



## **Reading and high-quality texts in the curriculum: an afternoon with WSCC Schools Library Service**

### **Duncan Edwards, Education Adviser**



***"Save time, save money...give your pupils the library they deserve"***

The Education Inspection Framework places huge significance on reading; it is seen as the gateway to the wider curriculum and a key tool in unlocking access to additional knowledge and understanding. There is a plethora of research that supports the need for pupils to learn to read as quickly as possible, but research also identifies the crucial need to develop a love of reading too. As Kirsty Godfrey stated in her online address to West Sussex schools back in 2021 that reading "paves the way" for future success and therefore, "learning to read is an essential priority."

***"Through the Schools Library Service book collections can be regularly replenished and updated."***

Having mastered decoding, supporting pupils in their wider reading journey is critical if they are to become confident, fluent, and accurate readers who love to dive into a book. Well-chosen texts which broaden pupils' reading diet, spark excitement and increase engagement will support pupils to know, understand and remember more over time.

***"If you are looking to develop a love of reading, West Sussex Schools Library Service can support schools to map their reading journey beyond phonics. This work may include discussions with leaders, a library audit, a review of current reading materials and/or how to create vibrant reading communities."***

Many schools have spent quality time considering their curriculum, ensuring that it is reflective of and responsive to the needs of their pupils, parents, and wider community. Using systemic thinking and repeatedly answering key questions, such as 'why this?', 'why now?', leaders have created curriculum maps that show a clear progression of knowledge and skills. In mapping the endpoint composite knowledge, subject leaders have been able to break down the component knowledge into smaller steps, sequencing units of learning logically to help pupils deepen their knowledge and skills over time.

Last term, I spent an afternoon in the Schools Library Service base at Worthing Library with Senior Librarian, Abby Squire, exploring the work of the Schools Library Service (SLS). The SLS team not only understand the importance of reading but are genuinely passionate about helping schools to use books effectively as part of a well-planned curriculum. Schools can be provided with a vast range of high-quality texts to support the development of reading because the team at SLS totally comprehend how they can be threaded and meaningfully used across the curriculum to support learning.

***"We recognise the uniqueness of every school/setting and always try to ensure that the services we provide meet the needs of pupils and staff."***



Lots of primary schools have taken a thematic, topic-based curriculum approach with the SLS team keen to ensure book selections are as carefully matched as possible. With thousands of books at their disposal and new titles and authors regularly available, the team are keen to provide schools with texts that support the development of reading whilst also building curriculum coherence. In doing so, they aim to help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the key themes or concepts being intentionally taught.

*"On average, approx. 1000 project loan units were delivered to schools across the county per term – with a minimum of 14 books per unit, that's over 14,000 books every term!"*

When it comes to author, genre, subject or content, pupils' tastes, interests, and passions are hugely diverse. The SLS team are mindful of this challenge and seek to provide schools with an expansive range of books. During my visit, I was given a guided tour and, although not an exhaustive list, some of the categories that stood out to me include:

<b>'New arrivals'</b> **	<b>'Wordless books'</b>	<b>'Dyslexia friendly reads'</b>	<b>'Transition reads' (KS2-KS3)</b>
<b>'Graphic novels'</b>	<b>'Beginner reads'</b>	<b>'Dual language collections'</b>	<b>'Puzzle books'</b>
<b>'Reluctant readers'</b>	<b>'Braille and noisy books'</b>	<b>'High content, low ability books'</b>	<b>'Poetry and rhyme'</b>
<b>'Picture books'</b>	<b>'Challenging reads'</b>	<b>'Large print books'</b>	<b>'Nursery collections'</b>

**\*\* "New books are bought in advance of publication so that titles can be circulated to schools as soon as possible."**

In collaboration with the Education for Safeguarding (E4S) team, SLS has very recently purchased over £7k of themed books to support schools in the teaching of RSHE. These high-quality resources have been well received by many schools already. As a guide, please see some of themes covered listed below:

**\* Mindfulness \* Feelings \* Philosophy \* Bullying \* Behaviour \* Resilience**  
**\* Identity \* Gender and sexuality \* Racism \* Tolerance \* Families**  
**\* Grief \* Refugees \* Disability \* Safety and body privacy**

For many schools, high quality core texts have been fundamental in building a coherent curriculum that meaningfully connects key concepts to support a growing body of knowledge over time. Having spent an afternoon chatting with Abby, it seems that more and more schools are requesting books not based on one topic but on various themed related concepts that have been threaded throughout the curriculum. With an SLA offering amazing value for money, if you've not yet subscribed to the West Sussex Schools Library Service, 2023 could be the year to do so!

*"Typically, the books that schools receive over the year equate to 7 or 8 times the value of the Service Level Agreement."*

**"We want to make it as easy for schools as possible."** As part of your annual subscription with SLS, a flexible exchange service is available. This can be organised through the 'deliver and collect' service or through the use of the mobile library visits.



Associated links:

- [Empowering teachers to help children read for pleasure](#) - Professor Teresa Cremin
- [Reading Communities](#) - The Open University
- [CLPE Reading for Pleasure 2021-22](#) - Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
- [Using stories in the curriculum](#) - Mary Myatt
- [A book led curriculum: designing a magical learning journey](#) - Jo Gray

To find out more about the West Sussex Schools Library Service and access a range of freely available reading related resources, please visit their [webpage](#).

Alternatively, watch this [short video](#) about the Schools Library Service!