

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM 21st NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

SCHOOL'S LIBRARY SERVICE UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates the Forum on the recent changes to the Schools' Library Service and the service plans for the future.

2.1 BUDGET

2.2 The Schools Library Service is a de-delegated service, mainly for Primary Schools, although other schools can access services on request. Funding from the Schools' Forum provides £189,900, the equivalent of £8.78 per primary school pupil which is from maintained schools. Academies have the opportunity to buy back into the service. The make-up of the complete budget is shown below.

2023-24

Staffing £96,300

Other costs including book fund £60,435

Support Services Recharge £33,165

TOTAL £189,900

Income Secondary Schools £1000 cr

Income Academies £8771.22 cr

Income Special Schools £1066 cr

TOTAL £10,837.22

3.1 2023-24 PRIORITIES

- We will continue to maintain our current level of book, artefact loans and audio-visual resource provision for both maintained and academy schools as a standard service.
- We will continue to offer our expert librarian advice for the remodelling of school libraries on a first come, first served basis. We currently have a list of schools waiting for our services due to its popularity.
- We will continue to ensure our book stock, resources and offers to all schools remain relevant and up to date.

- We have made good on our intention to increase our academy uptake, with 5 schools now signed up. We hope to continue this trend and have had contact with all schools hoping to become academies in the future. We continue to encourage all Wirral academies to buy into the service.
- With the closure of 8 public libraries, SLS is proving to be even more essential for schools. Our reading for pleasure boxes are incredibly popular and an invaluable tool for schools hoping to improve post pandemic literacy levels.
- After promotion on the BBC schools website, our microbits are more popular than ever and we have more sets available for schools to borrow.
- We are currently in the middle of a move from our JP base to Ridgeway school. As you can imagine this is a huge undertaking and we would like to extend our thanks to the staff at One Call for their support. This move was not in our plans for 2023 but it must be noted that our schools have been very supportive and understanding. However, it cannot be underestimated the impact this move has had on both staff and service. We are currently working between two sites, neither of which are fully operational, and it should be assumed that our January deliveries will be late. Our main concern is a lack of space for all of our resources, but we are hoping that we will have access to an offsite storage space. As ever, we are sure that SLS will continue to thrive in its new base, thanks largely to the hard work and enthusiasm of the staff.
- We would like to extend an invitation to all Councillors, interested Council Officers and School Governors to visit our new SLS base to see what we do and how much our service has to offer, especially as 2024 marks 50 years of Wirral Schools Library Service.

4.1 STAFFING

4.2 There are currently 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ FTE members of staff:

- 2 * 0.5 Schools' Librarian - job share
- 1 * 0.6 Assistant Schools' Librarian - $\frac{3}{4}$ post
- 1 * Library Manager- ft post

Additional temporary staff members are employed three times a year to help facilitate the collection and delivery of resources to and from schools at the beginning and end of each term.

The service will be based at:
 Ridgeway school
 Noctorum Ave,
 Birkenhead,
 Prenton
 CH43 9EB

Please see our entry in the Wirral Traded Services Brochure for more information on the service we offer.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That the Forum notes the report.

Louise Rice and Catherine McNally
Wirral Schools' Library Service
November 2023