



# ABC to read

## Three-year Business Plan

### 2018 to 2021

## Executive Summary

*"I really love reading now and it has made me very happy!" Year 6 boy*

### Our Vision

Every child a reader, with the self-confidence and skills to make positive life choices and contribute to their wider community.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to transform children's lives by working with schools, families and the children themselves to provide high quality support in developing literacy skills and building self-confidence.

### Our Aims

- To help as many children in Berkshire as we can to improve their reading and so enable them to achieve success in later education, make positive life choices and contribute to their wider community
- To recruit, train and provide ongoing support for volunteer reading mentors to go into primary schools and work individually with children to help them improve their literacy skills and boost their confidence.
- To provide training for families to enable them to help their own children at home and support their learning at school.
- To achieve sufficient funding from sponsors, grants and other donors in order to support schools affected by continuing government pressures on school funding

### The problems we address

A lack of basic literacy skills causes problems for children, both during their childhood and into their adult years. This can lead to low self-esteem, problems gaining and maintaining



employment and social isolation for them as individuals, as well as the associated issues for communities as a whole.

- 34% of children left primary school last year unable to read to the required level
- 70% of pupils permanently excluded from school have difficulties with basic literacy
- 25% of young offenders have reading skills below that of the average 7 year old
- If current trends continue, we will have left behind 1.5 million children by 2025
- Poor literacy costs the UK economy £81 billion every year

As well as being a problem across the whole of the UK, many children in Berkshire are struggling with social and educational inequality. The number of children at state-funded schools in 2016 who moved onto secondary education at the end of Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) without the 'expected' standard of reading, writing and mathematics:

- Slough – 45% of all pupils
- Reading – 44% of all pupils
- Wokingham – 39% of all pupils

(figs. from gov.uk, 'National curriculum assessments: key stage 2')

## **The social outcome that we work to achieve**

There is a clear link between poverty and poor literacy. Berkshire Community Foundation's Vital Signs Report shows how the measure of people in Berkshire who grow into adulthood with no qualifications "is strongly correlated to disadvantaged areas across the county". In fact, Berkshire has areas in the top 20% of UK deprivation.

Through our work we aim to help reduce deprivation, unemployment and poverty in Berkshire communities by breaking down barriers felt towards reading and education. Supporting children to develop a life-long love of learning leads to:

- Increased confidence in reading which is closely linked to improved self-esteem for individuals and the associated societal benefits of improved mental health and wellbeing
- Higher levels of general confidence in themselves and their abilities in all areas, not just reading, which leads to improved aspirations and future opportunities
- Better relationships with family, peers and teachers

## **What we do to achieve this**

### **One to one support**

We transform children's lives by providing schools with trained and supported volunteer reading mentors who motivate, raise self-esteem and help each child they work with to develop improved reading skills for life.

### **Focussed training**

We also run courses to support families and children:



- Parent helper – for those who volunteer in their child's school (2-day course) (also adaptable for training Teaching Assistants)
- Ready to Read – for parents and carers of pre-schoolers to help them understand what they can be doing now to prepare their children for a lifelong love of reading (2 x 2 hour sessions)
- Workshops – shorter, focussed sessions on specific aspects of our longer courses (usually 2 hours)

## Our objectives for 2018-2021

- Maintain our existing level of active volunteers and external funding in the face of pressures on school funding
- Maintain levels of funding so that we can cover the costs for schools that are struggling to fund a volunteer reading mentor for a child who needs support due to increasing pressures on school budgets
- Offer the Ready to Read course to more parents so that they feel more confident and their children are better prepared for learning to read
- Explore partnerships with other organisations that work with children and families in order to reach more children who are struggling to read confidently

## Financial summary

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
<b>Expenditure (£):</b>			
Management and administration costs:	£68,250	£70,298	£72,406
Volunteer costs:	£7,750	£8,000	£8,250
Running costs:	£4,700	£5,000	£5,250
Capital costs:	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£81,700</b>	<b>£84,298</b>	<b>£86,906</b>
<b>Income Forecast (£)</b>			
Grants (restricted)	£15,000	£17,500	£18,000
Grants (unrestricted)	£12,500	£17,500	£20,000
Schools	£45,000	£40,000	£37,500
Parent training	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Fundraising	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Bank interest (coif)	£50	£50	£50
Donations	£6,000	£7,000	£7,000
Other	£250	£250	£250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£81,800</b>	<b>£85,300</b>	<b>£85,800</b>

*“The volunteer has really helped Maria expand her vocabulary, especially with parents who do not speak English as a first language.” Teacher*



## ABC to read Business Plan, 2018 – 2021

### Our Vision

Every child a reader, with the self-confidence and skills to make positive life choices and contribute to their wider community.

*"I really love reading now and it has made me very happy!" Year 6 boy*

*"I remember learning to recognise difficult words by playing word bingo – I have more confidence in reading now" Year 6 boy who worked with an ABC volunteer 4 years ago*

### Our Mission

To transform children's lives by working with schools, families and the children themselves to provide high quality support in developing literacy skills and building self-confidence.

*"ABC to read has had a significant impact on Abdul's language acquisition and confidence in reading." Teacher*

### Our Aims

- To help as many children in Berkshire as we can to improve their reading and so enable them to achieve success in later education, make positive life choices and contribute to their wider community
- To recruit, train and provide ongoing support for volunteer reading mentors to go into primary schools and work individually with children to help them improve their literacy skills and boost their confidence.
- To provide training for families to enable them to help their own children at home and support their learning at school.
- To achieve sufficient funding from sponsors, grants and other donors in order to support schools affected by continuing government pressures on school funding

### The problems we address

A lack of basic literacy skills causes problems for children, both during their childhood and into their adult years. This can lead to low self-esteem, problems gaining and maintaining employment and social isolation for them as individuals, as well as the associated issues for communities as a whole.

- According to the National Literacy Trust, up to 40% of the UK adult population in the UK's most deprived areas lack the literacy skills expected of an 11 year old.



- 34% of children left primary school last year unable to read to the required level
- 70% of pupils permanently excluded from school have difficulties with basic literacy
- 25% of young offenders have reading skills below that of the average 7 year old
- If current trends continue, we will have left behind 1.5 million children by 2025
- Poor literacy costs the UK economy £81 billion every year

In Berkshire alone, the figures are no less unsettling. The problems are rooting from an early age. Whilst there are some very affluent areas in Berkshire where children are exceeding expectations, there are also some very deprived areas, particularly in Central Reading. It is in these areas where our work is most needed. That is why ABC to Read exists - to help bridge this gap in our community and give deprived children more of a chance to succeed in their futures

The number of children at state-funded schools in 2016 who moved onto secondary education at the end of Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) without the 'expected' standard of reading, writing and mathematics:

- Slough – 45% of all pupils
- Reading – 44% of all pupils
- Wokingham – 39% of all pupils

(Figs. from gov.uk, 'National curriculum assessments: key stage 2').

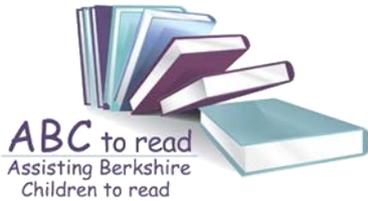
Families who want to support their children to read well often lack confidence themselves and do not know what they can do to help.

What they say:

*"Jess really enjoys her sessions. There is a noticeable change in her manner when the volunteer arrives and she is very enthusiastic and always wants to go first." Teacher*

*"It's great as Kyle has had the opportunity to read aloud with another adult-increasing both fluency and understanding." Teacher*

*"It has been wonderful to witness Anita's self-confidence blossom. Since reading with the volunteer she has been able to develop an independent home reading habit." Teacher*



## The social outcome that we work to achieve

There is a clear link between poverty and poor literacy. Berkshire Community Foundation's Vital Signs Report shows how the measure of people in Berkshire who grow into adulthood with no qualifications "is strongly correlated to disadvantaged areas across the county". In fact, Berkshire has areas in the top 20% of UK deprivation.

Through our work we aim to help reduce deprivation, unemployment and poverty in Berkshire communities by breaking down barriers felt towards reading and education. Supporting children to develop a life-long love of learning leads to:

- Increased confidence in reading which is closely linked to improved self-esteem for individuals and the associated societal benefits of improved mental health and wellbeing
- Higher levels of general confidence in themselves and their abilities in all areas, not just reading, which leads to improved aspirations and future opportunities
- Better relationships with family, peers and teachers

Improving the motivation, potential, and happiness of a previously struggling child also brings happiness to their families, especially where parents aren't able to help their children themselves.

There are also benefits to the wider community in improving the chances, motivation and attainment of these children – better social integration, improved economic contribution and lower levels of crime, drug use etc.

Improving the skills of each child improves their employability in later life and chances of leading a fuller, happier life. In the long-term, local businesses could benefit from there being a more employable workforce

Our volunteers also benefit. 88% feel their volunteering makes them feel proud and 86% say volunteering for ABC to read makes them feel physically and mentally active.

What they say:

*"The volunteer is very reliable in class and is completely focused on supporting the children to improve their reading skills." Teacher*

*"The volunteer has excellent questioning skills and is able to bring out the best in Ed during their session together" Teacher*

*"I feel very proud to be a reading mentor and know that I am making a lasting difference to a child and my local community." Volunteer*



## **What we do to achieve this**

### **One to one support**

We provide schools with volunteer reading mentors who will motivate, raise self-esteem and help each child they work with to enjoy reading. Our volunteers bring along their own box of books and games and make reading fun! They work for half an hour twice a week with each child they support (usually 3 children per volunteer). We help schools achieve targets, enrich children's learning and help every child fulfil their potential. We help schools to make the best use of time and resources and demonstrate value for money. We provide impact data gathered to show progress

We support our volunteers by offering them regular training and on-going support from field workers, who have experience of being reading mentors themselves and are able to assist with any challenges the volunteer is facing in any aspect of their role.

### **Focussed training courses**

We train parent helpers already volunteering in schools, so they have the skills and understanding to be effective in supporting children they are working with. This increases the quality of support in schools overall.

We provide training for parents to enable them to help their own children at home. We help them to identify the skills their children need to become successful readers. We give them practical ideas on how to support their children's learning in school.

We run the following courses:

- Parent helper – for those who volunteer in their child's school (2-day course) (can also be adapted for training Teaching Assistants)
- Ready to Read – for parents of pre-schoolers to help them understand what they can be doing now to prepare their children for a lifelong love of reading (2 x 2 hour sessions)
- Workshops – shorter, focussed sessions on specific aspects of our longer courses (usually 2 hours)

What they say:

*"ABC to read volunteers are able to build strong and positive relationships with the children, which supports an increase in self-esteem and its consequence is a positive impact on their reading progress." Teacher*

*"I feel that the time and effort ABC give to each child they read with is excellent and much needed for children who need extra support." Teacher*



## Our achievements

In the last year we have:

- Trained over 70 volunteer reading mentors
- Placed 150 reading mentors in schools
- Supported at least 500 children to build their confidence and literacy skills
- 95% of those children have improved reading skills, including 57% who have improved significantly and 8% who made an outstanding improvement
- Placed volunteer reading mentors in 70 schools across Berkshire
- Carried out parents' training events with over 40 parents
- Carried out a new 'Ready to Read' course with over 50 parents
- Produced the "Our Story" leaflet to demonstrate the emotional impact of our work
- Produced a legacy, memorial giving leaflet and placed within local solicitors
- Been awarded the national Investing in Volunteers Award and the Safe and Sound kitemark, awarded by Reading Voluntary Action to recognise the quality of our governance

In the last financial year we raised over £38,000 from public fundraising, corporate sponsors, funding bodies and trusts.

What they say:

*Jade was a very shy little girl and it took quite a while before she would say anything to her volunteer, Brian. Even then it was seldom more than yes or no; she certainly would not have initiated a conversation.*

*She did like playing games though and one particular favourite, a version of Snap with cards like pizzas, began to bring her out of her shell. She was quicker than Brian at calling out the various phrases needed to win the cards and gradually as success improved her confidence, the sessions became much noisier with chat and laughter. Brian was delighted the day Jade asked him a question for the very first time as she gathered up her pizza cards. "Do you like onion rings on your pizza?"*

*Not long after that, Jade's teacher commented on how much more confident Jade was becoming in class and how her reading had also improved. She had always kept her head down, hoping she would not be noticed but now she was putting her hand up more and the teacher said: "When she comes to see me now, instead of sidling up like a crab and avoiding eye contact, she looks at me confidently and speaks clearly – it's quite a transformation!"*



## Our objectives and how we will deliver them

Maintain our existing level of active volunteers and external funding in the face of pressures on school funding

Activities	Success measures
Engage schools, parents and other agencies with the services we provide – we will do this by building close relationships with them, understanding their needs, demonstrating how our work addresses those needs etc.	They continue to make use of our services
Recruit good quality, committed volunteers	We have enough volunteer reading mentors to fulfil all requests from schools The drop-out rate after initial training and during the school year is reduced
Manage our volunteer reading mentors well so that they know what is expected of them, that they are supported and that they are making a difference	They stay with us We are only having to recruit new volunteers to fulfil new requests, not to replace existing ones
Use international literacy events such as World Read Aloud Day, International Children's Book Day, National Share-A-Story Month, International Literacy Day, Children's Book Week, etc. to create our own events and to increase awareness of ABC to Read.	Awareness of ABC to read increases with all target groups – schools, potential volunteers, donors, general public
Evaluate the impact of our recent higher profile and the change in emphasis of communications to be more emotive; review all communication and marketing materials in line with this evaluation in order to increase the impact	Awareness of materials amongst potential and new volunteers Social media impact measures (details tbc)
On-going evaluation activities to assess the effectiveness of the work that we do	On-going evaluation results continue to demonstrate effectiveness and improvements for the children we work with



Maintain levels of funding so that we can cover the costs for schools that are struggling to fund a volunteer reading mentor for a child who needs support due to increasing pressures on school budgets

Activities	Success measures
Identify and connect with corporate sponsors, including considering a mailing to a small number of target Berkshire businesses	An increased number of corporate sponsors, providing more support each to the work that we do
Apply for and pursue grants and donations	Increased donations
Use international literacy events such as World Read Aloud Day, International Children's Book Day, National Share-A-Story Month, International Literacy Day, Children's Book Week, etc. to create our own events and to increase awareness of ABC to Read.	Increased awareness through these events leads to increased donations

Offer the Ready to Read course to more parents so that they feel more confident and their children are better prepared for learning to read

Target: Hold 12 a year

Activities	Success measures
Promote the Ready to Read course to children's centres	Children's centres ask us to run the course for their parents
Access any funding available to children's centres who say they cannot afford the course	Children's centres who are unable to fund the course themselves can access appropriate funding from elsewhere
Spread awareness of this course and be alert to potential opportunities to run the course for parents in different settings – this includes identifying other partner organisations to work with	We train more parents through the Ready to Read course
On-going evaluation activities to ensure the course remains relevant and achieves increased levels of parental confidence	Parents feel more confident after attending the course We are able to quickly adapt the course in response to evaluation, if necessary



Explore partnerships with other organisations that work with children and families in order to reach more children who are struggling to read confidently

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Success measures</b>
Be alert to other possibilities of partnerships that would benefit more children	Available partnership opportunities are explored to see if they will benefit children



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