

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR YOUTH, FAMILIES & CULTURE**INSPIRE UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Committee on the delivery of reading, arts and cultural activity delivered by Inspire.

Information and Advice**Summer Reading Challenge 2016 – ‘The Big Friendly Read’**

2. The Summer Reading Challenge is an immensely popular and successful library reading initiative. It is co-ordinated by The Reading Agency an independent reading charity and is delivered in libraries across the UK. The Challenge, now in its 18th year, is the UK’s biggest national reading initiative involving 800,000 children nationally per year.
3. Each year the challenge to children is simple. They are encouraged to read six or more library books of their choice during the six week holidays. For every book read, children receive collectable incentives and rewards.
4. Each year the Summer Reading Challenge has a different theme. This year it was delivered in collaboration with The Roald Dahl Literary Estate to celebrate the centenary of Roald Dahl’s birth.
5. Research has shown that taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge helps increase children’s enthusiasm for reading, their reading confidence and boosts their desire to read at home – all with potentially life changing results. The Summer Reading Challenge can help primary schools prevent the ‘dip’ in reading levels that can occur over the holidays. The Challenge directly supports the Reading for Pleasure element of the new Primary Curriculum through this sustained encouragement of reading through the summer holiday.
6. Libraries work closely with schools to promote the challenge and in libraries staff and volunteers provide advice, encouragement and support throughout the summer.
7. The Challenge was run in all Nottinghamshire libraries from 16 July – 11 September 2016 and key achievements include:
 - **10,696** took part in this year’s challenge, a slight increase on last year’s number of participants (10,419)
 - **5,993** completed the challenge – Nottinghamshire’s best ever result

- the highest number of children taking part was in the 4 – 7 years age group (**54%**); the second biggest age group was 8 – 11 year olds (**40%**)
- boys accounted for **41%** of children signing up for the challenge and **39%** of children completing
- **230** children joined as library members in order to take part
- Over **200** activities for children were held in libraries throughout the six-week holiday attended by over **5,500** people;
- An estimated **39,500** books were read as part of the challenge.

8. Evaluation was overwhelmingly positive.

“I thought the Big friendly read was really fun and I felt determined to finish it. This was my first summer reading challenge and I will definitely be wanting to take part next year! I LOVED IT!!!” Sophie, aged 10

“I think the big friendly read was FANTASTIC” Jane; aged 5

“Six weeks – six books, makes sense... but she was inspired to read as much as possible! Great idea, will be doing it again next summer!” parent of 10 year old

“Fab!! Has encouraged a child that doesn’t usually enjoy reading” parent of 7 year old

9. The Summer Reading Challenge is a successful way to encourage children to read for pleasure. The Department for Education in 2012¹ stated that research shows the benefits of reading for pleasure are numerous and include:

- children who say they enjoy reading for pleasure are more likely to score well on reading assessments compared to pupils who said they enjoyed reading less
- regularly reading stories or novels outside of school is associated with higher scores in reading assessments
- there is some evidence to show that the activity is a more important determinant of children’s educational success than their family’s socio-economic status
- it can have a positive impact on pupils’ emotional and social behaviour
- it can have a positive impact on text comprehension and grammar
- positive reading attitudes are associated with reading more later in life and having increased general knowledge.

The Big Friendly Exhibition 2016

10. The Big Friendly Exhibition was launched on 21st July at Mansfield Central Library in partnership with the Big Friendly Read, with exhibits created at a series of artist led workshops in libraries, inspired by the work of Roald Dahl.

11. The gallery exhibition was created by artist Jane Stockley and groups of young people from St Edmund’s C of E Primary School (Mansfield Woodhouse), Asquith Primary School (Mansfield), Oak Tree Primary School and Nursery (Mansfield) and Hucknall National C of E Primary School (Hucknall).

¹ Education Standards Research Team (2012). Evidence for Reading for Pleasure. ESARD

12. Using the Roald Dahl stories as a starting point the young people created giant dream catchers, exploring the magical imaginative stories through art work and creative expression.
13. The reading shed art installation was created by artist Anna Roebuck and groups of young people from New Ollerton schools: St Joseph's Catholic Primary and Nursery School, Ollerton Community Primary School, The Dukeries Academy and Forest View Junior School.
14. Inspired by the creatures found in the Dahl stories and his talent for devising new words, young people made 3D artwork to fill a full sized shed as an enchanting reading space for visitors to sit and complete part of the Summer Reading Challenge. Roald Dahl himself wrote all his stories from his own shed, sat in an armchair, and this is echoed in the reading shed that has been created.
15. Over **175** young people worked with the artists to create the exhibition and reading shed.

"Wonderful exhibition, so creative, colourful and inclusive"

"Wonderful and Cheerful. Makes you feel happy"

"Wonderful motivating exhibition, lots of fun, colours and imagination, really great".
16. The shed theme continued through the library led Summer Reading Challenge activities with 14 medium card sheds being used creatively to encourage young readers to complete the challenge and 1,500 mini card sheds distributed with "How To" sheets for libraries (including mobile libraries) to engage visitors in reading through a craft activity.

Children's Pop Up Theatre 2015-16

17. Following a successful bid to Arts Council's England's Grants for the Arts Libraries Fund, the Library Service was awarded over £80,000 to develop an innovative family theatre project in libraries. The project aimed to attract new audiences to County libraries, reaching families who may not ordinarily access a major theatre venue but will happily visit their own library.
18. Working with The Spark Arts for Children a brand new play was commissioned specifically tailored for library spaces. The play, *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat*, was based on an award winning book by Dave Shelton and launched at Mansfield Central Library in July 2015. *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* went on to tour 15 other County libraries.
19. Four further seasons of performances of other high quality and imaginative shows and a series of workshops took place between October 2015 and April 2016. A total of **2,444** people attended Pop Up Theatre performances across the five seasons, comprising 1,353 children and 1,091 adults, with **660** people attending workshops in seasons 2-5.
20. Key achievements were as follows:
 - New play commissioned and delivered
 - **17** performances of *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* in 16 libraries

- 556 children and 452 adults attended performances of the play
 - **84%** of audience members rated the performance 'excellent'
 - Show sold to three East Midlands library authorities
 - Four seasons of Page to Stage performances and workshops
 - **25** Page to Stage performances in 10 libraries
 - 639 children and 797 adults attended Page to Stage performances
 - On average **74.5%** of audience members rated the performances across the four seasons as excellent (range from 68% - 91%)
 - **48** supporting workshops attended by 375 children and 285 adults.
21. Free tickets were offered for selected performances at all shows to encourage ticket take up from disadvantaged groups. The offer was targeted at Looked After Children, children living in areas of poverty and children with disabilities and their families. Tickets were offered via the Council's Virtual School for Looked After Children, Supporting Families programme and Play for Disabilities team. In total, 64 child tickets and 53 adult tickets were allocated.
22. The project aimed to encourage new audiences to library events and encourage repeat visits. Evaluation from *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* showed that 75% of survey respondents had never attended a production in the library before. For subsequent shows this was lower with 53% of respondents across the remaining seasons.
23. The shows also attracted audiences that had not visited a theatre with their children before; for *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* performances this was 17% of survey respondents. For subsequent seasons, on average, 21% said they had not attended a theatre performance with their children previously.
24. 84% of survey respondents rated *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* performances as excellent. For the following seasons, performances were rated between 68% - 91% with an average of 75%.
25. The comments received showed that both children and adults valued being able to access high quality theatre experiences in their local library:

"It was amazing and very funny! I am going to buy a book and read it to my sister" girl aged 8 years (BBB)

"Funny. I loved the bull and joining in painting a picture" girl aged 5 years (Picasso)

"Cool, awesome. Superb" boy aged 8 years (Fairytale)

"Lovely performance, very energetic, captivating and mesmerising. Really grateful to be able to see such a play at our local library." (BBB)

"More of these, a great way to allow families to access theatre on their doorstep" (Tasty Tale)

"Amazing performance. Very imaginative. Great to see these events in our local library. Wonderful opportunity for my daughter to experience live theatre" (Fairytale).

Earth and Fire Ceramic Fair 2016

26. The Earth and Fire Ceramic Fair was held at Rufford Abbey Country Park from 24 – 26 June 2016.
27. Earth and Fire is one of the country's premier ceramic events. This year's event attracted over 6,900 visitors. Collectors, gallery owners, enthusiasts and the general public visited Rufford Abbey Country Park in the last weekend in June for the opportunity to meet and talk to a wide variety of potters selling an extensive range of ceramic wares and to participate in a programme of demonstrations and illustrated talks.
28. Delivery of the fair was commissioned to a free-lance project manager whose responsibilities included promoting the event to exhibitors, managing the selection process to ensure the highest quality of exhibitors, event design and delivery and running an effective communication and marketing campaign. This was the first year that the fair was run using a commissioning model. Income and expenditure were controlled to bring the event in on budget.
29. The event was hosted by the Country Parks Service who provided the site management and logistics. A new website was designed for both exhibitors and visitors which hosted the exhibitors application process and a section to encourage volunteers to become involved. Marketing for the event was focused through the website, a Facebook page, direct mail, advertising and print.
30. Overall 239 applications were received from potters with **141** individual potters selected to exhibit, 60% of which were first time exhibitors at Earth and Fire. These included 12 new comers who had set up their ceramics business since 2014 and 21 students. 15% of exhibitors had travelled from outside of the UK to attend the fair. Two groups also exhibited: London Potters and Yorkshire ArtSpace.
31. Potters reported having good sales. Some potters had their own facilities to take card sales but many took advantage of the event's credit card service which processed over £49,000 worth of sales over the three days.
32. Overall potters said that they were happy with the planning and running of the event, in particular the introduction of a new downloadable exhibitors' pack.

"...as a newcomer I have to say the organisation from start to finish, emails, information, getting there and set up, volunteer helpers etc., were all brilliant. I had good sales and would love to do it again"

"Without doubt Earth & Fire is the most enjoyable of the ceramic fairs. There is an undeniable passion and dedication in its organisation and management and an atmosphere of enjoyment permeating the event. The selection ensures a high quality and wide mix of ceramic fare and the staff's support, interest and enthusiasm makes for a highly successful event"

33. There were **6,991** visitors to the fair, a small decrease in last year's number of attendees (7,200). Comments received were very positive.

“What a wonderful event – such a variety of styles, absolutely spoilt for choice!... Will definitely return!!

“A great show... A really good mix of work on display. A lovely relaxed atmosphere. We go every year – long may it continue. Well done and thank you to all involved for putting on a great show again this year”.

Village Ventures 2015-16

34. Village Ventures brings professional performances to village halls and community venues across Nottinghamshire. Supported by local volunteer promoters, the programme hosts a wide range of touring companies and performers who deliver high-quality, entertaining and affordable professional live theatre, music, dance, family shows and film screenings to local communities.
35. The programme is co-ordinated by Live and Local and funded by Arts Council England, Nottinghamshire County Council and District Councils in Nottinghamshire.
36. Live and Local took over co-ordinating Village Ventures from the Council in August 2015. It is a not-for-profit arts organisation working with a network of voluntary groups across Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire. They provide a range of support for arts activities that keep people in touch with their communities and enhance their quality of life.
37. The programme of activity ran from October 2015 – May 2016. Key statistics were as follows:
- Total no of events **108** (target was 102)
 - Sell outs 15
 - Cancelled 1
 - Total Attendance **6,869**
 - Capacity 64%
 - Total No of Volunteers **685**
 - No of Volunteer hours **3,240**
 - No of artist days 352

Other Options Considered

38. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

39. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

40. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk,

service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the update on the delivery of reading, arts and cultural activity delivered by Inspire be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

41. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (TMR 4/10/16)

42. As this report is for noting only, no Financial Comments are required.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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