



Chatterbooks Report November 2003

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Introduction

Chatterbooks is a national network of reading groups for 4 -12 year-olds, involving 3000 children. Started in 2001, it is a partnership between Orange and the public library network. It has grown from a 2001 pilot in three library authorities to a programme involving groups in 96 authorities. Chatterbooks now makes a difference to the lives of over 3000 children and their families, many from socially excluded groups, from England and Scotland, inspiring children to develop their enjoyment of reading and their skills in talking about their reading with other children and adults.

This report covers the experience of 69 groups, after running for a year and follows on from an earlier 2002 report. Since the 2002 report 27 authorities have joined the network.

Key Successes

1. Chatterbooks boosts children's reading confidence and enjoyment

Evidence from the groups shows that belonging to a Chatterbooks group boosts children's confidence and enjoyment of reading. Children read more than they otherwise would, read more widely and discover books they would otherwise not have considered reading.

2. Chatterbooks builds children's social skills and confidence

The effect of Chatterbooks on children's social skills, communication and confidence in groups has been a marked, and perhaps unexpected, success of the scheme. There are many reports of shy children becoming much more confident, and of children from different schools learning how to get on together.

3. Chatterbooks is raising the standards of the library service for children

Orange's investment in the resources children have to support their reading group experience is critical. The quality of the reading pack and the reading group experience is far higher than a library service could normally offer, showing how a library/business partnership can make a real difference to young lives. The Chatterbooks design and brand has been a huge success with children.

Chatterbooks has also enabled library staff, not only those working directly with the groups, to develop their skills and confidence in relating with children and engaging with them to encourage and stimulate their reading.

4. Chatterbooks supports key national policy agendas

Chatterbooks gives children creative opportunities and the freedom to explore reading and meet authors in a way that complements the work of schools, boosting reading confidence and enjoyment and resulting in motivation which is critical to the success of the National Literacy Strategy. Evidence from the groups shows that a mixture of stimuli and approaches is working well, especially the integration of ICT into reading group sessions.

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Children who really enjoy reading do not always feel able to be open about this; there is evidence from Chatterbooks groups that able readers greatly enjoy being able to share a love of reading with their peers.

Many of the groups are targeted at socially excluded young people, and it is clear that the model works as well in deprived communities as in more affluent ones. There is also evidence that families who would not normally use the library are discovering its benefits.

Chatterbooks also supports the citizenship agenda. Many children are involved in helping choose library stock, contributing to the shaping of a key public service. The scheme also yields volunteering opportunities.

5. Chatterbooks is held up as a model business partnership

Chatterbooks has allowed the library service to establish the first national network of children's readers groups. It has shown how business support can help individual library services combine forces to share best practice to improve experiences for children.

Its importance as a model has been recognised by government. Chatterbooks features as a case study in the government's new library strategy, Framework for the Future. It has also recently been shortlisted by Arts & Business for an Arts & Kids award.

Evaluation Methodology

Over the summer of 2003, librarians who had been running groups for more than a year were asked to document their knowledge of the impact of Chatterbooks on the children and families attending their groups. This knowledge has been developed from:

- Session records and observations recorded by staff running the groups
- Self (or parent) completion questionnaires for children
- Collection of personal statements and reports from children, parents/carers, library staff, teachers
- Survey of library service aims, target groups, and potential partners
- Partnership review

In addition, 3 authorities (Brent, Cambridgeshire and Calderdale) carried out more in-depth case studies of their groups and we have feedback from the training seminars which are run for all new Chatterbooks authorities. A librarian in Brixton carried out a study of her Chatterbooks group as part of her MA dissertation; some of her findings are included in this report.

This report documents our findings from returns from 32 authorities. It confirms many of the findings from the preliminary 2002 report.

These extracts from the evidence we have amassed illustrate the impact of Chatterbooks.

From the Willesden Green group in **Brent**: Rebecca Coates was 8 and had been coming to Chatterbooks for just under a year. Her mother said she had a reading age well above her actual age when she joined the group. It was good for her to meet with older children who were reading the sort of books

[www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks Report 2003.pdf](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks%20Report%202003.pdf)

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that she had already moved on to. Chatterbooks was able to extend this in a way that school was not. She had also very much enjoyed the literacy related activities – again extending beyond what she was doing at school. This was particularly important last year when she was in year 2 as she found quite a lot of the KS1 material boring and not sufficiently stretching. She had also gained in confidence in the group situation. Doing the book reviews had been particularly useful. It had given her a structure which she could use in school and had made her think more about what she had just read.'

From **Northamptonshire**: 'At local level, analysis shows that the girls at the start of the project were more keen to read, and did so more frequently, were more likely to discuss good reads with friends, and to be able to identify a favourite author. By the end of the year the attitudes to reading between the sexes were more balanced, with more boys rating reading as very good rather than quite good or not very good. All of the boys were more inclined to discuss books with their friends more readily.

Twenty per cent of the group reported that they read more frequently than at the start of the year. The boys were also more sure about who their favourite authors were, and the genre that they enjoyed the most.'

From **Cambridgeshire**: 'The parents at the last session very much believe that their children have derived a lot of benefit from Chatterbooks; how confident they have all become; the range of genres and themes they have discovered and how much Chatterbooks has really opened up the world of reading for them all. They love the folders and have seen the children change and grow in their reading tastes and skills. They themselves enjoy meeting up with the other parents and discuss how they are all progressing with the books they are reading.

Joshua was quiet and shy to begin with, but has revealed that he has an interest in scary and humorous stories. At the fourth meeting of our group he really opened up and read out 'Are you pink and green?' from Michael Rosen's *Book of Silly Poems*. This is a book he had enjoyed and amongst a lot of giggling he got to the end of the poem to be met with a round of applause from us all. It was a wonderful moment.'

From a group in an area of **Calderdale** where children have little or no adult support:

- Confidence levels have risen by approximately 85%
- Social skills have risen by approximately 85%
- Reading skills and habits have increased by at least 100% - all the children are reading more and also reading more adventurously. They have a very positive relationship with the Branch staff.
- The group is strongly cohesive: quiet, shy children are now relaxed and chatty and feel at home in the library and with the staff. There is a real sense of being a 'stakeholder' in the library and what it has to offer.

How Chatterbooks works

The Reading Agency is the national development agency for libraries' work with readers and has recruited and trained a growing network of key contacts in the library authorities running Chatterbooks. TRA maintains this best practice network through regular e-letters, a quarterly Chatterbooks newsletter and [www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks Report 2003.pdf](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks%20Report%202003.pdf)

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through e-mail and telephone support for individual librarians. TRA also manages a relationship with Ark, Orange's distribution company and gives advice on new designs for Chatterbooks packs. TRA represents Chatterbooks on the Orange Prize management committee.

300 people in libraries, key publishers and other opinion formers receive the quarterly Chatterbooks newsletter which The Reading Agency produces.

Orange provides individual packs for each Chatterbooks child, with special animated characters. The pack consists of a waterproof A4 carrying folder, which contains a reading diary, sticker sheet, pencil, balloons, note pads, fortune teller games and a magnetic book mark.

Background to the Project

The Reading Agency has worked in partnership with Orange on the Orange Prize for Fiction since 1999. The idea of creating a national network of children's reading groups run by public libraries was initially conceived within the framework of the educational initiatives linked to the Prize. The 2001 pilot was run with the Sponsorship Department, and subsequently Community Affairs became involved when it became clear that it met Orange's objectives in the area of corporate community investment (CCI), and the company's emphasis on the themes of community, creativity and communication.

The Orange partnership is part of a major Reading Agency workstrand which aims to create a more vibrant library service for readers by building partnerships with the business community. Chatterbooks is a model showing how reading, libraries' core activity, can be the springboard for these partnerships. Orange has taken an important lead in recognising the potential of this work.

Part of TRA's strategy has involved an experimental programme called Books & Business which has been developed with Arts & Business with funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. This has involved building pilot models of library/business partnerships and mentoring and skills sharing programmes. The Orange work is an important showcase programme, showing how working with libraries can deliver on a whole range of business objectives. We are particularly pleased that the power of Chatterbooks has been recognised by the government, in the Department of Culture Media and Sport's recent new government strategy for Libraries, Framework for the Future, and by Arts & Business, who have shortlisted it for an Arts & Kids award (winners announced in February 04).

Chatterbooks forms part of Orange's global Community Futures programme in the UK, which is about enabling people to participate more fully in society. Orange uses communication to achieve this wherever possible. Orange believes education plays a key role in the cohesiveness of any society, encouraging an appreciation and understanding of the wider world. Chatterbooks helps children to develop a keen interest in books, giving them the confidence to formulate and express opinions and communicate.

Aims of Chatterbooks

[www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks Report 2003.pdf](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks%20Report%202003.pdf)

The joint objectives of the partners, Orange and The Reading Agency

- To establish a national network of reading groups for 4-12 year olds, run through public libraries
- To develop children's love and enjoyment of reading by injecting the freedom to explore and experiment, supported by skilled library staff
- To develop children's confidence in choosing and talking about books and reading
- To bring children and families from different parts of the community together to share reading experiences
- Through supporting and promoting reading, to support national policy priorities including creativity in education, cohesive communities and social inclusion.

Reading Agency objectives

- To demonstrate the potential of major library partnerships with the business sector, showing how reading can be used as a springboard
- To raise the standards of library services by injecting the resources and inspiration of a major new national partnership

Orange objectives

- To develop an initiative which demonstrates corporate community investment in the communities in which Orange operates, and that has a large community reach.
- To raise Orange's profile as a socially responsible company.
- To develop partnerships with stakeholders and the wider community and local government.
- To support the Orange brand philosophy of helping people to communicate and interact better, and make a difference to people's lives.
- To build on Orange's established literary portfolio at a grass-roots level that would encourage community participation.

Chatterbooks is an important model of private/public sector partnership being brought to bear on these aims.

About the groups:

Frequency and timings of the meetings

70% of the groups meet monthly. This allows the children time to read the books between sessions and the staff time to prepare. Most librarians report that monthly sessions work best. The meetings tend to be held after school on any night from Monday – Friday, though several hold meetings on Saturdays. Wandsworth moved their meetings to Saturdays because of the dark evenings and Kensington and Chelsea to allow different children to attend. A few of the groups meet fortnightly - in Halton, for example, where sessions are run in schools and also in Falkirk.

Staffing

Sessions are run by a combination of professional librarians and support staff. Aberdeenshire involve volunteer sixth formers in running their groups.

Children/areas targeted

Reasons for targeting

Librarians report a range of reasons for choosing their target groups, from the pragmatic to the strategic:

- Outreach: Social inclusion
- Partnerships with schools, including supporting failing schools
- Build up positive relations with young people
- Raise library profile
- Increase library use; address falling issues
- Building on current library use
- Develop staff skills; use staff enthusiasm
- Run groups in bigger libraries where more staff available; and more likely to attract a good number of children

In general, libraries have targeted children in a range of 4 years, from 4-7 year olds or 9 -12 year olds. Others have targeted children in places where there is not much activity for children; examples include rural children in Cumbria, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire or in urban areas of Guildford. Cambridgeshire targeted army families where there is a high turnover in the population. Others, like Staffordshire, were guided by teachers in local schools to reach families needing support and they are now reaching parents as well. 50-60% of the children in the Long Eaton group are looked-after children.

Many, including Herefordshire, Knowsley and West Lothian, report waiting lists of children who have heard about Chatterbooks from their friends wanting to join groups. Knowsley report that there is a lack of parental support for library use but that their target group of 9-12 year olds come to the library alone.

Other reported target groups include:

- 6-7s, because not much provided for this age group (Cambourne)
- Mixed groups of able/less able readers
- Children already using the library
- Children not using the library
- Keen children – e.g. those taking part in summer reading challenge
- Areas where no existing reader development activity for children
- Children with literacy needs (Several: e.g. `class of 9 year olds who needed extra incentive to read – Stirlingshire)
- Families

What happens in the groups

Reports show that the library staff running Chatterbooks have proved endlessly creative in developing content for Chatterbooks sessions. The kinds of activities which work well in Chatterbooks sessions have been documented in newsletters, but recent 2003 reports show the following activities: (See Appendix for full list of session ideas which work particularly well)

Activities involving crafts

- Designing book covers – Cumbria
- Making and using the fortune teller – Staffs

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- Book-related craft activities – Stirling, Derbyshire, Dudley, Knowsley, North Tyneside, North Yorkshire

Poetry

- Reading and writing poetry – Cumbria, Herefordshire, Knowsley, Guildford, Epsom

Author events

- Author events and workshops – Falkirk, Cumbria, Gloucestershire
- Children selecting books for the library Cambridgeshire, Falkirk, Dudley

Using Computers

- Using websites – Cumbria, Wandsworth, Derbyshire, Glasgow

Games

- Treasure hunts using books as clues leading to other books – Southwark
- Jigsaws made from book jackets - Dorset
- Acting out well known stories – Lincolnshire
- Games based on books and jackets – West Lothian, Knowsley, Surrey

Linking with national initiatives

- Shadowing the Greenaway Prize – Chelsea, Derbyshire
- Taking part in national events like World Book Day and The Big Read /online events – Glasgow, Leeds

Miscellaneous

- Visiting a bookshop – Lincolnshire
- Bringing a tortoise to a session to stimulate discussion about animals in books
- Using picture books – Halton
- Show and tell session – Blackburn

The Impact of Chatterbooks

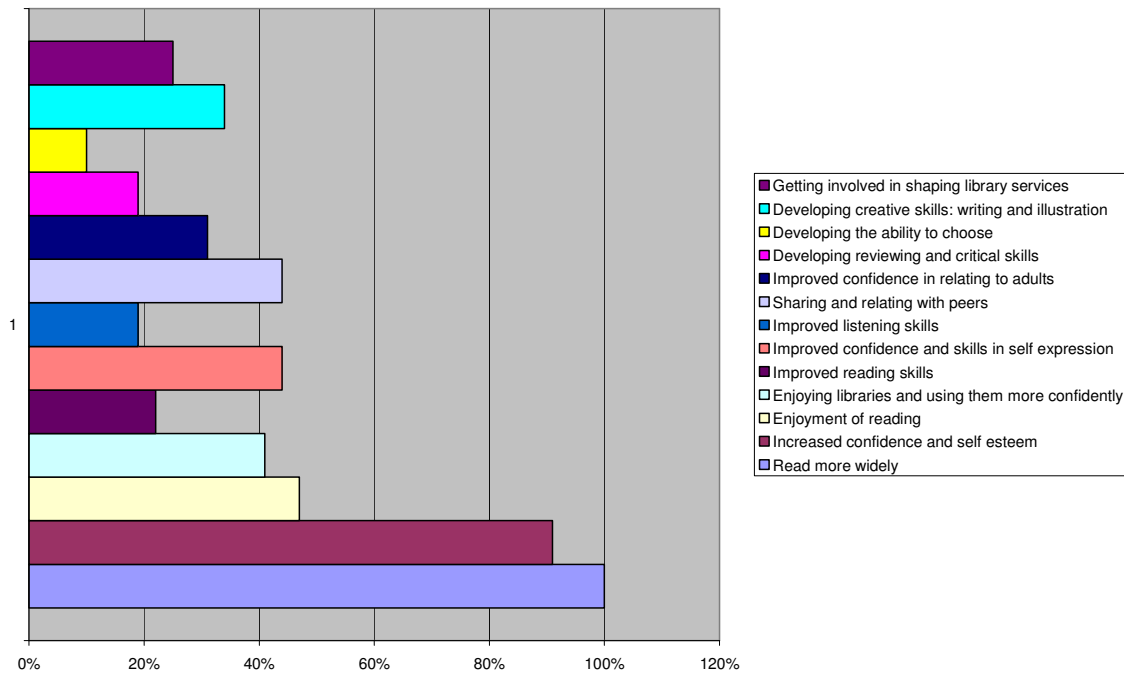
On Children

The 2002 evaluation identified several differences Chatterbooks was making for children and their families. Chatterbooks children were

- Reading more
- Having a really good time reading and talking about books
- Growing in confidence about reading
- Growing in confidence socially

These continue to be key outcomes as is shown by the following picture of what children have gained through Chatterbooks during 2002-3.

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The diagram above shows the impacts on children identified by staff running Chatterbooks groups

N.B.

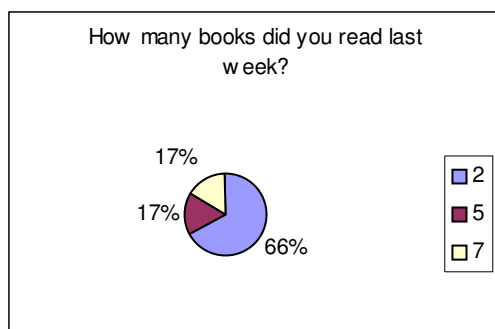
- All the figures are totals of points made by the groups in responses to open questions. They were not given a checklist to tick. This means that where a group does not mention e.g. enjoyment of reading, it does not necessarily mean that it is not happening; just that the impacts they gave us were the most significant ones for them.
- Each group will have set out with its own set of projected outcomes, which won't necessarily have included all of these.

Reading more widely

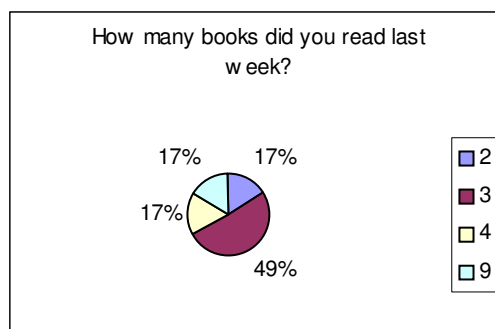
100% of the groups said children were reading more widely - 3,000 children*

After a year in the Brixton Chatterbooks group, the number of children reading 3 books per week had increased from 17% to 49%

Joining



Follow up



Two children have at a recent meeting stated that if it hadn't have been for Chatterbooks they would not have read such a wide range of books, and they have tried books they would not have considered. Their reading interests have therefore changed. **Cambridgeshire**

Confidence to try something different – developing / broadening reading tastes
West Lothian

Children are reading more titles and will try new authors on recommendation from peers. **Dudley**

The children have had access to and are now reading a range of books that we didn't envisage at the beginning. **Parent, Cambridgeshire.**

Increased confidence and self esteem

91% said children had increased confidence and self esteem - 2730 children*

Personal development – confidence to give views and opinions in group **West Lothian**

Children are more confident talking about books – even the shy children want to tell of the book they have just read. **N Lanarkshire**

There has been a noticeable increase in the confidence of the communication skills of some of the children. **North Tyneside**

Enjoyment of reading

47% said children enjoyed reading more - 1410 children*

A positive change in perception about reading i.e. seeing it as a fun thing to do.
Knowsley

One of the parents at Boney Hay said that she and her daughter had found 'Chatterbooks' particularly useful because it made reading fun. She said her daughter had disliked reading at school because the teacher made reading a chore. Her child's confidence had been dented by this attitude. During her time with 'Chatterbooks' she had seen her daughter's self-esteem being built-up again. She recommended that teachers attend 'Chatterbooks' sessions to remind them that reading is fun! To quote she said: "I think teachers could perhaps attend a Chatterbooks session so as to learn more about making books fun as opposed to being a chore!" **Staffordshire**

Parent comment – 'She loves it!' Another girl 'sacrifices' football when it is Chatterbooks week. Parent of one participant –He went with his friend and now is tackling longer books on his own. **Leeds**

Learnt that reading can be fun. **Wokingham, Woodley**

...a fundamental increase in the awareness of the pleasure in reading and talking about a wide spectrum of material by the children. **Angus**

Enjoying libraries and using them more confidently

41% said children enjoyed libraries and used them more - 1230 children*

Children are more at ease in library and around books **Derbyshire**

More visits to the library and becoming friendly with the library staff – breaks down preconceptions of library staff being “scary” or telling them to be quiet!

Surrey

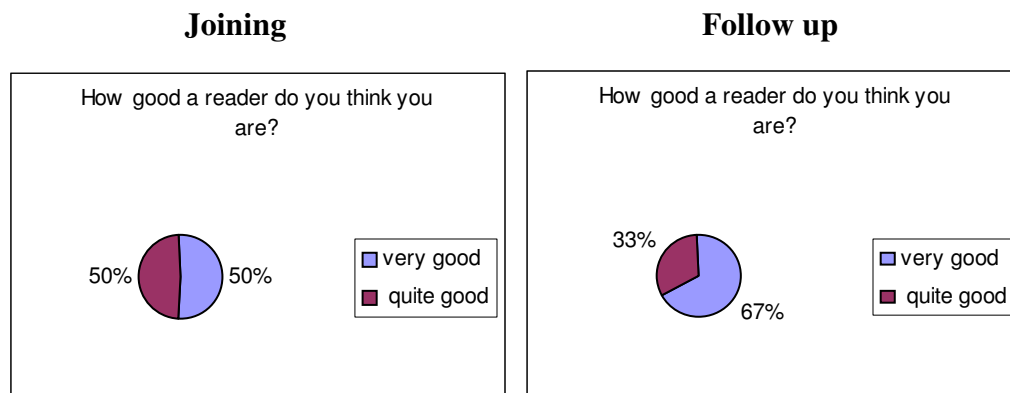
Access to specialist library staff. Getting to know local library staff better.

Gloucestershire

Improved reading skills

22% said children’s reading skills had improved - 660 children*

The diagrams below show that after being in the Brixton Chatterbooks group for a year the number of children thinking of themselves as ‘very good’ readers had increased from 50 – 67%



There is much anecdotal evidence to support that assertion.

Mainly improved reading skills / wider range of books read. **Kingston upon Thames**

The children are also expanding their knowledge through books and of books – the different genres, etc. so literacy skills are improving. **Glasgow**

The clubs have... expanded their reading horizons and in some cases have improved their reading skills and their confidence to voice their opinions in a group situation. **Lincolnshire**

Jade has learning difficulties especially with literacy skills. Her mother reported to us that she has improved with both reading and spelling since beginning Chatterbooks sessions. **Middlesborough**

Improved confidence and skills in self-expression

44% said children's confidence and skills in self expression had increased - 1320 children*

Children's confidence in reading and talking about their reading has improved. Children's confidence in talking within the group has improved. The children enjoy the group and look forward to coming to the library. **Edinburgh**

There has been a noticeable increase in confidence of communication skills of some of the children. At the early sessions at Killingworth many of the children did not feel confident about reading their reviews out loud to the rest of the group and relied on library staff to do so. However at a special presentation 15 of the children read out their book reviews dressed as their favourite book characters to an audience of 25 children, 25 parents and a representative from Barclay's Bank. **North Tyneside**

The children have become more confident in their reading and their reading tastes. **Kensington & Chelsea**

Jack had never stood before his class and talked to them. At Chatterbooks he was eager to borrow reading material and to report back to the group about the books. He liked borrowing song books and gave us a mini concert. Teaching staff were thrilled that membership of Chatterbooks had given him this enthusiasm and confidence. **Wokingham, Woodley**

Improved listening skills

19% said children's listening skills had improved - 570 children*

I feel there have been a lot of positive outcomes for the children. I have noticed that shyer children are more talkative and willing to participate. Those children who were not so quiet have learned to listen to others opinions and act upon them if for example a certain book is recommended. Social skills have improved. **Glasgow**

I have noticed that shyer children are more talkative and willing to participate. Those children who were not so quiet have learned to listen to others' opinions and act upon them if for example a certain book is recommended. Social skills have improved. **Glasgow**

Sharing and relating with peers

44% said children were sharing and relating better with their peers - 1320 children*

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They also provide a social bonding function and give their members prestige amongst their peers. **Lincolnshire**

...developing team work and tolerance, helping to meet some of the citizenship targets, fun with language and reading. **Staffordshire**

...children from different schools now mixing well together **Stirling**

Children speaking in front of a group and listening to others, integration of pupils from different schools and working together. **Dundee**

One of the boys to seemingly benefit most from Chatterbooks started as the terror of the group(!). His mother has been very supportive. He settled down over the year, and whilst still cheeky was far less disruptive. He has also been into the library on a number of occasions with his brother, and even his father. His mother told me his brother has also enjoyed a few of the books he took home for Chatterbooks. **Surrey**

Improved confidence in relating with adults

31% said the children had greater confidence in relating with adults - 930 children*

... children love the attention, an adult talking to them about what they read
Halton

...children more at ease with the library staff. **Stirling**

Developing reviewing and critical skills

19% said children had developed their reviewing and critical skills - 570 children

Developing skills in book selection – for self and group reading... Skill writing book reviews ... Feelings about books rather than list of facts or retelling blurb
West Lothian

Developing the ability to choose

10% said children had developed the ability to choose i.e. 300 children*

The clubs have improved children's access to books; have given them the opportunity for individual choice and the ability to choose... **Lincolnshire**

Developing creative skills: writing and illustration

34% said children had developed creative skills - 1020 children*

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The children have become more confident in their reading and their reading tastes. They have also developed creatively with their writing of stories, letters and poems. **RB Kensington / Chelsea**

...more imaginative in their writing **Knowsley**

Getting involved in shaping library services

25% said children were getting involved in shaping library services - 750 children*

The children had the opportunity to access books chosen by and for them to encourage future library use. **Middlesborough**

*** equals the minimum number of children potentially now benefiting in this way**

Other outcomes identified in groups' responses

Developing information finding skills

Developing ICT skills

And these further comments and individual 'stories' provide impressive pictures of what Chatterbooks is achieving.

Confidence, raised awareness of variety of authors, ability to read aloud, both from books and their own reviews. Older children help younger members to choose and read books **Cumbria**

(Chatterbooks has provided): Access to new books. Opportunity to meet and socialise with other children. Opportunity to be involved with their local library. Opportunity to be involved with a national children's reading club. Opportunity to take part in national reading events e.g. Big Read, Reading Maze. Opportunity to develop ICT skills by using People's Network and looking at author site and reading sites on the internet. Meeting storyteller. **North Tyneside.**

One girl who needed encouragement with her reading has developed by trying new authors and gaining in confidence when talking about what she reads. Quotes: What things do you like about Chatterbooks: " That you can talk about things to grown ups and they listen and help you", Meeting my friends and reading books", I get to do lots of fun activities and they let us have the first look at new books", "All of it" **Herefordshire**

For Families

31% responses made positive mention of linking with families, and relating more closely with parents.

The 2002 evaluation showed that through Chatterbooks other members of the family were discovering libraries

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We have two girls at Wragby who for the first six months would not say a word in the group discussion. In fact we doubted that they had read any of the books at all. Now it is almost impossible to keep them quiet so that someone else can have a turn! We also have a parent of one of the children at Wragby who has said (quite unsolicited) how attending Chatterbooks has widened the **family's** enjoyment and knowledge of books as they have discovered new authors
Lincolnshire

Several children are markedly less shy than when they first attended. One child wanted to take one of the Orange packs for her cousin who was returning to Poland. **LB Wandsworth**

(An 8 year old) inspired brothers and sisters to join library. Younger brother intends to join Chatterbooks when older. Mother visits Rattle n' Rhyme sessions with baby brother. Loves to discuss books with staff in a great deal of depth, personality has matured. Mother has mentioned that school reports have indicated a big improvement in his English... **Dudley MBC**

Though Conor brought in his copy of The Quigleys to the next couple of meetings, he asked to keep it so that he could re-read it. He has since been into the library with his father and younger brother – his father had never come in before. **Surrey**

For Orange

The Chatterbooks project has demonstrated Orange's commitment to working in the community, raising awareness with the Government, the literary sector and corporate social responsibility opinion formers. It has attracted major Government endorsement, substantial media coverage and recognition by Arts & Business' awards.

In the new Government strategy on libraries, 'Framework for the Future', Chatterbooks is cited as a case study illustrating how libraries can promote reading to new audiences.

"This is a highly significant example of the potential for partnerships to take libraries' important work with readers further"

Baroness Blackstone, previously Minister for Arts and Libraries

"It is always encouraging to hear of businesses interacting with the community in such a positive way"

Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

Chatterbooks has given Orange grassroots community reach and profile through its partnership with the library network, and through this a raised profile with library partners such as schools and community groups – and with the parents of the children joining in Chatterbooks.

The children have gone back into school and have spread the word about Chatterbooks. On subsequent school visits within the Northamptonshire Central library catchment area, positive verbal comments about the initiative have been received from Head teachers and their staff. **Northamptonshire**

For Libraries

The 2002 evaluation of Chatterbooks demonstrated the benefits for libraries from this nationally brokered business partnership, including:

- Development of staff skills
- Opportunities to share good practice nationally
- Using this attractive project with its high quality materials and support to target groups, increase library use, and develop library stock and activities in line with what young people want.

Feedback in 2003 shows that all these benefits are continuing:

Developing staff skills

Working with Chatterbooks groups has helped library staff develop their skills in reader development work with children – relating with children and parents, knowing more about books and how to encourage and stimulate children with their reading.

69% identified this as a positive outcome. Two authorities added that working with Chatterbooks had enhanced staff's project management skills.

A wealth of positive feedback about this development included the following:

The Chatterbooks groups were the first young people's reading groups to start in Lincolnshire and the training notes and expertise have been cascaded to all areas of the county so that now we have at least 20 reading groups up and running and working well. So they really gave library staff the impetus and confidence to 'have a go'. They also give staff an opportunity to talk one-to-one with individual children about their reading likes/dislikes and are helping to inform book selection for libraries. They are helping to create an enthusiasm for children's library work and a 'buzz' of achievement. **Lincolnshire**

Staff know the children and their interests better; increase in issues, and libraries are being used more. **Stirling**

Increased membership and use of the library

63% identified this as a positive outcome resulting from the project.

Increased library membership. Increased reading due to access to library stock. **Wokingham**

An increase in library membership, increased knowledge of books and how libraries work. **Falkirk**

...wider range of reading, more Library use. **North Yorkshire**

More visits to the library and becoming friendly with the library staff – breaks down preconceptions of library staff being "scary" or telling them to be quiet!
Surrey

Profile of the library

47% identified this as a positive outcome.

We have raised the profile of the library as a place where reading development and enrichment takes place. **Brompton**

Developing links with schools

In setting up Chatterbooks groups local schools have been key partners with libraries. In 2 authorities library staff and teachers together run the groups.

63% identified this as a positive outcome

There has been an enhanced recognition of the library's role in encouraging literacy and reading skills, and a closer relationship (with the school) has been developed as a result of the success of Chatterbooks. **Edinburgh**

Slowed down decline in issues at Colwall, improved contact with school, local parents and children **Herefordshire**

By working closely with the teachers with a range of ages we have learned more about how children learn and develop. **Staffordshire**

Making links with other partners

Other Chatterbooks partners include

- After-school clubs
- Home/School link workers
- Bookshops – e.g. Waterstones, WH Smith
- Local authors
- The reading charity: Reading Is Fundamental
- Looked after Children education service
- A local Healthy Eating project
- Arts service

For Orange and for Libraries

Chatterbooks has enabled both Orange and all the participating library authorities to contribute towards the achievement of key national policies.

Building a learning society

Encouraging the enjoyment of reading, as Chatterbooks does, is politically important. Recent research by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development sums up the critical importance of children enjoying what they read to the confidence they have in their reading skills. The *Reading for Change* study found that a love of reading is more important for children's educational success than their family's wealth or class. Children from deprived backgrounds do better in tests than those from more affluent

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homes if they enjoyed reading books, newspapers and comics in their spare time.

The recently published PIRLS international study of reading and literacy found that although England is third in the study of reading achievement of 10 year olds in 35 countries, our primary school children are less confident about their ability, and enjoy reading less. 13% of English children disliked reading, compared to the international average of 6%.

Social Inclusion

44% identified this as a key target in their Chatterbooks work

Setting up young people's reading groups is now an integral part of our service targets as they contribute to Social Inclusion, Lifelong learning and Reader development, and to Lincolnshire's priorities of building self-sufficient communities, striving for excellence in education and working in partnership. We are going to develop them (the reading groups) as focus groups and to involve them in our book selection process. **Lincolnshire**

A number of library authorities set up Chatterbooks groups with the aim of reaching children who might not easily come to the library, maybe because of rural isolation or lack of family support.

(Chatterbooks) is contributing to our work in areas of rural deprivation.

Gloucestershire

(Chatterbooks has enabled) ...improved outreach, wider community use of the library... **Cumbria**

Another socially excluded group, not usually referred to, can be those children who love reading but who feel left out and unable to share their enthusiasm at school because it is not 'cool' with their peers.

(Chatterbooks has given children) the chance to meet other children enthusiastic about reading. **Gloucestershire**

Fantastic! it has given Ella a chance to spend more time with other children that enjoy books **N Tyneside**

Literacy and Lifelong Learning

(Chatterbooks) has formed part of our programme for improving literacy and encouraging library membership. As we meet in the homework centre it has raised the profile of Study Support and many of the children have joined the homework club. **Brompton**

All the outcomes described above relating to children's reading show what an effective project Chatterbooks can be within libraries' work in supporting and enabling literacy development and lifelong learning.

Community cohesion

(Chatterbooks) has helped to meet objectives...around community engagement and identity. **Knowsley**

The children that have joined are a very interesting bunch. One of them is an Iraqi Kurd refugee...he escaped into Turkey with his parents... Three girls came from the Congo... Over the summer they were all involved with the local Refugee Action Group Play scheme. I went to visit the group and found that I knew all the children! Good to see how the borough is getting joined up, so to speak.

Librarian, London Borough

Calderdale Chatterbooks Case Study, Mixenden Group

Background

The Mixenden area is largely a traditional council estate to the north-west of Halifax town centre. The area has many social problems including unemployment, drug abuse, high crime rate, single parent families and the overall reading age of children attending local schools is low.

The Mixenden Chatterbooks group was set up in October 2002 and is run by the Mixenden Branch Supervisor and a library assistant. Initially the Children's Reader Development Librarian and the Group Librarian contacted the two local primary schools to talk about the project and invite children to become members. One school responded very positively and supplied the names of 5 children within a day. The second school were preparing for Ofsted, and, although interested, were less organised: five names were supplied eventually, but despite contact with the children via personally addressed coloured invitations and a teaching assistant who also works at Mixenden Library, none ever attended a session.

The Supervisor and Library Assistant were thoroughly briefed about running the project and its aims and objectives: and they had 5 children at their launch session. Subsequent efforts were made to contact the missing 5, but all drew a blank. The group has since expanded to 10 members, however, due to 'word of mouth' recommendations, and the children who attend are enthusiastic and enjoy their monthly sessions immensely.

All the Chatterbooks Groups in Calderdale meet with our Council Priorities, which are:

- To improve the educational achievement of all young people and promote widespread participation in learning
- To support and protect vulnerable children, young people and adults and promote independent and healthy living
- To create safer communities with lower crime levels, less fear of crime and safer roads
- To promote sustainable economic growth, respect local heritage and improve our towns, villages and neighbourhoods
- To secure a clean and attractive built and natural environment
- To continually improve customer service

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- To support diverse communities, building dialogue, understanding and a capacity to work and live together

The very fact of providing an organised activity for children in an area like this is a very positive move. Many children in the area have little or no adult support, and come from very poor, ill educated homes – for a proportion of families crime is a way of life.

Mixenden Children's Library has also attracted a grant from Sure Start for refurbishment. The Re-Launch, which was attended by the Mayor and local MP, took place in late July – and our Chatterbooks Group were among the invited guests. The children also came to an *Evening with Nick Sharratt*, an event organised at the Central Children's Library in June for all Chatterbooks members. They spent an evening listening to Nick, drawing for him, asking questions and having personal chats with him. Although exciting for any child, our overall feeling is that the Mixenden children probably benefited most from the experience.

The Group

Chatterbooks meets once a month on Thursdays after school. The children always play a word-based game to start off – sometimes riddles, sometimes descriptions (e.g. "If I were an animal, I would be a ... because ..."), etc. This part of the session was initially introduced to break down shyness barriers in the first couple of meetings but has proved so popular that a new game is used each time.

All sessions are themed and the children report back individually on the books they have been reading.

There is a break for soft drinks and biscuits.

In the second part of the meeting, the next theme is introduced by the leaders: who talk about it generally, and then either read part of a story or perhaps act out a funny part (e.g. the storyline of Howitt & diTerlizzi's *The Spider and the Fly* for Illustrated Books).

This is followed by either a paper-based game, or using Author Websites, or e-mailing (willing!) authors or illustrators.

Finally, books are chosen from a special selection on the next theme.

Overall Impact:

- There are 5 girls and 5 boys in the group aged 10 and 11 years.
- The children are now reading a variety of authors including Eoin Colfer, Jacqueline Wilson and Catherine Fisher.
- In the group they like the fun, games, and social interaction together with the reading, and finding fun in trying new authors. Each session is themed and so they have been introduced to a wide variety of subjects and authors over the 9 months.
- Confidence levels have risen by approx. 85%
- Social skills have risen by approx. 85%

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- Reading skills and habits have increased by at least 100% - all the children are reading more and also reading more adventurously. They have a very positive relationship with the Branch staff.
- There has been no feedback either from the school or from the parents – this is not entirely surprising given the social background of the area and its relationship to education. We are planning however to contact the children’s schools in September to ask if any differences have been noticed by the teachers in the children’s performances over the previous school year.
- The group is strongly cohesive: quiet, shy children are now relaxed and chatty and feel at home in the library and with the staff. There is a real sense of being a ‘stakeholder’ in the library and what it has to offer. Other children are keen to join the group when places become available (our Chatterbooks groups are limited to 10 places so that everyone gets a chance to speak and express themselves without being daunted by a large audience). The leaders feel there are no outstanding individual stories because all of the children have progressed within the group, and are now reading more widely and more often.

Chatterbooks At Waterbeach Library Cambridgeshire

Group setting

Waterbeach Library is a small village library, with premises in a portakabin and is the meeting place for Waterbeach Family Reading Group. Waterbeach is a large village situated to the north east of Cambridge, with a population of 4,152 (Census 2001). Of which approximately 18% of population is made up of personnel and dependents from the local Army Barracks.

The Library shares the same site, but separate building, as Waterbeach Primary School. Other community buildings are also present on the site and these are used by youth groups and an After school Club. The school population includes children of those based at the Army barracks, this represents one third of the number of children on the school roll. There is a high rate of mobility– with admissions to the school and leavers- through out the academic year

How the group was set up

The Chatterbooks group that meets in Waterbeach Library is known as the Waterbeach Family Reading Group. This was set up initially in partnership with the school. The school offered the library service opportunities for promotion and the resources with which to do this in the early stages of the project.

Careful research by the Children’s Team suggested that Waterbeach should be a target area for the promotion of the Chatterbooks Reading Group. Initial consultations with the school were very positive. The school agreed to a promotion by the Children’s Team of the new reading group. We agreed to [www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks Report 2003.pdf](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks%20Report%202003.pdf)

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target specifically KS2 pupils in the school, which also gave the library service the opportunity to involve parents with their children's reading and involve those members of the community who had not come in to contact with the library before. This involved an afternoon of talking to all the classes in KS2 at Waterbeach Primary, about the proposed Chatterbooks in the public library.

The response to the promotion by the school, parents and pupils was overwhelmingly positive. It was decided that the group size should be no more than 14 members, a Children's Team member plus support from colleagues across the service. The reading group was oversubscribed from the start. A waiting list was put in place in order to manage demand; the majority of families welcomed this. Display boards in the library and a duplicate one in the school promotes the reading group, their activities and regular book reviews.

The reading group fits in well with key objectives within the library service plan. These are reader development; partnership – working together for the benefit of the community; the use of ICT; life long learning and social inclusion.

Structure of the group

On a regular basis we have 7 adults, and 7 children. The group currently comprises of more boys than girls – 5 boys and 2 girls. Occasionally, dads come along and we have even had a grandma who wanted to come to all the sessions. The main age range of the children is from 8-10. Three of the families are dependents of Army personnel based in the locality; at one time this was four. One family has a daughter attending who has some minor learning difficulties. A characteristic of the reading group is that there is the main core of those who attend regularly, but every 6 months or so 1 or 2 members leave for various reasons- leaving the area or moving on to secondary school, for example.

Previously, we had two brothers attending with their mother. Both brothers were receiving learning support at the school. A few of the activities we carried out at each meeting they found challenging, but were able to accomplish these with support and encouragement from another member of staff present. We were able to provide a range of reading material which they found interesting and stimulating.

Recently, we had twin girls in the group with quite different reading tastes and a strong reading ability, they have now moved on to secondary school. Likewise, a family with links in Asia, have returned to that area after having been with the reading group from the beginning; Dickchan who was 8 years old and attended with his father was a very accomplished reader and had reading tastes beyond this age group. The remaining two girls who make up the group have attended the sessions regularly.

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The group meets once a month in term time only, on a Wednesday, 6.30pm-7.45pm in Waterbeach Library. This is during an open session in the library and is part of the promotional strategy. The session has a refreshment break, at which we have Jaffa cakes and celebrate members' birthdays with cakes. The structure of each meeting depends on whether we have a visitor to the group, but generally we hold a register, share book related news with each other, for example new books; film tie-ins; new book related websites; library news; visits the group is making outside of the sessions plus any plans regarding forthcoming visitors to the sessions. We hold a Talkslot where the group members report back on the material they borrowed from the previous session.

Following on from this we break for refreshments. The group make use of this time to access the children's web pages of Cambridgeshire Libraries, browse in the library and socialise. The group then work on the theme of that particular session. Books or other reading/listening/viewing material related to the session's theme are then made available for the group to select and borrow. Review sheets for them to complete, accompany the selected material and finally a date is set for the next meeting.

We have had since the start of the group three visitors to the sessions; Tony Mitton, the children's writer and poet; the local community beat officer from the police force and a representative from Cambridge United Football Club. All talked about their own reading experience when they were children and the reading they do now as adults. All these visitors were very well received by the group and there are plans to visit the Cambridge Evening News offices in Cambridge in the Autumn of 2003 and then invite a reporter back to visit the group. The group have also visited a local children's bookshop and were delighted to receive a goodie bag each from the staff there. A visit to see the stage show of the Wizard of Oz is planned for the new year. The meetings have a structure to them but are seen by the group as very relaxed and informal.

Where we are now

The group have had access to a very wide range of reading material so far. We have looked at for example, picture book illustration, pop-ups and other novelty books, comics and magazines; film and TV. tie-ins; non-fiction - sport; animals and poetry; holiday reading; children's classics, reviewed publishers proofs, held a book related quiz - Who wants to be a Millionaire style- and had free choice too. The children and parents appear to look forward to the sessions, they like surprise themes and interestingly are reluctant to be given a free choice. They also enjoy the lure of new books and being the first to try a new book.

At the last meeting for this academic year several comments were made that were related to where the children are now in their reading and the enjoyment they obtain from it. The type of comments received were - "We really love coming along to the group"; "Their reading has grown and changed and developed since the start of the group" (parent); "The children

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have had access to and are now reading a range of books that we (parent speaking of experience) didn't envisage at the beginning." "I have really enjoyed the books at Chatterbooks and think Chatterbooks is a really good reading group." (Child)

Where the group could be improved from a staff point of view is more resources; time, and time to promote the group more through the media, have more author visits and perhaps meet outside of the academic term too; to invite the group to approval meetings occasionally so they can suggest titles that can be purchased for stock.

The whole groups reading confidence has increased by 100%. Evidence of this is the contrast between when they were reluctant to choose books at the inception of the group to where at the last meeting it was "where is that book we've just been shown" and the children have eagerly retrieved the title they were looking for. They are also willing to give more challenging texts a try. Anecdotal evidence shows that where one 10 year old boy who was keen on Usborne style puzzle books, has now 'graduated' to the Horrible Science and Horrible Histories series and has enjoyed reading 'Kensuke's Kingdom' by Michael Morpurgo. Similarly, one of the girls who enjoyed the Lucy Daniels series Animal Ark, has moved on to 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe' and absolutely loves it.

The group have now reached the stage whereby they are able to articulate quite clearly their reading preferences and give a balanced review of something they have read. The children and parents are also comfortable with saying why they did not complete a book or did not write a review or actually disliked what they had been given to read. The children are currently reading and reviewing a range of holiday themed reading. The group have been encouraged to promote reading in its widest sense by telling friends and family what they have enjoyed reading over the summer holidays, and whether or not they would recommend what they have read.

Anecdotal evidence – the individual stories

Over the last 17 months since the start of Chatterbooks at Waterbeach Library, staff have received many favourable comments as well as requests and suggestions for themes and activities. The group is vibrant and articulate. The comments from the group can be split into two types, those from the children and those from their parents. Also included are the observations from staff managing the sessions.

The Children's Stories

"We love Chatterbooks"; "The folders are cool"; "I've really enjoyed the books at Chatterbooks"; "I've read lots of different books at Chatterbooks".

The Parents' Stories

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The parents at the last session very much believe that their children have derived a lot of benefit from Chatterbooks; how confident they have all become; the range of genres and themes they have discovered and how much Chatterbooks has really opened up the world of reading for them all. They love the folders and have seen the children change and grow in their reading tastes and skills. They themselves enjoy meeting up with the other parents and discuss how they are all progressing with the books they are reading. Some of the parents would like to hold their own reading group, but feel at the moment that the timing is not right due to the current needs of their families.

The Staff's stories

Many of the children in the first year of the group were quite shy and unused to commenting on their reading habits or offering an opinion on what they had read or would like to read. Gradually, Joshua – who is nearly 10 years old- has gained in confidence and enthusiasm for reading a range of material. It emerges that he has a dry sense of humour and has enjoyed Michael Rosen's silly poems, Morris Gleitzman and Michael Coleman's titles. He is also a fan of the Horrible Histories, and enjoys reading to the group excerpts from these titles.

Jack has always appeared shy and quiet and at one time looked as if he would leave the group. It transpired he found the book reviews a bit of a challenge. However with some gentle encouragement and support from Library Staff and his mum, Jack returned to the next session, happy to listen to other members' reviews, browse around the library and select his next piece of reading material. He has now decided to join in with the reviews again and has become quite a contributor to the Talkslot part of the sessions. We have a James Bond fan aged 9 who enjoys adventure stories and loves talking about the books he has read and sharing the 'best bits' of these with the rest of the group.

Finally, Kaitlyn and Iona the two girls of the group have changed and developed their reading tastes very much since the beginning of this year. Enjoying poetry, the Sleepover Club series, animal stories and some of the children's classics.

Brent Chatterbooks Groups: Willesden Green

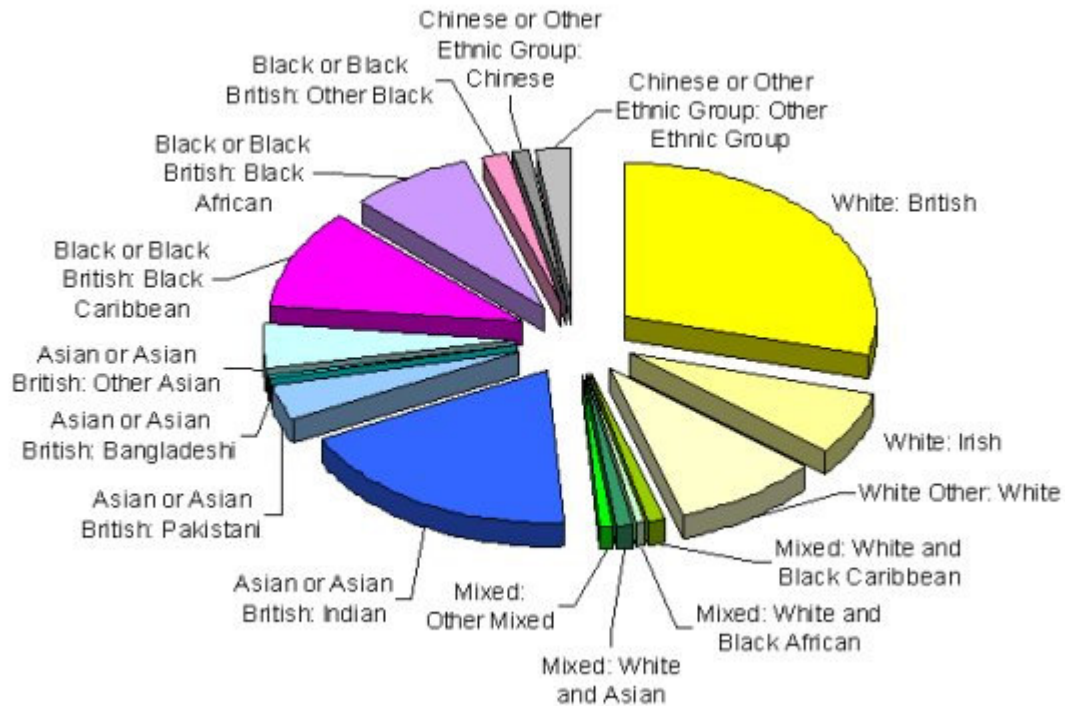
Demographic Profile

Willessden Green library serves a multicultural community in Brent. Brent is one of the most culturally diverse boroughs. (Non - white) ethnic groups in Brent now make up the majority of the population at 53.7%, according to GLA projections. This is the second highest of all the London Boroughs after Newham. The chart below reflects the ethnic grouping categories defined by ONS. Brent proudly boasts a community consisting of a variety of different religions. The largest religious group identified by the 2001 census was

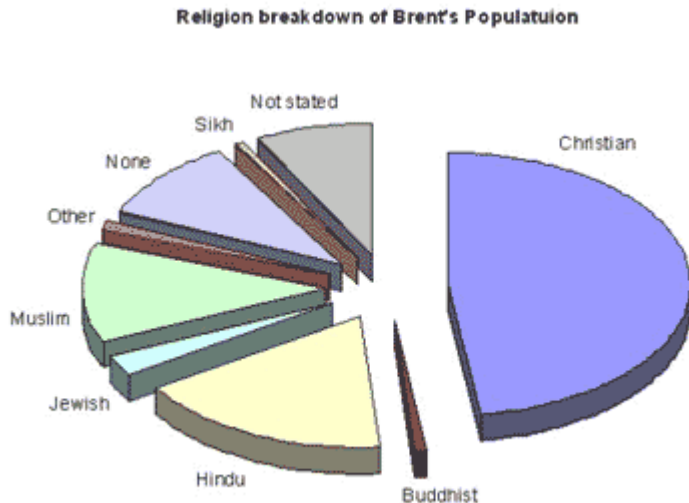
[www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks Report 2003.pdf](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks%20Report%202003.pdf)

Christian (48 per cent) followed by Hindu (17 per cent) and Muslim (12 per cent). Ten per cent of Brent's population stated that they had no religion. Brent's population has a relatively young age structure with 25% of the population being in the 0 to 19 range and Brent's population has a high fertility rate compared to most other London boroughs which accounts for the high level of 0 to 9 year olds.

Ethnic groups



Religious Groups



The group

The group was set up in January 2002 and sessions have been held on the second Monday in the month. There are regularly 20 participants at the sessions, girls outnumber boys in a ratio of 3:1, with as many as 8 boys at some sessions. Themes for the sessions have been:

- Launch, introduction and a taster session
- Old and new
- Prehistoric and stone age
- Magic and mysteries
- Designing and printing a book cover on the theme: magic and mysteries
- Famous people
- Special guest, Sophie Dahl
- Animals
- poetry
- a 'first birthday' celebration for the group
- art and artists
- old objects (in partnership with the museum)

The format for the sessions has been: children talk about the books they've been reading/read out their book reviews; the librarian introduces the theme of the week; an activity for the children (games or breaking into small groups to look at old photos or objects with a magnifying glass and related books etc); group comes back together to discuss; close

Impact

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Of 16 children interviewed, 3 said they were better readers, and 1 said she felt she was a better writer, 4 children said they read more and 1 said they read more difficult books, 2 said it had made reading fun, 2 felt more confident to talk about books and 1 said they had 'learned big words'.

3 children said they talked to parents about the books they read at Chatterbooks, 4 talked to friends, 2 to their teacher 2 to Ian (the librarian running the group), 2 kept it a secret and 1 to their sister. 7 enjoy talking to their friends most, 4 to their family and 2 to Ian.

If the children could change one thing about Chatterbooks, 3 of them would have a bigger group, 1 would like more time to talk, 2 would like more events/author visits

The children value the library for the number and variety of books and the selection which helps with their homework.

The individual stories

Monica Aziz, aged bet 8-12 said that coming to Chatterbooks had made her a better reader and better at writing her own stories. If she could change one thing, it would be 'the way the outside world thinks of books.' Her favourite thing about coming to the library is that there a lots of books there for you and you don't have to buy them. You can read any book you like – and a wide variety...it's also good for homework research

Nikita Patel has been coming to the group for more than a year. She feels that coming to Chatterbooks has meant she has read more and become a better reader – reading more difficult books. She would like more author events. She likes coming to the library to read and do her homework because it's less noisy. Her mum feels that she is more confident about reading

Rebecca Coates is 8 and has been coming to Chatterbooks for just under a year. Her mother says 'she had a reading age well above her actual age when she joined the group. It was good for her to meet with older children who were reading the sort of books that she had already moved on to. Chatterbooks was able to extend this in a way that school was not. She has also very much enjoyed the 'literacy related activities – again extending beyond what she was doing at school. This was particularly important last year when she was in year 2 as she found quite a lot of the KS1 material boring and not sufficiently stretching. She has also gained in confidence in the group situation. Doing the book reviews has been particularly useful. It has given her a structure which she can use in school and has made her think more about what she has just read. (She tends to read quickly and, I suspect, not always thoroughly)'

Shanneece Stuart aged 11 said she used to think reading was boring but since joining Chatterbooks it's not. 'it takes you into a different world'

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Lots of the children, asked with whom they most liked talking about books, said Ian, the librarian who runs Chatterbooks.

Lots said they'd like a bigger group

Carolina Obando, aged 10 who has been coming to Chatterbooks for more than one year, says it has built her confidence to speak to others. She said she was shy before she came to the group. She likes reading more and getting to be a better reader and learning big words. She would like more people to come to the group. She thinks that they don't because they are shy. Carolina's reflected Carolina's feeling that she is more confident about talking to other people. She also said that Chatterbooks meant that Carolina had started to read an awful lot more and that she reads different books and is more confident about reading and about talking with others. 'She's learnt big words and she is more confident in talking to adults about books'. 'My daughter loves going to the Chatterbooks club because she totally adores reading'

Celeste aged 8 also a long standing member of the group put her fingers in her ears when one of the other children was talking about the latest Harry Potter book. She looked horrified that she was going to be told what happened and that she would miss the enjoyment of reading the story herself. This intense feeling was reflected in her comment on talking to others about books. She preferred not to talk to other children about the books she'd read incase they were reading the same books. Instead she talks to her mum, dad and nanny. The thing she likes best about Chatterbooks is that none of her friends bug her!

Celeste's mother says she has benefited from 'meeting with other children and learning to discuss books in a social setting. She has also learnt about book reviews and how to write them. Not to mention the fun she has at Chatterbooks. She doesn't read more as a result of coming to Chatterbooks but she definitely reads different kinds of books 'I think she feels more able to tackle longer more challenging books following the example of the older children in the group. Celeste has also read books on the strength of other children's recommendations at Chatterbooks. Meeting the authors has been a wonderful experience and, as a reluctant writer, has helped Celeste to understand the skills of being able to make a story come to life. The fact that Celeste has reserved books at the library because of other children's reviews of them must be a wonderful endorsement for the programme. Celeste thoroughly enjoys her time at Chatterbooks, it's helped her to really feel that the library and books can be a special part of her life and as a parent I can't ask for anything more! Thank you!'

Alessandra Lombardi aged 9 has been coming to the group for 5 months. She reads widely and loves it. Her favourite author is Roald Dahl. She would like more games at Chatterbooks sessions and 'perhaps a little bit of cheesecake!' Alessandra's mum, Rita Carvalho, said that over the period of just under one year that she has been coming Chatterbooks, her reading and comprehension has improved. She reads more, and is more confident about

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reading. After one special session on art books, Alessandra was inspired to make models and other artistic representations of her reading. The session also opened her eyes to other areas of non-fiction and she has also been reading science books. Alessandra is bi-lingual , Spanish and English and when she came to live in England after being in America, Chatterbooks played a major role in her reading and writing development.

Areas for discussion and future development

1. In 2004 we would like to explore carrying out a published national impact study, using professional researchers, and disseminated at the highest opinion former level. The evaluation done so far has been "in house", but indicates that such a study could be extremely powerful. The library sector is developing new methodologies, and we could draw on that used for the summer reading challenge, which ties in with an important new public sector qualitative tool, Inspiring Learning.
2. We would like to discuss a clear policy on development of Chatterbooks especially whether to charge authorities which would like to buy in supplementary packs and the terms on which that might happen.
3. We would like to discuss a possible roll out to schools through a library/school partnership model
4. We recommend refresher training to consolidate good practice and keep the momentum going
5. We would like to agree an approach to extending Chatterbooks to Northern Ireland including availability of packs and training, and to discuss further the plans for the Scotland events for October 2004
6. We should like to discuss strategies for maintaining the high profile Chatterbooks currently enjoys, including some kind of celebration event whether or not Chatterbooks wins the Arts and Kids Award in February 2004. This might include applying for a Scottish Arts and Business Award in 2004, and involvement in The Reading Agency's Books as Business work.
7. To firm up the new design for the pack and proceed with distribution to libraries waiting to set up new groups
8. Orange's Employee Engagement department has discussed with TRA the possibility of developing a pilot employee volunteering programme for Chatterbooks. As part of the pilot, employees from Orange's internal readers' groups could be offered the opportunity of getting involved in Chatterbooks groups local to its regional offices, before opening. We should like to discuss how Orange would like to take this initiative forward.

And finally... a story from a librarian in Craigneuk Library -

'The children are all attending well and getting a lot out of this. One particular incidence has made an impression on me.

One of the girl's aged 10 took ill the day after being at the group. Her condition was very serious very quickly and she had to be taken to Yorkhill Children's Hospital to have some excess fluid drained. The prognosis was that she would not be able to return to school before the autumn term. We made an orange get well card duly decorated with stickers from our packs and everyone used a post it note to send a message to her and sent it to her in hospital with an Easter Egg. Towards the end of the Easter Holidays we got a telephone call from her. (Although her speech is stilted) Could she come to the Chatterbooks group on [www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks Report 2003.pdf](http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/documents/Chatterbooks%20Report%202003.pdf)

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Monday, even although she was not allowed to attend school? She came along, coped well, - although her Mum kept an eagle eye - and has arranged to return to school on a part-time basis. She actually went back to school full-time long before the summer holidays started.'

Appendix A: Sessions which work particularly well

Designing book covers went well, as did reading and writing poetry. **Grange-O-S, Cumbria**

Falkirk Library's Chatterbooks: The writing workshop led by visiting author, Nicola Morgan Grangemouth Library's Chatterbooks: The children spending some of the library's book budget selecting books for the library during a key copy session. This has resulted in the children and their friends placing requests for the books they selected.

At Christmas we gave the children "mystery" books to read and review, wrapped up in Christmas paper so that they did not know what book they were getting until they got home and opened the parcel. Choices were based on library staff's knowledge of the children's tastes and abilities as demonstrated at earlier sessions. The visit by Jacqueline Wilson in Oct 2002 was also a resounding success! **Ormsgill, Cumbria**

Using websites to consider books in a different way, Jacqueline Wilson's desert island books inspired the group to come up with their own top ten. **Cumbria**

Poetry session where children shared their favourite poetry. They would have liked to go on all day **Herefordshire**

Several. Treasure hunts using books as clues leading to other books particularly good. **Southwark**

A chance to find out from and consult with families about their reading habits and what shapes their reading choices; what reading material they would like to see in libraries and how they want their libraries to be developed. **Cambridgeshire**

Acting out well-known books has worked well at Lincoln (you need a very extrovert member of staff!). A visit to the Lincoln bookshop to meet an author was a fantastic experience for the Wragby children as many of them had never been in a good bookshop and had certainly never met a 'real' author before. Taking along a pet tortoise to the session on animal books was a success. **Lincolnshire**

The children love making the fortune telling thingy! We have also found one that ties in with the 'Winnie-the-witch' stories, so we read the story and then make the fortune games. The children then 'interview' each other using the fortune games. They really enjoy it. **Staffordshire**

We really enjoyed shadowing the Greenaway prize - the website was very helpful and the children loved the print-out membership cards and certificates - especially helping to laminate them! **Chelsea**

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The best session we ran was when we read stories by Paul Jennings. We then made a list of words that Paul Jennings may use and we wrote and decorated stories. The children found this session great fun. **RB Ken & Chelsea central**

They enjoyed looking at picture books, we have looked at authors – Babette Cole, Shirley Hughes and Korky Paul. We have also used Stories from the web website and other book related websites which has been popular **Halton**

Recently I did the mystery book in a bag – simple enough to do but the children had no idea what the book was going to be. They couldn't wait to open the bag to see what they had got. Particularly good as Sharon Holmes had organised for the group to have some pre-publication books so they were happy at that. Like to do jigsaws where I will scan some book jackets, cut them up in to lots of pieces then they have to try and find all the parts – simple to do yet the children enjoy it. Easter time I did a treasure hunt where they had to find the chatterbooks characters hidden in the junior library – they had great fun doing this. **Dorset**

A Show and Tell session where the children all brought along a treasured possession and then wrote a poem about it. **Blackburn**

Tooting: talk about your favourite place to read, favourite male and female characters, favourite baddies. This was all written up and made into a poster. Tooting – using People's Network computers for part of the session to look up author websites. Battersea – the group are reading *I capture the castle* and have been on a group outing to see the film. **LB Wandsworth**

Any session, which had craft activities, as opposed too quizzes went down best. **Stirling**

Fauldhouse – Matched a selection of book jackets to an extract from each book...great discussion was generated from session worksheet on labelling parts of book & session "Can you judge a book by its cover" Linlithgow – Scanned book jackets of books reviewed to put on display board in junior library. Boghall P.S. – Session always finished with "game " of some sort and they all enjoyed taking part in these...Hang man; wordsearches; listen to story and complete question sheet etc. **West Lothian**

LE – Discussing Greenaway titles and voting on them. 'Pants' won easily. They love anything to do with Nick Sharratt. GA – Craft-based and computer activities work best **Derbyshire**

Arts & Craft sessions – Making masks and bookmarks very popular. **Dudley MBC**

Buying sessions – choosing from catalogues and from bookshop shelves; writing letters to famous people to find out their books. **Dundee**

Book Openings – the first page of various books were copied and questions asked about how interesting the pages were, how much info did they give, did you want to read more. After discussion, attempts were made to match the first page to the book. Also the World Book Day session when we accessed the World Book Day website, made comments online and listened to the Terry Pratchett interview. **Glasgow**

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Jacqueline Wilson's visit stands out as the most successful. Other sessions have met with a fairly consistent positive response. **Gloucestershire**

Sessions which have worked well include poetry; illustrators, particularly Anthony Browne; mock interviews with authors and poets; designing book covers; all the groups enjoy word searches and games such as consequences and also like arts and crafts to be included on a regular basis. **Knowsley**

Stereotypes in fiction. Quizzes & treasure trails – literary related & using IT. Enjoy discussing/involvement in national events ie the Big Read. **Leeds**

One session we read Julia Jarman's Time Travelling Cat and the children made a full sized mummy made out of cardboard and old sheets. They made a fantastic display. **North Tyneside**

Book-cover design and anything that involves producing displays **North Yorkshire**

Guildford - Poetry session where each child read out a favourite poem from the books they had selected last time, and then wrote their own.

Epsom – Limericks session where children had to put sentences already prepared on strips of paper together to make a limerick.

Merstham – made a board game linked to books we had read. **Surrey**

Yes Malden Manor took children to London Eye on World Book Day 2002 – great fun, kids got a lot from it. **Kingston upon Thames**

Yes the children from Pallister Park Chatterbooks sessions have been a great success. **Middlesborough**

All have been great fun as we have refreshments and chat half way through. At Christmas we had a quiz and mince pies which went very well. **Wokingham**

Our final session for each group (we change the children termly to enable the maximum number of participants) is a themed evening which involves dressing up eg pirates and red Indians and looking at fiction and non-fiction which relate to the theme. **Wokingham, W.**

We have now got in to the habit of telling the children at the end of each meeting what we will be discussing at the next group. This means that the children can take a book to match that theme and have it read by the then. So far themes have included Non-Fiction books – a child took a cookery book and bought in some crispy cakes the following week; poetry – the children wrote a poem each; alien books – the children drew pictures of what they thought aliens look like; short stories – the children, as a group, wrote a nonsense short story. We also have quizzes for the children to do. **N. Lanarkshire**

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