PREMIER LEAGUE READING STARS (PLRS) is an educational project that harnesses the motivational power of football to encourage families to enjoy reading.

It targets those hard to reach groups in society who may not have shown an interest in reading, but who do have a passion for football.
Following successful applications in September 2008 to the Football Foundation, Premier League and Arts Council, the National Literacy Trust received funding to continue Premier League Reading Stars for two further years, up to and including December 2010.

This report covers the second year of that funding stream, which included:

- A continuation of the current project format: 20 Premier League clubs working with local libraries, up to a maximum of 72 libraries across the scheme. All partner libraries received free books, project merchandise and funding to host an author and bookshop visit.
- The national roll out of the Premier League Reading Stars Challenge for the second consecutive year.
- Pilot work of the PLRS curriculum in schools.
- A Strategic Overview of the project.

BACKGROUND

Premier League Reading Stars (PLRS) uses the power of football to encourage families to read more.

PLRS is a national reading initiative that operates through a network of Premier League Clubs, schools and public libraries. Each of the 20 Premier League teams nominates a Reading Star to discuss his reading habits and recommend his favourite book. These titles form the Premier League Reading Stars Fixture List. In addition to the Fixture List, there is also a Subs Bench list of popular children’s titles supplied free to partner libraries.

Each Club then adopts local libraries that host reading clubs based on the book choices of all 20 Premier League Reading Stars. The libraries recruit families through school referrals and run a programme of seven sessions, focusing on family literacy – encouraging parents to read with their children. It is designed to use the power of Premier League Clubs and players as a motivational tool to encourage children and adults to read. It targets those ‘hard to reach’ groups in society that may not have shown an interest in reading, but who do have a passion for football. PLRS aims to create lifelong readers and raise awareness in the community of the resources available to them at local libraries.

PLRS has been running since 2003 following the creation of a unique partnership between the Premier League, the Football Foundation, the National Literacy Trust, and Arts Council England.

PLRS has five intended outcomes:
- Increase access to local libraries, to books and to professional football clubs.
- Improve attitudes towards all aspects of literacy.
- Raise confidence to read well, to enjoy reading, and to mix with others socially.
- Provide motivation towards reading more and to improve one’s reading ability.
- Change perceptions towards reading and the stereotypically negative view of readers.

This report covers 2010: the eighth year of the project with 72 public libraries registered with the scheme. Around 700 children took part, each accompanied by a parent or carer, totalling around 1,400 participants on the main scheme. Additional project work in schools, along with the national Premier League Reading Stars Challenge, increases the estimated number of participants for 2010 to over 60,000.
THE ANNUAL LIBRARIANS TRAINING DAY:

The seventh annual PLRS training day was held on 4 December 2009 at the Premier League offices in London.

The training day has grown in both size and significance over the eight years of the project, and now represents a crucial and fundamental part of the project preparation. Educating new libraries and clubs on the key delivery processes, the training day also gives an opportunity for experienced librarians to feed back and share best practice. It is also the only time where almost all project deliverers are in the same room at the same time, allowing the PLRS staff to outline and emphasise what aspects of the project must be focussed on for the coming year.

Perhaps most importantly, the training day has proven to generate a great team spirit between PLRS staff and project librarians, creating personal and positive working relationships which carry through for the rest of the year.

The focus of the training day is the project instruction kit, known as the Tactics Book which explains how to run each session and each section of the project. The day also includes a presentation from PLRS author and workshop presenter Tom Palmer as well as staff from the Premier League and Football Foundation.

The training day also provides an excellent opportunity for such administrative tasks as expenses claims and library cost claims.

The training day for the 2010 project was attended by 60 librarians, with the remaining affiliated libraries being sent the Tactics Book and other resources by post.

LIBRARY ACTIVITY:

Over 475 sessions were run as part of PLRS 2010.

- 84% of libraries ran The Kick Off library-based session
- 80% of libraries ran The Second Leg library-based session
- 100% of libraries ran an Author Visit workshop
- 100% of libraries ran a Bookshop Visit
- 68% of libraries ran The Football Fiction workshop
- 60% of libraries ran The Replay library-based session
- 72% of libraries received a Club Based Reward session
- 94% of libraries received a Premier League Ground Tour
- 44% of libraries received free match tickets for a Premier League game

72 libraries affiliated to the scheme, all aiming to run seven separate sessions as part of their PLRS project delivery, as instructed in the project Tactics Book.

- Libraries that ran six sessions 32%
- Libraries that ran seven sessions 52%
- Libraries that ran eight or more sessions 16%
### PROJECT ACTIVITY

#### LIBRARIES AFFILIATED TO THE SCHEME INCLUDED:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>AFFILIATED SCHOOLS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ARSENAL</td>
<td>Cambridge Library</td>
<td>North London Borough of Islington</td>
<td>Grafton School, Eburne Road N7 6AR</td>
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<td>2. CHELSEA</td>
<td>Chelsea Library</td>
<td>London Borough of Kensington &amp; Chelsea</td>
<td>Servite, St. Barnabas &amp; St. Philip's School</td>
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<td>3. BURNLEY</td>
<td>Burnley Library</td>
<td>Burnley Central Burnley Borough Council</td>
<td>Rosewood Primary School</td>
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<td>4. BLACKBURN</td>
<td>Blackburn Library</td>
<td>Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council</td>
<td>St. Peter's CE Primary, St. Peter's RC Primary, St. James CE Primary, Deansgate RC Primary</td>
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<td>5. BOLTON</td>
<td>Bolton Library</td>
<td>Epsom Surrey County Council</td>
<td>Epsom Primary School</td>
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<td>6. SUNDERLAND</td>
<td>Sunderland Library</td>
<td>Sunderland City Council</td>
<td>St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School</td>
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<td>8. EVERTON</td>
<td>Everton Library</td>
<td>Liverpool City Council</td>
<td>St. John Bosco School, Thankewell School</td>
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<td>Wigan Leisure &amp; Culture Centre</td>
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PROJECT ACTIVITY

10 out of 20 Premier League clubs provided a player for their PLRS libraries presentation ceremony, representing a 50% success rate.

PLAYER APPEARANCES 2010:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUB</th>
<th>PLAYER</th>
<th>EVENT/PLAYER APPEARANCE</th>
<th>% OF LIBRARIES</th>
<th>ESTIMATED DELIVERY HOURS BY PL CLUB</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arsenal</td>
<td>Lukasz Fabianski</td>
<td>No player appearance in 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aston Villa</td>
<td>Curtis Davies</td>
<td>Ground Tour for libraries - 2 April 2010</td>
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<td>Birmingham City</td>
<td>Craig Bellamy</td>
<td>Stadium visit - 27 March 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackpool</td>
<td>Paul Robinson</td>
<td>Ground Tour for libraries - 22 April 2010, with Paul Robinson</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolton Wanderers</td>
<td>Paul Robinson</td>
<td>Stadium visit - 27 April 2010, with Paul Robinson in attendance</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everton</td>
<td>Tony Hibbert</td>
<td>Ground Tour for libraries - 11 April 2010</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hull City</td>
<td>Boaz Myhill</td>
<td>Ground Tour - Visit 19 April 2010, Boaz Myhill in attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>Steven Gerrard</td>
<td>Delicate Centre QUA with all three Man City library projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man City</td>
<td>Shay Given</td>
<td>Delicate Centre QUA with all three Man City library projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man Utd</td>
<td>Gary Neville</td>
<td>Old Trafford Certificate presentation - Sept 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Andy Burnton</td>
<td>Delicate Centre QUA with all three Man City library projects</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norwich City</td>
<td>Danny Haynes</td>
<td>No player appearance in 2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>Andy Reid</td>
<td>Ground Tour at Stadium of Light with Andy Reid in attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>Lee Cattermole</td>
<td>White Hart East Ground Tour - April 2010</td>
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100% of libraries ran an author visit session.

The average number of recruits per PLRS project was 19 with an average of 2.2 people attending all sessions across the whole project.

On average, each library group purchased 38 books between them, at an average of 2.2 books per participant.

On average, each child borrowed 7 books from their library during the project. On average, each adult borrowed 4 books from their library during the project.
On average, each project library recruited 4 new members from their Reading Stars groups, representing 21% of their project.

96% of librarians felt that the project had strengthened their relationship with local schools, with 72% of libraries feeling that their relationship with their local Premier League club had also been strengthened.

84% of librarians felt that reluctant readers in their group had been inspired to try one of the books on the reading list because they titles had been selected by footballers.

2010 MOST POPULAR TITLES:
Each year, the reading list from the Premier League Reading Stars generates huge interest amongst both the media and the project participants. Every season the participants are asked to vote for their favourite title from the list...

The most popular children’s title from the 2010 PLRS list was Fantastic Mr Fox by Roald Dahl, selected by Danny Higginbotham (Stoke City).

The most popular adults’ title from the 2010 PLRS list was The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown, selected by Shay Given (Manchester City).

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS:
Through a variety of ways, PLRS aims to target those who are disinterested in reading but who do have a passion for football.

Feedback from our project librarians regarding recruitment included:

“We liaised with the literacy coordinator from a local school, who selected the families to take part.”

“We spoke with the local school and the deputy head advised me of the team’s choice.”

“We contacted our local school. We met with the Year 4 teacher who selected ten children who we thought could benefit from the scheme.”

“We asked the school involved to choose children who they thought would benefit most from the sessions.”

“First we contacted the school and arranged a meeting. We proposed that the headmaster and teachers should decide who would benefit the most but also asked for a couple of keen readers in the group to support the other young people.”

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK FROM THE LIBRARIANS:
“PLRS has been a really positive experience for all the groups. The children were great and I was really pleased at the enthusiasm from the parents who are so busy but still found time to come to the sessions. Many have commented on the fact that it has been good to have time together with their children, that they have now started reading and also that they feel more confident generally. Thanks PLRS – we’ve put a lot of hard work in, but it’s been well worth it!”

“It brought together mums, dads, grandparents and the children. The children were excited that a family member was there to share it with them. Two of the children thought one of the books they picked from the PLRS stock was the best read of their lives. And two of the adults said that they had got back into reading again – after years of not picking up a book. It was a great success. Many, Many thanks.”
"Generally really positive feedback from children, parents, school and really good attendance, especially from parents. I felt it was something children and parents would remember for a long time. Parents also mentioned how fantastic it was to have quality time with their child doing something they wouldn’t normally do. I remember at Waterstones how shocked parents were by the children’s disappointed reactions when we asked if we could hold onto one of the books the children had bought – bearing in mind they were all originally reluctant readers! We also got each parent and child to produce a display together to promote reading during the World Cup. That was good to see – heads bowed getting on with it – really enthusiastic. Thumbs up all round!"

"It has been great to see the pupils’ enthusiasm grow as well as their knowledge of authors and football. I’ve learned things too. The parents, pupils, school and community are benefiting from this scheme."

"Billy (a self-confessed book hater) joined the library; Jason, a rather hyperactive boy, became more involved and attentive as the sessions progressed."

"Jason gained in self confidence. He was particularly enthralled by the author visit. Prior to this he was a very hyperactive boy who found it difficult to keep still. During the author visit he sat and listened to Dan Freedman and asked him lots of questions. Victoria has medical problems which means that she has very severe migraines which affect her behaviour. She calmed down and after one particular session, wrote a spontaneous letter to Sue and I thanking us for running the Reading Stars sessions and telling us how much she loved it."

"For one family English was a second language and attending PLRS supported the child and the parents’ reading skills and raised awareness of community support with services such as the public library."

"One child struggled with his written work but wanted to produce a story for our booklet so he persevered. One child was lacking in confidence but during sessions with his friends from school he became more involved. One child’s older sister became particularly involved and showed a keen interest in something she would not normally have participated in. The Head commented on how enthusiastic and excited the children were the morning after the evening session."

"One child in particular has had a traumatic life so far. The teachers were delighted that he turned up to all sessions and was so excited to be part of the PLRS."

"At least four of my families had English as a second language and as the weeks went on it was great to see the parents come out of their shells and take part, each week we had an ice breaker game that was quite silly and as none of them knew each other it made everyone laugh. Then at the last session a lot of the mums were swapping phone numbers saying they would keep in touch, it was great!"

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PROJECT ACTIVITY

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC LIBRARY/PREMIER LEAGUE CLUB RELATIONSHIPS:

“Fulham provided each of the children and their parents with match tickets, goody bags and gave the group a tour of Craven Cottage with food provided.”

“The Team’s Community Worker attended meetings with library staff and organised a presentation evening at the club which included the tour of the stadium, a Wolves mascot present and there was a question and answer session with Marcus Hahnemann, who was excellent with the children and stayed until the end of the event.”

“Deborah Glynn at Manchester City organised a tour of the stadium and presentation where we met Shay Given. Deborah also gave the children goody bags containing City photos and a Horrid Henry book.”

All children, parents and carers registered to the scheme are asked to complete online evaluation PRE and POST project questionnaires.

PLRS aims to measure changes in attitude towards reading, leading to behavioural change and subsequent enhanced enjoyment and ability.

CHILDREN:

65% of the children were boys
35% of the children were girls

68% were aged 11
14% were aged 12
15% were aged 10
2% were aged 9
13% were aged 7
14% were aged 8
26% were aged 12

PROJECT RESULTS

How much do you enjoy reading?

- Very much 15%
- Quite a lot 12%
- Not very 28%
- Not at all 45%

How confident do you feel about reading?

- Very much 19%
- Quite a lot 21%
- Not very 37%
- Not at all 23%
How confident do you feel speaking in front of other people?

- 15% Very confident
- 21% Quite confident
- 35% Not very confident
- 29% Not confident at all

How often do you read outside of school?

- Never or almost never 30%
- Once or twice a week 30%
- Every day or almost every day 13%

How often do you go to the library?

- About once a month 18%
- About once a week 18%
- A couple of times a year 10%
- About once a year 7%
- Never or almost never 12%

Do you ever go to a bookshop?

- Yes, a lot 44%
- Yes, a little 33%
- No, not at all 10%
- Not sure 3%

Do you read with your family?

- Yes, a lot 64%
- Yes, a little 33%
- No 3%
- Not sure 1%

PROJECT RESULTS

Do you think that participating in PLRS has made you:

- Enjoy reading more 64%
- Feel more confident about reading 41%
- Better at reading 49%
- Read more often 51%

As a result of Premier League Reading Stars, do you now feel more confident speaking in front of other people?

- Yes, a lot 45%
- Yes, a little 39%
- No, not at all 5%
- Not sure 11%

POST PROJECT:

Do you think that taking part in Premier League Reading Stars has made you:

- 54% Read more with your family
- 40% Talk about reading more with your family
- 48% Talk about reading more with your friends

68% of children attended five or more PLRS sessions

21% of children attended all seven PLRS sessions

87% of children read two or more books during their Reading Stars project

18% read four books, 15% read five and 12% read six

88% of children said they enjoyed participating in the project

One child managed to read 29 books in the space of their PLRS project!
71% of children say they now read more because they know that footballers read.

38% of children said that meeting a footballer was their favourite part of PLRS, making this the most popular section of the scheme, with meeting an author the second favourite element of the scheme at 37%.

88% of children said that they will go to their library more because of PLRS.

84% of children felt that they are now reading more with their family.

41% of children joined their local library because of PLRS.

96% of children said they will read more regularly because of participating in Premier League Reading Stars.

**QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK FROM THE CHILD PARTICIPANTS:**

- “I now read books more often.”
- “It’s made me read more!”
- “I enjoy reading a lot more than before.”
- “Since I have been coming, it has made me more confident in reading and speaking to everyone about my books I love reading.”
- “Am now more confident in reading books and I really find them enjoyable.”
- “It has made me read nearly every day!”
- “I am confident in reading more so it has changed a little part of my life.”
- “Yes, it has made me more confident to tell other people about the books I have read.”
- “Yes, it has made me more confident in life.”
- “It has made me read more and express my opinion.”
- “I have learnt more about how much fun different books can be and how much fun football can be.”

**ADULTS:**

- 30% of adult participants were Male
- 70% of adult participants were Female

**Adult employment status:**

- I am employed full time 28%
- I am self-employed 8%
- I am employed part time 30%
- I am a stay at home parent 17%
- I am a carer 3%
- I am retired 6%
- I am currently unemployed 8%
How often do you read with your family?

- Yes a lot: 33%
- Yes a little: 28%
- No not at all: 39%

How much do you enjoy reading?

- Very much: 26%
- Quite a lot: 35%
- Not very: 25%
- Not at all: 14%

How confident do you feel about reading?

- Very confident: 12%
- Quite confident: 30%
- Not very confident: 39%
- Not confident at all: 19%

Are you a member of your library?

- Yes: 53%
- No: 47%

How often do you go to your library?

- Never: 24%
- About once a week: 26%
- A few times a month: 21%
- About once a month: 29%
- Very much: 11%
- A couple of times a year: 7%
- Not at all: 4%

Do you think that participating in PLRS has made you:

- Not at all: 35%
- Not very: 25%
- Quite: 22%
- Very: 18%

How confident do you feel speaking in front of other people?

- Very confident: 12%
- Quite confident: 30%
- Not very confident: 39%
- Not confident at all: 19%

How confident do you feel about reading?

- Very confident: 33%
- Quite confident: 28%
- Not very confident: 39%
- Not confident at all: 19%

Do you read with your family?

- Yes a lot: 33%
- Yes a little: 28%
- No not at all: 39%

How much do you enjoy reading?

- Very much: 26%
- Quite a lot: 35%
- Not very: 25%
- Not at all: 14%
PROJECT RESULTS

22% of parents feel that their child is reading more because of PLRS

52% of parents felt that they are reading more as a family because of PLRS

74% of parents feel that their child will keep reading regularly as a result of PLRS

84% of parents feel that they are reading more with their child as a result of PLRS

81% of parents feel that their child’s schoolwork has improved since participating on PLRS

85% of parents said PLRS gave them an opportunity to bond with their child.

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK FROM THE ADULT PARTICIPANTS:

“I am now a more committed parent to my child.”

“Luke has read books by authors he would not normally read.”

“It changed my life a lot in terms of confidence.”

“I have been able to encourage my children to read lots more, other than school work.”

“I have now realised how important reading is for children. It has also enabled the children to enjoy reading and realise that it is not a chore. I think it is a brilliant scheme with several positive benefits for both children and parents.”

“I have wanted to go out more on Saturday mornings. It has been really nice for him to bond more with his dad as a result of going with him. Colin came to most of the sessions with James and I have come for the last two.”

“Me and my daughter have bonded a lot better doing something together and the meetings are nice to meet other parents.”

“It has definitely given me the impetus to attend my local library and borrow books to read. This has had a positive influence on my family too as my younger children are also encouraged to borrow books from the library. Overall, it has been an enjoyable experience and I will encourage others to participate in the future.”

“It has given my daughter and I more things to talk about and has made Grace more confident in reading and writing.”

“It has given me special time with my son, something we don’t always find the time for.”

“I got to enjoy listening to Conor read and know that this was our special time spent together.”

“It has given us a better outlook on reading.”

“I feel it has definitely made my son realise he can enjoy reading and he is doing so.”

“It gave my son more confidence in reading in front of others and as I take my daughter with us, she is now more interested in reading and talks about what she reads. I just want to say thank you for this opportunity. It gives children an incentive in reading more and gives them confidence to interact with other children.”

“Shared a wonderful seven sessions with other parents and children.”
THE TOPPS STICKER ALBUM COMPETITION

Sticker mad football and reading fans across the country were treated to a once in a lifetime opportunity this season – the chance to meet the Premier League’s top goalkeeper Shay Given – all courtesy of a PLRS competition with TOPPS Stickers!

PLRS and TOPPS Stickers have enjoyed a long standing and positive relationship over a number of Reading Stars seasons, with TOPPS providing free sticker albums and stickers to all PLRS participating children. In 2010, it was decided to take that partnership one stage further, with a joint run, national competition.

TOPPS ran a full page, PLRS designed advert in this year’s edition of the Match Attax album, challenging youngsters to write a 250 word match report, and stickers to all PLRS participating children. In 2010, it was decided to take that partnership one stage further, with a joint run, national competition.

Mick was suitably impressed with the standard of entries for the competition, saying: “I was really impressed by the passion for football that shone through in all the entries. Some of the reports were really more like radio or TV commentaries – but those who had tried to produce newspaper reports did so, with some clever use of words.”

“Shay Given at the City of Manchester Stadium,”

Every child was given the chance to ask Shay a question and have their photo taken with the Republic of Ireland star!

Sky Sports News and Daily Express journalist Mick Dennis charged with judging all the entries. Mick picked the top 25 entries, who all qualified to attend a special session with Manchester City Star Shay Given at the City of Manchester Stadium.

THE PREMIER LEAGUE READING STARS CHALLENGE

2010 saw the continuation of the PLRS national poster campaign, with the second consecutive season of the Premier League Reading Stars Challenge.

The challenge is simple: fill the chart with reading stickers, one earned for every completed book read. When the class hit 100 stickers – the challenge is complete! All groups that register a completed project go into the hat for quarterly national draws to win top Premier League prizes, including free books and free match tickets.

The PLRS Challenge was launched in April 2009. Since then, nearly 5000 poster packs have been distributed, motivating around 150,000 children in the country!

On average in 2010, it took 5000 poster packs have been distributed, motivating around 150,000 children in the country!

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THE PREMIER LEAGUE READING STARS CHALLENGE

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS:

“Year 6 are highly motivated by football and the chance to win football stuff was engaging for them. For Year 2 it was more about putting a sticker on the chart, but boys loved that it was football orientated. Good vehicle for other learning as well as increasing reading – children had to tell somebody else in the class about the book they’d read/ favourite characters etc so promoted speaking and listening targets and comprehension too.”

“It had a very significant impact on the group. It brought them together as a team who encouraged each other to read. It inspired all members of the group to read much more than they usually would.”

92% of teachers said that the PLRS Challenge made their class want to read more.

“A group of very reluctant readers found that working together made the goal much smaller for them as an individual, making reading a far less daunting task.”

“Year 6 are highly motivated by football and the chance to win football stuff was engaging for them. For Year 2 it was more about putting a sticker on the chart, but boys loved that it was football orientated. Good vehicle for other learning as well as increasing reading – children had to tell somebody else in the class about the book they’d read/ favourite characters etc so promoted speaking and listening targets and comprehension too.”

“The project raised the profile of reading. Boys and girls interested in football really responded very well. Children fed back to class about each book read, to qualify for a sticker. Got real team spirit about challenge – desperate to get sticker and talk about their book. Made reading cool and they offered book to peers at end of talk in response to question from child – is it up for grabs?”

83% of teachers felt that the children in their class would keep reading regularly after the project had finished.

PLRS CHALLENGE CASE STUDY:

The Premier League Reading Stars Challenge that I chose to run at Comfield School in Littlehampton, West Sussex from May–July 2010, proved to be extremely successful within our secondary school. As you have already been made aware, Cornfield School is attended by excluded children, meaning that they are pupils that have been excluded from a mainstream setting, and have not been successful in other placements they further attended such as PRUs. Therefore, by the time they reach us, a large majority would have missed a lot of their education, and have a very negative view of any type of schooling.

“I chose to launch the challenge with primarily those students in KS3, as they are pupils that have been excluded from a mainstream setting, and have not been successful in other placements they further attended such as PRUs. Therefore, by the time they reach us, a large majority would have missed a lot of their education, and have a very negative view of any type of schooling.”

“I chose to launch the challenge with primarily those students in KS3, as they are pupils that have been excluded from a mainstream setting, and have not been successful in other placements they further attended such as PRUs. Therefore, by the time they reach us, a large majority would have missed a lot of their education, and have a very negative view of any type of schooling.”

In order for us to achieve reading the 100 books by the end of the Summer Term, we put aside one English lesson for them a week, where they would be given the opportunity to read a book of their choice. This again has been really successful, so much so, that Year 7 and Year 8 have even been reading books during tutor time, which is something that they have refused to do in the past. Also, because of the clear success of this challenge, I have now put into the English Subject Development Plan for September 2010/2011, to continue with ‘in-house’ reading challenges, and of course will be entering Cornfield into next year’s Reading Stars Challenge again!

Therefore, I would like to say a huge thanks to yourself and the others who have organised this challenge, as without it I honestly believe that we would have continually struggled to engage the children in reading, and certainly wouldn’t have made it as fun as your challenge has. It really has made a massive difference in the way that the KS3 boys view reading now, so, long may it continue!

Many thanks and best wishes.

Sarah Poole
Subject Leader of English at Cornfield School

92% of teachers said that the PLRS Challenge made their class want to read more.

83% of teachers felt that the children in their class would keep reading regularly after the project had finished.

The PLRS Challenge is available for FREE to absolutely ANYONE.

To request your pack log on to: www.plrschallengeregistration.org.uk or go to: www.premierleaguereadingstars.org.uk for more info.

Many thanks and best wishes.

Sarah Poole
Subject Leader of English at Cornfield School
MEDIA COVERAGE

Each year the project holds a national media launch, with a focal event for broadcast media and numerous follow up national newspaper hits over one designated weekend to create widespread coverage of, and interest around the scheme.

Due to the high profile nature of the scheme, PLRS also attracts additional sporadic media coverage both locally and nationally throughout the year in a number of publications, as well as Premier League clubs’ official websites and match day programmes.

In April 2010, West Ham United hosted the national media launch involving first team goalkeeper, Jonathan Spector, reading to local children from his book choice, *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. The children also got to enjoy a session of multi sports activity on the pitch at Upton Park, with Jonathan Spector joining in the fun. The event was covered specifically by BBC’s Match of the Day and shown in the community feature section of the Sunday morning repeat show.

In terms of print and website coverage, PLRS attracted coverage in a number of regional newspapers following the media launch, and particular articles in national newspapers including; *The Sun*, *The Guardian*, *Timesonline* and the websites of premierleague.com, *Four Four Two magazine* and *Nursery World*.

Such prevalent and significant media coverage allows the impact of the scheme to reach far greater audiences than the finite number of families actually registered with PLRS libraries. This coverage is one of the strongest aspects of PLRS and helps to create a strong brand identity for the project, recognised throughout the country.

THE PLRS PROJECT NEWSLETTER:

The project also produces a central newsletter, documenting key events, good news stories and best practice amongst the scheme. The Official Newsletter is distributed to all Premier League clubs, all affiliated libraries and schools as well as all project participants. Copies are also sent to key partners of the scheme, trustees of the Football Foundation, as well as being available for anyone to download from the project website. The newsletter represents an excellent overview of project activity, both factually and visually, and has become an integral part of the scheme over the past five years.
### PLRS FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

#### PLRS FINANCIAL COMMENTARY 2010

Starting with an annual budget of £12,775 and adding in the additional £8,383 underspend from 2009, the total working budget for PLRS 2010 was £241,108. As highlighted in the table above, the underspend from 2009 was distributed between Library Activity costs (Arts Council funded activities – £6,609) and Additional Project Activity (£21,724).

**Library Project Costs** came in on budget, with all management costs and internal on-costs accounted for. The final four months of 2010 will see a saving of £2,029 due to staffing changes.

**Central Project Costs** came in at £3,567 under budget. In particular, savings were made on planned travel costs, and savings of around £1,000 on staff training, newsletters and distribution.

Within the Development category of the budget a substantial £11,000 saving was made as a result of the PLRS not running a Premier League club Extension Work projects. The decision was made by the project Steering Group not to run the option for extension projects, due to the changing structure of the way in which Premier League community grants are overseen. To run a PLRS extension project would not appear confusing to Premier League clubs at this time. With a smaller than expected take up of PLRS Challenge posters in 2010, substantial savings were also made on the allocated budget for PLRS Challenge poster distribution. With £21,724 being carried over from 2009 into Additional Project Activity, it was agreed by the Steering Group to employ an external research company to evaluate in detail the qualitative success of PLRS 2010. Further to a tender process, market researchers BDRC Continental were employed to undertake this piece of work, with their costs coming in at £24,000, thus fully utilising this element of the 2010 budget.

Underspend at 31 December 2010 will be discussed by the project Steering Group and re-distributed or reclaimed as appropriate and at the discretion of each individual funding partner.

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#### Table: Project Staff Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Staff Costs</th>
<th>Annual Allocation</th>
<th>Actual Spend</th>
<th>Variance Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork (PLRS)</td>
<td>38,966.00</td>
<td>26,851.42</td>
<td>12,124.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football (PLRS)</td>
<td>15,500.00</td>
<td>15,500.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Club activity costs</td>
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<td>8,246.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>52,607.42</strong></td>
<td><strong>104.58</strong></td>
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#### Table: Central Project Costs

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<th>Central Project Costs</th>
<th>Annual Allocation</th>
<th>Actual Spend</th>
<th>Variance Amount</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Project Manager (full staff)</td>
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<td>2,839.11</td>
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<td>Task Force/Project costs</td>
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<td>5,171.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publishers costs</td>
<td>8,500.00</td>
<td>9,494.35</td>
<td>-994.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admin/Office costs</td>
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<td>5,251.76</td>
<td>-251.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; subsistence</td>
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<td>240.45</td>
<td>-240.45</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,724.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,477.12</strong></td>
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#### Table: Library Activity Costs

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Annual Allocation</th>
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<th>Variance Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kids' T shirts</td>
<td>3,500.00</td>
<td>3,563.78</td>
<td>-63.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids' goody bag</td>
<td>6,000.00</td>
<td>5,446.13</td>
<td>553.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Display stand</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
<td>3,750.00</td>
<td>-1,250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Books</td>
<td>22,400.00</td>
<td>19,723.02</td>
<td>2,676.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarian Time</td>
<td>11,100.00</td>
<td>9,450.00</td>
<td>1,650.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,500.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>29,431.15</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,068.85</strong></td>
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#### Table: Library Project Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Project Costs</th>
<th>Annual Allocation</th>
<th>Actual Spend</th>
<th>Variance Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management costs</td>
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<td>9,470.00</td>
<td>1,630.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Books</td>
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<td>21,072.93</td>
<td>1,327.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Display Stand</td>
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<td>9,750.00</td>
<td>3,250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kits</td>
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<td><em>Total</em></td>
<td><strong>56,000.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,449.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>-449.13</strong></td>
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#### Table: Library Activity Costs

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<th>Annual Allocation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author visits</td>
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<td>10,315.64</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,962.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,646.36</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,315.64</strong></td>
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#### Table: Library Project Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Project Costs</th>
<th>Annual Allocation</th>
<th>Actual Spend</th>
<th>Variance Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management costs</td>
<td>15,186.00</td>
<td>13,000.00</td>
<td>2,186.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Books</td>
<td>22,400.00</td>
<td>20,702.82</td>
<td>1,697.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Display Stand</td>
<td>7,000.00</td>
<td>9,750.00</td>
<td>-2,750.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kits</td>
<td>4,000.00</td>
<td>5,466.13</td>
<td>-1,466.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kits</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,096.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>42,659.95</strong></td>
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#### Table: Library Activity Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Annual Allocation</th>
<th>Actual Spend</th>
<th>Variance Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21,740.00</td>
<td>20,695.50</td>
<td>944.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletters/Tactics Books</td>
<td>4,000.00</td>
<td>3,266.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posters/Player Cards</td>
<td>8,600.00</td>
<td>9,344.35</td>
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<td>Training and Meetings</td>
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<td>-1,517.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project staff training (club staff)</td>
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<td>2,933.01</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,835.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,532.92</strong></td>
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#### Table: Development

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1A Activity Costs – Extension Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Challenge Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>O2A Activity Costs – Project Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Project Activity</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,740.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,263.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,476.99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

- Revisions not to be processed.
- Management costs yet to be processed.
- Total predicted underspend 31 December 2010: £34,508.43

**Staff Costs:** 3,029.58

The Additional Saving on Project Manager is 2,029.58.

**Total:**

- **32,740.00**
- **27,263.01**
- **5,476.99**

---

**FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

Figures include forecast spend to the end of calendar year 2010.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUB</th>
<th>Number of Libraries</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arsenal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aston Villa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham City</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn Rovers</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolton Wanderers</td>
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<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everton</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulham</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull City</td>
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<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester City</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester United</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
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<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke City</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tottenham Hotspur</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Ham United</td>
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<td>120</td>
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<td>Wolves</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLRS TOPPS Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLRS Challenge</td>
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<td>60,000</td>
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<td>PLRS Challenge</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>61,490</td>
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**LETTERS FROM THE PARENTS**

The Official PLRS Newsletter gets lots of post, with letters from parents and children on the Reading Stars scheme. Here’s our pick of the best...

“**I would like to say a very big thank you to you both from myself and Luke and Ashley for this last few weeks. We have all enjoyed the sessions at the library, not to mention meeting Tom Palmer of course and tonight was just fantastic. Being able to meet David James and have a look round Fratton Park was just amazing. The only thing now is I’m not sure who to choose, Tom Palmer or David James? Anyway, a really BIG thank you to you both for making it happen and for making it such fun...”**

Julie, Parent, Portsmouth FC project

“**As another successful PLRS scheme comes to a close we would like to say just how beneficial and what a positive experience it has been for the families and all the staff involved. There has been very positive feedback from the school and the families, one parent in particular has been overwhelmed by the experience and couldn’t thank us enough for our involvement. Once again Birmingham City Football Club have been extremely supportive and generous, the tour of the ground was the highlight of the scheme. Our tour guide, Nick Coleman was an absolute gem with his genuine enthusiasm, wit and anecdotes, he made it a day to remember. We’re all looking forward to our final session with Tom Palmer whose performance last time was so outstanding the pupils are still talking about it. We sincerely hope the Football Foundation continue to fund this amazing scheme, it triggers or renews people’s passion for reading and provides a unique and unforgettable experience. Heartfelt thanks.”**

Kerry and Helen from Balsall Heath Library

“Thank you so much for the complimentary tickets for the Fulham Vs Wigan match. My brother took my son (he’s ten) to see it (his first proper football match) he absolutely loved it and is now asking for a season ticket! I have just seen one of our reading stars in the Library who also went to the match with his Dad and was telling me all about it. He and his family joined the Library through the Reading Stars. I was just talking to his Mum who was telling me that before Reading Stars they had never set foot in a Library and now her son is nagging her to bring him in as well as his brother and sister. Just shows that Reading Stars is well worth all the effort!! Thanks!”

Theresa, Mum, Fulham FC Project
CONCLUSION

PLRS 2010 has produced an impressive showing of project activity, with more single sessions being run in one season than ever before.

32% of libraries ran six PLRS sessions as part of their project, with 52% of libraries running all seven designated PLRS sessions. Over 450 sessions in total were delivered during PLRS 2010 – a record for one year of the scheme. The high percentage of libraries willing to commit to running six or more PLRS sessions during their programme demonstrates not only enthusiasm towards the project, but also strong commitment to the actual content of the sessions, with library staff clearly feeling that running the outlined designated sessions were worthwhile workshop experiences for their participants. 100% of libraries ran both bookshop visits and author visits – the scheme generates. 87% of children confirmed that they read and completed two or more books during the seven week period of PLRS demonstrating the change in behaviour created by the scheme. With many of the child participants admitting that before the project, they hardly read at all (73% of children stating they didn’t enjoy reading and 30% saying they read never or almost never), to read two whole books within the space of seven weeks is a dramatic improvement and a sizeable achievement for many of these children. One child even managed to complete 29 books!

On average, across the scheme, 68% of all participants attended five or more sessions with 21% of children attending all seven designated sessions. Attendance is traditionally a problem for Saturday morning clubs, especially in local libraries, but the return of nearly three quarters of all child participants attending the majority of the sessions demonstrates a clear commitment to the scheme and its importance within the families that attend. With 54% of children saying that the scheme has made them read more with their family and 85% of parents saying the scheme gave them an opportunity to bond with their child, the impact of the scheme within the family is highly significant and should not be underestimated. With additional comments from the parents including, “I am now a more committed parent to my child”, the true impact of PLRS goes far beyond reading habits with their family.

The essence of the scheme is the interest and engagement with reading generated through the involvement of Premier League players. The fact that 84% of librarians felt that reluctant readers in their group had been inspired to try one of the books on the reading list because the titles had been selected by footballers again proves that this theory is valid.

Arguably, the most important impact of the PLRS project is what happens following that initial inspiration. Once the participants have been inspired to try a footballer’s recommended read, the content of the project sessions aims to harness that initial interest, and bring about an enduring change in attitude. The significant differences in attitude and behaviour before and after the child has participated in the project, show these changes taking place in the 2010 project.

64% of children said they enjoyed reading more straight away, with 88% of children saying they will go to their library more because of the PLRS project. Once the project had finished, 96% of children said that they would read more regularly because of PLRS – an incredible success rate when working with initial reluctant readers.

Changing attitudes towards reading and eventually improving reading habits are the most important outcomes of PLRS and the above results demonstrate the success the project has delivered on these outcomes in 2010.

The number of children who said they never read fell by 26% between the start and end of the project, with the number of children reading more than once a week rising by 30%.

With one particular child commenting that, “I am confident of reading more, so PLRS has changed a little part of my life”, the enduring effect of the project is clearly highlighted.

Premier League Reading Stars Annual Review 2010

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An interesting side effect of participating in PLRS workshops is the positive impact on both social confidence and reading output. 45% of children said that they now felt more confident speaking in front of other people having participated in PLRS, with 40% of parents saying the same. Such impacts are highlighted by the comments of one parent, who said: "(PLRS) gives children incentive to read more and gives them confidence to interact with other children.”

Utilising footballers as reading role models of course is the single most significant motivating factor, with 71% of children saying they will read more now, specifically because they know that footballers read. This is one of the strongest aspects of the project as the list of the twenty Reading Stars and their book choices can be the main draw for many of the participants to become involved and the players are often the most significant factor in inspiring those participants to actually pick up a book. 94% of libraries received a Premier League Ground Tour and ten out of twenty Premier League clubs sent a Premier League Ground Tour and ten out of twenty Premier League clubs sent a Premier League Ground Tour and ten out of twenty Premier League clubs sent a Premier League Ground Tour and ten out of twenty Premier League clubs sent a Premier League Ground Tour and ten out of twenty Premier League clubs sent a Premier League Reading Star to meet their library groups. Both factors are invaluable to the engagement and subsequent inspiration of the scheme.

The fact that 84% of parents now feel they are reading more with their child because of the impact of PLRS and that 87% of parents think they will now go to the library more demonstrates the enduring effects the scheme can have, far beyond the time period of the seven project sessions.

The increases in reading habits amongst the children in particular have also generated positive effects within the school environment. 81% of parents felt that their child had improved their school work since participating in the scheme, demonstrating a positive effect of the scheme, outside of the library in which the sessions took place. This is further highlighted by the comments of one parent, who said: “We read together every day now. Matt’s school work has also improved. Matt loved the course – especially the books.”

PLRS therefore holds an important and high profile role in the promotion of literacy to both children and families. Premier League Reading Stars can at the very least raise awareness of the enjoyment and importance of reading throughout this targeted age group and potentially make significant changes to the behaviours of those children. For those lucky enough to take part in the designated library sessions, the experience can be both memorable and rewarding. One parent summed up their experience by simply saying: “We shared a wonderful seven sessions with other parents and children.”

AIMS FOR 2011

The findings from the Strategic Overview concluded overwhelmingly to continue the scheme into 2010, extending the reach of the PLRS content specifically into schools.

The research conducted by BDRC reported categorically that PLRS is very highly regarded among child participants, parents and librarians. The structure of the scheme, its basis on football and the energy and enthusiasm of the librarians all provide an incentive for children and their parents to enhance their enjoyment of reading.

Meeting authors, visiting bookshops and enjoying the professional skills of librarians to help choose appropriate materials is great fun, enjoyable and certainly productive.

It is very apparent that there are positive ‘unintended’ consequences of PLRS, most notably the social and familial aspect of children spending quality time with parents and using reading as a means of bonding.

The only substantive element of concern is the policy (or lack of it?) applied by schools at the participant recruitment stage. It was common to find children who were not ‘poor readers’.

One of the ways the scheme works is the power of the ‘I want to be like him/her’ positive impact on the whole group as they encourage the less engaged readers to enjoy reading, too.

On the basis of BDRC’s qualitative assessment, they recommend that PLRS should continue its valuable and highly regarded work.

Taking into account the findings of both the 2010 project and the research conducted throughout the year, a proposal has been submitted to the Premier League to continue the work of the scheme over an 18-month period, focussing specifically on increasing the number of institutions running PLRS workshops to 1500.

The national PLRS Challenge would also continue, also including a new online and digital element via the Premier League’s official website, www.premierleague.com

With the withdrawal of the Football Foundation’s large Community Grants Scheme, a 66% shortfall in the PLRS budget needs to be made up, potentially through additional contributions from the Premier League and Arts Council England.

A decision will be made on the future content and governance of Premier League Reading Stars by September 2010.
Football Foundation

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Photographs courtesy of Action Images and Premier League Football Clubs.