



13 May 2008

## Children's publishers and libraries: new partnership scheme launches

A new partnership scheme between children's publishers and librarians begins work this month (May 2008), heralding a new era of joint work. Called **Children's Reading Partners**, it is led by The Reading Agency and involves 12 children's publishers, The Publishers' Association and the main children's library bodies.

Children's Reading Partners was launched at the Bookseller Association's 2008 conference on 13 May (Brighton). It will work to take the children's library/publisher relationship to a new level, with the ultimate aim of encouraging more children to read more. It will build on a new understanding in the book trade of the strategic significance of libraries' changing work with readers. This understanding has been spearheaded by the work of the original Reading Partners project, also led by The Reading Agency, in which ten leading publishers of adult books have been working in partnership with the UK public library network. (Please see "Notes to editors" for more details.)

Children's Reading Partners will help publishers connect to young readers in new ways by allowing them to link into important developments in libraries. These include libraries' national Chatterbooks children's reading group network and The Reading Agency's new teenage social networking website.

New online databases will create a new and easier flow of information and contact between libraries and publishers. Breakfast briefings and regional road shows will build new knowledge and contact between the sectors.

**"We've been building up to this for two years, so it's brilliant to get this scheme off the ground"** says Miranda McKearney, Director of the Reading Agency. **"It has huge potential to harness new publisher input so that children using libraries have really contemporary reading experiences. And equally huge potential to inject user innovation by helping publishers talk direct to young readers."**

### **Children's Reading Partners: who's on board?**

Ten children's publishers are on board for the two-year pilot: Hachette, Harper Collins, Faber, Macmillan, Penguin, Random House, Simon and Schuster, OUP, Scholastic and Walker. The Publishers' Association is also supporting the scheme. Two publishers are involved in a one-year work package: Bloomsbury with the teenage website, and Egmont with Chatterbooks reading groups.

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A new regional structure of library representatives will allow publishers to talk to libraries right across the country. The representatives come from the Association of Children's and Education Librarians, and will be working closely with the Youth Libraries Group.

### **What will be happening?**

- A new strategy group steering Children's Reading Partners will start work in June. This will be supported by a senior team from The Reading Agency, and Naomi Danquah has been appointed as Children's Reading Partners Co-ordinator.
- Publishers will link directly to children in Chatterbooks reading groups to test ideas, promote authors, and get feedback on jacket designs. They will attend library training events to network and build understanding of the opportunities offered by libraries' reading groups.
- Publishers will be using The Reading Agency's new teenage reading website to experiment with Web 2.00 technology to promote authors and gather young people's own ideas about reading. This launches in September with podcasts, tagging, RSS feeds, virtual author events and blogs.
- Libraries and publishers will go to breakfast briefings to build new understanding about areas of joint interest.
- There will be two regional road shows a year, bringing librarians, publishers and writers together to look at forthcoming titles and possibilities of regional collaboration on promotions, author tours, training or special initiatives.
- The scheme will be guided and supported by regional library co-ordinators who will energise libraries in their region, and help shape initiatives with the publishers.
- For the National Year of Reading, publishers in the new Children's Reading Partners group are providing libraries with access to 235 authors for library events.

Other children's publishers keen to join in should contact Miranda McKearney or Tricia Kings from The Reading Agency on [miranda.mckearney@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:miranda.mckearney@readingagency.org.uk) or [tricia.kings@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:tricia.kings@readingagency.org.uk)

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### **Notes to editors**

- Founded in 2002, The Reading Agency is an independent charity and reading development agency. It aims to get more people reading more, and is passionate about everyone having an equal chance to become a reader. For more general information about The Reading Agency and its work, please visit: [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

- **Reading Partners:** The Reading Agency leads a partnership scheme with adult publishers called Reading Partners. This has proved a real force for innovation in the reading industry. Reading Partners projects have included, for the National Year of Reading, a huge “reader meets writer” programme including some of the UK’s best-known authors and covering every UK library authority, and *Reaching Readers*, a project aimed at giving libraries and publishers a closer understanding of the reading and writing habits of black and minority ethnic audiences. The Reading Partners publishers are: Bloomsbury, Faber, Hachette Livre, HarperCollins, Harlequin Mills & Boon, Pan Macmillan, Penguin, Random House, Time Warner and the Independent Publishers Guild. For more information, please visit: [www.readingagency.org.uk/adults/reading-partners/](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/adults/reading-partners/)

**It’s time to stop reading. It’s time to get someone else to start.**