

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

NORTHERN CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL 2008

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Washington Area Committee of the 25th Northern Children's Book Festival which was held from 10 November 2008 to 22 November 2008.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Northern Children's Book Festival is an annual regional event held over two weeks in November. The event promotes the love of reading and books to children as well as parents/carers and teachers who also gain new knowledge and enthusiasm.
- 2.2 Each year the festival brings to the area over 40 children's authors, poets and illustrators to talk to children in schools and libraries. Organised by library services of the twelve North East Local Authorities the Festival culminates in a free entry Gala Day, held in a different authority each year.

3.0 WEEKDAY EVENTS

- 3.1 Sunderland schools hosted thirteen Authors, Illustrators and Poets during the Festival. Three sessions were held in Washington which were:

13 November	Paul Bajoria (author)	St Robert of Newminster
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14 November	Viv French (author)	St Bede's RC Primary Holley Park Primary
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- 3.2 Thirty eight sessions were held involving 2,816 pupils ranging in age from Nursery to Year 10. 152 adults attended including class teachers, learning mentors, school librarians, parents and public library staff.
- 3.3 One of the Festival's aims is to encourage book ownership to promote reading as an enjoyable activity. This was achieved by Authors talking about their work, providing poetry performances, drawing pictures of characters and enthusing children about reading and writing. They also signed their books and over £2,700 worth of books were sold in schools.
- 3.4 The Gala Day was hosted by Newcastle City Council and held at Newcastle Civic Centre on Saturday 21 November 2008. The theme for the day was the Silver Screen which linked to the National Year of Reading November activities. Sunderland Libraries provided a craft activity based on Charlotte's Web by E. B. White.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Northern Children's Book Festival is regarded as one of the largest events in the children's book calendar in Europe and is an example of national best practice which has increased the profile of children's reading in the city and the region.
- 4.2 Sunderland schools and families benefited from the chance to meet well-known authors, poets and illustrators in their city.
- 4.3 The festival demonstrated successful partnership working which included working with a range of internal and external agencies across the city.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 There were no background papers relied upon to complete this report.