

## **Solihull Bookstart Annual Report 2010-11**

In December 2010 Book Trust and the Department for Education agreed a budget settlement that reduced the national funding for Bookstart by approximately 50%. The result of this has been the announcement of the withdrawal of the Bookstart Plus pack for 2 year olds by June 2011. All the other Bookstart packs and offers from Book Trust will be maintained.

Local funding within Solihull is made through Libraries & Information Services for staffing and a £10,000 commission from the Early Years Surestart fund for delivery, promotion and activities for families.

- Take-up statistics for the three packs in 2010-11 are:
  - Baby bags (for 9 month olds) 103.8% take-up  
2487 packs given out, Birth rate 2394
  - Bookstart Plus (for 2 year olds) 97.6% take-up (97% last year)  
2214 packs given out, Birth rate 2267
  - Treasure Chest (for 3 year olds) 102.9% take-up  
2318 packs given out, Birth rate 2252
  
- 990 Book Crawl certificates were awarded to children across the year (892 in 2009-10, a rise of 11%) with 5082 library visits to take part in Book Crawl (4636 in 2009-10, a rise of 9.6%). Each certificate represents four visits to the library and is an indicator that Book Crawl families make regular use of library services and instils both a library habit and regular book sharing within the family.
  
- In the north of the borough 190 Book Crawl certificates were awarded to children across the year (158 in 2009-10, a rise of 20.2%) and library visits for Book Crawl rose by 28% to 933 (729 in 2009-10).
  
- 337 adults and 517 children attended Bookstart Family Learning activities during the year (62 adults and 119 children in 2009-10) with 35.8% of parents reporting they would increase the time they read with their children as a result (38% in 2009-10), 54.2% (50% in 2009-10) would increase their library visits and 45.9% (10% in 2009-10) would spend more time sharing nursery rhymes. All respondents in the North of the borough reported that they would increase these three activities.
  
- Although library membership by under-fives increased by 7.9% in the past year (compared to a 3.1% rise for members over the age of 5), active library membership for under-fives fell by 3.9% over the previous year to the level of 2009. However, 35.9% of the under-5 population are active members compared to 18.6% of the 5 and over population.
  
- An estimated 64.2% of the under-fives population in Solihull are now library members.
  
- 8 Bookshine packs and 4 Book Touch packs were gifted to children with hearing and visual disabilities.

- Take-up of the dual language offer, an additional book in both English and a family's mother tongue at one stage of the Bookstart offer, remained poor with only 11 additions requested (3 in 2009-10).
- Priorities for 2011-12 are to
  - maintain the profile of Bookstart and the book sharing message in the light of the reduction of the number of interventions
  - promote the take-up of Bookstart Corner (partnership work with Children's Centres targeting so-called hard to reach families)
  - promote Bookstart Bear Club (the replacement to the Book Crawl) particularly in the North of the borough
  - promote the take-up of the dual language offer and develop partnerships with groups linked to families where English is an additional language
  - develop the links with children's centres and Sensory Impairment Service