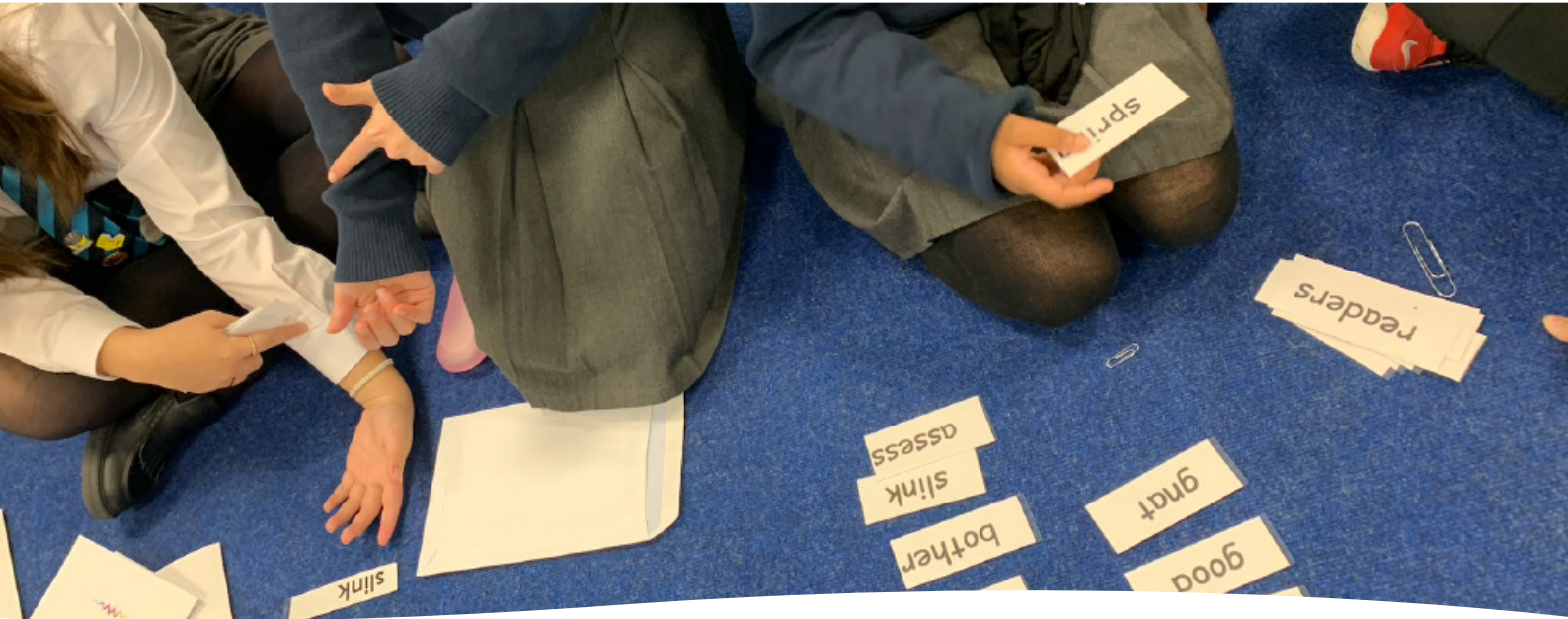




SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

Reading Lab Starts in Secondary Schools and links with Reader Leader to extend benefit



We are delighted to have had an excellent start to working with two new partner schools this term: Henry Fawcett Primary school in Lambeth and The Ravensbourne Secondary School in Bromley.

As well as taking Reading Lab, the schools are also participating in our Reader Leader programme to extend the benefit of the 10 weeks of Reading Lab tuition. This is a new development for us: the aim is that those children who graduate from Reading Lab then have an older reading mentor who supports them over the following 18 weeks, reading with them once or twice a week so that they can continue to make progress and are encouraged to read for pleasure.



Henry Fawcett Primary School
in Lambeth



The
Ravensbourne
School

The Ravensbourne Secondary School
in Bromley

A Bumper Year So Far for Reader Leader

Our Reader Leader trainers Saadia, Cathy and Ruth have been busy delivering Reader Leader sessions in Corby, Birmingham, London, Manchester and schools in Kent. While traditionally we have run this programme for secondary schools only, the expansion into primary schools has been enthusiastically received and we are delighted with how well the younger children have embraced their reading mentor roles.



We are also seeing some of our partner schools training their older students to be Reader Leaders so they can then mentor Reading Lab graduates, with the goal of prolonging the benefits of the Reading Lab intervention and in particular to embed reading engagement. Typically, we see Year 10 or 12 secondary school students mentoring Year 7 and 8 Reading Lab graduates and in primary schools, Year 5 or Year 6 Reader Leaders will mentor Year 3 or Year 4 Reading Lab graduates.

Education Lead Julie comments:

“

It is early days but we can already see how linking Reading Lab graduates and Reader Leader Mentors keeps the reading momentum going and improves motivation. We're really looking forward to feedback so we can develop this approach further.

“

New Partner: EmpathyLab



We are excited to announce that EmpathyLab has recently become a new partner for the Children's Literacy Charity.

EmpathyLab is a charitable, social enterprise and their mission is to raise an empathy-educated generation, inspired to build a better world for everyone. EmpathyLab works with schools and teachers to develop young people's empathy skills through the use of high-quality literature. They offer several key interventions, one of which is their Read for Empathy annual collection, which features 65 books for 3-16 year olds selected for their empathy-building power by expert judges and which explore powerful, timely themes.

These carefully chosen books give children not only the opportunity to enjoy high quality stories but also to develop the language and vocabulary associated with emotions and the perspectives of others. For instance, books such as **Be More Dog** by Caroline Crowe and Carlos Vélaz is about a dog whose superpower is happiness. The dog helps to overcome a child's anxiety when his dad leaves for work every day. **The Comet** by Joe Todd-Stanton is a beautiful picture book about a child who moves to a new town with her dad where she struggles to adjust but her sensitive dad manages to help Nyla to overcome this as they settle into their new life together.

As part of this association, we will be able to share the new **EmpathyLab's new Read for Empathy Collection** of books for 2024 with all our Literacy and Reading Lab schools.

To find out more about EmpathyLab and the work they do with schools, visit their website at www.empathylab.uk.

**A date for your diaries:
Empathy Day - Thursday 6th June**

**We will be celebrating with
tailored resources and tutor
guidance for all our Labs.**

One Education – Manchester Expansion



One of our longest standing school partnerships is with Mauldeth Road School in Manchester where we run our largest Literacy Lab and more recently have been delivering Reading Lab and introduced the Reader Leader programme too.

As part of a plan to grow our presence outside of London, we are now working with One Education, a Manchester-based organisation providing teaching and learning support to schools. One Education is keen to support the expansion of our Reading Lab catch up intervention and other CLC programmes in the Manchester area and will provide opportunities for our Head of Education to speak to Literacy Leads and senior leaders at One Education's Manchester network meetings.



One particular reason we were drawn to One Education is their commitment to Reading for Pleasure and we are delighted to be able to support their Reading Award. The Reading Award provides a set of criteria, allowing schools to apply for a bronze, silver or gold award, recognising the great work done by schools to promote reading.

Read more here ►

The Impact of Tutoring

An independent report into the Economic Impact of Tutoring, published by Public First and supported by a number of tutoring charities including ourselves, shows that tutoring delivers a significant economic return of more than £4bn.

We were particularly encouraged by the finding that even though Maths tuition at both Key Stages 2 & 4 is more common than English, KS2 English tuition provides the highest share of grade improvements.

Of course the numbers don't tell the whole story and all the evidence we have points to the positive impact literacy tuition has in allowing those children who are furthest behind to begin to engage right across the curriculum and build confidence and resilience ahead of the transition to secondary school.

The report attracted the support of many leading educationalists and commentators on social mobility:

[Read the report here ►](#)

“

Dame Rachel de Souza
the Children's Commissioner for England:

Additional tutoring at school is a great way for children and young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to get the help they need to progress in lessons. It has academic as well as many other benefits for children's well-being.

“

Professor Becky Francis
Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF):

We know that high-quality tutoring is one of the best-evidenced and most impactful ways to help children who have fallen behind get back on track. What's more, it can be particularly valuable for pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds too.

“

Lee Elliot Major
Professor of Social Mobility at the University of Exeter:

This report confirms that high-quality tutoring is one of the most cost-effective approaches we have at our disposal in levelling the education playing field.

”

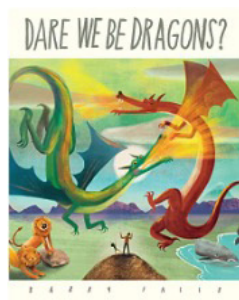
”

”

World Book Day

We are very excited for the World Book Day celebrations to begin! This year, all Literacy Labs will receive two new books and they can choose one of them as a focus for World Book Day. The books are **Dare We Be Dragons?** By Barry Falls and **The Tigon and the Liger** by Keilly Swift.

Dare We Be Dragons is a beautifully illustrated book about a father and his daughter's trip to the park which turns into a feast of the imagination. Climbing up a hill becomes an ascent up a volcano and the swing becomes a jet pack that takes the child and her dad to the moon. **The Tigon and the Liger** introduces us to two animals that just don't fit in. They are teased and taunted but somehow learn together that they are unique and that difference is something to celebrate.



A date for your diaries:

World Book Day - Thursday 7th

National Storytelling Week

The end of January was brightened up by a celebration of National Storytelling Week in all our Literacy Labs. Tutors were provided with a selection of resources, including story dice, story maps and story bones to stimulate the children's imaginations. With the support of our wonderful tutors, the children created some very exciting adventure stories; they became storytellers using puppets and other props and tutors created fabulous displays to share the stories with the wider school community.



BookTrust: Reading together, changing children's lives

The BookTrust's action plan calling for a long-term government commitment to investing in books and reading for children under seven was published in January. It was great to be able to attend the launch event and we are wholly supportive of the proposal to help every low-income family become a family which reads together. Our Literacy and Reading Lab parental engagement workshops and celebrations are all designed to embed a love of reading and we will build on the work we currently do to nurture reading for pleasure in the home environment.



First Ambassador for The Children's Literacy Charity

Reema Reid, Head at Hollydale Primary School, Southwark, is to be the charity's first Ambassador.



Reema has been the Head Teacher of Hollydale since 2013. The daughter of a Windrush immigrant, Reema first joined education as a lunchtime supervisor and a teaching assistant in Lambeth before becoming a qualified teacher and eventually Head of School. In 2021, Reema won the prestigious Gold Teaching Award for Headteacher of the Year in a Primary School in the Pearson National Teaching Awards. She is now a judge for the Teaching Awards and also a regular speaker at conferences.

Reema was the keynote speaker at our 30th anniversary event, giving an inspirational speech on the importance of literacy, the challenge of getting catch up provision to work well and her experience of partnering successfully with the CLC to close the literacy gap for children who need the most help.

“

Over ten years ago when I was dropping my youngest daughter off to a school in Lambeth I noticed a brightly lit room with attractive reading displays and a rich literacy environment. I knocked on the door and asked what was the focus of this classroom. The tutors explained it was a dedicated Literacy Lab space run by a charity where they supported children to close their literacy gap and become confident with their reading skills. I observed expert tutors who were passionate and committed to helping children become readers.

I vowed that when I became a substantive Head Teacher, I would work with such an intervention which could so effectively change children's lives. I have been true to my word and I have seen the impact of The Children's Literacy Charity on children at Hollydale School. Without specialist support, the most disadvantaged children will always struggle to catch up and I am delighted to be taking up this Ambassador role for this charity.” tutoring is one of the most cost-effective approaches we have at our disposal in levelling the education playing field.

”

In addition to her role as Head Teacher of a thriving school, Reema is also involved with Southwark's Teaching School Alliance where she has helped to coach and mentor ethnic minority teachers to take up leadership roles in their schools and has empowered many educators and pupils to follow in her footsteps.

The Urgency of Early Intervention



Dr Jenny Thomson PhD

Professor in Language & Literacy, Director of Research & Innovation, University of Sheffield

As I write this it is exam marking season here at the university where I teach. I help train future speech and language therapists and am currently reading my students' perspectives on how speech and language skills contribute to early reading success. With some relief (i.e. something went in during the lectures!), I can see that most of them seem confident of the connection. A child's early awareness of the sounds in words (known as phonological awareness), enables the sound-letter linkage needed to access phonics instruction. In addition, a child's vocabulary knowledge and their ability to form and understand sentences, as well as pick up idiomatic or inferred meaning are all absolutely crucial to reading development.

At the same time, an increasing number of research reports are arriving in my inbox highlighting the enduring impact of the COVID pandemic on children's speech and language skills. The pandemic was bad news for speech and language development in many ways. Firstly, it reduced the amount of social interaction children had, as well as limiting opportunities for new experiences that encourage the learning of new words. At the same time, children spent a lot more time on digital screens and for children with known speech and language difficulties, access to support was severely limited.

As recent research by Speech and Language UK highlights, almost two million school children are behind their peers in talking and understanding words, the highest level on record. This is hampering the development of too many children and affecting their longer-term education. These children are six times more likely to fail English tests at the age of 11 and are eleven times less likely to pass maths. They are also twice as likely to have a mental health problem and, sadly, twice as likely to be unemployed as an adult.

In our day-to-day work, we have found that these gaps in speech, language and communication are increasingly evident in children referred for our specialist tuition. Julie, Education Lead at the charity says that a growing number of Key Stage One referrals to Literacy Lab are arriving without the phonemic and phonological awareness that prepares them for phonics and the early reading process. The vocabulary and language skills that are essential foundations for reading and writing are absent and having identified these problems, our expert tutors now deploy a range of strategies to improve outcomes for the children who are the furthest behind.

As a long-standing Trustee of the Children's Literacy Charity I have always believed in the importance of early intervention. With every report which arrives on my desk, it is now clear that early intervention is a necessity if we are to reduce the speech and language gap and give every child the future that they deserve.

Focus on Fundraising

Brown Advisory Volunteers Step Into A Story at Harlesden School

Investment management firm Brown Advisory has been helping to fund our Reading Lab programme at Harlesden School in Brent for two years now and in January we hosted a Step Into A Story workshop for Brown Advisory volunteers at the school.

Step into a Story is our volunteering programme for selected corporate partners and creates a unique opportunity for employees to get involved and gives children at the school a chance to participate in an engaging and interactive storytelling session. Volunteers spend a morning or afternoon in storytelling workshops with children reading a book together and creating crafts based on the story.



The team from Brown Advisory had a lot of fun exploring the book 'Somebody Swallowed Stanley' by Sarah Roberts and the children in Year 1 and Year 2 loved the story and creating their own jellyfish and kites with the volunteers.

“

Louisa Cottrell, one of the corporate volunteers said:

It was wonderful to see the work of the Children's Literacy Charity in action and a privilege to spend some fun time with the children and be in such a different environment to our office. We are delighted to be able to support all their good work.

“

Courteney Baxer, Teacher at Harlesden commented:

The step into a story event was incredibly exciting for the children - they were extremely focused and engaged and could not stop talking about it!

“

Julie Taylor, Education Lead at the charity, runs the Storytelling workshops and says the feedback from both teachers and children is always so positive:

We are able to create a really magical time for the children and it is an invaluable complement to the work done in our Reading Labs.

”

”

”

If you are a potential supporter and would like to find out more about our corporate partnership opportunities, including Step Into a Story, please contact by clicking:

[Get in touch here ►](#)

Supporter Events



We are able to provide the life changing literacy work that we do because we have some incredible supporters helping to fund our programmes and keep the cost to schools as low as possible.

Running and Challenge Events are always great fundraising opportunities for any charity and we have access to over 500 of these events across the country, from 5K runs and marathons to fun runs and inflatable obstacle courses.

This year, anyone wishing to help raise money for The Children's Literacy Charity can take part and every penny raised will help disadvantaged children to close their literacy gap.

If this is your thing, you can choose to sign up for your own individual challenge or as part of a team with friends and work colleagues.

Find out more here ►

“

Andrew Leith from Pulse commented:

It was a fun morning out, helping a cause we love to support. What's not to like!

”



Please follow us on social media:



For more information about our school partnerships or supporting our vital work please contact:
info@theclc.org.uk

The Children's Literacy Charity works in socially and economically disadvantaged areas, helping to close the literacy gap for children who have the greatest need. Our provision of one to one and small group tuition helps children realise their true potential.
Registered Company No. 6251103. Registered Charity No. 1124257