

**Book Ahead  
Programme Evaluation**

**A report to the MLA**



**Report Funded by**



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## 1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The main recommendations and proposed actions are provided below, with a suggested lead partner. The majority of recommendations require a coordinated response across a number of partners at both national and local level to release their full benefit.

### *Strategic Recommendations*

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead Partner(s)</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
1	The DCSF to ensure library services are integrated into national early years literacy initiatives such as Every Child A Talker, to sustain the impact of Book Ahead and partnership working.	<b>DCSF &amp; MLA</b>	<b>4.23</b>
2	Children's services departments to ensure that library services are embedded in local strategies to develop children's communication, language and literacy skills	<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>4.3</b>
3	Children's services departments to integrate the valuable training and support provided by library staff into early years training and inspection strategies	<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>4.38</b>

### *Operational Recommendations*

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead Partner(s)</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
4	Library Services to work in partnership with Early Years settings to sustain the impact of Book Ahead partnerships.	<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>4.15</b>
5	Develop guidance for Library Services to plan, target, monitor and evaluate ongoing engagement with Early Years settings.	<b>MLA &amp; Local Authorities</b>	<b>4.32</b>
6	Further research the take up of Schools Library Services by Early Years settings, particularly private, voluntary and independent groups.	<b>MLA</b>	<b>5.7</b>
7	Promote and monitor group library tickets nationally and locally.	<b>MLA &amp; Local Authorities</b>	<b>4.17</b>

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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### *Background*

2.1 In March 2008 ERS was commissioned by MLA Council to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Book Ahead Programme and identify its outputs, potential outcomes and impacts. The Book Ahead Programme aimed to deepen the partnership between Early Years settings and public library services in England. The Programme was targeted at 0-7 year olds, but with a specific focus on 3-5 year olds, and aimed to provide Early Years practitioners with access to good quality book collections and new skills to support an integrated approach between Early Years settings and libraries.

2.2 The evaluation was specifically designed to answer the following study questions:

- *Has the programme had any impact on the work practices, skills and attitudes of library staff and Early Years practitioners? In particular, what have been the benefits and challenges of building, or deepening and sustaining collaboration between early years settings and public libraries?*
- *What is the unique contribution of Book Ahead to the aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage?*
- *What other outcomes have recipients of this programme (i.e., young children and their families) experienced?*

2.3 Detail on the evaluation methodology is provided in Appendix 1. Carrying out this evaluation has required significant contributions of time and information from a large number of people (see Appendix 2) and their assistance and contributions are much appreciated.

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## **Study Context**

- 2.4 A broad range of initiatives, including **Bookstart**, **Booktime** and **Booked Up**, have provided a focus on encouraging the use of books from an early age, in particular by providing book resources and introducing a range of activities in settings to encourage practitioners, parents and carers to use the resources imaginatively to support children's reading.
- 2.5 In 2008 the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework<sup>1</sup> was published which set the standards for learning, development and care that young children should experience when attending settings outside their family home. The learning and development requirements outlined in the EYFS incorporated early learning goals relating to communication, language and literacy.
- 2.6 The recently published primary curriculum review<sup>2</sup> emphasises the importance of developing language, speaking and listening skills, in particular in supporting children to move from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'. The review highlights the importance of developing children's spoken communication, in particular citing the progress made through government-funded initiatives such as Time for Talk and Every Child a Talker.
- 2.7 By focusing on the development of an integrated approach to reading between Early Years settings and libraries, the Book Ahead Programme is able to contribute to improving practice within settings and provide the foundations for equipping every child with a command of reading and stronger communication skills.

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<sup>1</sup> DCSF (2008)- 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'. May 2008

<sup>2</sup> DCSF (2009)- 'Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Final Report'.

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### 3.0 KEY FINDINGS

- 3.1 The Book Ahead Programme has provided a number of learning points with regard to the design, implementation and delivery of models of partnership working between the Library Service and Early Years settings. Whilst stronger guidance from the outset may have enhanced delivery across a number of Library Authority areas, **the Programme has been successful in strengthening existing partnerships and building new ones where required.**
- 3.2 Importantly **the Book Ahead Programme has provided a clear contribution to the aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage** by providing support to settings in using a range of reader development activities. This has supported the learning and development of a substantial number of children attending targeted settings. In several areas delivery has also encouraged greater involvement of parents in their child's reading.
- 3.3 Feedback from Early Years setting staff has highlighted that ability of the Book Ahead model to deliver positive outcomes from children. Specific examples cited by setting staff include **increasing independent reading, improving children's listening, vocabulary and communication skills, facilitating increased interaction with other children and increasing the confidence of children in handling books.**
- 3.4 **Over 16,000 Early Years settings have been engaged in the Book Ahead Programme with the majority (71%) of the Book Ahead resources used to support private, voluntary or independent (PVI) Early Years settings.** The Programme has therefore been largely successful in achieving its original objectives and encouraging the development of partnership working between the public library service and PVI settings.
- 3.5 Where detail regarding the contact status of the settings prior to Book Ahead was provided (5,509 settings), approximately half relate to new contacts established as a consequence of Book Ahead delivery (2,670 settings). **The Book Ahead Programme has been successful in enabling and encouraging the Library Authorities to establish contact with previously unengaged Early Years settings and well as deepening collaboration with settings that have been previously supported.**

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- 3.6 Approximately half of the setting visits recorded relate to structured reader development activities and effective practice highlighted in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including **4,522 storytelling sessions, 5,443 rhyme time sessions** and **1,623 book talks**. **Over 130,000 children have been supported as part of Book Ahead activity**, with a substantial number of these engaged in storytelling sessions organised using the Book Ahead resources across the Early Years settings. **This provides reassurance that a high proportion of the Library Authorities have engaged identified settings in more depth than simply delivering the book resources.**
- 3.7 **Some 3,164 Early Years settings have registered for a group library ticket as a result of the Book Ahead Programme.** This provides encouragement that the impact of the Programme may be sustained, in particular if Library Authorities adopt a proactive approach to monitoring the levels of activity for settings with a group library ticket.
- 3.8 Delivery of the Programme has generated considerable enthusiasm and creativity, provided flexibility to pilot new ways of working and new approaches to engaging previously unengaged Early Years settings. The Programme has been successful in many areas in bringing local partners together and identifying areas for future collaboration and development. **The process of engagement has also provided valuable feedback to enable the Library service to reshape its approach and tailor services based more closely on the needs of Early Years settings.**
- 3.9 **The majority (74%) of responding Library Authorities indicated that the increased level of engagement with Early Years settings would be continued** beyond the delivery of the Book Ahead Programme.

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## 4.0 OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

4.1 Key findings with regard to the contribution to the outcomes experienced by recipients of the Programme are provided below.

- **Book Ahead has contributed to the development of children within Early Years settings in a number of ways, including communication, language and literacy improvements as well as personal, social and emotional development**
- **Book Ahead has encouraged parents to get more involved in their child's reading and participate in training activity to support reading away from the Early Years setting.**

### ***A) Outcomes experienced by recipients of the programme***

4.2 The design of the Book Ahead Programme is strongly aligned with the effective practice outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup>, in particular early learning goals associated with communication, language and literacy. **A range of national initiatives<sup>4</sup> currently advocate the use of storytelling and rhyme time sessions to support children's reading and learning. Consequently an increase in the use of these approaches as a result of the Book Ahead Programme provides evidence of a direct contribution to the effective practice outlined in the Statutory Framework.**

4.3 This evaluation is not intended to provide a professional assessment of early years practice, however it is possible to provide evidence based on consultation with setting staff, children attending settings and observation of activities by members of the study team. The actions and activities gathered through this primary fieldwork can be mapped onto the assessment scales for Communication, Language and Literacy, outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (see Appendix 3), to provide evidence of the contribution of Book Ahead in supporting the children's development and the achievement of early learning goals (see Table 1 for examples).

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<sup>3</sup> DCSF (2008)- 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Settings the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five'.

<sup>4</sup> Notable examples include Chatterbooks, Summer Reading Challenge and Their Reading Futures delivered by The Reading Agency and Early Reading Connects delivered by the National Literacy Trust)

**Table 1- Evidence of contribution to Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>Listen to familiar sounds, words or finger plays (one to one and in small groups)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>'Children particularly like the CD books and are good for listening to familiar sounds'.</i></li> <li>▪ <b><i>'Pants</i></b> <i>book is good for the children getting familiar with words'.</i></li> <li>▪ During story time back at the setting the nursery staff used some of the finger plays and rhymes used at the library session and the children responded positively and joined in.</li> <li>▪ The children showed a great deal of interest in the pictures in the book as well as the props used to bring the story to life.</li> <li>▪ <i>'[The children's] listening skills are improving, especially when the book is interesting and told in an interactive way and with props'.</i></li> <li>▪ A nursery staff member asked the children what noises certain animals made including a cat, to which the children recognised as <i>'meow'</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Respond to words and interactive rhymes, such as 'clap hands'</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><i>'Each Peach</i></b> <i>book is a favourite and the children like to hear it repeated a lot!'</i></li> <li>▪ <b><i>'Aliens and underpants</i></b> <i>story good for using rhymes'.</i></li> <li>▪ When the children were read the Bear Hunt story they joined in the actions of the book.</li> <li>▪ During a storytelling session one of the children was asked <i>'why do you wear sunglasses?'</i> to which they responded <i>'to stop the sun from hurting your eyes'.</i></li> <li>▪ A lot of the children pointed out what they could see in the book – <i>'look he's got big teeth', 'he looks like a ball', 'a big fat ball', 'there's a big spider'.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Show interest in stories, songs and rhymes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>'Children have a lot more interest in books now since the new books arrived and the story times have contributed to this interest development as well. Had previously lost a bit of interest from both the children and the staff alike'.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>'The children pick up on the rhyming words within <b>Meg and Mog</b>'.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>'The Book Ahead books have broadened the interest of the children. The book on pirates really engaged one boy, which meant that it</i></li> </ul>

*became a broader theme with songs, pirate hat and patch made along with treasure chests’.*

- Children walked around the nursery carrying books to nursery staff requesting that they read with them.
- The children came into the reading room in pairs and read with the nursery staff.
- Nursery staff ask the children how they think a story is going to end or what is going to happen. Nursery staff observed that the older children like the book to end how it’s supposed to end and can tell if the staff have changed the ending.
- One child was identified as being a quieter member of the group but during a storytelling session the child came forward and pointed out the cat in the book.

#### **Handle books carefully / Hold books the correct way up and turn pages**

- *‘The children will tell on each other if they are mistreating the books’.*
- *‘The children used to be less careful with books but now are much better’.*
- The children were all asked to put the books they had selected back in the box before the story telling started which they did carefully.
- The children turned pages of book at the right times as the story was being read out.
- One child was observed gathering the books together to make a neat stack on the table.

#### **Have some favourite stories, rhymes, songs, poems or jingles**

- ***‘Bear in the Cave is a favourite’.***
- *‘Children came and selected their favourite books from the table’.*
- ***‘Dragon on the Doorstep is a favourite and they especially like the man’s voice on the CD’.***
- *‘The children select their favourite books from the table’.*
- *‘Judging for the Story Corner Competition was done by staff from the Schools Library Service and the Early Years Service. When they visited [the nursery], several of the children showed them books, sat and read them and clearly enjoyed the space’.*
- When a group of children were asked what book they wanted to read, one child requested *‘pirate one’.*

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- 4.4 Based on feedback from practitioners and observation, it is also possible to gather evidence of particular contribution to three of the five Generic Learning Outcomes (see Inspiring Learning<sup>5</sup>), namely: *Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity; Action, Behaviour and Progression; and Knowledge and Understanding*. Example evidence is described in the following sections, along with details regarding parental engagement (more detail in Appendix 4).

#### *Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity*

- 4.5 It was apparent that books within settings have a dual function. Firstly, most settings include Book Ahead books within their existing open-access 'story corners' or reading areas and so enable independent access by children either individually, shared as part of a storytelling game, or to show each other particular pictures:

***Some of the children will come and pick up a book and flick through it then walk off and others will spend longer looking at the books. Some of the children (mainly girls) will pretend to read to the other children, as if it were story time.***

- 4.6 Secondly, the books are utilised by staff in group contexts for storytelling and promoting interaction with the content of the story. Observations illustrated that, on occasion, girls were more engaged than boys from the outset of storytelling sessions. However, the boys' interest grew towards active involvement, particularly where actions and rhymes were included alongside the story:

***One book was read in a smaller group which involved identifying what was big and what was small, fast/slow etc. and children pointed to which they thought was which.***

#### *Action, Behaviour and Progression*

- 4.7 There is particular evidence of Book Ahead activity promoting increased or renewed interest in books, indicated through self-directed attention and requests to staff. Children were observed selecting their favourite books from either a story corner, book case or display table and the excitement of 'visitors' (either librarians or the Study Team) clearly influenced their interest in books, for example, through showing their books to visitors, reading parts of the story to them and pointing out pictures, in addition to being engaged by storytelling:

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<sup>5</sup> [www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/](http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/)

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***When the Book Ahead box was brought in, the children chose to sit in a circle around it, opened it and chose books to read.***

- 4.8 Additionally, the confidence of children to handle and read books has been further promoted, both as individuals and as groups. Children were observed being asked to select their favourite books from library shelves, which they did, in order to loan them for the nursery. They were frequently observed picking out the stories that they wanted to read, with many appearing to have favourite stories that they looked to read or have read to them again and again. New books caused visible excitement in some instances, but with an understanding that they needed to be held carefully and in turns, rather than squabbling.

***One child at first was reluctant to get involved and open a flap on a pop-up book but eventually came forward and did so.***

#### *Knowledge and Understanding*

- 4.9 By using the Book Ahead books and participating in supporting activities, a contribution has been made towards promoting the concentration of children, indicated through their listening skills and response to props and stories. Actions, activities, puppets and interactive games appear to be popular in developing engagement. For example, one child described his favourite activity as being *putting the animals back on the sheet*, in reference to an interactive Old Macdonald nursery rhyme.

***The setting staff sometimes ask the children how they think a story is going to end or what is going to happen. It was commented that the older children like the book to end with its true ending and can tell if the staff have made changes.***

- 4.10 Pictures were observed to be extremely effective at bringing stories to life and encouraging comprehension. This was evident beyond words and meanings to include numbers, for example, in one setting children were asked how many teddies were in the bed shown in the picture, and a child pointed and tried to count them.
- 4.11 There was evidence of a contribution towards building communication and vocabulary skills, recognising and using words. Popular stories are those with rhyming words and phrases, and repeated words and phrases.

***At one point in the story it was asked where Jack and Jill were going and one child shouted out, "Down the hill!"***

*Evidence relating to parental involvement/engagement*

- 4.12 Based on feedback from practitioners and observation, there is evidence of parental engagement being supported and, in a small number of instances, stimulated by Book Ahead activity.
- 4.13 Examples of increased involvement included, bringing in books from home, borrowing books from the setting, participation in training, and attendance at libraries. Some settings encouraged children and parents to borrow books either from the setting or from the library. As an alternative to loans, one setting encouraged parents to bring in books from home based on the monthly book theme.

***Parents are given Weekly Themes and Activities home worksheets. Included in the activities to do at home is to visit the local library to get books related to the particular topic.***

***The setting tries to engage parents in the children's reading development by loaning out story sacks, which contain a book, soft toys of the book's characters, CD, worksheets, games and a feedback sheet for the parents.***

***B) Partnership working***

- 4.14 Key findings with regard to partnership development across the Book Ahead Programme are provided below.

- **Adopting a flexible programme has enabled Library Authorities to establish models of delivery appropriate for local structures and context.**
- **The implementation of Book Ahead has also improved the level of dialogue across Early Years partners and increased awareness of the services and support that different partners can provide.**
- **More hours have been allocated to engagement with settings as a direct consequence of the Book Ahead Programme. The majority of respondents stated that the increased level of engagement would be maintained beyond the delivery of the Book Ahead.**
- **The proportion of respondents indicating that the level of engagement between their Library Service and Early Years settings was either good or very good has increased following delivery of the Programme.**
- **Stronger coordination of national and local initiatives can boost rates of take-up by settings by promoting a coherent early years offer.**

- 4.15 The implementation of Book Ahead has improved the level of dialogue across early years partners and increased awareness of the services and support that different partners can provide. Several case study areas indicated that the delivery of Book Ahead had highlighted additional areas where partners could work collaboratively to assist Early Years settings and their staff in providing services and support to children and parents. Consequently the Book Ahead Programme had provided a platform for future delivery and enthusiasm to work in partnership.

In **Birmingham** Book Ahead has been delivered as a partnership between the Public Library Service and Teacher Advisory Team. This has strengthened the working links between the two departments, and as a result of Book Ahead the Teacher Advisory Team request support, advice and information from the library team on a more regular basis.

Involvement in Book Ahead has enabled the public library service to release branch staff to work directly with Early Years settings (EYS). The public library service has produced a map of the EYS in target areas to assist in branch libraries in planning engagement with settings. The establishment of accurate contact details for staff within settings has helped to improve the level of communication, highlighted as significant barrier prior to the launch of the Book Ahead Programme.

The Book Ahead project in **Warwickshire** has been underpinned by a strong partnership between the Schools Library Service (SLS), Public Library Service and Early Years Advisory Team (EYAT), with the SLS leading on delivery. The delivery model was devised collaboratively by these partners and a strong steer was provided by the EYAT with regards to the targeting of Early Years settings. It was agreed to target those settings participating in the Foundation Stage Partnership Scheme, on the basis that most settings are located adjacent to a supporting primary school and have the advice and support of both their primary school reception teacher and early years advisory teacher. The close collaboration with the EYAT ensured that all of the participating settings had Book Ahead written into their Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum action plan under its contribution towards Communication, Language and Literacy.

The partners planned to capture the impacts of the project by carrying out their own local evaluation of a selection of 'case study' settings. Given the involvement of primary schools in the project it is hoped that the evaluation will be longitudinal, with potential to revisit those participants in their primary schools and monitor progress.

This close partnership working has helped strengthen the ongoing relationship between the EYAT and the SLS, as well as building the capacity and mutual understanding of both services. As a consequence of the Book Ahead Programme both have a greater understanding of their respective services.

- 4.16 Respondents identified a number of benefits of establishing a coherent library service early years offer, namely:
- **Realising operational efficiencies-** joint delivery, coordinated marketing, shared training;
  - **Increasing reach-** maximising the use of existing networks; and
  - **Presenting a coherent offer-** avoiding consultation fatigue, ensuring consistency of approach.
- 4.17 Presenting a coherent early years offer had served to boost take-up rates by settings of a number of initiatives. This was regarded as particularly helpful given restrictions on delivering some resources directly to PVI settings (e.g. Bookstart). Some 3,164 Early Years settings have registered for a group library ticket as a result of the Book Ahead Programme. This provides encouragement that the impact of the Programme may be sustained, in particular if Library Authorities adopt a proactive approach to monitoring the levels of activity for settings with a group library ticket.
- 4.18 However the ability to present a coherent early years offer was reported as challenging given the time-limited nature of several national initiatives and the gradual roll-out of national programmes. This message was also reinforced by setting staff who reported some confusion with regards to the plethora of initiatives (national and/or local) and the capacity pressures generated by uncoordinated engagement activity.
- 4.19 The success of the Book Ahead Programme in developing stronger relationships between Early Years settings and their local library is encapsulated in the following comments:
- 'It has enabled us to lend books to parents to share with their children'.***
- 'It has been very revealing to staff about the books children choose for themselves'.***
- 'The Library service should, ideally, be able to continue the scheme, rolling it out to all settings, increase visits to settings, increase and extend workshops for staff and families'.***
- 'I feel it has had a very valuable contribution with regards to positive relationships between staff, children and parents, as well as links to the six areas of learning'.***
- 'The staff at the library are brilliant, friendly and helpful people. We are on first name terms and would recommend this library to any Early Years setting as well as local people, childminders, schools, mother and toddler groups'.***

- 4.20 Some 82% of respondents indicated that more hours had been allocated to engagement with settings as a direct consequence of the Book Ahead Programme. The majority of respondents (72%) also stated that the increased level of engagement would be maintained beyond the delivery of the Book Ahead.
- 4.21 Notwithstanding the implementation and delivery challenges reported by Library Authorities, at a programme-wide level there is consensus that **the Book Ahead Programme has provided a range of positive impacts in strengthening and expanding partnership working**. Maintaining the delivery momentum and building further on the partnership foundations supported as a consequence of the Book Ahead investment is clearly desirable to continue to provide positive outcomes for target children and their families.

***C) Impact of the programme on work practices, skills and attitudes of staff***

- 4.22 Key findings with regards to the impact of the programme on work practices, skills and attitudes of staff are provided below.

- **Additional capacity paid for through the Book Ahead Programme has been a critical success factor for local delivery.**
- **The Book Ahead Programme has been used to pilot new ways of working as opposed to simply boosting existing approaches to delivery.**
- **Approaches to measuring the success of engagement with Early Years settings have been strengthened during the delivery of the Book Ahead Programme with more attention focused on measuring the outcomes.**
- **There is merit in standardising the use of a quality framework across all Library Authorities to monitor the extent to which good practice has been embedding within settings.**
- **Mapping the location and profile of settings provides both strategic and operational benefits to working in partnership with Early Years settings. This should be undertaken by all Library Authorities.**
- **Consideration should be given to developing a national programme of training across all Library Authorities and integrating this with existing workforce development programmes at a local level.**

### *Strategic planning*

- 4.23 There was consensus across the case study areas that **the Programme has given the library service increased confidence to target the early years sector and crucially be able to respond with a coherent offer**. The Programme has also helped to build the skills and knowledge of the Early Years Service in some areas, providing advisors with a greater awareness of new titles and authors that they can recommend to settings. In light of the partnership momentum established in many areas as a consequence of the Book Ahead Programme, there are clear opportunities to signpost partners to existing national programmes that can provide a focus for future partnership activity.
- 4.24 In some case study areas respondents indicated that the experiences and **lessons from Book Ahead delivery have fed into local reviews of the local library service**. Therefore it is plausible that the Book Ahead has contributed to local infrastructure change which can provide a legacy of improvement beyond the cessation of the Programme.
- 4.25 Respondents in a number of case study areas also stated that the delivery of **the Programme has provided infrastructure improvements by increasing the effectiveness of internal communication and joint working within their library service**. Consultation has also provided evidence of a relaxation of loan procedures in a number of case study areas, which respondents indicated represented a major cultural shift and removed to barrier to engagement cited by early years settings.

A Nursery Manager in **Doncaster** described the benefits of the Book Ahead approach for her nursery. Despite the nursery being in close proximity to a branch library, a main road crossing made it difficult to take the children for a visit. As such, the Nursery Manager has picked up the box of books from the branch library enabling the children to benefit from the use of a range of new books.

The extended loan period (3 months) for the Book Ahead resources was welcomed as allowed the children more opportunity to read all of the titles. Packaging the books in a box was reported to have provided a number of benefits, in particular in teaching the children to sit quietly and patiently before they are allowed to select books. The provision of the books has also increased the levels of independent reading within the nursery, with children using the books outside of formal storytime sessions.

- 4.26 Not all case study areas report to have mapped the location and profile of all Early Years settings as part of their Book Ahead delivery. Those that had indicated that this provided their library service which a more accurate picture of where the settings are located and how engagement could be facilitated. In

some case study areas this has enabled the library service to allocate settings to branch libraries, providing branch library staff with a stronger sense of ownership of the Book Ahead Programme and enabling them to prepare collections that more closely matching the needs of settings within their catchments area.

### *Encouraging Collaboration*

- 4.27 **There was consensus across the case study areas that the Programme had provided a focus and impetus for collaboration.** Library staff indicated that the additional outreach capacity has been a critical success factor for local delivery, overcoming previous difficulties in encouraging individual settings to visit their local library. The administration resource provided with the book allocation has enabled the Library service to engage more directly with Early Years settings and establish personal contacts with setting staff. It has also provided an opportunity for the library staff to provide information on the additional services and support that the library service can provide, most notably the benefits of registering for a group library ticket.
- 4.28 The success of this approach can be evidenced on a programme-wide level by the high proportion (47%) of new settings engaged through Book Ahead Programme. **Across the case study areas respondents highlighted the value of spending time with previously unengaged settings or settings initially unwilling to engage with the Library service.**

One playgroup is situated in an isolated rural area of **Norfolk**. The setting had felt ignored by the Library service prior to the launch of the Book Ahead Programme, which they attributed to their geographic isolation. As a result of the Book Ahead Programme the setting is now more engaged with the Library service. The setting is now taking advantage of the services available to them to support the children attending the playgroup.

- 4.29 Several respondents indicated that **the Book Ahead Programme had made their Library service more inclusive of all Early Years settings**, by providing an opportunity to clearly identify which settings currently subscribe and which do not. The process of engagement has also provided valuable feedback to enable the Library service to reshape its approach and tailor services based more closely on the needs of Early Years settings. In some areas this has highlighted shortcomings in the approach to promote library services to settings.

**'We thought we were marketing our services well, but realise there are EYS who don't use them'.**

- 4.30 In Doncaster and Leeds the establishment of stronger links between the Library service and Early Years settings has been supported by changes to the branch library opening times, with settings able to visit the library by prior arrangement outside of existing hours of service. This flexibility has facilitated engagement with setting staff and increased the use of the library service by local settings.

An Area Librarian in **Leeds** has engaged very successfully with a setting which is not a formal day nursery but offers a range of provision including a playgroup and baby groups from a dedicated space within a community centre. The first set of Book Ahead books was delivered by the Librarian to the setting. When the set was due to be refreshed, the Librarian delivered a storytelling session for an hour, with the children joining in and answering questions about what was happening in the story. A third set of Book Ahead books are being picked up from the branch library by the children and the playgroup worker, through a visit to the library when it is shut to the public, making it an extra special visit for the children.

#### *Monitoring and use of data*

- 4.31 **The Book Ahead Programme has provided an opportunity for a number of Library Authorities to review and improve their approach to targeting and data management:**

***'We discovered that the data we were basing our original figures on was inaccurate also the computer operating system changed during this period from Galaxy to Spydus. The data transferred across wasn't always successful. The project gave us the opportunity to tidy up the system, for example to delete groups who no longer exist, have duplicate cards or have been allocated to the wrong group.'***

- 4.32 In several of the case study areas delivery of the Book Ahead Programme has encouraged library staff to adopt a more structured and proactive approach to monitoring the use of the library service by Early Years settings. Approaches to monitoring have understandably varied in terms of depth and quality across the case study areas. **A number of local monitoring systems have been able to evidence the increased number of library users as a consequence of their Book Ahead delivery** (including group library ticket and individual users).

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- 4.33 Although the majority of respondents continued to use activity indicators or outputs to assess success, there has been a move away from reliance on single indicators towards assessment based on a suite of measures. In addition **more attention has been focused on measuring the outcomes derived from Book Ahead activities in order to provide a more robust assessment of impact** (see Appendix 5).

In **Enfield**, library staff devised a quality framework to encourage Early Years settings to adopt and embed good practice in literacy and language development in partnership with the library service. To achieve compliance with the quality framework, settings are required to choose four of the six delivery activities. Although clearly referenced to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, compliance with the quality framework is voluntary. Whilst achievement of the certificate of recognition is not a formal quality standard, it does enable the practice of the setting to be formally recognised.

The framework has been used to enable library staff to maximise the impact of the Book Ahead resources and also coordinate delivery with other initiatives such as Bookstart Treasure Chests. The use of the quality framework has been approved by the Early Years Strategy Manager within the Schools Improvement Service (see Appendix 6 for further detail).

#### *Creativity in promoting reading*

- 4.34 **The delivery of Book Ahead has stimulated the use of more creative approaches to engaging children in reading.** This can be attributed to a number of factors including: the impact of training provided by library staff to early years practitioners; the provision of fresh book collections in many settings; or simply the success of the Book Ahead Programme in providing practitioners with an opportunity to review their existing practice.
- 4.35 The logistical challenge presented by the Book Ahead Programme has reinforced the value of mobile provision in several case study areas (most notably in rural authorities but also in urban areas with a high concentration of settings). The administration resources provided by Book Ahead has facilitated mobile library visits to many smaller nurseries not previously engaged by the library service due to the relatively high costs and the small number of children that would benefit.

- 4.36 In Tower Hamlets respondents indicated that the Book Ahead resources had facilitated mobile library visits to smaller nurseries that had not previously been contacted by the library service. These visits are to be continued following the cessation of Book Ahead due to the success of this approach.

In **Cumbria** the School Library Service (SLS) has used some of the Book Ahead funding to pilot an outreach mobile library service. This has enabled setting staff and children view, select and exchange books at an outreach bus, which includes an area for the delivery of reading activities such as storytelling.

Although delivery of the Book Ahead Programme was managed by the SLS, settings were able to return loaned books to the SLS, the Public Library service or the mobile access bus. This has facilitated exchange and return of books by the settings. In addition the Book Ahead Programme has been branded under the existing Book Share initiative to provide continuity and avoid any confusion arising from delivering separately branded initiatives.

- 4.37 A number of Library services have reviewed their approach to displaying collections in order to facilitate the use of the library by early years practitioners. In Norfolk the Library service is considering categorising their collection to specifically highlight books that can support the delivery of rhyme time and storytelling sessions. In Kent the Library service has invested in additional display furniture to make it easier for early years practitioners to identify and borrow suitable collections. **Encouraging all Library service partners to review the effectiveness of how they categorise and display collections for early years practitioners can help sustain collaboration with early years practitioners beyond the Book Ahead Programme** by making it easier for setting staff to select appropriate collections.

### *Training*

- 4.38 The implementation of the Book Ahead Programme has not been underpinned by a dedicated programme of training for library staff and early years practitioners. **Consideration should be given to developing a national programme of training across all Library Authorities and integrating this with existing workforce development programmes at a local level.** Early Years setting staff highlighted a range of training needs to assist them in supporting children at the setting. Most frequently cited was the provision of workshops for parents to encourage and support reading outside of the setting and additional advice on effective storytelling.

4.39 In case study areas **where formal training has been provided to practitioners<sup>6</sup> this has been well received with respondents expressing a commitment to try some of the techniques and ideas covered within the sessions.** A number of case study examples are provided below with further detail in Appendix 7.

In **Norfolk** the Library service organised a six week parenting group, 'Babbling Babies', which was held at Earlham Children's Centre. A total of eight parents attended the training, of which six completed all of the sessions. As part of the course the parents were provided with training on reading with their child as well as a range of resources including a nursery rhyme time book and CD and a teddy bear and finger puppet to use of props in storytelling. The parents were also provided with a nursery rhyme time book which was produced as part of the National Year of Reading 2008, following a competition in which a range of Early Years settings and primary schools voted for their favourite nursery rhymes.

The library service also organised '*rhyme time training for the terrified*' which used external trainers to support early years practitioners in using this approach to support children within their setting.

In **Staffordshire** a training workshop was hosted for the Early Reading Connects initiative. The session was delivered by the National Literacy Trust and included staff from PVI nurseries and the local authority Early Years Service. The session was used to promote a coherent offer to the early years sector including Book Ahead, Bookstart and other services available through the Library service and Schools Library Service.

The aim of the workshop was to encourage all nurseries to become Early Reading Connects settings. All participants were provided with a range of resources to help them adopt the guidance and principles outlined in the Early Reading Connects initiative. In total 20 PVI settings attended the training session and local partners are currently assessing the extent to which the settings have made improvement to their delivery as a consequence of the training.

Five half-day training sessions have been delivered in **Derbyshire** to improve the skills of early years practitioners and library staff in supporting reading and contributing to the Early Years Foundation Stage. A total of 200 places were made available across the five sessions with 100 allocated to early years practitioners and 100 to library staff. The joint training sessions were designed to provide participants with an opportunity to establish contacts and forge stronger working relationships in the future. The sessions were also used to increase participant's awareness of each others services as well as highlighting areas for collaboration and joint delivery.

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<sup>6</sup> Includes library staff and early years staff

### *Impact on Early Years settings*

4.40 Although the adoption of effective practice cannot be solely attributed to the implementation of the Book Ahead Programme, for many of the settings it has provided an opportunity to strengthen existing practice and/or adopt new approaches to maximise the impact of the additional book resource. Examples from the Early Years settings visited are presented below:

- Ofsted had advised one setting that the number of children in their storytelling group was too large. The setting has used Book Ahead as an opportunity to operate smaller groups. Staff report that this has worked much better in maintaining the engagement of the children.
- In one setting the children frequently requested the **Shark in the Park** book. One of the nursery staff has made fins and telescope props to bring the story to life.
- The children at one setting are encouraged to suggest books to be included into the '5 a day' box of books. All suggestions are judged by the nursery staff. The Book Ahead titles regularly appear in the weekly box and are used by the children.
- One of the settings previously used the Book Ahead books only at structured story times. However staff now encourage the children to use the books in free play time.
- Several settings report to have improved the display of their books as a consequence of the Book Ahead Programme (see Appendix 1 Photograph 1). Books are increasingly displayed in dedicated areas that children can access at any time.
- One setting promotes monthly themes based around a specific book. Parents of children at the setting are encouraged to bring in books that are related to that specific theme.
- Settings have worked with parents to make up story sacks, including props to be used with the stories (see Appendix 1, Photograph 2).
- Practitioners use a range of techniques to engage children in the storytelling sessions. Examples include speaking quietly to encourage children to listen, using different voices for different characters, asking children to finish sentences and suggest endings and asking children the meaning of words included in the book.
- One of the settings has a sensory garden which is used to inspire imagination and creativity in the children. Books are regular used in the garden to encourage the children to explore and use it to re-enact stories.
- In one setting they have used the Book Ahead books to introduce different themes to the children. For example the **Handa's Surprise** book was used to explore colour.

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4.41 Although by no means consistent across all settings visited by the study team, several have also improved the display of their book collections (see Appendix 8). Setting staff reported that this had been well received by the children attending and generated increased interest in the books. There is merit in communicating the benefits that can be derived from simply improving the display of books to all settings. At a local level this could be taken forward jointly by the Library service and the local authority Early Years Service, using existing setting advocates where possible to strengthen the message.

4.42 **The Book Ahead Programme has proven successful in making some early years practitioners more receptive to the use of puppets, props, storytelling and rhyme time** (highlighted as effective practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage). However further engagement will be required to embed the use of these activities within settings and provide stronger evidence of their positive impact on the learning and enjoyment of children. Whilst outside the scope of this evaluation, there is merit in assessing the extent to which the increased use of more creative approaches to reading are sustained within Early Years settings.

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## 5.0 SUSTAINABILITY OF BOOK AHEAD ACTIVITIES

- 5.1 In many of the case study areas sustainability had yet to be considered in any detail with the majority of staff indicating that the Book Ahead resources would be integrated into the existing library stock. However broader consultation has identified that **a substantial proportion of Library Authorities are planning to maintain the increased level of engagement with Early Years settings beyond the delivery of the Book Ahead programme.**
- 5.2 In the absence of nationally allocated succession funding, the level of resources allocated to maintaining local partnerships will be dependent on local priorities and funding pressures. However it is hoped that the case for continued investment of resources will be strengthened by national and local advocacy following cessation of the Book Ahead Programme.
- 5.3 At a local level several areas are in the process of completing their own evaluation and impact assessment (Hampshire and Kent provide useful examples) which may be used to make the case for further investment. In Library Authorities that have worked effectively with their local authority Early Years Service, it is possible that joint funding may be provided.
- 5.4 Consultation has identified **a desire for continued collaboration to build on the foundations established by the delivery of the Book Ahead Programme.** In light of the reported transience of Early Years settings (e.g. relocation and closure) and high turnover of staff within nurseries, further activity is required to sustain the benefits reported by library staff and Early Years practitioners over the longer-term.
- 5.5 Given the reported resource limitations at a local level, further guidance on accessing data to target resources effectively would be beneficial in supporting previously unengaged settings or settings identified by local partners as requiring reader development support.
- 5.6 Advantages may also be obtained by signposting Book Ahead Library Authority contacts to existing national initiatives that can support Early Years settings in developing a reading culture. The DCSF funded Early Reading Connects project, delivered by the National Literacy Trust, has been highlighted across several Library Authority areas and is consistent with the overarching objectives of the Book Ahead Programme.

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- 5.7 Consideration should also be given to conducting further research on the take up of SLS provision by Early Years settings, in particular for PVI settings. In Sunderland the Library Service is in the process of developing a strategy to market the SLS to PVI Early Years settings as a mechanism of developing a sustainable, self-funded model of delivery. An essential component of this and similar approaches will be to overcome the financial barriers reported by settings by highlighting the learning and development benefits provided for the children through the effective use of books.
- 5.8 **Respondents indicated that a number of the approaches piloted as part of the Book Ahead Programme have or will be mainstreamed by respective Library Authorities (e.g. mobile library use, loan procedures, outreach) thus providing a legacy for the Programme.** There are also opportunities to influence and re-shape local training for early years practitioners as a partnership between the Library service and the Early Years Service.
- 5.9 Delivery of the Book Ahead Programme has also stimulated a number of ideas for further collaboration and development, most notably with regards to family learning (e.g. Staffordshire) and use of parent volunteers to support Early Years settings (e.g. Kent). Both approaches may be supported by existing national partners (e.g. The work of Volunteer Reading Help, The Reading Agency's Chatterbooks project and National Literacy Trust's Family Reading Matters strategy).
- 5.10 Finally the production and dissemination of guidance materials and toolkits can assist Library Authorities and their partners to maintain the momentum established within the Book Ahead Programme and build on the partnership foundations strengthened and established during the course of its delivery.

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## APPENDIX 1- METHODOLOGY

Primary data collection was undertaken at three levels to provide a programme-wide assessment. It captures in-depth local perspectives, evidence of impact and key learning points. The three levels of data collection were:

- Level 1-** Programme wide data uploaded into MLA's Book Ahead Database
- Level 2-** On-line Survey of all Library Authority Book Ahead contacts
- Level 3-** Case Studies of a sample of 18 Library Authorities

### ***Level 1- Programme Wide Data***

Analysis of Book Ahead activity data is predominantly derived from a review of the quantitative data uploaded by Library Authorities within the MLA Database. The MLA Database enabled Library Authorities to upload information with regard to the delivery of their Book Ahead Programme, including information on the number of Early Years settings engaged, number of Early Years settings visited, detail on the nature and frequency of visits by Early Years setting (e.g. story telling, rhyme time, book talk to practitioners, deliver collection of books) and the number of children engaged as part of each visit.

Obtaining an accurate baseline for the number of hours allocated to engaging with Early Years settings prior to the Book Ahead Programme has been problematic due to the absence of accurate and/or consistent data collection systems across all Library Authorities. Respondents indicated that it was difficult to quantify the amount of time spent engaging with the Early Years setting, either because engagement was undertaken by a number of staff as one component of their role or simply because the information was not collated by the Library Authority.

Consultation has revealed that a number of Library Authorities have encountered some difficulty in uploading information onto the MLA Database which affected the quality and integrity of the Programme wide data. Although support has been provided by MLA to facilitate uploading of activity data, many areas have provided blank or incomplete returns. Indeed delivery of this evaluation study has encountered difficulty in obtaining robust, accurate and consistent data on the delivery of the Programme from all 149 Library Authority areas. Consequently we can assume that the MLA Database under-records activities delivered as part of the Book Ahead Programme. This report provides an analysis based on the information uploaded as of April 2009.

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## ***Level 2- On-line Survey***

An on-line survey was distributed to all Book Ahead Library Authority contacts at two phases during the study period. The survey asked respondents to answer a series of questions relating to the level of collaboration and engagement with Early Years settings at the commencement of the Programme and towards the completion of delivery. Segmenting the study methodology into two discreet phases enabled the study team make a final assessment of the strategic added value of the Book Ahead Programme by capturing the 'distance travelled' across all Library Authority areas.

Respondents to the on-line survey were asked to provide their views on a range of statements relating to the level of joint working with Early Years settings prior to and following the delivery of the Book Ahead Programme by providing a score against each statement. By reviewing scores provided by respondents it is possible to assess the impact of the Book Ahead Programme and determine the extent to which this met expectations of staff within the Library service. Given the variation in the level of partnership working across all Library Authority areas, this approach enabled respondents to report progress and impact from their area. Responses have been aggregated at a Programme wide level to provide an assessment of the outcome of partnership development activity delivered as part of the Book Ahead Programme.

A total of 118 Library Authority contacts completed the Phase 1 on-line survey and 78 the Phase 2, equating to a response rate of 79% and 52% respectively. The responses evidence the substantial variation in the roles of the staff in respective Library Authorities taking the lead role in implementing the Book Ahead Programme, which largely reflects differing library service structures.

A similar data collection exercise was completed with a sample of Early Years settings across the 18 case study areas. A postal questionnaire was disseminated to setting contacts during the same two phases that the on-line survey was distributed to Library Authority contacts. Both data collection exercises were not designed to provide statistically significant findings but rather to provide an additional layer of data to facilitate analysis and cross-reference with data uploaded into the MLA Database and qualitative evidence derived from the case study visits.

The sample of settings in each area was intentionally skewed towards those settings that had been actively engaged by their Library service (as notified by the respective library service contacts). In areas where the Library service was unable to provide specific contacts for actively engaged settings (as opposed to details of all settings),

the study team selected a random sample of settings to receive the postal questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed with a freepost envelope to encourage greater response rate.

A total 329 questionnaires were distributed to the Early Years settings during Phase 1 of which 77 were returned. A follow up survey was distributed to the 77 respondents to assess their views on Book Ahead and their Library service following delivery of local activities. A total of 40 responses (52%) were received.

### **Early Years setting survey response**

<b>Library Authority</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>Phase 1 Responses</b>	<b>Phase 2 Responses</b>
Barnet	4	1	1
Birmingham	7	2	2
Bristol	15	0	0
Cumbria	18	1	1
Derbyshire	0	0	0
Doncaster	44	11	7
Kent	24	2	0
Leeds	21	2	1
Manchester	30	8	3
Norfolk	0	0	0
Northumberland	40	17	9
Nottinghamshire	20	5	2
Oxfordshire	20	6	2
Somerset	20	12	7
Staffordshire	19	2	0
Sunderland	31	4	0
Tower Hamlets	10	0	0
Warwickshire	6	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>40</b>

### **Level 3- Case Study development**

The study team selected the case study Library Authorities following analysis of the proposed local delivery models submitted by Library Authorities. In addition the final sample included a mixture of county and unitary authority structures as well as geographical spread across the nine English regions.

This evaluation model has ensured that the report is based on the practical experiences of local partners and is able to highlight common issues identified across the 18 Library Authority areas. In respect of the on-site fieldwork, the study team completed consultations with a range of library service staff and early years

practitioners and attended a number of local training activities and events. In addition the study team has engaged with 250 children across 27 Early Years settings across the case study areas to observe the impact of activities delivered as part of the Book Ahead Programme. The report is largely based on a sample of case study areas and as such cannot be representative of the specific experiences of all Library Authorities involved in the Book Ahead Programme.

### **Book Ahead Case Study areas**

<b>Library Authority</b>	<b>Number of Pupils Age 3-5</b>	<b>Allocation for Books</b>	<b>Allocation for Administration</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
Cumbria	14,457	£29,926	£8,550	£38,476
Doncaster	9,822	£20,318	£5,805	£26,123
Leeds	22,883	£47,192	£13,483	£60,675
Manchester	15,202	£31,092	£8,883	£39,975
Northumberland	9,254	£19,132	£5,466	£24,598
Sunderland	8,579	£17,728	£5,065	£22,793
Birmingham	41,128	£84,450	£24,129	£108,579
Derbyshire	23,237	£48,138	£13,754	£61,892
Nottinghamshire	23,795	£49,161	£14,046	£63,207
Staffordshire	25,360	£52,499	£15,000	£67,499
Warwickshire	16,815	£34,796	£9,942	£44,738
Norfolk	24,098	£49,801	£14,229	£64,030
Barnet	12,565	£25,890	£7,397	£33,287
City of Bristol	12,743	£26,197	£7,485	£33,682
Kent	46,488	£96,053	£27,444	£123,497
Oxfordshire	21,188	£43,654	£12,472	£56,126
Somerset	15,742	£32,557	£9,302	£41,859
Tower Hamlets	9,107	£18,532	£5,295	£23,827

Carrying out this evaluation has required significant contributions of time and information from a large number of people and their assistance and contributions are much appreciated. The qualitative element of this evaluation is necessarily based on the views of those interviewed and as such is subjective. Every care has been taken to conduct this evaluation openly, thoroughly and professionally, to retain an objective stance, to balance the opinions expressed and explore the justification for the comments made.

## APPENDIX 2- LIST OF COMPLETED CONSULTATIONS

Name	Position	Organisation
Ruth West	Director	Abacus Nursery, Taunton, Somerset
Alison Strodder	Manager	Apple Tree Day Nursery, Rothwell, Leeds
Hannah Richens	Adviser for Children & Youth	Barnet Borough Council
Sarah Ginn	Regional Bookstart Development Manager	Barnet Borough Council
Lisa Horne	Manager	Barnet Preschool Learning Alliance
Claire Davis	Manager	Birchwood Pre-School, Warwickshire
Jackie Inman	Schools Library Service Adviser	Birmingham City Council
Jacqui Adams	Schools Library Service Adviser	Birmingham City Council
Maxine Watkins	Librarian, Schools Library Service	Birmingham City Council
Patsy Heap	Head, Children's Youth and Education Services	Birmingham City Council
Sandra Lloyd	Head, Early Years Advisory Service	Birmingham City Council
Sue Gaughan	Assistant Community Librarian	Birmingham City Council
Sue Rogers	Head, Schools Library Service	Birmingham City Council
Yvonne Burt	Book Start and Early Years Librarian	Birmingham City Council
Anne Smith	Manager	Blue Square Childcare, Sunderland
Mel Anderson	Leader	Blue Square Childcare, Sunderland
Tanya Anne Sai	Nursery Manager	Bo Peep Nursery, Barnet
Joanne Taylor	Manager	Bolland Hall Nursery, Northumberland

Name	Position	Organisation
Dianne Southcombe	Schools Library Service	Bristol City Council
Jannet Randall	Young Peoples Services Manager, Public Library Service	Bristol City Council
Margaret Pemperton	Librarian, Schools Library Service	Bristol City Council
Roxanne Lewington	Early Years Librarian	Bristol City Council
Mrs Nicholle	Nursery Manager	Clever Clowns Nursery, Kent
Nikki Jones	Nursery Manager	Columbia Market Nursery, Tower Hamlets
Ann Singleton	Young People's Services Manager, Schools Library Service	Cumbria County Council
Nick Anderson	Senior Support Services Officer, Library Services for Schools	Cumbria County Council
Rachel Perry	Schools Library Service	Cumbria County Council
Mark Hewerdine	Group Leader	Debdale Park, Manchester
Carol Critchley	Early Years and Bookstart Coordinator	Doncaster City Council
Claire O'Brien	Community Development Manager	Doncaster City Council
Jane Wheelhouse	Head of Early Years, Children's Services	Doncaster City Council
Kate McKeown	Consultant Teacher	Doncaster City Council
Maria McCrystal	EMTAS Consultant Teacher	Doncaster City Council
Michelle Davis	Communication and Language Community Nurse	Earlham Children's Centre, Norfolk
Felicity Thomas	Manager	Earlham Early Years Centre, Norfolk

Name	Position	Organisation
Michelle Davis	Communication and Language Community Nurse	Earlham Early Years Centre, Norfolk
Dawn Campbell	Leader	Elmcrest Nursery, Skellow, Doncaster
Jayne Etherington	Leader	Elmcrest Nursery, Skellow, Doncaster
Claire Baker	Nursery Nurse	Flying Start Day Nursery, Doncaster
Helen Combs	Baby Unit Manager	Flying Start Day Nursery, Doncaster
Helen Shore	Deputy Manager	Flying Start Day Nursery, Doncaster
Melanie Johnson	Manager	Flying Start Day Nursery, Doncaster
Stacey King	Senior Nursery Nurse	Flying Start Day Nursery, Doncaster
Sally Hodgson	Manager	Gable Nook Day Nursery, Manchester
Rina Montague	Nursery Manager	Gainsborough Pre-School, Barnet
Irene Richardson	Nursery Staff	George Green Day Nursery, Tower Hamlets
Sharon Mathieu	Nursery Staff	George Green Day Nursery, Tower Hamlets
Mobile bus visit no staff directly engaged		Great Corby Nursery, Carlisle, Cumbria
Justin Gore	Children's Librarian	Hendon Library, Barnet
Lisa Hargreaves	Manager	Honey Bear Nursery, Manchester
Sue Elliot	Manager	Horeston Grange Pre-School, Warwickshire
Mrs Rowles	Nursery Manager	Invicta Park Day Nursery, Kent
Cath Anley	Head of Library Service / Chief Librarian	Kent County Council
Colleen Martin	Head of Early Years	Kent County Council

Name	Position	Organisation
Karen Sillifant	Head of Settings	Kent County Council
Kay Devine	Deputy to the Head of Bookstart	Kent County Council
Lindsay Prestage	Family and Lifelong Learning Services Manager	Kent County Council
Joanne Routledge	Manager	Kinder Park nursery, Cumbria
Caroline Hunter	Lakey Lane Pre-School Nursery Manager	Lakey Lane Pre-School Nursery, Birmingham
Britta Heyworth	Arts & Reader Development Manager	Leeds City Council
Kirsty Fenn	NYR Support Officer and Librarian (West Area)	Leeds City Council
Liz Audsley	Librarian (East Area)	Leeds City Council
Lorraine Lee	Children's Development Librarian 0-10 (and Bookstart Coordinator)	Leeds City Council
Rachel Spence	Group Leader	Levenshulme Baptist Church, Manchester
Mobile bus visit no staff directly engaged		Little Luvs, Carlisle, Cumbria
Marie Dennison	Leader	Little Rascals Nursery, Dunscroft, Doncaster
Helen Sanday	Leader of Foundation Stage	Littlemead Primary School, Bristol
Selda San Ridley	Bookstart Coordinator	Longsight Library, Manchester
Suzi Wild	Early Years Manager	Manchester Library Service
Carol Fuller	Nursery Assistant	Merry Go Round Day Nursery, Staffordshire
Kelly O'Grady	Manager	Merry Go Round Day Nursery, Staffordshire

Name	Position	Organisation
Emma Shields	Coordinator	Methley Mites, Methley, Leeds
Alison Applegate	Librarian Assistant	Norfolk County Council
Dorne Fraser	Young People's Reading and Learning Librarian	Norfolk County Council
Joanne Lamb	Senior Development Officer, Early Years Workforce Development and Training	Norfolk County Council
Jan Casson	Children's Centre Locality Manager	Northumberland County Council
Lynne Riddell	Team Librarian, Library Service	Northumberland County Council
Pat Hallam	Senior Education Librarian, Library Service	Northumberland County Council
Mary Buttolph	Senior Librarian, Children's Services	Nottinghamshire County Council
Carol Stitson	Principal Librarian, Children and Young People	Oxfordshire County Council
Vivien Kadobinskyj	Book Project Coordinator	Oxfordshire County Council
Jane Fairbairn	Nursery Manager	Piggy Bank Day Nursery, Kent
Gillian Winder	Manager	Plumbland Pre-School Playgroup, Cumbria
Natalie Barker	Manager	Primley Park Nursery, Alwoodley, Leeds
Joy Tollington	Team Librarian, Service Development	Somerset County Council
Penny Docherty	Childcare Inclusion Officer, Central Childcare Team	Somerset County Council
Rachel Boyd	Senior Manager, Policy & Development	Somerset County Council
Sara Long	Senior Assistant	Somerset County Council
Sarah Timms	Stock Team	Somerset County Council
Isabel Marsden	Manager	Springboard Nursery, Sunderland

Name	Position	Organisation
Mobile bus visit no staff directly engaged		St Aiden's, Cumbria
Jean Glavey	Team Lead of Children and Young People, Tamworth District	Staffordshire County Council
Sue Ball	Service Development Officer Children and Young People, Library and Information Services	Staffordshire County Council
Sarah Watson	Books for Babies Librarian	Staveley Library, Derbyshire
Eleanor Dowley	Schools Library Service	Sunderland City Council
Joanne Parkinson	Principal Librarian, Reader Development	Sunderland City Council
Penny Henry	Early Years Support Service	Sunderland City Council
Bridget McKeown	Family Link Library Worker	Sure Start, Manchester
Ginny De Valda	Family Link Library Worker	Sure Start, Manchester
Sharon Drinkwater	Family Link Library Worker	Sure Start, Manchester
Lisa Marriott	Leader	The Warren Nursery, St Catherine's Hospital, Doncaster
Catherine Evans	Manager	Tiddlywinks Nursery, Manchester
Mary Dunphy	Manager	Tiny Tots Day Nursery, Doncaster
Gill Bowmaker	Head of Early Years	Tower Hamlets Borough Council
Gillian Harris	Head, Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services	Tower Hamlets Borough Council
Jill McGinley	Parental Engagement	Tower Hamlets Borough Council
Karen Robinson	Children's Librarian	Tower Hamlets Borough Council

Name	Position	Organisation
Lucy Chambers	Schools Librarian	Tower Hamlets Borough Council
Sue Stenson	Walmley Playgroup Manager	Walmley Playgroup, Birmingham
Alison McKellar	Audience Development Manager	Warwickshire County Council
Celia Merriman	Services to Schools Manager	Warwickshire County Council
Joanne Vallis	Senior Advisor, Early Years and Childcare	Warwickshire County Council
Sandy Chapman	Children and Young Persons Librarian	Warwickshire County Council
Linda Rees	Manager	White Horse Pre School, Oxfordshire

Early Years setting	Number of Children engaged
Apple Tree Day Nursery, Rothwell, Leeds	6
Birchwood Pre-school, Dordon, Warwickshire	8
Blue Square Childcare, Sunderland	10
Bo Peep Nursery, Barnet	8
Earlham Early Years Centre, Norwich, Norfolk	6
Elmcrest Nursery, Skellow, Doncaster	4
Flying Start Day Nursery, Doncaster	10
Gable Nook, Manchester	7
Great Corby Nursery, Cumbria	10
Honey Bear, Manchester	9
Horeston Grange Pre-school, Nuneaton, Warwickshire	15
Invicta Park Day Nursery, Kent	19
Kinder Park, Cumbria	5
Lakey Lane Pre-school nursery, Birmingham	10
Little Learners Day Nursery, Sunderland	12
Little luv's, Cumbria	8
Littlemead Primary School, Bristol	6
Merry Go Round Day Nursery, Staffordshire	8
Methley Mites, Methley, Leeds	15
Plumbland pre-school, Cumbria	5
Springboard Nursery, Sunderland	6
St Aidens, Cumbria	8
Tiddlewinks, Manchester	9
Tiny Tots Day Nursery, Doncaster	8
Treasures Neighbourhood Nursery, Staveley, Derbyshire	6
Walmley Playgroup, Birmingham	20
Yewdale pre school, Cumbria	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>

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## **APPENDIX 3- ASSESSMENT SCALES: COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE & LITERACY**

### **Linking Sounds and Letters**

1. Joins in with rhyming and rhythmic activities.
2. Shows an awareness of rhyme and alliteration.
3. Links some sounds to letters.
4. Links sounds to letters, naming and sounding letters of the alphabet.
5. Hears and says sounds in words.
6. Blends sounds in words.
7. Uses phonic knowledge to read simple regular words.
8. Attempts to read more complex words, using phonic knowledge.
9. Uses knowledge of letters, sounds and words when reading and writing independently.

### **Reading**

1. Is developing an interest in books.
2. Knows that print conveys meaning.
3. Recognises a few familiar words.
4. Knows that, in English, print is read from left to right and top to bottom.
5. Shows an understanding of the elements of stories, such as main character, sequence of events and openings.
6. Reads a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently.
7. Retells narratives in the correct sequence, drawing on language patterns of stories.
8. Shows an understanding of how information can be found in non-fiction texts to answer questions about where, who, why and how.
9. Reads books of own choice with some fluency and accuracy.

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## APPENDIX 4- ASSESSING IMPACT USING GLO FRAMEWORK

In addition to evidencing the contribution of the Book Ahead Programme to the Early Years Foundation Stage, the qualitative data collated across the Early Years settings can also be coded against the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) to describe the learning that has taken place as a result of the activities supported by Book Ahead. This evaluation has focused solely on the use of qualitative statements and evidence obtained from participant observation to evidence the contribution of the Book Ahead Programme to the most relevant outcomes, namely:

- **Action, Behaviour, Progression**
- **Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity**
- **Knowledge and Understanding**

The GLO Framework provides a useful method for using both qualitative and quantitative data on learning experiences to provide evidence of impact<sup>7</sup>. Example statements are presented in Table 9 over page. References to specific titles included in the Riveting Reads booklist have been highlighted in bold.

The substantial qualitative data provides strong evidence of the contribution of the Book Ahead Programme in encouraging early years practitioners to adopt effective practice to support the achievement of early learning goals. In the settings visited by the study team the use of the Book Ahead resources has encouraged the use of more creative approaches to reading. The use of these approaches has provided clear learning and enjoyment benefits for the children attending the settings, most notably in settings that reported to have limited previous experience of such techniques.

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<sup>7</sup> For further information visit [www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/](http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/)

## Generic Learning Outcomes: Evidence from Book Ahead

ENJOYMENT, INSPIRATION & CREATIVITY	EXAMPLE STATEMENTS
<p><b>Having fun</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aliens and underpants story good for using rhymes.</li> <li>▪ Children particularly like the CD books and are good for listening to familiar sounds.</li> <li>▪ They sing and do rhymes. The children particularly like singing songs with actions.</li> <li>▪ Children laughed a lot at the different books.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Innovative thoughts, actions or things</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One child opened a page where there was a picture of a dog and caught the attention of a staff member and said <i>“look at my dog”</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Creativity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Book Ahead books have broadened the interest of children, one on pirates really engaged one boy which meant that it became a broader theme with songs, pirate hat and patch made along with treasure chests.</li> <li>▪ <b>“Gruffalo”</b> is good to create new words with and generally making up actions for including gnashing of teeth and other features.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exploration, experimentation and making</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children walked around carrying books to nursery staff requesting them to read them.</li> <li>▪ Books are used in the garden to encourage the children to explore and use it to re-enact stories, e.g. they use the We’re Going on a Bear Hunt story to act out whilst they listen– <i>“swishing through the grass”</i> and <i>“squelching through the muddy water”</i>. Learning in situ encourages them to ask questions, which in turn supports the development of their language and communication.</li> </ul>

ACTION, BEHAVIOUR, PROGRESSION	EXAMPLE STATEMENTS
<p><b>A change in the way that people manage their lives including work, study, family and community contexts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each child had been given a book by the nursery, which suited the child’s reading age. The children would take these books home so that they could read them with their parents.</li> <li>▪ <b>Pants</b> book has been reported to have been discussed by children with their parents who have bought the book as a result.</li> <li>▪ The children know that they have to sit nicely in order to get first choice out of the box.</li> <li>▪ Without the box the children do not sit and read so much, just now and then. They also read after storytime when the box is available.</li> <li>▪ A consultation session was held with parents to discuss, amongst other things, the promotion of reading and sharing books with their children and using the library. As part of this promotion of family reading they have started loaning out the Book Ahead books to parents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Actions (observed or reported)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children will tell on each other if they are mistreating the books.</li> <li>▪ Children used to be less careful with books but now are much better.</li> <li>▪ Some of the children (mainly girls) will pretend to read to the other children, as if it were story time.</li> <li>▪ A small group of children gathered round a staff member sitting at a table and were invited to pick their favourite Book Ahead books.</li> <li>▪ One child was observed gathering the books together to make a neat stack on the table</li> <li>▪ One child was asked to put a book back and put a big book back in the right place with the other big books.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Change in behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children have a lot more interest in books now since the new books arrived and the storytimes have contributed to this interest development as well. There had previously been a loss of a bit of interest in reading from both the children and the staff alike.</li> </ul>

**Progression – towards  
further learning**

- One of the children was identified as being a quieter member of the group, but while reading the story this child came forward and pointed out the cat in the book.
- Some of the children talk about the beginning and end of stories. The member of staff sometimes asks the children to think of alternative endings if they do not like how a story ends.
- One of the practitioners had read one of the Book Ahead books that day (**Bear by the Sea** by Michael Rosen) which had been very popular. She had first read the book and then put on the CD, which she had anticipated the children only wanting to listen to for a few minutes and they had liked it so much they asked to listen to it twice.
- **Meg and Mog** is a particularly colourful book and the children like the pictures. This led to one child who made a cauldron picture after seeing it in the book
- The staff read the story and then leave out the story sack/ box for the children to play with.
- The children do have favourites and the Book Ahead books are amongst these and are put in to a 5 a day box of books that are read over a week period. The children often say what they think should be in the box or the staff judge this themselves.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	EXAMPLE STATEMENTS
<p><b>Knowing about something</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ While looking through the books one child said, <i>“this one is about whales”</i>, then pointed out, <i>“that’s the daddy”</i> at the father whale.</li> <li>▪ The staff keep a profile for each child that links with the Early Years Foundation Stage and when they have reached key points they are highlighted. Things are usually evidenced by witnessing the child doing something 3 times or more.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning facts or information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ They learnt a new word which they repeated at the end – <i>“gigantasaurus”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Making sense of something</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The children understood the meanings of the words. One girl was asked to explain the meaning of the word <i>“cross”</i>, which she had just read, to this she replied <i>“angry”</i>.</li> <li>▪ A child pointed at picture of candy floss and said she did not like it i.e. that she personally did not like to eat candy floss.</li> <li>▪ A child was asked while reading the <i>“Through the Seasons”</i> book what she will be doing in December, to which she replied <i>“seeing santa”</i>.</li> <li>▪ The children are able to pick out what is happening in the pictures which demonstrates their listening and concentration skills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning how libraries operate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One child asked if this was the library van.</li> <li>▪ A practitioner reported that the children knew that the books had come from the library.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Giving specific information – naming things, people or places</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A lot of the children pointed out what they could see in the book – <i>“look he’s got big teeth”</i>; <i>“he looks like a ball, a big fat ball”</i>; <i>“there’s a big spider”</i>.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Deepening understanding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ During storytime some of the children knew the story and followed and pointed out what was happening on the pages. Some children also made observations on what was happening. The member of staff read from the book, <i>“you wouldn’t believe what noises you can hear in the garden at night?”</i> in response to which some of the children started making owl noises.</li> <li>▪ A practitioner asked <i>“Can you see all the holes in the tent?”</i> and a child responded, <i>“they need plasters so they don’t get wet”</i>. <i>“Why else is it cold?”</i> with a response <i>“Because of the moth holes”</i>.</li> <li>▪ A practitioner asked, <i>“What are they going to do without sleeping bags?”</i> and responses included, <i>“uh oh”</i>, <i>“sleep on the grass”</i>, <i>“[staff name], they might see a monster”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Making links and relationships between things</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ While reading “Blue Kangaroo” one child shouted <i>“he’s going to fall out of bed”</i> showing that she knew what was going to happen.</li> <li>▪ One child remembered a cat from the <b>Meg and Mog</b> book when seeing a picture of one in <b>I Love You, Blue Kangaroo</b>.</li> <li>▪ Children guessed what was coming in the stories especially ones where something was hidden and you could see the rough shape, children shouted out what they thought it might be.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 5- MEASURING ENGAGEMENT

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of under 5s registered with the library</li> <li>▪ Number of issues to under 5's library ticket</li> <li>▪ <b>Number of collections to Early Years settings (activity)</b></li> <li>▪ Number of Early Years settings with library membership</li> <li>▪ Number of Early Years settings subscribing to School Library service</li> <li>▪ Use of books by parents with their child</li> <li>▪ <b>Feedback from Early Years and Foundation Stage Advisers</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Behaviour / Response of supported children</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Coverage of Early Years settings (%)</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Feedback from Early Years practitioners (setting staff)</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Use of Quality Framework for Early Years settings<sup>8</sup></b></li> <li>▪ <b>Use of Advisory teachers action plans (AAP)<sup>9</sup></b></li> </ul>
Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of attendees at events</li> <li>▪ Number of visits to settings</li> <li>▪ Number of books issued to settings</li> <li>▪ Number of Bookstart packs delivered</li> <li>▪ <b>Number of training sessions delivered</b></li> </ul>
Process Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of people signposted to activities</li> <li>▪ Number of contacts to Early Years settings</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> London Borough of Enfield

<sup>9</sup> Warwickshire

## APPENDIX 6- ENFIELD'S QUALITY FRAMEWORKS

### Quality Framework Requirements

	Activity	EYFS Compliance	Monitoring	Timescale
1	Participate in Letters and Sounds training including module on <b>Sharing books, library awareness and storytelling practice</b> delivered by Library service		PVI recorded on Register taken by SIS	Summer term 2008
2	<b>Treasure Chests</b> are delivered to PVI or collected from local library.		Bookstart Coordinator records	Apr 08-Mar 09
3	PVI signs up to receive 3 <b>Book Ahead</b> collections (each with a maximum of 30 quality early years book titles) from Schools Library service or local public library	<i>Create an attractive book area where children and adults can enjoy books together.</i>	Schools Library service records	Apr 08-Mar 09
4	Arranges one or more <b>visit to the local library</b> for storytelling session and opportunity to view or borrow books	<i>Ensure access to stories for all children.</i>	Library Records	Apr 08-Mar 09
5	Undertakes to send a batch of <b>library joining cards</b> to parents of each child on roll, with information and publicity about the local library			Apr 08-Mar 09
6	Host at least one <b>story session</b> from the Library service at the PVI during a year	<i>Find opportunities to tell and read stories to children.</i>	Schools/public library records	Apr 08-Mar 09

Early Years settings are required to provide evidence that they have used Book Ahead collections effectively to encourage early literacy and language development. This could include:

- *timetables of regular story sessions using the books*
- *schedules showing that children have time to use and share the books as part of their daily routine*
- *comments from children, parents or staff responding to the books loaned*

## APPENDIX 7- EXAMPLES OF TRAINING ACROSS CASE STUDY AREAS

To support the delivery of the Book Ahead Programme, staff from the local authority Early Years Service in **Warwickshire** were provided with training on the Early Reading Connects initiative. The sessions were used to highlight the benefits of adopting the principles and practice outlined in the Early Reading Connects guidelines and share good practice on effective reader development activities. The feedback from participants has been positive and suggests that the practice will disseminated across settings. Examples of feedback provided by practitioners is presented below:

*'Very enjoyable course. It wasn't what I was expecting however far more useful. Valuable introduction to reading counts for me'.*

*'Very interesting with lots of relevant and up to date issues. Literature that I can now cascade to PVI and maintained setting'.*

*'I thought the course would be about supporting parents in sharing books with their children. The course was actually a lot more interesting and useful to me as an English coordinator, particularly the session about storytelling and its impact on writing'.*

A Book Ahead training event was held in **Birmingham** specifically for staff within PVI settings. The event, delivered by the schools library service, focused on:

- Promoting and explaining the Book Ahead programme;
- Highlighting a range of recently published resources for 3-5 year olds, including stories from other cultures;
- Providing ideas for display and promotion; and
- Updating participants on current Early Years initiatives with particular focus on family learning.

Feedback from the training was gathered using evaluation forms. Analysis of the evaluation forms revealed that the training that participants found most relevant included:

- Introduction to and awareness of new books;
- Ways to involve families;
- Website links which the setting will share with families and carers;
- Gaining library contact details;
- Links to download materials in other languages; and
- Information about half-term activities.

Examples of feedback provided by practitioners is presented below:

*'Very useful. The training helped us find out about how to display books imaginatively and about all the different library services'.*

*'I will visit the local library to get some of the books I have seen today'.*

*'It's given me lots of ideas for involving parents'.*

*'The handouts were useful, particularly the online links'.*

## APPENDIX 8- INFLUENCING SETTING PRACTICE

Photograph 1- Improving the display of books within Early Years setting



Photograph 2- Using theme-based story sacks to engage children in reading

