and their partners.

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**education and skills**



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# Enjoying Reading

## public library partnerships with schools

### Section 1 : Why? Public libraries and schools - why work together

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## About this pack

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This pack is designed to help public library staff develop more effective partnerships with schools, to support young readers.

It is organised into five sections:

Section 1: 'Why?' covers the strategic and policy rationale for partnerships between public libraries and schools. It has resources to help you argue the case for the importance of public library/school partnerships in making sure children really enjoy reading.

Section 2: 'How?' offers ideas for developing partnerships, with examples from a range of projects.

Sections 3, 4 and 5: continue to show 'How' partnerships can support readers by linking to key national public library initiatives, which provide a practical focus for partnership work:

- The Summer Reading Challenge
- The Developing Reading Communities Project
- Orange Chatterbooks reading groups

Detailed case studies show how these initiatives have worked in practice.

The accompanying CD has:

- A PDF file of the whole pack
- A folder with the photocopiable sheets
- A powerpoint presentation which you can adapt to help with advocacy
- A copy of the 2004 Summer Reading Challenge website - an off-line version for you to use in negotiating and planning joint work with schools

In addition, the whole pack is available from the Reading Agency website's download centre under Enjoying Reading where copies of the photocopiable sheets are available as Microsoft Word documents for customising locally.

The Reading Agency  
December 2004

## Enjoying reading:

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### Good practice, new partnerships

Research shows that when public library and school staff work together, children's reading enjoyment and skills can improve dramatically. Public libraries have a huge amount to offer. There are some excellent examples of good practice and the opportunity to learn from these to help improve libraries' links with schools.

Recent national initiatives and government policies have focused on different sectors working together to achieve shared objectives, and Every Child Matters in particular creates a crucial new partnership framework. Public libraries working with schools to support children's reading can be a powerful alliance. Librarians working closely with school staff can help children to discover the joy of books, and lead them to catch the reading bug for life.

Libraries have a unique role in this process, because they can link formal and informal learning experiences. But teachers may not know how they can link with their local library to support their children's reading development.

#### Schools Library Services (SLSs)

Where an authority has a Schools Library Service, they will be a powerful ally and a key partner in your work with schools. SLS staff will know about local schools and what they need. They are an invaluable source of information and can help you encourage even the most reluctant schools to take up the services and programmes you offer.

#### Research into public library/school partnerships

In 2003 the University of Central England carried out some research into public library and school partnerships<sup>1</sup>. It showed that although some very successful joint working was underway, the full potential of the partnership is yet to be realised.

The *Developing Reading Communities* research and development programme<sup>2</sup> (see section 4 of this pack) identified that there was no consistency to the ways in which schools and libraries were working together to support readers. While some ground-breaking projects have been developed, it appears that more confidence is needed on both sides in order to develop the potential.

This pack features ideas and lessons from the most successful projects, providing material to support you in your work with schools.

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<sup>1</sup> *Reader development and reading promotion in school libraries and public libraries, and Investigating links between school and public libraries*, Centre for Information Research, University of Central England, 2003

<sup>2</sup> *Developing Reading Communities*, The Reading Agency and ContinYou, 2004 (see [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk))



## Making partnerships with schools work

*Developing Reading Communities* identified the following as key elements of successful joint working:

- Involvement of all partners in advance planning
  - school libraries
  - public library services
  - Schools Library Services
  - teaching staff
- Focusing on the child and what's important for them
- Effective communication throughout
- Personal enthusiasm of key players
- Involving children throughout the project
- Links with national projects or networks like the Summer Reading Challenge or Chatterbooks
- Support from the LEA (via advisers and consultants)
- Using the School Library Service, where practical, to mediate communication between you and school staff
- Involvement of senior staff
- Taking time to understand each others' objectives

In the long-term, the service or activity becomes part of core provision

*A key success factor for joint working is that both partners should be able to share some common ground and understand each others' perspectives and context.*

*Don't worry if you can't meet all these conditions – some of them may be beyond your influence. As long as you can tick most of the points you should be OK!*

This pack aims to help. It features handouts for you to photocopy and give to your colleagues in schools to support your case for partnership development and working.

The accompanying Microsoft PowerPoint presentation can be used to promote these messages to staff in schools. The full pack is also downloadable as an Acrobat pdf file from The Reading Agency website ([www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk))

## Public libraries and schools – why work together? (a)



### Political agendas require working together

Partnership – or 'joined-up' – working is a priority for national government and local authorities.

*Every Child Matters*<sup>1</sup> envisions the integration of all local services for children.

*The 2004 Children Bill*<sup>2</sup> makes cooperation and information-sharing essential.

*The DfES Five year strategy*<sup>3</sup> shows the need to work in partnership to achieve change in children's services, education and training.

*Framework for the Future*<sup>4</sup> urges stronger partnerships with schools in order to encourage children to use libraries.

*The Shared Priorities*<sup>5</sup> depend on stronger partnership working to achieve the common aims of raising standards in schools and improving the quality of life for children and others.

*Study Support and Out of Hours Learning*<sup>6</sup> show the value of community-based activities in supporting children's learning.

### Key Research shows the value of working together

*Start with the Child*<sup>7</sup> – Agencies working together provide better, more integrated packages of family-friendly services.

*Creative Reading*<sup>8</sup> – School/library partnerships stimulate children's creativity, and encourage reading for pleasure.

*Fulfilling their Potential*<sup>9</sup> - Partnership working is the most effective way to help young people extend and enjoy their reading.

*Reading for Change*<sup>10</sup> - Young people's life chances improve when they read for pleasure. Enjoying reading can break the link between social class and underachievement.

*Inspiring Children*<sup>11</sup> - Libraries' work with children (for example through the Summer Reading Challenge) inspires children and encourages them to read for pleasure and more widely.

<sup>1</sup> *Every Child Matters*, DfES, 2003, [www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/downloads.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/downloads.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> The Children Bill (HL), House of Lords, 19th July 2004, [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/200304/cmbills/144/2004144.html](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/200304/cmbills/144/2004144.html)

<sup>3</sup> Five year strategy for children and learners, DfES, July 2004

<sup>4</sup> *Framework for the Future* – libraries, learning and information in the next decade, DCMS, 2003

<sup>5</sup> ODFM and LGA Shared Priorities, 2001

<sup>6</sup> Study Support Quality Development Programme, DfES, 2003

<sup>7</sup> *Start With the Child* research report, MLA, 2002; *Start with the child* report, CILIP, 2002, [www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/](http://www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/)

<sup>8</sup> *Creative Reading*, Demos for TRA, 2004

<sup>9</sup> *Fulfilling Their Potential*, TRA, 2004

<sup>10</sup> *Reading For Change*: performance and engagement across countries: results from PISA 2000, OECD, 2002

<sup>11</sup> *Inspiring Children*: the impact of the summer reading challenge, The Reading Agency, 2003

## Public libraries and schools – why work together? (b)



### **Working together to reach every child, every family**

Through libraries, teachers can offer all pupils a whole new reading universe.

Through schools, librarians can engage with all children, including those who haven't discovered what the library has to offer.

Children can be encouraged to visit and use library services as individual young citizens, developing their sense of community involvement and individual responsibility.

Research shows that children who are enthusiastic about library use can get their whole family hooked<sup>14</sup>.

Working together in different ways can help to pick up children who have not yet discovered reading for pleasure.

### **The complementary strengths of libraries and schools**

Librarians know and are enthusiastic about children's literature and the full range of resources: including books, their authors and IT available to young people via their local library.

Librarians working with children have considerable knowledge of children's books and know which the children are enjoying most.

Libraries are open out of school hours, including at weekends.

Libraries provide a unique community space where children can browse, read, enjoy all kinds of books and follow their individual passions.

Teachers have intimate knowledge of the curriculum, its requirements and of the needs and preferences of individual children.

Libraries and schools together make a powerful and effective combination.

<sup>14</sup> *Inspiring Children*: the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge, The Reading Agency, 2003

## What public libraries offer schools (a)



### **More choice = wider reading**

Libraries have a massive community network with over 4000 local branches holding 24 million books between them. This means children can access a huge choice of reading locally in a neutral and informal environment. Library staff generally know about children's books and information sources, and can usually find the right book for every child.

Children gain:

- individual help and encouragement to find the books and IT they will enjoy;
- access to the wider world of IT resources via the People's Network computers in all libraries;
- new ways to enjoy their reading, through clubs, projects and links with publishers and authors;
- lively links with other community partners to stimulate those who may have disengaged with reading.

**Libraries offer a massive choice of books and encourage wider reading**



### **More enjoyment = better skills**

Libraries give children access to a vast amount of reading materials at all levels and for all interests. They are supportive reading environments, where children can enjoy reading in their own space and in their own time, with help on hand when they need it.

Children gain:

- positive attitudes to reading through free access to a huge range of books;
- improved confidence and better reading and writing skills;
- better speaking, listening and critical communication skills, through talking about books;
- access to library staff who know about children's books and care about children's reading;
- a chance to talk about books and reading with each other.

**More enjoyment means more reading, better skills and higher standards**

## What public libraries offer schools (b)



### **Joining = belonging and sharing**

Using the library is an important first step in local citizenship.

Children gain:

- a sense of belonging to the community through using a shared resource;
- the chance to use a community space that celebrates local diversity;
- an early experience of citizenship and community responsibility;
- the chance to develop and achieve in a community setting through reading challenge schemes (with certificates and medals), offered in 95% of public libraries in school holidays, and through library-based reading groups (offered in 59% of library services);
- self-esteem through sharing reading opinions with others in a safe community setting;

**Joining and using the library promotes a sense of belonging and responsibility**



### **Creative spaces = creative experiences**

Libraries provide a mix of cultural and creative resources and experiences. They have strong links with writers, illustrators and storytellers. Partnership work can be used to enrich reading and to develop other creative processes.

Children gain:

- more creative reading experiences using a mix of resources and expertise;
- space and time to think, make new connections and develop new ideas;
- access to a broad range and variety of cultural activities and a chance to explore their own individual imaginative and creative interests;
- chances to display their work, or perform in a safe community space;
- improved creative writing skills through reading and the chance to work with writers, illustrators and storytellers;
- better access to other cultural services through libraries' partnerships with museums and archives services;

**Libraries provide creative spaces and offer imaginative creative experiences**

## Public libraries and schools: the policy framework



All current government child-related policies stress the importance of 'joined-up' services for children. There is a real imperative for children's library services and schools to work together, and a recognition that creativity and enjoyment promote learning. An understanding of the policy context will enable public library staff to present the value of libraries' work with readers to potential partners in schools.

### Why libraries and schools together ?

Schools are a key partner for libraries in helping young people to:

- develop reading independence
- develop reading skills and confidence
- develop understanding of texts and literacy skills.

Public Libraries help schools to meet key objectives by:

- developing children's reading choices
- providing the widest range of reading
- introducing children to a learning resource for life
- supporting the National Curriculum and the National Primary Strategy with resources and information
- developing children's creativity and imagination
- contributing to the quality of life of children and families
- providing children with a community role and space
- supporting children to participate in their community through practical citizenship projects
- supporting children's health, well-being and self-esteem through reading confidence.

Together libraries and schools can create a community of reading support and activity, widening and increasing children's enjoyment of reading.

The key policies which emphasise the joined up approach to service delivery are:



## 1. National and local government policies:

**The Shared Priorities**<sup>15</sup> are seven shared public service delivery priorities which were agreed by central and local government in 2001. These give local authorities the opportunity to develop local solutions to local needs, whilst meeting central government targets. The shared priorities include:

- raising standards across schools
- improving the quality of life of children and young people...

Local authorities aim to achieve progress within these areas through local Strategic Partnerships and by developing Community Strategies. Partnership work between libraries and schools at a local level is important for supporting both local and national priorities<sup>16</sup>.

## 2. Child welfare policies and reports



**The Children Act**<sup>17</sup> aims to create the structures to deliver improvements – cooperation between services, secure arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare, and the effective sharing of information.

**Every Child Matters**<sup>18</sup> aims to transform children's services to maximise opportunity and minimise risk for all children and young people. Working together is the only way to ensure that no child slips through the net. It identifies five key outcomes that underpin children and young people's well-being:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic well-being.

*"The vision we have is a shared one... A step-change in early years provision... parenting support embedded at each life stage... schools that provide high standards, and a range of extended services. Multi-disciplinary teams based in universal services... More support and a wider range of positive activities in and beyond school for young people."*

<sup>15</sup> ODPM and LGA Shared Priorities, 2001 and at [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

<sup>16</sup> Cultural services and the shared priorities, January 2004, Local Government Association, ISBN 1 84049 3577

<sup>17</sup> The Children Act, November 2004 ([www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040031.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040031.htm))

<sup>18</sup> *Every Child Matters*, DfES 2003, [www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/downloads.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/downloads.shtml)



### 3. Children's education policies and reports

**All our futures -: creativity, culture and education**, National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999...makes recommendations for promoting pupils' creative and cultural development in schools. It seeks more recognition of these areas in the curriculum, more training for teachers, partnership between schools and arts organisations and the establishment of schemes and awards to improve arts education and creativity.

*"... partnerships between schools and outside organisations and individuals are essential to ... educational development ... such partnerships enrich and extend the experiences of young people and support teaching and training."*

**The DfES Five year strategy for children and learners**, DfES, July 2004 sets out a vision for the transformation of children's services, education and training. It identifies five key principles of reform that will underpin the changes:

- Greater personalisation and choice
- Opening up services
- Freedom and independence
- Major commitment to staff development
- Partnerships to maximise the life chances of children, young people and adults

**Excellence and Enjoyment - A Strategy for Primary Schools**, DfES 2003...emphasises the importance of enjoyment to promote learning, stating that *"Children learn better when they are excited and engaged"*

**Extended schools - providing opportunities and services**, DfES, 2002, p11... identifies that providing services and activities beyond the school day can lead to increased motivation, improvements in behaviour and additional facilities.

*"Local groups and individuals who may be able to provide advice or work in partnership with schools...could include libraries, museums and galleries."*

**The impact of study support:** J Macbeath et al, DfES 2001, showed that study support makes a difference to attainment, attitude and attendance at school and *"should be seen as an element of all initiatives to raise achievement and promote social inclusion."*

**Learning out of hours: the quality and management of study support in secondary schools**, OFSTED, 2002, reports on the positive contribution of out of hours learning on pupil achievement, but also identifies that...

*"More can be done to strengthen the contribution of out-of-hours learning activities including developing links with community and other organisations."*

**The National Primary Strategy** emphasises the importance of reading a range of texts within a supportive framework for teaching and learning

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/literacy/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/literacy/)

**The Reading Connects project** [www.readingconnects.org.uk/](http://www.readingconnects.org.uk/) is part of the DfES National Reading Campaign promoting creativity and children's enjoyment of reading and writing. The project has been extended to further promote reading for pleasure, particularly in primary schools.



## 4. Library services policies and reports

***Start with the Child***,<sup>19</sup> the most important review of library services for young people since *Investing in Children* (1995) provides practical ideas and frameworks to support new partnerships and activities.

*“The more integrated the approach from school library and teaching staff...the better the learning experience is for children.”*

***The value and impact of homework clubs in public libraries report***<sup>20</sup> reported that *“a structured homework club service works extremely well in public libraries, providing a wide range of study support resources in a neutral and welcoming environment.”*

***Study support code of practice for public libraries***<sup>21</sup> provides practical guidance on running out of hours activities and explains that... *“study support in libraries does not just consist of formal homework clubs, but may include reading and computer clubs and major national initiatives such as the ... Summer Reading Challenge ....”*

***Framework for the Future***<sup>22</sup> identifies that libraries can provide ‘a vital alternative but complementary learning service to support school aged children’ and emphasises the need to work in partnership with schools over such projects as the Summer Reading Challenge. *“...this should involve the library service in working with local schools in conjunction with Schools Library Services ... to provide a planned programme of reader development to enrich and enhance the curriculum”.*

***Framework for the Future Action Plan***<sup>23</sup> follows up the original report by identifying that to *“support young readers through joined-up school and public library work”* is key.

<sup>19</sup> Start with the Child, Cilip 2002, [www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/](http://www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/)

<sup>20</sup> The value and impact of homework clubs in public libraries report, LIC, 2000

<sup>21</sup> Study support code of practice for public libraries , QEC/NYA, 2002, piii

<sup>22</sup> Framework for the Future – libraries, learning and information in the next decade, DCMS, 2003

<sup>23</sup> Museums, Libraries and Archives Council Framework for the Future Action Plan, MLA, 2003



## Evidence that it works: lessons from research

Research proves that partnership work supports reader development.

### More choice = wider reading

Library staff can contribute significantly to children's reading enjoyment by offering them the best texts, and by promoting reading in innovative ways.

<p><b>Research findings show that...</b></p> <p>66% of participants said they read more books than if they hadn't taken part in the Summer Reading Challenge.</p> <p>95% wanted to read more books after the challenge.</p> <p>45% read a book they would not have wanted to read before.</p> <p>78% believed their reading had improved as a result of the Summer Reading Challenge.</p> <p>98% like choosing books for themselves and 99% like going to the library.</p>	<p><b>Sources of evidence....</b></p> <p><b>Inspiring children: the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge</b></p> <p>This national participant study, conducted in 2003 by product perception ltd for The Reading Agency, interviewed 380 children from three libraries across the UK to assess the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) on participating children once they had completed the challenge. <a href="http://www.readingagency.co.uk/html/research_downloads_detail.cfm?e=21">www.readingagency.co.uk/html/research_downloads_detail.cfm?e=21</a></p>
<p><b>And...</b></p> <p>83% of students read in their spare time.</p> <p>11% never read outside of schools hours. These students were more likely to come from a home where neither parent or guardian worked.</p>	<p><b>Young People's attitudes towards reading</b></p> <p>Nestle Family Monitor 17 was conducted by MORI in 2003</p> <p>More than 900 11-18 year olds in 33 state and independent schools and sixth form colleges were asked about their reading habits and preferences <a href="http://www.nestle.co.uk/about/familymonitor">www.nestle.co.uk/about/familymonitor</a></p>

## More enjoyment = better skills

Reading for pleasure can be the key to academic success and improved life chances  
Libraries can encourage children through providing free access to a huge range of books



<p><b>Research findings show that...</b></p> <p>Students who were more enthusiastic about, and engaged in, reading performed better in tests.</p> <p>Students who had access to print at home were more engaged in reading.</p> <p>Being a frequent reader was more of an advantage, on its own, than wealth or social status.</p> <p><i>“finding ways to engage students in reading may be one of the most effective ways to leverage social change.”</i></p>	<p><b>Sources of evidence....</b></p> <p><b>Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)</b></p> <p>Conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) during 2000, PISA tested 15-year-olds from 32 countries. In addition, students were surveyed about their reading habits and preferences.</p> <p>A report on the findings, <i>Reading for Change</i>, was published in 2001 <a href="http://www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/9602071E.PDF">www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/9602071E.PDF</a></p>
<p><b>And...</b></p> <p>Children who read most frequently for fun had the highest test scores.</p> <p>10-year-olds in England came third overall in reading ability, but had a poorer attitude to reading and read less often for fun than students in comparable countries.</p>	<p><b>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)</b></p> <p>This comparative study of the reading achievement of 10-year-olds was conducted in England during 2001 by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) <a href="http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/pirls.asp">www.nfer.ac.uk/research/pirls.asp</a></p>

## Joining = sharing and belonging

Children need the support of a trusted and respected adult who can support reading to improve and develop their reading skills and enjoyment. They also benefit from discussing books with their peers.



<p><b>Research findings show that...</b></p> <p>Good quality publicity materials and a sense of belonging to a special group are important.</p> <p>Children and young people have ideas and opinions to contribute to the design, stock and marketing of libraries – they want to be involved.</p> <p>Children and young people want adults to take an interest in their reading, without dictating their tastes.</p>	<p><b>Sources of evidence...</b></p> <p><b>Start with the child: the needs and motivations of young people</b> This research was commissioned by Re:source (now MLA), and conducted by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre. The research involved discussions with 75 young people aged 3 – 16 and revealed the increasing consumerism of young people, the importance of IT, the strong influence of the family, and the basic need for all young people to belong as well as to develop their own identities as they grow to adulthood.</p> <p>For the CILIP report based on the research see: <a href="http://www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/index.html">www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/index.html</a></p>
<p><b>And...</b></p> <p>43% of students chose to read something based on a peer recommendation, while 10% read on the basis of a teacher recommendation</p>	<p><b>Young People's attitudes towards reading</b> Nestle Family Monitor 17 was conducted by MORI in 2003</p> <p>More than 900 11-18 year olds in 33 state and independent schools and sixth form colleges were asked about their reading habits and preferences <a href="http://www.nestle.co.uk/about/familymonitor">www.nestle.co.uk/about/familymonitor</a></p>
<p><b>And...</b></p> <p><i>"The effect of Chatterbooks on children's social skills, communication and confidence in groups has been a marked, and perhaps unexpected, success of the scheme. There are many reports of shy children becoming much more confident, and of children from different schools learning how to get on together"</i></p> <p>44% of groups said children were sharing and relating better with their peers and that children's confidence and skills in self expression had increased</p> <p>Children have benefited from "meeting with other children and learning to discuss books in a social setting" (Chatterbooks parent)</p>	<p><b>Chatterbooks Report</b>, November 2003, The Reading Agency</p> <p>This report covers the experience of 69 Chatterbooks groups, after running for a year, and follows on from an earlier 2002 report. It is available from the TRA website at <a href="http://www.readingagency.org.uk">www.readingagency.org.uk</a></p>

## Creative spaces = creative experiences

Children want spaces of their own, where they can experiment with their choice of books and discuss their reading with their peers.



<p><b>Research findings show that...</b></p> <p>Children want to be listened to and to be able to exercise choice.</p> <p>Children want a space that belongs to them, for themselves and their friends.</p> <p>Children want to have access to a wide range of appropriate books, to be read to, to be given help and guidance in choosing books.</p> <p>Children want opportunities to talk to their peers about reading.</p> <p>The support of an interested adult and reading role models helps children to develop their own individual reading identity.</p>	<p><b>Sources of evidence...</b></p> <p><b>Start with the child: The Needs and Motivations of Young People</b></p> <p>This research was commissioned by Re:source (now MLA), and conducted by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre.</p> <p>The research involved discussions with 75 young people aged 3–16 and revealed the increasing consumerism of young people, the importance of IT, the strong influence of the family, and the basic need for all young people to belong as well as to develop their own identities as they grow to adulthood.</p> <p>For the CILIP report based on the research see:  <a href="http://www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/index.html">www.cilip.org.uk/advocacy/startwiththechild/index.html</a></p>
<p><b>And...</b></p> <p>No two people read the same text in the same way.... We take what a writer gives us and we make it our own.</p> <p>Many young people use a combination of reading, music, websearches and pictures to satisfy their curiosity. Libraries can meet this need with their increasing range of resources across different media.</p>	<p><b>Creative Reading: Young people, reading and public libraries</b></p> <p>This report by Demos, the influential think-tank, was published in June 2004 in association with The Reading Agency  <a href="http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk">www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>And...</b></p> <p>34% of groups said children had developed creative skills.</p> <p><i>“The children have become more confident in their reading and their reading tastes. They have also developed creatively with their writing of stories, letters and poems”</i>          Chatterbooks group leader</p> <p>“After a special session on Art books, (she) was inspired to make models and other artistic representations of her reading”          Chatterbooks parent</p>	<p><b>Chatterbooks Report</b>, November 2003, The Reading Agency</p> <p>This report covers the experience of 69 Chatterbooks groups, after running for a year, and follows on from an earlier 2002 report. It is available from the TRA website at  <a href="http://www.readingagency.org.uk">www.readingagency.org.uk</a></p>

## Public libraries and schools working together make readers for life

Children's reading is best supported where schools and libraries work in partnership and where children can influence activities directly.



<p><b>Research findings show that...</b></p> <p>A variety of media helps to satisfy different young people's individual learning styles.</p> <p>Browsing the shelves is like surfing the web.</p>	<p><b>Sources of evidence...</b></p> <p><b>Creative Reading: Young people, reading and public libraries</b></p> <p>This report by Demos, the influential think-tank, was published in June 2004 in association with The Reading Agency <a href="http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk">www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>And...</b></p> <p>Joint activities between school and public libraries make the best use of expertise and staff, and allow both parties to share costs and material resources.</p> <p>Schools Library Services can play a key role in reader development.</p> <p>Partnership working allows public and school library staff to reach more young people.</p> <p>Isolated large-scale events need to be supported by ongoing reading programmes. These should include <i>“activities in which young people have direct input.”</i></p>	<p><b>Reader development and reading promotion in school libraries and public libraries</b></p> <p>This study, published in 2003, was carried out by the Centre for Information Research and the Isle of Wight Council via requests for information on email newsgroups<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>The findings were based on a sample of 19 respondents from Schools Library Services, school and public libraries. Respondents were interviewed, and researchers conducted focus groups with school pupils.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ebase.uce.ac.uk/projects/reader_development.htm">www.ebase.uce.ac.uk/projects/reader_development.htm</a></p>



## Overcoming the barriers: ideas

Partnership working can present challenges and barriers, particularly in cross-sector partnerships where participants can often have different strategic priorities and work to different time frames. But the rewards for the child are more than worth the effort.

### No time

#### Possible solutions

- Involve all partners in strategic planning from the start, so time issues can be addressed in the project's structure.
- Work to persuade senior level staff that the project needs dedicated time from coordinating members (see policy and research sections).
- Find enthusiasts who will make time to make the project work.
- Buy time by securing funding – either from core budgets through advocacy, or from external sources.

#### Possible solutions

- Use your local Schools Library Service to manage communications between partners.
- Plan regular meetings and a system for information dissemination right from the start.
- Ensure all partners are clear about why they're involved and what they want the project to achieve – and communicate their priorities to everyone involved.

### Communication problems

### Lack of resources and funding

#### Possible solutions

- Use advocacy skills and materials (see section 1.3 - why work together?) to persuade senior level staff that the project needs adequate resources to be successful and hit key targets.
- Use the policy statements to extract funding from core budgets.
- Apply to external bodies for projects funding (consider Creative Partnerships) and see [www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/Funding.htm](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/Funding.htm) for more funding advice.

## Students not interested in reading

### Possible solutions

- Involve children in the development and choice of project so that they experience a sense of ownership in a project they want, rather than one adults *think* is effective. Think innovatively and creatively about the type of project you will run – go beyond reading groups and award shadowing; what will stimulate the hard-to-reach?  
(see [www.literacytrust.org.uk/readingconnects](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/readingconnects) for ideas).
- Use the project examples provided in the YouthBOOX Reading Kits to overcome initial scepticism
- Locate the project in the library as a non-school space, or use a mobile library in conjunction with a community venue
- Recruit a focus group of young people to input to the planning and be responsible for part or all of the project

### Possible solutions

- Set up regular training/networking sessions for school and public librarians to share information and ideas. If you have a local SLS, ask them to facilitate.
- Use the photocopiable material from this pack to persuade staff of the importance of partnership working.
- Find a keen teacher/librarian who is looking for career development opportunities.

## Enthusiastic people hard to find

### Possible solutions

- Use mobile library services, where available.
- Use IT in schools and libraries (webcams, blogs, video conferencing).
- When sourcing funding, include a transport budget.
- Look for community venues, or commercial premises.

## Large distances between libraries and schools

### Possible solutions

- Show senior level staff the policy comparison table, highlighting key areas of overlap.
- Discuss each party's Unique Selling Points (USPs) - see section 1.3.
- Be clear about each partners' main priorities and seek commitment of all the partners to achieving these.

## Partners have different priorities.

**Action planning: Developing school/library partnerships**  
**Sheet 1 – defining the project**



Name of Partnership project
Target group
Key aims of the project
Partners
Objectives (what do we want to happen?)
Outcomes (what will success look like?)
Key measures (what do we need to measure and record?)
Project monitoring (how will we monitor progress on a regular basis?)

Action planning: Developing school/library partnerships  
Sheet 2 – overcoming barriers



Name of Partnership project

Potential barriers to partnership working

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Possible solutions to overcome the barriers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Support from others outside the partnership (who else can help?)

Potential risks for the project  
(what might happen to prevent us achieving the outcomes?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Possible solutions to the risks

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Action planning: Developing school/library partnerships Sheet 3 – Action Planning



Summary of key actions to be taken to progress the project

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

# Enjoying Reading

**public library partnerships with schools**

## Section 2: How? Public libraries and schools - making it work

	Page
2.1. Making it work	1
2.2. How libraries and schools can help each other (photocopiable sheet)	2
2.3. Ideas for inspiring children to catch the reading bug	
• The first stage	3
• Moving on	5
• Ideas for library and staff development	16
2.4. Highly developed partnerships: one library service's approach	18
2.5. Ideas checklist (photocopiable sheet)	20

## Making it work

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This section of the pack is divided into four elements:

- A summary of the unique ways in which public libraries and schools can help each other (section 2.2).
- A range of ideas and snapshots showing how partnerships between public libraries and schools work in practice. Also included are ideas for library and staff development (section 2.3).
- A focus on one local authority's activities, demonstrating how children's reading experiences are improved and enlivened through partnership working in a highly developed partnership arrangement (section 2.4).
- A checklist to use for practical planning (section 2.5).

## How libraries and schools can help each other



### Public libraries helping schools

- Libraries are vast treasure houses of books.
- The extraordinary range of books available expands children's reading choices and confidence.
- Librarians know these books and can promote them effectively to even the most reluctant readers.
- Library staff:
  - can inspire children to experiment with wider reading
  - know about trends in reading and what children are enjoying and will want to try next
  - are aware of the latest prize winning books and know about books in the media
  - can help children to access, use and enjoy reading websites and other resources
  - help students to understand how libraries work
  - can bring children together to share ideas and opinions about reading
  - can support whole families, helping them to share their books and reading with each other and give mutual support
  - can assist with homework queries and help children research the answers to their question
  - can mount displays of students' work
  - can assist schools to make most effective use of the local School Library Service
  - have great ideas for reader development activities and projects.
- Libraries work directly with authors, storytellers, illustrators and publishers, and have links with local reading, writing and art groups.
- Joining the library helps children develop a sense of community and sharing. Libraries are great places to let the mind run free and develop creative thinking.

### Schools helping public libraries

- Schools help librarians reach children and discover what they want.
- They can help form focus or consultation groups of young people.
- They can share visiting authors, storytellers or illustrators.
- Schools help libraries to reach parents, especially non-users.
- They can help libraries contact families and follow up Bookstart and Bookstart Plus projects.
- They can promote special reader development campaigns, such as the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Schools can help libraries to promote news about children's books and reading (Children's Book Week, prize-winning books and authors).
- They are essential partners in reaching, developing and supporting young readers.

## Ideas for inspiring children to catch the reading bug



### The first stage...

Every public library can reflect and celebrate the work of its local schools, and schools can actively encourage every child and their family to become library users

#### Art exhibitions

It is easy to ask schools to provide pupil's art work about reading (book jackets, or work inspired by reading) to exhibit in the public library. Children love to show their families/carers their work on display. It can persuade them to visit the library for the first time. The school achieves valuable promotion and the library can demonstrate its community links.

**Top Tip:** *This works best when exhibitions are tied in to joint projects.*

#### Bulletin boards

Library notice-boards can be used to display news from local schools, while school notice-boards promote the library and its services. To maintain interest, the information displayed should be up-to-date and refreshed regularly. Boards can promote individual books or special campaigns and projects.

**Top Tip:** *It's worth asking publishers and book suppliers for book jackets, posters, author photos or show-cards, and the organisers of book prizes like the Nestlé Smarties Book Prizes (Book Trust) for promotional materials for your notice-boards.*

#### Class visits

Class visits are an important way of introducing children to their library and its services. Not all parents or carers can bring children in, so the school visit might be a child's only chance to go to their local library. A regular programme of contact and visits makes a terrific first step to ensuring children have good access to their library, and know what it has to offer. In some areas, visits are run jointly by public library and SLS staff. Some authorities (e.g. West Sussex) involve staff from the LEA's Inspection and Advisory Service. This produces richer and more informed school/library partnerships and stronger support for developing children's reading and use of the library.



#### Snapshot

*Hampshire SLS knew that many pupils in a primary day special school were not public library members. The children had moderate learning difficulties and some were autistic. The SLS worked with the school and public library service on a Book Trail which took place during Schools' Book Week. One of the challenges built into the Trail was a visit to the public library. Non-members could borrow a book on a group ticket to encourage them to join. The library exhibited artwork that the children created during the week, and class visits have continued.*

*For a full report, see Books for Keeps, No 145, March 2004  
For more information contact Anne Marley: [anne.marley@hants.gov.uk](mailto:anne.marley@hants.gov.uk)*

## Improving access

Sometimes improving access to the library can transform children's use of the service.



### Snapshot

*Staff at Newbury Library, West Berkshire, were concerned that many local children didn't visit the library. They decided that "if you can't get the child to the book, then you must get the book to the child" and arranged for one of the authority's mobile libraries to stop outside a local school from 3.10-3.45pm once a week. In term-time the mobile library stops just inside the school gates, in the school holidays it is in a lay-by outside the school.*

*Library staff announced the stop at a school assembly. Children were invited to complete a form to join the library and hand it in to the school before the visit. The school confirmed their details and the library accepted this as proof of identity and address. Children were slow to use the service at first, but use has been building up steadily to a point where the library van is generally full during its visits.*

*Since then, library and school staff have developed an 'encouraging reading' scheme. The library has bought multiple copies of core picture books. Foundation Stage (3-5 years) teachers are encouraging parents and carers to borrow these books and share them with their children in the lead up to their entry to school. Knowing these stories well provides young children with a firm foundation for learning to read and to enjoy reading.*

*For more information contact Barbara Magee: [bmagee@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:bmagee@westberks.gov.uk)*

## Using the web

A link on the school intranet to the library web pages, encourages students to search the catalogue (most library catalogues are now online), and makes it easy for them to find out about their local library.

You can also link from the library website to local school websites, so that children can find their school life reflected in the library.



## Moving on...

### Annual events and festivals

World Book Day, prize award ceremonies, National Poetry Day, Children's Book Week, Family Learning week and National Storytelling Week all provide ideal opportunities for linking to the school curriculum. It's worth checking out internet sites such as [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk) and [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk) to find out about national events that can be used as a focus for these activities.

### Book Awards

Book prizes can be a great way to get teachers and children reading and talking about books. There are international, national and local awards, some of which provide opportunities for children to get directly involved. You can find details of most prizes at [www.booktrust.org.uk/](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/) or [www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/awards.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/awards.html). Alternatively, search for 'children's book awards' on the web.

The annual Carnegie/Greenaway Shadowing Scheme can be used to develop joint working between schools and libraries. Information and support material can be found at [www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/](http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/)



### Snapshot

*Hertfordshire Libraries have always had a school librarian and a member of the SLS team on their Carnegie/Greenaway planning group. What started as a discussion day for library and school staff has developed into shadowing and led to 'Children's Choice?'. Schools taking part in the shadowing scheme are invited to a discussion day and children vote for their favourite books. At the end of the day, a specially invited author talks to the children, answers their questions and signs books.*

For more information contact Sue Jones: [sue.jones@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:sue.jones@hertscc.gov.uk)

**Top Tip:** *If you're feeling particularly adventurous you can always set up your own local award!*

### Snapshot

*In Stockton about 1,000 nine to twelve year olds from 25 schools get involved in choosing the best book of the year. All children read and review a shortlist of five books, copies of which are provided by the library service. Children vote in a secret ballot to choose an overall winner. Throughout the project, library staff visit schools and discuss the books and authors with the children. Some schools incorporate the books into their literacy hour and use them for shared reading or text level work. All five shortlisted authors are invited to a special event to talk to children about their books.*

For more information contact Tony Quantrill: [tony.quantrill@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:tony.quantrill@stockton.gov.uk)

## Snapshot

Salford's fifteen high schools, the SLS and the local children's library service worked together to promote the 'Salford'. Young people from Y8 and Y9 discussed a shortlist of books, joined reading groups set up for the project, and selected a winner.

Librarians reported the outbreak of a 'reading bug' in the schools and many of the reading groups continued after the award. One Y10 boy who had always avoided reading fiction was heard to say "Miss, that book is mint... I can't put it down... I've been reading everywhere."

For more information contact Pamela Manley: [pamela.manley@salford.gov.uk](mailto:pamela.manley@salford.gov.uk)

## BOOX

BOOX magazine uses young people's own reviews and recommendations to highlight great reads for teenagers. It's a terrific resource for promoting reading and libraries. You can hand it out to school classes, use it for displays in public and school libraries and classrooms, and as a focus for regular reading groups or special one-off events.

For details of how to order BOOX see [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

**Top Tip:** *Why not use BOOX when you update your collection? You could also encourage local school students to use it to choose books for the public library. They could also take responsibility for creating a BOOX promotion in the library, which could include posting their own book reviews and recommendations on the school and library websites, or even developing their own version of the magazine.*

## Dads and Lads schemes

These schemes identify books and other reading materials that link into men's/boys' hobbies and obsessions. They get fathers and sons reading socially and emphasise pleasure, excitement and provide excellent motivations for reading, which are nothing to do with the school curriculum.

Dads and their lads are invited to find out about the books and read them together. They can also explore magazines, newspapers, graphic novels and websites. It's a great way for dads to encourage their sons to read, and to overcome any negative attitudes towards reading they may still harbour from their schooldays.

**Top Tip:** *Ask a local school to recruit the dads and lads, while you host the sessions and source and promote the books. You can either focus the sessions around new library stock or on a particular theme or issue. Why not ask participants if there's a particular theme they'd like to explore?*

## Family reading challenges

Family reading gets the whole family developing the lifelong reading habit. Library and school staff can work together to promote library membership and the benefits of reading together.

**Top Tip:** *Why not launch a family reading challenge at a school parents' evening or open day? You can tailor your project to meet local needs, list 'top family reading' titles, and create linked displays in the library and school. You can work with school staff to devise reward systems for families (including parents/carers). You can award parents 'Reading Champion' status, offer special incentives to encourage library use (e.g. free AV loans, certificates and badges).*

Family Learning Week in October can provide a good focus for these events  
[www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk](http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk)

## IT

Websites don't have to just provide information. Try getting students from your local school to create and maintain interactive web pages featuring book-related discussions, reader-insights, links, reviews and story-writing. A website like this can develop into the hub of a whole interactive reading community and can be planned jointly, hosted either on the People's Network or school computers and be accessed from anywhere. If your local school has links with a school abroad, perhaps you could use the web to develop an international reading group?

Or how about encouraging students to get involved in exciting projects creating interactive fiction (see Nottingham Trent University-based trAce Online's Kid's on the Net project  
<http://kotn.ntu.ac.uk>

**Top Tip:** *Why not set up a virtual reading club based on the Stories from the Web model <http://www.storiesfromtheweb.org>  
 This can be used to engage readers and encourage non-readers.*

Reader development tools like Ask Chris, [www.essex.gov.uk/askchris](http://www.essex.gov.uk/askchris), and the Australian Book Rap project, [/rite.ed.qut.edu.au/old\\_oz-teachernet/projects/book-rap/about.html](http://rite.ed.qut.edu.au/old_oz-teachernet/projects/book-rap/about.html), help readers to get more out of reading by prompting them to consider their own reading needs and preferences more deeply and helping them to discover new authors and genres.

## Local Games Workshops

These can provide occasional events (especially good for Dads and Lads) in your library featuring, for example, the *Lord of the Rings* game. You can promote your event in schools to existing clubs and as an awareness raiser for the setting up of new school clubs.

**Top Tip:** *Make contact with your local Games Workshop to see how a partnership might be developed. Both library and school staff can work closely with Games Workshop staff to build up tie-in title collections of graphic and mainstream novels, comics and magazines.*

## Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP)

Positive Activities for Young People is a multi-million pound government programme running from 2003–2006 aiming to provide cultural and sporting activities for young people at risk of offending during the school holidays. A national programme with cross-departmental government support, it covers all the school holidays and includes several earlier schemes like Summer Splash and Splash Extra.

Funding is delivered regionally, via regional government offices and libraries' involvement is brokered through The Reading Agency together with ASCEL (Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians) Briefing packs and further details, including a downloadable list of artists who have worked with the scheme is available from [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

Links with schools are really helpful for reaching target young people, and publicising the programme of PAYP events.



### Snapshot

*Birmingham Library and Information Service (BLIS) ran a range of Splash! activities in 2003 which involved working with young offenders on a multi-media project incorporating music, film, performing arts, poetry, prose, story writing and animation. They received £12,000 to run three weeks of activities and worked in three community libraries providing music-based workshops. Participants could access a range of music technology software and traditional instruments, and work with professional artists and musicians. Library staff were also encouraged to get involved.*

*The participants used a full range of library resources, including literature, poetry and reference books to write their own lyrics and to explore issues pertinent to them. Each activity focused on core skills: mathematics, technology and, most significantly, reader development.*

*A partnership with Connexions provided necessary support and as a result, BLIS have created other partnerships with statutory and voluntary agencies. As a result of these successful projects BLIS have found external funding to purchase music technology hardware and software. Library staff are being trained to use the equipment and encourage disengaged young people and community groups to access the library service in an informal, fun environment.*

*For more information contact Patsy Heap: [patsy.heap@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:patsy.heap@birmingham.gov.uk)*

### Quizzes

A pub-style quiz or challenge can generate discussion and enthusiasm around reading. Quizzes can be structured in themed rounds with teams competing to win book and cash prizes. The concept is staggeringly successful in New Zealand, where 95% of schools take part with boys getting increasingly involved and high profile media coverage (see [http://www.cfnz.org.nz/events/previous\\_events/storylines\\_festival\\_2001/lit\\_quiz.html](http://www.cfnz.org.nz/events/previous_events/storylines_festival_2001/lit_quiz.html)).

Schools recruit teams of students who meet regularly to read and to devise practice questions for email circulation to other local teams. Qualifying heats and interclass competitions take place in schools. Library staff visit to 'coach' teams and talk about library stock to increase the teams' book knowledge.

Local finals are hosted in the public library and are attended by teachers, school librarians and families – who have their own questions to answer between rounds! Local authors can be invited along to provide additional support and sign books. Book prizes donated by publishers are awarded to the highest scoring team of every round, and winning schools go on to a national final.

## Reading Buddies

Buddy schemes help raise literacy levels, increase self-esteem and improve attitudes to reading as well as encouraging youngsters to read more adventurously and voraciously.

Reading buddies act as reading mentors to younger pupils. They meet up in a neutral setting, usually a public library, and discuss books and reading. Try linking up with your local secondary school to train students to become reading buddies. You can teach them about the range of books available through the library and also how to promote them to their mentees.

The Health & Social Care curriculum can provide the focus for more ambitious schemes, under which students prepare help sheets for parents and read books with nursery aged children. Alternatively they can visit the library on a rota basis, assisting staff with family reading groups, nursery class visits, holiday activity groups, or the Summer Reading Challenge.

## Reading Champions

The Reading Champions scheme, [www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/champions.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/champions.html), celebrates male reading role models who encourage boys and men to read.

You can work with local schools to nominate champions, or to develop a local scheme offering rewards like vouchers, match tickets or cinema/leisure club passes for participating fathers. Try inviting reading heroes from local sporting teams – or identified through the national Reading the Game scheme, [www.literacytrust.org.uk/football/RTGNews/rtgnews.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/football/RTGNews/rtgnews.html) – to special sessions to discuss books and reading, meet children and sign autographs.

Variations include...

- **Sporting Challenge**

Children take part in a favourite sport, and read a relevant story or something like a match report, for instance, or browse a sport website, to win an invitation to a public library event with a local sports hero who talks about his favourite books and signs autographs.

- **Girls Only**

Girls Only projects work equally well. Try inviting mothers/carers to sessions where they can discuss book choices, reading and storytelling with library staff and their daughters.

**Top Tip:** *Why not develop a local Girls Only Reading Champions scheme, rewarding participants with cinema tickets, shopping and leisure club vouchers or free makeovers from local college hair and beauty students? But don't forget that some girls may be more interested in sport or gaming events.*

## Reading Connects

Reading Connects is a DfES funded National Reading Campaign initiative that helps schools offer every child the experience of reading for pleasure. It provides schools with a support network which helps them to entice families, children, and everyone associated with the school into a community where everyone can access books and enjoy reading.

**Top Tip:** *Are any of your local schools involved in a Reading Connect project? If so, why not link in and offer your libraries resources as part of the wider supportive reading community? If not, can you encourage any local schools to participate? The Reading Connects website offers ideas, case studies and resources for working in partnership with schools [www.literacytrust.org.uk/Readingconnects/readingconnects.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Readingconnects/readingconnects.html)*

## Reading groups

Reading groups provide a terrific forum for children to enjoy, share and develop their reading. Members can find out much more about the books they read, share opinions about books, enjoy fun reading-related activities, and can even have the opportunity to meet authors or chat with them online. All of which both enhances their reading skills and drives enthusiasm for further, wider reading.

### Orange Chatterbooks reading groups

Chatterbooks reading groups meet in libraries or schools, depending on local circumstances. Started in 1999, they are sponsored by the telecommunications company Orange, which provides special packs and funds a network to support groups. Library staff run activities and special events for the groups and children participate enthusiastically. A lively newsletter spreads ideas and good practice. To join the Chatterbooks network, contact The Reading Agency [info@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:info@readingagency.org.uk)

For more information see the Chatterbooks Case studies in section 5.

## Reading raffles

These encourage young people to read more and discover more reading enjoyment. School and public library work together to secure age-appropriate prizes from local sponsors: vouchers, signed books, swimming tickets, cinema tickets, family days out. Readers can then earn raffle tickets through regular public library borrowing.

**Top Tip:** *A draw at the end of term can provide a great opportunity for joint celebration events!*

## School open nights

Why not see if you can contribute to a local school open night? You, or Schools Library Service staff, could talk about the importance of reading for enjoyment in boosting overall academic attainment. Perhaps you could offer incentives for new members, explain all the library services and show off some books from the collections?

**Top Tip:** *Secondary open evenings, often at the start of the autumn term, or new intake evenings in the summer term, provide great opportunities to advertise community education and skills classes, and to mount displays of the support the public library can offer. Just make sure you have the approval of school senior management and governing bodies beforehand!*

## Study support clubs and homework centres

Where funding is available, libraries and schools can work together to make a new type of facility for young people – somewhere where they can access advice and support, information, ideas for reading, computers to access the internet or to prepare their work, plus refreshments and someone to talk to about their reading and learning needs.

Clubs can focus on reading for enjoyment, with library staff finding and recommending fiction to support most topics. The local School Library Service may be able to get involved too. And every club should display a range of ‘have you tried this one?’ titles to stimulate wider reading.



### Snapshot

*In Northamptonshire, target libraries set up study support clubs and staff approached specific schools seeking members. The Schools Library Service trained the Study Support Assistants and the clubs buy SLS membership in order to provide up-to-date relevant curriculum material. Feedback has been excellent:*

*“It is easier to do homework with the support of staff and friends.”*

*“My Mum lets me come here because it is safe.”*

*“This is the first homework I’ve done this term.”*

*“I got a star for my Egypt project.”*

*For more information contact Evelyn Jarvis: [ejarvis@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:ejarvis@northamptonshire.gov.uk)*



### Snapshot

*Enfield employed consultant, John Vincent, as co-ordinator/outreach worker for their homework centres using the LEA ‘s Study Support fund. He:*

- *promoted the centres (and libraries) via schools and youth agencies*
- *ran evaluation projects which demonstrated that the homework centres improved children’s learning and attainment*
- *worked with a small group from one of the participating schools (from within an Education Action Zone), bringing students to the public library and to the local Ottakars to buy books. The students rated this aspect of the project most highly; they all found something they wanted to buy. All students said their reading had improved ‘a lot’, and were keen for the project to continue.*

*For more information contact Lucy Love: [lucy.love@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.love@enfield.gov.uk)*

## Special study support sessions

Some libraries offer special 'clinics' or support sessions where a member of staff is on hand after school specifically to help with homework and reading queries.



### Snapshot

*Hesters Way library (Cheltenham, Gloucestershire) funded by an LEA out of hours learning grant, provides special homework sessions after school every Monday evening. The library serves an area of particular need: a concentration of low-income families, four large primary and three secondary schools.*

*A learning support worker (currently a sixth former) helps children find information and do homework, responding to their needs. Sometimes children need help finding specific information for a school topic. Other times they are helped to explore new websites, or recent library stock arrivals. The scheme improves children's confidence in using their library, and increases their enjoyment of everything on offer there.*

For more information contact Cheryl Cliffe: [Cheryl.cliffe@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Cheryl.cliffe@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

**Top Tip:** *Funding for special initiatives and project work like this may be possible through the New Opportunities Fund, LEA Study Support funds, or through local schools' other community partners.*

## Story-sacks

Story-sacks are bags containing a children's picture book with supporting material to stimulate shared reading. The contents include a soft toy, props and scenery that bring the book to life and a non-fiction book with factual information on the theme.

You can work with schools themselves or help to broker a match between a school and a local nursery group. Students can design story sacks and the making can be built into the curriculum, or passed out to volunteers or a partner organisation (e.g. local sewing club, craft club, or Women's Institute).

It may be possible to accredit the work as part of students' coursework (e.g. Health & Social Care and Childcare), providing students with a tangible reward as well as boosting their confidence and self-esteem – especially if they have low level literacy skills themselves. And, if the sacks are well-enough made, they could be integrated in to the public or school library service library collection for subsequent loan to pre-school groups, nurseries and infant schools.

## Student librarian scheme

SLS staff can be key partners in enabling young people from local schools to gain work experience in their local library. The programme of work needs to be carefully structured to ensure it is appropriate and varied. Students can

- design or help create displays
- act as a reading advisors for other young people
- help with story-times, shelving and tidying the library, or answering queries.

**Top Tip:** *Recruit student librarians in a simple but formal way so they gain valuable experience for job applications and interviews. At the end of their placement, present them with a certificate and formal thanks for their efforts – perhaps during their school assembly.*



## Snapshot

*In Stockton-on-Tees, a structured training model has been developed to enable local pupils to gain work experience at their local library over the period of a year. Staff give an initial introductory talk, and, together with colleagues from the school library provide support. The volunteers follow a developmental programme and build portfolios detailing what they've done and learned. A final award ceremony is held in the central library, with a visiting author.*

*For more information contact Tony Quantrill: [tony.quantrill@Stockton.gov.uk](mailto:tony.quantrill@Stockton.gov.uk)*

## Transition schemes

Promotional strategies, similar to Bookstart, can be used at every transition stage of a child's reading development. The start of a new Key Stage of education is a good opportunity for libraries and schools to work together to support children.

**Top Tip:** *Why not approach primary schools to talk to Reception, Y1 and Y3 children? Explain the services offered by the library and hand out leaflets and joining forms. You can follow this up by inviting classes to visit the library.*

It's also worth targeting children moving from primary to secondary education. Special quizzes and projects and the Summer Reading Challenge (see section 3) can all be used to provide continuity and a focus for reading between Key Stages.

## World Book Day

Why not use World Book Day to do something different to celebrate books and reading? If there's no participating bookshop in your community, why not work with book suppliers to act as redemption points for World Book Day vouchers?

Meanwhile, you can encourage your local schools to promote books by the authors and ideas featured on the World Book Day website.

See [www.worldbookday.com](http://www.worldbookday.com)

**Top Tip :** *When planning your event, why not ask media students to devise a promotional multimedia campaign, business studies students to develop marketing and advertising campaigns, and art/graphics students to design point of lend materials?*

## Young Cultural Creators

This visual literacy project for young people explores original works of art, artefacts, documents, and places of interest, linked to the work of children's writers and illustrators. It inspires young people's creativity in reading, writing and illustration and involves libraries, museums, archives, galleries, publishers and authors, working with children, their schools and their families.

Workshops with authors in museums, archives and galleries, and in local libraries, provide inspiration for young people's own creative work, and encourage them to get to know and enjoy all that these venues have to offer. A typical programme includes:

- an introductory class visit to the library;
- a session with an author exploring gallery, museum, archives, and sharing ideas and inspiration;
- follow-up work in the classroom and public library based on a theme introduced by the author;
- a library-based workshop with the author to refine and craft ideas;
- a library display and celebration of young people's work.

Most current schemes are run through regional Museums, Libraries and Archives Agencies, see [www.youngculturalcreators.com](http://www.youngculturalcreators.com) or email [info@youngculturalcreators.org.uk](mailto:info@youngculturalcreators.org.uk)



### Snapshot

*Young Cultural Creators at Tate Britain:*

*In front of Frith's panoramic 'Derby Day', children chose a 'favourite' from the myriad characters depicted there. Encouraged by writer Catherine Johnson, they stood in front of the group and said something about themselves and their chosen character. Back in class they read Catherine's novel Hero and explored links between the book and the picture – and then developed their character sketches fully, to share with Catherine in a follow-up workshop in the library.*

*Paul Geraghty introduced children to his book The Wonderful Journey and took classes on the wonderful journey of life, round a room of figurative paintings, focusing on works by Packaj.*

*Nicola Davies, who writes non-fiction books about the natural world, used the striking abstract pictures of Richard Smith to stimulate young people's vision of what it might be like to be a bird, a bee, a bat or a dolphin.*

*Michael Foreman chose The Dead Sea by Paul Nash and linked it with his books War Boy and My Grandfather's Pencil – themes of war and memory.*

*Celia Rees chose a whole range of images which linked with uncanny immediacy to her book Truth or Dare – the pictures explored by the children included Hockney's 'My Parents' and Howard Hodgkin's 'Rain'.*

*For more information contact Tricia Kings: [tricia.kings@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:tricia.kings@readingagency.org.uk)*



## Snapshot

*Young Cultural Creators and National Archives:*

*National Archives worked with Chris Priestley, author of *Death and the Arrow* – a murder mystery set in 18<sup>th</sup>-century London. Young people looked at original 18<sup>th</sup>-century petitions and ballads from Newgate Gaol. Each child was given their own individual prisoner to study, based on the petition of a real person. They read *Death and the Arrow*, developed role plays about their prisoner and then wrote their own ballads about their fate.*

For more information contact Tricia Kings: [tricia.kings@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:tricia.kings@readingagency.org.uk)

## YouthBOOX

Run by The Reading Agency and the National Youth Agency, YouthBOOX brings together library and youth services to create new approach routes to reading for socially excluded young people.

Programmes have been run in 20 authorities in the last four years. This combined experience has led to the development of three Reading Kits which provide practical advice on how to develop projects with youth services.

- **Reading Kit 1** sets out the rationale for joint working on reading, provides valuable background information on the approaches of libraries and youth services. It includes sections on tackling a non-reading culture and creating a young person friendly library.
- **Reading Kit 2** offers a range of practical ideas for engaging young people in reading development programmes. It looks at the different ways to 'hook' young people into reading, and explores emotional literacy and issues about the culture of libraries
- **Reading Kit 3** offers practical advice to managers who are intending to introduce a YouthBOOX project. It provides practical suggestions and solutions through case studies on which professionals can build their own work.

**Top Tip:** *Schools can help you link into the local Connexions service to reach young people and encourage them to join a local YouthBOOX project. And why not ask a local school to host performances or displays created during YouthBOOX projects to celebrate the participants' achievements?*

More information on YouthBOOX can be found on The Reading Agency website [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk) and on the National Youth Agency site [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)



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## Ideas for library and staff development

### Library makeovers

If you're planning to refurbish or reorganise your library, why not get local school children involved in the process? Schools can help you consult with students or recruit 'makeover teams' to participate in the design decisions. Make sure you're open and honest about what's practical and possible – and how much money is available. Pupils could choose some of the library fittings or decide the colour scheme. They can provide useful insights on signing and guiding, stock selection for the new facilities and the best place to put computers. You can also give pupil representatives a place on consultative committees and steering groups.

You could also ask local schools to let you present plans and ideas to school committees or to provide the chance for you to consult parents about the changes. The new project will reflect local need more closely as a result and will be better used by the local community.

For more ideas on how to do this access the Fulfilling Their Potential report from the download centre on [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

### Collections and stock selection

It's important to talk to teachers about how public library collections can support the out of hours learning needs of their children. They might suggest titles or topic areas that are likely to be in high demand. You will pick up valuable information about the teachers and the children's reading needs which could help in selecting books for the library.

Teachers can also help you to arrange for young people to:

- visit the public library to evaluate the stock and provide feedback to the library staff
- have access to new stock approvals or advance lists, and vote for their choice of books
- take responsibility for purchasing stock through vouchers and an opportunity to visit a book seller or supplier as a group
- develop new displays, promotional materials and the school website to promote the stock they have chosen.

NB: As public library collections are designed for children's use and need to be available to them, teachers seeking resources to help with lesson preparation and classroom work, should be directed to their local Schools Library Service, wherever possible.

## Joint training/professional development

Running joint training sessions with colleagues from local schools and the youth service can be a terrific way to get productive partnerships off the ground. You don't have to arrange anything fancy. A series of short, regular meetings, where you share your knowledge about books and library facilities, and teachers and youth workers talk about their work and needs, can be very productive.

Imaginative joint projects can often grow from this sort of semi-informal contact. It can develop into specific joint training, or shared use of resources such as the Their Reading Futures website, [www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk), which offers support materials for developing core skills for promoting, supporting and encouraging children's reading development.

Another way to understand and appreciate staff roles and perspectives is to exchange roles for a day, or a week, over a period of time – the greater the understanding, the more scope and enthusiasm for collaboration.

**Top Tip:** *How about arranging for school support workers to train alongside library staff as reading mentors or reading champions? This will develop their confidence and enthusiasm for promoting reading and talking about books with young people and their families. In return, ask if they can spend some time supporting young people in the public library.*

*Or, why not invite teachers (perhaps as part of an Inset day) to visit the library to learn more about what you can offer? Newly qualified teachers can find this especially valuable.*

## Highly developed partnerships: one library service's approach



Once you've developed a track record of partnership working, the next step is to develop a strategic approach, using a range of complementary partnerships to reach and involve a variety of young people and transform their experience of libraries and of reading.

You may want to follow the example of the complementary reader development projects for young people that **Derbyshire Library Service** has developed in partnership with local schools.

### Book Pushers Project

Derbyshire Libraries Book Pushers are teenage reader volunteers, trained by library staff to present and read from books of their choice to others. They promote the books they enjoy to their peers, as well as to teachers, librarians, parents, publishers and authors. So far, library staff have linked with a number of local schools to recruit young people.

One school's group of Book Pushers were taken to visit another participating school as part of their book week. They ran two sessions for Y7 pupils, helped by the school librarian and the local children's librarian. Firstly, the Y7 pupils chose their favourite book from a selection of eight book jackets. After the Book Pushers had talked to them about the books, the pupils chose again - lots of the young people made different choices!

Future plans include taking a group of the Book Pushers to talk to pupils at a special school, and involving them in shared discussions with library staff to recommend titles for the Carnegie medal book award. The Book Pushers have also promoted books to people in community venues and delivered Book Doctor sessions in libraries.

### University of the First Age (UFA)

Derbyshire Library Service is a key partner in the UFA development in Derbyshire, which is looking at different ways of learning. Five library staff have been trained as UFA fellows alongside teachers from the pilot schools. Others have been working with teachers in schools during their Super Learning Days. The Book Pushers have also been trained as peer tutors and are the first library peer tutors in the country. They are now working with library managers to deliver UFA learning activities in libraries to support other young people's reading.

### Young People's Reading Debate

Derbyshire's first Young People's Reading Debate was held in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Matlock in March, two days before World Book Day. The debate was designed for Y10 pupils and was organised by the library service. 150 young people attended, with 25 teachers and school librarians from 15 of the county's secondary schools. The motion was 'This house believes that there is no issue too controversial to be included in a book for young people.'

Four adult guest speakers opened the debate, and each school was given five minutes to speak for or against the motion. Finally the debate was opened up to allow comments from the floor. The young people spoke with passion and precision. The evaluations from teachers and young people were so positive that Derbyshire will repeat this in the future. This is now becoming an annual event and the 2005 event is already over-subscribed.

## Hooked on Reading

Hooked on Reading is a children's literature conference organised jointly by Derbyshire, the School Library Service, and Derby library services. The conference is run with local school librarians and the public library service and covers the whole range of children's literature, from pre-school to young adult. The conference offers a mix of keynote speakers and practical workshops. About 180 delegates attend – teachers, early years staff, school and public library staff, publishers, authors, literacy consultants, and more.

For more information, contact  
Annie Everall: [annie.everall@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:annie.everall@derbyshire.gov.uk)

## Public libraries and schools working together : an ideas checklist

- More choice = wider reading
- More enjoyment = better skills
- Joining, sharing = belonging
- Creative spaces = creative experiences



The first stage		Do we/can we do this?
Art exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> </ul>	
Bulletin boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ In the school</li> </ul>	
Class visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For transition years</li> <li>▪ For all age groups</li> </ul>	
Improving access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opening hours</li> <li>▪ Mobile libraries</li> <li>▪ School Library Service</li> </ul>	
Using the web	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Linking school to library website</li> <li>▪ Linking library to school website</li> </ul>	
Moving on		
Annual events and festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ World Book Day (see below)</li> <li>▪ National Poetry Day</li> <li>▪ Children's Book Week</li> <li>▪ Other national events</li> <li>▪ Local and national festivals</li> </ul>	
Book awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shadowing schemes</li> <li>▪ A local award</li> </ul>	
BOOX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ In the school</li> </ul>	
Dads and Lads schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ In the school</li> </ul>	
Family reading challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A local challenge</li> <li>▪ Link to a national project</li> <li>▪ Family Learning Week</li> </ul>	
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Library and school website links</li> <li>▪ Reading discussion pages</li> <li>▪ Stories from the web</li> <li>▪ A virtual reading club</li> <li>▪ Children as web authors</li> </ul>	
Local Games Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A library event</li> <li>▪ Related stock</li> </ul>	
PAYP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A local programme</li> </ul>	
Quizzes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lit Quiz event</li> <li>▪ Family quizzes</li> </ul>	
Reading Buddies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Link to a secondary school</li> <li>▪ Link to a primary school</li> <li>▪ Link to nursery settings</li> <li>▪ Links to the curriculum</li> </ul>	
Reading Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Links with schools</li> <li>▪ Links with community groups</li> <li>▪ Sporting Challenge</li> <li>▪ Girls Only projects</li> </ul>	
Reading Connects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A local project</li> <li>▪ Link to a national project</li> </ul>	
Reading groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ In the school</li> <li>▪ Orange Chatterbooks group</li> </ul>	

Reading raffles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ In the school</li> </ul>	
School open nights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New intake sessions</li> <li>▪ Open evenings</li> </ul>	
Study support clubs and homework centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Homework collections</li> <li>▪ Study support clubs</li> <li>▪ Help sessions</li> <li>▪ Special study support sessions</li> </ul>	
Story-sacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Links with nursery settings</li> <li>▪ Links with the voluntary sector</li> </ul>	
Student librarians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ Links with the Schools Library Service</li> </ul>	
Transition schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key Stage 1</li> <li>▪ Key Stage 2</li> <li>▪ Key Stage 3</li> <li>▪ Key Stage 4</li> <li>▪ Other</li> </ul>	
World Book Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ World Book Day website</li> <li>▪ Literature events/author visits</li> </ul>	
Young Cultural Creators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ In the school</li> <li>▪ Links to other arts providers</li> </ul>	
YouthBOOX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the public library</li> <li>▪ Links with Youth Services</li> <li>▪ Links with Connexions</li> </ul>	
<b>Ideas for library and staff development</b>		
Library makeovers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation with children</li> <li>▪ Focus groups</li> <li>▪ Pupil representatives</li> <li>▪ School committees</li> <li>▪ Consultation with parents</li> </ul>	
Collections and stock selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For the public library</li> <li>▪ For the school</li> <li>▪ Vouchers for children to use</li> <li>▪ Displays and promotions</li> </ul>	
Joint training/professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the library</li> <li>▪ In the school</li> <li>▪ Shared core skills</li> <li>▪ Reading mentors and champions</li> <li>▪ Joint INSET days</li> <li>▪ Staff exchanges</li> </ul>	
<b>Highly developed partnerships</b>		
Book Pushers Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In a secondary school</li> <li>▪ In a primary school</li> <li>▪ Linked to a special school</li> </ul>	
UFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joint training in thinking/learning</li> <li>▪ Peer tutors</li> </ul>	
Young People's Reading Debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With one library/school</li> <li>▪ Across a whole authority</li> <li>▪ Across a whole region</li> </ul>	
Children's literature conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With one library/school</li> <li>▪ Across a whole authority</li> <li>▪ Across a whole region</li> </ul>	
Summer Reading Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Links with schools before the Challenge</li> <li>▪ Follow-up after the Challenge</li> </ul>	
Chatterbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Chatterbooks group in the library</li> <li>▪ A Chatterbooks group in school</li> </ul>	

# Enjoying Reading

**public library partnerships with schools**

## Section 3 : The Summer Reading Challenge (SRC)

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The Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) is a national initiative, run by The Reading Agency, which challenges children from 4-12 years to read books of their choice during the summer holidays.

## Summer Reading Challenge overview



Run through public libraries across the UK, SRC can be adapted to local needs, styles and priorities. Every year a new theme allows libraries to explore new images, events, activities and partnerships.

It's not about children reading as many books as they can; it's about children enjoying what they read, discovering more about books, knowing how to find the books they want to read, and sharing 'reading time' with parents and carers, library staff and peers.

*"Both my children aged 7 and 4 were really excited and came to the library every day. Although they have lots of books at home, sitting in the library encouraged them to discuss their books and think about the stories they had read"*

Evaluations<sup>1</sup> show that the SRC

- keeps children reading during the summer holidays and encourages more reading
- develops children's reading skills
- encourages reading enjoyment
- broadens reading horizons
- instils confidence
- gets children talking and writing about books and stimulates creative activities
- inspires and rewards children's reading
- encourages library membership and promotes positive feelings about the library

*"The challenge clearly has positive impact on children's reading progress during the break from school, helping them to become independent, discriminating readers."*

Fiona Collins and Judith Graham, Department of Education, University of Surrey, Roehampton

*"My 7-year-old son is about to be statemented as he is dyslexic and can't read. The Challenge is giving him a belief in himself that he can be the same as other children and still enjoy the pleasure books can bring. Thank you so much."* Parent

### How does it work?

Library authorities use themed materials designed to encourage children to join the scheme. Participating children choose books from their local library to read over the summer and then chart their progress with stickers in their personal SRC folders. A key feature of the scheme is the opportunity children have to talk about their books with public library staff. Participants who read six books are presented with a medal and/or a certificate during a special ceremony in their local library or their school.

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<sup>1</sup> *Inspiring children*, The Reading Agency, 2003

All authorities are mailed with details of the annual challenge in the winter each year, and materials are delivered in the spring, in time for staff training and promotion of the challenge in the community. The SRC works even better where local schools are involved, encouraging children to join, and recognising their achievements through, say, hosting the medal and certificate presentation ceremony.

**Top Tip:** *If there's an SLS in your area, they can be hugely influential in getting schools involved in, and enthused about, the SRC. Why not promote the challenge together? Joint approaches to schools can be especially effective.*

## Some Facts and Figures

- 600,000+ children aged 4-12 take part each year
- 90% of UK public libraries take part
- 3,600 community libraries are involved
- 35,000+ children become new library members each year.

*"I think the Challenge is really fun and a good idea. I enjoyed reading all the books."*

## How schools can benefit from the Summer Reading Challenge

*“The Challenge clearly has a positive impact on children’s reading progress during the break from school, helping them to become independent, discriminating readers”* Fiona Collins and Judith Graham, Department of Education, University of Surrey, Roehampton

- 90% of all UK library authorities host the Summer Reading Challenge
- 600,000 children take part in around 3600 libraries
- 35,000 children become new library members to take part
- The Challenge is accessible to every child.



### The Summer Reading Challenge (SRC)<sup>2</sup>...

#### ...keeps children reading during the summer and encourages more reading:

- 1 in 6 read their SRC books and nothing else during the school holiday
- for 2 in 3, SRC books comprised at least half their reading over the summer
- 66% said they read more books because of the challenge
- 95% wanted to read lots more books
- 98% liked choosing for themselves

#### ...develops children’s reading skills

- more than 75% of participants say the SRC made a big difference to their reading
- 4 out of 10 thought they read ‘a lot better’ as a result

#### ...encourages reading enjoyment

- 96% like reading the books
- 84% enjoyed taking part in the challenge ‘a lot’
- 76% liked reading ‘a lot’

*Reading enjoyment is critical to young people’s life chances, as shown by the recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development research in their 2002 study ‘Reading for Change’. This found that a love of reading is more important for children’s educational success than their family’s wealth or class. Children from deprived backgrounds do better in tests than those from more affluent homes if they enjoy reading books, newspapers and comics in their spare time<sup>3</sup>*

#### ...broadens reading horizons

- introduces new reading experiences
  - 92% of books read as part of the challenge were new to the reader
  - 66% were by an author new to the reader
- encourages experimentation
  - 45% read a book they wouldn’t have wanted to read before
  - 90% liked reading all different types of books
  - 21% say they don’t just read books of their favourite type
- generates new connections
  - as a result of the challenge, 40% of children found a new favourite book
  - and 1 in 8 discovered a new favourite author

<sup>2</sup> All evidence is from *Inspiring Children* [www.readingagency.org.uk/html/research\\_downloads.cfm](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/html/research_downloads.cfm)

<sup>3</sup> available via the DfES website [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)



## The Summer Reading Challenge (SRC)<sup>4</sup>...

### ...instils confidence

- 66% considered themselves 'excellent' or 'very good' at reading after the reading challenge
- 78% believe their reading has improved as a result of taking part
- 68% have the confidence to recommend a book they like to their friends

### ...gets children talking and writing about books

- 63% liked writing about the books
- 65% tell their friends to read a book they've enjoyed.

### ...stimulates creative activity

- 68% liked to draw or play games about a book with friends or on their own
- 63% say they think about a book after reading it

### ...inspires and rewards children's reading

- 81% liked getting the medal
- 89% liked collecting the stickers

### ...encourages library membership and promotes positive feelings about the library

- 12% joined the library to take part
- 99% liked going to the library
- 77% think "*the librarian likes talking to me about my books*"
- 99% are keen to go on using the library
- 97% want to do the SRC again next year
- 71% felt it was easier to find books they want to read after doing the Challenge
- 98% like "*choosing the books myself*"

### ...helps children to find out more about themselves and the world around them

- 59% found something in a book that they didn't know before
- 63% read a book about people with different lives from them
- 30% read a book about someone just like them

**The Summer Reading Challenge web-site** – [www.readingrollercoaster.org.uk](http://www.readingrollercoaster.org.uk)<sup>5</sup> gives children the chance to find out about authors and illustrators and discover what inspires them to write and draw. The web-site:

- enables children to make connections between authors and their own creativity
- inspires children to read more
- leaves children buzzing with their own creative ideas
- is so much fun that children recommend it to friends and family
- encourages the children to read books by the featured authors

<sup>4</sup> All evidence is from *Inspiring Children* at [www.readingagency.org.uk/html/research\\_downloads.cfm](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/html/research_downloads.cfm)

<sup>5</sup> [www.readingrollercoaster.org.uk](http://www.readingrollercoaster.org.uk) for 2004 challenge

## Template letter to Y7 teachers (summer term)



Dear Year 7 Teacher

### **The Summer Reading Challenge**

Last year, [total number] children in [name of the authority or area] participated in the Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) - the national reading scheme run annually by libraries.

The SRC happens in every public library in [area] during the summer holidays. Children choose books to read with family and friends, and then talk to library staff about their reading. They collect 'rewards' to mark their progress. Children who finish the scheme by reading a minimum of 6 books, receive a certificate and a medal\*.

The SRC is designed to have maximum child appeal. Children love the collectable folders, stickers and medals\*. And it's not a competition, but a personal challenge within a particular time-frame which offers reading inspiration and incentives to encourage children into libraries.

Underlying the fun, research by the University of Surrey, Roehampton shows that the SRC boosts children's confidence and enjoyment of reading – more than 80% of children consider themselves better readers as a result of taking part – and promotes positive reading behaviour, matching National Curriculum requirements for Key Stages 1-2.

### **How You Can Help**

Many participating children will be Year 6 Transition pupils moving up to secondary schools. As they progress through the Challenge, library staff will remind them to note their 'summer reads' in their Reading Journal.

It is rewarding for these children to have their summer reading valued and it would be terrific if you could take the time to congratulate them on the extra effort they made during the summer by participating in the SRC.

And, in return, we hope that you will see the benefits to pupils' reading confidence and skills when talking to them about their Reading Journals.

Yours sincerely

\*delete as appropriate

*With thanks to Warwickshire for permission to adapt their letter as a template*

## Template letter to teachers (autumn term)



Dear Headteacher/Literacy coordinator

### Building on the success of The Summer Reading Challenge

This summer, local libraries in [authority or area] achieved great success with '[name of summer reading challenge]', the national Reading Agency's summer reading game for children.

Thousands of children across the authority took part in the scheme, visiting the library over the summer period and reading numerous books of their choice. Children were given a reading folder and were rewarded with stickers/a certificate/medals\* for competing the challenge.

The Challenge was the basis for a range of reader development activities targeted for children, and all those who visited the library were encouraged to experiment with their reading and were helped by library staff to develop their reading interests and confidence.

We would like to build on this success by working with you to celebrate the children's reading achievements through special assemblies, or book displays and by inviting you to bring your classes to visit the library, to encourage your children to use the library and enjoy the wide range of books available. School visits are an ideal way to introduce children to the full range of library services, and a lifetime of reading enjoyment.

A visit to the library will support the key requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Primary Strategy, helping pupils to become '*enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama as well as non-fiction*' (National Curriculum p. 43), to become more '*interested in books (and) read with enjoyment*' (National Primary Strategy, p.3), as well as to learn '*to gather information from a variety of sources*' (National Curriculum p.98).

In particular, the library service aims to promote the enjoyment of reading, as children who enjoy reading have been shown to achieve better at school, regardless of their social background (OECD research, Reading for Change, published by the DfES, 2002).

We are happy to discuss the individual needs of your pupils and the detailed programme for your visit. The visits are completely free, but as demand is high, we do require as much notice as possible.

I hope you will be able to take up this opportunity this year and I look forward to hearing from you soon. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of the visits on offer, or any other potential partnership opportunities where the library service could be of help.

Yours sincerely

\*delete as appropriate

*With thanks Gloucestershire for permission to adapt their letter as a template*

## Summer Reading Challenge case studies



### 1. Essex

#### Background

Essex is a large county, with a mix of small market towns, commuter towns, New Towns with areas of social deprivation and very rural communities served by 73 libraries and 13 mobile libraries.

Called The Big Summer Read locally, the Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) is run during opening hours in all library facilities.

Working groups of children's specialists and field staff get together at the start of the calendar year to plan new initiatives, or refine old ones. In 2003 we had three groups, working on:

- Book sharing tables (a new way to help children engage with books)
- An activity to attract older children (10-16)
- IT within the SRC as we incorporated both the SRC website and Ask Chris for Children (the Essex interactive website at <http://askchris.essexcc.gov.uk>).

#### Promotion

During the summer term, children's specialists and other library staff are welcomed into most Essex primary and special schools to promote the SRC in assemblies and to class groups. Although in most cases, library staff initiate the visit, some schools have started to call us first, booking us into their programme of assemblies.

We give schools an invitation and explanatory letter which they distribute to parents and carers.

Library staff also take posters and information to secondary schools, independent schools, pre-schools and playgroups, kids clubs, youth groups, local shops and to any library promotion in leisure centres, local shows and school summer fetes. We also make sure that summer literacy schools know that the SRC is happening.

#### What happened

All library facilities run the SRC and all staff are involved in some way. They chat to children about their books, or cover colleagues' desk and counter duties so they can also engage with young readers.

38,000 young people – about half of those eligible – participate every year.

Over the summer, children borrow books, read them, and return to the library to talk to staff about what they have read, often bringing short reviews they have written back with them. Staff are supplied with some simple prompt questions in case they are needed to help the discussion along.

Libraries also provide 'Book sharing tables' where children who don't want to wait to talk to a member of staff can do a simple activity which prompts them to think about their reading. The results of the activities are displayed for other children to see and think about.

## Afterwards

Library staff visit the schools again (they usually return to the school they previously visited to promote the SRC) and hand out certificates to every child who has participated.

## Staff involvement

Staff from all levels of the library service volunteer enthusiastically for the SRC. Some have been visiting the same school for many years, developing on-going relationships with staff and students.

Management and support staff muck in too. Last year our Head of Service and other senior managers from all parts of the library service staffed a Reading Maze desk. All are trained and updated with information about the current year's themes and activities. The School Library Service also helps. We use our weekly internal news update to distribute the latest information about the SRC.

## Partnerships with schools

Schools are happy to welcome us, and give an invitation and letter to each child. Library staff use the visits as an opportunity to remind schools of other activities we can offer, such as class visits to the local library.

## Vounteers

A number of Essex secondary schools are part of Project Trident, [www.thetridentrust.org.uk](http://www.thetridentrust.org.uk), where students volunteer to spend fifteen hours in libraries helping children develop their reading enjoyment. Last year 170 students from 36 schools helped in 46 libraries.

Because Trident volunteers are young, they make terrific role models and are genuinely enthusiastic about books. They catch up on their own reading 'between customers' – it's great for children to see other young people reading, particularly boys.

Trident volunteers are trained in school during the summer term and in their placement library once they start volunteering.

They are a valuable part of the SRC. Because they enjoy it so much, some exceed their 15 hours, and several have gone on to join the library service as Saturday Assistants, and a few have even become permanent members of staff.

## Outcomes

We gain over 1000 new active members each year as children join to take part.

We see children explore a wide variety of books, and find out what their real favourites are.

Parents comment on the self-confidence they see in their children, as they talk to an unknown adult about their books.

Schools keep welcoming us back and tell us that it's obvious when a child has continued reading through the long summer holiday, as it maintains their reading progress.

Parents say:

*"Brilliant scheme. Encourages my son to read throughout the holidays – otherwise he would probably forget how to read!!"*

*"The Reading Maze has been superb... My son [age 5, who joined especially to participate] has enjoyed the whole library experience."*

*"It really encourages my daughter to read nearly every night. It's something that encourages me and her dad to read with her because it's all she goes on about!"*

Children take part year after year. They tell us which medals they have collected. Numbers increase year on year.

Trident students often volunteer because they enjoyed the SRC so much when they were younger.

**Top Tip:** *Make sure that you involve staff at all levels, and seek their comments and suggestions on an ongoing basis. Ask children, parents/carers and participating schools to complete feedback sheets. Encourage staff to visit the same school(s) year after year. This builds up ongoing relationships and can feed into other partnership work*

For more information, contact

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## 2. Isle of Wight

### Background

Approximately 131,000 people live within The Isle of Wight library authority. We have 11 libraries, 1 mobile library and 1 housebound library.

### How it works

#### Planning

The programme was planned by the senior children's librarian, working with a group of staff drawn from across the service. This involved front line staff as well as managers. The programme was planned using evidence from the previous years' evaluation and feedback.

#### Promoting

The Island has 64 schools and only one member of staff with the time to visit them to promote the SRC. So we send every school a letter, two copies of the SRC Poster, samples of the registration form and advocacy pack.

During the Reading Planet (2002) 103 children said they had heard about the SRC as a result of 'school', 'teacher' or 'school newsletter'. During the Reading Maze (2003) this number of children increased to 312.

In 2002 YPLS staff noticed that a couple of libraries were attracting significantly less SRC participants than others. So in 2003 YPLS concentrated on visiting schools in these areas to promote the SRC. They gave talks in assemblies, handed out leaflets and invitations to all school children and organised articles in school newsletters. Participant numbers increased significantly.

Some schools work with parents to promote the scheme. YPLS staff went to one school to talk at a Parent's evening about the scheme. This resulted in a high percentage (11.9%) of children taking part in the SRC, whereas in schools where staff or parents weren't involved, as few as 0.7% of children participated.

### What happened

To complement the SRC a series of events are planned throughout the summer holidays and every schoolchild receives a leaflet advertising these.

Events include 34 story times at libraries across the Island, with (usually) 3 activities at each library. The activities are loosely based around the year's SRC theme and include, for example, murder mysteries, arts and crafts activities, talks by staff from Dinosaur Isle and ghost talks.

These events attracted over 450 children and some excellent press coverage.

Every year children are encouraged to write a book review, or draw a picture about their favourite book from the SRC, and are rewarded for participation.

An awards ceremony is held at the end of the SRC to which children and their parents/carers are invited. YPLS staff try to ensure that individual prizes relate to the favourite book read, in one instance we presented a cuddly Little Zeb to a girl who reviewed a 'Little Zeb' book. Books signed by their authors are also very popular.

Local press attend, the children feel very special and the ceremony generates lots of positive PR for the library service.

## Staff involvement

All frontline staff are trained to help in the SRC by the Young People's Library Service Team (YPLS). YPLS have two professional librarians but due to local staffing duties only one professional librarian was available during the 2003 SRC.

On the Island it is difficult to differentiate between the Schools Library Service and the Children's Library Service as the YPLS Librarian works for both sectors. Whilst this should provide cohesion and a natural marketing of the SRC, there is a general staff shortage on the Island and therefore the time available for promoting the SRC is limited.

## Partnerships with schools

Links with local schools are gradually being strengthened as a result of the scheme. Two schools have contacted their local libraries asking to promote relevant library service events.

## Outcomes

Teachers provide positive feedback about the SRC.

In 2003, 725 children said they joined the Reading Maze because the 'library' told them about it (312 learned about the SRC at school). This is an increase of 161 children from the Reading Planet in 2002.

One little girl was particularly shy in the library and very timid during story times. A staff member invited her to join in the SRC and she now seeks out library assistants to talk with about books. She also won the local SRC competition.

And, as one parent put it *"If it wasn't for this (SRC) they wouldn't be reading"*

## The future

YPLS would like to track whether borrowing books in the public library is sustained after the SRC. We have a new Management Information module on DS Galaxy which should make this possible.

YPLS would like to plan a timetable to visit schools that are not participating in the challenge and make follow-up visits afterwards.

School Libraries are now going to contribute book reviews and recommendations from children to the Public Libraries newsletter 'Book Chat'.

Provide school teachers with comment forms which guide them to make more detailed, less vague feedback.

We are planning to apply for Arts Council Funding over the next year to create bigger, themed events, with the appropriate numbers of staff. We would, for instance, like to have a dedicated member of staff at each branch library, specifically to talk to children about the SRC. And we would love to create 'SRC Zones' in each library with comfy beanbags and chairs where children can sit and read, and talk to each other about their books.

**Top Tip:** *Try to ensure that you have enough money and staff to achieve your aims: if local budgets are limited, try applying to other funding bodies. Early planning will help.*

*Keep an eye on the libraries attracting fewer participants, and focus your promotional efforts in those areas, targeting liaison with the local schools.*

For more information, contact

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## 3. Swindon

### Background

The Reading Maze took place in Swindon libraries from 19 July to 13 September 2003. This was our fifth Summer Reading Challenge and participants ranged from 2-14 years. Swindon has 18 libraries and the Challenge took place in 17 of these. The project was funded by Swindon Learning Partnership.

### How it works

#### Planning

Before producing bilingual posters, we approached the Diversity and Ethnic Minority Achievement Team (who are part of Swindon's Education Department) to find out what languages were spoken in the highest frequency by school pupils. Although only 3% of children taking part were speakers of other languages, in one school 41% of children spoke a language other than English (this was their first language).

#### Promotion

Publicity included press articles, radio slots, attending school assemblies, and bilingual posters in the following languages: Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Konkani, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and English.

Four librarians approached 26 primary schools before the Reading Maze began to promote the Challenge through assemblies. These schools were targeted because they met one or more of the following criteria:

- (a) Showed the lowest take-up rate for last year's summer reading challenge.
- (b) On the Swindon Learning Partnership family learning list of schools.
- (c) Recommended by the Key Stage 2 Literacy Co-ordinator.

This has always proved a very successful way to promote the SRC, so we continued this for 2003. Indeed 37.5% of all children taking part in 2003 stated that they heard about the Reading Maze through school assemblies (this was the main source stated). Thus it was an important mechanism for promoting the challenge.

The remaining schools were sent flyers and posters and worked with parents/carers to promote the challenge.

### What happened

Take-up of the Summer Reading Challenge has increased year on year. 2612 children took part in the Reading Maze, which was a 28% increase on 2001 and treble the number that registered in the first Challenge in 1998. 56% (1458 children) went on to complete the game (a 27% increase on last year).

## Afterwards

At the end of the Reading Maze the Project Supervisors wrote to each school, giving them a list of children who had completed the Challenge, so schools could celebrate their children's achievement. Several schools held special assemblies.

## Staff involvement

Due to a successful funding bid from Swindon Learning Partnership, five part-time Summer Reading Challenge Project Supervisors were appointed to help with the overall running of the Challenge. They were based in the three busiest libraries and their duties were to organize volunteer timetables, enroll children and discuss with them the books they had read collate statistics and promote the challenge to children and parents/carers in the library.

## Volunteers

Volunteers were recruited to enroll children at the start of the Challenge, and to discuss with children the books they had read before giving out sticker sheets. They worked across all 17 libraries taking part. We aimed our recruitment at pre-schools, schools and colleges, Swindon Volunteers Bureau, Millennium volunteers and existing volunteers who deliver the Home Library service.

## Parents/carers

Parents/carers were given information sheets to encourage them to get involved with their child's reading and support them in completing the Reading Maze. Evidence collected in questionnaires assessed the benefits of the Reading Maze and showed that a key result of the game was increased discussion and sharing of books with other family members. One parent said: *"It has encouraged a regular reading time, which I will be carrying on with."*

## Outcomes

Libraries gained 240 new members (a 33% increase on last year). Furthermore, 83% of parents/carers asked said they were visiting the library more often as a result of the Reading Maze.

The questionnaires also provided evidence that the SRC had helped to improve children's reading abilities. One parent said: *"My daughter's reading this summer has improved so much; I'm very pleased."* Further evidence suggested that children's confidence had grown and that their reading was sustained over the long summer holiday. One parent said: *"It has made him more confident in speaking to others and kept up his reading over the summer."* In addition, 31% of parents/carers asked said their child was reading more as a result of the Reading Maze.

## The future

Swindon Libraries are to change the format of the Challenge slightly. Children will complete an activity sheet, either drawing or writing about each book read instead of discussing the book at length with a member of staff or volunteer.

The aim here is to provide tangible evidence that children have been doing activities to improve their literacy skills. At the end of the project, the sheets will be “published” in a book of achievement. One will be made for each school, as a resource for children to use to help them make reading choices. We intend to discuss this with schools to find out their views on this proposal and how the finished booklet could be used.

We will continue to run a targeted school assembly programme as this proved a very successful way of promoting the SRC. We will also work with Swindon Family Learning Partnership to run workshops in libraries for parents/carers and children on ways to share books.

***Top Tip: Personalised feedback to schools telling them about the children from their school who completed the challenge is a really good way to build the partnership.***

For more information, contact

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Swindon Libraries  
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## 4. Nottinghamshire

### Background

Nottinghamshire is a large authority with a population of approximately 748,500, served by 60 static library service points and 7 mobile libraries.

The funding for the SRC comes from the library service budget. Originally there was a reallocation of resources from The Nottinghamshire Children's Book Award. The SRC proved successful but wide promotion was held back from fear that demand would outstretch the capacity to deliver. However, in 2003 as part of a new Literacy Development Strategy for children funding was doubled and clear, stretching targets set.

### How it works

#### Planning

The Education Department had identified the need to improve performance at Key Stage 2 and expressed an interest in working with the Education Library Service and the Public Library Service to increase voluntary reading for pleasure during the hiatus in schools following SATS and through the summer break.

A steering group representing each partner and the communications officers for each department was convened. Timescales were tight and it was agreed that the focus would be on marketing and involving schools in reading based activities such as the SRC, which were already happening. The emphasis therefore was on making existing provision more effective.

The partnership included:

- Commitment at Director level.
- Funds were made available from the Education budget for marketing.
- Involvement of the Literacy Inspector and county literacy team who encouraged literacy co-ordinators within schools to focus on promoting the value of reading for pleasure during the summer term.
- Badging of the campaign with the logo appearing on all communications with schools.



## Promotion

Thirteen libraries were targeted for intense promotion with librarians visiting schools to promote the SRC to approximately 4600 children.

The partnership with the Education Department produced:

- Posters featuring local sporting and TV celebrities reading with the strapline 'Make time to read - I do'. These were sent to all schools, libraries and leisure centres. These proved very popular, with school librarians reporting positive responses from pupils.
- A leaflet for parents highlighting the value of reading for pleasure and featuring some ways of supporting their children, including taking part in the SRC. This was again sent to schools, libraries and other venues.
- The campaign was launched at a library with children from a local school talking about their favourite books and what reading means to them. One of the sporting celebrities also attended to give support and sign autographs.
- Media profile was kept up throughout the period by the press attending library activities. Local radio ran some features with interviews about what children were reading in libraries.

## What happened

286 children joined their library to take part in the SRC; 31% of these came from the libraries which had been targeted. Activities organised during the Challenge, included reading groups. The sessions had varying attendances but the quality for the children taking part was clear. At one group a boy with dyslexia visibly flourished in the informal, small group situation.

Throughout the summer, children borrowed books from the libraries, returning them to talk about their reading and collect stickers to complete their collector cards.

## Afterwards

Follow-up medal winners' ceremonies were held in the thirteen targeted libraries, some with a visiting magician as a special reward. Press and councillors attended.

## Staff involvement

All staff are involved in the summer reading challenge with front line staff promoting the SRC to children and talking to them about the books they have read.

The most in-depth work on promotion within schools is done by the lead children's specialists and local librarians

## Partnerships with schools

- Librarians reported varying responses from schools when they contacted them to promote the SRC, some were very aware of the campaign and keen to be involved, others were fairly passive.
- Schools ran their own promotional activities during the summer term and some involved their local library in these.
- Some schools contacted their libraries directly wishing to be involved in the SRC.
- Teachers attended the award ceremonies in some libraries.
- Some libraries told schools how many of their children had taken part in the SRC. This will be a feature of next year's SRC.

## Outcomes

Evaluation has been largely anecdotal but there is evidence of the value of the campaign.

Year	SRC	Start	Finish	New Members
2000	R Relay	4276	1684	138
2001	R Carnival	4189	1767	309
2002	R Planet	4059	1584	206
2003	R Maze	6483	2666	286

The thirteen targeted libraries saw an increase of 89% in participation over last year. The remaining libraries also saw an overall increase of 47%. 7.8% of primary school children took part in the SRC. And librarians report strengthened links with local schools.

*"My son, at five and a half, had just completed his reception year in July but was not an enthusiastic reader and was very slow. I persuaded him to join the Reading Maze and the lure of stickers for each book and particularly the medal at the end encouraged him to read six books over the summer holidays. By September my son had become a much faster reader, knew many more words than he did previously, had increased confidence in sounding words out, and his spelling at school has improved. He is generally a much better and more enthusiastic reader now than he was at the start of the Reading Maze." Parent*

*"I thought the Reading Maze is really cool. Every year through the six weeks holidays I always join the Reading Relay and the Reading Maze because I like collecting the stickers and medals what you get. I will carry on doing this until I am too old. The Reading Maze is wicked!" Girl 13 years*

## The future

The campaign will be run again and the library service is involved in the planning for a celebration of 'The Good Practice Fortnight'. Libraries will be venues for displaying the work of local schools.

***Top Tip: Involving teachers as much as possible is the key – invite them to everything, especially library award events, or invite a school to feature in the launch.***

For more information, contact

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# Enjoying Reading

**public library partnerships with schools**

## Section 4 : Developing Reading Communities (DRC)

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## Developing Reading Communities (DRC) overview

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DRC was a programme with two different strands:

- developing reading clubs in secondary schools in deprived communities
- an exploration of how schools and public libraries can work more closely together to inspire children to read.

The programme ran from 2002-4, led by The Reading Agency and ContinYou (formerly Education Extra), funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation

The material in this pack covers the second strand of the programme.

### Public libraries working with schools

This featured an 18 month research and development programme which aimed to set school and public library reading clubs in a community context

- build models of the way schools can link children more powerfully to the resources of the public library for additional inspiration and encouragement with reading
- incorporate the crucial role of Schools Library Services in underpinning the development of these models.

### What happened

A mapping exercise was carried out to explore existing links, the policy and funding background to school and public library partnerships and barriers to joint work. The results of this work appear in section 1 of this pack.

Three case study projects show how schools and libraries can establish and sustain partnerships. They were selected because of their focus on three areas of national development, all concerned with creativity:

- Study support (Solihull)
- Creative Partnerships (Slough)
- Arts Council programmes (North Yorkshire)

A full report on Developing Reading Communities can be found at [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

## Developing Reading Communities Case Studies



### Solihull – reading groups

#### Background

Building on the success of a local reading festival in 2002, which promoted the support schools and libraries provide for readers, and the library's leading role in the provision of study support, staff from Solihull Library worked with two local secondary schools to support and establish reading groups. They aimed to:

- develop closer relationships with schools
- build relationships with young people so they would use their library more fully
- support the development of reading groups in secondary schools
- support school librarians through mentoring and sharing good practice
- use the TRF evaluation framework<sup>1</sup>.

The ultimate aim was to develop a model for supporting other school-based reading groups and reader development activity linked with public libraries.

The schools were simply keen to explore new ways of promoting the love of books and reading.

#### The schools

The first school is slightly larger than average and is still growing. Most students live locally, in an area which ranks among the most deprived ten percent in the country. Many join the school with very low literacy levels and half need extra support.

The second school has approximately 1000 students – about the national average for a secondary school - and is located close to Solihull town centre. It is socially and economically mixed. Attainment on entry is generally above average. The second school was already running a successful reading group.

#### What happened

Public library, school library, teaching and support staff worked together to run the reading groups which met during school lunch-hour for approximately three quarters of an hour every fortnight during term time.

In the first school the reading group comprised 7–10 students, two boys, the rest girls, in Y7 and Y8. In the second school the group was slightly larger, approximately 12-14 pupils with a few more girls than boys, drawn from Y7 to Y9.

<sup>1</sup> Their Reading Futures Audit framework, see [www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk)

In the first school, public library staff took the lead role, liaising with the school librarians and English teacher to plan each session and choose themes, resources and any additional books to be used. In the second school the school librarian led the project and the sessions, with public library staff on hand to contribute and broaden perspectives.

The students discussed the top 21 books in the BBC Big Read, using the quizzes and other support materials; evaluated the new teenage series 'Shades' and the Reading Journey game developed by Education Extra<sup>2</sup>. Publishers supplied some books, with the public library loaning the rest (this proved particularly helpful for pupils in one school with below average reading ages). And one group attended a poetry reading given by Owen Shears and Roz Goddard.

Pupils at the school with an established reading group took part in a balloon debate at the school for the top 21 Big Read titles and in a debate at the Central Library. which also involved adult reading groups. As the groups became more established, participants became increasingly involved in deciding themes for upcoming sessions.

## Funding

In addition to the cost of staff involved, the public library provided additional stock to support the sessions. The two schools subscribed to Education Extra book groups. The post of the Out-of-School-Hours Learning Co-ordinator is funded through Study Support and a small amount of Standards Fund (Study Support) was used to fund tickets for the poetry reading.

## Outcomes

A questionnaire completed by the project manager shows that participants are reading more and becoming increasingly enthusiastic about reading and about belonging to the groups. There is some evidence that reading skills have improved along with attitudes to reading and learning and also that young people are gaining confidence and relating better to other group members.

Pupils at the school with an established reading group showed greater self-confidence. All students particularly enjoyed receiving proof copies of books from the 'Shades' series: they felt that this meant that their opinions were valued.

For more information, contact

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<sup>2</sup> Available as part of the Education Extra Book Club Pack



## Scarborough, North Yorkshire

BX4U project

### Background

In Scarborough, the library service joined up with a secondary school library, already running an extensive reader development programme (including active book groups and Carnegie and Greenaway Award-shadowing) to extend this work.

Designed to sustain children's interest in reading during the summer holidays and to ease the transition for those students making the change from primary to secondary school, the project was enhanced by Book Trust's Creative Reading Initiative (funded by the Arts Council). Staff from the library service worked in the school and some of its feeder primaries, with the school librarian and the Schools Library Service (SLS), promoting library-based activities.

In the past the SLS had successfully supported a number of schools running reading clubs using DfES 'Partnerships for Study Support' funding. However, when funding was withdrawn in 2002, schools didn't continue supporting this work from their own resources and so many of the reading groups were dissolved. Developing Reading Communities provided a new opportunity for the SLS to work with schools to support provision for young people in public libraries.

### The school

A large, mixed 11-16 comprehensive school serving the north of Scarborough and adjacent rural communities. The social background of students at the school is broadly typical of the national average and standards of attainment on entry to the school in Y7 are above average.

### What happened

Following an initial planning meeting between the school librarian, the SLS Library Advisor, the Head of Services to Children and Schools, and the DRC Project Consultant arrangements were made for a Reader-in-Residence to work in the school for a week in June as part of the Creative Reading Initiative.

During July, the Library Advisor worked with the school to build up links with a small rural library on the outskirts of Scarborough which hosted a summer reading club. This involved promoting the summer reading club to members of the school reading club, a presentation to the school assembly about the summer activities, and visits to local primary schools to promote the club to pupils who would be transferring to the secondary school in the following September. The club was also advertised in the library.

The summer reading club was held in the library from 3.00-4.30 pm on Monday evenings for six weeks during the holidays – a time when the library would usually have been closed, which meant that other users were not disturbed and that club members gained a sense of ownership of the library.

At least fifteen young people attended each session. Although originally intended for 10-13 year olds, most participants were 9-11, and the group ranged from a very good reader aged 8, to the oldest at 15. This could have proved divisive but in fact the older participants supported the younger ones and the size of the group, combined with relatively high staffing levels - there were always at least three staff members on duty - allowed everyone to do something they enjoyed and to have some individual staff attention during the meeting.

Sessions began with physical games and ice-breaking activities enabling the children to get to know each other. These were followed by refreshments and then smaller group activities.

Staff introduced young people to a wider range of reading experiences, which included the **approval collection**: club members selected books from the collection to be added to library stock. Staff took the opportunity of discussing titles and making suggestions and encouraged the children to look at the review books both individually and in groups. The restricted selection offered by the approval collection encouraged young people to read material that they would not usually have read. Group members finally chose over 100 new books from the approval collection. The selection process had the benefit of developing social and communication skills as all club members had to listen to each other as they discussed their selections and in some cases the decision was put to the vote. The books selected were identified by stickers to indicate that they had been selected by the club members.

Involving young people in selection had many benefits, including encouraging other young people to read selected titles and further enhancing the young people's sense of ownership and improving their self-image. It has also extended the ability of the library to respond to the needs of children and also sent out the message to the wider community that the library can and does respond to user needs.

This activity was linked to the Summer Reading Challenge (see section 3), and club members could also use the computers to visit some of the Reading Challenge sites and puzzle sites which proved very popular.

Extensive use was made of existing resources such as the Big Read and Birmingham's Stories from the Web as well as quizzes and 'guess the book character' activities.

The club provided other opportunities for participants to develop their social and communication skills. Older teenagers took over the running of the smaller group activities and helped keep the children interested. This enabled library staff to talk informally to all club members and quietly encourage them to read the books available. The older teenagers also encouraged the younger ones by talking about titles they had read when younger, *"Oh, I read that when I was your age. It was great!"*.

The project also encouraged social cohesion by bringing together young people from a wide range of backgrounds.

A celebratory show-case event was held early in September to which parents, teachers and local dignitaries were all invited. Lindsay Mackie, a freelance consultant working in collaboration with Education Extra and member of the project steering group, gave a talk on the power of reading and all the children participated in a presentation about the books that they had enjoyed. The collection of books selected by club members and purchased by the library was installed and certificates were presented to all the participants.

## Funding

This project was primarily funded from within existing budgets. The Reader-in-Residence was part of the Book Trust's Creative Reading Initiative funded by the Arts Council. The collection of books on approval, worth £2,000, was supplied by Askews from which club members selected £500 books to be added to library stock.

Costs incurred by the County Library Service included staff time, a budget for books and the cost of opening the library for an extra afternoon each week. While some staff were released from existing duties to take part two members of staff were funded as extra to their normal hours.

## Outcomes

The summer reading club made a big impact on participants' reading, significantly increasing the amount they read and feeding their enthusiasm for reading and learning. It also developed their confidence in talking about reading experiences. Library use increased significantly. There was also some evidence of improvement in reading skills and, in at least one case, teachers have identified a general improvement to work in English.

In addition to its impact on reading, the evaluation showed that the project made a substantial impact on participants' social skills and generally contributed to their empowerment. Participants gained in emotional maturity and the opportunity for the older teenagers (all girls) to work with, and run activities with, the younger group members proved beneficial to them and to the younger members.

The gender imbalance highlighted the need to attract more boys to use services, but the main concern is to establish how projects like the summer reading club can be sustained over the long term, developing into regular, on-going services.

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## Creative Partnerships, Slough - Graffix project

### Background

Creative Partnerships is a national initiative funded by DCMS *“to develop schoolchildren's potential, ambition, creativity and [to establish] sustainable partnerships that impact upon learning between schools, creative and cultural organisations and individuals”*. Library staff in Slough used the initiative to support the development of school book groups.

Berkshire Education Library Service already offered schools a range of services, including:

- loan of resources
- programmes of events and activities
- in-service training and advice.

These are designed to support school book groups and can also be adapted to support other projects.

The main purpose of the Graffix Project was to explore ways in which Creative Partnerships could add value to existing programmes and in particular could stimulate creativity through work with authors, illustrators and other creative artists. It aimed to:

- develop links between schools and the public library
- establish a book group in the two participating schools
- encourage all students, but particularly book group members, to read more widely and in particular to explore graphic novels as a medium.

The theme of graphic novels reflected the personal enthusiasm of the Principal Librarian for Children's Services and supported the Education Library Service's objective of stocking a broader range of graphic novels.

### The schools

The two participating secondary schools are small, 11-16 secondary modern schools, which serve culturally diverse communities. In the first, over a third of students come from substantially deprived backgrounds with a significant number being refugees and asylum seekers. Four out of five students speak a first language other than English and a third of the school population is identified as having special educational needs (almost double the national average). In the second school, just over half of the students are white and the remainder come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A high proportion speak English as an additional language, and the school has a significant number of refugees and traveller students. Half of the students have special educational needs, and an above average proportion of these students have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

## What happened?

The Graffix project had three distinct strands - strands 1 and 2 took place during the second half of the summer term:

1. Working with an author and illustrator within the classroom .
2. Establishing book groups within the schools and developing a programme of activities for group members to undertake.
3. A three day workshop held in the central library during the summer holidays. This was open to all young people and not just to those who had participated in the school-based activities.

### Strand 1

Author Graham Marks, and illustrator Malcolm Livingstone worked with a Y8 class in each of the schools to create a comic or graphic novel. This project ran for half a term and comprised four half-day sessions with the author and illustrator and a further two sessions where students continued with their work supported by their teachers. Education Library Service librarians participated in the first and last sessions at each school with the author and illustrator to provide extra staff support.

In the first lesson Graham and Malcolm talked about the process of writing and illustrating books with examples drawn from their own work and the work of other illustrators. The class teacher then set up the project, for which the students worked together in small groups to produce short graphic novels or comics.

At the end of the project the stories were bound together and published. Students then had to form into groups, agree roles in the production process and start discussing characters and storylines. Over the subsequent five weeks they developed their stories, and Graham and Malcolm provided assistance with storyboarding and cartooning as well as support and advice for individuals and groups. In the last session students prepared their art work for printing.

In one school, the pupils involved were a top English set and the project was led by their very enthusiastic English teacher. These pupils were taken out of other lessons. In the second school the sessions were taught jointly by English and Art teachers and pupils were selected specially to take part in the project. Neither school chose to involve the school librarian.

### Strand 2

This involved a longer-term project to establish a book group in each school.

One school choose to undertake the project as a class activity. In the other, individual pupils in Y7, Y8 and Y9 were invited to join the group which ran during the dinner-hour. Both book groups were led by teachers, with the school librarian having limited involvement.

An ELS librarian worked with the teachers in both schools to develop activities and materials around graphic novels, taking part in the groups' first meetings, introducing a selection of graphic novels which were left for the students to read, and returning later in the term to discuss these books with group members.

Other meetings were run by teachers and involved discussions about censorship, portrayal of violence and stock selection policy as well as sharing opinions about, and writing reviews of the books. Written reviews were published on the ELS website.

### Strand 3

The three-day workshop in Slough library ran during the second week of the summer holiday. A young web designer and graphic artist involved with the local computer-games shop worked with a diverse group of twelve young people, boys and girls, aged 10-14 (about 50% were 11) to:

- select new graphic novels for library stock
- design posters and a promotional leaflet for the service
- visit the Council's Print Room to see them produced.

The workshop was planned by the public library children's team in consultation with the Education Library Service and was designed to introduce participants to library resources.

### Funding

About £10,000 received from Creative Partnerships towards a total project cost of approximately £18,000.

The biggest cost was the fees and expenses of the four creative artists. The funding also covered the cost of teachers' involvement in planning and evaluation, a proportion of library staffing and some incidental costs. The project did not cover the purchase of stock.

### Outcomes

The project achieved both short and longer-term goals. Participants benefited from all the three strands of the project, which has also served to develop a framework for longer-term work with young people in both public and school libraries and to establish the basis for further joint projects.

**Teachers** particularly appreciated the cross-curricular nature of the project. They also commented on its motivational effects, especially on those pupils with no particular talent for Art or English, who were able, in this context, to achieve success. *"Many pupils had a good outcome even though they are not generally good at the forms of art they have previously tried"*. They could see clear benefits from all three strands of the project: *"All students taking part in the Book Group benefited from the opportunity to read more widely"* and *"it provided a stimulus for discussion and the chance to develop oral and social skills"*.

**Students** demonstrated improvements in their drawing, writing and work planning skills as a result of participating in the book groups. They benefited from the opportunity to read more widely and experience a genre new to them. The groups also provided a stimulus for discussion and the chance to develop oral and social skills: *"I have gained the skills to work better with people even if I don't like them"*. Two quiet students played a leading role in setting up one book group and teachers commented on their resulting increase in confidence.

Young people who took part in the library-based workshop said they valued the opportunity to develop new drawing, cartooning and IT skills most. Some also said they welcomed the chance to make new friends.

## Creative Partnerships

The Graffix project met a number of Creative Partnerships' aims. It gave young people the opportunity to be creative, and contributed directly to the core curriculum, improving literacy – especially writing. The fact that the creative 'role models' were only a little older than the participants was particularly relevant in the context of Creative Partnerships' overall objectives of raising young peoples' aspirations and promoting employment in the arts.

The project also led to the establishment of a teenage focus group in Slough Library which has already contributed to the development of services for young people. Book groups have been established in both schools.

Teachers and 'creatives' have suggested that the first strand, involving the creation of a comic/graphic novel, would work better organised as whole-day sessions rather than double lessons.

*"[The project] has served to establish a framework for longer term work with young people in both public and school libraries."*

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# Enjoying Reading

**public library partnerships with schools**

## Section 5 : Orange Chatterbooks

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## Chatterbooks - Talking about the books you want to read...

Chatterbooks supports children's reading through reading groups in public libraries. Sponsored by Orange, it is a national network of children's reading groups run in public libraries, often in conjunction with schools. TRA co-ordinates the network, and Jacqueline Wilson is the Chatterbooks patron.



### Children gain

- Peer group support and discussion about books and reading
- A wide range of creative reading activities
- An attractive pack of fun materials - reading diaries; 'post it' review notes, fortune-teller book choice games, pencil, bookmark and stickers - all in a special Chatterbooks bag
- Regular support and stimulus for new reading adventures
- Special events to tie in with national campaigns and links with authors and illustrators
- IT based activities to enliven and enrich reading
- Self confidence and self esteem



### Parents gain

- Advice and support in helping to encourage their children's reading
- Volunteering opportunities (in some groups)
- A way to support their children to take part in a community based activity that will improve their confidence and reading skills

Groups are for 4-12 year olds and aim to inspire young people to read adventurously, develop confidence in expressing their opinions – and have a terrific time talking about books!

Each Chatterbooks group works out its own modus operandi. Activities focus on reading and talking about books, but can also feature a range of special events: groups sometimes meet authors and illustrators, have storytelling sessions and use the internet. Parents and carers are encouraged to offer ideas for stimulating and developing their children's reading confidence. The local school is often a key partner in agreeing the target and focus of the club. And this partnership approach shows how successfully libraries, schools and other local organisations can work together.



## Chatterbooks

### Chatterbooks helps deliver on school priorities through:

- Developing children's love and enjoyment of reading
- Providing new reading ideas for young people to widen and deepen their reading
- Developing young people's confidence about themselves as readers
- Developing peer to peer reading support
- Offering children the chance to interact positively with adults about reading (e.g. library staff and parents/carers)
- Increasing the time children spend reading and sharing books
- Increasing the sense of belonging to a community
- children having a really good time reading and talking about books

### You can also use it to deliver specific local aims, such as

- Targeting particular groups of children
- Encouraging children to use their local library
- Promoting 'joined-up' working with the local cultural community

### And Chatterbooks also meets key government aims and priorities:

#### **Creativity and cultural agenda**

Chatterbooks connects children to reading, writers, publishers, community artists and storytellers, and the many different ways of telling and experiencing a story or narrative. It gives them a chance to develop as critical readers and culturally aware citizens comfortable sharing their creative ideas and thoughts.

#### **Social Inclusion**

Chatterbooks can reach children whose families may not have had contact with libraries before. It's a powerful – and fun – way of empowering and involving young people in decision-making. Group activities validate all types of reading from classics to comics, acknowledging all tastes, viewpoints and abilities.

#### **Citizenship and Community Cohesion**

Chatterbooks helps children formulate, express and discuss opinions about the world around them. You can connect the groups with young people's forums to help children link in further with their community and strengthen community cohesion.

#### **Lifelong Learning**

Chatterbooks reading groups promote access to all kinds of learning in the community for the young people who join, and for their parents and carers. And that's in addition to their increased enjoyment and use of library facilities.

#### **National Curriculum & National Primary Strategy**

These reading groups encourage children to develop the key skills fundamental to attainment across the National Curriculum, especially reading, writing, listening, ICT and social skills. Chatterbooks offers access to a wide range of reading activities, including 'wider reading', choosing and appreciating different texts and developing listening and speaking skills and confidence.

## Chatterbooks case studies



### Guildford - Chatterbooks in the Children's Space

#### Background

Guildford Library has a beautifully refurbished section for children, which staff have worked hard to promote since its opening. Chatterbooks was seen as an important opportunity to enthuse non-users.

#### Promotion

Two members of staff visited four local schools to talk to Y4 and Y5 – nearly 450 children. We spent 15 minutes with each class, talking about the Children's Space, showing examples of items we have here (DVDs, *Horrible Histories* and *Asterix* went down particularly well), and discussing Chatterbooks (they loved the packs). Then we answered any questions and left each child with an information pack containing bookmark, stickers, brief library information and a letter for a parent to sign if the child wanted to join Chatterbooks. These were to be returned either to the school or the library with tight deadlines.

#### Level of response

We had no idea what level of response to expect. Guildford Library suffers from its location in the town centre, without convenient parking. Although the schools visited are the closest ones, few families live within walking distance. However, we were pleasantly overwhelmed: 71 signed slips were returned when we wanted 15 for the group, and only slightly more girls than boys! The downside was phoning those we couldn't accommodate.

#### What happened

At least three children from each school visited were given places and an equal number of girls and boys were chosen. Meetings took place every three weeks on Mondays between 6.00-7.00pm. We 'rationed' Chatterbooks pack contents, holding back four items back as an incentive for participants to return. The biggest challenge will be to keep them all interested given the wide range of reading abilities, which became apparent at the first meeting: the children had been asked to bring along a favourite book, and these ranged from *Hop on Pop* by Dr Seuss to Tolkien's *The Two Towers*.

We included a session about Roald Dahl books, splitting the children into two groups, one group using the children's computer facilities to look at the official website, while the other discussed his books, including *Boy* and *Going Solo*. This smaller group approach encouraged some of the quieter members to speak up.

The original Chatterbooks group finished at the end of the year, as the existing members had gained as much as possible from the experience. Also, we wanted to give some of the other children who had wanted to join the opportunity to be part of Chatterbooks.

We focussed the second group around Guildford Grove Primary School. This school has undergone a period of change and is working hard at raising its profile in the local community. Most children in the classes we spoke to had never visited the library. As the library is not within walking distance, running the group there would have restricted participation. So we decided to run the group in the school, during school time. To combat the problem of differing reading ability encountered in the first group, we chose to use only one year group, and wanted them to be as old as possible. As many initiatives were already aimed at Y6, the Y5 teachers chose 12 able readers whom they thought would benefit from Chatterbooks and the reading group ran every three weeks on a Wednesday afternoon during the spring and summer terms.

Meetings were held in the computer area, with everyone seated around a large table. The area did not have closable doors, and there was some distraction from the corridor running alongside.

The high point for this Chatterbooks group was the visit from author Simon Mason. The children felt special because they'd been chosen to meet an author. Having their picture in the newspaper was a bonus.

## Outcomes

One of the boys to seemingly benefit most from the first Chatterbooks group started as a total terror. He settled down over the year, and whilst still cheeky became far less disruptive. He has also been into the library on a number of occasions with his brother and his father. His mother (very supportive) said that his brother also enjoyed a few of the books he took home for Chatterbooks.

Discipline proved something of a problem – after all, Chatterbooks isn't like school: it's meant to be fun! But despite the challenges staff faced in getting the children to listen to each other, their verbal and written feedback made it clear that they enjoyed and benefited from the experience enormously.

None of the children in either Chatterbooks group had previously used the Children's Space. Most members have now visited outside of a Chatterbooks meeting.

From the reader development point of view, having the whole group at Guildford Grove look at poetry or picture books successfully changed preconceptions. Half the children showed no interest when we gave them poetry books to read for the next meeting, but nine or ten of them showed enthusiasm for the poem they found to share with the group. Picture books were dismissed by three of the boys as being for babies, but two of these ended up really enjoying the books they were given to read.

Our school visits weren't only effective in recruiting participants for our Chatterbooks groups. We made our original visit to the largest school one Friday, and the next day three mothers came into the library, saying that their children were so inspired that they could not wait to come! At least ten children from the classes we visited – some of whom had never been to the library before – have joined.

Running Chatterbooks at Guildford Grove has also had a wider positive impact. It has strengthened links between the library and the school, and given the library an association with fun. Chatterbooks has helped to raise the library's profile amongst the students, parents and teachers and we will continue to benefit from this association for some time to come.

***Top Tip: Be flexible about where you hold your Chatterbooks meetings. Can all the children and their parents or carers get to the library? If not, can you hold the group sessions in their school during school time? Or is there an alternative venue that would be more suitable?***

***If possible, try to ensure that the members of a Chatterbooks group have roughly the same level of reading ability. This makes for more productive discussions.***

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## Staffordshire - Chatterbooks in schools

### Background

The Library and Information Service in Staffordshire piloted Chatterbooks in two of its libraries in 2002. As a result of the pilot, it was felt it would be of more benefit if we worked in schools with groups of children and staff. This would enable us to

- a) identify children who really would benefit from this kind of scheme,
- and
- b) give us more chance of involving the children's families.

In Chatterbooks in schools, library staff and school staff work with small groups of children (up to 12) and their parents/other family member for 4 to 6 weeks, meeting in the school or local library once a week.

### What happened

We have now run Chatterbooks in nine schools with a wide range of children. Some have been reluctant readers, some high achievers the teachers wanted to give a chance to shine. One school has been with Y7 pupils who had not reached their SATs level in Y6. We have three more groups starting next term, one of which will be with 10 special needs children. One of the children was blind and three autistic. The youngest age we have worked with in schools is six.

The response from teachers, children and parents has been very positive. Two of the teachers we have worked with have gone on to become Heads in new schools and invited us in to set up new Chatterbooks groups there.

We have supported over 90 children and their families so far – a big increase in the numbers we were reaching in the libraries. We are also reaching non-users of the library.

**Top Tip:**

Ask the teacher you are liaising with to

- Identify children and their families the school would like to target.
- Pick a member of school staff, teacher or teaching assistant, to work with the group each week.
- Think about what the school would like the group to achieve.
- Find a space to work in the school.
- Identify the best time and day each week to meet.
- Contact the library service to discuss working arrangements with a librarian.
- No more than 12 children to each Chatterbooks group.
- Each child to have a family member/carer working with them each week. Chatterbooks can work if some children do not have an adult working with them, but groups are noticeably less successful if fewer than half the children are supported.
- Identify a member of staff from the school who can work with the group every week. Library staff are there to facilitate rather than teach. Working in partnership with a strong teacher or teaching assistant is key to the success of Chatterbooks as each brings different skills to the sessions – and it's easier to maintain discipline.
- Provide refreshments to make the session feel special.
- Identify a time when the school feels the parents and children will benefit the most and the school will be able to fully support the programme.
- Sessions work best if they run for a minimum of 1 hour 30 minutes and a maximum of 2 hours.
- Invite the parents/carers to join half way through the session. This gives staff time to work with children on their own first.
- Meet once a week and stick to the agreed timetable closely. Parent support tends to drop off if meetings are altered.
- Expect Chatterbooks to be fairly informal and very game-based. Lots of fun and chat. Giving the children cameras in the first session and making books out of their photos in the last session works really well.
- Holding the third session in the local library is an excellent way to encourage the families to use the library. Many families have been surprised at what they have seen in their local library. The children think our libraries are cool!

For more information, contact

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## North Tyneside - Chatterbooks project

### Background

North Tyneside Libraries has four Chatterbooks reading groups based at the libraries in North Shields, Killingworth, Fordley and Cullercoats. The groups meet monthly, for an hour and have been able to sustain a regular attendance of about 10 children at each group. Members are aged between 9 and 11.

North Tyneside is a diverse area economically, socially and culturally. Our Chatterbooks groups are located at libraries spread throughout the borough to reflect this diversity.

- North Shields is a former seaport and an urban environment.
- Killingworth is a former new town. It is a SureStart area and currently undergoing regeneration.
- Fordley is a former mining community, which is located on the rural periphery of the borough.
- Cullercoats is a small seaside area popular with commuters to Tyneside.

### What happened

Chatterbooks members are recruited directly from local schools. In Killingworth and North Shields children from three primary schools belong to the same groups. Cullercoats and Fordley Chatterbooks groups draw members from the one primary school nearest to each library. Killingworth, North Shields and Cullercoats groups meet straight after school, while the Fordley group meets at lunchtime and children bring a packed lunch to the session. The schools literacy co-ordinator brings the children to the group and also participates along with the library staff at the session.

We held a Chatterbooks celebratory event and invited all members along with their families. Thirty-one children and seventeen parents participated in this exciting reader development project - one of the highest attendance's at a family learning event in North Tyneside. A 10-year-old member of our Cullercoats group described the event as *"marvellous, wicked, cool and delicious"*.

Our Chatterbooks project has been greatly enhanced by developing strong links with partners and by obtaining external funding.

Our groups linked into the BBC Big Read with members compiling their own top 10 best reads by finding out the favourite books of all their families, friends and teachers. We held a special event to announce our top reads and invited all our Chatterbooks groups along with their families. Grant funding was secured from the local authority 'Widening Participation' project, which funded a storyteller and – more importantly – the travel costs, which enabled families without transport to get to the venue.

Maureen Dixon, Orange Regional PR and Sponsorship Manager has been incredibly supportive and works closely with us. She has been highly successful in developing regional and local press coverage, attends our main events and has provided a photographer.

This partnership with Orange is hugely beneficial to our groups. Through this contact four of our Chatterbooks members had the unique opportunity to meet Jacqueline Wilson on her Best Friends book signing tour.

We are currently organising our very own book award to give our members the opportunity to judge and take part in a book award scheme. Orange are working with us on this project and we welcome all their support and advice.

## Working with Schools

North Tyneside Libraries have always maintained good links with local schools and these partnerships have contributed to the success of our Chatterbooks project. The schools support our Chatterbooks groups by

- Recruiting members. This saves our library service precious time and resources. The schools identify and select children they think will be interested and would enjoy and benefit from attending a Chatterbooks reading club.
- Getting involved in the initial setting up of the group. The schools encourage the children to join the group and pass on all the invitations and information to the children and more importantly information about the reading group to their parents and carers.
- Giving the project lots of positive encouragement. Every school we have approached has been keen to take part in the scheme.
- Letting Chatterbooks members leave school early and provide authorised passes so members can attend special events.
- Sharing their resources when we have needed additional equipment for example classroom space and their ICT equipment.

Committed and dedicated school staff support our sessions in their lunch breaks, keep parents and carers informed and organise children and their families to get to special events.

We chose to work with schools:

- close to their local library
- where we have excellent contacts with enthusiastic teaching staff
- that make regular class visits to the library
- that are situated near libraries where library staff are committed and enthusiastic about children's activities
- that participate in the Summer Reading Challenge and make use of our School Library Service.

## Outcomes

Chatterbooks in North Tyneside has been enormously successful. It has:

- Promoted reading and the love of books to children and their families in the area
- Contributed towards North Tyneside Council's corporate vision of promoting life long learning and social inclusion.

**Top Tip:**

- *Try to develop strong partnerships with Orange's PR and Sponsorship Manager for your region. Orange are an imaginative and hands-on sponsor and are very supportive of the Chatterbooks project.*
- *It's always worth trying to access external funding to enhance your programme of activities.*
- *Ensure that the library staff leading the project have the time and resources to do the job properly. And that they're getting active support from the schools.*
- *For added excitement and topicality, link your group's reading and activities to national events such as World Book Day.*
- *Think imaginatively and be creative!*

For more information, contact

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## Planning and delivering a Chatterbooks programme – planning checklist

Chatterbooks projects need to be developed in partnership. You can use the following checklist to work with local schools to develop your Chatterbooks group. Following it will help you ensure that the project is developing in line with your joint objectives, and that the planning involves both partners in equal measure.

If you are not already part of the Chatterbooks network, contact The Reading Agency ([info@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:info@readingagency.org.uk)) for details on how to join



1. Planning the programme: to do list	Complete	Notes or further action needed
<b>Support materials</b> - Obtain the Chatterbooks Handbook and other relevant materials from The Reading Agency website ( <a href="http://www.readingagency.org.uk">www.readingagency.org.uk</a> )		
<b>Chatterbooks training</b> - Book your places on TRA's training course.		
<b>Research</b> - What else do you need to know before you can confirm which/how many children you'll be working with? Who needs what? How will your group complement existing activities?		
<b>Consultation</b> - With the target group and their parents, carers and with individual teachers.		
<b>Resources</b> - What resources will you need, and what is available?		
<b>Staff</b> - Who are they; what skills do they have/need ?		
<b>Training</b> – Fill any gaps in staff skills and knowledge		
<b>Stock</b> - What books will you be reading and talking about and where will you keep them?		
<b>Publisher Support</b> - Use existing or new links?		
<b>Further funding</b> - What will be needed, and where will it come from ?		
<b>Delivery</b> – You need to make decisions together about age ranges and group size, and the format and timing of sessions.		
<b>Other partners</b> - Your joint partnership is the basis for the group, but are there any other groups who could help?		
<b>Monitoring and evaluating</b> – Define the evidence you need to show the impact of the group for each of your organisations.		
<b>Reflection</b> - Write a Development Plan so that you are clear about what needs to be done when and by whom.		
<b>Promotion &amp; Recruitment</b> – Work together to attract the right members to your Chatterbooks group		



## Planning and delivering a Chatterbooks programme – delivering checklist

2. Delivering the programme: to do list	Complete	Notes or further action needed
<p><b>Orange Chatterbooks Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure your Chatterbooks packs have arrived, or are on order and will arrive, before your group is due to start.</li> <li>▪ Ensure your key staff have received their Chatterbooks training.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>At Every Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A warm welcome.</li> <li>▪ Name badges and a session plan.</li> <li>▪ An opportunity to choose books to take home and read before the next Chatterbooks meeting.</li> <li>▪ A reminder of the date and time of the next session – and of any special events coming up.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Some Practical Tips</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have something for children to do if they arrive early.</li> <li>▪ Arrange a suitable time with library staff for when the children can get all their books stamped before they go.</li> <li>▪ Confirm start and finish times with parents/carers.</li> <li>▪ Check that your plans are in line with your Health and Safety policy and local Child Protection strategy.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Running Chatterbooks Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan the possibilities together.</li> <li>▪ Enable the children to contribute to session planning.</li> <li>▪ Establish a style and tone and explain how the group will work.</li> <li>▪ Include all kinds of reading and listening.</li> <li>▪ Talk through all the things in the Orange folders, and what they're for.</li> <li>▪ Use the Chatterbooks Handbook for ideas to get people thinking and talking.</li> <li>▪ Get people talking about their favourite books.</li> <li>▪ Chatterbooks questionnaire: get this completed during your second or third session, once the group is starting to settle in.</li> <li>▪ Don't forget the refreshments!</li> <li>▪ Set up reviewing activities and Book Chats, or special themes.</li> <li>▪ Include IT for reading and creating.</li> <li>▪ Consider developing family reading activities, special workshops, visits and behind the scenes tours.</li> <li>▪ Think about how the sessions can be followed up by the library and school.</li> </ul>		



## Orange Chatterbooks - evaluation checklist (a)

Chatterbooks is a nationally co-ordinated project which aims to raise standards of children's library services through a cost effective approach to developing resources, research and dissemination of best practice and approaches to skilling staff to run reading groups. It supports children's library services in delivering local government policy objectives, demonstrates the value of partnership working, develops children's love of reading and helps children have a really good time reading and talking about books

Evaluation stages	Notes/Action
<p><b>1. Identify specific aims for your group.</b> Your joint partnership aims might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing new reading ideas for young people to widen their reading.</li> <li>• Developing young people's confidence about themselves as readers.</li> <li>• Developing peer-peer reading support.</li> <li>• Offering children the chance to interact positively with adults about reading.</li> <li>• Increasing the time children spend reading and sharing books.</li> <li>• Increasing their sense of belonging to a community.</li> <li>• Providing an activity where children are having a really good time reading &amp; talking about books.</li> <li>• Providing opportunities for children to contribute to library decision-making.</li> <li>• Strengthening the link between the library and the school and making it more visible in the community.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Research your evaluation methodology.</b> Try using <a href="http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk">www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk</a> (the Planning and Evaluation section) as a basis. This is an Outcomes-based approach to evaluation, looking at the <b>impact</b> of an activity for the people taking part in it – the <b>difference</b> that activity has made.</p>	
<p><b>3. Define what you want to achieve.</b> You will need to define your goals together. It may be necessary to limit yourself to a few key ones, but you might agree to use any or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people reading more widely.</li> <li>• Young people become more confident about themselves as readers.</li> <li>• Young people supporting and inspiring each other in their reading.</li> <li>• Young people engaging more positively and more confidently with adults about their reading.</li> <li>• Young people spending more time reading and sharing books.</li> <li>• Young people and their families with an increased sense of belonging to the community.</li> <li>• Young people enjoying reading.</li> <li>• Young people enjoying talking about books.</li> <li>• Library staff more skilled and confident in talking with young people and their parents/carers about their reading.</li> <li>• Library staff and school staff working more closely together to support children's reading.</li> </ul>	

## Orange Chatterbooks - evaluation checklist (b)



Evaluation stages	Notes/Action
<p><b>4. Identify the activities that will produce your desired outcomes</b> and ensure you have ways of recording the results of those activities.</p>	
<p><b>5. Plan evidence collection</b> Work out how you will identify and demonstrate changes in young people's skills, behaviour and attitudes, to check the project is meeting your objectives.</p>	
<p><b>6. Collect the data</b>  <b>Basic Data</b> – numbers of children, sessions etc.  <b>Session records</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of what happened at each session, including feedback.</li> </ul> <b>Questionnaires:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-activity questionnaires (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> session) for baseline evidence.</li> <li>• Follow up questionnaires to assess progress and collect feedback.</li> </ul> <b>Staff Logbooks</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of each session, what happened, who did what.</li> </ul> </p>	
<p><b>7. Other techniques</b></p> <p><b>Celebration event after 6 months</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to highlight and celebrate participants' achievements within the group – collect quotes and video footage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Post Interview with Parents/Carers –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for feedback on children's behaviour, attitudes, and skills since joining.</li> </ul> <p><b>Post interviews with teachers, school staff, and library staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for feedback on behaviour, attitudes and skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>Interviews/focus groups with children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be run as part of a group session.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questionnaires with children/adults</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focusing on particular outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Case study work and structured observations</b></p>	
<p>More guidance is available in the Chatterbooks Handbook, and at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk">www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk</a> : See 'Involving and consulting young people'</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.inspiringlearningforall.org.uk">www.inspiringlearningforall.org.uk</a> : See 'Measure learning'</li> </ul>	

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