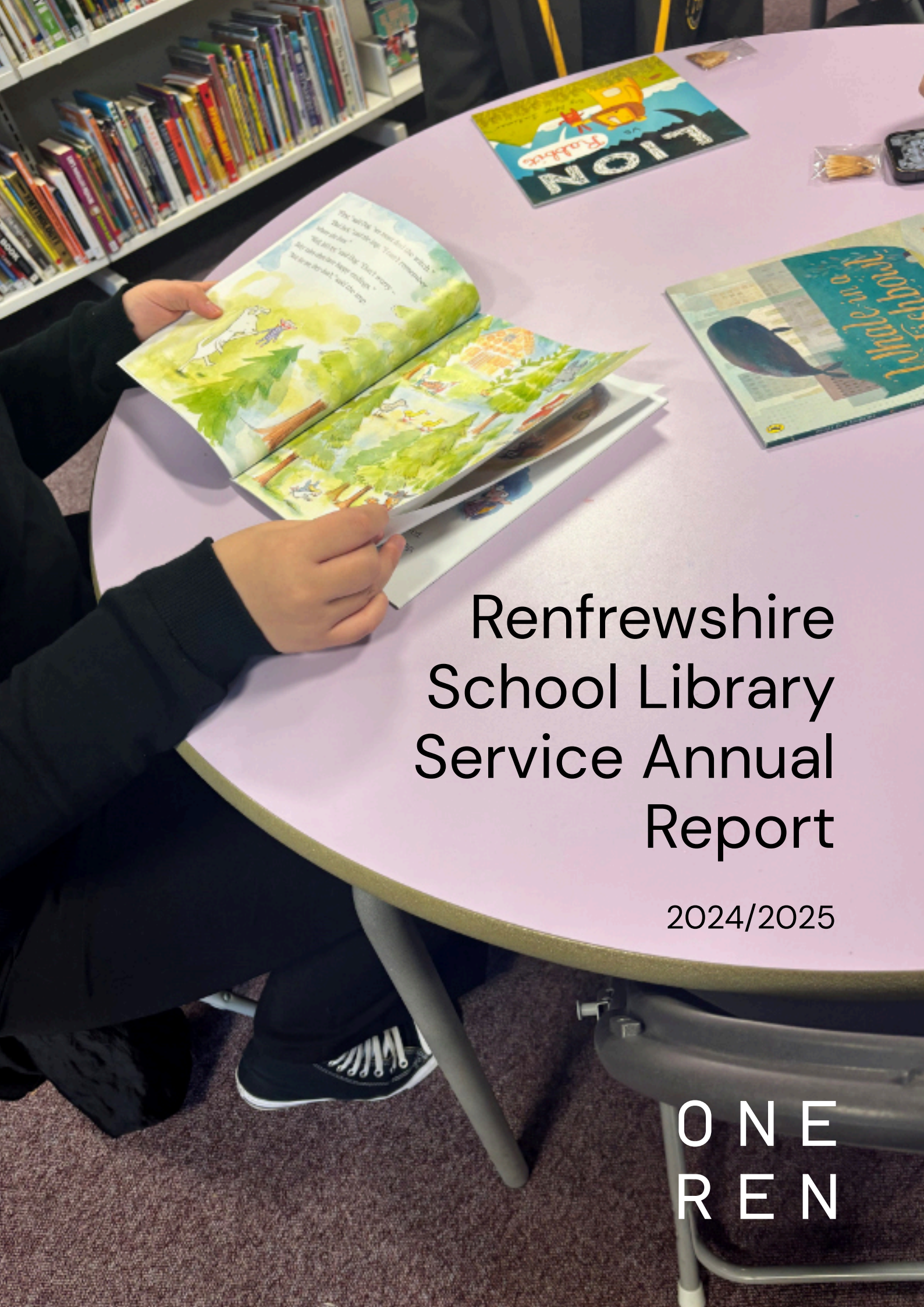

Renfrewshire School Library Service Annual Report

2024/2025

ONE REN

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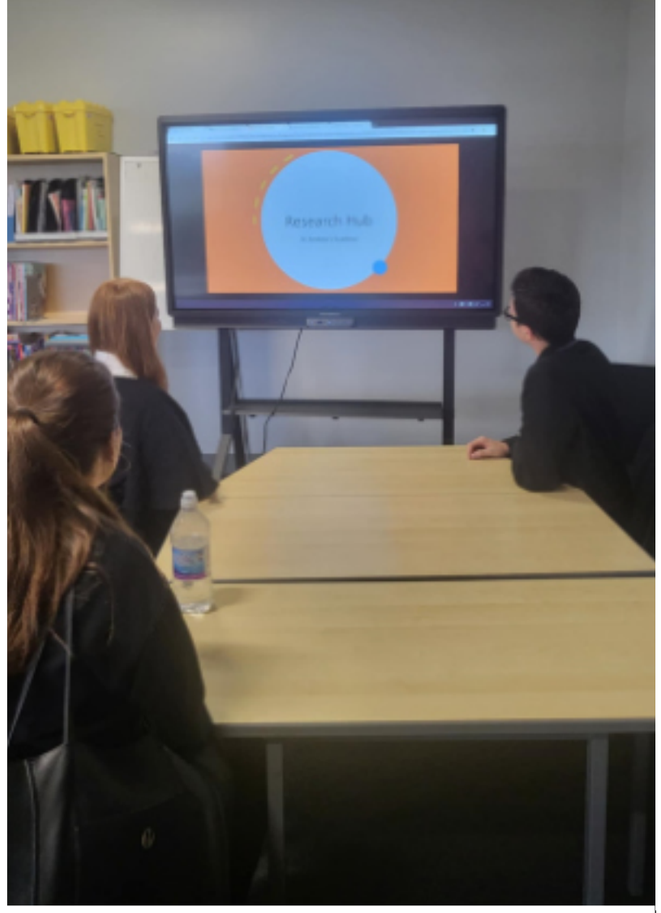

Introduction

OneRen provides a professionally qualified librarian to 11 secondary schools in Renfrewshire. School library opening hours are based upon the size of the school with the two largest schools, St. Andrew's Academy and Park Mains High, open 4 days per week. All other school libraries are open 3 days per week apart from Linwood High which is open 2 and a half days per week. OneRen also provides equitable funding for books to each school library.

This report shows the range of activities that have taken place across the 2024-25 academic year, and a brief summary of some of the positive impacts the school library service has had on young people.

Clare Hemsworth, Library Support Co-ordinator (Schools), July 2025

What does a professionally qualified librarian in Renfrewshire do:

- Provides up to date advice on resources to support literacy and attainment including selecting resources that support both the curricular and extra-curricular needs of pupils.
- Arranges author visits to widen ethos of reading culture within the school.
- Is a trusted expert on Information Literacy including journal searching, plagiarism and referencing.
- Runs activities and clubs that support health and wellbeing of young people e.g dungeons and dragons, craft clubs and book clubs.
- Provides access to a welcoming and well resourced space throughout the school day including break-times
- Provides drop in digital support to pupils and school staff e.g Dip into Digital sessions and 3D printing.
- Arranges trips to support literacy, support curricular work and wellbeing such as to Paisley and Edinburgh Book Festivals, bookshops to select resources or to university libraries.

Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools

A National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland.

The School Library should reach all ages, levels and curricular subjects to improve attainment, develop a reading culture, support information and digital literacy, and provide a nurturing space for pupils to reflect and learn.

Professionally trained librarians can provide young people with the transferable skills required to achieve throughout life and develop a lifelong love of reading. An inspiring and safe place, the library fosters wellbeing and creativity across the school community.

Strategic aim 1:

School Libraries in Scotland are a key resource and are central to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, develop pupil skills for the world of work, and encourage learning that will stay with pupils throughout their lives.

> *"She [the Librarian] has been doing so much to support my son's reading. He's quite shy but reading in the library helps him escape from the wider school environment he finds overwhelming at break times. She suggested reading club and he's made some friends there." (S2 parent comment)*

Strategic aim 2:

School Libraries in Scotland use digital technology to deliver high quality and efficient digital learning experiences for young people, enabling access to information and creative opportunities.

> *"A Technical class of 20 pupils visited the library with their teacher to learn about 3D printing and watch a demonstration. Bernadette McGarvey brought examples of 3D printing to show what can be done. The pupils were surprised by the diversity and complexity of the objects that can be created using a 3D printer, and were highly engaged during the session." (Librarian comment)*

Strategic aim 3:

School Libraries in Scotland are central to education for all ages, develop a culture of reading for pleasure, offer literacy and numeracy support from ELC settings through to primary and secondary schools and enable opportunities for family learning.

> *"I really enjoyed going to read to P1 because they were really eager to listen. It was also very nice to talk about the book, like what pets do they have, their favourite animal and so on. This experience reinforced the joy and importance of sharing stories with young learners. I gained a bit of confidence with reading aloud and I am very thankful for this experience." (Pupil comment on storytelling session run by librarian)*

Strategic aim 4:

School Libraries in Scotland contribute to health literacy, social and mental wellbeing and provide a safe, trusted space for children and young people to be nurtured.

> *(on Japan pen-pal project) "It was amazing to see so many pupils enthusiastic about reading and writing as part of the pen pal programme. One pupil who was unsure about writing at the beginning told me how exciting it was to have someone to chat about K-pop music with, and was introduced to manga by their partner. Another pupil was emotional when they received their last letter, saying they had really looked forward to receiving a new letter every month, and how they felt like they had made a connection with their partner over the programme." (Librarian comment)*

Strategic aim 5:

School Libraries in Scotland are essential to closing the attainment gap in schools, support all curriculum areas, are well supported by the schools management team and operate under a successful working model.

> *"At a creative writing event with 20 S3 pupils, pupils responded well to the author and the activities, with many sharing some very personal responses of what they had written. Place2Be staff commented that she worked with some of the pupils in attendance and that it was good to see them engaging as this wasn't always the case in class." (Librarian comment)*

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REN

Reach your goals.

#WeAreOneRen

2024-2025 School Library Team

Louise Gordon (School Librarian).
Based at Park Mains on Mondays and Fridays and Paisley Grammar on Tuesdays to Thursdays.

Onyinyechi Agwu (School Librarian).
Based at Linwood on Mondays, Tuesdays and Friday mornings and Gryffe High on Wednesdays on Thursdays.

Sylwia Grabowska-Szumska (School Librarian).
Based at St. Andrew's on Wednesdays to Fridays.

Ian Love (School Librarian).
Based at Renfrew High on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and St Benedict's on Thursdays and Fridays.

Andy Kerr (School Librarian).
Based at St Benedict's on Mondays, Trinity High on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and Castlehead High on Wednesdays.

Emma Thompson (School Librarian).
Based at St Andrew's on Mondays, Johnstone High on Tuesdays to Thursdays and Gryffe High on Fridays.

Kenneth Naismith (School Librarian).
Based at Park Mains on Tuesday and Wednesdays and Gleniffer High on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Benjamin Holder (School Librarian- maternity cover).
Based at Linwood on Mondays, Tuesdays and Friday mornings and Gryffe High on Wednesdays on Thursdays.

Clare Hemsworth (Library Support Co-ordinator).
Line management of school libraries team.

Leilani Thomson (School Librarian).
Based at Castlehead High on Mondays and Tuesdays. Provides peripatetic casual cover in other schools as needed.

Andrew Givan (Children and Families Coordinator) & **Joyce Retnaraj (school librarian)** also contributed to work in this report during the 24/25 academic year but have now left OneRen.

Annual Statistics July 2024-June 2025

Usage of school libraries

There were 185,190 visits to all 11 locations. 3,323 class visits, clubs and groups took place in the libraries. 201 pupils hours were spent volunteering supervised by the school librarians with volunteering time used as evidence towards school recognition programmes.

Resources

29,100 physical books were issued to pupils over the year with many pupils borrowing from the library on a weekly basis. Book returns continued to be a challenge with a significant amount (approximately 6,000) not returned. Plans are in place to roll out automatic e-mail reminder notices from August 2025 as non-returned books continues to have a significant negative impact on resources.

Funding

£40,000 in resource funding was provided by OneRen for books and magazines. Additional funding of £3,384.50 was given by Future Paisley for events to support creativity and health and wellbeing. Schools supported trips with transport funding for external trips to bookshops and author visits. For the 3rd year running, Renfrewshire school libraries were awarded a Scottish Book Trust Author Residency, being only one of 8 schools in Scotland to be awarded this- Johnstone High library will start this project in August 2025 and will allow 10 author visits to take place.

Author visits

38 author visits were held across 11 schools with an additional 10 author sessions held as part of the Paisley Book Festival and Will Eisner week. Authors invited ranged from award winning authors to local authors all of which made a huge impact on the pupils who attended the sessions. Live Literature Funding was awarded to many schools to reduce the financial cost of author visits with a Scottish Book Trust Author Residency awarded to St Andrew's Academy Library which allowed 10 author visits to take place. Pupils from 4 schools also attended Edinburgh Book Festival after being awarded free places and transport funding.

Highlights of the year

Paisley Book Festival Schools Programme and Janet Coats Memorial Prize

The Paisley Book Festival Schools Programme is funded by OneRen and Creative Scotland and aims to inspire children and young people to love reading and develop their own creative writing skills through meeting and hearing from authors who write for their age group. It encourages children to engage with the library to expand their reading horizons and develop their creativity through free access to books and the support and guidance of school librarians and public library staff. The Schools Programme also aspires to be inclusive, and accessible to pupils from different backgrounds and from across Renfrewshire.

This year 18 events were held by 6 authors with total physical attendees as 1,163. Last year with 38 events we reached 1452. 42 primary and secondary schools also signed up to watch the live stream of the Joseph Coelho session at Paisley Town Hall which was very well received. We hope to increase the number of events next year, feedback this year was particularly positive about pupils having the opportunity to visit the town hall.

An event to award the Janet Coats Memorial Poetry Prize was held as part of the festival. 67 pupils submitted entries with 5 pupils from 4 schools being shortlisted. S1 pupil Isla Thomson from Gryffe High School won the 2025 young peoples prize with her poem 'Now it's a Memory' and winning £200 in poetry books for her school library.

Now it's a Memory
by Isla Thomson,
S1 Gryffe High School

A sunrise
Fresh apple
A cold walk to school
Tea stains on my shoes

Running to my friends
Hiding in stairwells
Tripping up over my shoelace
What a day

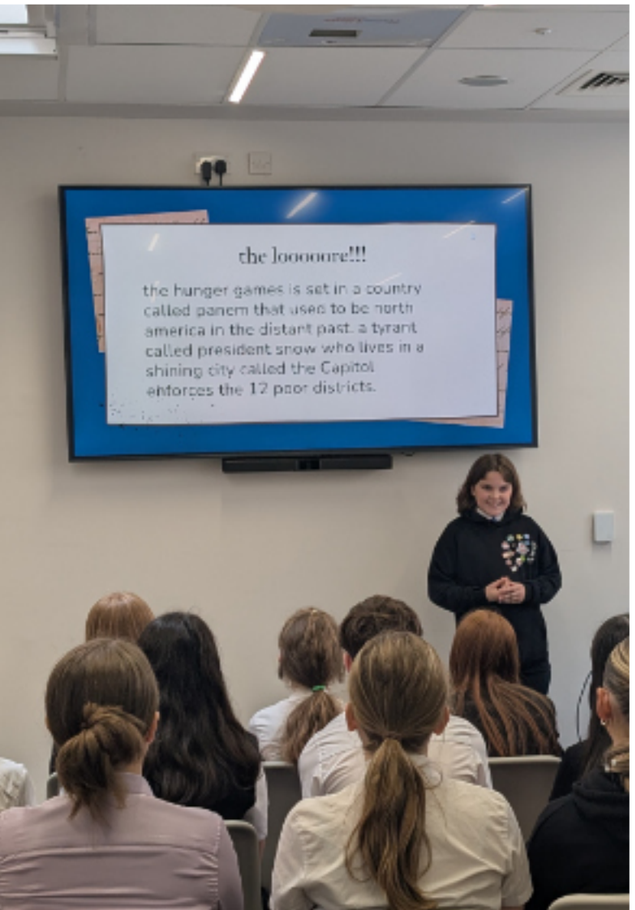
Spanish, suddenly
It's break time, maths and we
Are queueing up for food
Eating
Reading
The bell goes suddenly
I make my way to the theatre
'We're all in this together' they said
But are we really?

I stumble home quickly
My brother's screaming at me
I eat and drink
Watching myself go crazy

It's fleeting
Now I'm spiralling
It's a deep deep gaping dread
In the dead of night
Sometimes I feel like an ellipsis

That twist was too cruel
Up too late, now drowsy
I remember facts that won't remember me
I look around
I can't retrieve all the time I waste

Is it worth the time and the youth I waste?
Am I upset?
Funny?
Today is now just a memory.



Empathy Day

Pupils from 6 schools attended Paisley Central Library in June to celebrate Empathy Day. This was the 2nd year this event was held with an increase of attendees this year. Pupils shared presentations they had made on books as well as learning more about Empathy Day and how reading can build empathy skills from school librarians. Having a shared event such as this was very popular, pupils not only were able to share books they had enjoyed but also got experience of public speaking and designing very creative presentations. Work is ongoing to run this event again in 2026 with capacity for more schools to be involved.

> *'I really enjoyed it, I thought it was something different. Nice that they had the same interests.' (pupil comment)*

> *' I liked that here were so many different schools wanting to read and take part.' (pupil comment)*

Information Literacy

Information Literacy was a key priority with all schools undertaking key induction skills for new S1 at the beginning of the academic year. All pupils were given information on how to use the library catalogue and resources including the benefit of their joint public and school library card. Research skills for senior pupils sessions included referencing, bibliographies and journal searching. St Andrew's Academy continued the popular research hub sessions that was funded in the previous academic year by the School Library Improvement Fund. Visits were also organised by school librarians to local university libraries to support dissertations but also to encourage the continued use of libraries beyond the secondary level.

Comic books and creative writing

Comic book creation continued across the schools with the creation of 2 comic books funded by Future Paisley funding.

Castlehead High published a comic for the 2nd year running working closely with the author Neil Slorance to create a book with the theme of movies and cinemas. The author/illustrator Gary Erskine worked with pupils from Trinity High School to create personalised comics.

Creative writing took on an international element with a paired up project between Renfrew High School and a school in Japan. 50 pupils were matched with each other to become pen pals with the aim of Japanese students learning more about life in Scotland and improving English language skills with Renfrewshire pupils learning more about life in Japan and sharing manga and graphic novel recommendations. The school librarian, Ian Love, even managed to visit the school in Japan when on holiday!

St Andrew's Academy were awarded School Library Improvement Funding to work with the author and poet Simon Lamb in the school library to create a nature based poetry book 'Scaling Mountains' with pupils taking part in a trip to Conic Hill to inspire their writing.

School Reports

Castlehead High

The 2024-25 school year started with Dolly Parton Imagination Library training for 20 S5-S6 pupils. The Monday lunch time and Wednesday after-school craft clubs recommenced. One of the English teachers worked with S2 pupils to create a fashion display for the library. Four inductions took place in August to welcome and introduce S1s to all the resources the library has to offer. Preparation for the comic book project began, with pupils signing up and consent for attendance organised.

In October, work on the comic book project started, led by Artist/Writer Neil Slorance. 36 S1-S3 pupils chose the theme of 'Castlehead at the Movies'. The sessions continued through November, after which the project work was sent for polishing and printing. Challenges included having only three funded sessions, with Neil in the school for only two of the sessions. Assistance from school staff was an issue due to staff absence and unavailability while covering for other staff absences.

In November, the library collaborated with the OneRen Creative Learning Team to run two sessions of a museum focus group with 15 S1-S4 CHS pupils offering valuable insight into attracting the young adult demographic to the soon-to-be-reopened Paisley Museum. The library also worked with Support for Learning on a stop motion project to support a pupil working once a week in the library. Craft clubs continued to go well on Mondays and Wednesdays, one challenge was supplies were running low. There was a Book Week Scotland competition, with prizes including chocolate and mini stationery. 3 pupils in S1, S2 and S3 won. Pupils wrote on post-it notes why they liked either books, libraries or reading.

In December we received 121 books and a story box from the Scottish Book Trust. Most books were gifted to pupils and their families with help from the English Principal Teacher and Home Link. Preparation for the rollout of the 2024-25 CHS comic book began, with a date and film to watch after the comic book unveiling ceremony chosen.

As 2025 began, craft supplies were down to a minimum with only a few pupils able to participate in the craft club as supplies dwindled. The final museum focus group meeting took place in January with lots of pupil engagement and a plethora of great ideas for the museum to take forward.

In February, the comic book rollout took place with pupils, their families, school staff and the artist/writer in attendance. Pupils excitedly pitched in to prepare the auditorium for the rollout and the viewing of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. All pupils were proud to see their personal comics in the published comic book. Also in February, 18 CHS pupils submitted poems in the Janet Coats Memorial Prize.

In April, the Paisley Book Festival saw 77 CHS S1 pupils and staff attending an author visit by Tom Palmer at the Paisley Town Hall. In April and May, the CHS library was increasing utilised as a revision site for many pupils on study leave. Classes continued attending their regularly scheduled library time as usual.

In June, the library took 11 pupils on a field trip to the Sauchiehall Street Waterstones in Glasgow. Every one of the pupils exemplified exceptional behaviour throughout the day. They handpicked a wide range of books for the CHS library encompassing multiple genres.

Over the year, the CHS Library had strong attendance from all S1-S2 classes, with S3 classes coming in occasionally as well. A record number of pupils spent their time before school, at breaks, at lunch and after school in the library. Loans were up nearly 2% from the previous school year. The leadership class utilised the library for books to help them write reports about inspiring people. Duke of Edinburgh volunteers assisted in the library. One volunteer also chose reading as their skill for their DofE award.

Leilani Thomson and Andy Kerr, July 2025

Gleniffer High

We have had a busy year this year in Gleniffer High School. Over 9930 individual visits were made to the library, comprising 238 class/group visits of over 5550 pupils. These visits generated over 3300 physical book issues or renewals. This was supported by four S6 volunteers providing 113 hours of work and 629 books coming into the library, to replace or improve the existing library stock.

A trip to Waterstones in January with four S2 and two S6 pupils aided in this improvement with 79 books being bought from there. Several books were donated this financial year (63) and we also received some in relation to the Paisley Book Festival (13). The remainder were purchased from our main supplier Askew's.

Activity wise, the library has been busier due to two clubs starting this year. The Manga club meet on a Thursday lunch to talk all things Manga and to provide recommendations to the library about suitable Manga which could be added to the stock. The Dungeons and Dragons club mentioned in last years report has been successful this year, to the point that the group needed to be split in two due to its size. Ms Grao of the English Department assisted greatly by taking one group on a Monday lunch, while I had the other Friday lunch. The plan for the coming year is for pupils to now take on the role of Dungeon Master for the existing group and for the new group planned in September.

I again aided the school during the Activities Day by running the K'nex challenge of building a structure as tall as possible to hold a selected book using a standard K'nex kit. This year the tallest build was 30 cm. I also attended the Senior School Snoball dance, providing supervision.

For the Paisley Book Festival this year, we heard from Brian Conaghan, with a group of 44, S2 pupils. They chose to hear his story of troublemaker to author.

The Book Bingo system was expanded this year and a further review of it is ongoing to embed the library into the new literacy development plan. This follows on from the inspection the school received this year and the comments on the library in the report.

"The library within Gleniffer High School is situated very close to the English department. The library is staffed by a librarian three days per week (shared with a nearby school). The library is inviting, well-organised and well-resourced with a wide range of texts. The library also has an area that has books to support young people with dyslexia (for example, summarised text, yellow paper, appropriate font size and style). The librarian recently secured funding for new texts and organised a group of young people to visit a book shop in Glasgow to select new texts for a range of different reading levels and ages. These are now available to borrow from the library The library is very well used by the English department, including a reading period for young people within the BGE. Staff have also introduced strategies within the library to encourage further personal reading. Other departments across the school also make effective use of this resource."

P10 of the Summarised inspection findings for Gleniffer High School, Renfrewshire Council issued 10 June 2025 by Education Scotland.

Kenneth Naismith, July 2025

Gryffe High

Gryffe High School Library is open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. We run a busy timetable across these days with an average of 8 S1-S3 classes visiting the library each week to swap books. Pupils are encouraged during their visits to engage with our longstanding 'Read for Gold' (S1s), 'Genre' (S2s) and 'Bingo' (S3s) reading challenges which celebrate active commitment to reading. Gryffe High School has an incredibly strong reading culture of which the library is a major driver, there is no doubt that this culture contributes significantly to the school's impressive success in attainment.

Further to our timetable, we run a variety of literacy-based activities. We were pleased to receive special recognition from Scottish Book Trust in our Reading Schools Gold application this year, for 'the seriously impressive' number of author events offered to pupils. Our first was in September, when Margaret McDonald visited and spoke to S3s and S4s about her debut, Glasgow Boys. The event tied in nicely with the Gryffe Valley Book festival which the School Library was delighted to promote. This was followed by Elle McNicoll's visit in October. Elle was promoting her first YA book, Some Like It Cold and spoke to S4s-S6s about neurodiversity. Two different groups of S1s have enjoyed comic book workshops – Tom Foster visited in November and Matt Smith visited in March. Finally, in early May, Julie McNeill, author of Mission Dyslexia: Find Your Superpower visited and spoke to S1s-S3s with a dyslexia diagnosis or had below average literacy levels. Julie shared strategies to boost confidence in reading and writing. There is nothing like a visit from an author to inspire and motivate pupils to value reading for enjoyment and creative writing.

The library also runs several extra-curricular clubs for pupils. We have a regular book club who read best-selling junior fiction titles such as One of Us Is Next by Karen McManus and Like a Charm by Elle McNicoll. We also have a manga club where members share their reading recommendations, draw their favourite characters and discuss anime adaptations. Our manga club members even teamed up with Johnstone High School Library's Manga Club to write a joint comic! In the last few months, the library has also launched a new after-school club called Nerd Nest where pupils are encouraged to play tabletop games such as Pokemon, Chess, Scrabble and Magic the Gathering; exercising their problem-solving in an informal social environment. We have also hosted and organised several one-off lunchtime events. For example, a quiz for Book Week Scotland, a Zines workshop, and a Valentine's Day book speed dating activity. These events are often planned partially by pupils through the library committee who also help create and maintain seasonal book displays.

We are delighted to end this academic year with the news that Gryffe High School has achieved its Reading Schools Gold accreditation on which the library and English Department have worked together. To achieve gold, we had to demonstrate that the school was promoting reading in the wider community. To this end, the library arranged for senior pupils to participate in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme whereby seniors visited local nurseries to lead paired reading. Meanwhile S2 and S3 reading buddies visited Houston Primary School on several occasions, to deliver paired reading there. Finally in January, 12 pupils visited the Bridge of Weir Care Home where they read to residents and delivered a donation of books for the community bookshelf. It has been wonderful to see pupils share their love of reading with the wider community and the library very much looks forward to continuing to support reading within school, and beyond.

Benjamin Holder and Emma Thompson, June 2025

Johnstone High

Johnstone High School Library is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We run a busy timetable across these three days with an average of twelve S1-S3 classes visiting the library each week to swap books and participate in Librarian-led activities promoting reading.

Further to our timetable, we run a variety of other activities. We kicked off the new academic year with a trip to Edinburgh Book Festival in August. Students attended the Young Adult Book Prize Event where they heard from shortlisted authors, including the winner, Lex Croucher (a bestselling author of teen romantic comedy). Students all went home with a complimentary book and a long list of recommended titles to devour! Pupils enjoyed the experience so much they demanded another trip to the festival which we are delighted to be arranging.

Edinburgh Book Festival was the first of several author opportunities organised by the library. In December, Kevin P. Gilday visited to deliver a poetry workshop for S3s. Then in April, we took thirty S1 students to see Joseph Coelho talk at Paisley Book Festival. English teachers were asked to recommend students who lacked confidence in literacy, anticipating that Coelho's highly interactive (and downright funny!) presentation style would encourage them to exercise their own creative, written voices. Coelho did not disappoint and shared with pupils a variety of simple but clever creative writing techniques. One pupil said they were especially inspired to learn that someone from an impoverished background like themselves could become a best-selling author (Coelho talked about being brought up in a deprived part of Roehampton). May saw our last author event of the academic year. Colin Maxwell of Maximised Comics spoke to S1 pupils who had been selected for demonstrating a keen interest in history as a subject. Colin talked about using comics to tell the story of the Scottish Wars of Independence, which S1s had been studying as part of the curriculum.

Throughout the year, the library has also run several popular lunchtime clubs for pupils. At board games club pupils are encouraged to exercise problem solving and strategy. At manga club members share reading recommendations, draw their favourite characters and discuss anime adaptations. Our manga club members even teamed up with Gryffe High School Library's Manga Club to write a joint comic! Our Reading Champions Club meets as a regular book club, but members also plan initiatives to promote reading across school. The library has also hosted several one-off lunchtime events, for example, a virtual author talk by Elle McNicoll for Autism Awareness Week, a quiz for World Book Day and bookmark crafting activities for Book Week Scotland.

We are delighted to end this academic year with the news that Johnstone High School has achieved its Reading Schools Gold accreditation which the Library and English department worked on together. To achieve gold, as well as proving we had sustained our strong, silver level in-school reading culture, we also had to promote reading in the wider community. We achieved this in three different ways. Firstly, the School Librarian took a group of pupils to Fordbank Primary School for paired reading. Secondly, our Reading Champions started a pen pal project with the refugee charity, Sewing2gether All Nations. And lastly - you may spot our pupil-made posters promoting reading which are being displayed in the windows of some local businesses. The Reading Schools framework, run by the Scottish Book Trust, has been an excellent tool for building a transformative reading culture in school for the benefit of pupil attainment and wellbeing. A culture which we look forward to sustaining and extending into the future.

Emma Thompson, July 2025

Linwood High

The Linwood High School Library continues to play a vital role in supporting both the academic and personal growth of its students. It is open Mondays, Tuesdays, and a half day on Fridays.

The library has recorded over 6,557 student visits, 265 classes and/or groups' visits, and 1,721 physical books loaned. Of the 1,721 books that were loaned this year, 1,538 of them have been returned at the time of this report. The number of students who attended the classes and/or groups was 3,320.

Two clubs meet every week in the library during the lunch period: Manga Club and Art Club. These clubs aim to encourage the students to use their library during lunch time while also promoting the idea that libraries are a safe place to be and are more than just a building/place that houses books. The students who attend the Manga Club discuss which manga they're currently reading, design their own manga cover for one of their favourite manga, or make a zine about why you should read their favourite manga. In Art Club, the students have been diligently working their way through a Bob Ross tutorial on YouTube. Supplies (acrylic paint, canvases, palettes, paint brushes, etc.) were purchased previously this year and the students of the Art Club have been making good use of them. Along with these two clubs, zines have been introduced into the library and students are encouraged whenever they come in to make their own zine or to take one from the display. However, this has not gotten that much traction but will hopefully expand in the coming years as the idea catches on.

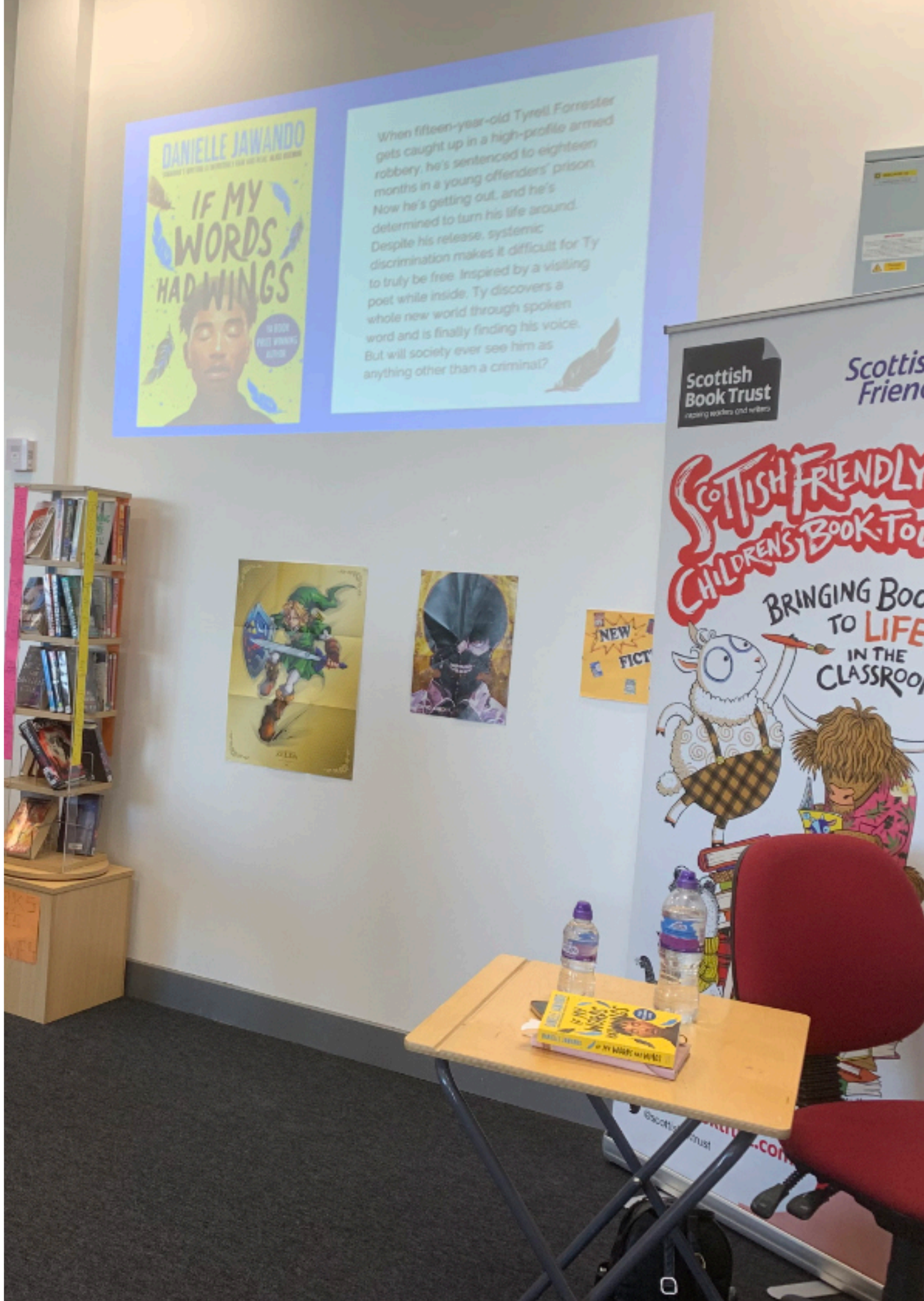
The library hosted multiple events this year, one of them being an author visit courtesy of the Paisley Book Festival. Tom Palmer came and spoke to the kids about his journey from not being interested in reading to being a full-time author—24 students attended this event, and all were positively engaged and spoke highly of the event afterwards. Other events included: S1 induction, Danielle Jawando visit (Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour), and Elle McNicoll visit.

The school librarian attended multiple CPD sessions and online webinars to further their education, as well as attending zine festivals in Glasgow to further learn how to utilize the medium of zines to get students interested in reading, writing, and creativity.

The challenges the library faced included the re-arranging of some shelves to make way for two heaters to be installed. The heaters have yet to be installed so there may be more shifting of shelves down the line. This resulted in re-organizing most of the books in the library, which ultimately was a positive as the library looks and feels a bit better now.

However, despite these challenges, the library has made great strides in creating a space where students feel safe and encouraged to read, write, or study. With continued support and careful planning, it's the aim of this library to further enhance these services and resources in the coming year to promote a culture that supports academic excellence as well as personal well-being in any way possible.

Benjamin Holder, June 2025



Paisley Grammar

'Thank you for making the library a wonderful place in both study and leisure' - card from S6 pupil

Our in-school author events started in July last year with graphic artist Neil Slorance making a return visit to run a workshop for pupils involved in enhanced transition. This event was supported by the Live Literature Fund. Our other Live Literature event was with Renfrew author, Ely Percy. Ely hosted a lively discussion with targeted S3 girls about their book 'Duck Feet', which has been selected for inclusion in the Scottish set text list for English courses.

As part of the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour in September, we were delighted to be selected to host a creative writing workshop for S3 pupils, with YA award winning author, Danielle Jawando. Danielle's session focussed on her new book 'If Words Had Wings', and its themes of young people finding their voice and the power of words. For this year's Paisley Book Festival, 35 pupils went along to the Tom Palmer session, held at the Town Hall.

Developing links with the associated primaries has continued this year. Primary 7 classes were visited in May/June in order to meet myself and find out about all the library can offer. P7/6 classes from Williamsburgh also came along for a visit and were able to choose books to take back to school. We have had two groups of S1 reading ambassadors this year – one group visited Ralston and read with P3/4 classes and the other, Williamsburgh, sharing stories with the S1 classes. The primary teachers have been very impressed with how well the S1 pupils engaged with the younger children. Some of the pupils were asked what they thought about taking part:

'At first I read quite often, only for myself but now I enjoy reading for other people, I am now not as scared to read out loud, they might enjoy trying new books.'

'Before I started to read to little children, I wasn't confident and didn't really know what the point was, but when we went it boosted my confidence and reading experience'.

Yes, I felt more confident reading to them and I felt I helped them with their reading. I got more confident reading with them and built patience when they were reading too! They enjoyed it when we talked about books we were going to read and what books they liked to read. Thanks Miss Gordon for the experience, I really enjoyed it'.

As part of preparing to re-open the Paisley Museum, staff from the venue held three sessions with some of our young people to find out about what they think would make it a safe and inviting place to spend time in. Pupils took part in an object handling activity, where they had to guess what the objects were. Pupils were also asked what type of activities they would like to see in the museum and how it could be made welcoming to visitors their age. Staff from the museum were impressed with the ideas and the high level of engagement pupils had with the activities.

Five pupils attended the school libraries Empathy Day Conference on the 12 June. They presented to pupils from across Renfrewshire on their favourite books and the importance of reading in developing empathy. The presentations were fantastic, and the pupils did exceptionally well, speaking to a large group of new people.

The main challenge this year continues to be encouraging engagement with reading and activities such as book talks and book speed dating have continued, as has our twice-yearly visits to Waterstones. We have also made use of a new resource, Story Deck, developed by the Scottish Book Trust, which encourages discussion amongst pupils about the stories they enjoy, as well as a tool to be used by school librarians to support pupils with their reading choices.

The Share a story collection is a selection of titles for young children. These books are available for pupils to take out and share with the younger members of their families. The collection continues to be built upon and includes recommended titles from the Read for Empathy list.

The library continues to be well used at breaks with a good number of regular users and DD remains popular on Wednesdays after school.

Louise Gordon, July 2025

Park Mains High

Our in-school author events began again in July with a return visit by graphic artist, Neil Slorance. Neil hosted a creative workshop with pupils participating in the enhanced transition. This event was funded by the Scottish Book Trust Live Literature program, as was the talk by local author Ely Percy who met with S3 pupils. Ely's book, Duck Feet, has recently been added to the Scottish set text list for English courses.

We also secured funding for a second year from Paisley Future for return visits by poet Sean Kwai Cheung to work with the AH Higher English class, as well as writing workshops with S2 pupils. Pupils found the workshops very beneficial, and the AH class were asked if they learned anything from the event which supported their writing:

· Better ways to write paragraphs and being able to make longer and shorter sentences., He gave me good feedback on my folio, Yes, how to structure my piece and more ideas for it, To ensure the length of my sentences vary and flow like music, I learned to change my writing style throughout any piece of writing that I'm doing.

Miss Little's S1 Art class also had the opportunity to work with comic book artist, Matt Smith, an event part of Will Eisner's week, organised by Renfrewshire Libraries. The pupils had a great time, creating characters with Matt and rated the event overall 4/5, with one pupil commenting 'the lesson was fun as it was very different'. Our Paisley Book Festival event this year was with Brian Conaghan, making a return visit to the school. Brian spoke to S3 pupils about his journey to becoming a writer.

Work with the S1 and S2 Pathways classes has continued to try and engage them with the library and reading. This has already been reviewed for the year and plans enacted for the coming academic year.

We have also continued to develop links with the associated primary schools and have supported transition by visiting the P7 classes to introduce ourselves and let them know what the library has to offer. Many new pupils are looking forward to their library visits. Two S6 pupils expressed an interest in Dolly Parton training. One followed this through and received a glowing report from the nursery and a mention by inspectors of the nursery as well. The library has been involved in completing activities towards the school's Reading School's application and has been awarded the core award.

The main challenge this year has been encouraging engagement with reading. Themed book talks and book speed dating activities continue to be beneficial in encouraging pupils to try different texts. S1 and S2 classes also tried out Story Deck, a new resource from the Scottish Book Trust, which encourages pupils to discuss the types of stories they enjoy, as well as a tool for school librarians to support reading choices. Pupils are encouraged to suggest resources and have also been involved in two visits to Waterstones to select new books for the library.

To encourage use of the library by S1 pupils, a library ambassadors' group has been set up. The pupils are all keen readers and will be involved in the Reading School's application for the silver award. Three of the pupils also participated in the recent Empathy Day conference. Along with two other pupils, they talked about their favourite books and the importance of reading. Although they found it nerve wracking to talk in front of a new group of people, they enjoyed the day and would like to take part again.

Even given the challenges noted, the library hosted 452 groups or classes, with 10719 attendees. This was out of 30, 821 individual visits to the library. An average of 21 library visits in the year from each pupil.

'Thank you for getting the book for the library – I absolutely loved it'. An S4 pupil who had requested books by Sarah Waters.

Louise Gordon and Kenneth Naismith,
July 2025

Renfrew High

This year at Renfrew High Library the focus remained on building a positive relationship with pupils in the school and establishing the library as a space where students feel safe and free to express themselves. This ethos has guided much of the work done this year, and the library continues to be a popular space in the school - around 40 pupils choose to spend their intervals and lunchtimes here, and pupils regularly volunteer as library assistants and submit book recommendations. A weekly film club after school was also run from the library, and around 10 pupils attend it each week. The library also collaborated with other departments in the school; hosting referencing classes with the Advanced Higher PE class, finding book bundles on various topics for History classes, and providing research classes for RMPS.

Improving literacy and promoting reading for pleasure remains another important priority for the school library, and in January, Renfrew High achieved our Reading Schools Gold accreditation from the Scottish Book Trust. This was a fantastic achievement that demonstrated over a year's worth of activities, initiatives, hard work, and ideas from pupils and staff in the school. Pupils also had the chance to hear from and engage with authors this year as part of the Paisley Book Festival, visiting the Paisley Town Hall to hear from Tom Palmer, and a visit to the school from author Brian Conaghan. Additionally, we held a trip to Waterstones in Glasgow where pupils selected books of their choice for the library.

There were a number of challenges this year, and besides the gold reading accreditation, January also brought with it Storm Éowyn, which resulted in major flooding damage in the library specifically. Over 500 books had to be discarded due to mould, and the flooring had to be ripped up and replaced. Walls also had to be repainted, and some shelving and furniture was thrown out. This was a huge disruption to the library service as the school library was closed for around 2 months while work was carried out and we worked to restore the library to a condition where it could be re-open. Other OneRen school librarians were hugely helpful during this period, with many of them coming in to the school to help move shelves, discard books, and help re-organise everything. The library opened back up near the end of March and work continues to fully restore it. An additional challenge was the library was used heavily during the May exam diet, which meant further disruption and pupils only being able to sporadically access the library over that period. While these exams happened, the librarian took book requests from classes and delivered books there.

Trying to sway hesitant readers to pick up a book remains a challenge, but it is one that both the school and the library service will continue to work on. For instance, the English department have been working with the school library to develop a library activities booklet to encourage pupils to read and give them an alternative way to engage with books if they don't feel up to reading during their library periods.

The library also ran a pen pal programme this year with a secondary school in Miyazaki, Japan. 50 pupils from S1-S6 took part in the programme and were partnered up with a Japanese student to exchange letters. Pupils wrote about what they were reading and shared reading recommendations and were free to chat about other topics and many shared their artwork, talked about movies, music, hobbies, and life in their respective countries. The programme was a huge success, with pupils sending monthly letters from October up until June, and many commenting that they look forward to getting their letters delivered each month.

Ian Love, July 2025

St Andrew's Academy

St. Andrew's Academy had a very busy and successful year. The School Library had a makeover over during summer, with new flooring, painting and refurbishment. School Librarians were very busy to get it ready for the new school year. We are open four days a week for pupils and manage a large collection of books used by pupils and staff across the school.

We started the school year with our annual trip to Edinburgh Book Festival attended by 30 'Readers of the Year' who enjoyed attending an author event and engaging in festival activities. This was the first of several opportunities for pupils to meet authors. We were also visited by Danielle Jawando (Scottish Book Trust funded) and pupils also took part in several Paisley Book Festival events.

We successfully delivered a Scottish Book Trust funded Author Residency Programme. £4000 plus of funding enabled us to develop a 'Scaling mountains' project with the poet, Simon Lamb. A group of pupils with dyslexia and low literacy levels worked with Simon to create poems about Scottish landscapes. They even had the opportunity to experience a Scottish hill first-hand - on a trip to climb Conic Hill which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Over the course of the project, pupils took part in 10 workshops with Simon; working to improve their literacy and develop their knowledge of and sensitivity towards natural environments. By the project's end, each pupil had written a poem inspired by the experience, which were published together as a poetry collection.

The previous year, we had also secured School Library Improvement Funding to establish a Research Hub project. This year, we continued to deliver workshops to our Higher and Advanced Higher pupils to help them with research projects - how to use online databases, use local libraries and reference.

Our biggest achievement this year (on which we worked closely with our colleagues in the English Department) was to receive the Gold Level of Reading School Accreditation.

In addition to the major projects mentioned so far, we have delivered annual activities for Dyslexia Awareness Week, Book Week Scotland and we organized an Empathy Day Conference in Paisley Central Library in partnership with other schools in Renfrewshire. We also run several clubs in the library: Craft Club, Manga Club, Wax Stamps Club and Kamishibai. Craft Club and Wax Stamps Clubs in particular were attended to maximum capacity. We also took pupils on a Waterstones trip, to select books for the library.

Quotes about clubs: 'My favourite day of week'; 'I wish we could have club like this every day'; 'I love coming here [library]', 'My favourite place in school'; 'I love Craft Club!'

Quote about sessions delivered as part of Teaching and Learning Conference: 'It was very valuable to see the overview of available resources online that I can now use in my work with senior pupils'.

Quote about delivering session for AH students about references and bibliography: 'Its extremely helpful to have a lesson from librarian and that pupils could learn from the expert how to do references'.

Sylwia Grabowska-Szumska and Emma Thompson, July 2025

St. Benedict's High

The term started with the new Book (Fridays) Manga clubs (Mondays) beginning month. The S1 inductions took place, with each S1 given a library card and an introduction to Libby, our library app. Also, about 20 pupils signed up to be library helpers.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library held an information session in the library on 17th October. Around 20 students attended, which was a great turnout. 11 signed up after the presentation, and they enjoyed getting selfies and a few even made TikToks with the Dolly cutout that Julie Paterson had brought along.

Both Library and Manga clubs continued to grow during this period, stabilising at around 5 pupils in each club. Library Club takes place after school on a Friday and has also saw two S3 pupils undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteer their time to help in the library.

'Autumn leaves' decorations added a nice touch to displays and shelves during Autumn, as well as a Halloween Spook-tacular story competition' that garnered good interest from pupils who submitted short scary stories. Additionally, a poetry competition was held for National Poetry Day, with English teachers judging and the winner receiving a sweet treat of their choice.

The library organised a Waterstone's trip, open to any pupils interested in going. The trip was successful and a great exercise in engaging pupils with the library. Pupils loved exploring the Waterstone's store in Sauchiehall Street and showing their friends their favourite books.

Challenges included the library being closed a few times in January for prelims and immunisations. Although it should be noted that for the main May exam diet, school staff actively tried to avoid using the library, and only one exam ended up taking place in the library, meaning disruption was minimal, which was hugely appreciated.

St Benedict's enjoyed two events as part of Paisley Book Festival. The first was Joseph Coelho (Friday 25th April) at Paisley Town Hall (Ian Love supervised the trip). Pupils had a great time with lots of engagement from them. Many wanted to ask questions and were keen to have something signed by Joseph. Unfortunately, we had to leave before everyone had an opportunity to get something signed. We did manage to go back in with four pupils who were very keen, as the bus wasn't leaving for another 5 minutes, and they managed to get their bookmarks signed.

The second event was the Tom Palmer visit to St Benedict's library (Andy Kerr & Ian Love supervised). The visit went very well and there was a good rapport between author and pupils, which was helped by the author being very friendly and approachable. Lots of questions were asked and the author encouraged staff to participate too. One pupil had an old newspaper from the 40s in his bag and was delighted Tom would sign it for him. Another pupil talked to Tom about an old book her family had found in their house.

In the middle of June, we also received a fully funded event- £200 in funding from Live Literature - a Scotland-wide programme that helps fund author events in communities. This money was used to arrange a visit from author Julie McNeill, the Poet-in-Residence for St Mirren Football Club, who has a particular interest in writing for children and adults with additional support needs (ASN). Julie hosted a poetry workshop for dyslexic pupils.

For Empathy Day seven pupils from the school attended an 'empathy conference' at Paisley Central Library. These pupils were joined by groups from other Renfrewshire schools, and each of them created their own presentations and spoke about their love for reading in front of around 40 other pupils.

Ian Love and Andrew Kerr, July 2025

Trinity High

August - September

The new term began with the all-staff library presentation on Inservice day. The event was intended as a library 'relaunch' after the refurbishment in 2023-24 and was an opportunity to communicate the variety of resources and library-based learning activities on offer.

Next was the Edinburgh Book Festival trip to see the Young Adult Book Prize. Andy went with two English staff and 12 S3 pupils to attend the event.

We had a 3D printer session with an S3 Technical class. Bernadette McGarvey brought examples of 3D-printed objects to the session to show what is possible from 3D printing, including larger objects such as a 'Lightsabre'. A GoPro camera was placed inside the 3D printer so that printing progress could be viewed close on the laptop & large TV screen.

The library was also involved with Modern Languages in printing Italy-themed keychain prizes for European Day of Languages.

The Comic Book Club began this month, and numbers began to slowly grow throughout the year.
A Fake News Workshop (26th September) was held with an S4 English class as a result of library user education programmes being referenced during the all staff talk in August.

October - December

Gary Erskine visited as part of the Future Paisley funding awarded to the school library. He spoke to an English class then the comic book club twice in this period. Pupils worked on a 'meet the artist' page with pupils drawing themselves, listing likes, dislikes and the contents of their school bag.

Library displays: There were a variety of displays between October and December, including a large one for new books, Halloween books, study skills and a Christmas display.

January - March

Gary made his 3rd and final visit as part of the Paisley Future project funding. On this occasion he spoke to thirty S3 Art pupils made up of two separate classes. He spoke about his career and how he got into the comic book business and the creative process. The S3 art class wrote articles about the visit using AI. In March the pupils' art booklet was printed via Document Solutions, with an end of term celebration.

April – June

Paisley Book Festival: 31 S2 pupils attended Brian Conaghan's visit on Thursday 24th April. Pupils were very well engaged during the session, asking a lot of questions as Brian spoke about his career and getting published.

Empathy Day at Paisley Central Library: Five S3 pupils, Andy and an English teacher attended the event on Thursday 12th June, joining five other Renfrewshire secondary schools to listen and present on their books and how they can find empathy in fictional characters.

Andrew Kerr, July 2025

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sls@renfrewshire.gov.uk

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