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Major new children's reading promotion Spotlight launches

In May 2009, the Reading Agency is launching Spotlight, a major new children's reading promotion, in collaboration with Children's Reading Partners, the library/publishing consortium. Spotlight is the result of an unprecedented cross-industry collaboration, drawing on the expertise of children's librarians to highlight the very best that children's publishing has to offer.

Ten times a year, six titles selected by specialist children's librarians from across the UK will be promoted through public libraries, and school library services. Spotlight aims to introduce children to the best new writing and expand their reading horizons, help parents make informed reading choices for their children, and enhance libraries' promotion of current children's literature.

The Spotlight list can also provide inspiration for further promotion of library book stock and publisher lists, including other books written by the featured authors, and 'if you liked this, you'll like these' themed displays.

"We're excited by this important initiative," says Elaine McQuade, MD of Scholastic Children's Books and Chair of the PA Children's Book Group. "Spotlight takes our partnership with libraries to a new level, giving us coordinated marketing access to the vast and diverse grass roots library network. In these tricky times, harnessing the power and reach of this network to get a wide range of new books into the hands of as many children as possible is more important than ever for children's publishers."

Spotlight will be implemented in two phases. From May to September, libraries signing up to Spotlight can get a free starter pack containing posters and headers to accompany library displays. They can also download ideas for the supplementary promotion of author back lists and feedback on the development of the project.

Once Phase One feedback has been reviewed, more materials will be available from September 2009. Libraries will be able to buy extra Spotlight promotional materials and get free access to reader development resources to support linked reading group activities. Some Spotlight authors will be available for library events.

Spotlight has been devised by Children's Reading Partners, the partnership consortium which aims to expand the market for reading by transforming the way public libraries and children's publishers work together. The consortium is led by The Reading Agency, the independent charity working to inspire more people to read more. It involves the whole UK public library network, 13 children's publishers, The Publishers Association and the main children's library bodies.

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Notes to editors:

- The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more. It is funded by the Arts Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. (www.readingagency.org.uk)
- The children's publishers involved in the two-year Children's Reading Partners pilot project are: Bloomsbury, Egmont, Faber, Hachette, Harper Collins, Macmillan, OUP, Penguin, Random House, Scholastic, Simon and Schuster, Walker Books, and Bounce!. The Publishers Association supports the scheme.
- The children's library bodies partnering in this project are the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) and the CILIP Youth Libraries Group (YLG)
- Spotlight lists will be available ten times a year, ie: monthly except for August and December.