



First Minister's Reading Challenge Advisory Group

Minutes

22 November 2016

10.00am – 12.00pm

Scottish Book Trust, Sandeman House, Trunk's Close, 55 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1SR

Present:

Caitlyn Bannatyne – Graphic Novelist

Lindsey Barley – Community reading projects/Musselburgh Burgh Primary School

Antonia Clark- Scottish Book Trust

Angie Crawford – Waterstones

Laura Dougan – Scottish Book Trust

Lindsey Duncan- Education Scotland

Craig Flunkert- Scottish Government

Lindsey Fraser – Fraser Ross Associates

Jen Harwood- Scottish Book Trust

Lucy Jukes – Chair

Margaret Leitch – National Parent Forum of Scotland

Moira Findlay – Scottish Book Trust (observer)

James Robertson – Writer

Rosie Sim – Scottish Book Trust (note-taker)

Rosemary Ward – Gaelic Books Council

Apologies:

Hugh Andrew – Birlinn Ltd

Kevin Brack – Brunstane Primary School

Derek Brown – Association of Directors of Education

John Doherty – Larbert High School

Catriona MacKenzie – Scottish Government

Amina Shah – Scottish Book Trust

Pamela Tulloch – Scottish Library and Information Council

1. Update from Scottish Book Trust
 - 1.1. Key Facts & Figures

- As of 21 November, 1480 schools have registered for the reading challenge (70% of schools in Scotland).
 - Every Local Authority in Scotland is registered, including 100% of schools in North Ayrshire and Clackmannanshire. These Local Authorities appear to be using the Challenge as part of their ongoing work towards improving literacy and attainment.
 - Scottish Government analysis of the pupils within the schools registered shows that pupils from all SIMD deciles are taking part.
- 1.2. Case Study Plan
- 13 case studies are planned with 10 schools and 3 libraries across 10 different Local Authorities.
 - Each case study will showcase different ways of engaging with the Challenge. For example, some will showcase the use of outside funding, how to launch the Challenge, working with libraries, a whole school approach to the Challenge, building community partnerships and developing reading spaces.
 - As a trailblazer, Our Lady's Primary School in Dundee will show how to keep up momentum throughout the Challenge and how to put forward an entry. Scottish Book Trust will support the school to provide a series of blog entries at each stage of the reading challenge. Their work will be showcased, but they will not be able to enter Challenges due to the level of support from Scottish Book Trust. The school has a high proportion of EAL pupils and so will also highlight inclusion.

The group are asked for any recommendations of schools and libraries who may be interested in conducting further case studies as the challenge progresses. A case study focusing on very reluctant readers is suggested - Scottish Book Trust will look out for this.

1.3. Group Updates and Discussion

The group discussed ways to capture data to conduct impact assessments. The use of CEM (Centre for Evaluation) analysis and InCAS assessment is recommended as this is also used by Local Authorities and many schools.

The group discussed how the Challenge has had an impact on booksales and library uptake since its launch.

All Waterstones shops have the book list in stores and use this as a starting point to make recommendations for individual customers.

An increase in library uptake in some areas has been noted, with children returning to their local libraries time and again, showing that the challenge is helping to maintain momentum and long-term interest. It has also been noticed that it is not

only P4-7 pupils who are being encouraged to join their local libraries, but the younger cohorts as well. Scottish Book Trust will follow this up with SLIC to see if there is any data reflecting this observed increase in library uptake.

2. Inspiring Classrooms

Scottish Book Trust updated the group on the progress of Inspiring Classrooms.

2.1. Description and costs

- Inspiring Classrooms is a project created to help schools build and sustain a reading culture. Schools can apply to receive a small grant for a project of their choice, including an author visit and resources for P4-7 pupils taking part.
- The total grant available for each school is approximately £325.
- £175 is used for the author's fee, and up to £50 for travel expenses. Any travel expenses reasonably exceeding £50 can be invoiced to Scottish Book Trust.
- The remaining amount can be spent on resources for the P4-7 pupils to take part in the project.
- There is enough in the budget to fund approximately 50 schools to receive an Inspiring Classrooms grant

2.2. Submissions

- Applications to Inspiring Classrooms closed on Friday 18th November
- 135 applications were received from schools
- Local Authorities with the highest numbers of submissions were: South Lanarkshire (32), Glasgow (17), North Ayrshire (9) and Fife (8). No applications were received from Angus, East Renfrewshire, Midlothian, Shetland or the Western Isles
- An initial overview of applications so far suggests that schools across a wide range of SIMD profiles have submitted. The majority appear to have already started building a reading culture and would like to use Inspiring Classrooms to maintain momentum and reward pupils taking part.

2.3. Shortlisting process

Shortlisting will then take account of the following criteria (in no particular order):

- Geographic spread- so that schools across Scotland have the opportunity to participate
- Need/impact- how much impact the grant would have on their project
- Level of commitment and enthusiasm evident in the application

- After an initial sift, a panel of representatives from Scottish Book Trust, Education Scotland and Scottish Government will help shortlist the final 50 successful applicants.
- Dates for shortlisting: Wednesday 30 November and Thursday 1 December
 - Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications by Monday 19 December

3. Celebration Event

The date for this will either be week commencing 12 or 19 June 2017, hopefully with the First Minister attending.

Central venues are being looked at, with schools' transport costs being covered by the Scottish Book Trust

The group discussed the possible formats the event could take, with particular consideration to what would be most suitable for a children's audience.

A mini-festival style event was suggested by the Group, with a number of themed areas and a big show at the end where children will receive their awards.

Strong community and parent involvement is recommended, perhaps with tickets given to children to invite the adults they would like to join them. This could be family members or community members, such as librarians. A child-led approach rather than teacher-led is suggested as a way to increase excitement.

Timing of the event is important. Should the event be intended to involve parents, Scottish Book Trust should consider which times would be most appropriate.

4. Evaluation

The Group were updated by Scottish Book Trust on the evaluation plans. A brief has been sent to Scottish Government based on the one discussed at the group meeting on 20 June 2016.

The brief covers the context, strategy, primary & secondary outcomes, and indicators.

The group approved the brief, with a couple of suggested additional areas to include, such as accessibility for children with additional support needs and children in Gaelic Medium Education.

The next steps are:

- Approval from Scottish Government- November 2016
- Bids from evaluators- December 2016/January 2017

- Refining of evaluation model, outcomes and indicators- January 2017
- Work commencing- January/February 2017
- Reporting- June 2017

5. Partnerships

The group discussed the different types of potential partnerships:

- Relationships
- National Trust Fund
- Local empowerment training for schools and support for small and local businesses

Key priorities for these are:

- Widening access to books
- Increasing accessibility
- Normalizing reading in everyday life

Suggestions for work included:

- Resource pack for teachers with tips and advice on how to contact businesses for support, including template letters, branding and logos
- Resources pack for businesses to show and promote their support of the Reading Challenge, also including marketing materials and logos
- Contacting Parent Councils, libraries and other literacy organisations to provide support and get involved

The Group agreed that it was important not to rely on one large commercial sponsor within the partnership strategy, but to look for collaborative partnerships at a local level to empower communities. It was acknowledged that the need is not only for financial backing to increase access to books, but also partnerships working collaboratively with the Reading Challenge were required to meet the other key priorities. Focusing on large commercial partnerships risk taking away autonomy over community's development of a reading cultures, particularly small, local independent businesses, such as local book sellers.

The role of local bookshops was discussed and the Group emphasised that visiting a local bookshop is an important part of growing and experiencing a reading culture. It was acknowledged that local book shops survive not solely through book sales, but through their relationships with communities. School visits to their local bookshops is an important part of creating this relationship and something to be encouraged. Whether the to shop makes direct sales from such visits is not the sole aim, but rather creating an enjoyable and memorable experience for children and a well-rounded reading environment that can only benefit booksellers and their

communities. The pleasure of experiencing this in an increasingly digital age, from exposure to the carefully made selections and visually-appealing displays to the act of choosing and paying for their very own book is an important part of a child's reading journey. There is also much that bookshops can do for the reading culture in their communities that is free for people to attend. For example, many bookshops work regularly with publishers to arrange author visits and events in their local areas.

It was also suggested that working with local NHS services and health visitors would be a way to widen access and normalize reading cultures. For example, book donation boxes stationed at local health centres could be away for vulnerable families to gain access. Falkirk has introduced a similar model where book drops can be made at local pharmacies, health centres and various different services in the area.

6. Expansion

Scottish Book Trust gave a suggested plan on how to expand the challenge to P1-3 and then to secondary schools. A summary of this is as follows:

- P1-3: roll out to this cohort in the next school year 2017/18. The model will be the same as that for P4-7 but with some adaptations to resources for the younger age group.
- Secondary schools: a different model will be required for secondary schools due to the differences in the way curricula are structured and the age of pupils. For this reason, a pilot year could be run before rolling out on a national scale. 5-6 schools could be chosen to test different ways of introducing the Reading Challenge at secondary level. The schools selected would represent a wide range of characteristics, such as school size, location, cohort profile, existence or not of a school librarians and approaches to literacy across learning, for example. The models could be co-developed with the schools taking part, allowing them to reflect their specific needs and ambitions. The range of models piloted would provide a rich source of information to inform future expansion and development of a Reading Schools model over time.

The Group discussed the logistics of these plans and the following suggestions and recommendations were made:

- At least one of the pilot schools should follow P7's who participated in the Reading Challenge at primary school level, to see how pupils who are familiar with the idea of a Reading Challenge carry this into secondary school
- It is recommended to avoid introducing the Challenge to pupils between Easter-Summer due to intense time of exams
- Enlisting school librarians as lead contacts during the pilot is suggested

7. AOB

The following meeting dates are proposed for 2017:

- Thursday 19 January
- Tuesday 21 March
- Thursday 18 May
- FMRC Celebration Event- June (date TBC)
- Thursday 21 September
- Tuesday 21 November

Advisory Group members are asked to contact Scottish Book Trust if they are unable to make any of these proposed dates.