

# Booktime Evaluation



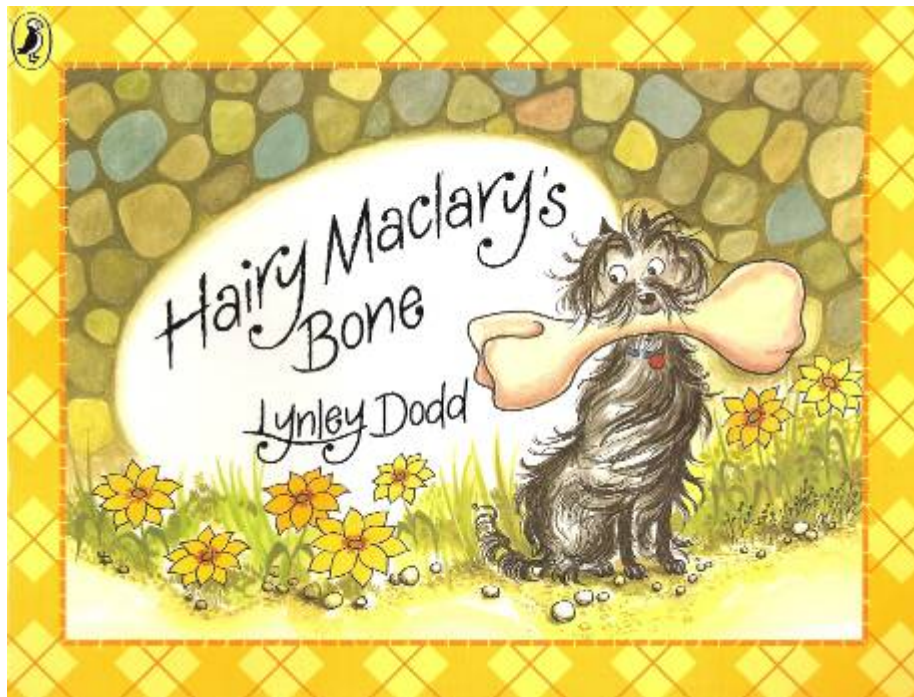
Full Report (March 2007)

Prepared by Hugh Hope-Stone

# Contents

# Project Overview

- **Booktime is a scheme to encourage parents and children to read together.** Launched in October 2006, it provided a free book pack to over 260,000 children (aged 4-5) in local authorities across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It contained a children's illustrated book '*Hairy Maclary's Bone*' by Lynley Dodd and a guidance booklet for parents and carers on reading with their child.
- Supporting materials were also provided to local authority and library services and schools.
- The **aim** was to promote the pleasure of books and shared reading, by encouraging parents and carers to set aside some time each week to read aloud with their child.
- The **objectives** were to enhance the skills and confidence of parents and carers and support family reading, particularly in deprived areas.



# Evaluation Objectives

- The **objective of the evaluation** was to assess and demonstrate the benefits of the programme for stakeholder groups, and to discern the ways in which various aspects could be changed or improved upon. It focused on the following areas:
- **The logistics of distribution**
  - Did the book packs get to the right people, at the right place at the right time?
  - What could be changed to make distribution better?
  - Were the supporting materials and resources of value?

**The value of the book and accompanying guidance booklet to the three stakeholder groups:** 1) Local authority and library services; 2) teachers,; 3) parent/carers and children covering...

- **Engagement and enjoyment**
  - Did the children enjoy it?
  - Did they seem inspired by or engaged with it?
  - Did the parent/carer or teacher read the book with the child?
- **Guidance**
  - Was the 'Reading with your Child' guidance booklet of value to teachers, parents and carers?
  - What could be changed to make the guidance more effective?
  - Is the 'Reading with your Child' guidance booklet appropriate, how well does it work as a reading resource?
  - Should the guidance notes provide more or less ideas and information?
  - Is the format and presentation right?
- **Project aims**
  - Did local authority and library services and teachers understand the aims of the programme?
  - Did they think the project was worthwhile?

# Evaluation Method

- This report is based on the findings from self completion questionnaires distributed following the delivery of the book packs during October 2006. Local authority and library service managers, teachers and parent/carers were asked to complete the questionnaire and by the end of 2006 the following number of questionnaires had been returned:
  - 194 parent/carers
  - 127 teachers
  - 18 local authority and library services
- The samples of teachers and parent/carers are unevenly distributed as the survey relied on individual local authority and library services and schools to distribute copies for completion. Consequently we have a relatively high number of parent/carer and teacher returns from Scotland as compared to other parts of the UK, with particularly a low response from London and the South East.
- In addition sampling was based on self selection and we cannot be certain that the respondents are representative of parents and carers or teachers in the local authorities where the Booktime programme took place. However, there does not appear to be any particular bias in the responses as a result of geographical location of the respondents.
- Local authority and library services returns were more evenly distributed and although a small sample it covers nearly a third of the 62 authorities where the programme took place, making it fairly representative of the potential sample as a whole. However, given the small number of returns, we have used whole numbers rather than percentages when presenting their responses.

## **A note on the quotes used:**

- Overall the feedback on this programme is very positive. However in this report the author has tried to illustrate all opinions given with suitable quotes; consequently the reader should not take the number of quotes included as an overall indicator of the strength of feedback on any particularly point, particularly where negative comments are given.
- Key findings in the report are highlighted in **blue**.

# Summary of Main Findings

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## Aims of the programme:

- **All 18 local authority and library service respondents said they understood the aims of the programme and all who responded were happy to support the programme in the way they were asked to.**
- **They also all agreed that the programme was worthwhile and targeted towards the right age group.**
  - *Many children receiving the books will come from homes with few books in and this is a great way to give reading the prestige it deserves. (LA/Library Services, West Yorkshire)*
  - *We would welcome the opportunity to take part in this programme on a yearly basis. We have used the programme to further raise the profile of family reading with all of our coordinators. (LA/Library Services, Nottinghamshire)*
  - *Wigan has been delighted to be involved in Booktime, and schools have been very supportive of the initiative...overall we have been very impressed in the way that they (the Booktime managers) have helped us to bring the scheme to our area. (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)*
- **This enthusiasm extended to teachers – all teachers who responded said they were happy to help and support Booktime, and considered it a worthwhile programme, the purpose of which nearly all (93%) understood.** For many it fitted in well with current teaching programmes.
  - *It fits in well with our literacy programme and the fact that children receive a book of their own increases the appeal and makes it easier for parents to access reading material. (Teacher, Stirlingshire)*
- A small number (6%) of teachers questioned whether it would inspire parents to read more with their children.
  - *Parents who already read with their children will no doubt participate fully with the programme but am doubtful it will 'convert' some others. (Teacher, Clackmannanshire)*
- Although not explicitly an aim of the programme, greater sales and/or public library loans of Hairy Maclary books might come about; the popularity of the book will no doubt drive children to want to hear more, and teachers to obtain more, books from the series.

# Summary of Main Findings

## Programme logistics:

- Booktime relies on LA/Library Services to provide school orders: primary school addresses, contact details and the number of pupils expected to start school during the year (2007-08).
- **From a logistical perspective Booktime has run very smoothly. All books arrived in good condition, and virtually all (97%) went to the right person and arrived at a suitable time in the school term.**
- Both among teachers and local authority and library services there were a few issues around the timing of the distribution, either in receiving sufficient notice of delivery or catering for pupils starting school later in the year.
- The most salient problem for teachers was a lack of communication about the programme or the delivery of materials - 34% said they didn't have prior notice and there were shortages of books in around 10% of participating schools.
  - *The delivery of the books without any prior knowledge of the books contained made it difficult to include activities as themes and blocks of work had already been allocated.* (Teacher, Nottinghamshire)
  - *Lots of schools have a January intake also, could the delivery be split?* (LA/Library Services, Cornwall)

## Communication and advocacy:

- Booktime relies on local authority/library services to supplement the advocacy provided by Booktrust to schools and families, and to publicise the programme locally.
- Booktime also relied on Head Teachers to pass on email notification to teaching staff.
- **Improved communication, advocacy and publicity could resolve the above logistical issues.**

# Summary of Main Findings

## Reading *Hairy Maclary's Bone* at home:

- **Virtually all ( 94%) parents and carers said they had read *Hairy Maclary's Bone* to their child and nearly all (89%) said they enjoyed reading it.**
  - *My four year old thought it was fantastic receiving his very own book. It's a great idea.* (Parent/Carer, Nottinghamshire)
- Overwhelmingly parents and carers thought that their child enjoyed listening to and talking about the book.
  - *The Hairy Maclary stories are an excellent choice.* (Parent/Carer, East Yorkshire)
  - *I think that the programme is really good. It encourages my little boy to choose a book and then we read it together. He is more interested now when we go to the library.* (Parent/Carer, East Renfrewshire)
- **18% of parents said they would be likely to read more to their children than before as a result of the Booktime project.**

## Reading *Hairy Maclary's Bone* at school:

- 86% of teachers said they had read the book with their pupils.
- 54% said they had, or planned to, run classroom activities linked to the book.
  - *We based the weeks' work around the book – made a reading game, wanted posters, own versions of the story, own books, read other Maclary books, re-enacted the story with 'small world'. Looked at a variety of dog books etc.* (Teacher, London)
- **Nearly all teachers (99%) thought that children enjoyed listening to the book and a similar number (97%) agreed that the rhymes helped the children remember some of the words and to join in saying them.**
  - *Children gained such satisfaction from being able to join in.* (Teacher, South Lanarkshire)
  - *Very enjoyable, pupils enjoyed interacting with the rhyming words. Good discussion about children's dogs and rhyming dogs' names.* (Teacher, Stirlingshire)
  - *The pupils in my class thoroughly enjoyed the story and were eager to stay the rhyming words when we read the story for a second time.* (Teacher, Stirlingshire)

# Summary of Main Findings

## **'Reading with your Child' guidance booklet**

- Teachers (69%) were much more likely than parents and carers (31%) to consider the guidance booklet *'very useful'*. This difference in response may be a reflection of the parents and carers who responded, many of whom claimed to frequently read to their children already, whereas teachers felt the guidance booklet would be helpful in encouraging those who don't read to them so often.
- Nearly all (96%) parents and carers thought the length was about right, with a similar percentage (93%) of teachers agreeing.
- **All Parents and carers and 95% of teachers said the guidance booklet was easy to understand.**
- Just over half (55%) of parents and carers thought the illustrations were good and helped explain the words although 40% thought they were simply 'okay'.
- Teachers were more positive; 66% considered the illustrations very good.

# Summary of Main Findings

## Role of supporting resources

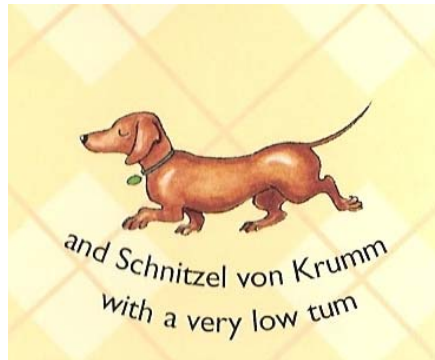
- The response to both the programme materials (book, book bag, teacher card, poster, guidance booklet) and the supporting resources was very positive, with most local authority and library services agreeing that they were helpful in setting up the programme.
- A significant number of local authority and library service respondents were unable to comment, suggesting that they may not have seen and/or used some of the resources.
- Only two respondents didn't feel the press brief was helpful and only one felt that the Dispatch Letter (containing the aftercare helpline and email details) wasn't helpful.
- Most suggestions for improvements in resources focused on the need for more sample packs.
  - *We needed more for councillors/ local library staff etc for raising awareness and training.* (LA/Library Services, Lewisham)
  - *A contingency of packs delivered to the authority would have been invaluable in helping with advocacy of the project, promptly addressing the minority of cases where packs were not complete and promptly meeting the additional needs of schools who required only a limited number of additional packs.* (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)

## Supporting existing literacy development and partnerships

- Overall nearly all (16 of 18) local authority and library service respondents felt that Booktime helped to support and enhance the work already being done to promote reading for pleasure and family engagement.
- The same number agreed that Booktime helps to create or build on existing links between the local authority and library services, schools and families in their region.

# Main Findings

# THE PROGRAMME AIMS



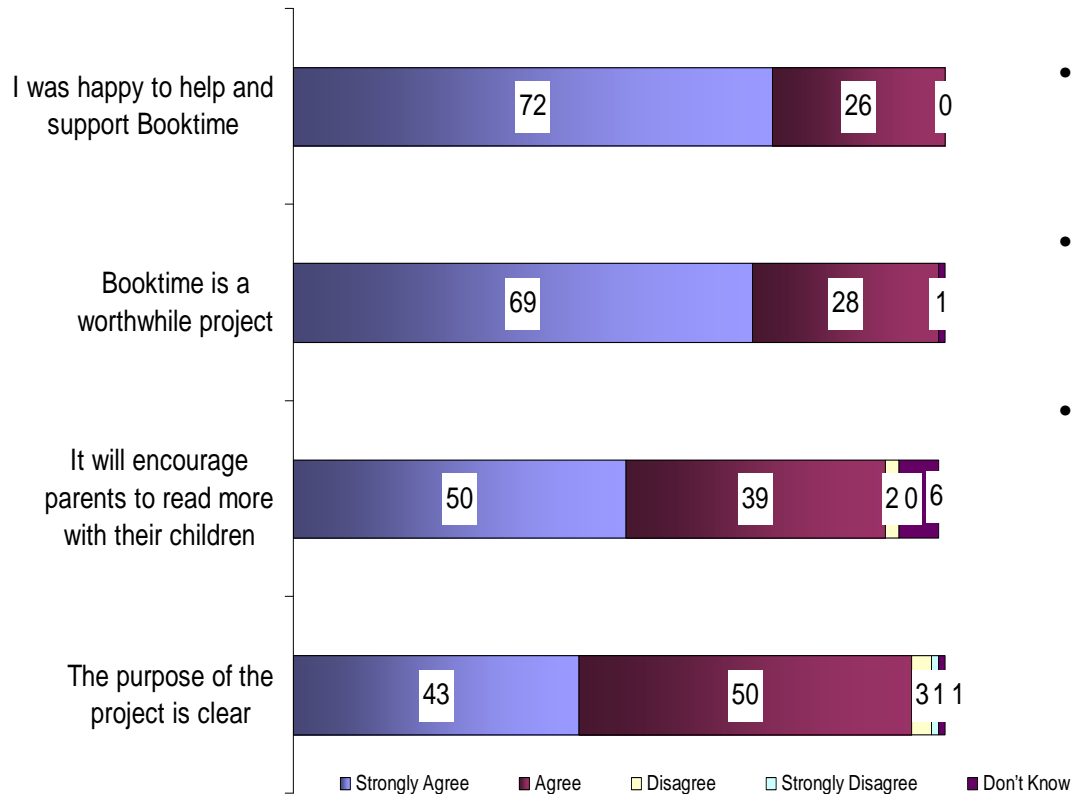
# Understanding the programme aims: Local authority and library service feedback

- All 18 local authority and library service respondents said they understood the aims of the programme and all who responded were happy to support the programme in the way they were asked to.
- They also all agreed that the programme was worthwhile and targeted towards the right age group.
  - Many children receiving the books will come from homes with few books in and this is a great way to give reading the prestige it deserves. (LA/Library Services, West Yorkshire)
  - We would welcome the opportunity to take part in this programme on a yearly basis. We have used the programme to further raise the profile of family reading with all of our coordinators. (LA/Library Services, Nottinghamshire)
  - Wigan has been delighted to be involved in Booktime, and schools have been very supportive of the initiative...overall we have been very impressed in the way that they (the Booktime managers) have helped us to bring the scheme to our area. (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)
- Six respondents felt that while Booktime was targeted towards the right age group other age groups could also benefit.
  - Two specifically mentioned years 1 & 2, where their reading ability was growing and they could be reading out loud to their parents and carers.
    - There might be demand for books to read aloud (simple fiction) for year 1 & 2 – share at bedtime, encourage the habit of still sharing stories as children learn to read for themselves. (LA/Library Services)
    - [It] would be good to do something for year 3 as this is often when parents stop sharing books with children. (LA/Library Services)

# Understanding the programme aims: Local authority and library service feedback

- Others mentioned the benefits of sharing books what ever their age particularly at what they describe as key transitional points.
  - *The transition phases in children's lives, starting school, moving to high school and key points which require specific support to ensure children's learning and learning potential is sustained and developed. (LA/Library Services)*
  - *One aimed at teenagers would be useful, possibly using graphic novels to try and keep them interested in reading for pleasure. (LA/Library Services)*
- **All local authority and library service respondents thought that Booktime would encourage parents and carers to read more with their children;** 5 strongly agreed, 13 agreed.

# Understanding the programme aims: Teacher feedback



% of teachers: n=127

- Teachers were generally happy to help and support Booktime, and considered it a worthwhile project.
- While nearly all agreed that Booktime will encourage Parents/Carers to read more with their children only half agreed strongly.
- Similarly only 43% agreed strongly that the purpose of the project was clear. However when ask to explain their responses those simply agreeing did not appear to express any more negative comments than those who agreed strongly.

# Understanding the programme aims: Teacher feedback

- **Most of the supporting comments on how well they understood the programme aims and how well it achieved these aims, were positive.**
- **Most feedback was on how good the programme was for encouraging children to read, 21% mentioned this, with a further 9% stating that it was good to encourage reading in general.**
  - *This is such an important time to encourage reading.* (Teacher, South Lanarkshire)
  - *I am most interested in a project where all children can be involved in reading.* (Teacher, South Lanarkshire)
  - *Any encouragement and support given to parents is worthwhile.* (Teacher, South Lanarkshire)
  - *I think as much reinforcement and encouragement as possible for parents reading to their children is needed in schools.* (Teacher, East Renfrewshire)
- The danger of 'preaching to the converted' was expressed by some; while a small number of other (6%) felt the project would not inspire reading among those not already interested.
  - *Parents who already read with their children will no doubt participate fully with the programme but am doubtful it will 'convert' some others.* (Teacher, Clackmannanshire)
  - *Some parents will read with their children and some will not, regardless of the programme. An audio book or tips on the styles of story telling may support less confident or self-conscious parents.* (Teacher, East Renfrewshire)
  - *Booktime could involve a short presentation to parents informing them as I feel many may not look at the leaflet and just let the child read the book on their own.* (Teacher, West Dunbartonshire)
  - *Parents that don't read with their child are unlikely to start because they have received a book.* (Teacher, Lancashire)
  - *Not sure that a 'one off' book will promote regular reading at home.* (Teacher, Stirlingshire)

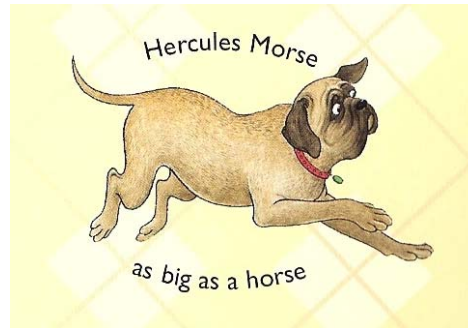
# Understanding the programme aims: Teacher feedback

- Giving a child their own book was spontaneously mentioned as a positive aspect of the programme by 4% of teachers. A similar number felt the programme supported what they were already doing in school.
  - *It fits in well with our literacy programme and the fact that children receive a book of their own increases the appeal and makes it easier for parents to access reading material* (Teacher, Stirlingshire)
  - *The more books we can get into homes the better. Books are vastly better than tokens.* (Teacher, Nottinghamshire)
- **A number of teachers expressed a wish that prior notice of the book title would have been helpful. In addition the timing of the delivery didn't always fit into the school's early reading curriculum.**
  - *I hope this will be a project which will continue. The idea is a good one and could be integrated into a yearly plan if the teacher knew it would continue and when it would be delivered.* (Teacher, Stirling)
  - *A letter of notification should precede distribution.* (Teacher, West Dunbartonshire)
  - *I would like the book well before the beginning of term then it could be planned into literacy.* (Teacher, Derbyshire)
  - *Advanced notice of the book title would help us to forward plan activities.* (Teacher, West Lothian)
- Two respondents suggested the provision of support materials such as a big book version.
  - *I agree that this project will help to encourage children and parents to read together. Maybe a visit, a colouring sheet another book or a big book to share might be good too.* (Teacher, Stirling)
  - *A teacher copy in 'Big Book' format would be a real bonus and easier to share and read again and again.* (Teacher, West Dunbartonshire)
- Only one respondent felt the book was unsuitable for their pupils and parents.
  - *It is unsuitable in subject matter and language for our pupils and parents the majority of who are Muslim with limited levels of English.* (Teacher, West Yorkshire)

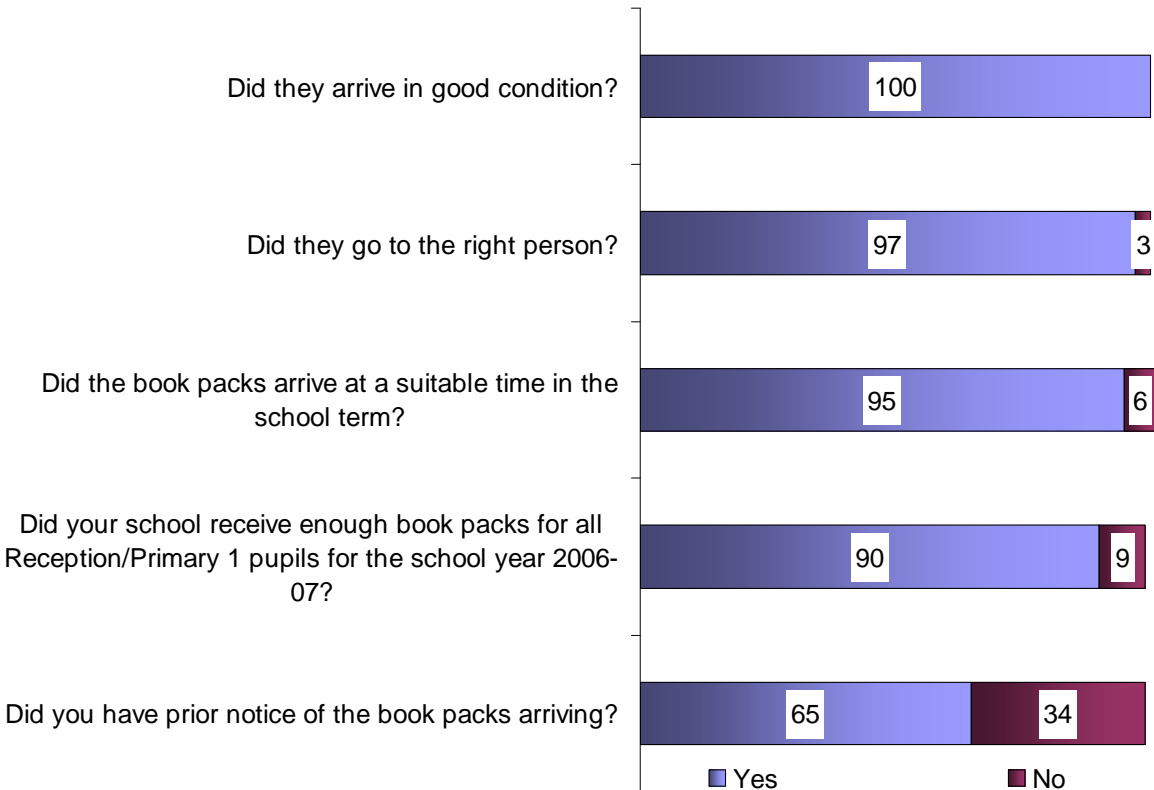
# How well does Booktime work with existing reading programmes?

- 16 of the 18 Local authority and library service respondents agreed that Booktime helps to support and enhance the work already being done to promote reading for pleasure and family engagement. 2 did not comment.
- The same number agreed that Booktime helps to create or build on existing links between the local authority and library services, schools and families in their region.

# PROGRAMME LOGISTICS



# Logistics: Teacher feedback



% of teachers: n=127

- From a logistics perspective Booktime has run very smoothly. All book packs arrived in good condition, and virtually all went to the right person and arrived at a suitable time in the school term.
- There were shortages of book packs in around 10% of cases. Most notably in the South of England where 4 out of 12 schools did not receive sufficient book packs.
- The most salient problem for teachers was a lack of prior notice of the book packs' arrival. 34% said they didn't have prior notice. This was most notable in the East Midlands (8 out of 15 said they received no notice) and in Yorkshire/Humberside (10 out of 16).

# Logistics: Teacher feedback

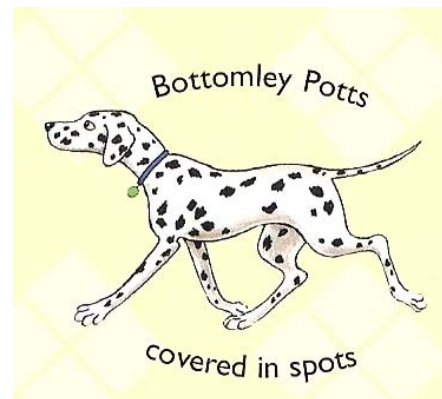
- Given the previously highlighted issues around delivery and prior notice it is not surprising that there was some negative feedback on this. Overall 7% mentioned the need to receive the books at the start of term.
  - *It would have been useful to know at the end of the previous term or the first week of this (autumn) term about the books so that they could be included in the terms' plans. Notice was a bit short.* (Teacher, London)
  - *Had the book packs arrived earlier in the term I would have been able to do more activities linked to the book.* (Teacher, West Yorkshire)
  - *It would have been nice to have enough packs for all the reception intakes in the year, this was only enough for the autumn term intake. It would have been useful to know they were arriving and when.* (Teacher, Nottinghamshire)
  - *The delivery of the books without any prior knowledge of the books contained made it difficult to include activities as themes and blocks of work had already been allocated.* (Teacher, Nottinghamshire)
- **However most did not mention delivery or prior notice as a problem.**
  - *Books arrived in good condition with more than the number asked for.* (Teacher, Greater Manchester)
  - *I was glad that we had plenty of notice and information before books were delivered.* (Teacher, West Dunbartonshire)
- A few teachers asked if an accompanying letter could be included to explain to Parents/Carers what the project was all about.
  - *We had to put a letter into each bag to explain to parents that this was free book and should not be returned to school.* (Teacher, Clackmannanshire)

# Timing:

## Local authority and library service feedback

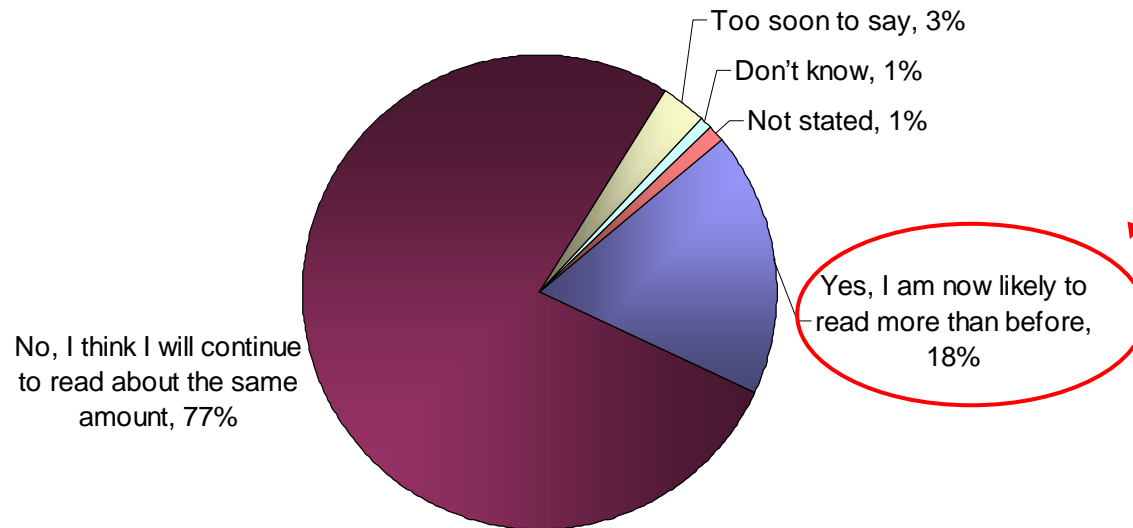
- All local authority and library service respondents said they thought the timing of the email memo to the Head Teachers was appropriate.
- Only one respondent had a problem with the timing of the book packs, although this issue is clearly more widespread as the teacher feedback highlighted.
  - *We would have preferred to have been able to despatch all the packs prior to half term. We received our packs on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October; an extra few days would have been helpful to us arranging delivery of the materials to schools.* (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)
- Some comments reflected teacher feedback concerning split deliveries between autumn and January due to their 2<sup>nd</sup> intake of reception children, or in some cases a 3<sup>rd</sup> intake in the summer term.
  - *Lots of schools have a January intake also, could the delivery be split?* (LA/Library Services, Cornwall)
  - *As we are a 3 term intake of reception children we would benefit getting the books in the summer term so they all get one – unless we get books each term.* (LA/Library Services, Humberside)
- Others felt that longer or more specific notice of delivery would have been helpful.
  - *We would have appreciated notice of the week/day of our delivery.* (LA/Library Services, Lewisham)
  - *Timing of the school order form was late (i.e. after schools had closed) and it was difficult to be accurate about the number of packs needed.* (LA/Library Services, West Yorkshire)
  - *If we had notification of the programme from Easter, we could build it into our termly newsletters.* (LA/Library Services, Nottinghamshire)

# USING THE BOOK PACK



# Encouraging reading

- 18% of parents and carers said they would be more likely to read more to their children than before as a result of the Booktime project.
- Probably not surprisingly the majority (77%) said it hadn't changed their reading habits with their children.



% of parents: n=194

# Reading the book

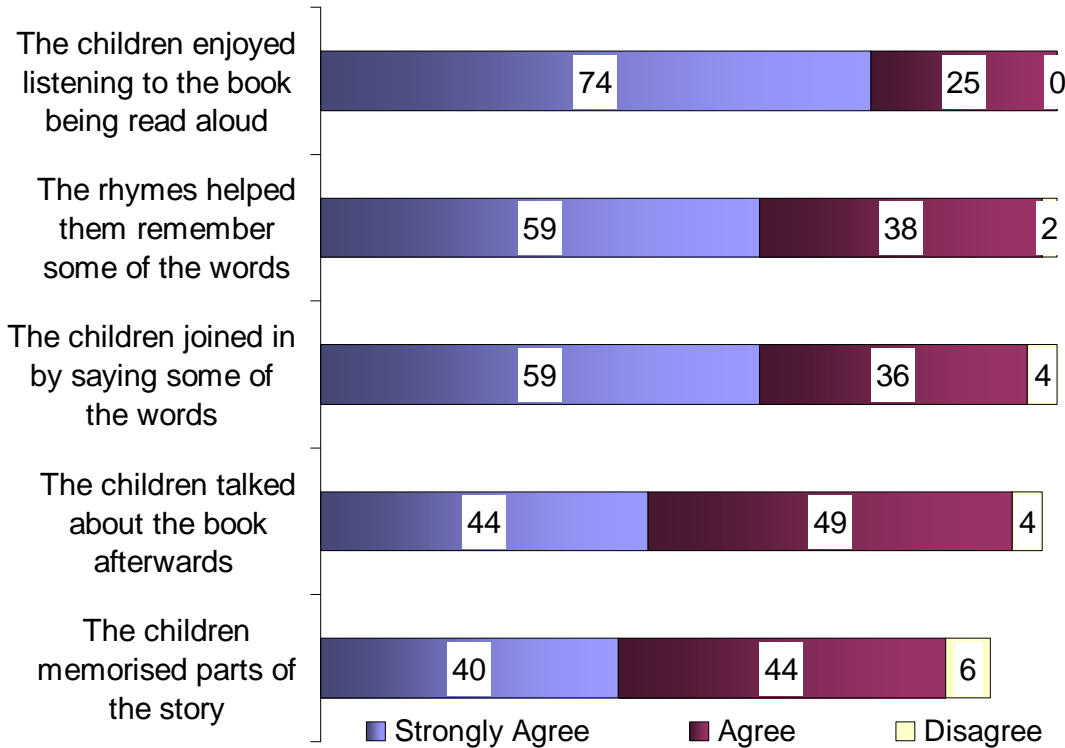
## With Parents/Carers:

- **At the time of completing the questionnaire 94% of Parents/Carers said they had read *Hairy Maclary's Bone* to their child.**
- **Nearly all (89%) of those who responded said they enjoyed reading the book, the remainder (11%) thought it was okay; none said they didn't enjoy it.**
- 6% said they had not read the book to their child – the main reasons given for this were:
  - My child wasn't interested: 1% (2 respondents)
  - Filled in the questionnaire before reading the book: 1%
  - Only had it a few days: 1%
  - Only one respondent said they didn't like the book

## With teachers:

- **At the time of responding 86% of teachers said they had read the book with their pupils. Of those who had not yet read the book nearly all said they planned to.**
  - *I will read it to the class after they have taken their copy home. I wanted their parents to have an opportunity to read it to them first.* (Teacher, Greater Manchester)
- **54% said they had , or planned to run, classroom activities linked to the book.**
  - *We visited the local library for a linked session. We based the weeks' work around the book – made a reading game, wanted posters, own versions of the story, own books, read other Maclary books, re-enacted the story with 'small world'. Looked at a variety of dog books etc.* (Teacher, London)

# The children's response: At school



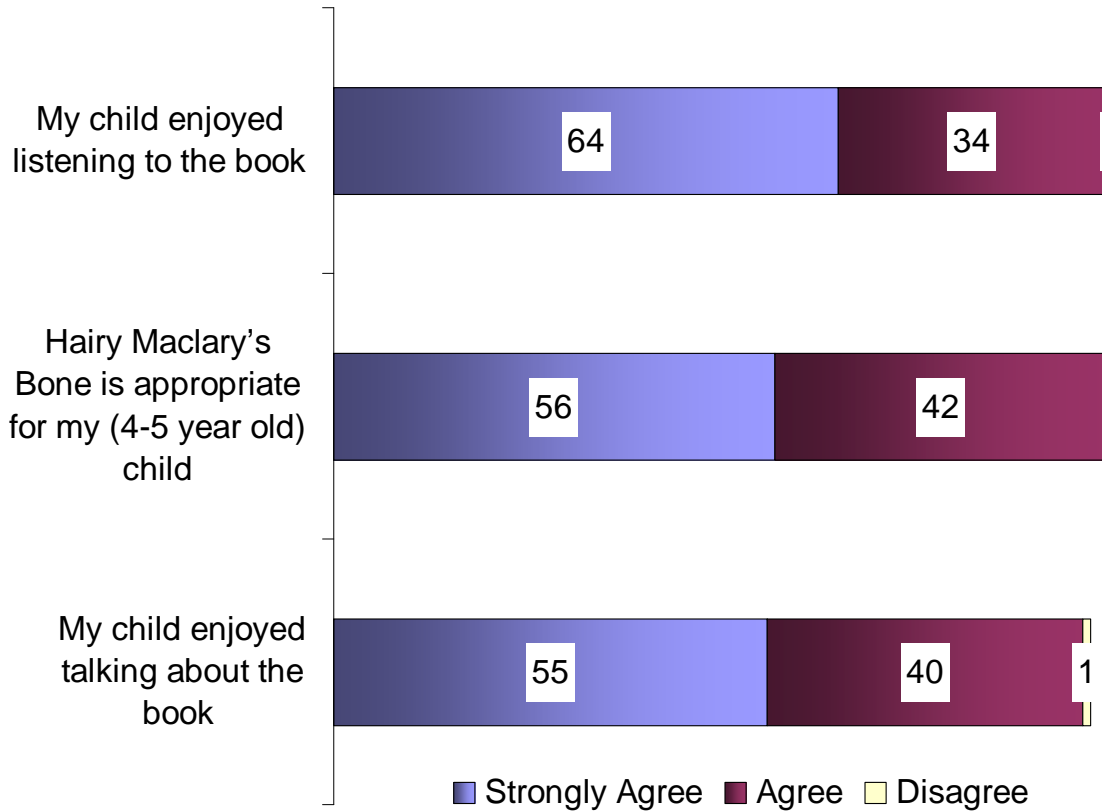
% of teachers: n=127

- **Nearly all (99%) teachers thought that children enjoyed listening to the book.**
- Most (87%) also agreed that the rhymes helped the children remember some of the words and that the children joined in saying some of them.
- 95% of teachers who responded thought the children had talked about the book to some degree and 84% thought that the children had memorised parts of the story.
- Few teachers disagreed with any of the statements on the children's responses to the book.

# The children's response: At school

- The main feedback on the children's responses via teachers was that they enjoyed the book in general (27%) and the characters and names in particular (15%) as well as engaging with the rhymes (22%).
  - *Children gained such satisfaction from being able to join in.* (Teacher, South Lanarkshire)
  - *Very enjoyable, pupils enjoyed interacting with the rhyming words. Good discussion about children's dogs and rhyming dogs' names.* (Teacher, Stirlingshire)
  - *The pupils in my class thoroughly enjoyed the story and were eager to stay the rhyming words when we read the story for a second time.* (Teacher, Stirlingshire)
  - *The children enjoyed this story. They had listened to other Hairy Maclary stories and so were familiar with the characters.* (Teacher, Nottinghamshire)
  - *We all love Hairy Maclary and his friends.* (Teacher, Nottinghamshire)
- A fair proportion of teachers (16%) said the children were already familiar with the Hairy Maclary books.
  - *It was important that a Hairy Maclary book was sent because our pupils are very familiar with this series of books.* (Teacher, Aberdeenshire)
  - *Children like all Hairy Maclary stories. Whenever they see one about to be read aloud they are happy. They enjoyed the prediction in this book.* (Teacher, East Renfrewshire)
- **Undoubtedly this positive response will drive children to want to hear more, and teachers to obtain more, books from the series.**
  - *Children enjoyed hearing the story and were interested to hear of other books in the series.* (Teacher, East Renfrewshire)

# The children's response: At home



% of parents: n=194

- Responses from parents and carers were very similar to those of teachers; **overwhelming they thought that their child enjoyed listening to the book and talking about the book.**
- Nearly all thought the book was age appropriate.
- **Consequently there was a high level of expectation that their child would read other books in the series** – 55% thought it very likely, 39% thought quite likely -only 3% thought it unlikely; 4% were unsure.

# Parent/Carer opinions on the programme

- **Most feedback from parents and carers was very positive.**
- Good to encourage children to read: 8%
  - *I believe any project that motivates parents to read with their children is great. My daughter was thrilled to receive the book.* (Parent/Carer, Lancashire)
- Children enjoyed it a lot: 8%
  - *My child was very pleased with her new book and wanted me to read it to her right away. It is a lovely idea and helps get them started early.* (Parent/Carer, Lanarkshire)
  - *I think that the programme is really good. It encourages my little boy to choose a book and then we read it together. He is more interested now when we go to the library.* (Parent/Carer, East Renfrewshire)
  - *My four year old thought it was fantastic receiving his very own book. It's a great idea.* (Parent/Carer, Nottinghamshire)
- A very enjoyable book: 7%
  - *He loved this book, especially the names of the dogs.* (Parent/Carer, South Lanarkshire)
  - *The Hairy Maclary stories are an excellent choice.* (Parent/Carer, East Yorkshire)
- Family reading together is good: 4%
  - *We feel the programme is very good. As a family we always encourage reading and this only helps enforce it.* (Parent/Carer, East Renfrewshire)
- Encourages Parents/Carers to read to child: 3%
  - *The booklet reminded me of how much I enjoyed reading as a child. I will endeavour to read more to my children and not just at bed time.* (Parent/Carer, South Lanarkshire)
  - *We enjoyed reading the book together and it helped encourage me to read more with my son.* (Parent/Carer, West Dunbartonshire)

# Parent/Carer opinions on the programme

## Suggestions to improve the programme:

- There were a variety of suggestions to improve the programme, but none were mentioned by more than 3% of respondents. Even these were not directly related to Booktime, rather they were more concerned with reading in school in general. Suggestions mentioned by 2% or more of respondents were:
  - More book related topics in school: 3%
  - List of recommended books: 2%
    - *Possibly include a list of best selling children's books for each age group. I am sometimes unsure what books to buy.* (Parent/Carer, South Lanarkshire)
  - Book swap among friends: 2%
    - *A variety of books could be given out and the children could swap them weekly, then discuss which one they liked the best and why.* (Parent/Carer, Stirlingshire)

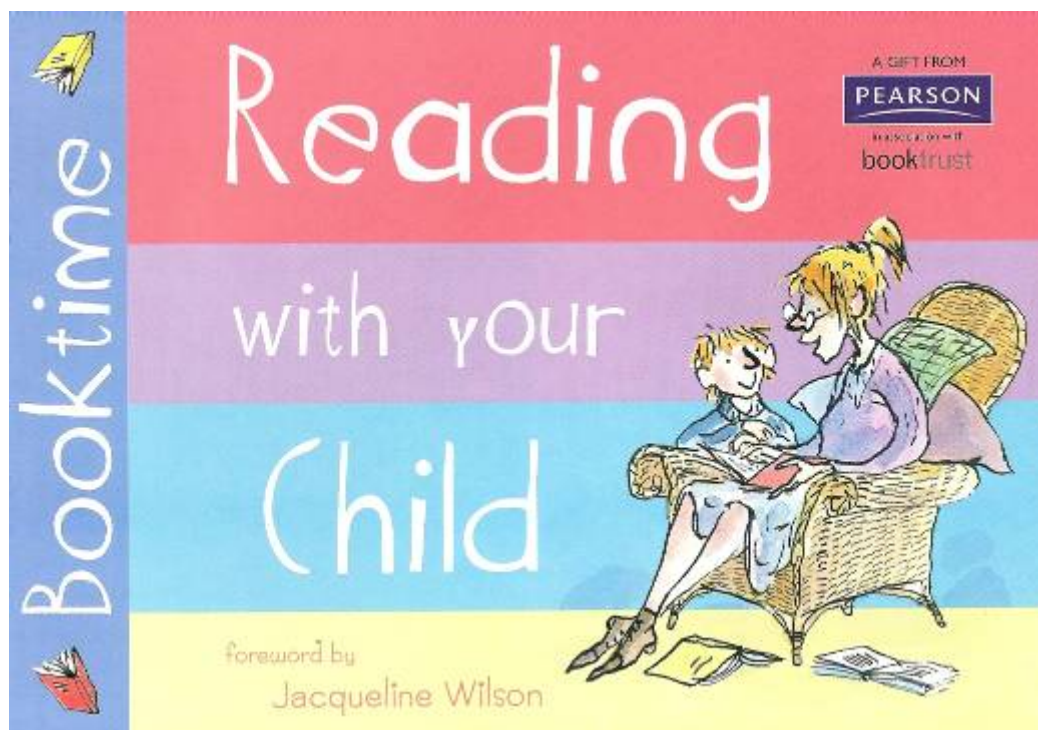
# Parent/Carer opinions on the programme

Less than 2% mentioned...

- Offer a choice of books.
  - *Offering a choice of books would be good as we already had the book we were given. (Parent/Carer, West Dunbartonshire)*
- Enclose one fiction and one non-fiction book.
- Story telling suggestions would be helpful.
  - *I think Booktime could be enhanced with story telling sessions for children...I don't think just sending materials home is totally effective. (Parent/Carer, Hull)*
- Extend age range.
- Make it clear that it is a gift.
  - *Could it be made clearer on first glance that it's a gift? I thought it was to borrow, like a story sack, until I read the questionnaire. (Parent/Carer, Stirlingshire)*
- Enclose separate leaflet about Booktrust.
  - *Could there be some information about Booktrust...explaining who, why, where? (Parent/Carer, Stirlingshire)*

# Parent/Carer opinions on the programme

- Provide a follow up pack.
- Dispense with bag and spend the money on more books.
- Put books in school/class library.
- Give book tokens with pack.
  - *Book tokens given to children to encourage parents/children to buy books. (Parent/Carer, West Yorkshire)*
- Include book marks and book labels.
  - *Could include bookmarks, book label or items related to the story...bone bookmarks for Hairy Maclary's bone? (Parent/Carer, Nottinghamshire)*
- Co-ordinate with the school book fair.
  - *So we might be able to buy the books at the fair. (Parent/Carer, South Lanarkshire)*

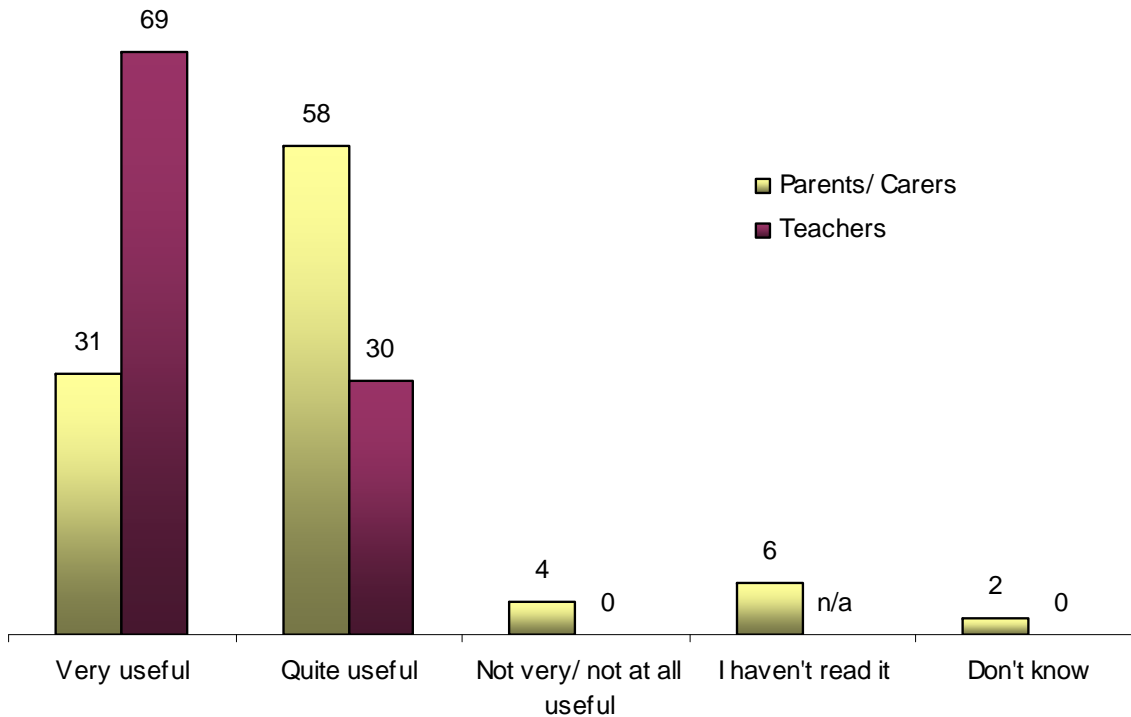


## GUIDANCE BOOKLET

# Value of the guidance booklet

## Parent/Carer and teacher feedback

### How useful was the guidance booklet?



% of Parents/Carers : n=194/ % of teachers: n=127

## Local authority and library service feedback

- 7 local authority and library services strongly agreed that the guidance booklet was suitable and of good quality; the remaining 11 agreed.
- There was no negative feedback.

# Feedback on the guidance booklet concept

- Although the questions to each sample were not worded in exactly the same way overall it would appear that teachers were generally more positive about the value of the guidance booklet than either parents and carers or local authority managers (see chart on previous page).
  - *It compliments what we already provide to parents about reading with their child.* (Teacher, Brighton & Hove)
- Comments demonstrate that some parents and carers feel they are already doing the things suggested; so the guidance booklet has more limited value to them, although still giving reassurance they are doing the right thing.
  - *I think the booklet was great. Very easy to understand with lovely illustrations. The booklet gave me advice and reassurance that I am doing the right things.* (Parent/Carer, Nottinghamshire)
  - *For those people that do not read much to their children it is probably a useful book, but I think we already do much of what is in the leaflet and have had similar pamphlets before .i.e. Bookstart* (Parent/Carer, West Yorkshire)
  - *This is somewhat patronising. There is an assumption that we all require advice on how to read to children.* (Parent/Carer, North Lincolnshire)
  - *Include some suggestions for parents who already read to their children.* (Parent/Carer, North Lincolnshire)
- A few parents suggested providing an additional booklist as well as advice.
  - *I think what would be helpful to me is the type of reading children need at what stage.* (Parent/Carer, Tameside)
  - *Perhaps give...some recommendations for books to read at different ages.* (Parent/Carer, Stirlingshire)

# Feedback on the format

## Length of the guidance booklet:

- **Nearly all (96%) Parents/Carers** thought the length about right, with a similar percentage (93%) of teachers saying the same.

## Complexity:

- All Parents/Carers said the guidance booklet was easy to understand but there were some suggested changes for those with lower literacy skills or changing the focus so children could also read it.
  - *The booklet could be more child friendly so that both adult and child could share the knowledge of what to do.*  
(Parent/Carer, South Lanarkshire)
  - *Simplify the language, perhaps more 'cartoon like' instructions for Parents/Carers with poor literacy skills.*  
(Parent/Carer, Stirlingshire)
- Teachers agreed, 95% thought it had the about right level of complexity, with just 2% feeling it was too basic and 1% too complex.

## Illustrations:

- Just over half (55%) of Parents/Carers thought the illustrations were good and helped explained the words although 40% simply thought they were okay. Only 3% felt they needed some improvement.
- Teachers were more positive; 66% considered the illustrations very good, 32% okay and just 1% felt they needed improvement.

# Suggested changes: Parents/Carers

Parents and carers made a variety of suggestions but changes to the illustrations were only mentioned by 3%.

- *An illustration for colouring in.* (Parent/Carer, Stirlingshire)

Some other individual suggestions were;

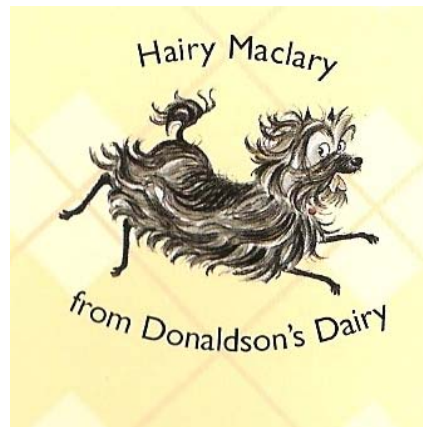
- Include suggestions on other places to read together.
  - *Maybe add that you can read in different environments .i.e. in the supermarket, on the bus etc.* (Parent/Carer, Stirlingshire)
- Change the title to reflect reading by more than just adults – as many siblings also read to younger brothers and sisters.
  - *The title isn't quite right. In our house children read with all sorts of people, not just parents.* (Parent/Carer, Derbyshire)
- Different presentation style.
  - *More bullet points to outline the most appropriate advice so parents can refer to them without having to read through.* (Parent/Carer, North Lincolnshire)

# Suggested changes: Teachers

As with Parents/Carers , teachers did not give any consistent suggestions. Those mentioned by more than 1% of respondents were:

- Send the guidance booklet earlier: 5%
  - *Great booklet, it is helpful without being too 'heavy'. It would be nice to have it available (not necessarily with the story book) so we could send it to parents before children start school.* (Teacher, Nottinghamshire)
- Have it in different languages: 2% (Despite another teacher noticing its availability in three languages already)
  - *In dual language for Mums who speak very little English.* (Teacher, West Yorkshire)
- More advice/detail for Parents/Carers : 2%
  - *A little more detail and advice for parents who rarely read to their children.* (Teacher, Stirling)
  - *Not enough detail to support parents reading with their child at home. I send a guide at the start of the school year and meet parents to go through key points.* (Teacher, Hull)

# BOOKTIME RESOURCES AND MATERIALS



# Suitability and quality of the materials distributed

- Overall local authority and library service respondents thought the Booktime materials were suitable and of good quality.
- All agreed to some degree that the Poster and the Blue bag were suitable.
- In the case of the Teacher Card and the book itself two respondents did not think they were suitable.
  - *I would change the book. There are better books in terms of illustration/subject matter which still rhyme and have a plot. Teacher support materials could have been more detailed with examples of how to use the pack/sample lesson plans. (LA/Library Services, Lewisham)*
  - *Would be useful to have an alternative book for children from the BME community. Feedback from one out reception teachers at a school with a large percentage of Asian children is that the subject matter is unsuitable for these children. (LA/Library Services, West Yorkshire)*

How much do you agreed that the.... was suitable and of good quality? [Number of responses: n=18]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/ Not stated
Blue bag	7	11	0	0	0
The Book	12	4	1	0	1
Teacher card	5	7	1	0	5
Poster	10	6	0	0	2

# Supporting resources

- The project provided local authorities and library services with a range of supporting resources (see list below).
- **The response to these resources was also very positive, with most local authority and library service respondents agreeing that they were helpful in setting up the programme.**
- There were a significant number who were unable to comment, suggesting that these respondents may not have seen and/or used some of the resources (for example 5 for the film and 6 for the order form).
- There were two negative responses to the email to Head teachers, and one to the sample book pack.
  - *Head teachers don't read email.* (LA/Library Services, Cornwall)

**Were the supporting resources listed below helpful in setting up the programme?** [Number of responses: n=18]

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not stated
"Introducing Booktime" brief	15	0	3
The film of the pilot (via CD-ROM/weblink)	13	0	5
Sample Booktime book pack	15	1	2
"The Benefits of Booktime" advocacy document	14	0	4
Template School Order form (Excel spreadsheet)	12	0	6
Partnership Agreement	14	0	4
Email Memo to Head Teachers (to alert schools)	13	2	3

# Additional resources

- **Feedback on the post launch resources was also generally positive, with most agreeing that they were helpful in following up the programme.**
  - *The supporting materials provided an impressive and comprehensive package via which it was possible to distribute and promote the scheme effectively. (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)*
- As with the supporting resources there were quite a high proportion who were unable to comment on the additional resources, suggesting again that some respondents did not see and/or use them.
- There were two negative responses on the value of the press brief and one to the Aftercare helpline and email, because it was left out of the delivery.
  - *None of our packs had a letter in with the helpline. (LA/Library Services, Cornwall)*

**Were the additional resources listed below helpful in following up the programme?** [Number of responses: n=18]

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not stated
Press brief	14	2	2
Evaluation questionnaires for teachers & Parent/carers	12	0	6
Booktime website	13	0	5
Aftercare helpline and email	12	1	5

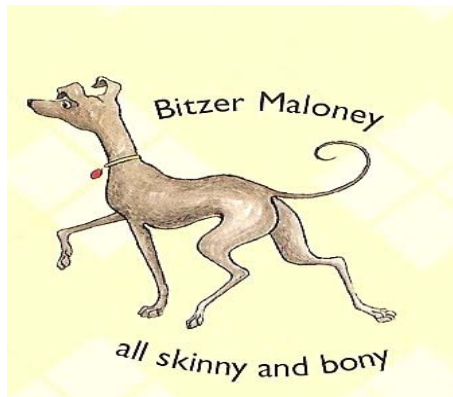
# Further suggestions from local authority and library services

- Additional sample packs.
  - *We needed more for councillors/ local library staff etc for raising awareness and training. (LA/Library Services, Lewisham)*
  - *Early notification of arrival and receipt of samples would enable us to gear up teachers at our regular meetings. If there were samples for each teacher we could prepare some time in advance and incorporate into our provision for reception children/ family literacy. (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)*
  - *A contingency of packs delivered to the authority would have been invaluable in helping with advocacy of the project, promptly addressing the minority or cases where packs were not complete and promptly meeting the additional needs of schools who required only a limited number of additional packs. (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)*
- Packaging.
  - *All packs for one school in one box or taped together. Teacher books should also have a bag so they can give to any new children. (LA/Library Services, Cornwall)*
- Co-promotion with libraries.
  - *It would help enormously if Booktime could promote the link between the project and libraries as explicitly as possible. (LA/Library Services, Lewisham)*
  - *The role of the library service could have been highlighted more that it was in publicity and correspondence. (LA/Library Services, Lancashire)*
- Documentation.
  - *Ensure all documentation comes to the teacher handing out the books rather than management. (LA/Library Services, Humberside)*

# Further suggestions from local authority and library services

- Aftercare helpline.
  - *You should extend the helpline availability for a little longer as we were unable to deliver all the packs within two months.* (LA/Library Services, Northern Ireland)
- Book choice.
  - *It would be good to see a mixture of books so that not every child received the same one – perhaps have a pool of 3-6 books from which the packs are prepared – similar to the Booktrust approach. I realise that this would increase the cost of the scheme though!* (LA/Library Services, North Lincolnshire)

# Conclusions



# Conclusions

- It is clear that Booktime has been very successful.
- It has provided an appreciated gift for reception aged children that facilitates reading with their parents or carers.
- It has provided a focus for teaching material; and teachers are always looking for new ways to inspire reading among their pupils.
- While there have been a few critical comments on the book and the accompanying guidance booklet these have been very minor in comparison to the praise received overall.
- The logistics appeared to have worked smoothly overall, with only sporadic problems of lack of supply and short notice of delivery.
- Local authority and library services appear to have been well serviced with the package of supporting resources.
- Some questions do remain about timing to coincide with reception intake as well as teachers receiving sufficient notice of the pack to ensure they can plan lessons around it.
- Most striking has been the enthusiastic reception of the book pack by children and the 18% of parents and carers who claim that they will read more to their children as a result of Booktime. While this may be an over claim it is still an indicator of the kind of inspiration and impact a programme like Booktime can make.

# Sample Distribution



# Samples

## Local authority & library services (Number of respondents)

Cornwall	1
London	2
Yorkshire & Humberside	4
Nottinghamshire	3
NW England	5
Scotland	2
N. Ireland	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

## Parents and carers (Number of respondents & %)

London	12	6%
South West	1	1%
East Midlands	21	11%
Yorkshire and Humberside	43	22%
North West England	40	21%
South/South East	9	5%
Scotland	68	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	

## Teachers (Number of respondents & %)

London	5	4%
South East / South West	12	9%
East Midlands	15	12%
Yorkshire and Humberside	16	13%
North West	20	16%
North East	5	4%
Scotland	54	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	