

# **EXTENDED SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE**

## **Hearing 2**

**Wednesday 28 April 2010**

### **Building Communities of Readers: Libraries and Archives support for Kent's schools**

Kent Libraries and Archives promote the enjoyment of reading and opportunities for learning for people of all ages, but especially the young. Our mission is 'to enhance the quality of life for all Kent's residents and communities, by stimulating lifelong imagination, exploration and discovery'.

For all Kent's children, from the earliest age, and their families, we aim to promote a love of reading, to support the development of literacy skills, and to encourage active public library use. To achieve this our staff deliver a wide range of quality services such as storytimes, events, reading group sessions and family learning activities. We provide a comprehensive range of stock that meets the educational and recreational needs of all pupils. This includes free access to books and information including a range of online resources and services which can be accessed from school, home or library. This results in annual issues of 2.1 million books to Kent's children borrowed from our network of public libraries, including mobiles. Our libraries are located in towns and villages across Kent including a few on or near to school sites. Our mobile libraries visit more isolated communities.

#### **1. Services provided within Kent's schools**

**1.1 Book loans;** from September 2010 all Kent's schools will be entitled to borrow up to 100 books each from any local library at no cost.

**1.2 Booktime:** every year 16,000 children starting primary school in Kent receive free books through Booktime, a DCSF scheme administered by Kent Libraries and Archives on behalf of Kent Education Directorate (CFE). Events and publicity provided by the library service help to reinforce the message that reading together for enjoyment is a key to success. We value the funding provided by the Extended Services Team to support this work which will total £9.5k in 2010-11.

Kent has won national recognition for adding value to the Booktime aims and objectives. The Kent scheme is managed by Libraries and Archives working in partnership with CFE, whereas in other parts of the country it is left to the Education Directorate to manage the scheme.

The aims of Booktime are to promote reading for pleasure and to involve parents and carers in reading aloud with their children. Libraries & Archives supports Booktime through the work of a Service Development Librarian and a range of staff based in our districts.

Booktime resources are supplied each year by the DCSF, via the Booktrust, to all Reception-aged pupils in Kent. Every pupil receives two books - and a leaflet about reading for their parents - in a waterproof book bag. 16,000 pupils receive Booktime packs in Kent each year.

Each pack is worth £13 and, in addition, the school receives resources (stickers, books and badges) worth £30 for every infant class. Parents/carers also receive information about the library, encouraging families to enjoy reading together.

Packs can be presented to pupils at special gifting sessions in libraries. Return visits to the library by families involved in Booktime gifting sessions in previous years have led to an increase in book issues. Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) and Parent Support Advisers (PSAs) have played a key role in promoting the benefits of Booktime to families. We have provided training for FLOs and PSAs around book gifting and promoting the pleasure of reading for parents with their children.

A few quotes from Kent teachers:

*The support materials and resources were fantastic*

*We were very impressed with the project. Please carry on!*

*The parents have reported that they enjoyed using the packs at home.*

*The children were delighted to receive and use these books.*

**1.3** Libraries and Archives supports **Transition Information Sessions** in schools. We also work with Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) and Parent Support Advisers (PSAs) in schools to target families that could most benefit from family learning events in our libraries. Our Service Development Librarian (Lifelong Learning) works with partners to encourage pupils' parents to engage in formal and informal learning opportunities. We look forward to working with CFE on National Family Week in 2010. We worked closely with Guston School in Dover to support a **Welcome Day** for new intakes of soldiers at the barracks.

**1.4 Reading groups:** we support reading groups for children, young people and families, at school or in libraries. We offer a group ticket, and access to national schemes such as Chatterbooks (for primary school children) and groupthing (for teenagers). Examples include a group in a school in Sandwich which targets boys who have difficulty reading and a 6<sup>th</sup> Form Reading Group in Ramsgate.

**1.5 Supporting equality;** we work with MCAS and FLOS to support Gypsy Roma Travellers and other ethnic groups including provision of dual-language books and support for multicultural events in schools, libraries and the wider community. We provide Bag Books for children with learning disabilities. We also support children who are dyslexic or have other disabilities.

**1.6 Building Communities of Readers:** Kent Libraries and Archives is a partner in a national three year project (formerly Teachers as Readers), which is raising pupils' literacy standards at targeted schools by improving teachers' knowledge of children's literature and the communities in which they work.

## 2. Services provided via libraries and other outlets

"..... a child taken to the library on a monthly basis from ages 3 to 5 is two and a half months ahead of an equivalent child at age 5 who did not visit the library so frequently". *The Sutton Report February 2010*

**2.1 Bookstart** is a universal programme which is managed and promoted by the Booktrust. Funding for the Bookstart packs is provided by the DCSF including donations of books from publishers. The value of the Bookstart materials per child is £60 for the 3 packs and participation in the Bookstart BookCrawl. Our Service Development Librarian (Early Years) co-ordinates this national initiative for Kent, on behalf of Booktrust. CFE (Extended Services) funding (£31,350 in 2010-11) supports our work to administer and promote Bookstart. Bookstart provides a firm foundation to children's literacy, helping to prepare children for school and to achieve better results at KS1. Bookstart children have consistently higher levels of language and literacy development than non-Bookstart children. They are also statistically ahead in reading tasks, reading comprehension, writing, spelling, mathematics, and science. In total, Libraries and Archives arranges the delivery of nearly 48,000 Bookstart packs to families with preschool children each year via Registrars, Health Visitors and Early Years settings. From 2011, births will be registered in Kent libraries, providing us with a significant opportunity to engage with all parents.

Bookstart has been recognised as making a valuable contribution towards the Kent Agreement 2 indicators for Early Years. The scheme contributes directly to the Children's and Young People's Plan, Shared Priorities, Birth to Three Matters, and to Foundation Stage practice.

Bookstart provides young children and their families with free books plus tips and ideas for parents on sharing books together. Local Authorities are encouraged to allocate resources to ensure that Bookstart is delivered to all eligible families within their communities. Delivery is managed by KCC Libraries and Archives through partnership with Children, Families and Education; Health; Registrars; Children's Centres and other partners. The value of Libraries and Archives' contribution through the work of the Service Development Librarian (Early Years) and a range of staff based in our districts is approximately £45,000 per annum plus office provision. In Kent children receive 3 packs before they start school:

- **Bookstart Pack** for babies aged 0 - 12 months. Gifted to families by Registration Services. We reach 100% of eligible children.
- **Bookstart Plus** for toddlers aged 18 - 30 months. Gifted to children

via Health Visitors, Children's Centres and Early Years Settings. This is the most challenging pack to deliver, as there is no universal health check at this age. We currently reach 83% of eligible children

- My **Bookstart Treasure Chest** for children aged 36 – 48 months. Gifted to children via all Early Years Settings. We reach 100% of eligible children.

The next Annual Bookstart Report will be published later this year. Meanwhile the 2008-09 report highlights:

- In total Bookstart reached 47,946 children in 2008-9.
- 43,645 children (51% increase) attended 3,532 early years activities (23% increase) in libraries including Baby Bounce and Rhyme
- 619 Early Years settings and childminders borrowing books and other items (23% increase)
- Nearly 10% of new library members are aged 0-4 years

Research has shown that children who receive Bookstart '*are significantly further ahead in six measures of literacy and numeracy ... at 5 years of age when they had entered and settled into their primary schools*' The final part of Wade and Moore's study compared the Bookstart children with the control group at their first SATs assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 Bookstart children were found to be statistically ahead in the reading task, reading comprehension, writing, spelling, mathematics, and science<sup>1</sup> A Sheffield study found that Bookstart children had acquired consistently higher levels of language and literacy development than the non-Bookstart children. Bookstart children recorded 20% higher scores in 'Listening and Speaking Skills' and 'Linking Sounds and Words,' 19% higher for reading and 12% for writing<sup>2</sup>

Some Kent quotes:

*One mum....said when she got the Bookstart bag that she didn't think her little boy would be interested in books, but that she was really surprised when she tried looking at them with him that he loved them and he is now, at a year, very enthusiastic about books (Children's Centre staff)*

*It has really encouraged me to take time to look at the books with my toddler (Parent)*

50% of parents are now taking their child to the library (Early Years Advisory Teacher)

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<sup>1</sup> Wade, B & Moore, M. 2000. *A Sure Start with Books. Early Years 20, Spring, pp.39-46*

<sup>2</sup> Hines, Margaret and Brooks, Greg. 2005. *Sheffield Babies Love Books: An Evaluation of the Sheffield Bookstart Project. University of Sheffield.*

**2.2 Class visits** and book exchanges: 59,300 children visited libraries with their school in 2008-09, with over 2,000 hours of class visits taking place.

**2.3 Online library resources:** we have countywide subscriptions for a wide range of online resources, including Children's Britannica, Student Britannica, dictionaries, newspaper indexes, careers information and more. All of our resources can be accessed by pupils at home, at a library or at school and are available free of charge.

**2.4 Ask a Kent Librarian:** our team is waiting to respond to pupils' homework queries by telephone, email or online chat, 24 hours a day. See [www.kent.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/libraries/online\\_library\\_services/ask\\_a\\_kent\\_librarian.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/online_library_services/ask_a_kent_librarian.aspx)

**2.5 Homework clubs:** libraries provide a safe and neutral community space for Homework Clubs. There are currently 19 locations and we are piloting Virtual Homework Help via the on-line *Ask a Kent Librarian* enquiry service. These centres complement school-based clubs and provide an alternative venue for young people who do not live near their school. They are run by trained library staff and volunteers. 2088 children and young people attended our Homework Clubs in 2008-09 including 854 boys. Homework helpers are also on hand after school in many libraries, with trained helpers. Extended Services funding has again supported our work including £5k funding in 2010-11, helping us to provide stationery, aids for children with dyslexia and attendance rewards.

Quotes include:

*We do not have the internet at home*

*My son gets on with his homework much more quickly here than at home*

*The staff are very good at encouraging the children when they don't want to listen to their parents.*

*My vision of learning for children and young people in the future has the library, in all its forms, at its heart.*  
Prof. Tim Brighouse

**2.6 Archives and Local History:** we have a range of materials — including maps, photographs and historic documents going back to 699AD - which can make history come alive for pupils. See [www.kent.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/archives\\_and\\_local\\_history.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/archives_and_local_history.aspx)

**2.7 Summer Reading Challenge:** the annual Summer Reading Challenge is the ideal way to keep pupils reading with enthusiasm through the summer holidays. We send an invitation to join the challenge to all primary school age children and encourage them to read six books with incentives such as certificates, stickers and medals. Around 15,000 Kent pupils sign up to the

Challenge every year and in 2010 we will target Reading Recovery pupils in particular.

**2.8 Family Learning:** we work closely with CFE and Adult Education to provide family learning activities including Storysacks. Most recently we have worked with Amicus Horizon Housing Association, Adult Education and CFE to support work to raise family literacy skills in Swale.

Quote:

*Great session; it showed us how to make a story come alive, so parents could share the story with their children, to make it fun and interesting.*  
(Family Liaison Officer)

**2.9 Family Matters Open days** CFE Extended Services held bullying awareness sessions for parents in libraries in Canterbury. PSA's were pleased with outcome and would like to repeat sessions on Saturdays.

**2.10 Speakeasy Project** Development Worker supported by ESM ran courses for adults helping them speak about sexual health to their children in libraries in Maidstone, Dartford, Swale and Thanet.

**2.11 Learning Destinations** –a national scheme: A joint working partnership between Children's University and Libraries is currently being developed. Children take part in a learning activity to achieve a stamp in their Learning Destination Passport leading to gold, silver or bronze awards.

**2.12 Offers** to specific groups (Looked After Children, Reading Recovery teachers, Volunteer Reading Helpers) articulate our services to those involved in teaching and learning. We promote the fact that groups can have 50 books at a time, for example, and that we do not charge fines on their loans. Offers are attached.

**2.13 Volunteering opportunities** for young people help them to fulfil the community service element of the IB or their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Young people are volunteering as homework helpers, web wizards and user group members in our libraries. 18% of our Time2Give volunteers are under 24 years old. We are also developing a Library Champion role for adult volunteers, to encourage closer links between schools and local libraries.

See

[www.kent.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_culture/libraries/services\\_for\\_everyone/volunteering.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/services_for_everyone/volunteering.aspx)

**2.14** We are working in close partnership with CFE to develop the **Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading: a strategy to engage the whole community**. The Kent Approach will recognise that there is much good practice but that there is a need for a more strategic and joined-up approach. Our aim is to develop and embed a culture where everyone, regardless of first language, ability or age, aspires to read and where there is excellent access and signposting to skills development opportunities and support. CFE has provided £10k funding to support The Kent Approach in 2010-11. Together we are actively involved with the DCSF-sponsored **Partners in Literacy** initiative delivered by the National Literacy Trust. Its aim is to improve local outcomes for families through local coordination. It recognises that literacy

begins from birth in the home and that the greatest effort should be placed on engaging pre-school children and their families. Through the national network we can learn from current developing good practice. KCC has recently secured funding of £40k for one year to appoint a literacy coordinator on a fixed term contract, based in CFE to work with families around literacy – particularly disadvantaged families and those with children aged birth to five.

Quote:

*Kent is a shining example of an authority dedicated to making literacy a basic right for all of its communities.*

(Manager: *Partners for Literacy*, National Literacy Trust)

## 2.15 Library staff skills

There are 12 **Customer Service Development Librarians** (CSDLs) and 6 **Community Development Librarians** (CDLs) who work in partnership with their local schools to promote our services and add value to schools' literacy work.

Our **Service Development Librarian (School Age Children)** co-ordinates the work with FLOs and PSAs in schools, focusing on reaching the more disadvantaged families who would not traditionally use libraries. As well as overseeing Libraries' homework clubs, she develops other study support opportunities, such as Learning in the Wild (with Kent Children's University). She also ensures that we have software and reading aids to help pupils with disabilities to use our libraries.

Our **Service Development Librarian (Young People)** is working to expand our on line services to pupils, via Virtual Learning Environments, on line magazines and an on line discussion forum.

The work of the **Family and Lifelong Learning Services Manager** co-ordinates all these activities, developing new services (such as the new school ticket and bulk loans for Looked After Children and other groups), responding to DCSF initiatives and promoting relevant library services to CFE partners.

*"Taking a child to the library is the single most important thing parents can do to give their child a good start in life"*  
Prof Cathy Silver (Institute of Education) speaking to the Commons Select Committee

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