

Schoolreaders Needed to Spread the Joy of Reading in Hampshire Schools



Children's literacy charity **Schoolreaders** is looking for more volunteers who can help spread the joy of reading to children in Hampshire primary schools – especially around Alton.

A recent survey¹ of young people by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) revealed that reading enjoyment had reached a 15 year low, rallying slightly in the pandemic before declining again by 2022, especially amongst those from disadvantaged backgrounds and amongst boys.

Furthermore, the Annual Literacy survey found that fewer than 1 in 2 children aged 8 to 18 enjoyed reading with only 28% reading daily.

Schoolreaders is looking for volunteers of all ages – from students to retirees - who can listen to children read in a local primary school, especially at those schools where children require support the most.

Worryingly, 1 in 4 children leave primary school every summer unable to read to the expected standard² and the Schoolreaders scheme is now more in demand than ever, particularly to help those children most disadvantaged following the education disruption caused by Covid lockdowns.

Schoolreaders volunteers act as trusted role models in the classroom alongside the class teachers, not only helping children improve their reading but also by being a positive influence.

Schoolreaders volunteers are asked to listen to children read once a week during term time and to commit to an academic year. By applying now new volunteers will be matched as

quickly as possible to a partner school and be ready to start once they have completed a mandatory DBS check and virtual safeguarding training.

Jane Whitbread, founder of Schoolreaders, adds, “Children who leave primary school unable to read well can’t access their secondary schooling fully which will disadvantage them for life. One in seven adults have poor literacy and cannot read instructions on a medicine label or a bus timetable or fill in a job application form. Working together we can change this.

“There is no substitute for face-to-face interaction and support when it comes to reading. Our volunteers provide a crucial supplement to classroom teaching and are welcomed by schools - and the children. 95% of children in our scheme improved their reading performance and over 90% their reading enjoyment after time with a Schoolreaders volunteer which is so valuable³. If more children gain pleasure from reading from an early age and their reading fluency and confidence improves too, communities and Society will reap the benefits.”

To find out more or to apply today to be a Schoolreaders volunteer in primary schools with the greatest need in Hampshire, visit [Schoolreaders.org](https://www.schoolreaders.org)

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For further media information, please contact Pru Murray on 07780 600180 or email p.murray@schoolreaders.org

1. National Literacy Trust [Annual Literacy Survey](#) based on 70,403 responses from children 5-18 conducted in 2022.
2. [UK Government Statistics](#) at Key Stage 2 2021.
3. [Schoolreaders State of Primary School Reading Survey 2019](#) in partnership with the Institute of Research in Education at the University of Bedfordshire.

About Schoolreaders CIO (Charity Number: 1159157)

Schoolreaders supports children. We want every child to read well. Our network of dedicated volunteers provide free weekly one-to-one reading support for children in primary schools nationwide. With 1 in 4 children leaving primary school unable to read well, there has never been a more important time for our work.¹ Leaving primary school with poor reading skills can hugely impact a child’s secondary education and life chances. Literacy opens doors, helps learning and brings new opportunities. We want to help give all children, especially those with the greatest need, the best start in life.

Schoolreaders supports schools. Schoolreaders finds, interviews and matches volunteers to partner schools locally. Our volunteers provide 1-1 reading time that some children require to help improve their literacy and provide additional support to the schools. Our volunteers’ support has been proven to help children’s reading fluency, comprehension, and enjoyment, providing a crucial supplement to classroom teaching. A 2019 University of Bedfordshire Institute for Research in Education study showed that in six months 95% of children supported by Schoolreaders improved their reading age. Over half (58%) gained 3-6 months+ in their reading age and over a third (37%) gained between 1-3 months improvement. In addition, 92% of schools in our scheme noted the positive impact on children’s reading confidence, 85% reported a positive impact on children’s reading enjoyment and 78% on their reading fluency.

Schoolreaders engages communities. We raise community awareness of low educational attainment and potential lifelong outcomes. We engage with local authorities and respected organisations to connect local volunteers with schools in their community.

Schoolreaders benefits the generations. Schoolreaders provides an intergenerational activity for older people to use their knowledge and skills to help children with their reading. It provides an opportunity to become involved in the community and helps to support mental well-being and independence. 98% of our volunteers reported a positive impact on their personal wellbeing through volunteering with us.