



AUTUMN UPDATE 2025

We are now firmly into the new school year and the children attending our 'Labs' have settled in well and are already making good progress. In this termly update we are pleased to share our 24/25 Impact Report, turn the spotlight on our expanding Reader Leader programme and announce our author ambassador for the National Year of Reading 2026.

In this issue...

- Delivering outstanding impact - the difference we made in 2024/25
- Spotlight on our expanding Reader Leader programme
- Rising SEND needs and the role of specialist interventions

Our 2024/25 Impact Report

The start of a new school year is always full of promise, but we also have a great opportunity to look back over the last academic year and celebrate everything that has been achieved. Yet again, our fantastic expert tutors have delivered some remarkable outcomes in closing the literacy gap for those children who were struggling to make progress and have really flourished as a result of our specialist intervention sessions.

While the numbers speak for themselves, we also continue to see the profound impact stronger literacy has on a child's self-belief, confidence, resilience and motivation. Significantly improved engagement in reading really does open up the world of education, as children discover when they are able to participate fully in the classroom. Our tutors are as adept at knowing how to support hard-to-reach children as they are at teaching literacy. Their skill in helping children learn how to enjoy learning is as important as their literacy expertise and is at the heart of everything we do.

Highlights from the Impact Report

Expert Literacy Lab

90%

of our Literacy Lab graduates closed or significantly narrowed their literacy gap

75% closed their reading age gap entirely**7%** came within 3 months of closing their reading age gap**8%** came within 4 to 6 months of closing their reading age gap**10%** narrowed their reading age gap**4.1 RATIO GAIN* AVERAGE**

For every one month a child has our Literacy Lab tuition, children make 4.1 months of reading progress.

*A ratio gain of 2 or more is considered 'useful impact'. Above 4.0 is considered 'remarkable impact'. (Brooks 2007)

Expert Reading Lab

10**WEEKS OF TUITION****→ 7****MONTHS OF PROGRESS****Schools reported:**

- Significant impact on children's love for reading, confidence and self-esteem
- Strong evidence of children's improved classroom engagement
- Satisfaction with high quality of CLC tutors

[Read the 2024/25 Impact Report here](#)

Children attending our Literacy and Reading Labs last year continued to make outstanding progress and the trial of our early years intervention, Story Lab, is showing very encouraging results, with over 80% of the reception children participating achieving The Early Language Goal in Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL).

In total, our expert tutors delivered over 16,500 specialist literacy sessions to 1,200 children.

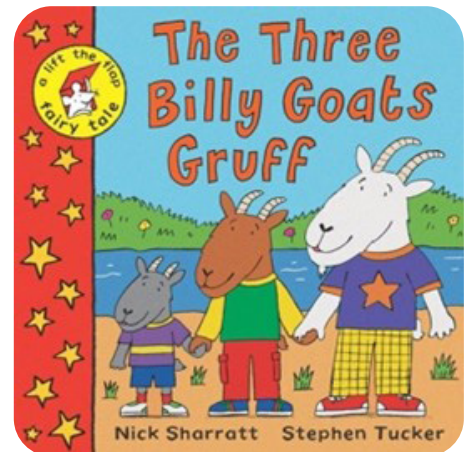
Our Reader Leader mentoring training supported 1,400 pupils and we expanded our parental engagement programme, delivering over 170 celebration assemblies.

Children's Author and Illustrator Nick Sharratt to be our National Year of Reading Ambassador

Like many literacy charities and reading organisations across the UK, we are busy preparing for the National Year of Reading 2026. This Department for Education campaign, delivered by the National Literacy Trust, seeks to address the decline in reading among children and adults. Just one in three children aged 8–18 say they enjoy reading.

While our charity's focus is on specialist tuition across all the important literacy skills, reading engagement and the joy of stories are central to everything that we do and we're delighted to be one of the supporting partners of this initiative.

We also place great store by working with children's authors whenever we can and we're delighted to announce that the author and illustrator Nick Sharratt will be our charity's Ambassador for the National Year of Reading. Nick's work is inspirational and we feel sure that his playful creativity, colourful characters, and books such as *You Choose* and *The Foggy Foggy Forest* will be invaluable in encouraging a lifelong love of reading among the children we support.



"Engaging with books at an early age and reading for pleasure as a youngster brings many important advantages in future years. The message of the National Year of Reading 2026 is that no one should be missing out on the benefits of reading and the literacy skills that come with it - an outlook that is at the heart of The Children's Literacy Charity's amazing school programmes. I'm really looking forward to my role as ambassador for the charity and working with them in the exciting year to come."

Nick Sharratt

Find out more at the National Year of Reading's new website, www.goallin.org.uk. We look forward to sharing more updates on our plans in early 2026 so do keep an eye on our website's [News & Views page](#).

Spotlight on Reader Leader

While we devote significant time, energy and resources to our specialist literacy tuition interventions, we have also been growing our [Reader Leader mentoring training programme](#) for both primary and secondary schools.

Our Reader Leader training celebrates the power of mentoring, with older pupils being trained as reading 'Leaders', to support and inspire younger 'Readers'. The Leaders acquire mentoring skills, learn how the reading process works and develop empathy and accountability. The Readers get the benefit of sitting down with an older student, once a week over 18 weeks, not just to improve their reading fluency but also to discover the joy of stories and the sense of wellbeing that comes with progress.

Literacy Leads tell us that Reader Leader is a great way of providing reading support for younger pupils. As a partner in the Department for Education's planned National Year of Reading in 2026 we're keen to deliver as many Reader Leader sessions as possible next year!



Alice Paetel, Whole School Reading Lead at Queensbridge School in Bromsgrove, one of our Reader Leader schools, comments:

"The Reader Leader programme is my favourite reading intervention. Weaker readers often arrive to secondary school with a sense of shame around reading that is a difficult barrier to tackle.

Through the charity's high quality pupil training, our Reader Leaders are empowered to support younger pupils in a meaningful way. Older pupils connect with vulnerable younger readers in a way that cannot be replicated with adult staff.

The Reader Leader programme allows for genuine connection with peers. It is the best way that we have found of overcoming low self-esteem with reading."

Generous funding from [Stellantis UK](#) has allowed us to extend our Reader Leader programme into more schools than ever this academic year. Making this happen is a cohort of 15 trainers, all bringing exceptional skill, energy and experience to inspire the Leaders and Readers on their mentorship and reading journeys.

When recruiting, we were delighted to receive so many wonderful and varied applications, including some from writers and senior teaching staff. While each has a unique perspective, the trainers share a passion for encouraging a reading for life habit and helping to embed a culture of reading right across a school.

With our expanded training team, we are now delivering Reader Leader in new regions, including Norfolk, Derbyshire, Wiltshire and in eight schools in Cumbria. We're looking forward to welcoming even more schools to the Reader Leader family.

To find out more about the Reader Leader programme and to sign up for the training in your school, [click here](#) or email readerleader@thecic.org.uk.

On 4th October we celebrated National Poetry Day, a wonderful chance to let the imagination run riot!

Poems are a powerful tool for our tutors to use in our Literacy and Reading Lab sessions. Their rhyme, rhythm, and repetition help children hear patterns in words, strengthening reading and spelling skills. Reading or performing them aloud builds fluency and self-expression, while writing simple verses helps children experiment with language in a manageable way. Poetry also deepens comprehension, sparking discussion and connection, and memorising poems builds confidence and creativity.

Read more about how we marked the day [here](#).

Special thanks goes to author and poet **James Carter** who helped us celebrate the power of poetry by recording a personal message and reading for our tutors to share with the Literacy Lab children.



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Education Lead Julie Taylor on helping to solve the SEND crisis through early, tailored intervention

This October, the Education Select Committee published its *Solving The SEND Crisis* Report, bringing into sharp focus the extent to which mainstream schools are struggling to meet the needs of children with SEND.

1.7 million pupils are now identified as having special educational needs – a 20% increase since 2015/16 – and this SEND crisis is all too real in an educational landscape where schools have insufficient funding, limited access to in-school specialist support and growing administrative pressures on SENCOs.

The Select Committee's Report states that SEND 'must become an intrinsic part of the mainstream education system, rather than an addition to it', but ensuring that every child receives targeted and personalised support is increasingly difficult for even the most talented and committed practitioners.

Over 30% of the children referred to our KS1 Literacy Lab intervention are now on the Special Needs register and we have always believed that understanding the individual needs of every child and delivering personalised support is fundamental to good, inclusive practice. In our experience we see that if schools are able to intervene early, with support adapted and tailored to individual needs, we can achieve positive outcomes.



"At Hollydale, we've seen a rise in pupils with additional needs in reading and writing, and Literacy Lab and Story Lab have been transformative in supporting them. Their nurturing, evidence-based approach has strengthened pupils' confidence, engagement, and wellbeing, while securing clear progress in reading, writing, and oracy. These interventions have been instrumental in ensuring that the gap for our most vulnerable learners continues to close."

**Reema Reid, Headteacher,
Hollydale Primary School London**

[Click here to read the blog](#)

Welcome to our new partner schools this autumn



FENSTANTON

We have started delivering our Literacy Lab programme at **Fenstanton Primary School** in Abbot's Park, London, where expert tutor Marcia is providing our specialist support to children across years 2-4.

At **Waulud Primary School** in Luton, tutor Laura is delivering our 10-week **Reading Lab** catch-up intervention to children in year 4.

Reading Lab is also up and running at **William Stockton Primary School** in Ellesmere Port, with tutor Cheryl working with Year 6 pupils.

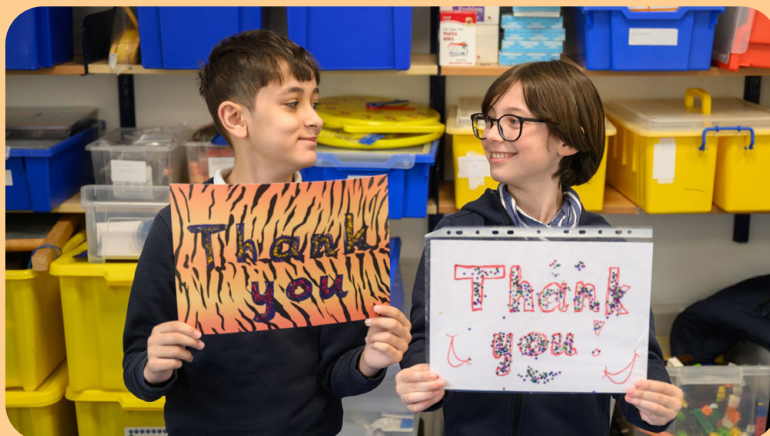
Reasons to be thankful

When we receive donations online, some people like to add a comment explaining why they have chosen to support our work. These can be inspiring, rewarding, touching and whatever the reason, they brighten our day so we thought we'd share just a few:

"We have been very impressed by the progress our grandson has made thanks to your work."

"I was given a modest tip by a school I was taking on a WW1 battlefield tour. Decided to pass it on to a children's charity."

"My Mum recently died at the fabulous age of 92. She was always passionate about reading and children's literacy- a clever lady who had to leave school at the age of 14. This is just a small donation in her memory."



As we head toward the festive season, if you would like to support our work and bring the joy of reading to those children who need the most help

[please click here to donate](#)

Thank you as always to all of our supporters, partners and funders. Every donation really does make a difference.



Please follow us on social media:



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