



bookstart

National Bookstart Week England Evaluation 2016



Contents

Executive summary.....	3
Introduction.....	7
Methods.....	8
Respondents.....	8
Reach, delivery and engagement.....	9
Promotion and targeting.....	11
Press coverage and VIP attendance.....	14
The resources and theme – use and feedback.....	15
Key objectives and impact.....	20
Improvements.....	24
Recommendations.....	24
Appendix 1 key objectives	26
Appendix 2 distribution figures.....	29

National Bookstart Week England Evaluation 2016

Executive Summary

The following executive summary presents the key findings from the National Bookstart Week England Evaluation 2016. The aims of the evaluation were to:

- Get an indication of reach and delivery mechanisms including event and book gifting figures, and how events were run
- Get feedback on the resources and theme
- Understand the objectives of settings delivering NBW, as well as impact of NBW on key outcomes, to:
 - Support and encourage families to read every day with their children
 - Reinforce Bookstart's core message; 'sharing books, rhymes and stories is fun'¹
 - Offer further opportunities to engage with families at the local level
 - Raise the profile of the Bookstart programme including awareness of pack entitlement
 - Provide free access to the best children's books
 - Promote the benefits of library membership²

The evaluation took a multi-stranded approach including online coordinator and children's centre³ and partner⁴ surveys – these were sent out after NBW took place, as well as paper parent surveys which were completed at the setting after a NBW event. The number of responses for each survey is as follows: online coordinator and children's centre (204), BookTrust partners (43) and parent (604). Additional operations and press data is also included where relevant. Key findings are outlined below, and findings relating to each key outcome are also included in the appendix.

Key findings

Reach and delivery mechanisms

National Bookstart Week engages with families at a local level through multiple channels. The following figures give an indication of reach, however with a 45% response rate of Bookstart Coordinators, it is not fully representative across all 152 local authorities in England. Findings are however, broadly consistent with 2014 and 2015.

¹ This is in line with Book Trust's mission to get every child reading for pleasure. The concept of 'reading for pleasure' is better expressed as 'seeing sharing books, rhymes and stories as fun' for the 0-5 age group

² These were the objectives set for NBW 2016

³ This survey was sent to the Bookstart Coordinators in all 152 local authorities in England, as well as the 1500 children's centres who were signed up to Bookstart Corner and were therefore eligible to receive NBW resources

⁴ This survey was sent to Bookstart partners including Home start, food banks, bookshops, neo natal units and hospices

Event and book gifting figures:

- 248,005 booklets were delivered to 150 local authorities and 139,400 were delivered to 1,394 children's centres signed up to Bookstart Corner
- Coordinator survey respondents reported that resources were delivered to a total of 1,678 libraries, with an average of 18 libraries per Local Authority⁵
- 48% of coordinators sent resources to other settings in the LA outside of libraries including children's centres, nurseries and early years settings
- All coordinator survey respondents held events, reporting a total of 2,013 events⁶ – an average of 22 events per local authority. A further 316 events were reported by children's centre respondents – an average of 4 events per children's centre
- Coordinator and children's centre respondents reported that 45,075 children, and 32,143 parents attended events⁷ - an average of 15 children and 11 adults per event
- The highest proportions of respondents reported that 'all' or 'most' children who attended were aged two or three, and that 'some' were aged 0-12 months, one and four.
- Press analysis shows that NBW generated 115 print articles, with an estimated reach of 1,890,586 people. This refers to the total number of people within the target audience that may have seen the message.
- 16,390 booklets were also delivered to 319 other BookTrust partner settings including FNP, Homestart, bookshops, neo-natal units and foodbanks

Targeting, promotion and engagement:

New families attend library and children's centre settings for National Bookstart Week and this goes beyond new attendance for regular sessions throughout the year – engaging families at the local level:

- A third of coordinator/children's centre respondents (33%) reported that they noticed new families coming into the setting for National Bookstart Week events, and of these 48% reported that this was more than the number of new families that come in for regular sessions (e.g. rhymetimes or storytimes).
- Most common reasons given for this were more extensive or focussed advertising, the free booklet and activities and more interest because it was a 'special' event
- A third of parent survey respondents were attending an event at the library or children's centre setting or a similar setting for the first time (32%) and 91% of these intended to return for another event.

Settings use National Bookstart Week to successfully target hard to reach groups

⁵ Calculated from the 60% (n=91) local authorities that responded to the survey – therefore total does not represent the full total for NBW across England

⁶ Calculated from the 60% (n=91) local authorities that responded to the survey – therefore total does not represent the full total for NBW across England

⁷ Calculated from the 60% (n=91) local authorities that responded to the survey, plus 86 children's centres and 27 other staff including library – therefore total does not represent the full total for NBW across England

- Over half of respondents (53%) targeted hard to reach groups for their events, and of these 44% targeted through partners, and 35% targeted through advertising. Three quarters (79%) reported that these families attended the events

Extensive advertising and partnership working occurs for National Bookstart Week

- The majority of advertising was done within the settings, however, there is evidence of cross-setting advertising as well, with 45% of Bookstart coordinators/library staff advertising in the children's centre, and 14% of children's centre staff advertising in the library
- Other advertising was also done through websites (51%) and email (22%), and small numbers also report using other settings, partners or websites to advertise their NBW events such as health centres/visitors, and specialist services such as Portage.
- Just under half of respondents (46%) reported working in partnership with local organisations – 56% of coordinators and other library staff, and 18% of children's centres.

The majority of coordinator/children's centre respondents ran themed events, although just under half only gave out the resources:

- 73% of coordinator survey respondents ran a themed session that used NBW resources such as craft activities
- 58% ran a themed session and gave out NBW resources e.g. in a goody bag to take home
- 48% ran their usual session⁸ but gave out NBW resource

Feedback on resources and theme

The resources were extremely well used, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

- Close to 100% used them, and found them useful, this was very similar to NBW 2014 and 2015
- 66% used the website during NBW, showing no change from 2015
- Of those using the website, the majority used all of the online resources, with the most used being the colouring in sheets (96%), and booklist (90%). Of these, over 80% found each resource useful
- 96% of BookTrust partners thought the resources were very good or quite good, describing them as bright, colourful and greatly appreciated by families that received them
- 97% of coordinator survey respondents thought the Under the Sea theme was 'very good' or 'good', compared with 99% in 2015 and 88% in 2014

⁸ Usual sessions most often are 'Bookstart Rhymetimes' and 'Storytimes'

Objectives and impact on key outcomes

Objectives

The objectives reported by settings fully aligned with the objectives set by BookTrust for National Bookstart Week, namely to support and encourage families to read every day, and to reinforce Bookstart's core message; 'sharing books, rhymes and stories is fun':

High proportions of coordinator/children's centre survey respondents reported their objectives were to encourage families to: see sharing books, stories and rhymes as fun (94%), to read every day with their child/children (89%), and to register their child as a member of the library (70%) Settings felt that these objectives had been achieved, and parent surveys support this:

- Of the 97% settings with key objectives, all (100%) reported that they had been achieved
- This is illustrated through the following open response comment '*National Bookstart Week is a fantastic opportunity for promoting a love for reading and creating opportunities for parents and their children to spend time reading and looking at books together, and recreating ideas they have experienced at the session at home*'

Impact

- 77% of all respondents agreed that the event had motivated parents to read more with their child/children and 95.5% reported that families had enjoyed the event
- 99% of families reported enjoying the event, 98% felt the staff responded well to their needs, and 98% of parents plan to read the free book with their child/children
- Of the 8% of families that were reading once or twice a week, 69% of these were planning to read every day or nearly every day following the event. It is possible that these positive intentions occurred in part as a result of positive messaging and atmosphere present at the event, as well as the free gift, although more parent focussed work would be needed to explore reasons for changes in reading intentions after attending an event
- Families also reported several other benefits of attending the events, that relate to learning more about *what and how* to read and rhyme with their child, for example learning new songs and rhymes to sing with their child (84%), getting ideas about encouraging interaction with books (52%) and getting ideas about encouraging creativity with books (48%).
- Two thirds of parents (62%) also felt more confident about reading with their child after attending an event

National Bookstart Week has an important place in local communities

- 95% of practitioners and 98% of parents agreed that it's important that a NBW event happened in their area
- 77% of practitioners agreed that the event promoted a sense of community amongst those who participated, and 91% of parents agreed they felt part of a community during the event. This is particularly interesting in the context of behaviour change theory which suggests that if parents see other families reading/rhyming together and perceive this as the 'social norm' they are more likely to do it themselves.

National Bookstart Week England Evaluation 2016

Introduction

National Bookstart week is an annual event, held since 2002⁹, which is run by BookTrust and delivered by libraries, children's centres and other settings across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to celebrate Bookstart and promote Bookstart's key messages such as 'sharing books and stories is fun' and 'read every day'. This is achieved through small to large scale events (depending on the setting) around a theme for children aged 0-5, with an accompanying story booklet and activity resources that are gifted to the family. BookTrust provides the resources, support and guidance, and the individual setting, often with support from a Bookstart Coordinator, decides on how they wish to run their celebration event/s.

This year National Bookstart week was 'Under the sea' themed and ran from 6-10 June. The resources for families included a *Hole in the Bottom of the Sea* booklet, a rhyme sheet, and a 'make your own shark hat' activity sheet; as well as online resources including colouring in sheets, an interactive *Hole in the Bottom of the Sea* storybook, craft suggestions on the blog, and a booklist. Additional practitioner focussed resources to support the running, promotion and evaluation of their events included an A4 poster, an A4 empty belly poster, a coordinator's letter, and a press and evaluation toolkit.

BookTrust distribute NBW resources directly to local authorities through Bookstart Coordinators as well as to children's centres signed up to Bookstart Corner. They also distribute resources directly to a number of partner organisations such as Family Nurse Partnership (FNP), Homestart, bookshops and neo-natal units.

This evaluation focusses on England¹⁰, and aims to:

- Get an indication of reach and delivery mechanisms
- Get feedback on the resources and theme
- Understand the objectives of settings delivering NBW, as well as the impact of NBW on key outcomes, to:
 - Support and encourage families to read every day with their children
 - Reinforce Bookstart's core message; 'sharing books, rhymes and stories is fun'
 - Offer further opportunities to engage with families at the local level
 - Raise the profile of the Bookstart programme including awareness of pack entitlement
 - Provide free access to the best children's books
 - Promote the benefits of library membership

⁹ The event was National Bookstart Day between 2002-2004, and was extended to National Bookstart week in 2005.

¹⁰ Separate evaluations are conducted in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Methods

The evaluation took a multi-stranded approach including online coordinator, children's centre¹¹ and partner¹² surveys, sent out after NBW took place, as well as paper parent surveys completed at the setting after a NBW event. The findings from the three surveys are synthesised throughout the report, and highlighted to illustrate which survey is being referred to. Additional operations and press data is also included where relevant.

Respondents

Online survey links were sent out to all settings that received National Bookstart week resources:

The **Coordinator and children's centre survey** was sent to all Bookstart Coordinators and Children's centre staff. It was open for approximately 4 weeks from 15th June to 18th July and received 204 responses; Bookstart Coordinators (45% n=91), children's centre staff (42% n=86) and library services and other roles (13% n=27). There are 152 Bookstart Coordinators in England (one in each Local Authority), therefore the Bookstart Coordinators had a response rate of 60%. 1,500 children's centres received NBW resources, therefore children's centres had a response rate of just 6%.

Bookstart coordinators were asked how many libraries in their local authority received National Bookstart Week resources. This was reported as an average of 18 libraries per local authority. Half of Bookstart Coordinator respondents also sent resources to other settings within the local authority. These mostly included: children's centres, nurseries and early years settings, with smaller numbers sending to community centres, Family Nurse Partnership (FNP), Women's aid, Portage, prisons and hospitals.

The **BookTrust partner survey** was sent out to all partners that received NBW resources directly from BookTrust. It was open for the extended period of 5 weeks between 22nd June to 26th July and received 43 responses from Homestart (14) and other family support charities (2), neo-natal units (9), bookshops (9), and food banks (6).

The **parent surveys** were administered in a self-evaluation pack that was sent out to all Bookstart Coordinators who were running National Bookstart week events, and were distributed as paper copies in the setting for parents to complete during NBW. The survey received 604 responses. They came from across England but there were more from particular locations such as Barnet, London, Dorset, Doncaster, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Norfolk, Plymouth and Thurrock, and should not be considered to be fully representative across the country. Of those who completed the survey - 95% were mums/female carers and 5% were dads/male carers.

¹¹ This survey was sent to the Bookstart Coordinators in all 152 local authorities in England, as well as the 1500 children's centres who were signed up to Bookstart Corner and were therefore eligible to receive NBW resources

¹² This survey was sent to Bookstart partners including Home start, food banks, bookshops, neo natal units and hospices

Findings

Reach, delivery mechanisms and engagement

Bookstart Coordinators and children's centres

Local Authorities were allocated more NBW resources in 2016, increasing the numbers of small booklets from 216,250 in 2015 to 248,005 in 2016. Children's centres received a substantial amount of booklets (139,400) however this was slightly lower than in 2015.

Distribution to local authorities and children's centres in England

	2016		2015	
	Number of addresses	Small booklets	Number of addresses	Small booklets
Local authorities (inc. Libraries)	150	248,005	165	216,250
Children's centres	1,394	139,400	1,538	153,825

Figure 1: Operations data NBW 2016 and 2015

All Bookstart Coordinators and library staff surveyed held events during NBW, as well as 93% of children's centres. Of those who had not held any events (just 6 children's centre respondents) reasons for this were mixed but included, lack of staff available to organise and run events (2), events are not well attended in their area (2) and they run enough events (1).

Coordinator respondents reported that they held a total of 2013 events during the week, an average of 22 events per local authority¹³. A further 316 events were reported by children's centre respondents – an average of 4 events per children's centre¹⁴.

Coordinator and children's centre respondents reported a total of 45,075 children, and 32,143 adults attended the events (an average of 15 children and 11 adults per event)¹⁵.

In order to get an indication of the ages of attendees, respondents were asked to report how many children (all, most, some, none) attended of each group.

National Bookstart Week is aimed at children aged 0-5, and the majority of children attending events were of this age. Over 98% of respondents reported that children attending were aged between 0-12 months and 3, whereas half of respondents (49%) reported that children aged five attended an event, and 30% reported that over fives attended an event.

¹³ Calculated from the 60% (n=91) of local authorities that responded to the survey – therefore total does not represent the full total for NBW across England

¹⁴ Calculated from the 6% (n=86) of children's centres that responded to the survey – therefore total does not represent the full total for NBW across England

¹⁵ Calculated from all respondents to the survey (which includes 60% of local authorities and 6% of children's centres)– therefore total does not represent the full total of attendees for NBW across England

The largest proportion of respondents reported that **all or most** children were aged two (40%) or three (37%).

The largest proportion of respondents reported that **some** children were aged 0-12 months (74%), one (74%), or four (70%)

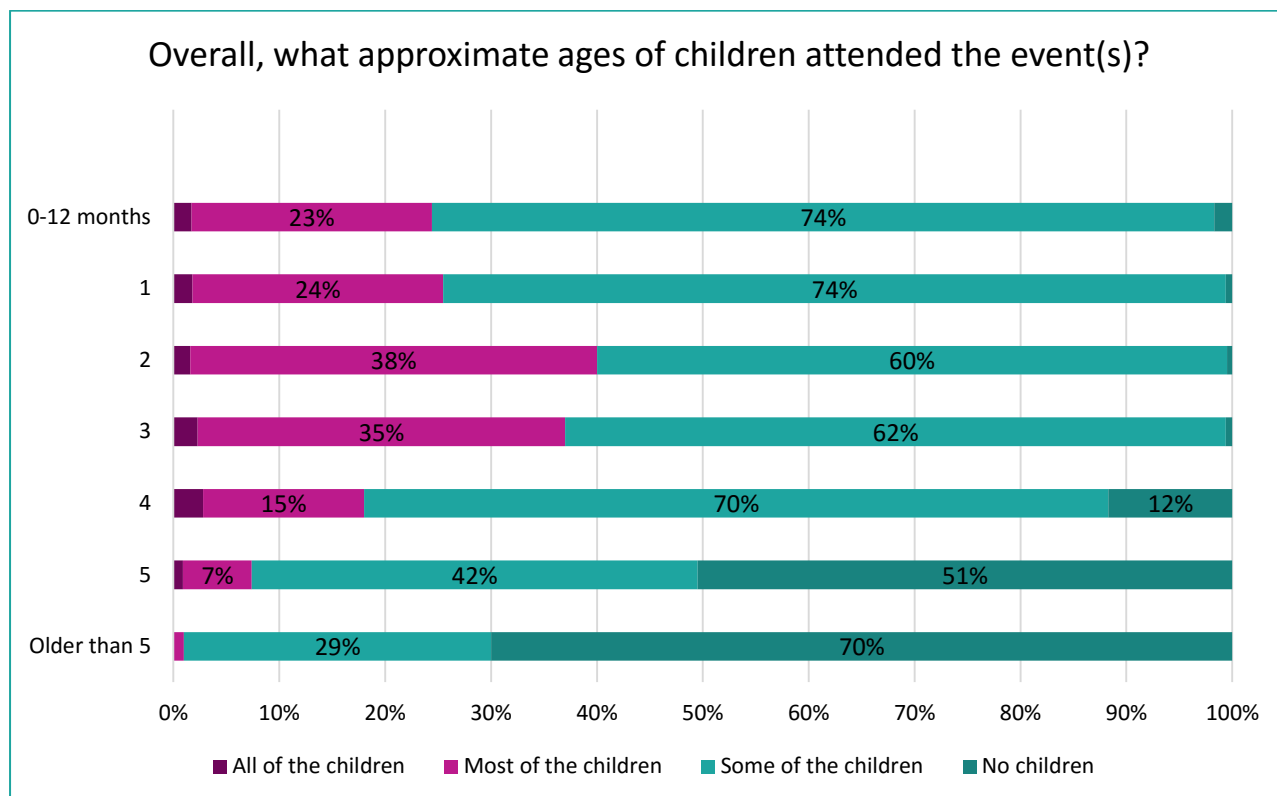


Figure 2: Overall, what approximate ages of children attended the event(s)? A series of single choice options. Coordinator/children’s centre survey. N=204

New and targeted families were reached

A third of respondents (33%) reported that they noticed new families coming into the setting for National Bookstart Week events, whereas 40% weren’t sure if this was the case, and 27% did not notice this. Of those that did notice new families coming in, 48% reported that this was more than the number of new families that come in for regular sessions (e.g. rhymetimes or storytimes), whereas 49% felt that this was about the same.

The most common reasons given for this were¹⁶:

- More extensive or focussed advertising (12)
- The free booklet and activities (8)
- More interest because it was a ‘special’ event (7)
- More focussed targeting (4)
- Word of mouth (3)
- The Bookstart Bear (2)

¹⁶ Numbers refer to the number of comments received to the open response question asking for a reason

Of those that felt that this was the same amount of new families as at regular sessions, small numbers (4) felt that this was due to poor weather, lack of extensive promotion or lack of capacity to run specially promoted events. The same number of comments (4) were received stating that they often get new families coming along through recommendations from friends or because they regularly hold themed events.

This is partially supported in the parent survey, with a third of **parent survey respondents** (32%) attending an event at a library, children's centre or similar setting¹⁷ for the first time. Of these, 91% reported they were likely to attend another session, with 62% saying they were very likely – indicating settings' success in reaching new families through NBW events and potentially maintaining engagement with them afterwards. New families mainly heard about events through libraries including through posters and flyers, online advertising through website or facebook, or word of mouth.

Over half of coordinator survey respondents (53%) targeted hard to reach groups for their events, and of these 44% targeted through partners, and 35% targeted through advertising. Three quarters (79%) reported that these families attended the events.

Promotion and targeting

The majority of advertising was done within the settings, with almost all Bookstart coordinators/library staff (97%) advertising their event in the library, and children's centre staff (98%) advertising in the children's centre. However, there is evidence of cross-setting advertising as well, with 45% of Bookstart coordinators/library staff advertising in the children's centre, and 14% of children's centre staff advertising in the library.

Both are also using other avenues to advertise including their website (52%), facebook (51%) and email (22%), although Bookstart coordinators/library staff are doing this more than children's centre staff.

In addition to this, around a fifth of respondents are using other settings, partners and websites to advertise their NBW events (shown in figure 3). Other websites mentioned included twitter, Bookstart and BookTrust, netmums, local family information services and local what's on websites. Other partners mentioned included other children's centres, health visitors and health centres, nurseries, portage, sensory support service, family information support service, new communities and travellers, museum service, Home-Start, leisure centres and sing and sign partners.

¹⁷ Events that were in unusual settings (such themed rhymetimes in a castle) were excluded from this analysis, as this question intended to get an indication on whether families were attending libraries and children's centres for the first time, for NBW.

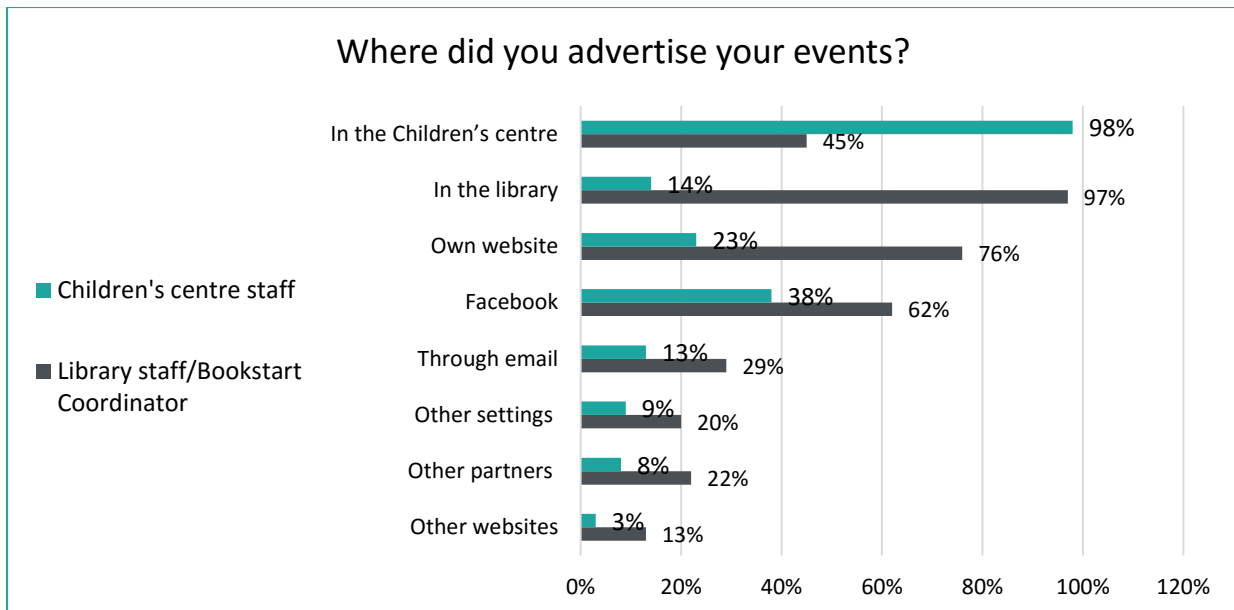


Figure 3: Where did you advertise your events? A multi choice question. Coordinator/children's centre survey. N=204. More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Partnership working between Coordinators/children's centres and their partners

Just under half of respondents (46%) reported working in partnership with local organisations to run the events— 56% of Bookstart coordinators and other library staff, and 18% of children's centres.

The 2016 evaluation did not explore what was involved in the partnership working that occurred through NBW, however to give an indication of a session run in partnership, an email received provides an interesting example of partnership working between Homestart and a leisure centre. In this case, vouchers for a free swim were provided and a pool based session, and language and book extensions were used to build on the story, for example squeeze toys linked to the book, and drama activities e.g. being a scary shark and a splashy fish. More could be done in 2017 to establish any support that settings would like from BookTrust in partnership working.

BookTrust's partner organisations

Although the distribution of NBW resources to BookTrust partner organisations was substantial (16,390 booklets), the numbers were significantly lower than in previous years. This was partly due to capacity, BookTrust Early Years and BRM teams had less opportunity to chase up partners that had not responded to emails about participation in NBW. It is also possible that lower take up of the resources was due in part to charity and public sector organisation partners operating at reduced capacity, particularly in the context of budget cuts in these sectors.

This is in contrast with 2015 when there was a deliberate strategy to increase the reach of NBW to hard to reach groups through partners. As shown in the table below, numbers to FNP, foodbanks and prison visitor centres were much lower in 2016, and settings such as Costa Coffee and other cafes, special schools, refugee groups, hospices and health visitors

were not reached in 2016. Full distribution tables for 2015 and 2016 are included in appendix 2 (p24).

Distribution to partners in England

	2016		2015	
	Number of addresses	Small booklets	Number of addresses	Small booklets
FNP	46	2,250	111	4,842
England Homestart schemes	131	6,550	95	4,600
Booksellers	70	4,100	74	4,250
Foodbanks	36	1,800	118	5,850
Neonatal Clinic	25	1,040	48	1,587
Hospices	11	350	5	215
Prison Visitor Centres	1	300	13	705
Costa Coffee	0	0	65	7,500
Refugee groups/organisations	0	0	10	520
Special schools	0	0	8	400
Childminders	0	0	27	269
Hospital schools	0	0	5	225
Nurseries	0	0	18	1,023
Playgroups	0	0	3	148
Cafés	0	0	1	50
Health Visitors	0	0	2	300
Family Support Charities	0	0	3	90
Preschools	0	0	18	958
Primary schools	0	0	2	45
Total	320	16,390	626	33,577

Figure 4: Operations data 2016 and 2015

These lower numbers were also reflected in lower numbers of responses to the partner survey (receiving 43 in 2016 compared with 119 in 2015). Respondents were from Homestart (14) and other family support charities (2), neo-natal units (9), bookshops (9), and food banks (6), and reported gifting the booklets in the following ways:

- Gave out during an event or group (21)
- Left out for families to pick up (12)
- Gave out during a home visit (10)
- Included in family food parcels (5)
- Gave out during a drop in session (4)

Press coverage and VIP attendance

A small proportion of coordinator survey respondents reported that their events had generated local publicity - this was mainly in the form of online articles (15%) or newspaper articles (13%). Only 3% (7 respondents) reported that their events had generated radio coverage and one respondent had received TV coverage. Respondents reported that a total of 73 articles/news items had been generated by their events.

A fifth of respondents (20%) reported using the press toolkit with the majority of these reporting it to be useful, well put together and/or easy to use. Other comments centred around appreciating the toolkit but have difficulties engaging local press that are not easy to get around. Small minorities of comments stated that they did not know about the press toolkit, or that it arrived too late for them to be able to use, as they have to go through their communications team.

A minority of respondents reported that VIPs attended their events; 8% reported that press attended an event, 7% reported senior LA representative attendance, whereas only 3% reported MP attendance and author/illustrator attendance. Around the same numbers invited VIPs but they didn't attend as shown in figure 3 below.

	Attended	Invited but didn't attend
Press	8% (15)	8% (14)
Senior LA representatives	7% (13)	9% (16)
MPs	3% (6)	3% (6)
Authors/illustrators	3% (6)	1% (2)
Celebrities	0% (0)	1% (1)

Figure 5. N=204. Coordinator/children's centre survey A single response question. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Further data from press analysis shows that NBW generated 115 print articles, with an estimated reach of 1,890,586 people¹⁸. This refers to the total number of people within the target audience that may have seen the message. Highlights from the press coverage included a BookTrust interview on BBC radio Cornwall, local newspaper coverage in Sheffield, Bournemouth, Liverpool and Hull, and celebrity support from Angelica Bell and Jo Frost.

¹⁸ The reach of a campaign is the total number of people within your target audience that may see your message. Sometimes referred to as coverage

Feedback on the resources

Bookstart Coordinators and children's centre colleagues either received or were signposted to all the available print and online resources. BookTrust Partners¹⁹ only received the *Hole in the Bottom of the Sea* booklets and in some cases the printed activity sheets.

Almost all **Coordinator/children's centre survey respondents** had used the *Hole in the Bottom of the Sea* booklets (99.5%), big books (99%) rhyme sheet (100%) and shark hat activity sheet (98.5%). Slightly fewer respondents, although still high proportions had used the other three resources; 94% used the A4 poster, 88% used the A4 empty belly poster (for promotion), and 90% used the coordinators letter.

Of those that used the resources, nearly all of respondents reported that they had found the resources for the family useful: *Hole in the Bottom of the Sea* (99%), big book (98%), rhyme sheet (98%) and shark hat activity (97%).

Of those that used the promotional materials, slightly lower, but still high proportions of respondents reported them as useful: A4 empty belly poster (94%), A4 poster (93%) and coordinator's letter (82%).

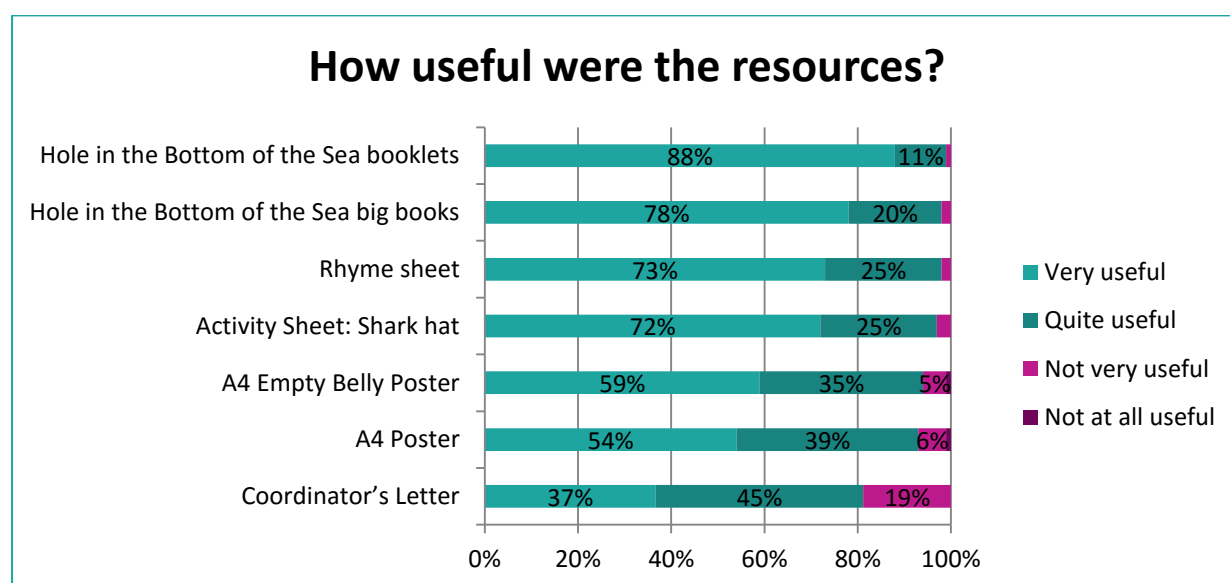


Figure 6: 'How useful were the resources?' Coordinator/children's centre survey N=between 167-195. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

The majority of open response comments focused on how highly valued the resources were. They were considered to be of excellent quality and extremely well received by the families. For example:

I loved the books and booklets I thought the theme, colours and the illustrations were the best yet so far.

¹⁹ Book Trust partners include Home start, food banks, bookshops, neo natal units and hospices

We really like the project and hope it continue for many years as the resources online and the book help us all year round!

As always the resources supplied for NBW were fantastic, although this year I think BookTrust excelled themselves with the pop-out shark hats!! They were brilliant, and not having to cut things out saved so much time

The Book start resources are fabulous for families and we receive so many positive comments about the resources and events. More of the same please.

There was a mixed response to the book choice, and although some reported really positive experiences using it, and many mentioned the beautiful illustrations, there were a number of comments (12) around dissatisfaction with the text for example the text was difficult to read aloud, story was too long for younger children, unfamiliar story for families and so difficult to join in, and dislike of incorrect grammar in the song:

This book did not flow when read out loud with groups. The song on You Tube was good but tricky to learn in groups as well as it was long and complicated.

Although the Under the Sea theme was great, the story - There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea was unfamiliar to many families and it was difficult for them to join in with the words (we couldn't have done it the YouTube way as it was too fast)

The 'Under the Sea' theme was great but the book that was chosen was very difficult for our staff and day care staff to deliver effectively - it's a very difficult read

This dissatisfaction is likely to be related to a misunderstanding of the book content, with practitioners not realising they were song lyrics (which are relatively rare in early years children's books) and the expectation that it should be read as a rhyme. This made it confusing for practitioners, and as a result - consideration to using a song book rather than rhyme or simple story should be given for future NBW book choices.

BookTrust partner respondents²⁰ rated the resources highly, with 96% agreeing that were very good (76%) or quite good (20%) quality. Comments received stated they were bright, colourful and greatly appreciated by the families that received them:

Parents loved the books and several were seen reading to babies at the cot side

Online resources²¹

Around two thirds (66 %) of **coordinator/children's centre survey respondents** used the Bookstart website during National Bookstart Week for downloading activity sheets etc, the same proportions as in 2014 and 2015. Of those that had used the website, the majority had used all of the online activities: the colouring – in sheets (96%), the book list (90%), craft suggestions on the blog (77%) and interactive story book (74%).

²⁰ Bookstart partners including Home start, food banks, bookshops, neo natal units and hospices

²¹ The online resources available in 2016 were scaled back from what were produced in 2015. This was a combined result of lower reported usage of certain online resources in 2015 coordinator survey, and reduced capacity at BookTrust

Of these, the majority found all the activities useful: the colouring sheets (98%), interactive story book (89%), craft suggestion on the blog (95%) and booklist (85%) and rhyme sheet (91%) were useful.

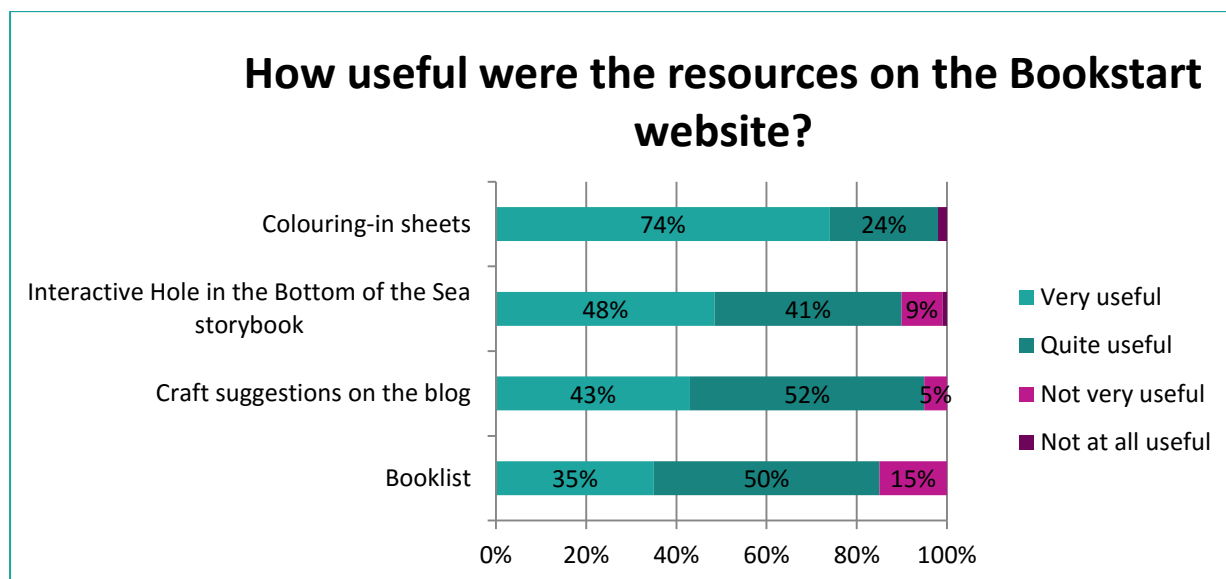


Figure 7: 'How useful were the online resources?' Coordinator/children's centre survey N= 91-120. A series of single response questions. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Of those who had used the Bookstart website during National Bookstart Week the majority reported that they had used the online resources with families: 59% stated that they had printed the online resources to use at National Bookstart Week events with families and 53% had signposted families to the online National Bookstart Week resources. Only 21% had not used the resources with families.

The Under the Sea theme

The Coordinators survey also included a question on the National Bookstart week theme. The Under the Sea theme was very popular with 96% reporting it as very good or good. Only 3% reported it as 'okay' and 0.5% reported it as 'poor'.

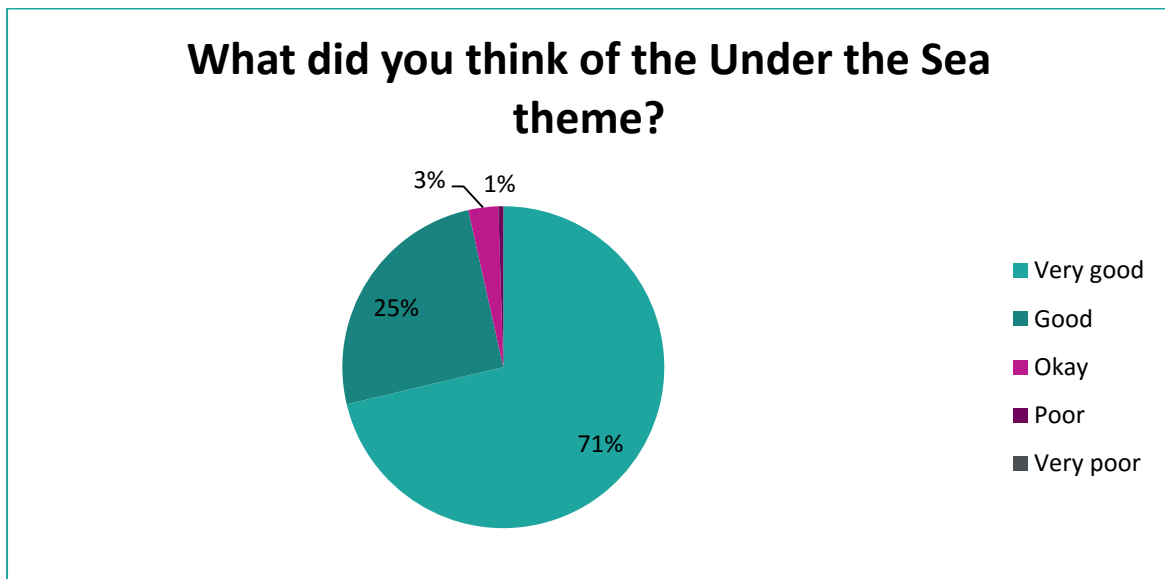


Figure 8: 'What did you think of this years Under the Sea theme?' Coordinator/children's centre survey N=218. A single response question. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

Parental feedback on the materials and event

Materials received as part of National Bookstart week:

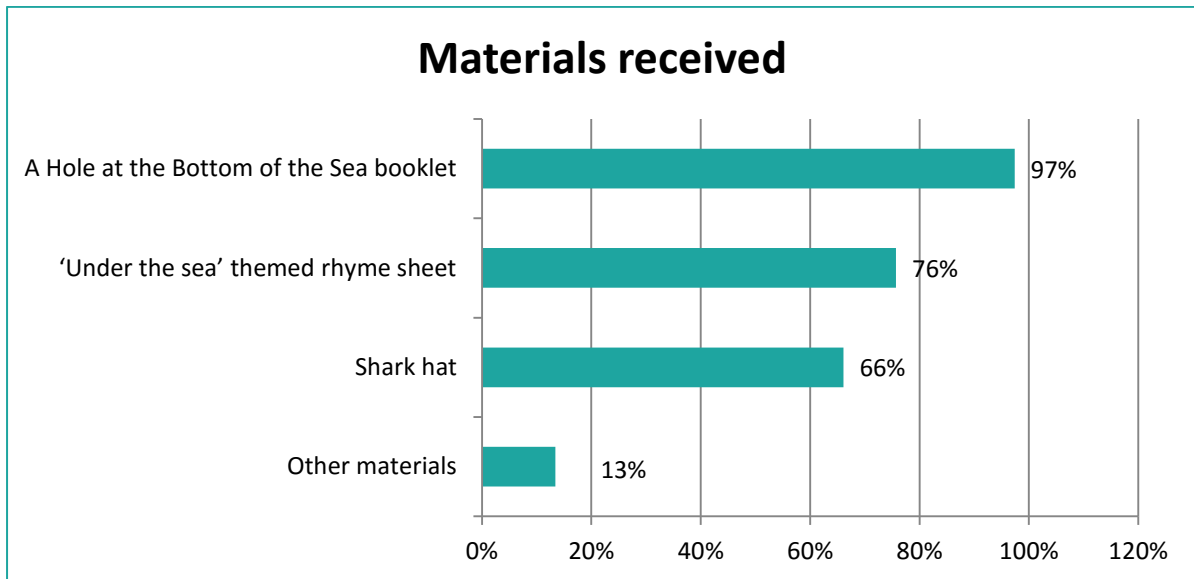


Figure 9: What Bookstart materials did you receive for your child/children? Parent survey. N=604. More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Nearly all respondents (97%) received a *Hole in the Bottom of the Sea* booklet, with 76% receiving the themed rhyme sheet and 66% receiving the shark hat craft activity sheet. Other materials that respondents received included online printable resources such as colouring activity sheets and stickers.

The most frequent words used to describe the materials were:

- Fun, enjoyable or entertaining (41%²²)
- Colourful or bright (36%)
- Interesting (8%)
- Creative (6%)
- Interactive (5%)
- Useful (5%)
- Educational (4%)

²² Percentages refer to the percentage of respondents who described the resources using these words

Objectives and impact

Key NBW objectives

Respondents were asked what their key objectives were for their events, as well as if they felt these objectives had been achieved²³. They were given a set of multi choice answers as well as an open response box to specify any 'other' objectives. The objectives reported by settings fully aligned with the objectives set by BookTrust for National Bookstart Week, namely to support and encourage families to read every day, reinforce Bookstart's core message; 'sharing books, rhymes and stories is fun', and promote the benefits of library membership.

The key objectives stated by **Coordinator survey respondents** were:

- To encourage families to see sharing books, stories and rhymes as fun (94%)
- To encourage families to read every day with their child/children (89%)
- To encourage families to register their child as a member of the library (70%)
- To encourage families to think about using other local services i.e. children's centres (50%)

Small numbers of respondents also stated the following other objectives:

- To raise the promote and raise awareness of Bookstart and Bookstart Corner, and the resources available to families (4)
- To encourage/welcome new families into the setting, and engage childminders, dads and grandparents (4)
- To support settings to promote positive messaging around reading, and support cluster working and team working (2)

Although small in number, these open responses give an indication of other objectives that settings have, and could be explored in more depth in 2017 to establish whether these are representative across settings in England. It would also be useful to explore whether coordinators or settings feel they need any additional support from BookTrust in setting and measuring objectives.

²³ This question was asked to begin exploring whether settings set objectives for NBW, and if so, if they were aligned with Book Trust NBW objectives. Settings are given suggested messaging from Book Trust for NBW and in previous evaluations (e.g. 2014, 2015) respondents were asked about a multi choice question on what messaging they communicated to families

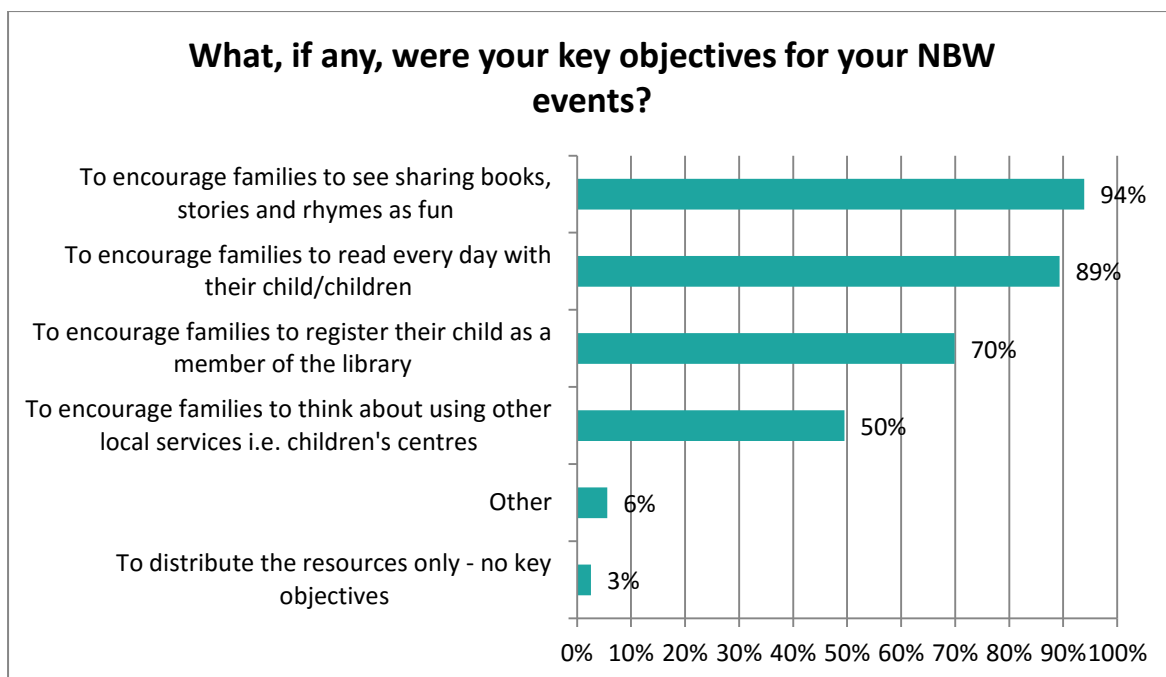


Figure 10: 'What, if any, were your key objectives for your NBW events?' Coordinator/children's centre survey . N=204. More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100²⁴

These objectives broadly match the messaging communicated by coordinator/children's centre survey respondents in 2015 indicating consistency across years. The top three messages communicated in 2015 were: sharing books, stories and rhymes is fun (98%), read every day with your child/children (86%) and parents/carers should register their child as a member of the library (80%).

Of the 97% with key objectives in 2016, all (100%) reported that they had been achieved. A small number (5) of open response comments on overall feedback of NBW also centred around NBW as an opportunity to promote reading for pleasure, library membership, partnership working as well as reach new families, for example:

National Bookstart Week is a fantastic opportunity for promoting a love for reading and creating opportunities for parents and their children to spend time reading and looking at books together, and recreating ideas they have experienced at the session at home.

NBW has helped us to promote reading and rhyming, to bring new families into libraries and Children's Centres and to help improve joint working with early years partners.

NBW works very well with families and the children and draws attention from other early years agencies to Bookstart and the value of the sessions. Hopefully it will continue in future years.

Parent responses also indicate that these objectives were met. For example, 94% of coordinators reported that a key objective was to encourage families to see sharing books, stories and rhymes as fun, and 99% of parents agreed that they enjoyed the (book and rhyme sharing) event that they attended.

²⁴ The 6% stating 'other' did not specify what this objective was

In terms of encouraging families to read every day, the vast majority of respondents (90%) reported already reading with their child every day, or nearly every day indicating that the events were attended by parents dedicated to reading with their children. There were still small differences in reading intention following the event however, with an increase of 7 percentage points in parents intending to read every day (from 70% to 77%).

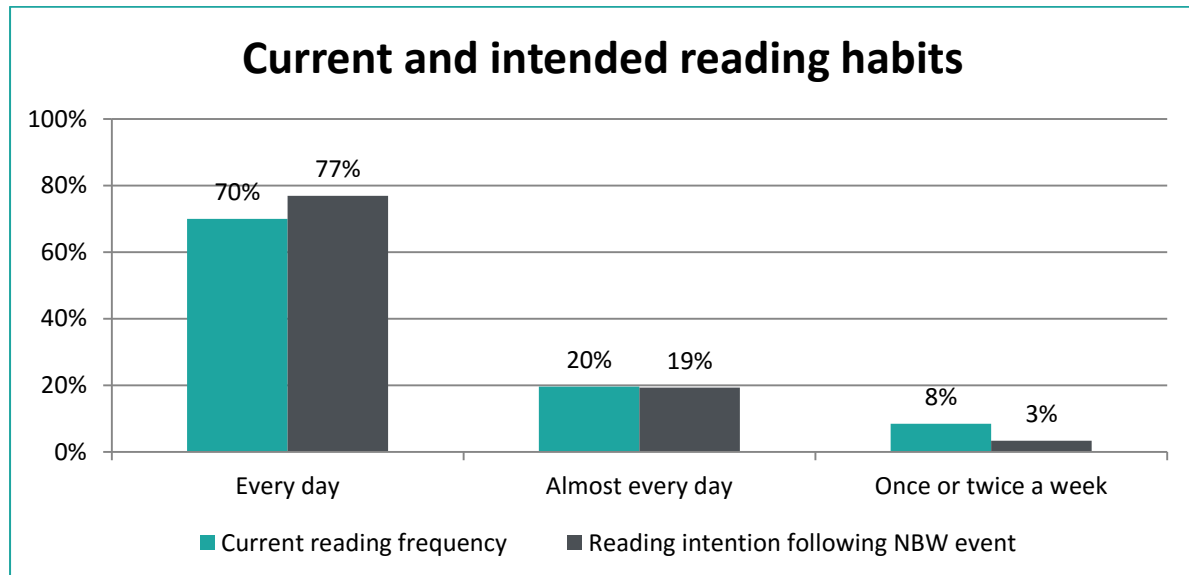


Figure 11: Two single response questions. Parent survey. N=604. Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100

More importantly, for the smaller proportions of parents not already doing this, attending an event appears to have made a bigger difference to their reading intentions. Of the 8% (46 respondents) currently reading once or twice a week, 69% of these were planning on reading nearly every day (56%) or every day (13%) after attending an event.

Considering that almost all events had the specific aims of reinforcing the message that reading is fun, and supporting families to read every day, and with the majority of families in attendance already on board with this idea, plus almost all (99%) reporting that they enjoyed the event they attended, it is likely that these factors could have influenced families who read less often with their children to do this more.

Parents were also asked about a series of other outcomes. Almost all (98%) were planning to read the book with their child, with three quarters strongly agreeing that they were planning to do this, indicating continued engagement after the event. Other changes were also reported with three quarters (79%) agreeing that they felt more motivated to do more creative things in the future, and two thirds (62%) agreeing that they felt more confident about reading with their child after the event.

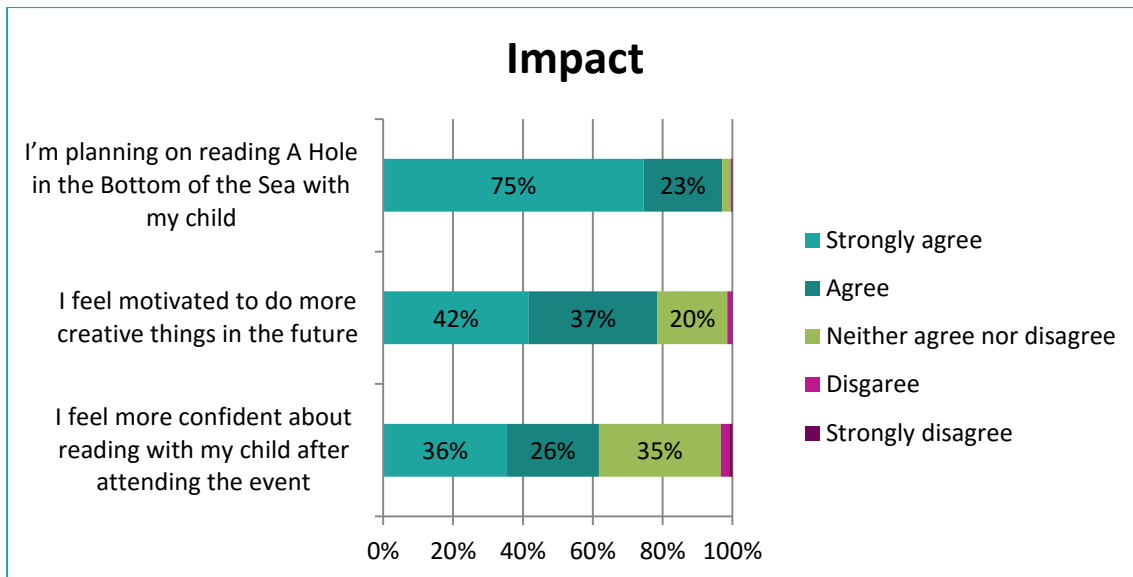


Figure 12: A series of single choice questions. How far do you agree with the following statements...? Parent survey N=604

The top three things gained from the events (reported by the highest proportions of parents) related to learning more about *what and how* to read and rhyme with their child/children:

- New songs and rhymes to sing with child (84%)
- Ideas for encouraging interaction with books (52%)
- Ideas for encouraging creativity with books (48%)

Although slightly lower proportions, significant numbers also reported gaining the following, indicating the potential for NBW to meet its objective of raising the profile of the Bookstart programme:

- Knowledge about the services available to them at the setting (44%) and through Bookstart (35%)
- New knowledge about things their child likes e.g. group activity with other children, singing, dancing and rock pooling (29%)

There is also an indication that National Bookstart Week has an important place in local communities. This is particularly interesting in the context of behaviour change theory which suggests that if parents see other families reading/rhyming together and perceive this as the 'social norm' they are more likely to do it themselves. High proportions of parents agreed with the following statements:

- It's important that a National Bookstart week event is happening here (98%)
- I enjoyed the event or activity that I attended (99%)
- I'm planning on returning to the setting (or a similar setting) for another event (98%)
- I felt part of a community during the event (91%).

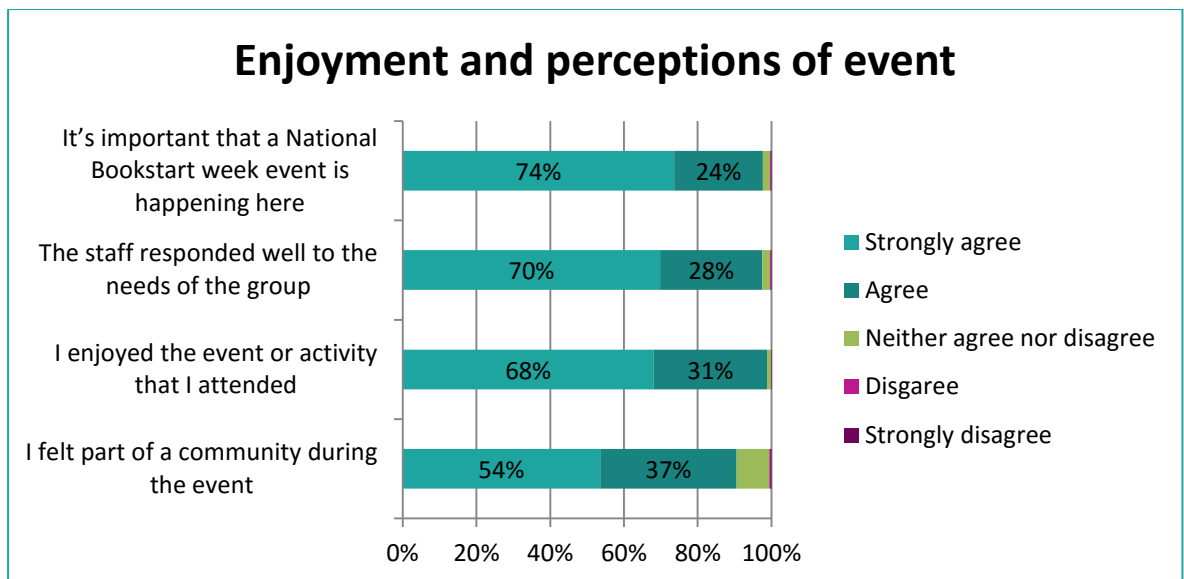


Figure 13: A series of single choice questions. How far do you agree with the following statements..? Parent survey N=604

Improvements

Open response comments from individual respondents included:

- Recordings/sound files of the more unfamiliar rhymes
- Book lists made available earlier so libraries can buy in the themed books in time
- Accessible books e.g. aimed at children using sign language

The majority of parents did not have any suggestions for improvements and were very happy with the event they attended. Suggestions from parents included setting specific improvements, such as making it less crowded or having more in attendance, putting the rhymes up on a screen, and using a microphone. Parents also wanted the sessions to be longer and to include more rhymes, some parents also mentioned preferring more familiar rhymes as they are easier to join in with.

Recommendations

Continue delivering NBW in line with previous years, but take into consideration the following:

Reach:

If BookTrust wish to maximise partnership working with organisations that support hard to reach groups, consider developing strategic relationships with partner organisations and develop BookTrust's NBW outreach strategy.

BookTrust might also explore how to maximise partnership working to reach new families that haven't previously come into contact with Bookstart programmes (particularly through key stakeholders such as Libraries and Children's Centres).

Book selection and resources:

- Consider selecting a book that is principally targeted at ages 2-3 but with broad appeal for the 0-5 age group
- Consider a book that is accessible for all children, including those with SEN
- Consider recording rhymes from the rhyme sheet and making them available on the website ahead of NBW
- Continue providing bright, colourful and attractive resources as these are highly valued by families and practitioners

Support from Book Trust:

- Explore what support, if any, settings are looking for to work more effectively in partnerships for NBW

Appendix one - National Bookstart Week objectives

Support and encourage families to read every day with their children

89% of coordinators/children's centre staff reported that a key objective was to encourage families to read every day with their child/children (89%), with 100% of these agreeing that this was achieved.

The vast majority of respondents (90%) reported already reading with their child every day, or nearly every day indicating that the events were attended by parents dedicated to reading with their children. There were still small differences in reading intention following the event however, with an increase of 7 percentage points in parents intending to read every day (from 70% to 77%).

Of the 8% of families that were reading once or twice a week, 69% of these were planning to read every day or nearly every day following the event. This is likely to be in part as a result of positive messaging and atmosphere present at the event, as well as the free gift, although more parent focussed work would be needed to explore reasons for changes in reading intentions after attending an event

Reinforce Bookstart's core message; 'sharing books, rhymes and stories is fun'

94% of coordinators and children's centre staff reported that a key objective was to encourage families to see sharing books, stories and rhymes as fun, and 100% reported that this had been achieved

99% of parents agreed that they enjoyed the [book and rhyme sharing] event that they attended.

Offer further opportunities to engage with families at the local level

National Bookstart Week engages with families at local level through multiple channels:

- Coordinators survey respondents reported that resources were delivered to a total of 1678 libraries, with an average of 18 libraries per Local Authority²⁵
- 48% sent resources to other setting in LA outside of libraries including children's centres, nurseries and early years settings
- 97% held events, with 2962 events held across the week - an average of 15 per respondent
- 45,075 children, and 32,143 parents attended events - an average of 15 children and 11 adults per event

New families attend settings for National Bookstart Week and this goes beyond new attendance for regular sessions throughout the year – engaging families at the local level

²⁵ Calculated from the 92 local authorities that responded to the survey

- A third of coordinator respondents (33%) reported that they noticed new families coming into the setting for National Bookstart Week events, and of these 48% reported that this was more than the number of new families that come in for regular sessions (e.g. rhymetimes or storytimes).
- Most common reasons given for this were more extensive or focussed advertising, the free booklet and activities and more interest because it was a 'special' event
- A third of parent survey respondents were attending an event at the library or children's centre setting (or a similar setting) for the first time (32%) and 91% of these intended to return for another event
- 16,390 were delivered to 319 other partner settings including FNP, Homestart, bookshops, neo-natal units and foodbanks

Settings use National Bookstart Week to successfully target hard to reach groups

- Over half of respondents (53%) targeted hard to reach groups for their events, and of these 44% targeted through partners, and 35% targeted through advertising. Three quarters (79%) reported that these families attended the events

Raise the profile of the Bookstart programme including awareness of pack entitlement

- Significant numbers (35%) reported gaining knowledge about the services available to them at the setting (44%) and through Bookstart (35%)
- NBW events are highly valued in local communities: 98% agreed that it's important that a National Bookstart week event is happening here
- Press analysis shows that NBW generated 115 print articles, with an estimated reach of 1,890,586 people²⁶. This refers to the total number of people within the target audience that may have seen the message

Provide free access to the best children's books

- 97% of parent respondents received a *Hole in the Bottom of the Sea* booklet and 99% found it useful. The most popular ways to describe the resource was fun, colourful and interesting
- 99.5% of coordinators/children's centre respondents used the resources and 99% found them useful
- Open responses indicated a mixed response to the content of the book however illustrated by the following contrasting quotes:
'I loved the books and booklets I thought the theme, colours and the illustrations were the best yet so far'.
'The 'Under the Sea' theme was great but the book that was chosen was very difficult for our staff and day care staff to deliver effectively - it's a very difficult read'

²⁶ The reach of a campaign is the total number of people within your target audience that may see your message. Sometimes referred to as coverage

- 90% used the online booklist and 85% found it useful, however one respondent requested that the book list is made available earlier so libraries can buy in the themed books in time for NBW

Promote the benefits of library membership

70% reported that a key aim of NBW was to encourage families to register their child as a member of the library (70%), and 100% of these agree this was achieved

Appendix 2

Distribution of Hole in the Bottom of the Sea resources (2016)

Type	Number of addresses	Small Booklets	Big Books	Shark Hat	Rhyme sheet
Local Authorities	150	248,005	3,671	240,005	232,770
FNP	46	2,250	-	-	-
England Homestart schemes	131	6,550	-	-	-
Booksellers	70	4,100	50	0	500
Foodbanks	36	1,800	-	-	-
Children's Centres	1,394	139,400	1,394	139,400	139,400
Neonatal Clinic	25	1,040	48	-	-
Hospital Schools	0	0	0	0	0
Hospices	11	350	-	-	-
Prison Visitor Centres	1	300	5	0	0
Northern Ireland	2	6,005	178	1,300	0
Totals	1,866	409,800	5,346	380,705	372,670

Distribution of Rumble in the Jungle resources (2015)

Type	Number of addresses	<i>Rumble in the Jungle</i> Small Booklets	<i>Rumble in the Jungle</i> Big Books	Card Game Activity	Elephant Mask Activity	A4 posters	Empty Belly posters
Local Authorities (incl. libraries)	165	216,250	3,309	203,010	203,062	4,791	6,152
FNP	111	4842		3820	3670		
Homestart	95	4,600		4,600	4,600		
Booksellers	74	4,250		1,950	1,950	191	129
Foodbanks	118	5,850		50			
Children's Centres	1,538	153,825	1,570	153,550	153,400	3,046	3,046
Northern Ireland	2	5,570	157	5,570	5,570		
Costa Coffee	65	7,500		6,600			
Neonatal Clinics	48	1,587					
Hospital Schools	5	225		225	225		
Hospices	5	215		215	165		
Prison Visitor Centres	13	705	100	560	605	4	
Special Schools	8	400		400	350		
Nurseries	18	1,023		1,033	1,033		
Playgroups	3	148		148	148		
Refugee groups/ organisations	10	520					
Cafés	1	50		50			
Childminders	27	269		622	622		
Health Visitors	2	300	5	300	200	5	
Family Support Charities	3	90		75	50		
Preschools	18	958		1,017	1,017		
Primary schools	2	45		105	105		
Wales	22	4,700	246		4,550	268	
Totals	2,353	413,992	5,387	383,900	381, 322	8,305	9,327