LiteracyActionNet Awards 2014 for innovation by schools

The LiteracyActionNet Awards celebrate excellence and innovation by schools. A total of £2,000 prize money is being offered to the winning projects and initiatives. Entries are invited from all schools in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Entries should demonstrate successful approaches in any one of or combination of the following categories:

1. Supporting children with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties
2. Working with parents and families
3. Supporting children and young people through school transitions
4. Motivation, creativity and love of reading and writing
5. Teacher development and training to enhance literacy outcomes.

Entries will be judged based on criteria including:

1. **Originality** – the distinctiveness and memorability of the project idea
2. **Replicability** – how others could be inspired by and run similar projects themselves
3. **Reach** - the number of pupils involved in the project
4. **Diversity** - of pupils engaged, particularly those who have challenging needs
5. **Impact** – of the project (demonstrated qualitatively or quantitatively)

**Timetable**
- Deadline for entries – **Friday, 1st August 2014**
- Shortlist announced – **Friday, 12th September 2014**
- Winners announced – **October 2014**.

**Rules and procedures**
1. Entries must be completed using the LiteracyActionNet entry form and sent electronically via the 'Submit entry form' link on the [Awards page](#).
2. Receipt of all entries submitted online will be automatically acknowledged.
3. Entrants may be asked to provide further information.
4. The judges' decision is final. Awards will be made at the judges' discretion and no correspondence will be entered into concerning any decision. Not all the awards advertised may
be awarded if the judges consider the criteria have not been met. Additional commendations may be made at the judges' discretion.

5. The content of any entry may be used for informing other practitioners and also for publicity purposes unless the entrant withholds their consent to this in writing.

6. Entrants are deemed to have accepted these rules and procedures and to have agreed to be bound by them when entering this competition.

Your Entry

Please do not exceed 1500 words in total.

1. Name of the project you are entering for LiteracyActionNet Awards 2014 for innovation by schools

   | Reading Café |

2. Award category or categories you are entering

   - Supporting children with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties
   - Working with parents and families
   - Motivation, creativity and love of reading and writing

3. Describe your project in one sentence

   Combining the love of food with a cheque book reward system has proved an effective way to improve reading – families share books and cake at a school ‘Reading Café’

4. Tell us about your school community
Harting Primary is a church school serving the village of South Harting and surrounding villages. Currently there are 125 pupils on the school roll with approximately 19% of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), predominantly with dyslexia or speech and language difficulties, however there are also pupils who are high attainers. 12% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (or in the ‘Pupil Premium’ category) and, although a relatively small group, are disadvantaged by poor transport links preventing children from readily reaching libraries.

5. What are the project’s objectives?

To encourage parents/grandparents to hear children read regularly irrespective of socio-economic or academic abilities. The project now aims to move forwards by allowing the children to access reading in electronic formats as well as celebrating rich texts by sharing books.

6. What are the project’s activities?

The café itself is an after school club lasting under an hour. It is attended by retired community members, parents with their children (including pre-schoolers) and a teacher. It is very informal with plenty of home-made cakes (not a healthy school initiative)! Pupils are selected by their lack of reading at home.

Unlike many clubs children attend these days, it is very relaxed with few rules. The invitation states that pupils attend with a parent (or other relative), eat cake, have a drink as well as read to them. Additional reading activities are offered but they are not fixed.

Adults or older children sometimes word process stories, dictated by the pupils. These are then printed and taken home to be read to another adult and have illustrations added. This was inspired by success of the ‘Story Links’ project*.

Sometimes a grandmother finds a group reader and reads with a small group of boys who love science fiction. Most recently, the children have enjoyed reading in a ‘den’ – a drape thrown over a table!

Adults read to children and at times books are ‘serialised’ for a few of the children. Older children frequently read to pre-schoolers and groups sprawl across the floor with heads in a book.
Although reading is central to the café, the friendly atmosphere encourages parents to share issues. Additional benefits have been that some families need time in the warmth with some food! It has also provided divorced fathers with a base when having access to their children.

The relationships between school and parents have improved (many teachers at my school pop in for a cake and chat) and we have picked up some really basic family needs - we now stock emergency food bank vouchers. It is also a good social network for many of the parents who support each other.

On their first visit to the café, parents and children complete the child’s ‘Promises cheques’. These incentives are based on children’s desire to spend more time with their parents. Children earn, through ten or more reads, inexpensive activities, usually chosen from an ideas list. Some children have enjoyed making catapults with their dad, painting their mum’s nails and playing in the park. There are also school rewards - several pupils have worn their own clothes to school for a day.

7. What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

When reviewed last year, 71% pupils had SEN but following tracking of their progress, over two years, 66% of them were making good (or better) or average progress despite some of them having significant learning and emotional needs. 44% of them were making good or better progress with reading. The café continues to thrive and I (its creator) have extended the project beyond the school’s boundaries by sharing the initiative and helping establish further cafés at another five local schools. Equally, a publication in the Times Educational Supplement (Mullett,F ‘Nourished by Reading’ TES, March 2014) was designed to encourage the spread of such cafés.

8. How is your project evaluated?

Use of the school’s computerised tracking system has allowed the rate of reading progress of pupils, attending the café, to be reviewed. Equally, monitoring of reading diaries indicates increased frequency of reading at home, supervised by carers. A pupil and parent questionnaire has also been used to canvas their views and for qualitative data.

9. How would you spend the prize money to develop the project?
As 50% of the pupils attending the café currently are eligible for free school meals, it would be good to be able to offer them the use of a method of reading electronically at home and at the café. By holding a stock of kindles and/or iPads, combined with purchasing suitable texts, the project could become more ‘current’ to better motivate the older attendees.

Instructions for entry submission

1. Save the entry form to a location of your choice.
2. Once you have completed the form, click on the 'Submit entry form' link at the top of the Awards page. You will then be taken to the 'How to Return your entry form' page. You will be asked to provide the name of your school and a one sentence summary of your project. To upload your entry form, press the 'Choose file' link in the third field.
3. After the three fields have been filled out, click ‘Submit this entry now’. You will then receive an email confirming that we have received your entry.
4. You can send over any supporting materials separately. Please email them to: awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk. Please put the name of your school in the email subject line.
5. Please submit your entry no later than Friday, 1st August 2014.
6. If you have problems uploading your entry or would like to add documents, photos, videos or other media that are relevant to your entry, please email them to awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk quoting ‘LiteracyActionNet Awards’ and your school name in the subject heading.