

**PE1581/L**

Anne De'Ath Letter of 19 January 2016

### **Submission - Halving the East Renfrewshire School a library Service**

Over the last few years I have become increasingly concerned with the major cuts to Scotland's School Library Services. My own experience in East Renfrewshire indicates that the local authority does not understand the value of the work of librarians. I am concerned that my experience is similar to others around Scotland.

Currently, I am the Librarian at Eastwood High School in East Renfrewshire. The Council proposed to halve the School Library Service here reducing School Librarians from 7 to 3.5. The Council said this would have no impact on the 8,000 pupils. Indeed, initially it was proposed to run the School Libraries by sixth year pupils (though this has now been dropped) and self-service machines. Since the proposed cuts were announced there has been a Public Consultation which dismissed this particular cut. However, at present the Council have ignored it and are pushing ahead with the halving of the Service. The Council's aim to see the altered service in place in East Renfrewshire by the end of July 2016, so time is limited and action is required now if our service is to be saved.

The School Librarians in East Renfrewshire are all professionally trained and qualified staff (over degree level). We are not just book stampers indeed over the last 12 months I have:

- raised money for charity (£1400) from a Readathon undertaken by S2 pupils (part of their Literacy programme)
- taken pupils to the Edinburgh Book Festival for an author event and also to the YaYah Festival to see a selection of authors.
- organised and financed for pupils to meet a Glasgow based author
- ran various competitions alone and with the English department to celebrate literacy events including, National Poetry Day and World Book Day
- attended evening events at Eastwood including the Primary 6/7 night in which I spoke to prospective pupils and parents about what the Library has to offer them.
- undertaken a special event for S1 parents to explain what the Literacy programme (run by the Library and the English department) has to offer them.
- helped all S1 pupils cover their Literacy programme and this includes making up short reading lists for each pupil (180) and helping them to write to their favourite author.
- worked with other departments including drama, music and science etc to help them use library materials and develop research skills
- worked with individual pupils; this is varied and involves everything from working out a CV to helping them plan essays, personal statements and creating bibliographies
- taught pupils how to use the Dewey system, Reference Books and find fiction materials and use the self-issue system (however this doesn't work for everybody)

Pupils can use the Library from when the school opens in the morning until when it shuts at night. Often the Library can have 90+ before break and lunchtime with about 50 at break. Thus I soon get to know vast numbers of pupils. This can be helpful for staff and also pupils talk to me as they know me because I am there regularly.

I work with other secondary schools in sharing resources and running combined author events and joint competitions. I also work with pupils from a local primary school by teaching information skills and organising acclimatisation tours for their special visits to my school.

I run a weekly book group for any interested pupils which involves developing their literacy and communication skills. This happens as they read challenging books, take part in nationally based competitions (including producing book reviews and book trailers). I encourage pupils to take part in the Scottish Children's Book Awards and the Carnegie medal

I work very closely with Learning and Behavioural support and Pastoral Care staff to help children whenever possible. This includes organising a paired reading initiative where S2 pupils meet Primary 7 pupils over a number of weeks to become their reading buddies. I also help with school events such as the Christmas disco. I promote the Library through Twitter, East Renfrewshire media and the parental newsletter

I have also helped pupils gain Saltire, Diana and Duke of Edinburgh awards by arranging Library based placements. I have worked with associated Primary Schools in talking about the Summer Reading Challenge and organising a joint literacy festival.

As is evident, the work that a librarian does in a school supports a range of activities and is essential for providing a rich learning environment for pupils. All the School Librarians provide an incredibly special service. Please help us and help us quickly to avoid the proposed cuts.

Yours

Anne De'Ath