

Title of meeting: Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting

Subject: Portsmouth School Library Service

Date of meeting: 28 July 2023

Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Wards affected: All

1. Summary

Part of the wider Portsmouth Library and Archive Service the School Library Service (SLS) is a highly regarded Traded Service of Portsmouth City Council.

2. Purpose of report

- 2.1 To provide The Leader with an overview of Portsmouth SLS, including funding, performance, resources, reader development activities and strategic partnerships.

3. Background

3.1 Funding of Portsmouth School Library Service (SLS)

The SLS operates on a cost recovery basis and obtains all its income by selling subscription services and additional services to schools. The majority of this is derived from the annual subscription to the standard service offered by means of a Service Level Agreement. This is overseen by a Service Review Group which has the following representation:

- Primary Head Teacher
- Secondary School Senior Leader
- Primary and secondary English leads
- Primary and secondary librarians
- Public Library and Archive Service Manager
- SLS Manager

3.2. Service description

The Portsmouth School Library Service (SLS) provides library services to local schools to promote high standards of literacy and learning in all key stages. This is achieved by:

- Access to books, through the provision of loans, eBook and eAudio platform and facilitating purchase via the bookshop
- Reader development strategies
- Library related advice, practical support and training

3.3 The service is made available to primary, special and secondary schools in Portsmouth and is also available to West Sussex secondary schools. The following subscribe:

- 100% buy in from Portsmouth primary and secondary schools
- Special schools
- Independent schools
- West Sussex secondary schools

3.4 The SLS is a reading focused service. The majority of activity is centred on the supply, exchange, organisation and promotion of high-quality books and resources to support the curriculum and pupils interests and reader development activities for schools.

4. Performance

4.1 Take up on all aspects of the service continues to be high. This is illustrated by increases in the size of the book stock, the staff hours spent in schools, the percentage of books exchanged and the number of children experiencing reader development events. (See Appendices one and two).

4.2 Portsmouth SLS is a highly regarded service by schools and this is evidenced by the rate of buy-back which is above the UL norm for school library services. Unlike public libraries, school libraries are not statutory and many local authorities do not have a school library service. Success in Portsmouth can be attributed to continuous positive feedback from SLS satisfaction surveys and ongoing informal feedback within the process of day-to-day engagement with school staff. (See Appendix three).

4.3 The SLS in Portsmouth is distinctively different from many others, in part due to the geographical nature of the city of Portsmouth and the close proximity of subscribers to the SLS Centre at Paulsgrove. This has enabled the service to ensure costs are kept low while a book stock of exceptional high quality and dynamic and responsive support is offered to schools. Our stock offer continues to be fresh and relevant because of our ability to replace a high number of books each year. Another distinctive element of the service is the range of pro-active reader development initiatives which are offered city wide. Strategies such as the Portsmouth Book Awards, Portsmouth Literature Quizzes, Meet the Author events, EYFS Read with Me Initiative and Year 6 Big City Read encourage reading, literacy development and celebrate the joy of reading for pleasure and learning. These initiatives are delivered in partnership with internal and external

bodies with shared agendas around reading, literacy, the promotion of books and positive educational outcomes for children and young people..

5. Portsmouth SLS Resources

- 5.1 Portsmouth SLS has a book stock of over 118,000 books providing schools with unique access to the very latest titles and responding rapidly to the changing needs of schools. Subscribing schools can exchange up to 60% of their titles every year ensuring that schools' stock enhances the curriculum and supports reading for pleasure. Book stock includes: board books, picture books, fiction for all key stages, non-fiction, single and dual language, Braille and large print, Dyslexia friendly and books pre-labelled for the Accelerated Reader scheme. The Service delivers and collects from schools on a weekly basis. Schools can visit the SLS Centre, email or telephone to select or request books. Alternatively the knowledgeable SLS staff can select books on the school's behalf.
- 5.2 Schools have access to the SLS eBook and eAudio platform with nearly 4,000 resources. Logins are provided for all pupils at Key Stages Two, Three and Four. The focus for this resource is reading for pleasure and the majority of the collection is fiction with some leisure non-fiction. This resource caters for those pupils who would prefer the convenience of reading on a device. A monthly eBook newsletter is sent to schools informing them of new titles added to the platform and usage by their pupils. Currently just over 80% of loans are made up of eBooks and just under 20% made up from eAudio books.
- 5.3 The SLS provides high quality texts to support literacy and learning. A range of books are available to support 'greater depth' in reading and writing and SLS staff advise school staff on suitable texts for year groups. The SLS has a large collection of books to support SEND and ELSAs who work in schools. These books provide invaluable support for staff working with these pupils. The SLS supports those schools using Accelerated Reader a reading programme that gives teachers the information they need to monitor students' reading practice and make informed decisions to guide their future learning. The SLS also works with Portsmouth School Improvement to support those schools who involved in Destination Reader, a pedagogical based approach to teaching reading through engaging daily, structured sessions that support children to read with greater understanding, enjoyment and purpose.
- 5.4 The SLS provides regular support and advice to all staff in schools through regular newsletters, network meetings, new book lists, parent newsletters. The SLS also provides training, advice and practical support with all aspects of running a school library and classroom collections.
- 5.5 An online bookshop gives schools the opportunity to purchase books at 30% discount.

6. Reader Development Activities

6.1 Portsmouth Book Awards

The SLS organises three book awards: The Year 1 Picture Book Award; The Year 5 Book Award and the Year 8/9 Longer Novel Award. The Year 1 and Year 5 Book Awards are designed as mass participation activities. In the region of 2,000 pupils take part in the Year 1 Picture Book Award every year which culminates with a visit to selected schools by the winning author and illustrator. The Year 5 Book Award involves over 1,500 pupils and culminates in an exciting celebration at The Kings Theatre. The Longer Novel Award involves around 150 pupils and culminates in a celebration at The University of Portsmouth Park Building involving the winning author. All three awards aim to promote reading for pleasure and broaden children's reading experiences.

6.2 Meet the Author/Illustrator events

The SLS organises an annual programme of author and illustrator events in schools. These events provide opportunities to and broaden children's reading experiences and provide inspiration for reading and writing both in school and at home.

6.3 Literature Quizzes

The SLS organises three Literature Quizzes: Portsmouth Junior Quiz; Portsmouth Secondary Quiz and the Chichester Literature Quiz. These events show case four authors and their books and provide inspiration for pupils for their own writing and further reading.

6.4 Read with Me Initiative

The School Library Service and Early Years Team have worked together to launch an early reading initiative that will span settings, parents and schools and create a bridge of learning. Ten carefully chosen core books form 'recommended reads' for pre-schoolers in their early years settings in the summer term. These books will then be available in public libraries and easily identifiable for families to borrow as part of the annual Summer Reading Challenge in the city and a range of materials will be available to parents to support them in understanding the importance of reading these books to their children. Children will then be able to access these same books as they start school in Year R.

6.5 Year 6 Big City Read Initiative

The Year 6 Big City Read started in 2021 and is a city-wide initiative open to all schools in Portsmouth. This initiative aims to: create a shared reading experience; promote book ownership; promote reading for transition and promote involvement in the Summer Reading Challenge. Each child participating is gifted a copy of the focus book by their school and pupils take part in a live stream event with the author.

7. Partnerships

- 7.1 The School Library Service works closely with other services and organisations supporting and promoting initiatives enabling schools have access to rich and varied resources to support literacy and learning. These partnerships include amongst others: The Public Library Service, School Improvement Service, Portsmouth Education Partnership, The National Literacy Trust, The University of Portsmouth, EMAS, Kings Theatre, The Hayling Island Book Shop, authors illustrators and publishers.

Signed by:

Stephen Baily

Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Performance figures 2021/2022 and 2022/23

Appendix 2 Performance figures for reader development activities

Appendix 3 Feedback and comments on SLS activities

Appendix 1

Performance figures 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 to date

Performance factor	2021/2022	2022/2023
Number of SLS books in schools	78,875	69,746 to date
Percentage of SLS books exchanged during the year	41%	37% to date
Books issued	47,105	42,164 to date
Books selected by SLS and issued	32,405	25,244 to date
% of issues selected by SLS staff	68.8%	59.9% to date
SLS staff level	3 FTE	3 FTE

Appendix 2

Performance figures reader development activities 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 to date

Performance factor	2021/2022	2022/2023
Number of author/illustrator events organised by the SLS	27	30
Number of children attending Meet the Author events	8,529	12,644
Number of schools involved in Meet the Author events	38	40
Number of children participating in Portsmouth Book Awards for Year 1, 5 and 8/9 pupils	3,435	3,761
Number of schools participating in Portsmouth Book Awards	61	67
Number of children participating in Y6 Big City Read	2670	2442
Number of schools participating in Y6 Big City Read	37	36
Number of children participating in Literature Quizzes	224	308
Number of schools participating in Literature Quizzes	24	30

Appendix 3

Feedback and comments on SLS and SLS activities

"Thanks for all your support and involvement" - Head Teacher

"Many thanks for all you do - we couldn't do it without this service!" - Primary school librarian

"A huge thank you for everything you have done this year. The library service has made such a difference to the school and the breath of books that the school can now access". - Primary English Lead

"A big thank you to you and all your team. All your hard work to promote and encourage young readers is priceless". - Junior school English Lead

"A huge Thank You to the entire SLS team for always providing such a fabulous service. You are all such a supportive, knowledgeable and friendly bunch :) Here's to many more interactions in the next academic year!" - Junior school librarian

"The children have enjoyed exploring new books and voting for their favourite!" - Year 5 teacher on Year 5 Book Award

"The children have really enjoyed listening to and sharing the stories with one another". - Year 1 teacher on Year 1 Picture Book Award