

INVOLVING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY; THE KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING 2011-2021

1. INTRODUCTION

Kent County Council's Medium Term Plan describes 3 clear aims which will be the focus of the local authority's activity in the next few years:

- helping the economy to grow
- putting the citizen in control
- tackling disadvantage

We believe that the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading supports all 3 aims. The facts and statistics below are taken from the National Literacy Trust's Literacy Changes Lives advocacy document (2008) http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/243_literacy_changes_lives_an_advocacy_resource

Helping the Kent economy grow: literacy skills will enable us to facilitate new growth in the Kent economy because:

- over 95% of all employment in the U.K. requires employees to be able to read
- 22% of men and 30% of women with literacy below entry level 2, the level expected of a 7 year old, live in non-working households
- men and women with poor literacy are least likely to be in full-time employment at the age of 30
- concern about basic numeracy and literacy is especially acute in retail and manufacturing – 69% of firms in retail and 50% in manufacturing report problems

Putting the citizen in control – Literacy and Reading will enable us to place power and influence in the hands of local people so they are able to take responsibility for their own community and service needs because non-readers are less likely to:

- vote or have an interest in politics
- participate in their local community
- belong to a membership organisation.

Tackling disadvantage – Literacy and Reading will help to make Kent a county of opportunity where aspiration, rather than dependency is supported, particularly for those who are disadvantaged or who struggle to help themselves and their family because non-readers are more likely to:

- suffer depression
- smoke
- live in over-crowded housing
- have low aspirations.

In order for Kent to move forward towards an aspiration of 100% literacy levels we need articulate and engaged communities. From birth through all stages of life we need to equip all of our communities with the life chances and opportunities to lead full and rewarding lives. Developing literacy skills, creating literate communities and promoting a love of reading for pleasure are central to these aims. *Involving the whole community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading* outlines why literate and reading communities are important to the continued success of Kent. It provides a new, simple and sustainable approach to achieve our aspiration.

Kent County Council and a growing number of partners aim to embed a culture where everyone aspires to read and provide excellent signposting to skills development opportunities, services and support.

Involving the Community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading aims to

- Raise awareness of literacy needs
- Promote the benefits of reading
- Raise awareness of the excellent good practice that already exists
- Involve more people to help us raise standards.

It will recognise that:

- Everything starts with reading; it is key to a fulfilling life
- Reading and success go hand in hand
- Reading is anything, anywhere, anytime
- The best place to begin is with what you love; enjoy what you read and share that pleasure
- It's never too early or too late.

We recognise the enormous energy, commitment and expertise that are already raising the standards of literacy and reading across Kent, including the work of our teachers, tutors and librarians. The Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading does not seek to advise on how literacy should be taught. It aims to support those whose role it is to develop literacy skills and promote the enjoyment of reading. It also seeks to engage the people who could most benefit from literacy skills and reading including parents of young children, people who are seeking work, and people who suffer mental health problems.

Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the Kent Approach. Involving the whole community is all about challenging stereotypes and promoting positive images of reading and our target audiences. We will seek to benefit and involve everyone who lives or works in Kent, regardless of first language, ability, gender, age, race, religious belief, gender identity or sexual orientation. All our partners have Equal Opportunities policies.

2. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'LITERACY AND READING'?

We will support all four strands of literacy - speaking, listening, reading and writing. There are many definitions of 'Literacy and Reading' but we have chosen two which we believe best sum up the benefits:

"The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associate with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society" UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

"We believe that reading can transform people's lives. The more you read, the more you know. The more you read, the more you imagine. The more you read, the better you understand and the better you can connect to people. Our mission is to inspire more people to read more." The Reading Agency

We also recognise that digital literacy is closely connected which is why we are supporting Race Online 2012 which aims to improve the life chances of people who have never been on-line.

3. WHY DO WE NEED A KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING?

To sum up, a love of reading and the ability to read brings benefits throughout life, including:

- bonding; sharing a story with a parent or carer is one of the earliest and strongest opportunities
- social skills; through storytime at pre-school or in a library a child can learn how to listen and interact with other children and adults
- readiness for school; sharing stories helps a child to gain confidence
- skills for life; literacy is a life skill; vital at every stage
- skills for work; jobs and the use of computers and other technologies require literacy skills
- involvement; a reader will be more confident to join in and play an active role in their community
- health and wellbeing; reading can be a lifeline for anyone who is ill or lonely
- and not least...fun!

4. WHY DO WE NEED TO INVOLVE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY?

We believe that the people who can make most difference are the readers of Kent; people who, whatever their first language, age or ability, can help us engage the non-readers of Kent. Readers far outnumber non-readers and their enthusiasm is infectious; let's harness it!

Everyone can play a role, whether it is taking a child to a library for the first time, making a story sack for a family, being a volunteer reader in a school, or accompanying a nervous friend to a Skills Plus Centre in the high street where they will find community learning and skills staff who can help them to gain a basic literacy qualification. Just talking about the sheer pleasure of reading can inspire others. There is good evidence to support our approach:

- 2 out of 5 adults are encouraged to read a book after receiving tips from friends: Office of National Statistics;
- 43% of young people will read something as a result of a peer recommendation: Nestle Family Monitor

Volunteering opportunities already exist and will be expanded. Volunteer Reading Help and Time2Give, Libraries and Archives volunteering programme which is managed by Community Service Volunteers, provide a range of opportunities including:

- Baby Rhyme Time and Story Time - helping to engage children in literacy related activities
- supporting and listening to children read - provided by Volunteer Reading Help in schools
- Summer Reading Challenge - peer and adult support for the school holiday programme
- Library links with local schools - promoting library services in schools and encouraging class visits. We may develop similar links with GP surgeries as well as promoting volunteering as a mental health therapy
- Reading Group hosts - facilitating and supporting reading groups in libraries. These include special interest groups e.g. the MIND reading group for people with mental health issues. There is also an Audio Reading Group for people who are blind or visually impaired
- Supporting Adult Literacy – opportunities to support Basic Literacy students, enabling them to have some extra support in the library between classes.

Other volunteering opportunities include:

- **Seashells Doorstep Library in Sheerness** - where Children's Centre volunteers and a Bookworker visit families each week offering to read a story and providing an opportunity to borrow books
- **KCC Employee Volunteering** in partnership with Reading Recovery to support Kent schools. We will design a project that offers positive roles and opportunities for staff, supporting them to volunteer to raise literacy and reading standards in Kent
- **Words for Work** – volunteers from the business community are supporting Kent secondary schools in a National Literacy Trust pilot. This initiative helps Year Nine pupils (13/14 year olds) to explore the use of speaking and listening skills in the workplace through a series of creative workshops

- **Reading Champions** in local communities, the workplace or in the clubs and societies. We want people who will help us to fly the flag, to help us challenge attitudes and other barriers to literacy and have some fun at the same time!

Everyone will be able to volunteer. We will welcome everyone whatever their first language, ability, gender, age, race, religious belief, gender identity or sexual orientation. For example, in 2010-11 at least 8% of our Time2Give volunteers were disabled and 8% were from Black Minority Ethnic groups.

A new opportunity for everyone to get involved!

We have been inspired by *The Future of Reading*, an Arts Council research project to engage people in a debate about the role and value of reading, and how it can best be encouraged in a digital age.

The report reveals a number of interesting findings about reading including:

- the importance of reading as an individual, creative experience and its perceived benefits of enjoyment, escape, empathy and overall wellbeing
- the reasons why people choose not to read, from a lack of time or interest to a fear of being too 'drawn in' to another world
- that all forms of reading are seen as valid and valuable and that people don't want to be patronised or dictated to about what they choose to read
- ideas for how individuals and organisations, particularly libraries, can help to promote reading by tapping into a universal interest in good stories.

The report also promotes the use of '**great stories**' as an art form at the centre of a programme to get more people reading more and more widely. Storytelling is a very accessible medium and part of the culture of some communities including Gypsy Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage.

We know that everyone has a story to tell about their life and their reading experience; whether a good or bad experience when they were a child, a story of how reading has been a lifeline during periods of loneliness or depression, or to raise concerns about why some children and adults are unable to read and make suggestions for what should be done to address the problem.

To understand the barriers and to get new thinking we need to maintain this dialogue with the people of Kent. We can use these stories and experiences to break down the barriers and stigmas associated with illiteracy. Building on a pilot run by AimHigher with 3 secondary schools, we aim to roll out **Local Legends of Kent**, encouraging everyone, in particular our target audiences to:

- tell their own stories
- tell other people's stories

- tell their community's story
- talk about the stories they love
- tell us about their reading experiences.

5. WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE KENT APPROACH?

We have identified 15 priority groups as shown below and will regularly review progress and add new target audiences as needs are identified. Statistics below are from the National Literacy Trust's Literacy Changes Lives advocacy document (2008) unless stated otherwise.

- **Early Years children and their families:** up to 10% of all children have a long term persistent communication difficulty. However, upwards of 50% of children on school entry have more transient difficulties which, with the right support, mean the children are likely to catch up. (Source: i-can *The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication*, 2006)
- **Children at Key Stage 2 transition and their families:** at Key Stage 2 the expected level for pupils to achieve is Level 4. In Kent 21.5% are below Level 4 in English, 15.3% in Reading and 35.2% in Writing. Nationally, 6-7% of 11 year olds in England leave primary school at a reading level equivalent to an average 7 or 8 year old. (Source: *The Long Term Costs of Literacy Difficulties KPMG Foundation* 2007)
- **Looked After Children:** in 2003, 48% of children in care left school without any qualifications, compared to only 5% of all other children. Children in care have poor results in Key Stage tests at ages 7, 11 and 14. Just 1% go to university. Children in care are 10 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school (source: Social Exclusion Unit)
- **Deaf children:** official figures suggest that over a quarter (28%) of all deaf children leave primary school without a basic understanding of literacy, compared with just 6% of all children
- **Men and boys:** in 2007 2396 pupils (12% of all pupils) in Kent were not awarded a Level for Reading. Of these 1566 were boys. Only 23% of boys read stories or novels every day compared to 41% of girls (Source: KCC Management Information Unit). In 2010 the National Literacy Trust found that boys do not enjoy writing as much as girls (38% vs. 52%) either for recreation or for schoolwork. 70% of men with poor literacy and/or numeracy were in manual jobs, compared with 50% of those who were competent in both
- **Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs):** it is possible to track people's progress from age 17 to 37. Data shows that those with lower levels of literacy are more likely to be unemployed by the time they are 23

- **Children and young people who are excluded from school:** 70% of children permanently excluded from school have difficulties in basic literacy skills
- **Gypsy Roma and Travellers:** In 2008-09, just 19% of pupils at Key Stage 2 in Kent achieved Level 4+ in English and Maths and 3.7% A* to C grades at Key Stage 4 (source: KCC Management Information Unit)
- **Families whose first language is not English (ESOL):** numbers of families from certain Minority Ethnic groups are increasing in parts of Kent. These include Nepali in Shepway, White Eastern European and Gypsy Roma in Thanet, Dover, Gravesend and Dartford (source: Management Information Unit)
- **Adults with literacy skills below Level 2:** 276,000 adults in Kent and Medway have Entry Level 3 or below literacy skills. 75.9% of Kent's working age population is employed, but the average household income in Kent is lower than in the rest of the South East. 12.1% of Kent's population have no qualifications at all, 16.2% are qualified to Level 1 (GCSE grades D-G) and 16.8% have a Level 2 qualification (GCSE grades A-C). In 2007/08, 23.9% of Community Learning and Skills learners (7,774) were on Preparation for Life and Work (literacy, language, and numeracy) programmes. The Moser report states that up to 7 million, i.e. 1 in 6, adults, in England, have difficulties with literacy and numeracy (source: Community Learning and Skills) In 2009/10, the percentage of Community Learning and Skills learners who were on Preparation for Life and Work (literacy, language, and numeracy) programmes was 25.49% (7368).
- **People who are out of work or on working age benefits:** the gap between those with low, average and good literacy skills widens by the time they are 37, those with low literacy skills being less likely to be in full-time employment than those with average or good literacy skills. Improving literacy skills to Level 1 (GCSE grades D-G) increases the likelihood of employment by about 5 percentage points. It also increases wages by 7 percentage points. Men who improve their literacy skills reduce their likelihood of being on state benefits from 19% to 6%. Only 2% of families with good literacy live in workless households.
- **Health patients in particular people with mental health issues:** research at the University of Sussex in 2009 found that reading is the best way to relax, and that even 6 minutes can be enough to reduce stress levels by more than two thirds. In a series of tests they found that reading reduced stress levels by 68%.
- **Adults with learning disabilities;** the majority of people with a learning disability have difficulty with literacy, reading and

understanding. Being able to read and understand documents makes a tremendous difference to people's lives. It builds confidence and self-esteem. Putting information into 'easy read' language can not only support people's understanding but it can also help support and develop their levels of literacy. There are an estimated 35,000 people with a recognised learning disability in Kent (source: KCC Families and Social Care 2011)

- **People on probation or at risk of offending including young offenders:** nearly two thirds of offenders under probation supervision in the community have a literacy and numeracy ability below that of an 11-year old (source: Kent Probation 2008). Nationally, 37% of prisoners are below Level 1 (GCSE grades D-G) against 16% in the general population aged between 16 and 65 years. Non readers are more likely to commit a crime and be sent to prison or re-offend once released and represent half of all offenders leaving prison
- **People living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage:** the breakdown of an overall percentage of adults who have skills levels, below Level 1 (GCSE grades D-G), in literacy and numeracy across Kent, is 47%. In Swale it is 54% and in Thanet it is 52% (source: Community Learning and Skills)

There are many other people who will benefit from the Kent Approach.

People of all ages, people who are disabled, people of both sexes, lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people, people of every religion, and people of all races may fit into one or more of our target audiences. Many will play a positive role helping us to deliver the Kent Approach. No one will be excluded. For example black children are ahead of their white peers when it comes to reading; gypsy roma and travellers have a rich culture of storytelling and people with disabilities, including learning disabilities, can help us to develop accessible approaches. We also support the Rainbow Readers LGBT Reading Group in Tonbridge Library, Kent Association for the Blind Book Club in Maidstone Library, and Audio Book Groups for Visually-impaired people in Sturry, Gravesend and Deal libraries

6. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO LITERACY AND READING?

Barriers include family background, upbringing, early years experience, a past lack of educational opportunity, peer pressure, lifestyle changes and other circumstances which occur throughout life. Five of the most significant barriers are summed up below:

Attitudes: research into attitudes towards reading commissioned by the Department for Education highlighted that only 24% of parents in the C2DE lower socio-economic group see the link between reading and success in life. Many people associate reading with books and literature and do not realise that you need good literacy skills to use a computer, read information on the internet or in leaflets. We must demonstrate the

value and benefits of reading, including magazines, websites, signs etc so that everyone aspires to read. The Business, Innovation and Skills *Skills for Life Survey 2003* states that:

- 54% of adults with Entry Level 1 (equal to National Curriculum Level 1) or lower level literacy said their everyday reading ability was very or fairly good
- Only 2% felt their weak skills had hindered their job prospects or led to mistakes at work

Many people come across children and adults who cannot read and write but do not think it is their responsibility to help and are not motivated to find out about the availability of help and support. **We must challenge these attitudes and make literacy everyone's responsibility.**

Lack of confidence: There is a huge stigma attached to an inability to read and most people prefer to cover up the fact. This is increasingly difficult as the use of computers and most job opportunities require reading skills. **We must remove the stigma so that people feel as comfortable discussing their literacy skills as their maths skills**

Lack of awareness of services and support: there is a wealth of free advice, help and support out there but many people are unaware that it exists and that it is for them. These include parents, young people, practitioners, employers and the general public. **We must raise awareness of our fantastic services and improve signposting to them through partnerships, website and staff training**

Lack of access to services and support: many people want help but are unable to access it for a variety of reasons including time, cost, travel etc. **We must understand their needs and overcome these obstacles through use of new technologies, which can provide access to services 24/7, and other new approaches**

Behaviours: some will never have used library or adult education services or sought help and advice from other sources. They may associate learning with a bad experience at school in the past. They may have a stereotypical image of a library. As a result they choose not to use these services. **We must help and support everyone to see for themselves that our services are modern, welcoming and open to all.**

7. WHAT WILL THIS STRATEGY ACHIEVE?

It will recognise, support, promote and build on excellent and innovative work that takes place in our schools, Community Learning and Skills Centres (Kent Adult Education and Key Training Services), in further education colleges and in our public libraries every day. Initiatives include:

- a. Bookstart** is a universal programme which is managed and promoted by the Booktrust. It is funded by the Department of Education and

books are donated by publishers. In Kent, Libraries and Archives manage the scheme which, in 2009-10, gifted books to 100% of babies at registration; 87% children at 18 – 30 months via the health service; and to 100% of 36-48 month olds via early years settings including Children's Centres and Pre-schools; totalling over 49,000 pre-school children. Bookstart is also available in alternative formats including dual language and Bookshine and signed books for children who are deaf.

- b. **Booktime** was developed by the Booktrust to maintain the benefits of Bookstart when children start school. Reception-aged children receive two books in a book bag with information for the parent/carer about sharing books. NIACE reported that Kent's Booktime programme ensured that *"children are enthused by other books, that parents are inspired to play a part in their child's education and that families develop the library habit"*.

Booked Up is a linked scheme which provides books for children in Years 7 and 8 in secondary schools.

- c. **The Every Child a Reader** programme involves training '**Reading Recovery**' teachers who deliver daily one-to-one teaching for children with the most significant reading difficulties. The initiative has been part funding the salary, and providing training, of highly skilled Reading Recovery teachers to give intensive help to children most in need. Reading Recovery is an early intervention for children who have made very little progress in reading and writing during their first year at school. It involves a daily one-to-one lesson with a trained Reading Recovery teacher for a period of between 12 and 20 weeks. The unique training model requires the teachers to observe and discuss two live lessons behind a one way screen at each training session.

Around 70 Kent schools are currently involved in the initiative. In 2009/10, of the 453 children who completed their Reading Recovery programme, 8 out of 10 children made accelerated progress and achieved age appropriate levels in reading and writing by the end of the programme and were back on track to succeed where they might otherwise have failed, but for Reading Recovery.

- d. **Every Child a Talker** is a national initiative designed to promote early speech, language and communication skills in children. It has been developed to address a national concern regarding the significant number of children entering school with poor communication skills. The Every Child a Talker programme will improve the skills and expertise of early year's practitioners; it will increase practitioners' knowledge and understanding of the development of early language and lead to measurable improvements in the early language of the children attending the settings involved. It will raise the understanding and expertise of early years practitioners across the whole setting and equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to work with both children and parents. As well as creating an enriched language

environment within settings, the programme will increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning and help to develop stronger home learning environments.

- e. **Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy programmes** run by Community Learning and Skills in schools, children's centres and other venues across Kent and are specifically designed where appropriate, to enable adults and children to learn together. These excellent programmes aim to raise standards for both parents and children, to extend parents' skills in supporting their children's developing literacy skills, and to provide opportunities for parents to achieve literacy qualifications at an appropriate level. For many adult learners a family programme is their first step back into formal learning since their own school days, and one important motivation is the desire to offer their child support and opportunity. For many children this can provide the encouragement they need to re-engage and feel success in learning.
- f. **Six Book Challenge** was launched by The Reading Agency in 2008 as a national scheme for adults who are improving their reading skills and getting into reading for pleasure. It invites them to read six books of their own choice, and record their reading in a diary. Those who complete the Challenge are presented with a certificate to celebrate their achievement and they can also be entered into a national prize draw. We run the Challenge in partnership with Skills Plus Centres in Gravesend and Maidstone Skills Plus centres again this year, and for the first time we are running it with ESOL learners and adults with learning disabilities in Margate.

We are keen to extend the Six Book Challenge to reach parents and carers with literacy needs so we will be running it alongside the Summer Reading Challenge in 2011 in Reading Recovery schools in Dover and Shepway Districts targeting families whose children are getting support with their reading. The Six Book Challenge could also be offered to other groups including workplaces, Children's Centres and those with mental health issues such as Alzheimer's

"The challenge made me want to read more and more often. I'm really enjoying books now" (adult learner)

"I'm not afraid to pick up a book now and I'm actually enjoying it" (adult learner)

- g. **Skills Plus Centres** are town centre learning centres with a difference. There is no standard delivery of courses and learners can set their own pattern of attendance to fit with their lives. Courses are tailored to individual need, usually embed basic IT and where appropriate learners can also undertake self-study with the support of the tutor. There are other satellite courses that take place outside the Skills Plus Centre e.g. in the workplace or in other Adult Education Centres.
- h. **Summer Reading Challenge;** led by The Reading Agency in partnership with public libraries, this is the biggest national reading

initiative. It is promoted as a fun, free and accessible activity that encourages children, aged 4-12 years, to sustain their reading habit during the summer break. Research by the UK Literacy Association shows It can help primary schools avoid the "summer dip" in pupils' reading motivation and attainment, widen pupils' reading range and repertoire, and boost their desire to read at home. The challenge is simple; children join at their local library. They can read or listen to any books they like during the holidays with incentives to collect along the way. There is a certificate and medal for every child who completes the challenge by reading 6 books. Libraries across Kent hold events and activities that offer free family fun throughout the summer to complement the challenge.

"It improves your reading. After the summer holiday I was moved up a level" (child)

- i. **Volunteer Reading Help** is a national charity which works with schools in Kent. The aim is to help build a nation of confident children who are literate for life. This is achieved by training and supporting a team of amazing people who volunteer their time to become reading helpers in local primary schools.

The Kent Approach will also encourage and support:

- **New partnerships;** since the National Year of Reading in 2008 a range of new and non-traditional partners have got involved working to support schools and engage Community Learning and Skills or Libraries to raise literacy levels and promote reading to meet their priorities. These include health, the community safety sector and housing.
- **New approaches** e.g. the Kent Reading to Dogs in Schools initiative is based on well-established models in parts of the U.S.A. and Canada. The scheme encourages reluctant readers to read to a trained therapy dog and its volunteer handler. In the pilot school one boy's reading age increased by 8 months over a 3 month period.
- **New opportunities:** new technology can be harnessed to support literacy. Nearly two thirds of children and young people read websites, and half of children and young people read e-mails, blogs or networking sites every week. For example Education Learning and Skills have recently used mobile phone technology to support the English language development of Eastern European families.

Involving the whole community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading will demonstrate the importance of literacy for educational attainment, work and life. It will encourage and enable:

- increased skills levels
- confidence and skills to get, or retain, a job
- raised awareness of services for literacy and reading

- every home to become a reading home
- a confident and articulate population including parents, carers and children
- young people to understand the importance of reading
- boys to feel more enthusiastic about reading
- adult literacy development and improvement
- more people to read more
- everyone to be better informed

Involving the whole community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading will also:

- enliven minds
- broaden horizons
- inspire creativity, innovation and fun
- make possible progressions in education
- increase aspirations and attainment
- increase participation
- support emotional and intellectual development
- increase knowledge
- break down barriers
- help to build stronger and safer communities
- encourage and support awareness and participation in local decision making
- enable community empowerment through awareness of rights, benefits and services
- improve the responsiveness of services to community needs including the needs of our target audiences
- encourage healthy lifestyles and contribute to mental and physical well-being; 40% of people who read a book on health said it made them feel better!
- enable people to cope with isolation, anxiety or ill-health
- help children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution
- support cultural diversity and identity
- change attitudes, behaviours and the culture

8. HOW WILL THE KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING BE DELIVERED?

If we are to achieve our aspiration of 100% literacy we must ensure that the Kent Approach is sustainable until 2021 and beyond. It must be really simple to be effective. The Kent Approach will provide a continuous cycle of interventions, recognising that a range of different approaches is needed and that there is no 'quick fix'. These are **Conversation, Reading Pledges and Challenge**.

The on-going **Conversation** aims to reach the widest possible range of partners, communities and individuals in order to get everyone talking

about literacy and sharing responsibility to help find new approaches. Questions will be adapted for different audiences but will be based on the following:

- what is your experience of literacy and/or reading?
- how can we raise standards of literacy?
- how can we introduce more people to the benefits of reading?
- what are the barriers to success?
- how can we overcome them?
- what can you or your organisation contribute?

A **Reading Pledge** for the people of Kent will promote existing services, many of which are free, alongside new offers and opportunities to get involved. It will aim to raise awareness of the range of facilities and activities that exist at local and county level enabling more effective signposting to help and support. We will also seek pledges from individuals and organisations and add them to our Charter. For example: *“I will go home and read to my child”* *“I will drop into my local SkillsPlus Centre”*; *“I will encourage my W.I to make Storysacks”*.

Through continuous **Challenge** we aim to maintain commitment to seek new approaches until the goal of 100% literacy has been achieved. The role of our champions and partners will be crucial in ensuring that literacy and reading are at the heart of Kent’s strategic and local priorities. To succeed we must challenge and be open to challenge. We must constantly strive to find alternative approaches and be open to new ideas.

9. WHEN WILL THE KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING BEGIN?

Focussed work began in the National Year of Reading in 2008 and it won’t stop until everyone has had the opportunity to develop their literacy skills and/or discover the joy of reading. Starting in 2011 we will promote and support a series of initiatives and activities to promote the Kent Approach. These include:

- community-based activities to showcase services and initiatives and begin a conversation with local people, gathering pledges etc
- promotional events aimed at every target audience. For example we attended the Kent 2020 Business to Business Conference in April
- attendance at significant conferences and seminars across the county eg Early Years Conference in the autumn 2011
- Webpages at kent.gov.uk/readingandliteracy

10. HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

The Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading supports the aims of Bold Steps and the ambitions of Vision for Kent. It will be achieved through prioritising

and focussing existing services, including library services, and resources on supporting this work.

Most importantly the human resources also exist; not only the teachers, tutors and librarians who are already working to develop literacy skills and promote reading, but also the people of Kent who love to read and the organisations which work with our target audiences. We can all help our schools and adult learning partners to achieve their targets for literacy. Our partners bring a range of skills, facilities and access to other resources as well as energy and enthusiasm. Maximising access to, and synergy between, these resources will be critical to the success of the Kent Approach.

The Kent Approach will use existing forums and events wherever possible to engage audiences and ensure sustainability.

The Kent Approach is attracting investment including:

- Dept for Education/ National Literacy Trust funding for the appointment of a Coordinator for Partners in Literacy in 2010-11
- Innovation Fund to support work in Swale and Thanet
- YMCA investment to support work with NEETs in Kent Thameside
- AmicusHorizon investment to reach families in Swale.

During the National Year of Reading just £18,715 provided seedcorn funding to enable nine initiatives to get off the ground. They were:

- the introduction of Bag Books, multi-sensory stories for adults and children with severe or profound learning disabilities, autistic children, children with ADHD and children and adults with physical disabilities
- making libraries more user-friendly for people with dyslexia
- a health-themed Alphabet book aimed at adults with basic literacy skills
- Kent souvenir guide books for gifting at Citizenship ceremonies
- the introduction of Six Book Challenge to support Skills Plus
- an Education thru' Art initiative to support the Headspace youth project in Folkestone
- a new Chatterbooks reading group for young people
- provision of magazines for young people
- support for literacy and reading in prison libraries

We will continue to pursue investment opportunities including sponsorship for high profile Kent Approach promotional events and seedcorn funding to test new approaches which will engage new audiences and new partners. We will welcome offers of seedcorn funding, in particular, to help kick-start projects in local communities or countywide. Please contact us if you would like more details or want to alert us to an investment opportunity. We will acknowledge all sponsorship in publicity and liaise with funding partners to see if there are other mutual benefits in working together.

11. WHO IS LEADING KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING?

Kent County Council has statutory responsibilities for education and libraries and is well placed to take a strategic lead. Libraries and Archives will act as lead partner for the Kent Approach and will act as coordinator, broker and enabler. Literacy and Reading is Libraries and Archives core business alongside community cohesion, public information and digital inclusion. We can provide support through shared use of resources including IT, library buildings and staff skills. Libraries and Archives also work with all the target audiences.

KCC and its strategic partners cannot, of course, deliver the Kent Approach alone and we will continue to work with a widening range of partners and local people.

In the final analysis the people of Kent are the real key to success. We will work with individuals and organisations at local community, county and national levels to deliver the Kent Approach. There is a role for everyone and opportunities to get involved from taking ten minutes to read to a child to helping in many other ways.

The **Kent Forum for Literacy and Reading** will replace the Implementation Group which has influenced and informed the development of the Kent Approach. It will provide a wide and diverse partnership forum to champion, steer and sustain the Kent Approach. It will:

- provide leadership, challenge, support and advice
- bring new thinking, creativity and flair
- celebrate literacy and reading at every opportunity
- involve and represent key sectors and partners
- help to broker new partnerships
- secure resources including in-kind resources
- ensure high level recognition within KCC and from its strategic partners
- advise on links with national and local policy
- deliver the Kent Approach

Existing partners are AimHigher Kent and Medway, AmicusHorizon Housing, Canterbury Christchurch University, Connexions, the Employment And Skills Board for Kent and Medway, JobCentre Plus, Kent Association of Training Organisations, Kent Probation, Maidstone Borough Council, Volunteer Reading Help and West Kent NHS. KCC is well represented including Community Learning and Skills, Libraries and Archives, Education, Learning and Skills (Alternative Provision, Early Years, Minority Ethnic and Bilingual Service, Parenting and Reading Recovery), Technology and Transformation, Valuing People, the Youth Offending Service and Youth Service. A wide and diverse range of other organisations are involved in local projects including Kent County Council's Arts Development Unit and Sports, Leisure and Olympics as well as Hi Kent and Kent Association for the Blind. There is no limit to the number and range of partners who could join in.

12. HOW WILL WE KNOW WHETHER THE KENT APPROACH IS WORKING AND WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?

Ultimately the test will of course be improved literacy levels but this is a long term goal and proxy indicators will need to be developed in order to measure progress. These will include the success of individual projects and initiatives; and levels of participation and partner involvement

Work to develop the Kent Approach has already enabled a range of new partnerships, new approaches and new opportunities. A few examples are cited below:

- **New partnership: the Kent Rapid English Forum** has been formed to develop and evaluate Rapid English. Work led by Education, Learning and Skills involves one primary and three secondary schools, seven Pupil Referral Units, a Young Offenders Institute, a prison, colleges and training institutes, and the Y.M.C.A. Rapid English helps anyone with poor levels of literacy as well as families whose first language is not English (ESOL), to communicate clearly and confidently. It is a user-friendly interactive IT programme which provides a positive and enjoyable learning experience and a simple but highly effective teaching method. It achieves rapid and dynamic improvements in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- **New approach:** new technology provides amazing opportunities. Education Learning and Skills have used mobile phones to support English language family learning classes for Eastern European families in Dover. Whilst the classes were extremely popular, participants wanted additional opportunities to learn, practise and develop their skills. In response, the Minority Communities Advisory Service introduced a learning application for use on mobile phones to reinforce and supplement classroom learning. The project was very successful with participants stating that their confidence in speaking in a variety of social situations had improved.
- **New focus on an existing programme:** in 2010 the **Summer Reading Challenge** targeted Reading Recovery schools. Many teachers accompanied groups of Reading Recovery children and their parents to the nearest library to get them signed up for the Challenge and to collect their first book. Reading Recovery children acted as ambassadors to promote the Reading Challenge to all children in their schools. Six Reading Recovery schools received reading trophies for having achieved between 15% and 33% of their school rolls participating.
"I never thought I would ever hear my Harry say he loved reading but he did, in the library, yesterday" (Parent)

13. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

As you can see from the examples above, the team that has worked together to develop the Kent Approach has not been a talking shop. However the Kent Approach is a call to action to enable everyone to get involved. Together we must promote and embed a culture where everyone aspires to read and where there is excellent signposting to skills development opportunities and support.

We need the help and support of:

- everyone who recognises the value of literacy and/or loves to read and
- every organisation which would benefit if we could improve the literacy skills of the children, young people and adults of Kent.

Involving the Whole Community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading will be available as a download on kent.gov.uk where we will also share good practice, new thinking, and links to sources of help and support. Aimed largely at people who want to help us to deliver the Kent Approach it will also provide a connection for anyone wanting some additional support to develop their skills or discover the benefits of reading.

15. HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There are many ways in which you can help us to get everyone talking and taking action to raise standards of literacy and promoting the joys of reading for pleasure. You can help us by:

- talking about it to others in your organisation, your community or your workplace
- passing this paper on to others
- sharing your thoughts
- sharing your ideas
- sharing opportunities
- sharing resources e.g. in-kind or financial support to help us achieve our aims
- helping us to initiate Conversations about literacy and reading
- getting actively engaged with Living Legends of Kent and telling us your story

We hope that the following sections will further inspire you. They are:

- **What do we mean by reading?** A list of examples
- **Some examples of literacy and reading programmes in Kent;** adding to examples included above
- **Some of our favourite quotes about literacy and reading**

DRAFT

Cabinet Appendix

These lists are not comprehensive. Please share your reading experiences, reading initiatives and quotes with us.

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY READING?

Reading experiences which you might encounter in a typical day include:

- Time on the alarm clock!
- A text message
- Ceefax news
- Road signs
- Work e-mails
- Websites
- Discussion forum
- Lunch menu
- Receipt
- Telephone book
- Personal emails
- Facebook
- Recipe
- Bank statement
- Sky Plus schedule
- CD case
- Song details on DRB radio display
- Sheet music
- Washing instructions
- Magazine
- Powerpoint presentation
- Food packaging
- Letters/post
- Catalogue
- Extract from an information book
- Newspaper
- Data and statistics
- Reports
- TV headlines
- Bedtimes stories
- Medicine label
- Quote for mortgage
- Rules for a children's game
- Maps
- Microfilm
- Bills
- Audio Book
- Song lyrics
- Advertising hoardings
- Subtitles for foreign film
- A magazine
- School noticeboard
- Holiday guide book
- a few pages of a novel before falling asleep!

What did you read today?

SOME EXAMPLES OF LITERACY AND READING PROGRAMMES IN KENT

These add to or expand on examples already cited in the report above.

AmicusHorizon Housing Association has 28,000 properties in South East England including 7,500 properties in Kent. One of the company's aims is '*Helping Residents Achieve*'. AmicusHorizon has recognised that a focus on literacy could make a huge difference to the quality of life of its residents including skills and employment, work with young people, relationships between neighbours and communications between the company and its tenants. The company is working with Community Learning and Skills, libraries and schools to provide a range of literacy-based activities aimed at families.

Arundel Unit Read Aloud Friday Book Club gives mental health patients at the William Harvey Hospital an opportunity to explore and enjoy a wide variety of literature in an informal group setting. Set up in partnership with Libraries and Archives it is now run by the Occupational Therapy team and patients. The project was shortlisted for the Lemos & Crane Rise Awards 2011 which recognise excellence in improving the quality of life and well-being of mental health service users receiving support in the community.

"I thoroughly enjoyed listening to poems and stories" (Patient)

*'The **Bi-lingual Children's meetings** at Ramsgate Library have become an invaluable source of advice and support for my family. It seems that parents who have a mother tongue other than English face many of the same problems and quandaries, even though we may be from different cultures and backgrounds. It is encouraging to share tips and stories with the other parents, and the efforts of the library staff go to to find book in various languages are very helpful too. I also appreciate the way (library staff) arrange activities for the children designed to engage as well as celebrate the diversity the different languages represented. The children vary a lot in age as well as nationality so this is no mean feat! On the whole I find the meetings a most praiseworthy initiative and hope they will continue'* (Parent)

Children's Stories, Language and Learning: *"Susan, an AmicusHorizon tenant, has a variety of personal and health issues including agoraphobia, depression (which can lead to erratic behaviour), epilepsy and also mobility problems. In addition to this she is a carer for her disabled mother. She is unable to use public transport and does not drive which limits the opportunities available to her. She joined the course run by Community Learning and Skills, and had examples of her work included in the book that was printed at the end of the course. This has been an enormous boost to her self confidence"* (Community Learning and Skills Tutor)

Community Learning and Skills provides programmes tailored to the needs of organisations and individuals including:

- fully funded learning for adults to improve their basic literacy, language and numeracy skills

- individual tailored programmes and support, delivered at one of the 13 Skills Plus Centres across the county
- the opportunity to gain certificates to evidence achievement of national standards
- fully funded programmes delivered to groups, on employer or organisation
- premises, to enable adults to improve literacy, language and numeracy skills and contribute to the workforce
- programmes for people who do not have English as a first language
- Family Language Literacy and Numeracy Programmes to enable adults and children to learn together and support their joint attainment
- programmes for adults that contribute to the enjoyment and development of reading and literacy in a variety of different contexts e.g. modern foreign languages, creative writing, art appreciation, local history and many more

Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading Newsletter: an electronic and occasional update on developments in Kent will share national news and research as well as good practice in Kent.

Kent Association for the Blind holds a monthly Book Club at Maidstone Library. *“The library is buzzing with animated discussions and guide dogs are made welcome with a bowl of water. It’s interesting to hear other people’s thoughts on the books and our varied views often lead to conversations about other topics of general interest”* (Book Club member).

“numbers are steady at up to 10 visually impaired people, ranging in age from their late teens to their 70s! The books are available in all formats: large print, CD, tape and Playaway” (Volunteer Coordinator at KAB)

Kent Reading Champions are people from all walks of life who live in the county or who have strong associations with Kent. They can include anyone who will inspire others to read more or improve their literacy skills. They will include a Bookstart Baby, young people, some of our oldest residents, and others from our target audiences, who may have struggled to read but have overcome their difficulties. These people will champion the Kent Approach acting as ambassadors and role models to inspire others to read or improve their literacy skills

“The Kent Reading to Dogs in Schools scheme has been incredibly successful, more successful than we ever thought it could have been. It has certainly boosted the self-esteem and reading skills of the children who have been involved. It is a very comfortable situation for the children because the dog isn’t going to be judgmental and we do as little intervening as possible. I know some people smile and say it’s just a gimmick and so on. Sometimes gimmicks are the things that get to children who have been really hard to reach in their reading. I would thoroughly recommend it.” (Headteacher and volunteer dog owner)

“My daughter is one of the children involved. She is nearly 8 years old and has only recently been able to read perfectly. When she came home yesterday all she went on about was how wonderful it was and that she knew

she couldn't ask for help from the dog so had to work the words out for herself. I would like to thank everyone who was involved with setting it all up" (Parent)

Libraries and Archives role; literacy and reading is our core business. Our services are widely accessible via the internet including the ability to browse our catalogue, order a book and renew items. Our libraries offer a welcoming environment where people can access books, newspapers, the internet and many more reading experiences, all for free. We offer a huge range of activities to support reading including:

- author talks
- Baby Bounce and Rhyme Time
- Books Can Help to support people who are ill
- Bookstart gifting to babies and pre-school children
- Home Library Service for anyone who is housebound
- Homework Spaces
- Postal Loans for people who are visually impaired
- Quick Reads for adult learners
- Reading Groups for all ages, abilities and interest groups
- Six Book Challenge to encourage adult learners
- Storytime
- Time2Give volunteering opportunities

Literacy work with prisoners: the Prison Library Service has run the 6 Book Challenge in prisons for three years. StoryBook Dads enables prisoners to read and record a story to send home to their children. The Toe by Toe scheme involves some offenders acting as mentors to others who are learning to read. At Swaleside Prison, Toe by Toe mentors bring their mentees to the prison library and help them choose something to read. As a direct result we set up a new Reading Group, focussing on short stories and easy reads, especially for those who find any sort of reading a challenge. This is in addition to other reading groups, which are held both in the library and on the wings.

"The library has some good ideas to encourage people to read" (prisoner)

"I liked it because it pushed me to do more reading" (prisoner)

Literacy Workshop: as a result of requests from residents in the Murston area of Sittingbourne, a 3 hour literacy workshop took place from an AmicusHorizon property. Community Learning and Skills provided the tutor and assessed the needs of the residents. At the end of the workshop seven residents wanted to continue and eight further sessions were provided. After these sessions the course moved to the Skills Plus Centre in Sittingbourne and three of the learners have now taken their level 2 literacy exam and are waiting for the results.

"I thought this course might have been a bit boring but the tutor made it fun. I have really enjoyed coming and will now go to the Skills Plus shop to work on my Maths" (adult learner)

"Making the Difference: Opportunities for Adults with Learning Disabilities" has been submitted for the Libraries Change Lives award 2011.

In showcases a wide range of good practice. For example there are Easy Access collections of books and DVDs chosen by adults with learning disabilities in 20 town centre libraries. In partnership with Skillnet, Libraries and Archives have produced an A-Z of Health and Fitness. Bag Books, age appropriate multi sensory books for children and adults with learning disabilities are available. Boardmaker Software will soon be available on some public computers in libraries. A Passport to the Library course for adults with learning disabilities has been developed in partnership with Community Learning and Skills. Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope uses Makaton signage throughout the building and hosts a *Biblio Hour* session, where adults with learning disabilities take part in coffee and chat, poetry and reminiscence sessions. Larkfield Library hosts a reading group where volunteers help and adults with learning disabilities to read and enjoy books.

"..I live in Swanley in my own flat. I go to the library in Swanley to do lots of things. I use the computers there. I made my own support plan using the computer and I do my letters to people like Michael Fallon who is our MP.

When I am at the library I meet lots of people I know. They stop and say hello to me and have a chat. The library does lots of things in the community. It is an important place to find things out and get to be part of things." (library user)

Seashells Doorstep Library in Sheerness where Children's Centre volunteers and a Bookworker visit families each week offering to read a story and providing an opportunity to borrow books. They seek to create an atmosphere for the children to feel confident around books and to build a trusting relationship with the families to help them use other services. Many of the families now attend groups and activities at the Children's Centre and have joined the library. Parents have been inspired to become more interested and involved in their child's literacy.

"One single parent was scared to use the Children's Centre. Her son was 3 years old, had behavioural issues and had never mixed with other children. With our help she came to trust us, and he began to wait by the door each week for his storytime. We encouraged her to enrol him at our nursery as he was missing out on his entitlement to 3 sessions per week. The Bookworker accompanied her to drop him off at his first session. She reports that he is now a different child, happy and confident, and she is loving having some time to herself" - Bookworker, Seashells Children's Centre.

[12 week storysacks making course which was followed by a further course aimed at achieving level 1 & 2](#)

Storysacks: as part of a community engagement initiative in Folkestone, Community Learning and Skills and Libraries and Archives ran a taster session on making Story Sacks for children. As a result, 22 parents signed up for a 12 week course. All the families involved undertook a further course to work towards achieving their Level 1 or Level 2 National Literacy Test.

"The first week I didn't think I could do it but I am so glad I came back. I always wanted to go back to college but this has made me think I can"
(Parent)

"I think I mentioned in our class that having a story sack to think about has really helped me at difficult times when I've been awake for hours at night with Annabelle; as instead of stressing about the sleep I'm not getting, I've actually

treasured the free time to think about my story! It has given me my own space inside my head to be creative and it has come as such a welcome relief I wasn't aware I desperately needed" (Parent)

Supporting the Nepalese community: a meeting with the Migrant Helpline of the Border Agency, representatives from District Councils, Minority Communities Advisory Service, Libraries and Community Learning and Skills together with members of the Nepalese community identified that some of the Elders were not aware of the services they were entitled to resulting in them living in poor and isolated conditions. Many were unable to understand English and some not literate in their own language. Information days were held in Ashford, Cheriton, Dover and Maidstone where partners promoted their services. As a result 30 Nepalese elders in Cheriton are attending ESOL classes run by Community Learning and Skills.

"Without a doubt, this English class has been invaluable for the Gurkha elders and has made a significant changes to their day-to-day lives ever since the class introduced. Based on the elders feedback, they found the class very useful and interesting as it has helped enormously to increase their mobility and build self-confidence thus they can now travel around the town, go shopping, communicate with others, and grasp basic understanding of health and safety and well being (e.g. fire safety, health, road road safety)" (Gurka Elder)

Words for Work; volunteers from the business community are supporting nine Kent secondary schools in a National Literacy Trust pilot. This initiative helps Year 9 pupils (13/14 year olds) to explore the use of speaking and listening skills in the workplace through a series of creative workshops.

World Book Night: Libraries and Archives supported the inaugural event which gifted a million books nationwide. They acted as collection points for Kent's Book Gifters to pick up their books and hosted events. In Whitstable Library 105 people enjoyed dancing and book tales from The Dead Horse Morris Men and Broom Dashers Ladies Morris Dancing groups.

"We love books and the idea of passing on what we have read to someone else always appeals" (participant)

Kent's **Youth Offending Service** is developing a Literacy and Numeracy Project to increase the level of attainment of young offenders on high end orders. Partners are Children, Families and Education, Libraries and Archives, the Association of FE Education Corporations, Kent Association of Training Organisations, Kent Thameside Literacy Forum, Connexions, JobCentrePlus, NACRO, Kent Probation and Youth Services.

SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE QUOTES ABOUT LITERACY AND READING

"A book is like a garden carried in the pocket." (Chinese proverb)

"Books were my window on the world" (Michael Caine)

"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" (Sutton Trust 2010)

"A good book is the best of friends, the same to-day and for ever" (Martin Tupper)

"The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading in order to write. A man will turn over half a library to make a book." (Samuel Johnson)

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents" (Emilie Bouchwald)

"He who has a garden and a library, wants for nothing" (Cicero)

"I am a bear of very little brain, and long words bother me.": (Winnie the Pooh, A. A. Milne)

"I have this belief that children become readers before they can read. They become hooked on books because they were read to as a child." (Jacqueline Wilson)

"If I don't read two books a day my brain won't grow" (Ella Aldous of Kent, aged 4)

"If there's a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." (Toni Morrison)

"In the digital age, more than ever before, we need strong literacy skills to make sense of our daily lives and interact with the world around us. Good communication skills make an individual more effective, engaging and employable. We must call for these skills to be addressed at an early age." (Thomson Reuters)

"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it" (Oscar Wilde)

"A library is a hospital for the mind" (Anonymous)

"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with

education in general, a basic human right. Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential” (Kofi Annan)

“.....Literacy is the most basic currency of the knowledge economy” (Barack Obama)

“Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and a responsibility” (Bill Clinton on International Literacy Day 1994)

“The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them” (Mark Twain)

“The moment we persuade a child, any child to cross that threshold into a library, we’ve changed their lives forever, and for the better. This is an enormous force for good!” (Barack Obama)

“Never judge a book by its movie” (J W Eagan)

“The only end of writing is to enable readers better to enjoy life or better to endure it” (Samuel Johnson)

“Outside of a dog, a book is man’s best friend, inside of a dog it’s too dark to read” (Groucho Marx)

“People say that life is the thing, but I prefer reading” (Logan Pearsall Smith)

“Poor literacy is an intergenerational phenomenon, and having poor literacy skills impacts not only on adults’ life chances but also on those of their children” (National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy)

“Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible” (Barack Obama)

“Reading without reflection is like eating without digesting” (Edmund Burke)

“So please, oh PLEASE, we beg, we pray, Go throw your TV set away, And in its place you can install, A lovely bookshelf on the wall.” (Roald Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory)

“Some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested” (Francis Bacon)

“Speaking and listening are the foundations of social and emotional development as well as preparation for future learning. We learn to talk and communicate by imitation, so parents must be supported to encourage their child’s language development.” (Professor Tara Bryon Psychologist and Writer)

"Taking a child to the library is the single most important thing parents can do to give their child a good start in life" (Professor Cathy Silver)

"Teaching reading is rocket science" (Louisa Moats)

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island." (Walt Disney)

"The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read" (Abraham Lincoln)

"Through literacy you can begin to see the universe. Through music you can reach anybody. Between the two there is you, unstoppable." (Grace Slick)

"TV - if kids are so entertained by those two letters - imagine the fun they will have with twenty six!" (Anon)

"When you are growing up, there are two institutional places that affect you most powerfully -- the church, which belongs to God, and the public library, which belongs to you. The public library is a great equalizer." (Keith Richards)

"A wonderful thing about a book, in contrast to a computer screen, is that you can take it to bed with you." (Daniel J. Boorstin)