

Dear all,

We are currently in the most difficult of times with schools closed for most pupils until after February half term, at the earliest, when it is hoped everyone in the top four groups will have been vaccinated for coronavirus. What we do know is there is not yet a timetable on when schools might reopen fully. We all know that this will have a detrimental impact on many of the most disadvantaged and that the need for ABC to read will grow even further. However, the excellent news on the vaccine roll out fills us with optimism that life will soon start to return to normal and will make it safe for more volunteers to return to enjoying their sessions in school. In the meantime, the ABC to read team is here to support you all and we hope our newsletters and contact with your fieldworkers will continue to keep you informed. Please keep in touch with us too – we do welcome your emails and phone calls!

Adapting our sessions online

Our Zoom interviews and trainings are proving successful.

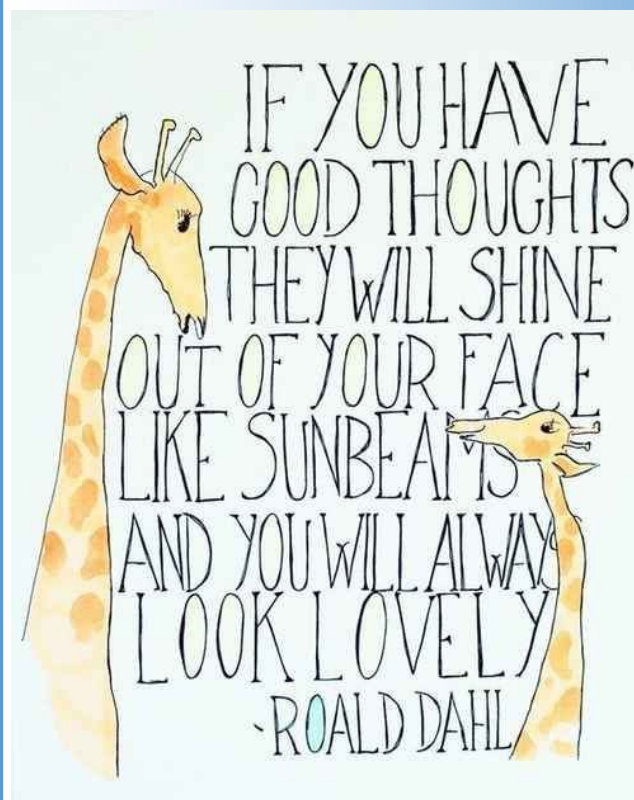
We have enjoyed catching up with many volunteers via Zoom “coffee mornings” and are looking forward to more of these this term.

Like most charities ABC to read has been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic but by one way or another we have continued to deliver high quality life changing literacy support across a range of our schools and continued to gain successful grants and donations.

We faced a period of adaptation and we were able to transfer some of our sessions online for some of our schools and families. This meant a rapid learning exercise for staff and volunteers and we continue learning! We are proud to have made this shift during lockdown in order to support children's literacy while at home and to help ensure that the gap does not widen further. *As of this week we are now supporting 120 children via the online sessions which is an amazing achievement so early into the launch of the programme!* 🍌

At the time of writing, Covid is still with us and this means that we must remain prepared to be innovative and flexible in our approach to delivering literacy support to schools. Do please let us know if you would like to take part in online sessions whilst you are waiting to return to school.

We are so lucky to have a great team of volunteers, a small but excellent team of staff and a committed board of trustees and we continue with our commitments to schools and to the children we support no matter what the form of delivery involved. Thank you to all who have supported us during 2020 and into 2021.



Board of Trustees update

This term the board of trustees has reviewed our Trustee Recruitment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Health and Safety Policy, as well as approving the revised Marketing and Business Plans.



Above and below: the beautiful Englefield Estate



Tips for running your sessions

If you're looking for something specific to help a reader who is struggling, this video from Oxford Education should help. She discusses keeping anxiety levels down and playing with sound to help the child you're reading with their phonological learning:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ga5KldBXMg&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=OxfordEducation

And for those of you who are preparing for your online sessions or are already running your online sessions, here is a wonderful video from author Ali Sparks giving you more information about how to share books online:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7HvrYnW4Bw&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=BookTrust

Please remember that we are still running our Storytime so if you would like to take part and record yourself reading a short story then we are welcoming more recordings to share. Some wonderful examples of our storytelling can be found: <https://www.abctoread.org.uk/storytelling-with-abc-to-read/> Please email your videos to info@abctoread.org.uk

ABC website and social media

During lockdown we have built a new website! It is now clearer and more concise and is optimised to work well on mobile devices. Please do familiarise yourselves with the site as you will find lots of information and resources:

www.abctoread.org.uk

You can view all of our news on our social media accounts: Twitter @abctoread. Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/abctoread2> Please do have a look at these and follow, share and/or retweet our posts!

New volunteer welcome!

We would like to say a huge welcome to all of our volunteers who have joined us since September.

Lesley Long, Linda Challis, Melissa Key, Rose Somerset, Katie White, Allie Smith, Selina Westbury, Nicola Horton, Julie Atkinson, Nigel Howard, Carmen Dupré, Holly Price, Helena Dale, Kaitlyn Clark, Chelsea Tanyi, Bryony Parkinson, Suzanne Kelly, Valerie Dunk, Jen Wiggett, Bryonny Little, Lucas Payne, Louise Mifsud, Mark Reed, Chandramala Rajasekaran, Rita Wood, Gemma Eastabrook-, Kate Almeida, Caroline Troup, Prue Fenn, Nancy Heighway, Francesca Unsworth, Nickita Dill, Ruth Wilson, Sophie Mullen, Abigail May

Covid-19 vaccine scams

Sadly, there have been reports of scams around the COVID-19 vaccine programme. People should be aware that the vaccine programme is being run by the NHS only and is free.

The NHS will never:

- ask for your bank account or card details
- ask for your PIN or bank password
- arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine
- ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport, driving licence, utility bill or pay slips

If you are a victim of a fraud, contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or www.actionfraud.police.uk



Above: *Snow fun in Caversham!*

Office closure - February half-term

The office will close on Thursday 11th February and re-open on Monday 22nd February