

Select Committee on Children's Services - 19 June 2008

Report of the Director of Children's Services

National Year of Reading (NYR)

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this paper is to give the Committee the background to the National Year of Reading and outline the programme that is going to take place in Dudley.

Background

2. Why do we have a national year of reading - what is it aiming to do?

NYR is a national campaign announced by the Secretary of State, the then DfES (now DCSF), in March 2007. It is led by the National Literacy Trust and The Reading Agency (TRA) with a consortium of supporting members with a commitment to reading, including the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council).

Its vision is stated as:-

'To create a powerful national focus of opportunities and activities, so that children, families and adult learners understand the benefits that reading – for pleasure and for purpose – can bring to change their lives for the better, both now and in the future.'

The emphasis being that reading opens doors – to new adventures and new experiences. NYR was launched nationally in April 2008.

Our local launch for EYYES took place on 6 May at Saltwells EDC with a Celebration of Reading. There were two sessions (in the morning and afternoon) which were attended by the majority of schools across Dudley; primary, secondary and special.

3. Our local aims are:
 - to explore the wide diversity of reading in all its forms;

- encourage more volunteers to support and encourage other readers; such as making a regular commitment to support reading in schools;
- to promote the NYR and use it to encourage more people in the Borough to pick up a book and celebrate reading in 2008;
- encourage more people to become a library member and make the most of thousands of books available to borrow for free.

4. We do all these things by doing what?

NYR will be embedded into the main policy blocks of the Local Area Agreements in order to improve literacy and the lives of the citizens of Dudley. A cross-council steering group has been established which meets bi-monthly. We have planned events to coincide with the NYR monthly themes.

NYR coordinators to bring NYR to the attention of the council as a whole, by spotlighting NYR at council-wide events. The campaign will become part of the corporate agenda by:

- inclusion on management forums;
- council induction and training courses;
- directorate newsletters (e.g. attached newsletter);
- the websites – www.dudley.gov.uk/reading;
- www.edu.dudley.gov.uk/english/Yearofreading/home.htm;
- staff briefings;
- identify partnership opportunities;
- involvement of Members;
- encouraging volunteer reading supporters(see attached leaflet).

A range of reading related events and activities are planned across the borough in various settings for children and adults. As well as creating innovative working practices we will also build on existing initiatives such as World Book Day, Children's Book Week, Dudley Children's Book Group, Local Authority and National Strategy work with schools, Schools' Library Service Book Quizzes, Black History Month, and link with Adult Learners Week and Family Learning Festival to promote and enhance the reading experience. Diversity will be promoted by exploring different reading experiences and encourage a wide range of audiences.

5. The aims above in section 3 were fully met at our Celebration of Reading from Early Years to Adulthood. The sessions began with a video of Dudley children reading books, poems, IT screens, reading in and out of school, doing dramatic presentations, attending author evens, reading together and alone. Spoz (Giovanni Esposito) Poet Laureate for Birmingham 2007, entertained both attendees and presenters with poems and details of how he became a writer. There were many presentations; libraries, family literacy scheme, primary and

secondary schools illustrating favourite books, oral story telling, using story sacks, book clubs – all showing our local passion for reading. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, Dudley Children Book Group Federation, ICT and visual literacy were all part of the day and a podcast was made with attendees and participants taking part in the making. Volunteer readers and supporters to work in schools were ‘signed up’ and all this surrounded by stimulating displays, with the opportunity to buy quality materials from a local book shop and ‘win’ books for children in schools. Evaluations of the day were fantastic! “Inspiring”, “Stimulating”, “Wonderful” – attendees really appreciated learning from the articulate and enthusiastic children, students and adults.

6. What else are we doing in the year?

The NYR cross-Directorate steering group meets bi-monthly to coordinate and promote related events. For example, the Summer Reading Challenge, organised by Dudley Library Service will be promoted in schools to encourage younger children to continue reading over the holiday period and the Primary Strategy is supporting with extra funding to enable more Dudley children to take part. An event is being planned for 1 October at Saltwells EDC to promote the reading and use of non-fiction for pupils but involving other agencies too. Events will be posted on the websites at www.dudley.gov.uk/reading and www.edu.dudley.gov.uk/english/Yearofreading/home.htm

Finance

7. The funding will be met from within existing budgets.

Law

8. The law relating to the information contained in the report is contained in the Education and Children Acts.

Equality Impact

9. This section should contain details of the likely impact of the proposals on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and other relevant groups.

All new policies must be assessed for their impact on different racial groups before they are introduced and a brief summary of this impact assessment should be included where the report relates to the introduction of a new policy or substantial policy change. This requirement relating to other equality areas is likely to be introduced in the near future.

It is a requirement for all report authors to make reference to:-

- The effect of the decision on children and young people.
- Whether there was consultation with children and young people; and
- The involvement of children and young people in developing the proposals.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that the committee note the report and support the development of this work.



.....
John Freeman
Director of Children's Service

Contact Officer: Jane Porter
Telephone: 01384 814263
Email: jane.porter@dudley.gov.uk