



John and Margaret's Story



John was sitting in the classroom, wishing he was outside playing football. All around him his friends were reading exciting stories about wizards and adventure, about footballing heroes, about Roman soldiers. On the page in front of him was a boring sentence about a cat going to the vet. No wonder his mind was drifting! Perhaps I could move on to better books if I tried harder, he thought – but no, said that little voice in his head, you're not clever enough for that. Before he knew what was happening, his frustration at missing out on the exciting stories took over him and he shouted out 'This book is rubbish!' Everyone turned to look at him and the teacher asked him to stand outside the room for a minute, he'd been shouting out all week and enough was enough.

The next week, his teacher introduced him to a lady who was going to help him, she said. Her name was Margaret and he had to go and sit in the library with her while his friends read their exciting stories. When he said he hated books and wouldn't try to read anything, she said 'Why don't we play a game instead?' She said she had heard he liked football, so she had brought some



football cards with her and they played with those for a while. Next week she had brought pens and paper and they played Pictionary, drawing pictures and describing them to each other. Slowly, John began to look forward to his time with Margaret each week.

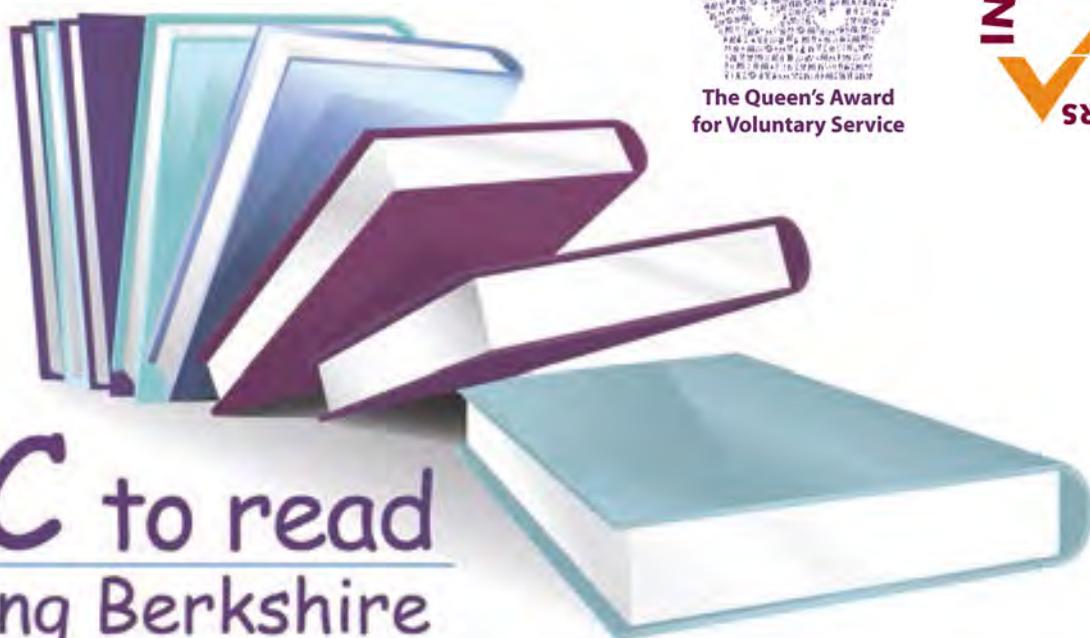
After a few sessions, Margaret suggested that they look at a football book together. This was much more interesting than cats and vets! John was embarrassed at first about the words he couldn't read, but Margaret read the tricky ones until he got used to them. When he reached the end of that first book a few weeks later, he was delighted. Perhaps he wasn't stupid after all, he thought!

By the time Margaret had been helping him for a term, John felt he was ready to sit still and read his book in class as well as in the library. He wasn't allowed to read the stories about the wizards yet, but he had moved on to green books and he was almost ready to move onto grey. Finally, his self-confidence had grown and he believed in himself.



ABC to Read recruits, trains and supports volunteers like Margaret to help children like John find the joy in reading and develop literacy skills for life. To become a volunteer or find other ways to support us please contact 0118 9511336 or visit our website

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