

South Gloucestershire Libraries: Creating the best start in life for our children and young people

Summer Reading Challenge 2023

Ready, Set, Read!

Presented by The Reading Agency.
Delivered in partnership with libraries.



The Summer Reading Challenge is the UK's biggest free reading promotion for primary school aged children. Available through public libraries, the Challenge provides **FREE access to books and fun reading for pleasure activities for all abilities and helps to prevent the summer reading 'dip'** during the long break from school.

KEY STATISTICS

- **6,350** children in South Gloucestershire took part in this year's Challenge.
- **127, 834** children's books were borrowed over the summer.
- **3,081** children attended free activities in the library.

The demand for children's library services have increased significantly from pre-pandemic levels:

- the number of children taking part in the Challenge has **increased by 26%** compared to 2019.
- the number of children's books borrowed has **increased by 18 %** compared to 2019.

FINANCIAL & SOCIAL IMPACT

To the individual, it matters emotionally, culturally and educationally; because of the economic impacts within society, it matters to everyone.

Whatever pupils' socio-economic background, making sure that they become engaged with **reading** from the beginning is one of the **most important ways to make a difference to their life chances**.

Although estimates of the **cost of low levels of literacy** vary and the methods are often opaque, the costs to the UK are estimated to be very high... a report published by the EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) in 2019 cites the cost to the UK to be around **£20 billion per annum**, while other estimates are much higher. In **social terms**, better reading might enhance opportunities for individuals to become more engaged politically, **increase their tolerance** and **involve them in their communities more effectively**.

(Source: The Reading Framework, Department for Education, July 2023.)

Reading for pleasure is more important to children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education and is a **more powerful factor in life achievement than socio-economic background**. (Source: Sullivan and Brown (2013) Social inequalities in cognitive scores at age 16: The role of reading).

Summer Reading Challenge: Benefits to Children and Schools

The Summer Reading Challenge is **inclusive** and can contribute to the achievement of **all pupils**, including those with **special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils** and the most able.

"...has SEND and has refused to read outside of school for months. With the motivation of activity packs, stickers and a medal, I got to hear my daughter read beautifully – thank you!" (Parent, Kingswood Library)

"My child is a bit behind her peers, struggling with reading, but the challenge has encouraged her to read more. She has now told me she likes to read for fun!" (Parent, Winterbourne Library)

"Both me and my son really enjoyed doing the challenge. It kept him really focused and has helped him with his speech which he sometimes finds difficult." (Parent, Downend Library)

Children keep reading over the summer, **ready for their return to school** in the autumn, and supports the **successful transition between year groups** and key stages.

"The Ready, Set, Read initiative has really helped us to encourage our son to read throughout the summer holidays and keep his confidence up ahead of Junior school." (Parent, Downend Library)

"Really great incentive to encourage children on their reading journey whilst not in the classroom." (Parent, Bradley Stoke Library)

"It's great to keep reading over the long holidays. Especially for my 5-year-old who's just finished reception. They love the medals and will take them into school." (Parent, Filton Library)

The Challenge encourages children to become more **independent** in their reading, boosting their **confidence** and **self-esteem**. Children who take part are more **enthusiastic** about reading.

"This is an amazing and effective idea. My son would not pick up a book and read unless I suggested it. But he was really motivated by the medal to read 8 books." (Parent, Filton Library)

"We really like the challenge, it focusses them to read over the holidays. Definitely made a difference to my 8yr old. He had to put extra hours in to finish the challenge." (Parent Yate Library)

"I think the reading challenge is awesome because it's fun and there is something to do every summer and if I read all the books, I get a medal." (Child, Cadbury Heath Library)

For more information about South Gloucestershire Library Service's work with children and young people, please contact Emma.Fisher@southglos.gov.uk.