

Spring 2024

## Harrow School Library Service Newsletter

*News and information update*



### Visit the School Library Service



#### Book purchasing service

If your school has not already planned to order new stock for the library this year, why not book a visit to view the 9,000 items in our Exhibition Collection at our warehouse in Wealdstone?

When time is short, teachers and librarians can also make use of our 'personal shopper' service.

We recommend that schools start spending their allocation in the autumn term to ensure that all orders arrive before the end of the financial year.

Please phone or email to make an appointment to visit us:  
0203 714 7739  
school.library@harrowlibraries.org.uk

Harrow School Library Service  
*Postal address:*  
Unit 4, 1, Forward  
Drive, Harrow HA3 8NT

*Visitors and all other deliveries:*  
Unit 4, Kenmore Avenue gate,  
Kenmore Avenue,  
Harrow HA3 8LU

‘The library should be the heart, the soul, the mind, the source, the spring, the gold-bearing seam, the engine room, the treasure chamber, the priceless inheritance, the joy and the pride of the school. Every school.’

*Philip Pullman calls for school libraries to be a legal requirement*

With these inspiring words, Philip Pullman joined fellow authors Michael Morpurgo and Julia Donaldson in supporting a renewed campaign for greater access for every child to books and reading, and a recognition of the fundamental importance of school libraries in promoting reading for pleasure, a love of learning, well-being and happiness.

In an interview in [The Guardian](#) on January 21st, Pullman made a heart-felt appeal to government and to local education authorities not to ignore the evidence for the value of libraries, books and reading to change lives for the better. “The school library is absolutely essential at every level of education, and it needs legal protection and status,” said Pullman. “It is too easy to think that books and reading for pleasure are not es-

## Call for school libraries to be a legal requirement (cont.)

sential, whereas nothing is more certain to improve children's ability – and desire – to read richly and well.'

The link between libraries, reading for pleasure and improved educational outcomes has been well documented but yet numbers of secondary school libraries continue to fall and the NLT reported that [14% or one in seven primary schools in England have no dedicated library space](#).

Combine these statistics with the alarming evidence published in a [National Literacy Trust report](#) in September 2022 that more than 56% of 8-18 year olds do not enjoy reading in their spare time, with levels lower among disadvantaged children, the current 'division of opportunity' described by Michael Morpurgo in a recent [Guardian interview](#), between children 'hugely enriched' by access to reading and those without looks certain to get worse. "We have to acknowledge the right of every single child in this country to have access, physically, intellectually and emotionally, to reading. And that will not happen unless the books are there, and it will not happen unless books are shared early."

Early intervention as the key to changing outcomes for all children, particularly the disadvantaged, is at the core of the Reading Together campaign supported by all 12 Children's Laureates (see right) and capable of changing lives, according to much-loved author Julia Donaldson in a recent BBC [Analysis](#) programme. When so much evidence now exists showing the benefits of reading for pleasure, she asks why in a country with a history of producing remarkable books for children, levels of reading for pleasure are at their lowest for 20 years.

The responsibility for change lies with everyone, she suggests—with schools to create a reading for pleasure culture that will especially benefit children from homes without books, with parents, to put down their phones and read aloud to their children, and with libraries, to build on the opportunities of the Summer Reading Challenge and World Book Day, when every child receives a voucher for a book of their very own.

Investment by government in libraries, books and reading, and more coordinated support from children's services for the under-sevens could prevent a worsening situation becoming a crisis for the current generation of young people. Chronic underfunding and closure of libraries starves whole communities of their heritage of literature and opportunities to understand the wider world. "We should never, ever, in this country close down a library again," said Morpurgo, 'The library is the last life-line to reading.'

### Reading Together



On January 19th, the Booktrust campaign [Reading Together](#) was launched, calling for long-term national investment by government in books and reading for the under-sevens.

The campaign has been supported by all 12 Waterstones Children's Laureates in an Open Letter calling for action to encourage parents to read to their children, greater access to a wide range of books and support from all those working with young children to encourage reading together.

Although 95% of parents with children under seven know that reading is important, only 42% of children of that age have a bedtime story. The impact can be seen in the numbers of children needing speech and language support at school entry, which has risen by a fifth since 2017.

The [Booktrust programmes](#) including Bookstart target resources at the critical stages of child development and low income families to try to redress this trend.

## Every child a library member—could this be delivered in Harrow?

### Independent review of public libraries recommends universal library membership for children

One of the key recommendations of Baroness Sander-son's [independent review of public libraries in Eng-land](#) published on 18th January 2024 is for a Universal Library Membership for children. The benefits of access to the wealth of reading resources and early learning activities that libraries provide are well-documented, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In Harrow one of the key aims of the library service is for every child to be a library member, an ambition which would require working in closer partnership with other agencies to reach parents, guardians and carers and encourage library membership from the earliest age.

At a local level, the library service already works with health visitors and children's centre hubs to deliver the Bookstart scheme, with each pack containing information about joining the library. However, there is scope for a more integrated approach, both within Harrow and linking to national organisations and schemes such as the BBC's Tiny Happy People. Making a Universal Library Membership scheme achievable and sustainable would require commitment and coordination across the council's services and resources to ensure that every child could benefit.

The review recognises the importance of libraries, their value and impact, particularly for disadvantaged community groups, and that more needs to be done to ensure their sustainability, especially given ongoing underinvestment by government and the impact of inflation and increasing pressure on council budgets to meet the demand for social care.

The eight recommendations:

1. The establishment of a national data hub to better evidence the role libraries play in our society
2. A national branding campaign to raise awareness of our libraries
3. The closer involvement of the British Library
4. An expanded library membership including Universal Library Membership for children.
5. A stronger volunteer network
6. The creation of a Libraries Minister and a more joined-up approach within government
7. The establishment of a Libraries Laureate
8. A change to the timing of Libraries Week to better involve politicians nationally.

*Please send your comments and suggestions on the above to HSLs and join in the discussion at our next library coordinators' meeting (see p.7).*

### Join the Great School Libraries campaign

With elections looming, this is an ideal time to contact your MP and to be ready to question candidates on how they will support school libraries.

Find out how you can help the campaign: [How can I help?](#)  
[Great School Libraries](#)

### Bring history alive with artefact boxes



Schools subscribing for project loans can request artefact boxes, ideal for children to explore ancient civilisations and to learn handling techniques for historical objects.

New this term are Ancient Rome and Ancient Egypt artefact boxes. Contact HSLs for further details: [school.library@harrowlibraries.org.uk](mailto:school.library@harrowlibraries.org.uk)

## Reading group activities—the Excelsior Award 2024



Registration is now open for the 2024 Excelsior Award, a reading for pleasure prize for the best graphic novels published during the previous year.

The shortlist consists of books chosen for their 'quality, popularity and variety of genre and artistic styles' in four age-groups, each consisting of 5 books:

- Excelsior Award **White**, for students aged **9 and over** (Key Stage 2) - illustrated above
- Excelsior Award **Blue**, for students aged **11 and over** (Key Stage 3)
- Excelsior Award **Red**, for students aged **14 and over** (Key Stage 4)
- Excelsior Award **Black**, for students aged **16 and over** (Sixth Form)

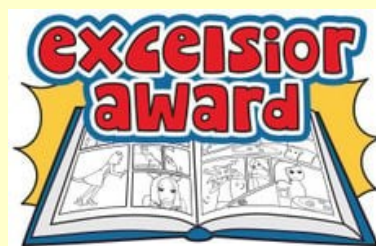
The aim is also to make participation affordable for schools, with a full set of any of the shortlisted books for 2024 costing approximately **£65** plus an administration fee of **£30**.

This is an ideal activity for an enthusiastic reading club suitable for a wide range of reading ability with titles selected to appeal to children from diverse backgrounds and sparking discussion and debate.

Taking part in the Award involves students reading all the books in the category and completing a rating form, awarding marks out of five for Story, Artwork, Characters and Dialogue. At the end of 10 weeks the winning titles are announced at a special award ceremony in June, attended by an author or illustrator of graphic novels.

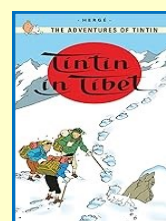
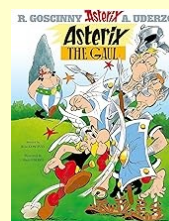
There are also awards for the book with the best cover, (the **JABBICA** (Judge A Book By Its Cover Award), voted for solely by librarians and teachers) and for schools that send in the most ratings forms (the **True Believers Awards**) and a **third prize for the Best School Library Display**, the '**Nuff Said Award**'.

Further details are available on the website: [Shortlists 2024 \(excelsioraward.co.uk\)](https://shortlists2024.excelsioraward.co.uk)



*'Encouraging 'reading for pleasure' in any form can only be beneficial to a child's development and education'*

Paul Register, Excelsior Award organiser and founder



One in four books of any kind sold in France are comics.

The comic book remains hugely popular in France. Asterix, Tintin, Boule et Bill, and Babar the Elephant are a few favourites that have crossed the channel from a long and distinguished tradition of *bandes dessinées* ('drawn strips') created by French/Belgian authors and illustrators.

Sales rose during lockdown, helped in part by the Culture Pass that gave teenagers hundreds of euros to spend. It almost doubled in size from 48.4m sales a year to 87.2m between 2019 and 2021 and unexpectedly has continued after lockdown.

# Forthcoming events— World Book Day March 7th



## WORLD BOOK DAY

### Reading and Writing for Pleasure: A Framework for Practice

The Open University and World Book Day have brought together research evidence on the specific barriers preventing children from reading for pleasure. Sign up for the [OU RfP newsletter](#) and [free CPD](#)

**Reading and Writing for Pleasure: A Framework for Practice**  
 Executive Summary

How is your school celebrating World Book Day this year? Resources and inspiration for librarians and teachers are available on the [WBD website](#), with special events on the day and tips to help with planning fun reading activities for the entire year.

New this year are resources for each of the special £1 books (illustrated below) with [information and discussion points](#) and a special poster for [WBD 2024](#) and on [Finding your Reading Superpower](#). There are competitions to enter and special badges for Book Clubs, plus suggestions for fundraising.

On March 7th, schools can join in [The Great Big Footy & Booky Quiz 9.30-10.00](#), a [live lesson with BBC Teach](#) at 11am and watch or listen to [Share a Story videos](#) and [audio-books](#).

Special versions of the WBD books are available [What is World Book Day's approach to diversity and inclusion? - World Book Day](#)



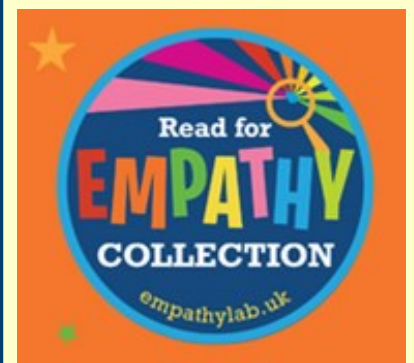
# Read for Empathy collection launch 2024

## Read for Empathy

The 2024 Read for Empathy Book Collection has been launched by EmpathyLab, the charitable social enterprise established with a three-fold mission based on research evidence: Read Stories, Build Empathy, and Make a Better World.

Resources, CPD and information are available on the website [www.empathylab.co.uk](http://www.empathylab.co.uk) to enable parents, teachers and librarians to encourage children to read some of the most inspiring and thought-provoking children's books published during the previous year. These include authors reading aloud from the collection of books as well as interviews in which authors discuss the power of reading and importance of empathy. The events culminate in Empathy Day, an annual celebration which this year takes place on **June 6th**.

The 2024 collection consists of 65 books suitable for ages 3-16 chosen by a panel of expert judges for their potential to teach children about empathy and how to put their learning into practice (see below).



**'Empathy is a vital skill, and books are the best, and most fun way to learn it'**

*Cressida Cowell,  
Children's Laureate*

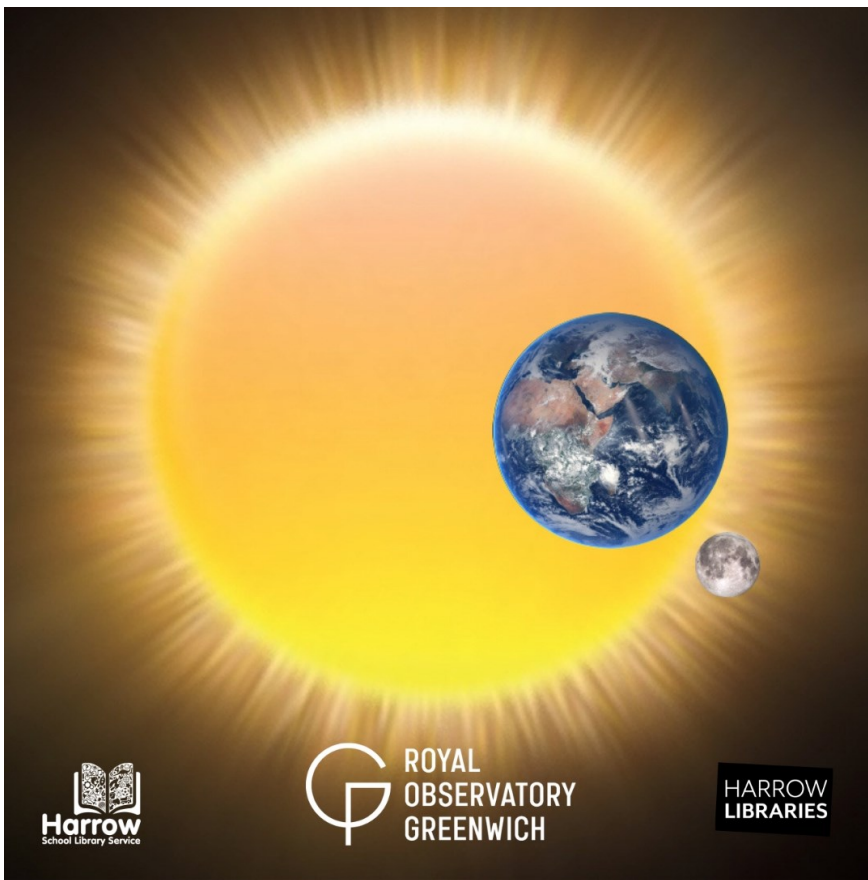
[www.empathylab.uk](http://www.empathylab.uk)

Download the Toolkit to plan your events from March 14th. CPD and resources on website

**The #ReadForEmpathy collection 2024 is here!**

**Expert reading recommendations to raise an empathy-educated generation**

## Science Week webinar with the Royal Observatory Greenwich



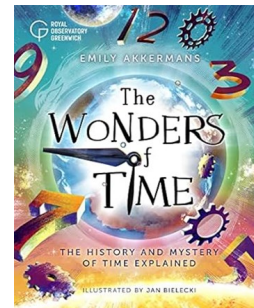
**Celebrate British Science Week with Harrow Libraries' special online webinar for KS2 about the Sun, Earth and Moon on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 10am.**

A real astronomer from the Royal Observatory in Greenwich will be hosting the event live via Zoom, during which we'll be exploring the concept of time in relation to the Earth and Moon's motion through space. We'll also be investigating the similarities, differences and relative scale and shape of the stars, planets and moons on our solar system.

The webinar will include a number of interactive elements to encourage children to think about how our solar system works. There will also be a Q&A opportunity for your class to ask any big space questions they may have, follow-up activities for your classroom and a special competition with the chance of winning a family ticket to the Royal Observatory in Greenwich!

To register your interest for the webinar, please contact [rachel.johnston@harrowlibraries.org.uk](mailto:rachel.johnston@harrowlibraries.org.uk) 0203 714 7739

### Book Offer



It's time for a mind-blowing look at the history and mystery of time with the masters of timekeeping – travelling across the globe and even to the far reaches of space!

**The Wonders of Time** is written by Emily Akkermans - the expert Curator of Time at the home of timekeeping, The Royal Observatory, Greenwich. The book uncovers the history and mysteries of time: its beginnings, the methods of measuring it, how we experience it, different philosophies of time and the potential of time travel.

**RRP £14.99. Available from Harrow School Library Service for £12.00**

*Save the date!*

**Spring Term  
Library Coordinators'  
Meeting  
online via zoom**

**Thursday  
February 29th  
3.45 for 4pm start**

*Details to follow*

## Spellcasters Workshop with poet Rachel Lewis



### Come and explore poetry and creativity at our Spellcasters Workshop for KS2 with poet Rachel Lewis.

SPINE Festival returns to Harrow in March, with the theme of *Magic and Imagination*. Produced by spoken word trailblazers Apple & Snakes, with funding from Arts Council England, we're holding special schools workshops free of charge at Greenhill Library.

During our **Spellcasters** workshop children will be writing their own spells, and exploring the power of words & imagination. Rachel Lewis will be showing your class two ways to put a poem together - creating a list poem and an address poem. Children will be working on poems in pairs, small groups and the whole class will collaborate on a super-poem about magical creatures!

In addition to the workshop at Greenhill Library, children will be encouraged to continue the art of *Spellcasting* via a competition. We'll be asking Schools to set aside some time to help children finish their spells after the workshop and submit scans of the poems to Harrow School Library Service (*cont. right*)

### Free Spellcasters Workshops (*cont.*)



by Tuesday 23 April 2024.

We have a family ticket to Harry Potter World for our overall winning *Spellcaster* and two runners-up prizes of *The Harry Potter Wizarding Almanac* to incentivise workshop participants to continue exploring Magic and Imagination.

All entries received will be displayed at Greenhill Library during the annual Summer Reading Challenge.

#### **SPELLCASTERS DATES:**

**THURSDAY 21st March**

9-11am & 1-3pm

**FRIDAY 22nd March**

9-11am

To reserve a space for your class please contact Rachel Johnston at Harrow School Library Service. Email: [rachel.johnston@harrowlibraries.org.uk](mailto:rachel.johnston@harrowlibraries.org.uk)  
Tel: 0203 714 7739