



50 years of Reading Results

Annual Report 2023

"I didn't use to like reading but now I do"

Zac, Year 3



5,043 
PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN 2022-3

1,681 
VOLUNTEER
READING HELPERS

689 
SCHOOLS
ACROSS ENGLAND

Bringing communities together to support children to read

Coram Beanstalk is proud to celebrate 50 years of giving children skills for the future. Being able to read is a fundamental life skill, without which children would be unable to access the opportunities their life brings them.

Through the dedication of our community volunteers, and the help of our funders, we have supported over 250,000 primary children to become confident, independent readers via one-to-one reading sessions. Every volunteer has been important to us, and we are extremely grateful for the time they have given in support of our vision.

We have now extended our approach into secondary schools via our Reading Leaders programme. This powerful initiative boosts the employability prospects of our KS4/5 reading leaders whilst simultaneously giving KS3 pupils a committed peer mentor who champions their reading skills and confidence. In the words of one programme coordinator "Magic is happening!!"

Our founder Susan Belgrave was ahead of her time, embracing reading for pleasure before it became embedded in the curriculum. Our sessions empower children to own their reading experience and we have been delighted to bring the work of many authors and illustrators into schools via our book packs. Our one-to-one, in-person approach, brings a champion into a child's life. This year we are able to report improvements not only



in reading skills but in areas that benefit the child's overall wellbeing and wider education too.

We are both proud to be part of Coram, the longest serving children's charity, and the Coram Beanstalk team, making change happen for thousands of children across England today by giving them the skills they need for tomorrow. As we close off the first 50 years with a celebratory feel, we push into the next 50 with confidence we will continue to open doors for children through the power of reading.

Jill Pay,
Chair of Coram Beanstalk

Amy Lewis,
Head of Coram Beanstalk



"It is the 1-1 connection... which opens up the pathway to empathy, to understanding, to knowledge. It's the big educational tool ... a wonderful way of having for the rest of your life the power of connecting with great literature and ideas and of course knowledge. To make a pathway for children like this has been truly revolutionary. Above all, it's about people passing on the love of reading. All power to Coram Beanstalk!"

Michael Murpurgo

Our Patron Her Majesty Queen Camilla celebrates 50 years of Coram Beanstalk with children from Ark Brunel Primary Academy, the longest continuing school

50 years of Reading Results

Over the life of Coram Beanstalk, there have been at least 12,614,400 volunteer hours provided by 77,000 individuals, reaching more than a quarter of a million children. This is the equivalent contribution to the school economy of £131,442,048 at the National Minimum Wage and £195,523,200 at the current rate for a tutor, all made possible by the sustained commitment of thousands of schools and the generosity of companies and individuals.

1973

Synthetic phonics begins to emerge with researchers proposing a 'dual-route' approach to learning to read.

1986

The *Simple View of Reading* emerges, emphasising the importance of comprehension.

1997

National Literacy Strategy launched to raise standards of literacy in english primary schools.



1973

Volunteer Reading Help (VRH) starts with seven volunteer reading helpers in two schools.

1980

VRH becomes a registered charity.

1982

VRH starts to open branches beyond London, beginning with Liverpool.

1985

Susan Belgrave awarded MBE for work at VRH.

1992

VRH celebrates 20 years and marks Susan Belgrave's retirement with a reception at 10 Downing Street.

1998

VRH celebrates its Silver Jubilee with Rt Hon David Blunkett MP as guest of honour.

Susan Belgrave MBE, Founder

In 1973, Susan Belgrave MBE launched a reading scheme in two schools in London with the support of seven volunteers. Her simple idea of providing one-to-one reading help in a relaxed session outside of the classroom still works today for thousands of reluctant readers.

Over the years we have expanded in partnership with primary schools across the country and can now also offer support to Early Years and secondary pupils, as well as provide training for local schemes and resources to help children in the home.



50 year impact

250,000

CHILDREN
SUPPORTED

£131+ MILLION

TO THE EDUCATION
ECONOMY

12+ MILLION

VOLUNTEER
HOURS

2014

Reading for Pleasure
becomes part of the
National Curriculum.

2021

The Reading
Framework emphasises
the importance of
Reading for Pleasure.

2011

2012

2013

2017

2019

2021

2023

2011

VRH launches its
'Get London
Reading' campaign
with the London
Evening Standard.

2012

VRH becomes
Beanstalk.

2013

HRH The Duchess
of Cornwall
becomes
Beanstalk's Patron.

2017

Beanstalk receives
£1 million from the
Dream Fund to
launch 'Story
Starters'.

2019

Beanstalk
joins Coram and
becomes Coram
Beanstalk.

2021

Reading Leaders,
our programme
for secondary
schools is
developed.

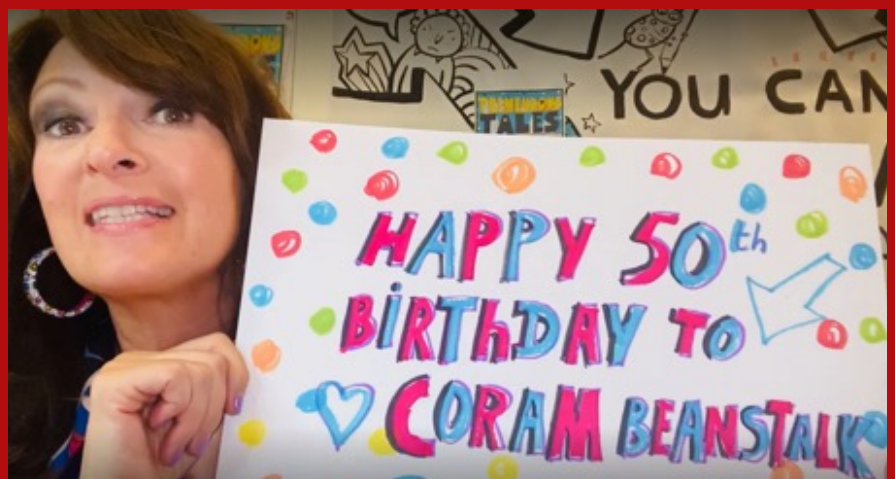
2023

Coram Beanstalk's
50th Anniversary
is celebrated with
HM Queen
Camilla.

Liz Pichon, Ambassador

"Congratulations and a very happy birthday to everyone at Coram Beanstalk. You've helped over 250,000 children get that love of reading, helped them on that path to reading and loving books. We know that children that read for pleasure particularly, do better in all aspects of their lives...

A huge thank you to everyone who takes part and gives time to help out, and help children, to get that love of reading. Well done everybody!"



A lifetime of difference

Being a confident reader is key to enabling children to engage in learning and school life. Every day Coram Beanstalk volunteers help children who are struggling with reading to practice and improve their reading skills and build their confidence and wellbeing. Research evidence is clear that the results of these changes last a lifetime, transforming the child's future prospects with significant benefits for society.

The level of need

Research shows that 70% of pupils permanently excluded from school have difficulties in basic literacy and a quarter of young offenders have reading skills below those of the average 7 year old.

Children who struggle to concentrate or make sense of words on a page can see not only their academic attainment negatively impacted, but also social and economic development.

Recent Department for Education calculations of the associations between changes in Key Stage 2 attainment and earnings in adulthood show that for one standard deviation improvement in English is worth £1,500 per year at age 33. Taking the average years of employment as around 39 years, this equates to an extra £58,500 over lifetime earnings increase from an improvement in reading attainment.

"Reading for pleasure in early childhood is linked with better scores on comprehensive cognition assessments and better educational attainment in young adolescence. It was also associated with fewer mental health problems and less time spent on electronic devices."

University of Cambridge study, July 2023



Peta's story

Peta Travis has been a volunteer for Coram Beanstalk for 45 years and has helped more than 100 children. A retired dyslexia therapist, Peta still volunteers at Ark Brunel Primary Academy in North Kensington, West London. Previously known as Middle Row Primary School, the school was one of the first to welcome volunteers and Peta is one of a team of four volunteers at Ark Brunel today.

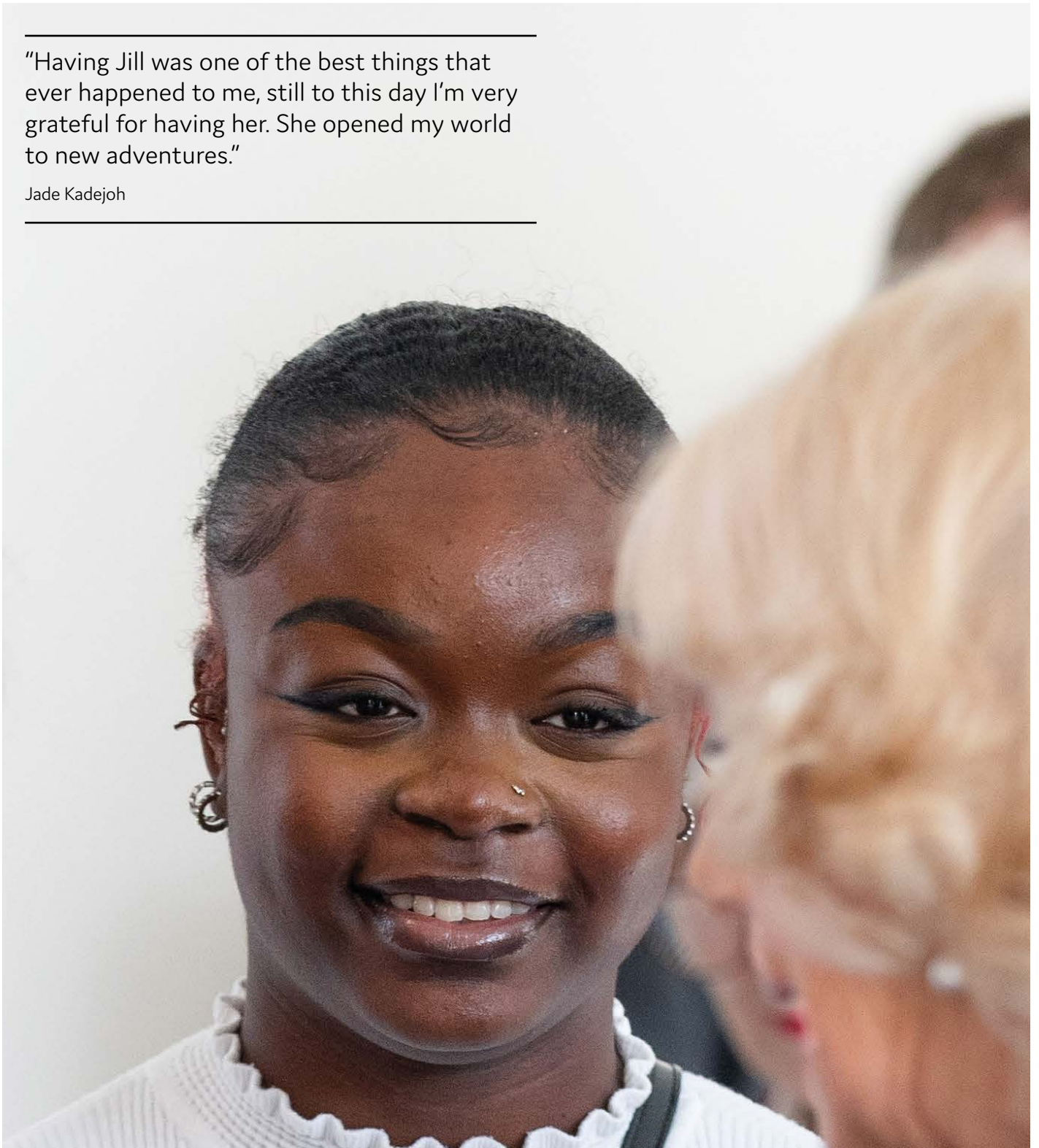
"The highlight for me is getting that first smile in the morning and seeing their love of reading, confidence and self-esteem improve," says Peta. "We're lucky we can take children out of the classroom so we can improve their language skills as well as their reading – and of course all sorts of things come up in the books that we can talk about."

You pick them up from the classroom and I like to get the smile between the classroom and the place where we are going to be reading. It gives you a huge boost – it's a two-way thing definitely. You just get such a terrific kick out of it. It's so uplifting to work with these children and see them progress and it really is the positive responses from the children that keeps the volunteers coming back!

It's also fun and it's really needed, it's just so important. I would recommend it to anyone."

"Having Jill was one of the best things that ever happened to me, still to this day I'm very grateful for having her. She opened my world to new adventures."

Jade Kadejoh



Jade's and Jill's story

In November 2011 via the Evening Standard's 'Get London Reading' Campaign, funding was provided for 30 reading helpers at St Mary's Catholic Primary in Battersea. Within a month 25 reading helpers had been recruited and trained by Beanstalk to start reading with 75 children at St Mary's.

One of these reading helpers was Jill Pay and one of the children she worked with was a little girl in year five called Jade, who was struggling with her reading because of dyslexia. Today Jade, now 19, is studying Marketing and Advertising at university and says that the Beanstalk sessions played a significant part in her success.



The children we reach today

Coram Beanstalk works with children aged 3-13 as a long term expert partner to schools across England, providing a distinctive one to one support programme for reluctant readers, tackling inequality and developing school capacity for volunteer reading help.

Primary need

Coram Beanstalk focuses its help where and how it will make the biggest difference – the development of language confidence, vocabulary and reading habits for infants as well as boosting engagement with meaning and love of reading in primary ages. Coram Beanstalk provides trained reading volunteers on the basis of the school's priorities. The majority of children supported receive Free School Meals, have a special educational need or English as an additional language and need help to secure their progression in the curriculum as they approach secondary transfer.

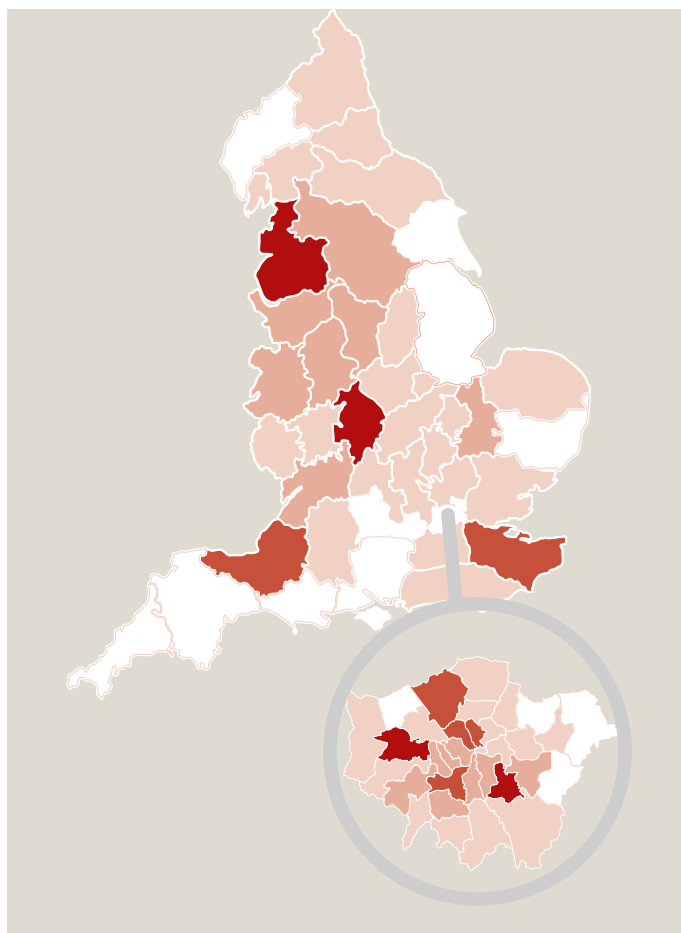
Virtuous circle

Secondary age children are supported by one-to-one reading mentors to enable them to cement their progress and form more confident engagement in learning in Years 7 or 8. They are directly supported by an older peer, who is trained and developed as part of the Reading Leaders programme enabling the older mentors in turn to improve their own reading skills and confidence, and develop their career readiness.

In all these ways, Coram Beanstalk enables progression in reading to be accompanied and amplified by social and relational development, achieving both direct attainment results and building capacity and community cohesion locally.



Map showing schools worked with in 22/23



"I used to be anxious about how many words I didn't know but now I love learning new words."

Mei, Year 6

"Beanstalk reading is different. We talk about the whole book! It's making me get passionate about books. It's letting me think, especially about the pictures."

Cerys, Year 6



Nikolai's story

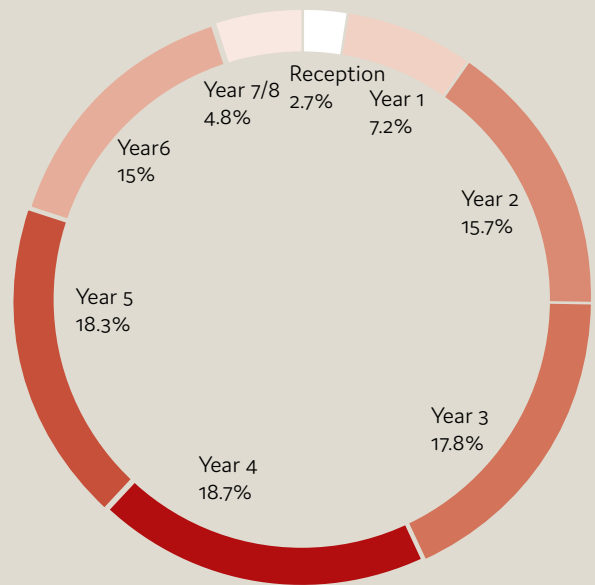
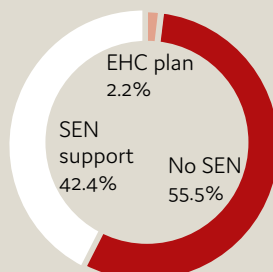
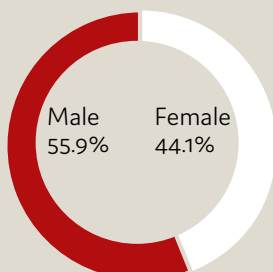
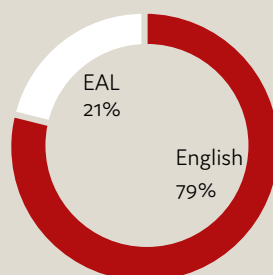
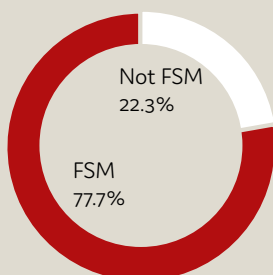
Nikolai was from Bulgaria and had not uttered a word to the teacher or any of his classmates in the weeks following his arrival at the school. I chose simple books with colourful pictures as I wasn't sure he understood English. However, it was very obvious they bored him so I decided to try a book geared more to his age group.

The Danger Gang, by Tom Fletcher, is a very amusing book and he started giggling from the very first page ... he understood English very well indeed! Over the course of the next few weeks we started by reading alternate lines then every other page until at last he was fluently reading page after page after page ... he had just been afraid to speak. By the end of the second term Nikolai had become firm friends with one of the other boys I read with that year. He joined the football kick about in the playground and he started answering questions in class.

One afternoon the teacher came rushing out to tell me how thrilled she was with the Nikolai's progress since he started reading with me and how many other teachers had commented on his transformation. Of course it wasn't just down to our two half hour sessions each week but I do think that the one-to-one support gave him the confidence to come out of his shell and fully participate in school life.

Irene Duffy, Reading Helper

The children we help



Reading results for children

Children who are reluctant readers face multiple barriers to their progress with lack of confidence cumulatively undermining their academic, social and emotional development and all too often compounded by challenges in their home environment or family circumstance as well as special educational needs. The unique one-to-one support provided by Coram Beanstalk volunteers provides each child with a trusted adult who can complement the reading programme of the school by helping children overcome the barriers they face, explore the world and develop their role in school life.

Partners in reading development

Coram Beanstalk is distinctive for training volunteers to provide sustained and consistent one-to-one support to children in school as an integral part of the educational programme.

Coram Beanstalk complements the reading scheme by encouraging and supporting children to develop a love of reading, whilst building local connections and capacity in the school community.

"One of our Y4 children was a non-reader and our volunteer started on picture books. However, he is now reading with her and is developing his fluency nicely. He really looks forward to the sessions as he is unable to read at home as his family also cannot read so struggles for parental support."

Rebecca Woodall, Headteacher,
Glenthorne Community Primary School

Measuring the difference

Coram Beanstalk measures the outcomes of our reading programme for 5-11 year olds by asking schools and reading helper to comment on the changes observed in the children, and progress against age-related expectations. The results from these are shown throughout this report.

Our biggest ever impact survey was conducted in the 2018-2019 academic year. From the Reading Records of 1,688 children there was a 62% increase in children showing improved reading skills. The Reading Records for KS2 children, at the start of the period of support, showed 84% of children 'Below' or 'Working Towards' their age-appropriate level in reading attainment. At the end of the programme, 44% of children were classed 'At' or 'Above' their age appropriate level.

Such improvements from the programme affects wider KS2 attainment in maths and science, as well as the impact improved reading has on other outcomes such as health, wellbeing, crime, and truancy.



**OF PRIMARY CHILDREN
ARE DEVELOPING A LOVE
OF READING**




**ARE DEMONSTRATING
A GREATER BELIEF IN
THEIR READING ABILITIES**



**MAKE PROGRESS AGAINST
AGE RELATED READING
EXPECTATIONS**

"I want to stay here and do happy reading"

Zara, Year 2



"I began working as a reading volunteer with Emily, a child in Year 3, at the start of the academic year. Initially she was very nervous in our sessions and clearly lacking in self-confidence. Within her reading she was still sounding out unfamiliar words that she didn't recognise, reading haltingly and not seeming to enjoy the experience. I took a step back and took the pressure off her reading aloud. Instead, we made a bookmark together and discussed what kind of stories she liked, and if she read outside of school. It was so important for us to take the time to get to know each other and ultimately gain her trust. During these early days I then offered up a new selection of books and let her choose which she wanted to read and we played word games at the end of each session.

With regular praise and encouragement, she began to read a wider variety of books. Soon her enthusiasm was growing. She really worked hard during our sessions and was reading fluently by the end of the year. Her class teacher approached me to make a point of telling me how amazed she was with her progress which was a real highlight of the year."

Jane Hoskins, Reading Helper

Impact beyond reading

The isolation and disruption of the pandemic has left a lasting legacy for some children which Coram Beanstalk volunteers help to address. Beyond the improvements in reading, the one-to-one time they spend has a significant positive impact to the whole child and the whole school, improving behaviour, wellbeing and attitude to learning.



**IMPROVED ATTITUDE
TO LEARNING**



**IMPROVED CONFIDENCE
AND SELF-ESTEEM**



**IMPROVED
COMMUNICATION**

Partnership in progress

For children with special educational needs, with English as an additional language or those living with challenging family circumstances, reluctance or difficulty with reading is all too often part of a wider social and emotional need.

Coram Beanstalk volunteers are trained to provide sensitive and culturally inclusive approaches and books are chosen to help children see themselves in the stories, strengthening oracy, broadening vocabulary, and enriching both experience and aspiration.

Parents who lack confidence in reading with their child often welcome the additional support in school where they can get to know the volunteers. For children experiencing multiple moves or disruption at home, the volunteer provides a regular and dedicated special time.

“The young person in question has had a difficult year and not only has the Beanstalk reader been significant in supporting the reading ability of this person, they have also been a huge support emotionally and with the child’s well-being. They have been a fantastic role model for the child and have built a positive relationship at a time when the child needed it.”

Grace Donnay, SENDCo
Archbishop Courtney Primary School

“I knew my daughter was going to have a Beanstalk reading helper and I was really happy about this. She loves to read but lacked confidence with her reading, and was reluctant to be the one to read. ... Since she’s had a reading helper I’ve seen her confidence come on so much, she loves talking about the books she’s read.”

Emer Round, Parent, Liverpool





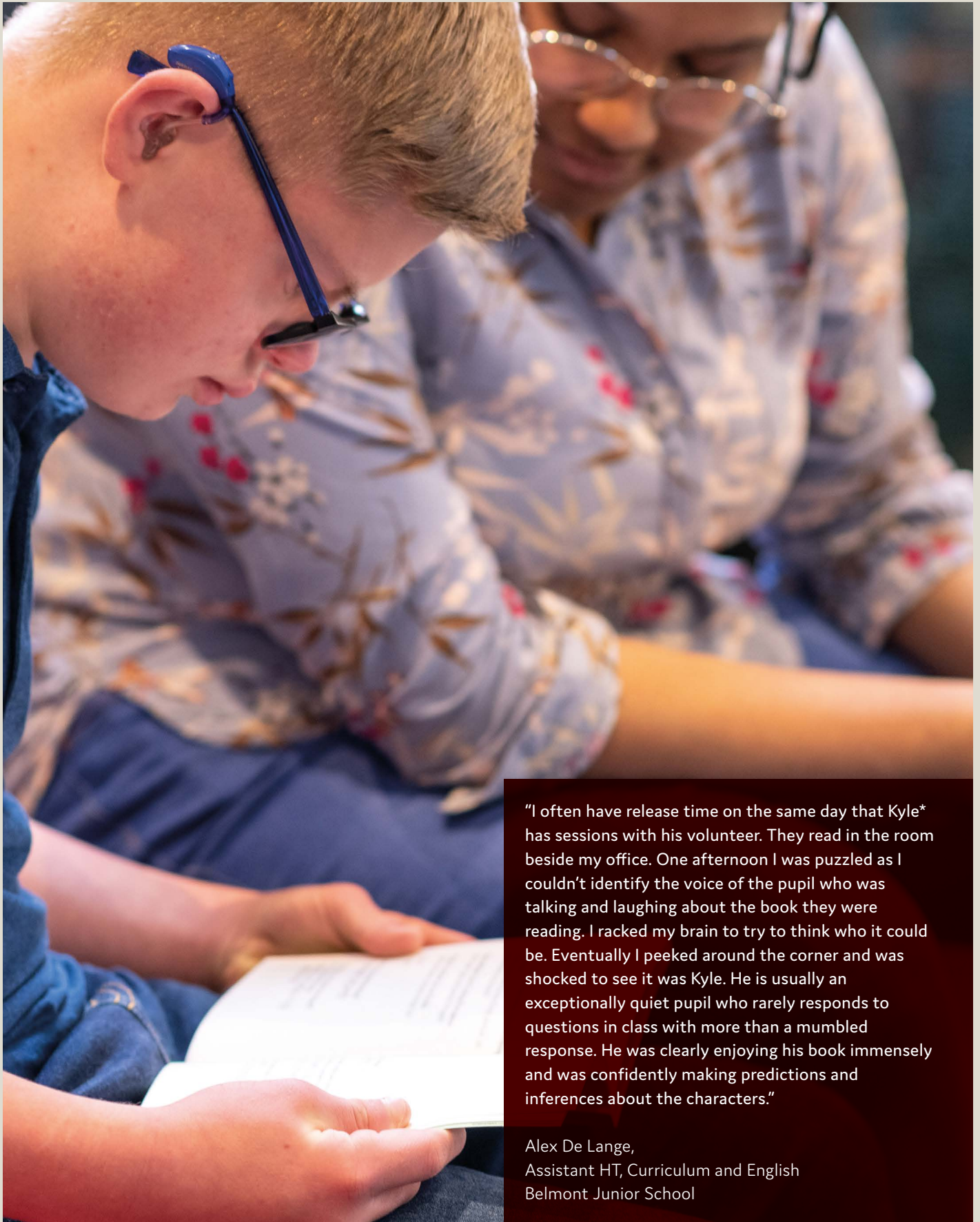
IMPROVED BEHAVIOUR



**IMPROVED OVERALL
WELLBEING**



**HAVE MORE SPOKEN LANGUAGE
AT THEIR DISPOSAL**



"I often have release time on the same day that Kyle* has sessions with his volunteer. They read in the room beside my office. One afternoon I was puzzled as I couldn't identify the voice of the pupil who was talking and laughing about the book they were reading. I racked my brain to try to think who it could be. Eventually I peeked around the corner and was shocked to see it was Kyle. He is usually an exceptionally quiet pupil who rarely responds to questions in class with more than a mumbled response. He was clearly enjoying his book immensely and was confidently making predictions and inferences about the characters."

Alex De Lange,
Assistant HT, Curriculum and English
Belmont Junior School

Benefit to schools

In 2023, England achieved a top five place in the global education league tables for children's literacy which is a huge achievement by schools and teachers. However, it remains the case that 1 in 4 children leave primary school without the reading skills needed to thrive at secondary education and Coram Beanstalk provides an affordable boost to the school community in rising to this challenge.

In every school in every town, there are children who would benefit from special time in helping them to overcome any challenges they face in language, social functioning or engagement in learning by developing a love of reading. For schools working to ensure the success of every child, Coram Beanstalk is a trusted partner in developing capacity and support in their local community to do just that.

For each child, a trusted relationship and timely support can make a lifetime of difference and the value to school is even greater. In 2022/23 Coram Beanstalk volunteers gave an average of 90 hours of their time in the year to support children on a one-to-one basis each week in school.



Value for schools

In 2022/23 1,000 Beanstalk volunteers gave an average of 90 hours of their time in the year.⁵ That's an estimated 90,000 hours of direct reading time with children. The time value based on the 2023 cost of an English tutor is £1,370,000 contribution to the education economy, an average of a 3:1 return on the contribution made by schools.

Over the last ten years excluding the pandemic period, 22,833 annual volunteers contributed 2,035,436 hours; a value of £21,412,787 at the National Minimum Wage and £31,852,035 at current tutor rate.

Since the charity began, there have been at least 12,614,400 volunteer hours, a contribution value of £131,442,048 at the National Minimum Wage and equivalent to £195,523,200 at current tutor rate.

"We had a Local Authority inspection and one of our pupils talked about the impact that Beanstalk had on him and how he will take what he has gained from the sessions onto his next stages in Secondary school."

Alexandra Jamieson, Headteacher, Bridge Hall Primary School



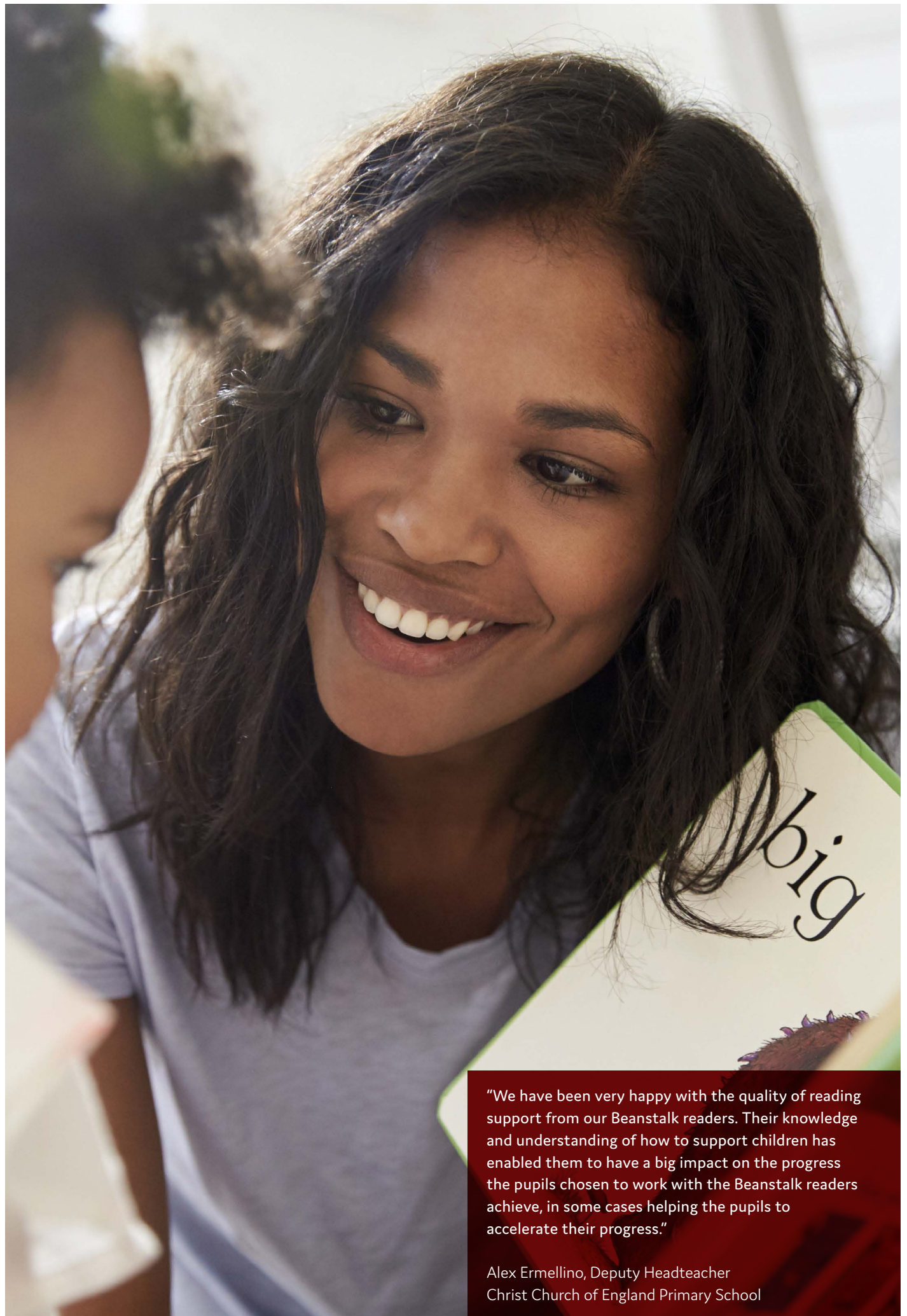
**OF PRIMARY CHILDREN
ARE MORE PREPARED
TO READ WHEN ASKED**



**HAVE A DEEPER
UNDERSTANDING OF
WHAT THEY HAVE READ**



**ARE INTERACTING
WITH MORE TYPES
OF READING**



"We have been very happy with the quality of reading support from our Beanstalk readers. Their knowledge and understanding of how to support children has enabled them to have a big impact on the progress the pupils chosen to work with the Beanstalk readers achieve, in some cases helping the pupils to accelerate their progress."

Alex Ermellino, Deputy Headteacher
Christ Church of England Primary School



**VALUE THAT SESSIONS
ARE DELIVERED IN-PERSON**



**WOULD RECOMMEND
TO OTHER SCHOOLS**



**SAY CORAM BEANSTALK
BRINGS VALUE TO SCHOOL**



"Coram Beanstalk provides our school with expertly trained volunteers who engage pupils in reading for pleasure activities. It is highly valued by both staff and pupils in motivating children to read and exposes them to a wider range of genres in a safe and non-academically focused session."

Joanne Jones, Deputy Headteacher
Dovedale Community Primary School

Volunteers in action

Coram Beanstalk is the first and longest continuing reading volunteering charity. Over 50 years, more than 77,000 people from every walk of life have trained and given their time to support children in their local area. More than 80 volunteers have supported 50 children each but all are characterised by dedication and a child-centred approach and in the last year 1,691 people aged 17 to 94 have supported more than 5000 children.

Training and support

All volunteers are fully DBS checked and supported by Coram Beanstalk to develop the skills they need to complement the teaching of reading by the school and enable reluctant readers to develop a love of reading. This includes the development of a child centred approach with sessions focused on the enjoyment of, and interreaction with, different types of reading materials.

Coram Beanstalk provides a network and learning sessions for volunteers to share their experiences and build skills, as well as a variety of relevant book selections, accessible to a diverse range of children. This includes author and illustrator talks, and invitations to wider events around how best to support children to become readers.

Volunteer Futures

Funding from DCMS and The Pears Foundation allowed us to run a project to increase our volunteer diversity by trialling different approaches in targeted areas. We recruited 364 new volunteers during the project lifespan, with 65% of these being new to volunteering. We also saw an uplift of 11% in the under 25 age group and a 6% increase in volunteers from ethnic minority backgrounds. The project has given us a lasting legacy enabling us to use different ways of attracting new volunteers, and offering more flexibility to enable access to a wider range of people. Ultimately ensuring more children can be helped.

"All the Coram reading helpers are polite, professional, well-trained and build an excellent rapport with both staff and children alike."

Victoria Heyes, Inclusion Leader
St Mark's CE Primary School

"Our reading helpers are committed, reliable and absolutely dedicated to bringing out the best in our children as readers."

Sophia Robey, English Lead
Thornhill Primary School

HM Queen Camilla meets longstanding volunteers



"I want to particularly thank the volunteers... over the course of 50 years you have helped almost 250,000 children to become readers. We couldn't do that without our incredible volunteer community... I wouldn't be here today surrounded by books if it weren't for people like you, giving up your time to help children fall in love with reading."

Dan Snow



"Having Beanstalk readers work with our children at Durham Lane, has been incredible. The readers are intrinsic members of our staff team. They are invaluable and have really supported our reluctant readers to begin to love reading and reading for pleasure."

Helen Gregory, Headteacher
Durham Lane Primary School



**FOUND OUR PROCESS TO
BECOME A READING HELPER
STRAIGHT-FORWARD**



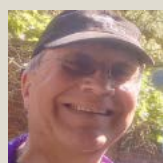
**WOULD RECOMMEND
BECOMING A
READING HELPER**



**FIND OUR LEARNING AND
DEVELOPMENT AND ONLINE
RESOURCES HELPFUL**

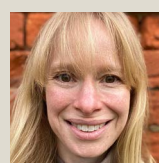
"I knew when I stopped doing a full time job that it would be good to help children with reading. I tried Coram Beanstalk's training and support, and found, with their help that reading with primary kids is inspiring. They are all different, but they all get great things from reading. We are transported to a world of facts, discussions and imagination."

Andy Richards, Spelthorne



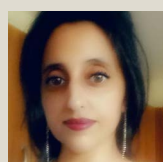
"Volunteering with Coram Beanstalk has been one of the best things I have done. I can honestly say that we have a lot of fun and that the rewards are multi-fold and work both ways. It is such a privilege to be able to spread the joy of reading and seeing the children grow in confidence and feel I have played a small part in that, is enriching beyond measure."

Chloe Lewis, Wandsworth



"I was searching online and came across Coram Beanstalk. After reading about the charity, I became interested in becoming a reading helper. This role has benefited me in many ways. I have become more confident about myself. I have read with year three children, each with their own unique personalities. This role has given me a lot of experience which is beneficial for me in the present and in the near future. I enjoy going to school and reading with children."

Andalib Tabassum, Birmingham



"Volunteering at Coram Beanstalk has not just helped the children, it has helped me in many ways, it has opened up a different chapter for me. My first day was nerve-wracking! From then on, I have seen a shy child become a confident reader, we have made up stories together, and imagined many things. I always look forward to the day I am reading and the joy I get from the children's faces when they see me. My journey is continuing and I hope it brings more stories."

Aasiya Ghaswala, Hackney



Reading Leaders

Reading Leaders enables young people aged 14-18 to develop their skills and confidence and gain recognition in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards as part of their readiness for work by being trained by Coram Beanstalk to become peer mentors to younger children in their school to improve their reading confidence.

A virtuous circle

Children in year 7 and 8 who are in need of support particularly benefit from the role modelling of reading for pleasure and good citizenship of Reading Leaders, building a culture of inclusion within the school.

The reading partners prefer reading to a student over a teacher as there is less pressure if they get something wrong, and the results extend beyond reading fluency, confidence and accuracy into wider aspiration and social networks within the school and provides a support that may be lacking at home.

For older pupils who will benefit from boosting their own presentational skills and confidence, the role of Reading Leader enhances both their academic and career aspirations and the programme is affordable and sustainable for secondary schools as part of their whole school approach, addressing multiple dimensions of the curriculum.

"I was able to meet students from different backgrounds that each have a unique way of reading. Some students were excellent and needed no help at all whereas, other students needed help there and then, which I was able to provide for them.... We knew we were making a difference in the child's life."

Jack, Reading Leader



Shire Oak Academy

We have around 30% free school meals at our school which puts us higher than the national average. We have over 15 primary schools feeding our large school and sometimes crucial information can be missed in transition because it does not get to our team. ...What I love about Reading Leaders is how the relationships can provide crucial information about reading difficulties that helps students in all aspects of school life, not just English lessons.

Caleb* is a year 7 student identified for the Reading Leaders programme. Caleb was struggling with reading, but didn't know why. He said to his Reading Leader that he had always been 'bad' at reading. She noticed he was finding tracking difficult and talked to him more about how things look and the books he likes. When she spoke to me about it, I referred him to the dyslexia unit again, who carried out a visual stress test and confirmed he would benefit from a green reading ruler it turned out he just needed some help.

We've also had huge advances in some of our reading ages through the programme. In Year 9, two girls, improved their reading age by over three years as a result of reading to their reading partner. They were so grateful and pleased. It has made such a difference to them. Zara* sent me a Christmas card; inside it just said: 'Thank you for helping me get better at reading'. (I have kept the card, which always makes me smile!)

Reading matters so much to students who are weak readers, and what they need is what the programme provides: someone to help and guide them in a non judgemental way, who is focused on helping them improve. That's why we offer it and that's why we love it.

Michelle Downes, Literacy Coordinator, Shire Oak Academy



**RATED THEIR TRAINER
AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD**



**RATED THE MATERIALS
AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD**



**ENJOYED
THE TRAINING**

Community of support

It takes a village to raise a child and Coram Beanstalk stands at the heart of a community of supporting organisations and individuals who believe in sharing that collective social responsibility. Together companies, employees and individual supporters, help us to help children by raising funds to match the contribution of schools, access their own customers and audiences to ensure that every child can have the best possible chance in life.

Media momentum

The Evening Standard *Get London Reading* campaign used its media power to galvanise action across the capital to tackle the attainment gap by helping Coram Beanstalk to recruit volunteers and create young readers. More than 800 volunteers supported 2,370 children in over 300 London schools, whilst the partnership with INews in 2019 also achieved outstanding results of its own across the country.

A Christmas Carol

In the mid 19th century Charles Dickens lived close to Coram, then the Foundling Hospital, in Bloomsbury and supported mothers in acute poverty and distress to write letters to seek admission for their babies. He named Mr Brownlow in *Oliver Twist* after the then Secretary and *Little Dorrit* features a character named Tattycoram.

It was this magical connection and commitment to supporting children in its London home that led the Old Vic Theatre to choose Coram Beanstalk as the partner for its smash hit production of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, enabling audiences every night to play their part in changing young lives today.



Very impressive impact

The Very Group has been the lead corporate partner to Coram Beanstalk over three years, enabling us to provide reading support to 12,880 children and to develop new resources to support home learning at a critical time in the pandemic.

Walking on hot coals, running a gala ball for suppliers and marshalling their own capacity for volunteering, enabled the Very Group community in all departments and locations to play a full part in tackling the challenges in areas they work.

A new range of Roald Dahl pyjamas recognised the importance of the author's work in growing young readers and engaged customers everywhere in the mission in playing their part. Celebrity supporters from Katie Piper to Danny Jones, recorded virtual stories to support parents in reading in the home in the darkest times of lockdown.

All at Coram Beanstalk consider ourselves Very fortunate to have such a partner working by our side in our priority area of Liverpool and were pleased to present the team to Her Majesty Queen Camilla at our 50th anniversary reception.

Playing your part

To mark the 50th birthday of Coram Beanstalk, we are seeking to raise £50,000 to recruit and train 50 volunteers and help 50 schools new to our community of support to join, changing the lives of 150 children in need. More details of how you can help can be found at corambeanstalk.org.uk

"It does make such a difference to read. You can escape into different worlds, you can laugh, you can cry, you can learn and it's thanks to all of you that's it's happening to all these children, so thank you very much from the bottom of my heart"

HM Queen Camilla



"In 2019 we set ourselves an ambitious challenge to raise £600,000 for Coram Beanstalk – to support children with one-to-one reading support. Then we entered a global pandemic and supporting children became even more important. The work that Coram Beanstalk do is vital and we're so proud to be a part of it through our ongoing digital support and colleagues' fundraising activities - from sporting events like marathons and cycle rides to a 30-strong team taking on a firewalk challenge."

Ben Fletcher,
Chief Finance and Transformation Officer
The Very Group

Creative culture

Stories and illustrations extend our understanding of the world and our part and future within it. With the help of authors, publishers and supporters, Coram Beanstalk carefully selects and provides books to volunteers and schools so all children can see themselves, explore and share things that interest, excite or challenge them and build the pathway for their future.

We provide all of our Coram Beanstalk schools with a starter pack of books supplied via Peters Books. Chosen to engage, they feature a range of authors and genres to cater for the varied ages and interests of the children we support.

Each month we have shared our chosen Book of the Month and recommended other titles with a similar theme or style with parents/carers and reading helpers. We handpick books which showcase a diverse range of characters and situations, encouraging children to fall in love with reading.

"The books provided are engaging and varied, there was something for everyone."

Catherine McGuire, Year 3 Teacher,
Bankside Primary School

Our partnership with World Book Day enabled us to reach even more children. Together with Bag Books, we created an easy-to-use resource to accompany the World Book Day £1 books; including discussion starters and a fun game to extend the child's enjoyment. Resources were downloaded for free and used by schools, parents/carers and reading helpers.



Since 2017 Coram Beanstalk has invited schools along to the annual London bookfest, hosted at Frances Holland School. The day features a range of Coram Beanstalk's author supporters who engage children in inspirational talks and activities, with all children leaving with a book to take home. In 2023 we will be hosting our first Bookfest in Liverpool with support from The Very Group.

"The children had a wonderful afternoon and were bursting to tell their parents about the day!"

Broadfields Primary School




"It's never, no it's never, no it's never just a book."

Joshua Siegel

Now and forever

With the pandemic leaving a legacy of issues for children, Coram Beanstalk has never been more needed. We have invested in growth and in the learning and experience of our volunteers to ensure we are able to reach and benefit the children who need us most. Together with schools, we will continue to bring them one to-one reading sessions achieving a lifetime of difference, now and forever

 **ONLY 1 IN 5**
CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO A
QUIET SPACE IN THEIR HOME
WHERE THEY CAN WORK,
READ OR TAKE TIME OUT (NLT)



**OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MENTAL
HEALTH NEEDS AGREE THAT THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS MADE
THEIR MENTAL HEALTH WORSE**

(Young Minds, 2022)



1 IN 2
DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN DID NOT
MEET THE EXPECTED STANDARD IN
READING AT THE END OF KS2 (DfE)



**ONLY 29% OF PUPILS
IN ENGLAND SAY
THEY ENJOY READING
COMPARED TO 42%
INTERNATIONALLY** (PIRLS)

“The pandemic has exacerbated other existing challenges for schools. These include persistent pupil absence and access to specialist services.”

DfE, 2022



Reach and results

Working with our network of partner schools, Coram Beanstalk will continue to offer a relevant reading intervention that boosts reading attainment and children's wellbeing as they recover from their years of lost learning. We will recruit and support a diverse and experienced group of volunteers and add value to schools by extending support in the classroom and into the home

We will work to expand the Reading Leaders programme across the country – including to every secondary school in Blackpool, working closely with the local library service to maximise long term benefit. We will partner with Coram Family and Childcare to help parents become more confident in developing early literacy skills for their children. Working with local authorities, we will offer training for foster carers to help them support children as they learn and provide a solid grounding in reading for pleasure.

"The more that you read, the
more things you will know.
The more that you learn, the
more places you'll go."

Dr Seuss





"Having Coram Beanstalk provides such a unique experience for our children. Not only does it promote a love of reading, but it provides opportunities to develop skills and experience children may not receive at home. Everyone should have access to Coram Beanstalk. It is such a beautiful charity with a lasting impact on children's lives not to mention the support it brings to schools and staff in terms of intervention support."

Jenna Webb, Nursery Manager
St Katherines School and Nursery

'After nourishment, shelter
and companionship, stories
are the thing we need most
in the world.'

Philip Pullman



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The Thomas Coram Foundation for Children (registered charity no. 296454)
was established by Royal Charter in 1739.

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for children
since 1739

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