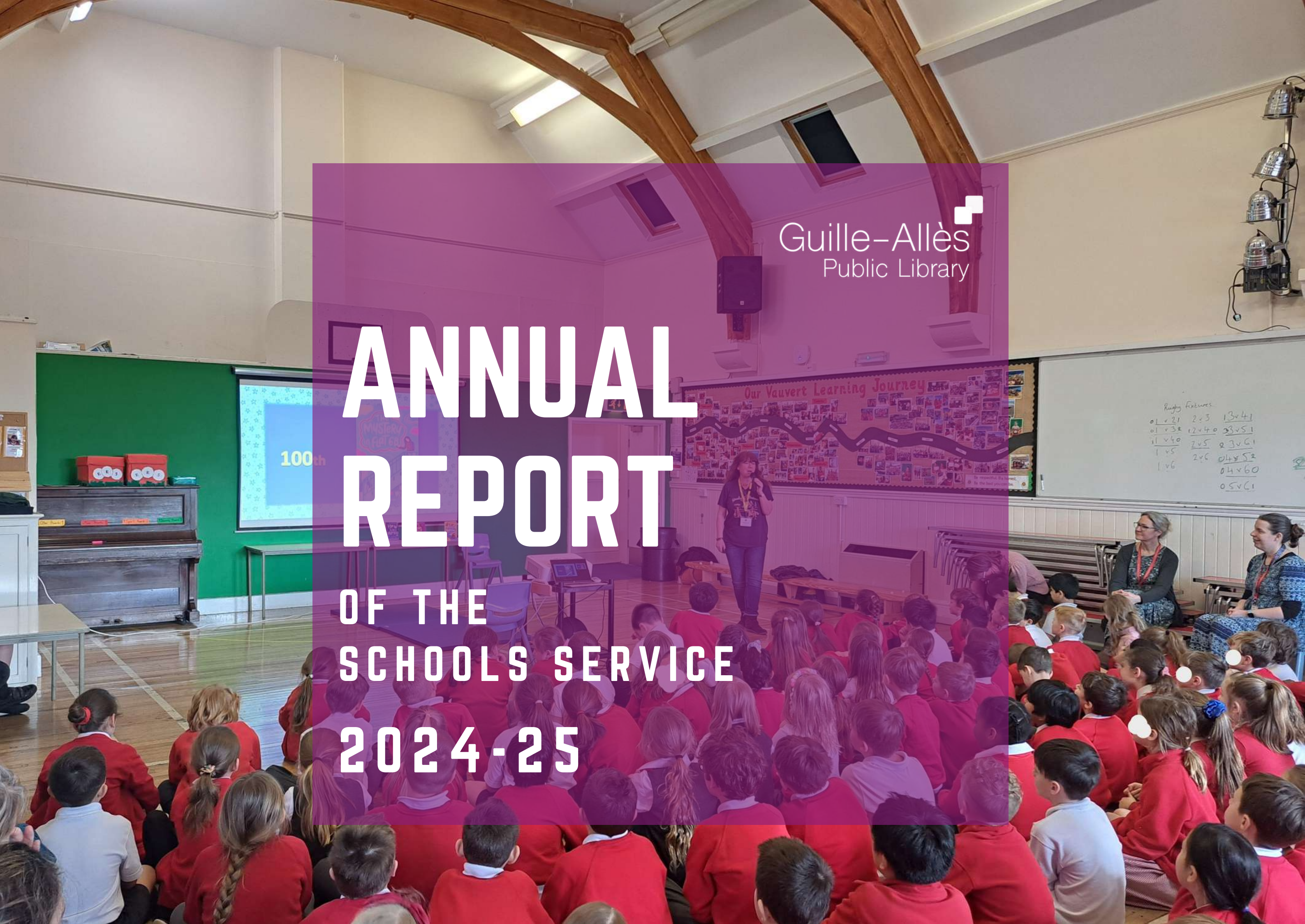




Guille-Allès
Public Library

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE
SCHOOLS SERVICE
2024-25



Rugby Fixtures

01 v 21	2 v 3	13 v 41
01 v 32	12 v 40	33 v 51
11 v 40	2 v 5	23 v 61
1 v 5	2 v 6	04 v 52
1 v 6		04 v 60
		05 v 61

INTRODUCTION

CORNELIA JAMES, CHIEF LIBRARIAN

2024-25 was a vibrant and successful year for the Guille-Allès Library's Schools Team, marked by a huge range of memorable events and reading initiatives. Highlights included a jam-packed schedule of author visits for the Guernsey Literary Festival, a diverse series of activities to support the Cultural Enrichment programme, and numerous class visits to the Library for the Carnegie Literary Lunch, Non-Fiction November, and more.

As always, our core objectives have been to **encourage reader development, promote reading for pleasure**, and support the efforts of teaching staff to **raise literacy levels**. We deliver these objectives through a combination of curriculum-linked sessions, author visits into schools, and Library-based events. Importantly, we also provide support for school library collections through the loan of thousands of fiction and non-fiction books (Bulk Loans and Curriculum Project Loans), ensuring the shelves are regularly refreshed with new and relevant titles. And we offer an extensive range of digital resources, including access to Britannica School, Q-Files, and our **Sora eBook app**, which has seen a notable increase in usage.

This year a key focus for the team has been to develop a clearer, more structured framework for the services we provide to primary schools. This framework outlines a **'Library Journey'** for Key Stages 1 and 2, clearly setting out what sessions and support will be delivered to each year group. It aligns with the curriculum and includes a mix of Library-based events, Cultural Enrichment activities, skills workshops, and topic-focused sessions. Nothing is changing about the services we provide, but we recognise that in the past it wasn't always easy for teachers to navigate what's available – this new structure clarifies what's on offer and when, as well as ensuring greater consistency of service across all primary schools.

We're confident the new Library Journey will make it easier for teachers to plan and engage with our work, and we look forward to rolling it out next year.

Cornelia James





1. SCHOOL LIBRARY SUPPORT

This year our team has worked hard to support schools across the island to enhance their library provision and **build a culture of reading for pleasure**. Our librarians provided their expertise to assist Vauvert and Le Rondin with the upgrades of their libraries, including resource relocation, layout planning, and signage design.

Throughout the year we delivered talks to parents at La Mare, Forest, Haute Capelles, and Amherst, highlighting the importance of shared reading at home and the role the Library can play in supporting families. And we contributed to professional development across the Education sector, presenting at the English Forum for Literacy Leads, introducing ICT Leads to our creative makerspace, the **Fab Lab**, and leading training workshops for new teachers on how the Library can support the development of a reading for pleasure culture.

Looking ahead, in 2025-26 we are partnering with St Martin's Primary School to pilot a **new reading challenge initiative**. Each half term, students will be challenged to read a book based on a particular theme – encouraging them to read more widely and highlighting the huge range of books available in their school library. The first theme, 'Genre Land', will be introduced in September through assemblies and interactive library book swaps. In addition to running these events, our team will help to develop the collection in the school library to ensure adequate coverage for each theme, as well as creating stretch challenges for students who finish early. If successful, we plan to replicate the initiative across more schools in the coming years.

Curriculum Project Loans

To enhance school library collections, throughout the year we supply Curriculum Project Loans with additional resources for specific topics and projects. These are available to schools on request.

Project Loan total 2024-25: 4,831 books

Bulk Loans

Bulk Loans of fiction and non-fiction books are delivered to all schools in the Bailiwick, keeping library shelves fresh and introducing students to a wider range of titles.

Bulk Loan total 2024-25: 13,600 books





2. SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

Our biggest children's reading initiative of the year, the Summer Reading Challenge is a hugely important and proven way to encourage young people to read for pleasure during their time away from school. The challenge is to read six books, with rewards on offer after finishing each one, and a medal for finishers. This year's theme was **'Story Garden – Adventures in Nature & the Great Outdoors'**, inspiring children to explore the magical connection between storytelling and nature.

In the run-up to the launch, our librarians visited all States-maintained schools (KS1 & KS2) to deliver special assemblies promoting the Challenge and reinforcing the importance of reading during the holidays.

In total, **1,746 children** took part, including 44 in Alderney. There were **811 finishers**. 202 children joined the Library during the holidays, and there were 13,511 children's book loans. Although these numbers did not quite match last year's record-breaking Challenge, they are still significantly higher than prior years. They also compare very favourably against the national statistics, including the other Crown Dependencies – many more children take part in Guernsey than in Jersey or the Isle of Man, despite Guernsey having the smallest population.

For the success of our Summer Reading Challenge, in 2025 the Guille-Allès Library was shortlisted for the **Library of the Year Award** at the British Book Awards.

"The Children's Library has provided so much joy for me and my son - I'm not sure who loves it more! We love visiting and choosing books, plus taking part in the great activities on offer. Our Library is one of the biggest treasures we have."

- Parent feedback



3. AUTHOR VISITS

BOOK WEEK 2024

In 2024 we were delighted to welcome three popular children's authors for our annual Book Week. Together, they engaged more than 5,100 children across every school and Key Stage.

Acclaimed writer and illustrator **Petr Horacek** spoke to students in Key Stage 1. His lively assemblies blended humour and live illustration, as he shared top tips on creating characters and drawing emotions. He also led a mural workshop at the Library, which saw 30 children and their parents contributing to a collaborative, animal-themed artwork.

Meanwhile **Karen McCombie**, author of more than 100 books for children, visited classes in Key Stage 2. Karen inspired students by debunking some myths about being an author, and offered practical advice for improving their own creative writing.

Finally, author **Christopher Edge** visited students in Key Stage 3, talking about writing and challenging them to solve puzzles inspired by his book *Escape Room*. A significant highlight was Christopher's visit to Alderney – he was the first author to make the trip in quite some time, following several years of bad weather.

Book Week is a cornerstone of our literacy programme. Research shows that author visits can have a lasting impact on children – they inspire a love of reading and writing, and many children remember them long into adulthood.



BOOK WEEK 2025

From 2025 onwards, Book Week will take place in the autumn term, with author visits scheduled throughout October. We're delighted to have three acclaimed writers already confirmed for this year's event:

- **Peter Bently**, known for lively rhyming picture books such as *The Great Dog Bottom Swap* and *Octopus Shocktopus!* (which won the 2022 UK Children's Book Award). He will inspire Key Stage 1 pupils through his playful, energetic storytelling and memorable verse.
- **Jenny Pearson** will visit children in Key Stage 2. Previously a primary school teacher, she is known for hit titles like *The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates*, *The Incredible Record Smashers*, and more recently, *Shrapnel Boys* – a riveting historical fiction book set in wartime London.
- **Ele Fountain**, writing for Key Stage 3, will engage older pupils through her powerful novels such as *Boy87*, which won multiple awards and was shortlisted for the Waterstones Children's Book Prize.

In 2025, Book Week will be supported by Collas Crill. Their support will cover the majority of the costs attached to travel, accommodation, and authors' fees, all of which have risen considerably in recent years. The event wouldn't be possible without them.

GUERNSEY LITERARY FESTIVAL

In May we were proud to coordinate the delivery of the Guernsey Literary Festival's Education Programme, which this year featured a record total of 16 events. Visiting authors included **Jordan Stephens**, **Pari Thomson**, and **Sophy Henn**, while a notable highlight was the special event at Beau Sejour with acclaimed writer **Nadia Shireen**, which brought together every Year 5 student in the Bailiwick for a lively talk. Afterwards, they each received a copy of her latest book, *Grimwood*.

4. CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

The Cultural Enrichment programme seeks to enhance children's understanding of different cultures, and provides meaningful cultural experiences as part of the school day. The Library's Schools Team delivers key elements of this programme for Years 2, 4, and 5, offering a range of activities designed to promote literacy, digital literacy, and independent learning.

To mark **World Book Day** in March, the team visited every Year 2 class in the States-maintained schools (including St Anne's in Alderney) for a storytelling session based on *A Year Full of Stories*, a collection of folk tales, myths, legends, and other classic stories from around the world. Afterwards, each of the 500 children received a copy of the book to take home.

Meanwhile, students in Year 4 were gifted a copy of Britannica's Children's Encyclopaedia as part of an in-class workshop. This session highlighted the importance of reliable information sources and in particular the value of **Britannica**, the digital encyclopaedia which children can access for free through their school library.

The coming academic year will see the introduction of a new cultural enrichment experience for Year 5. Throughout the course of the year, every Year 5 class will have the chance to visit the **Fab Lab**, the Library's creative makerspace. Using the 3D printer, coding robots, and other cutting-edge technology, the children will take part in hands-on activities designed to develop creativity, problem-solving, and digital skills.





5. LIBRARY VISITS

As part of our ongoing campaign to inspire a love of reading, throughout the year the team provided numerous opportunities for students to visit the Guille-Allès Library. Classes from Reception to Year 3 all made at least one trip to the Library for either a **Christmas or Summer Stories** session. This included visiting the Story Tower at the top of the building – a space off limits to parents and other grown-ups – causing great excitement on each occasion. There they listened to a selection of themed stories, before heading down to the Children's Library for craft activities. In total, more than 1,000 children enjoyed these sessions over the course of the year.

For older children, the team delivered a wide range of Library-based initiatives to encourage reading. As in previous years, students were invited to shadow two children's book awards – **Non-Fiction November** and the **Carnegie Medals** for fiction and illustration. Our librarians helped children in both primary and secondary schools to 'shadow' the awards by reading and reviewing the books on the shortlists. They then came to the Library to discuss what they'd read and vote for their 'Guernsey winner'. 75 students took part in the Non-Fiction November Quiz, while 45 children from 12 schools attended the 'Literary Lunch' for the Carnegie Medals.

We also continued our efforts to support students in their transition into secondary school. In the summer term we hosted a series of **Library induction events for Year 7 students**, welcoming more than 300 from Les Varendes High and St Sampson's High. Highlights included an introduction to the Fab Lab, a practical session with the coding robots, a visit to our special Liberation 80 exhibition, and a treasure hunt in the Children's Library. As in previous years, these visits proved a great opportunity to introduce students to the wide range of library services that can support both their work and their wellbeing.

In addition to these one-off events, throughout the year the team also coordinated **topic-based visits** from Castel, Haute Capelles, Amherst, Le Murier, and Herm School, welcoming more than 350 children in total. These sessions were designed to build familiarity with the Library and boost students' confidence in finding and using resources to support their learning.



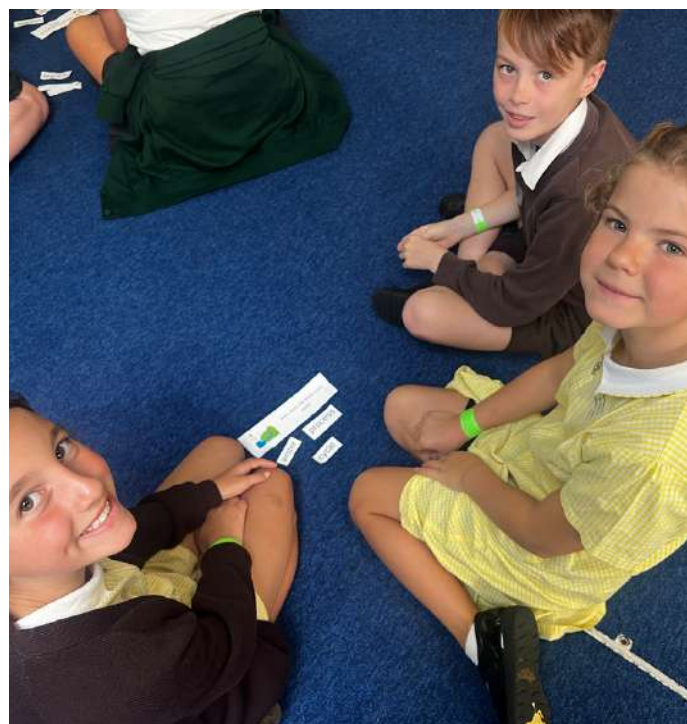


6. PUPIL LEADERSHIP DAY

In September 2024 our team played a key role in the delivery of the second Pupil Leadership Day at Beau Sejour. This event placed **Library Leadership** alongside Digital Leadership at its heart.

Our librarians ran a series of workshops to equip Year 5 students with vital research, digital and leadership skills, encompassing everything from enquiry work and fact-checking to teamwork, presenting, and coding.

A total of 130 students took part: 88 as Digital Leaders, and 50 as Library Leaders.



“The Pupil Leadership Day was such a fantastic event - it really inspired children to take pride in their library and become dedicated Library Leaders. I loved running the sessions, especially seeing the children’s confidence grow as they became more motivated and committed to their library roles.”

- Alan Nel, Schools Librarian



7. ONLINE RESOURCES

The Guille-Allès Library provides schools with free access to a wide range of trusted online resources, including **Digital Theatre+**, the encyclopaedias **Britannica** and **Q-Files**, and the eBook platform **Sora**.

This year the team have made a concerted effort to promote Sora, delivering a series of assemblies to raise awareness of the app and explain how to download eBooks and audiobooks. A representative from Sora also visited the island to deliver training for secondary librarians, sharing strategies for increasing student engagement.

These promotional efforts are producing results – notably, after an assembly at St Martin’s Primary School, monthly eBook checkouts rose from 61 to 631. Over the coming year we plan to continue building awareness so that more children can enjoy the huge range of reading materials available through Sora.



DT+

Digital Theatre+

User visits: 730

Total time spent: 299
hours, 49 minutes



Q-Files

Active users: 1,574

New users: 1,557

Sessions: 1,442



Sora

Total Checkouts

Castel: 5,612

Amherst: 3,122

Ladies College: 1,517

St Martin’s: 1,280

Forest: 1,158

La Houquette: 1,147

Vauvert: 1,092

La Mare Primary: 788

Hautes Capelles: 715

Vale Primary: 670

St Anne’s: 619

Notre Dame: 219

St Mary & St Michael: 199

Les Beaucamps: 145

St Sampson’s High: 37

Les Varendes: 22

Le Rondin: 11

Le Murier: 4

Total: 18,357



Britannica School

States-maintained schools

Hits: 1,641,403

Searches: 86,328

Sessions: 6,801

Private schools

Hits: 417,852

Searches: 21,912

Sessions: 1,329

“Our students absolutely love the Sora app! I’ve had great feedback from one of the Sixth Form boys, who uses it a lot.”

- Teacher feedback

MEET THE SCHOOLS TEAM



Jodie Hearn
Head of CYP



Ellie Fowkes
Schools Lead



Tiffany Woosley
Collections Lead



Julia Bichard
Schools Librarian



Alan Nel
Schools Librarian



Annette Carpentier
Reader Development Officer



Katie Anderson
Reader Development Officer



Guille-Allès
Public Library

THANK YOU

Managing Director: Richard Hamilton

Chief Librarian: Cornelia James

Head of Children & Young People's Services: Jodie Hearn

Head of Learning & Development: Catherine Stuart

Head of Marketing & Customer Services: Adam Bayfield

Head of Operations: Chris Jordan