

Marketing Innovation Awards 2011

Powys Library Service

Space Hop Summer Reading Challenge participation initiative

Objective:

To attempt to increase the numbers of children taking part in the summer reading challenge, in the Newtown library catchment area, and to help these children to maintain their reading standards over the summer holidays.

Summary:

Powys Library and Schools Library Service staff worked closely with teaching colleagues in local schools to enrol pupils as members of the public library and summer reading challenge. We built on our existing good working relationship with the schools, by taking the Bookrunner children's mobile library to them to enrol the children in the game, and allowing the children to borrow one book each on a special class ticket, which then had to be taken back to the public library to continue with the challenge. Those not already members would need to join the library at this point, thus attracting new audiences.

The promotional initiative was very successful, with participation in the summer reading challenge up by 130%.

Target audience:

Children aged 4-11 in 7 primary schools within Newtown.

Launch:

The £300 grant received from WAG through the Libraries for Life programme was used to put on an inspiring launch for the initiative, with a visit from Techniquet's Star Lab to the Maldwyn Leisure Centre in Newtown, for invited classes to enjoy. The Bookrunner mobile library and staff were in attendance, in order to promote the reading game – see attached photograph and press release.

Methodology:

Following the launch on July 8th, the Bookrunner mobile library visited all seven local schools during the next week, for all the children to enrol for the game and choose one book to start them on their way. This visit was in addition to the school's regular termly visit from the Bookrunner, but used the same resources in terms of stock and staffing, therefore the only extra cost would have been a small amount of diesel. The visits were made after all the routine termly visits were finished, and so made good use of the van and stock which would otherwise not have been utilised at this time. Fliers and reading game registration forms were distributed to the schools, to be sent home with the children beforehand – example attached.

Events were held in the library during the holidays to keep up momentum – weekly storytimes were held on a Thursday afternoon, plus space themed events on 8th and 17th August.

When the children were back in school in September, members of the public library and schools library service staff went in to assemblies to present the certificates and medals to all the children who had completed the summer reading challenge. (photo enclosed)

Evaluation:

The number of children starting the reading game at Newtown library increased from 195 in 2009, to 459 in 2010, **an increase of 135%.**

Those completing the challenge rose from 113 in 2009, to 261 in 2010, an **increase of 130%.**

Library issue figures were increased too, as below:

Newtown issues July/Aug 2010:

July 2010	Junior issues	3330	(July 2009	3128)
	Welsh junior	219	(July 2009	187)

August 2010	Junior issues	4052	(Aug 2009	3050)
	Welsh junior	247	(Aug 2009	172)

Staff views – it was a lot of extra work, but it was well worth it! “Lovely to see all the children coming in.”

The headteacher of one of the schools involved commented very favourably on the number of her pupils who completed the challenge, which had risen dramatically – “a huge achievement for children from one of the poorest estates in Newtown.”