

Summer Reading Challenge reading and activity programme 2018

Manchester Libraries participate in the national Summer Reading Challenge (developed by The Reading Agency) every year. The Challenge is designed to keep children reading over the summer holidays, and prevent the dip in reading levels that can occur at this time. We offer a lively programme of activities, crafts and



entertainment alongside the Challenge, and encourage young people to become involved in volunteering to build up their own skills and confidence. In 2018, the theme for the SRC was Mischief Makers, celebrating the 80th anniversary of The Beano.

Each year, we promote through schools, libraries and launch days, and work with partners to ensure the message around reading, and joining in the Challenge reaches as many children and young people in Manchester as possible. This report examines the various aspects of the programme, partnerships and engagement.

Highlights in numbers

8541 joined

5178 completed (read at least 6 books)

957 joined the library in order to take part

9835 activity attendees (children and adults)

2329 activity attendees (children and adults) at Read & Feed sessions

90 volunteers contributed 944 hours

11,544 children heard about SRC through **86** school engagement sessions

Reading

Over summer 2018, 8,541 children joined the Summer Reading Challenge, and 5,178 completed reading all six books, a total of 60% completing. Figures have shown a steady increase from 2015, with a peak in 2017. The change to using the library management system, Spydus in 2018 has had an impact on the figures

recorded this year, but we would expect to see an increase again next year as the new system embeds.

SRC year	2015	2016	2017	2018 (new recording method)
Children joined	3,494	5,712	11,760	8,541
Children completed	2,553	3,771	7,373	5,178
Books read		24,379	51,779	38,915

Age and gender

Where information is given on gender, it shows that 57% of the joiners were girls, and 43% boys; 58% of the completers were girls and 42% boys. This is a good rate of boys joining, which generally tends to be lower than girls.

The main target age of the Summer Reading Challenge is 4 -11, and this is reflected in the statistics, with 89% of joiners and 90% of completers being within this age range. For details of the under 4s challenge, see below.

Children joined by gender	Children completed by gender
Boys 3504	Boys 2085
Girls 4689	Girls 2892

Children joined by age	Children completed by age
Younger than 4 543	Younger than 4 311
Age 4-7 3910	Age 4-7 2413
Age 8-11 3735	Age 8-11 2270
Age 12 plus 353	Age 12 plus 184

A total of 957 children became new library members when they joined SRC.

New Members	Under 4	Age 4-11	Age 12-14	Grand Total
	118	812	27	957

What children and parents said about the Summer Reading Challenge:

'You came to our school - we would like to join the Summer Reading Challenge'
(child coming in to Forum library)

'I was so excited about what you were doing personally. I know it will help a lot of kids out here to be focused, and also keep them busy. You're making a difference in their life. Thanks for all your support'. (Ms Jane Williams)

'A good challenge for the summer and something different to the computer! I know my girls really enjoyed it and collecting the certificate at the end with the medal was the icing on the cake.' (parent from Gorton)

'We do it every year we look forward to it and really enjoy it.' (parent at Forum)

'Yes, it's fantastic and helped my children to get confidence in reading and activities in the library give them something new every day to explore and have fun' (parent at Abraham Moss library)

Tommy was one of the first children to complete SRC at North City Library. He also attended a lot of the Read and Feed activities, loved reading pirate books and coming to the library to join in the activities with other children. He was over the moon to receive his medal and certificate, as well as a special goody bag.

Tommy's parent said: The reading challenge has helped Tommy find a love of books. We do have lots of books at home but Tommy is in his element in the library with the vast choice of books. He is extremely pleased when he finds a pirate story. He now finds learning to read fun.

See Appendix 1 for more detailed case studies.

Under 4's Challenge

This is the second year that we have offered the additional challenge for under 4's, using the specially adapted pre-school SRC membership cards. Children collect six stickers, one for each book borrowed, and receive a certificate and gold medal sticker on completion. Children aged under 4, who reside in Manchester, were also entered into a prize draw to win goody bags.

Ten Active Tot activity sessions were held for under 4's, to encourage parents to bring children in to join the SRC. A parent fed back about the Active Tot session - 'My two under 4's thoroughly enjoyed this session. It was fun, energetic and related to pre-school learning and skills'.

	Joiners	Completers	% of all joiners
2017	926	624	
2018 (new recording method)	556	311	6%

We partnered with The Lowry to promote the under 4's challenge, with a prize of family theatre tickets to 'What the Ladybird Heard,' which were won by Emmett from Levenshulme, who regularly visits Arcadia library.

His Mum said 'the performance was AMAZING! Such a fabulous day out and we are so so grateful! Both my children, Emmett and William took part in the summer reading challenge and loved it! We love the library in general and they are always asking me if we can go and get more books! It's fab being next to their swimming lessons too so we always go after swimming!'

School engagement

Partnerships with teachers and schools is key, as they are a means by which Libraries can engage with non-library users to promote the Challenge. Through class assemblies in schools, and inviting classes into libraries, children are enthused to join the Challenge. This year 45 schools took up this offer from Libraries, visiting 86 times. As a result, 11,554 children and 814 teaching staff learnt about SRC. Cavendish Primary School told us that the Summer Reading Challenge 'encourages lots of their children and families to go to the local library and read books' and that they 'love it and look forward to it happening'.

The school competition is designed to bring an inter-school competitiveness to SRC. The winning school was rewarded with an author-in-school day visit from award-winning Ciaran Murtagh. The two runner-up schools received a SRC book collection for their school library. This year the winning school, Cavendish Primary in Didsbury had 21% of their pupils complete the SRC. They told us that the children 'love listening and hearing a real author' and that 'it really inspires children and motivates them to write / read and shows them the purpose of why they write.' Second and third place winners were Beaver Road and Didsbury C.E. schools.

Launch events

Schools were also key partners in our launch events, and this year we did more launch events than ever before. Twenty-one sessions were offered to schools, and these were attended by 23 schools and 1,647 children and 204 teaching staff. The launch events were delivered by Lynne Chapman (author/illustrator), Guy Bass (author), Craig Bradley (poet), Laura Howell Day (cartoonist) and John Kirk (storyteller/performer).

Feedback about the launch events

Church of England School of the Resurrection - Laura Howell author/illustrator event

- 'the children thought it was amazing. I'm sure they'll be talking about it for ages'
- the session was 'super for a plethora of reasons... and was aspirational'

St Wilfrid's CE Primary - John Kirk event

'This story-telling session was so much fun. Every child's face was rapt with attention. They were totally engaged. I can't believe I've been able to give every KS2 child a memorable treat for free!' (Anne Fox - Head teacher)

Summer Reading Challenge Activities

Every year, the Summer Reading Challenge is supported by an activity offer designed to attract children and families into library venues. These activities continue to be offered free of charge.

For the second year running, Read and Feed activity sessions were also offered to children in libraries to combat holiday hunger, expanding to three libraries this year. This initiative is described in more detail later.

This tables shows the headline figures for the activity programme:

	Children*	Adults*	number of sessions
Read & Feed programme	1578	751	75
Central Library	1054	566	29
All other libraries	3891	1995	245
Totals	6523	3312	349

*includes repeat visits

A varied programme of activities

The activities on offer were all related to the Mischief Makers theme and were incredibly diverse. They ranged from craft activities, including making Dennis the Menace jack-in-the-boxes and fake disgusting dinners, to Zoolab visiting with real animals and a circus company teaching children tricks. Virtual Reality events with google Cardboard and digital activities were also on offer.

A number of Bee a Reader craft activity sessions were also offered in libraries to support reading campaign, Read Manchester and to celebrate the city-wide bee trail, Bee in the City.

Working with partners

Working with partners enabled us to bring in 41 sessions, widen the scope and variety of the activities we offer, and also to promote to new and different audiences. This year, we worked with a variety of partners to offer high quality experiences to local children. For these partner organisations, it is a chance for them to reach new audiences and engage with the local community, with a view to attracting them into their own venues.

The National Football museum celebrated the World Cup and helped children create their own football flag.

The (Wandering) Jewish Museum (temporarily relocating to Central Library during refurbishment) took the opportunity to bring in a host of interactive activities and adventures and to ask for ideas in designing their temporary home.

Manchester Museum showcased some of their collections, and in the spirit of Mischief Makers and The Beano, created comic strips with the children.

Dogs Trust brought in dogs to libraries, which proved very popular, and explained the work they do in rescuing and caring for dogs.

The Family Learning team from Manchester Adult Education Service offered family sessions for children and parents to enjoy together. As a result of these 15 sessions, they enrolled 100 parents onto MAES courses.

What children said about the activities:

'It was a very persuasive summer - it was amazing at the library.' (Laynub, aged 9 at Abraham Moss library)

'I loved it so much, I could do it 1 million times.' (Zohaib, aged 8 about Virtual Reality session)

What parents said about the activities:

'It was really amazing, kids really looking forward to the holidays to do the reading challenge.' (African drumming workshop)

'Highly appreciate all the events in the summer holiday, very amazing time for children who are missing school and not going on holiday. Very friendly programme, suitable for children, chance to make new friends and improve their reading. Thank you'. (Mum at Longsight Library who attended all the activities with her 3 children)

'Absolutely brilliant sessions! Tricks skills were great and the kids loved them, great to have somewhere to take them without spending money.' (Circus skills)

'Children loved looking at the animals, they had really good fun and it was full of interesting facts.' (Zoolab)

'This is the way to encourage children for education, books and reading. Thank you for all your help to make my child love to come to the library. It has become a habit and she will love the library and books all her life. (Crafty Capers at Longsight library.' - Mum of 8 year old)

'Amazing and free, which is always the best thing.' (parent at Central library)

'Absolutely brilliant sessions! Tricks skills were great and kids loved them, great to have somewhere to take them without spending money.' (Circus skills at Brooklands library)

'Good to visit other libraries - we live in south Manchester. The activities encourage us to visit other libraries where we'll also sit and read.' (parent at Abraham Moss activity)

What an activity provider said about the activities:

'I have provided 10 sessions to Manchester Libraries for the SRC and it's been a very successful and busy summer. I was fully booked and over at every event! Everyone was so busy. I got brilliant feedback from parents, children and staff...', (African Drumming Leader)

Read and Feed

Read and Feed sessions are designed to tackle the problem of holiday hunger, when children out of school over the holidays may miss out on proper meals. By offering free, healthy food via the Fare Share charity, libraries are able to tackle this problem and also bring in additional children to join the Summer Reading Challenge and read more books.

Following a successful pilot at Fallowfield library last year, Read and Feed was rolled out across three libraries. An activity was offered every day, followed by a cold lunch.

Our partners, Fare Share visited North City Library during one session to assess how effective the partnership was. Their subsequent report highlighted the positives of Read and Feed as being the chance to join in community activities, make new friends, join the library and eat healthy food:

On the day of our visit to North City Library, the children were enthusiastically making kaleidoscopes with other activities including circus skills, Lego building and craft. The children are all now members of the library and have taken part in the citywide Mischief Makers Summer Reading Challenge, a scheme designed to encourage more children to get into reading.

A few of the children are new to the area and have English as an additional language. Michael, Favour and their mum Hannah, who all speak Spanish, have recently moved nearby and have attended regularly. Staff at the project have seen their confidence grow over the summer and the children are engaging more and more.

Library	Children*	Adults*	Activity sessions
Fallowfield	612	272	29
Gorton	611	334	23
North City	355	145	23

*includes repeat visits

Feedback was positive, with the following comments from parents:

‘Fun and exciting, the children will really miss it; they have really enjoyed coming to the Library’ (North City Library)

‘The food was healthy and amazing’. (North City Library)

'The summer activities at Gorton Library are the best. The kids have benefited in every aspect of it, also healthy snacks to all kids. Fantastic. Thank-you so much'. (Gorton Library)

'It's fabulous to have something creative for the children, not all children have access to the equipment and its just the kind of thing that keeps them absorbed for some time' (digital session). (Gorton Library)

'I think this is absolutely fantastic what you are putting on here, it has been a lifesaver for me over the summer holidays'. (Fallowfield Community Library)

'Loved the range of activities helped the children develop social, emotional, creative and mental well being/skills'. (Fallowfield Community Library)

Young volunteers

This year's volunteering proved a great success, with an increase of 51% in the hours volunteered, and an additional 63% in the numbers of young people (aged 13-24) volunteering.

	2017	2018
Number of young people	55	90
Volunteering hours	625	944

Volunteers supported SRC in a number of ways - signing children up to the challenge, helping deliver activities and promoting the challenge.

Feedback from volunteers was extremely positive, and focused on the benefits both to the local community and also to the volunteer in terms of improved personal skills and opportunities:

'I wanted to bolster future CV's or personal statements, improve my social and professional skills, and do something worthwhile this summer.'

'What I liked best about volunteering were the opportunities that were entailed with it, along with making new friends and lastly, the chance to help out others, no matter how big or small an impact I made.'

'I became a volunteer to be able to actually help my local community and make a commitment.'

'I got to learn new things and now know things about people in my community I didn't know before.'

Some of the young volunteers supported the Archives+ team to deliver a variety of family SRC themed events at Central Library. At each of these events, children and

young people were encouraged to explore their love of reading by sharing their favourite stories, writing and filming book reviews, and creating short stories. Families came together to enjoy free film screenings, supplemented with craft activities tied into each of the film's themes. Manchester Youth Council were on hand to promote membership to the Youth Council and members enjoyed joining in with the activities.

Feedback from parents and carers was very positive -

'I'm really pleased my daughter has joined in with the other children, she is usually very quiet and doesn't mix.'

'My daughter really enjoyed herself whilst her brother read lots of books.'

'Fantastic event, staff very friendly and kids loved it!'

Manchester's performance in context

When comparing Manchester's results with the other twenty-three authorities in the North West, Manchester has:

- Highest number of SRC starters (8,541)
- 3rd highest percentage of children in the authority that join SRC - 13%, which is excellent considering our demographics
- Highest number of completions (4867) - 36% more completers than any other authority
- Highest number of new members (957) as a result of the challenge - 42% more new members than any other authority
- Joint highest number of young SRC volunteers (90).

All these figures show our extremely high performance with the summer reading challenge, compared to other NW authorities. It also shows Manchester Libraries' commitment to SRC as our flagship reading and engagement programme for children.

Appendix 1 - Reading case studies

Merwa, 10 years old, Plymouth Grove school - Longsight Library

Read 15 books

Merwa sent a handmade card thanking Longsight library for helping her to read 5 million words (in conjunction with a book-reading scheme at her school). She is the first pupil at her school to have achieved this.

In her card she wrote

Dear Longsight Library,

I really appreciate all you have done for me. In my school I have read over 5 million words all thanks to my local library. So I just wanted to say THANK YOU. I don't know what I would do without you. You are not just a library you are more than that.

Her card was displayed for library customers to see and she was introduced to Cllr Sue Murphy (Deputy Leader) and Council Chief Executive Joanne Roney when they came to Longsight for a community event. She had her photo taken with them and Tweeted, with the result that the Manchester Evening News picked up the story and interviewed her too, greatly to Merwa's excitement:

'I was over the moon when I saw the article, it is a most exciting thing that I have in my life. Let me say that again Longsight library played a huge part in it. A BIG THANK YOU again.

Of course, I am a much better reader now than start of the holidays. My knowledge, my vocabulary has been increased and I think I have a broader view than I had before the start of the holidays. Another aspect of the holidays is that we have less academic pressure and I think we enjoy reading more in holidays than in term times. Summer Reading challenge brings excitement in the reading and brings sense of competition. It also brings inner happiness to have recognition. Summer Reading Challenge certainly helped as I like challenges.'

Feedback from Merwa's parents:

'It is even more important in this era to have broaden point of view and understandings in diverse society. The only way we can increase our wisdom and knowledge is to read books of all kind. I think libraries play important part in it. It would have been impossible for Merwa without the help of the library to achieve different milestones like winning debate competition, achieving reading targets and many more.'

Edward, 4 ½ years old, Beaver Road school - Didsbury Library

Read 30 books

Edward was registered at Didsbury Library four days after he was born. He has been to our storytime nearly every week until recently when he started school. Edward loves his books and is always happy to be in the library and read with his mum. Edward is a familiar face at Didsbury Library and most likely a library user for a long time to come.

Do you think you are a better reader now than you were at the beginning of the holidays?

Yes, definitely. We order a lot of books through the library and get to read a far bigger range because we are library members.

Do you like to tell your friends about a book you have enjoyed?

We particularly enjoyed 'Just Right For Two'.

Feedback from Edward's parents:

Coming to Didsbury Library is a big part of our life. We feel very comfortable here and it gives us a lot of joy. We order books in then get more ideas from titles on the back of the book. Edward is exceeding his reading age at school and I am a firm believer that this is at least in part due to the attending the library so much.

Amira Badar, 4 years old, Christ the King school - Newton Heath Library

Read 27 books

At the start of the summer, Amira didn't really want to take any books out, read or participate in any activities. Since joining the Summer Reading Challenge she has become more involved in library activities, starting to read books and is able to recognise things from the books that she has been learning to read. Amira has really come on in the last few weeks.

1. Do you like to tell your friends about a book you have enjoyed?

Loves telling her teachers that she visits the library.

2. Have you read more books this summer because you are taking part in the Reading Challenge?

Amira has started to read books on a daily basis.

Feedback from Amira's parent:

I am glad that my child is learning to read more and learning to come and take books out and join in more activities.