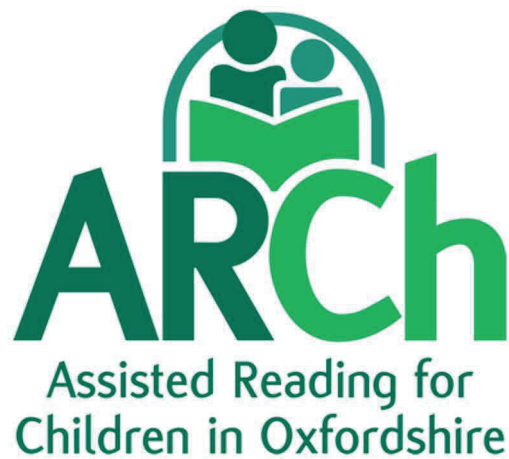




# Annual Report 2025

Inspiring Oxfordshire Children to Read



Registered charity number 1146276  
Company number 7962217

Assisted Reading for Children (ARCh) is a registered charity, dedicated to raising enjoyment of literacy for children in Oxfordshire via a network of dedicated volunteers.

Our vision is to inspire a love of reading in children from all of Oxfordshire's communities, which will enhance their wellbeing and improve their life chances.

Our service is available to all primary schools in the county.

## **Public Benefit Statement**

The work of ARCh benefits the community in a number of ways, primarily in the advancement of education, but it also can lead to the prevention of poverty, the advancement of citizenship and community development, and relief for those in need by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability or financial or other disadvantage.

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# Welcome from the Chief Executives

As founders of ARCh, we are extremely proud of the charity and its achievements and would like to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers, supporters and donors, and of course our wonderful staff and trustee team.

What began as a simple idea has grown into an organisation that makes a real difference in the lives of so many children and young people. This would not have been possible without the dedication, passion and generosity of everyone who has supported ARCh along the way.

Every volunteer who gives their time, every donor who contributes resources, every member of staff who goes above and beyond, and every trustee who provides guidance and leadership plays a vital role in helping us achieve our mission. Together, you have helped create opportunities, build confidence and inspire a love of reading and learning in countless young people.

We are immensely grateful for your continued commitment and support. As we look to the future, we remain excited about the opportunities ahead and confident that, with your help, ARCh will continue to grow, innovate and make a lasting positive impact in our communities.

Thank you for being part of the ARCh story and for helping us change lives, one child at a time.



**Jane Rendle**  
(Co-founders)



**Elaine Adams**

# Our Story

*Award winning charity inspiring children to read*

Established in 2008 by Elaine Adams and Jane Rendle, who had spent years working for a national children's literacy charity (Volunteer Reading Help), ARCh has helped to transform the lives of thousands of children by giving them a lifelong love of reading, boosting their confidence, helping them to see themselves as learners and raising their aspirations. All this helps to break the deprivation cycle so many find themselves in.

Thanks for our dedicated volunteers, funders and supporters, we have been able to help thousands of children discover a love of reading. The charity's work is unique in Oxfordshire - we provide vetted, trained, resourced and supported volunteers to over 100 primary schools in the county.

The charity has won multiple awards including OCVA Charity of the Year, Cherwell Business Award and the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.



**The Queen's Award being presented by Lord Lieutenant Sir Tim Stevenson**



# **The ARCh Staff Team 2025**

The staff team has a wealth of experience in the education and charity sectors

## **CEOs and Joint Founders**



**Jane Rendle**



**Elaine Adams**



**Emma Orton**  
**Recruitment Officer**

## **Office team**



**Marie Booth**  
**Administrator**



**Michelle Dye**  
**Administration Assistant**

## **Field Workers**

### **Supporting volunteers and schools throughout the county**

The job of the Field Worker is to support volunteers and schools to ensure that an effective and high-quality service is delivered.

They keep regular contact throughout the term, provide resources, share good practice, and join volunteers in their sessions in school, offering advice and tips.



**Jen Trantom**  
**South and East Oxford**



**Cathy Penny**  
**North and West Oxford**



**Beth Buckner-Rowley**  
**Banbury**



**Carolyn Davies**  
**South Oxfordshire**



**Caroline Carpenter**  
**Bicester and Thame**



**Kathryn Schmidt**  
**West Oxfordshire**



**Amanda Frank**  
**Freelance support**



## Our Trustees 2025

We are grateful to our Board of Trustees who donate their time and experience so generously.

Ben Morel-Smith (Chair)  
Ian Corkin (Vice Chair)  
Margaret Stevens (Treasurer)  
Curtis Leung  
Jane Williamson

Amool Raina  
Joanna Walton  
Veronica Carlton  
Hayley Nock

## Our Patrons 2025

A huge thank you to the patrons who support our work in so many ways;

### Will Gompertz — *Author & Journalist*



“I am lucky enough to run Sir John Soane’s Museum in London. It is an incredible masterpiece bringing together architecture, design, art, sculpture and literature. Soane was a brilliant Georgian architect whose influence continues to this day across the globe. The reason I tell you this, is that there would be no Sir John Soane or a Museum if he hadn’t learnt to read at a very young age. Despite being from a modest background and destined to a life as a labourer on building sites, it was his ability to read that created the opportunity for him to attend the Roay Academy and realise his talent. Reading was his saviour. The same applies today. There are plenty more Sir John Soanes in our schools – young, eager students – who, given the opportunity, will make an enormous contribution to society. But that is nearly impossible if a student cannot read. It is the doorway to opportunity and possibilities, which is why ARCh’s work is of such immense importance and I support it and them wholeheartedly.”



### Lord John Bird *Founder of The Big Issue*

“Reading laid for me the basis of a new chance in life. Reading meant that I was in a different situation. I could get myself educated and get different work. Even though I was a late comer to reading it changed completely the way I saw the world. Therefore, when I look at the work of ARCh I feel a great sense of privilege that you have allowed me to be associated with you, bringing reading to new generations.”

## Sir Philip Pullman *Author*

“Reading is the key to the greatest part of our freedom – the freedom of our minds and our imaginations. I can’t bear to think how much poorer my life would be if I’d never learned to read. Anything we can do to help others to find this key is enormously worth doing, and I’m pleased and proud to be a patron of ARCh, who are doing such valuable work in bringing the delight and the treasure of reading to so many young people.”



## James Carter *Poet*

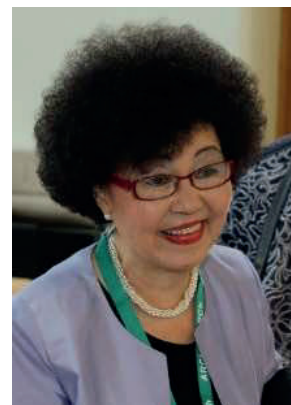


“Reading is a fundamental, and without which a child cannot love or own language, be fully creative or access the curriculum. Therefore it cannot be understated what brilliant work ARCh do in Oxfordshire schools in developing children’s vital literacy skills.”

## Shen Roddie

*Children’s author and former reading helper*

“Year on year, ARCh annual reports give cause for cheer. It is one thing to have a vision; quite another to see it through to the award-winning degree that ARCh has. Thousands of reluctant readers have passed through its portals to emerge more fluent, more confident and better able to engage with learning in the classroom.



A contrast to what would have been – pupils with unaddressed reading difficulties falling behind in nearly every subject, suffering low self-worth and in many cases, misbehaving.

Testimonies from schools have shown that not only have our dedicated band of ARCh volunteers raised reading levels among their charges, they have inspired many to develop a Joy of Reading and a love for books.

That is life-enhancing. A priceless gift. Well done, ARCh!”

# John Foster

*Performance poet*



"The benefits of ARCh are far reaching and go well beyond ability to read. After a year of 1-1 shared time, children emerge with greater self-regard and confidence, better able to be part of an adventure that is every child's basic right – the right to read, to access the exciting world of knowledge and learning and in the process, secure for themselves happier, brighter lives.

Well done, ARCh, for your commitment and initiatives towards this important ripple effect."

# Adam Guillain

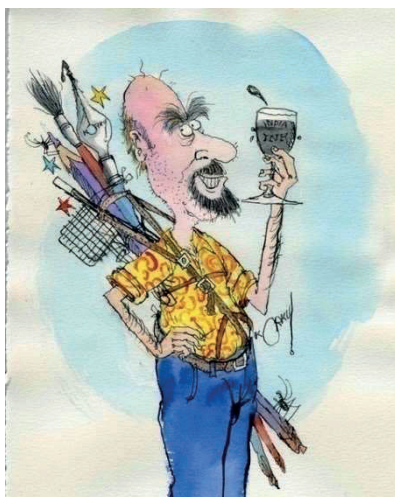
*Children's author & storyteller*

"I am so very honoured to be a patron of ARCh. I know from personal experience that firing a desire to read depends on moments of magic between a child, an adult and a book. We're not always needed as adults, but when we are, we are part of life-changing magical moments. I think everyone involved with ARCh is a little addicted to these. Long may it continue!"



# Korky Paul

**Illustrator** Winnie the Witch © Valerie Thomas and Korky Paul, published by Oxford University Press © Winnie the Witch illustration Korky Paul



"This remarkable organisation needs volunteers, to help fledgling, but struggling readers to foster the magic and love for reading, and so change their lives...

As a proud patron of this charity I urge you to consider this rewarding and life changing challenge - for both of you."

# Our Impact

Our vision is to inspire a love of reading in children from all of Oxfordshire's communities, which will enhance their wellbeing and improve their life chances. As this report shows, ARCh has not only helped children to read, it has raised their self-esteem, improved their communication skills and increased their overall engagement with learning. This is down to the unique one-to-one mentoring from ARCh.



**910 children supported**  
in 111 schools across Oxfordshire



**301 active volunteers**  
in Oxfordshire



**Making a difference through reading**

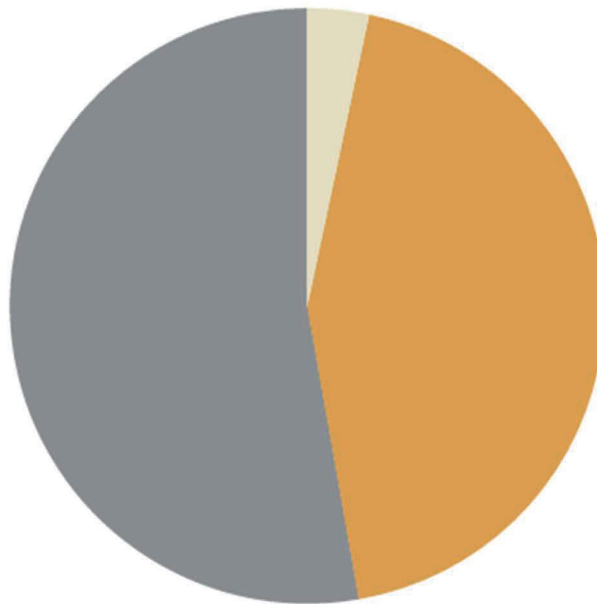
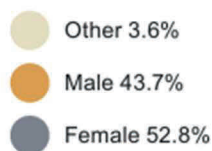
\*301 active volunteers across the entire year

The following overview provides details of the data collected via the ARCh 2024/25 School survey.

There was a total of **197** responses, from **56** schools.

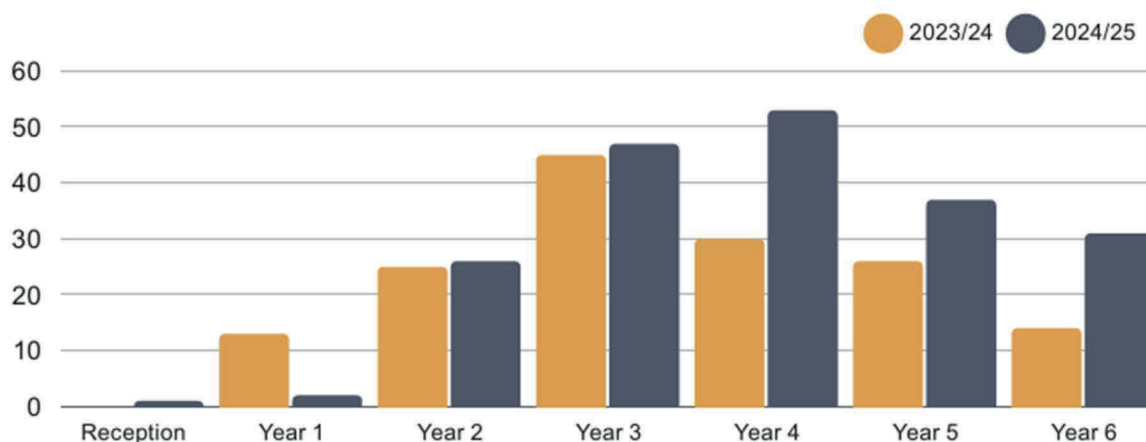
## Pupil gender

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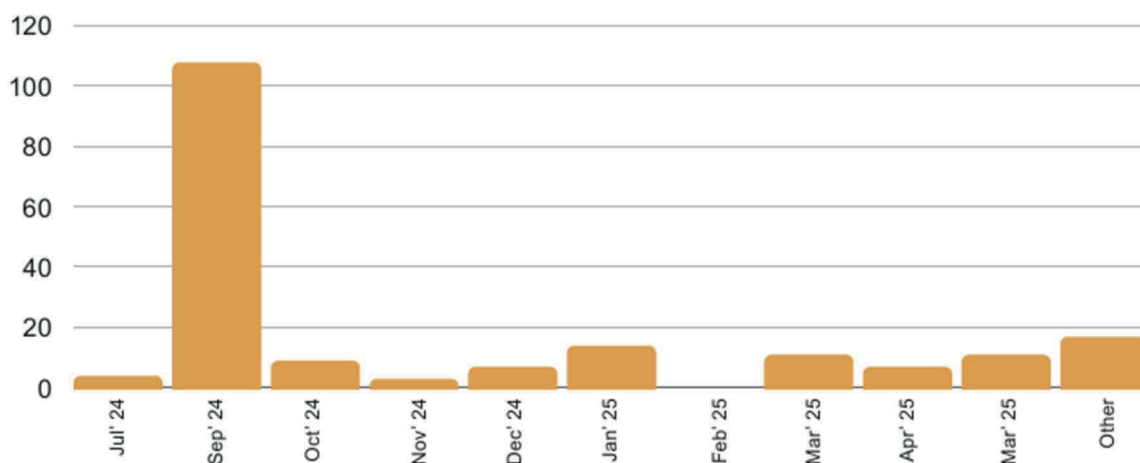
The majority of responses received concerned a female pupil, 53% (104). 44% (86) concerned a male pupil and 4% (7) concerned a pupil, whose gender was identified by the respondents as 'both', 3% (6), and 'multiple children of mixed genders 1% (1).

## Year group



Responses to the 24/25 survey concerned pupils who were attending Reception to Year 6, with the largest proportion being from Year 4, 27% (53). The smallest groups were from Reception 1% (1), Year 1, 1% (2), and Year 2, 13% (26). There seems to be a shift in the distribution of the data, with peak moving from Year 3 in 2023-24, to Year 4 in 2024-25.

## Start of ARCh support

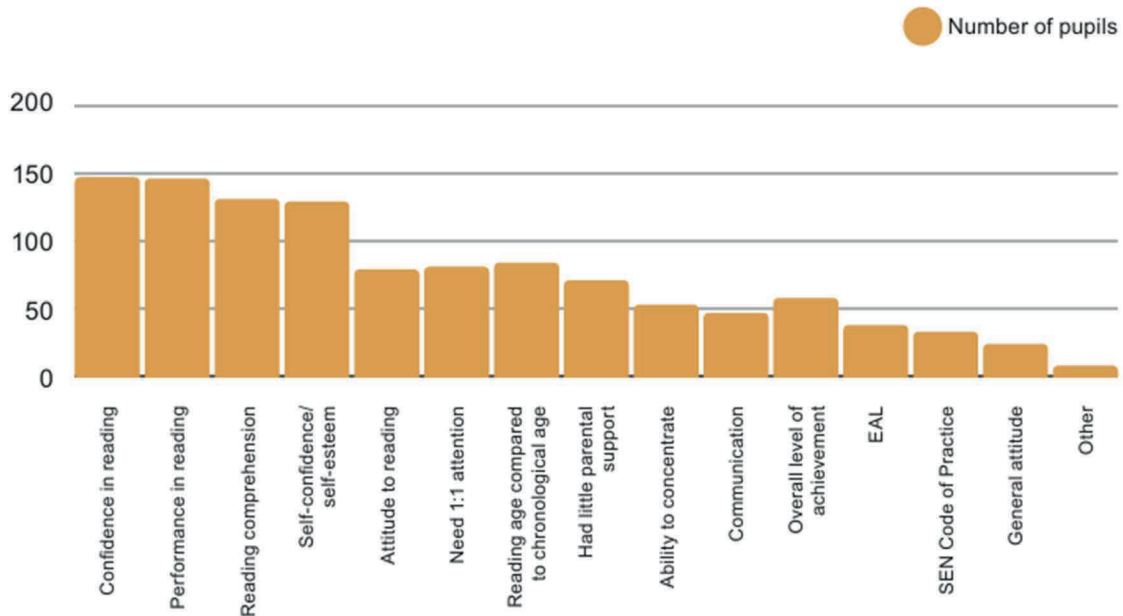


Respondents were asked to provide an approximate date of the start of reading support for a pupil.

The largest number of pupils started their support in September 2024, 59% (108). Other most popular points in the academic year were after the half-term/holiday breaks, e.g. January 2025, 8% (14) and May 2025, 6% (11).

There was a small number of pupils who have been receiving support since 2023, 1% (1).

## Reasons for pupil selection



Generally pupils were selected for ARCh support due to multiple factors. Only 2% (3) of pupils were selected because of only 1 criterion (English as Other Language). This demonstrates the complex nature of needs presented by the pupils engaging with the services provided by ARCh.

The most common reason for selecting a pupil to access support was to increase pupil's confidence in reading, 75% (147). The majority of pupils were also selected to improve their performance in reading, 74% (146), their reading comprehension, 67% (131), and their self-confidence/ self-esteem, 66% (129).

More than a third of pupils were selected because of:

- Their reading age compared with chronological age, 43% (84)
- Needing 1:1 attention, 41% (81)
- Their attitude to reading, 40% (79)
- Them having little parental support, 36% (71)

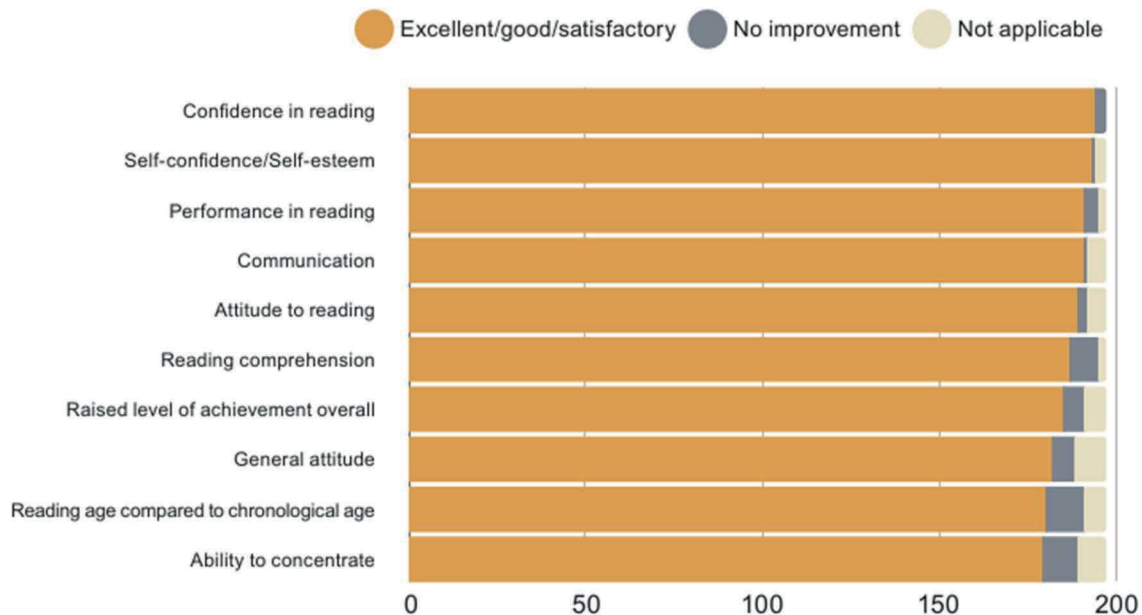
Approximately a quarter of pupils were selected due to their overall level of achievement, 29% (58), to support their ability to concentrate, 27% (53) and their communication, 24% (47). 20% or fewer pupils were selected because:

- They had English as an additional language (EAL), 19% (38)
- SEN Code of Practice, 17% (33)
- Their general attitude, 12% (24)

4% (6) of pupils were selected for "other" reasons. Those included limited vocabulary, physical health issues (e.g. impacted vision or selective mute), or pupil premium.

# Outcomes for pupils

Please rate the level of improvement you have seen in this pupil during the time they have received support from ARCh



The majority of respondents reported seeing an excellent, good or satisfactory improvement in their pupils for all of the measures asked in the survey.

Confidence in reading and self-confidence/self-esteem saw the greatest improvements, with 98% (194) and 98% (193) of respondents reporting a change in their pupils after ARCh support for both measures respectively. Performance in reading and communication were seen to have improved almost as much with 97% (191) and 97% (191) of respondents reporting a positive change respectively.

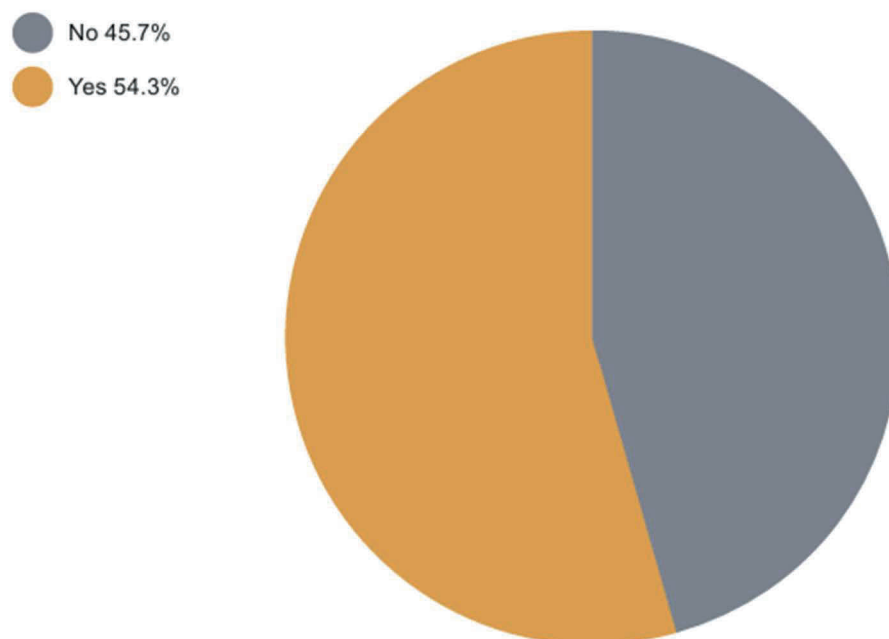
All measures were reported as having an excellent, good or satisfactory improvement by the majority of respondents. Those were:

- Improved attitude to reading, 96% (189)
- Improved reading comprehension, 95% (187)
- Raised level of achievement overall, 94% (185)
- Improved general attitude, 92% (182)
- Improved reading age compared to chronological age, 91% (180)
- Better ability to concentrate, 91% (179).

## Additional support

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Did this pupil receive any additional support – in addition to the help they received from ARCh?



The larger proportion of responses to the survey concerned pupils who were receiving support in addition to their engagement with ARCh, 54% (107). 46% (90) were not receiving any additional support.

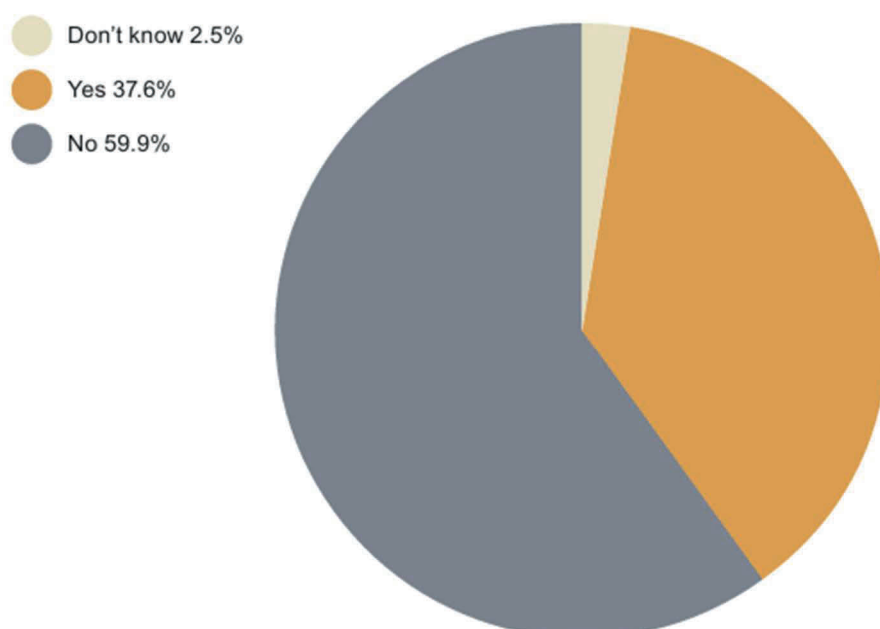
Additional support provided to pupils included:

- Reading interventions
- 1:1 reading
- TA or teacher support
- Phonics
- Small group support
- Reading Booster
- Other interventions (not reading, comprehension or writing)
- SEN support
- Emotional support
- EAL support
- CODE intervention
- ESLA
- Parent volunteer readers
- Young Carer support workers.

# Pupil Premium

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## Was the pupil eligible for Pupil Premium?



The majority of responses to the survey concerned pupils who were not eligible for Pupil Premium, 60% (118). 38% (74) were eligible and respondents were unsure about 3% (5).

## Pupil's reading age

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68% (134) of respondents were unable to provide information about the pupils' reading age.

From the 32% (63) of respondents that could give information about their pupils' reading age, all provided a reading age before and after ARCh assistance.

Due to the small data set available, these conclusions should be considered indicative rather than conclusive.

The following are conclusions that can be drawn from the available data:

- **On average, pupils' reading age increased by 14.11 months**
- **The range of reading age increase was 0 to 76 months**
- **No pupil's reading age decreased**

# Opinions of ARCh

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## Highly valued and beneficial

ARCh is described as 'invaluable', 'excellent', 'amazing', 'fantastic', 'brilliant', and a great resource that provides much-needed one-to-one reading

## Positive impact on pupils

Support provided boosts pupils' confidence, improves their attitude towards reading, helps with reading comprehension and fluency, and increases their enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading. Respondents reported that pupils often look forward to and enjoy the sessions with the Helper.

## Helper qualities and relationships

Reading Helpers are consistently described as 'kind', 'patient', 'calm', 'supportive', 'professional', 'dedicated', 'flexible', 'reliable', and 'excellent at building strong, positive relationships' with the pupils. They also often take the time to understand pupils' interests and try to cater for those.

## Addressing specific needs

Respondents found ARCh being particularly helpful for pupils who need additional support, lack confidence, are reluctant readers, have complex needs, have English as second language, or require emotional support.

## Communication and feedback

Respondents often highlighted Reading Helpers' ability to communicate well with the teachers and provide feedback on sessions. There might be a possibility for further improvement by ensuring that all feedback provided is consistent across all provision.



[www.researchoxford.co.uk](http://www.researchoxford.co.uk)

# What schools say about ARCh

**“They have made such a difference to the children they have been reading with. Their confidence has really improved.”**

**“Our ARCh Volunteer has been fantastic with our pupils and they have all made progress in their reading, confidence and speaking skills this year. We appreciate all that our ARCh readers do.”**

**“Both children in my class have loved spending time with our ARCh Volunteer twice a week. For them, it hasn’t just been about going out of the class to read. They have come back in to tell me the games they have played and the chats they have had too. It’s a bonus that we are now seeing them reading higher quality, more engaging texts. They have also become so much better at being able to comprehend what they have read. Our ARCh Volunteer’s been really flexible and accommodating too, which is great.”**

**“Our ARCh children really enjoy going to their sessions and they have had a confidence boost since attending. They are also now making noticeable progress in her reading, comprehension and reading aloud since the sessions started.”**

**“It has been a pleasure having our ARCh Volunteer come into school. She has made such a difference and the children really love their time with her.”**

**“Our ARCh Volunteer is part of the school!”**

**“We are very much enjoying having our ARCh Volunteer in to visit the children and the children love it!”**

**“Our ARCh Volunteer is amazing! Two of the three children are now at ‘expected’ level, closed the gap. Please keep coming!”**

**“The children’s reading have all improved so much! We are so grateful to our ARCh readers.”**

**“Thanks for all your support, we really benefit from ARCh and are grateful for the support it provides.”**

**“Our ARCh Volunteer is great with the children, we are excited to have her back!”**

**“We are forever grateful to our ARCh readers and all the support and time they give the children.”**

**“We are so fortunate to have our ARCh Volunteer, he makes such a difference and the children all love sessions with him.”**

**“We have had children who are selectively mute but will happily chat away to their ARCh reader!”**

**“It is my absolute favourite of all our interventions as it is so fun and engaging but also gets results!”**

**“The children are really benefitting from the support which she is providing & look forward to her visits.”**

**“We LOVE our ARCh readers and we think they are all fantastic!”**

**“They are so dedicated to the children and they rarely cancel their sessions - which for volunteers, always astounds me.”**

**“We have had children who have been completely switched off to reading and they have transformed in the time they have been doing ARCh.”**

**“Our ARCh Volunteer is amazing with our SEN children and often has the most complex children and she manages so well. For some children she has, doing anything out of the ordinary is stressful for them but they happily skip away to ARCh. When we had a child who displayed challenging behaviours - he could be having one of his most difficult moments but as soon as I mentioned ARCh, he walked straight there!”**

**“The kids all love them without fail and the sessions make them happy which is the most important thing to us.”**



# Things children say about ARCh

It's helped my reading  
and I enjoy it more  
now!

I wish I could take you  
to my new school. I  
love reading and  
playing games with  
you. Thank you for the  
amazing time we have  
shared

Only good thing about  
school is reading with  
R

ARCh is so fun

After this game we'll  
read a bit – we must be  
professional!

I want to carry on doing  
it in Year 7 too.

I really enjoyed that  
book we started last  
week. Can we look at it  
now?

I like spending time with  
you. It's helping me in the  
classroom.

Enjoying reading with  
S. Helping me 100%!  
I like reading!

# ARCh Reading Helpers

No formal qualifications are required to become an ARCh Reading Helper, just enthusiasm for reading, enjoyment of children's company and good communication skills.

We provide an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, interview and take up references for every helper. Once the application, checking and initial training process is complete, readers are allocated to a primary school near their home or work place. The school selects children for each volunteer to work with and they benefit from 'happy half hour sessions' during the school day, ideally twice a week.

The charity provides books and games to use in the sessions and these are selected with the individual child in mind, to encourage them to enjoy reading.

It is a long-term commitment as volunteers continue to work with the same children for the entire year, to build a supportive, mentoring relationship and boost confidence. We do therefore ask volunteers to commit to work with ARCh for at least one year.

It is important that adults enjoy and gain from their experience with ARCh. Many volunteers continue year on year!



We provide every helper with a book box to use with their three children. Contents are personalised to the individual children's interests and ability, which encourages reading for pleasure.

The book box contains a wide range of genres; picture books, novelty books (for example - pop up, lift the flaps), simple chapter books, poetry, duologues and plays, joke books, puzzles, children's magazines and comics. Non-fiction books are also

popular, and we provide an atlas and a dictionary too. The box also contains a selection of games.

Our Reading Helpers get to know their children very well and we work with them to find just the right books they can relate to which will entice their reluctant readers. We offer opportunities for reading helpers to change their resources whenever needed, so that there is always something exciting and new to engage the children.

**It is important to keep ARCh resources fresh and up to date, so we offer a book box sponsorship scheme as a way for individuals or businesses to support ARCh. See our page on ‘How you can help support our work’.**

# New Volunteer Training

87 new Volunteers were trained in 2025

The initial training covers the following topics:

- ARCh ethos and approach
- Why children may be struggling with reading
- How ARCh helps children
- Understanding the reading process
- Children's books
- The importance of games
- What to expect in primary schools today
- How ARCh supports its volunteers
- Safeguarding - additional online training courses via Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) and Prevent

We train groups of up to 30 in person and groups of up to 10 via Zoom. ARCh volunteers come from all walks of life and have a wealth of experience to offer. We all learn from one another, and the sharing of good practice is very important. The training course is inclusive; we ensure everyone participates, using a mixture of whole group work, smaller groups and paired working.



Feedback from the Zoom Volunteer Training Course:

*"The training was very enjoyable and comprehensive."*

*"I felt the training has helped me to feel well-prepared to start in school."*

*"It really helped to clarify our role as reading helpers, together with a thorough look at the kinds of challenges that different children may be facing and how to navigate these."*

*"I felt that a key part is the ongoing support that we will receive from our fieldworkers as well as from Jane and Elaine and others at ARCh."*

# On-going training and support

All of our ARCh Reading Helpers have access to on-going training and support on topics such as Oracy, Phonics, Dyslexia and Neurodiversity.



After their first months at ARCh, volunteers are invited to a Recall session. This is an in-person session, led by Elaine and Jane, that gives volunteers an opportunity to share their experience as an ARCh volunteer so far and also share ideas and good practice with each other. It is also an opportunity for volunteers to meet with the Field Workers and discuss in smaller, locational groups.



# Why are we needed?

The National Literacy Trust's 2025 Annual Literacy Survey paints a stark picture of children's engagement with reading, confirming that the work of organisations like ARCh has never been more vital.

Reading enjoyment among children and young people has now fallen to its lowest level in 20 years. **Just 1 in 3 (32.7%) children and young people aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in their free time** in 2025 - a 36% decrease since tracking began in 2005.

**Fewer than 1 in 5 (18.7%) children aged 8 to 18 now read something daily in their free time**, the lowest level ever recorded, representing a drop of nearly 20 percentage points since 2005.

Even among the youngest readers (aged 5 to 8), daily reading rates fell to 44.5%, down 3.4 percentage points in just one year.

## Oxfordshire

Life chances - the opportunities each individual has to improve their quality of life and fulfil their potential - are profoundly unequal across our county. For those born into deprivation, low educational attainment, digital exclusion and unemployment can have a stifling effect throughout life.

One in six children in Oxford city is living in poverty, and one in nine across the wider county. This can mark the start of a lifetime of deprivation and inequality, with lower educational attainment and earnings, and higher involvement in the criminal justice system among the likely consequences.

Educational inequality persists despite Oxfordshire being home to world-leading institutions. Disadvantage starts early: measures of development from age two already show poorer outcomes for the most income-deprived children. By the end of primary school, 35% of these children in Oxfordshire do not reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. The gap widens as children progress through school and is compounded when poverty intersects with coming from a racially minoritised background.

Without a strong educational foundation, children are less likely to access fulfilling careers and economic security. The Covid pandemic has further disrupted outcomes for a generation, with research showing that 59% of young people in the UK describe their generation's outlook as frightening.

## What Motivates Children to Read?

The National Literacy Trust's research highlights clear pathways to re-engagement:

- **2 in 5** children are motivated to read when material relates to a favourite film or TV series (38.1%) or matches their interests and hobbies (37.1%)
- **3 in 10** (30.9%) are drawn in by an interesting book cover or title
- **1 in 4** (26.6%) value having the freedom to choose what they read

ARCh is able to enable children to access books that they enjoy within our child-led reading sessions, increasing overall enjoyment and leading them to a wider reading experience.

# Business Partners

Children are the workforce of the future, so we see it as key that local businesses support education.

## One hour a week can change a child's life

Employers partnering with ARCh help us improve the literacy skills of today's children and of the workforce of the future. Companies invest in the local community, and this is attractive to staff and customers.

## In 2025 we worked with staff from the following organisations:

- Oxford City Council
- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford University Press (OUP)
- Elsevier
- Anders Electronics
- Rhubarb Seating
- Huber+Suhner
- BMW
- Unipart House
- CBRE
- HELLA
- Oliver and James Funeral Directors



Employee Volunteers go into a local primary school for one hour a week during their work day. They support 2 children for an entire year. We are incredibly grateful to all businesses and organisations that encourage their staff to use their volunteering hours with ARCh and enabling this to happen.

“Work has seen lots of change recently, and can be busy but I value and enjoy working with the children. I feel like I’m making a difference to the children”

“We can do other volunteering through OUP but I think about 99% of people volunteer with ARCh!”

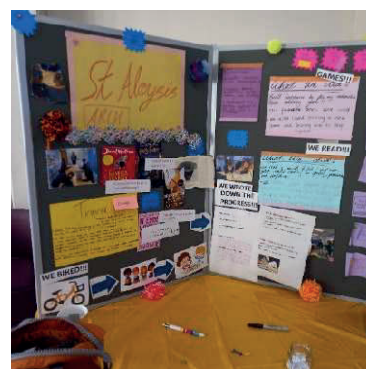
“I look forward to seeing the children and it gives me a lift to get out of my own adult concerns and stress at work for a short time each week. It helps to keep things in perspective.”

# Student/6th Form Volunteers

We entered our fourth year of working with St Edward's School in Oxford, with 5 students training as ARCh volunteers and supporting children in Wolvercote and West Kidlington primary schools. We were delighted to be included in the St Edward's Charitable Trust Impact Report, highlighting the benefits both for the children supported and the students themselves.



Students from St Edward's created a presentation about their volunteering time with ARCh to share with other students and the St Edward's Community.



“It's great for an independent school to support a state primary via ARCh. The Sixth Formers acquired new skills and experience of volunteering with younger children and acted as good reading role models.”

“The developing of relationships between the students and the children was particularly noticeable.”

# Community Volunteers

What our Volunteers say:

**“Thanks so much for this opportunity. I'm really enjoying my time at my school and it really must be the fastest one and a half hours of the week!”**

**“I've been an assistant reader for two terms and am thoroughly enjoying the role. The children I work with are nice, polite and friendly and always ready to read with me. They are now most proficient at reading and beginning to read in an expressive way. We end the session with a different way to use their brains, i.e. in wordsearches, playing cards and different types of puzzles. The school staff are most accommodating and helpful; nothing is too much trouble for them. I am so glad I copied the advert for ARCh and would recommend it to all who have some spare time to do some good and useful help.”**

**“THANK YOU for training support and amazing materials to help”**

**“Thank you for all your valuable support and guidance. I've really enjoyed all our get together over the past year. Knowing I have your support is very much appreciated and crucial to us all.”**

**“It's a pleasure and a privilege to volunteer with ARCh and so rewarding when you get promising results!”**

**“Really enjoying it. So impressed with ARCh and how it is organised.”**

**“Just as every year, very delightful and fun to be with the kids”**

**“I love it. Glad I did it. I look forward to it”**

**“I feel like I'm making a difference. I really enjoy it. I want to continue working here for as long as they'll have me. It's a lovely school.”**

**“Surprising to myself getting more out of it than the children are”**

**“It's such a lovely school and I'm so pleased to be part of it. Looking forward to next term already!”**

**“I just want to say a big thank you to yourself and the ARCh staff for giving me this opportunity to work with these school kids, to support and encourage their reading, and hopefully have a positive impact on their lives.”**

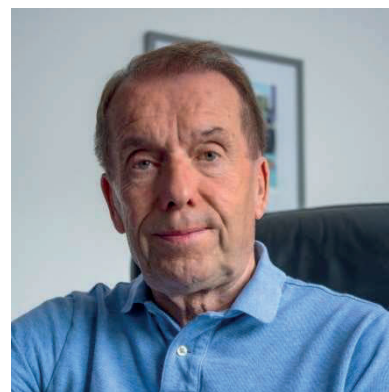
**“I do this as much for me as the children. I love it. Can't believe it's been 10 years!”**

**“Such a privilege to do this. I love it!”**

**“Thanks! It's filling my soul!”**

# ARCh Volunteer:

## David Thompson



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*"It feels like I have made a small but meaningful contribution"*

---

My name is David Thompson, and I became an ARCh reading volunteer in September 2024.

It's been a rewarding experience for me, just as I hope it has been for the children I've helped. This is my personal experience and I hope it's helpful for anyone considering joining ARCh.

I'm retired and now live alone. In July 2023, I moved to East Hagbourne in Oxfordshire to be closer to my daughter. The villagers were incredibly welcoming and I quickly settled into my new house.

With more free time on my hands, I wanted to find something fulfilling and challenging. Ideally, it should also benefit the community. At the time, I wasn't aware of ARCh, but a friend suggested I check them out and maybe enjoy helping young children improve their reading. I researched their website and applied.

My grown-up daughter and son both encouraged me to go for it, so I submitted my application. The first step was to pass an interview with the ARCh directors. The interview was friendly, and they explained the role and responsibilities. I think I convinced them I could do it.

Next, I had to complete legal DBS checks, which were straightforward. Then, I attended a full day of training focused on safeguarding aspects of working in a school. It also emphasised that I'm not a teacher but an adult friend who helps children improve their reading and plays games with them.

So, by the end of October, I was ready to begin. My next task was for my Field Worker to find me a school willing to use ARCh. A primary school was just five minutes' walk from my home, so I asked my field worker if they used it. They said they hadn't yet, but would contact them to see if they might be interested. In December, the headmistress invited me to meet her and visit the school.

This was my first school visit in 25 years, and I was completely unprepared.

The school was bustling with life and inquisitive minds. Each class had around 30

children, and the teachers managed to do an outstanding job despite the pressure. The headmistress asked the teachers to nominate a child who might benefit from reading support. She then chose three from the list.

The new term began in January, and I was excited to meet my three new friends. ARCh provided me with a brief questionnaire to help get to know them better. I had a 30-minute session with each child and was to meet them twice a week.

This was probably the most daunting part of the role: what would I say? How would they react? I decided to be myself and try to get to know them as much as possible. Time flew by.

The second meeting was much easier, and it became clear each child had different challenges. Two of mine had difficult home lives and virtually no contact with an adult who read with them. The third was new to the country, and English was not his first language, making him somewhat withdrawn. I found that alternating reading time with a game involving reading worked best.

After a few weeks, they began to open up about themselves and their lives. They seemed to enjoy our time together.

At the end of the school year, I informed them I'd be starting with new children in September. They all expressed their gratitude for the time I spent with them, which is incredibly rewarding.

This year, I've got three new children. Two of them are suspected to have ADHD, and one is confirmed to have dyslexia. ADHD is surprisingly common these days, and getting the children to focus is proving a challenge. However, I've found that a mix of reading and games works best.

When they finally pay attention, I'm amazed at how well they can read.

Leaving the school after seeing the children always feels like I have made a small but meaningful contribution, and I always leave with a smile.

The teaching staff have come to know me and stop by from time to time to discuss how things are going.

So, if you enjoy a challenge and want to make a significant difference in a young person's life, I strongly recommend talking to ARCh.



# ARCh Volunteer:

## Pauline Carter

Fifteen Years On...



---

*"Would You Like to Inspire a Child to Read?"*

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The words leapt out at me from the pages of our local free magazine. As a lifelong avid reader and retired secondary school teacher, much saddened by the number of children arriving in Year 7 with poor literacy, I was soon on the phone to ARCh, offering my services as a volunteer.

I found the training enjoyable and helpful and was impressed by the seamless teamwork displayed by Jane and Elaine. After a term's wait I started at a primary school 3 miles from home in January 2011.

Since then I have worked with some 60 children, mostly in Year 3. It has been fun getting to know them all and finding out their interests, so that I can choose appropriate material at book exchanges. Incidentally I am very firm about waiting until we have read before we play games.

There are, of course, children who will always stay in my memory, such as the little girl who came to me as a reluctant reader and who one day looked up at me, beamed and said "Reading's fun, isn't it?". That was one of the best moments of all.

There have been many amusing moments, too. One child, on turning a page and seeing no illustrations there, announced "That's a lot of words!" She managed to read them all, too.

More recently a boy asked about the award badges on my lanyard. I explained what they were for, adding that I'd be getting my 15-year one in the summer. His eyes opened wide in amazement. "And will you be old?" he asked. Well, as I'm in my 80th year I suppose I am old, and as my husband has at long last retired, I feel it's the right time to hand in my green box.

It's satisfying to know that I have made a difference to children and I do hope all present and future ARCh volunteers enjoy their work as much as I have.

ARCh is grateful to Witney Educational Foundation (WEF) for their financial support over the years, enabling schools like Pauline's to receive the ARCh service fully funded.

# Employee Volunteer:

## Yi-Wen Chen

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*“It’s been a journey that has enriched both the children’s lives and my own.”*

---



When I first discovered ARCh, it immediately stood out to me. I’ve always enjoyed working with children, and at that point I was looking for opportunities that would allow me to do just that. Having recently moved from Scotland to Oxfordshire, I also wanted to get involved in my new local community. On a more personal level, I didn’t grow up in a home where reading was encouraged, and in my country reading for pleasure was not common. It wasn’t until I was older that I realised how calming, enjoyable, and enriching reading could be. So when I learned about ARCh’s mission, I thought it was a brilliant idea and something I truly wanted to be part of.

I arranged my volunteering around my work schedule as agreed with my line manager for my paid employment. It usually happens during my extended lunch break on either Monday or Friday. ARCh was really helpful in arranging for a school that was close enough that I could walk there. I really enjoy this as it gave me a refreshing pause in the middle of the day. The staff at the school were always welcoming and flexible whenever I needed to swap a session, which made balancing everything easier.

The sessions themselves were always full of surprises. The children could choose what they wanted to read from a wide selection of books provided by ARCh. Sometimes the children even asked for specific books, which our lovely Field Worker in ARCh kindly managed to get hold of them and sent the books into school before the next session. Their passion in getting the right books for the children was truly amazing! Reading was only part of the session. We also played games, from simple word challenges to creative, child-invented activities. What I loved most was seeing how the children gradually changed. At first, they were nervous or unsure, but slowly they relaxed, found books they enjoyed, and started looking forward to continuing their stories week after week. Watching that spark of interest grow was a wonderful experience.

Volunteering with ARCh has been incredibly rewarding for me. It feels good to know I’m making a small difference, but I’ve also learned so much from the children themselves, especially their creativity, curiosity, and resilience. The experience has given me confidence, joy, and skills I can carry into other parts of my life.

I would encourage anyone to volunteer with ARCh. It’s not only about helping children with reading; it’s about building connections, sharing moments, and being part of something meaningful. For me, it’s been a journey that has enriched both the children’s lives and my own.

# ARCh long service award winners

Many of our Reading Helpers reached milestones in their volunteering careers this year. Those who were present at our volunteer meeting in July received their certificates from High Sheriff of Oxfordshire John May. Congratulations and enormous thank yous go to...

## 15 Years

Jenny Pettengell  
Hazel Geatches  
Ruth Leman

## 10 years

David Jones  
Sue Rous  
Elaine Pullin  
Derek Thornhill  
Janice Williams  
Katharine Wilson  
Jenny Ray

## 5 years

Kate Buckley (OUP Volunteer)  
Karen Chidwick  
Geraldine Collett  
Susan Dennyson  
Catherine Dobson  
Gill James

Lucy Serocold (OUP Volunteer)  
Rick Hughes  
Lucy Binney  
Sue Cavalier  
Sue Enevoldsen  
Nicola Kantorowicz  
Jane Prior



# How you can help support our work

The need for our work is increasing - more children than ever need support across Oxfordshire.

## As an individual you could:

- Donate  
Localgiving – <https://localgiving.org/charity/arch/>
- Shop online and support with EasyFundraising  
[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/archassistedreadingforchildreninoxfordshire/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/archassistedreadingforchildreninoxfordshire/)
- Remember ARCh in your will



## As a company you could:

- Sign up to the ARCh Company Volunteer Scheme
- Take part in a Challenge event
- Sponsorship of the ARCh service to a local school
- Sponsorship of Book Boxes
- Pro bono work
- Charity of the Year scheme
- Staff fundraising
- Books and games donations
- Donation of meeting rooms
- Payroll giving
- Gifts in Kind

## What your money buys ...

- £852 will recruit, train and equip a new volunteer and support them for one year
- £300 will buy 1 box full of books and games
- £30 will buy 2 word games to encourage a fun session
- £10 will buy a book to engage a reluctant reader



# Spreading the ARCh word!

*This year we have attended many events including*

- *Banbury Mayoral inauguration*
- *Oxford EID extravaganza*
- *Burford Golf Day*
- *Oxford Community and Voluntary Action Awards*
- *Banbury PlayDay*
- *Cherwell District Council Voluntary Sector Forum*
- *Oxford Older People's Day*
- *London Literacy Link Meeting*
- *Oxford Indie Book Fair*
- *Freemasons Summer Charity Dinner*



## ***ARCh has been featured in...***

**Banbury Guardian**  
**Oxford Mail**  
**Oxford Clarion**  
**Read This magazine**  
**Round & About magazine**  
**BBC Radio Oxford**  
**Greatest Hits Radio**  
**WRFM Radio**  
**Kidlington News**  
**Mostly Books Newsletter**  
**Didcot Directory**



# Collaborations

## Oxford City Football Club

In April, ARCh was selected as the “Charity of the Month” for OCFC and we were invited along to their last game of the season for Family Day. We were delighted to be featured in their match programme and for the free tickets that were offered to ARCh Volunteers!



## Banbury Beings Project

Banbury BID put together an art installation at Banbury Train Station highlighting 12 local groups that support the community. ARCh was delighted to be chosen to be a part of this. The incredible colourful art work will be on display outside Banbury Train Station for the next year!



## Oxford University Press visit

Our continued partnership with OUP and their staff was celebrated with a visit from children from St Mary's school in Bicester in the summer term. The children, who read with ARCh OUP volunteers, were able to visit OUP and see the press in action!

## Events with ARCh Patron James Carter

Poet and author James Carter worked with Emma on two events in the summer for families. The events had a focus on music, writing poetry, and finding enjoyment in words! Thank you to James for giving his time and to everyone who attended the fun sessions in Banbury and Didcot.



## WolvLitFest

In October, Jane and ARCh Volunteer Maggie were asked to run a workshop at the first annual WolvLitFest, run by the Oxford Independent Authors group. They put on a fantastic workshop around the magic of shared reading that was enjoyed by many families who attended.



## Oxford Community and Voluntary Action

We continue to be so grateful to OCVA for the support they give to ARCh and other charitable organisations across Oxfordshire.

We were honoured to attend the OCVA Awards where our former volunteer and trustee Honor Somerset received a very well deserved accolade, gaining "Highly Commended" in the Voice and Vision Award.



## Didcot Powerhouse Royal Visit

Elaine and one of our Didcot volunteers, Yi-Wen Chen met the Duke of Gloucester at a Royal Event at Milton Park in Didcot. The event, coordinated by the Didcot Powerhouse Fund (DPF), was arranged to celebrate the brilliant work the DPF does. In just 3 years, they have given out £400,000 in grants, supporting nearly 9,000 people across Greater Didcot. The DPF works with a range of organisations and we are so grateful to have been in receipt of funding and support over the last 3 years. It was a truly special event and an honour to meet the Duke of Gloucester and tell him about the incredible work our volunteers do.



# Thanks to our Funders and Supporters

Many organisations and individuals supported the charity during 2025. It is thanks to their investment in ARCh that we have been able to continue our work with children in the past year.

We know that there is a bigger than ever need for ARCh and together we have played a vital role in helping struggling children reach their true potential. Thank you to all, including:

Pye Charitable Trust  
Shanly Foundation  
Lennox Hannay  
Dovecote Café at Kidlington Baptist Church  
Janet Money  
Councillor Michael Waine  
Councillor Mark Lygo  
Councillor Sam James-Lawrie  
Cash for Kids  
Chipping Norton Literary Festival  
Abingdon Prep School  
John and Penelope Lebus Trust  
Everyone Active Grant for Didcot  
Cooper Charitable Trust  
Christchurch College  
Witney Lions  
Old Marston Parish Council  
Witney Educational Foundation (WEF)

Stonegarth Fund  
Kennington Parish Council  
Brian Archibald (Masons)  
SOHA Housing Community Fund  
HDH Wills Charitable Trust  
Tesco Didcot  
Tesco Bicester Stronger Starts  
Carol Quinton  
Councillor Thomas Ashby  
Councillor Nathan Ley  
Councillor Susanna Presell  
Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Liz Leffman  
Barnwood Limited  
Green Square Accord  
Stanton Ballard Charitable Trust  
Henley Rotary  
Abingdon Flower Club

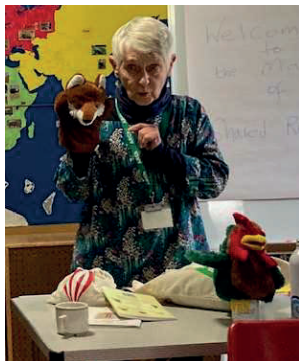


## Special thank yous to ARCh volunteers!

Thank you to Claire Parker for raising money for ARCh with two different events! First, Claire hosted her Open Garden with funds raised going to ARCh which raised an incredible £740! Claire is also a member of The Oxford Piano Group. Having arranged a concert at the Jacqueline Du Pre building at St Hilda's College, the group were looking for an additional charity for the group to sponsor and Claire suggested ARCh. Claire performed a Sarabande (a stately dance in triple time) from Bach's Partita no 1 and a Debussy Prelude - La Cathedrale Engloutie, in front of the 40 guests as part of the concert. We are so grateful to Claire for suggesting ARCh as the additional charity and the funds raised amounted to £130 for the charity!



Thank you to Dinah Adams who also participated in the Open Garden Scheme, again with funds raised coming to ARCh.



Thank you to Maggie Lloyd for her continued support with her duologues and supporting ARCh at WolvLitFest.

Thank you to Chris Poad, Peter Coggins, Catherine Roffe, and Marilyn Driver Davidson for coming along to the Oxford Indie Book Fair and sharing the joy they gain from their ARCh time.



## Thanks to those who have given their time so generously in different ways...



**Rose Somerset – Photographer**

**Janet Turner - Managing our library**



# The 2025 Christopher Quinton Award

## Colin Paice

Each year we present the Christopher Quinton award, in memory of our first Chairman, to mark outstanding contribution of a volunteer who has given much to the charity.

The 2025 award was made to Colin Paice, for managing the ARCh website for an amazing 12 years.

We first met Colin in 2013 at a networking event arranged by ROBIN (Responsible Oxfordshire Business Involvement Network) which connects businesses, charities, and communities across Oxfordshire.



Colin was looking to offer a charity some pro bono work - and ARCh turned out to be the lucky recipient!

Colin proved to be the perfect webmaster, always giving us sensible advice in plain English rather than using technical terms!

He was consistently responsive, ensuring that our website was always up to date.

We were, of course, we were very sad when Colin told us of his retirement plans and we thank him for all his work over many years.



# **Tribute to Ian Hudspeth OBE**

## **Chair of ARCh Trustees and former Leader of Oxfordshire County Council**

We were deeply saddened by the news in December 2025 that Ian had passed away after a brave fight against illness.

We had the privilege of first meeting Ian in 2012, when he attended the ARCh Readathon at Oxford's Central Library, in his role as Leader of Oxfordshire County Council.

Ian happily joined in the fun of the day and is pictured below reading with a group of children at our event.



Ian showed a deep understanding of the challenges some children face with reading, and how profoundly this can affect their lives if not addressed early.

From his experience, Ian knew that, despite the challenges many face, every child has the ability to succeed and to make a meaningful contribution.

Ian's own success was evident in the way he served the people of Oxfordshire in so many different areas.

When he stepped down from the County Council in 2021 and contacted us about becoming an ARCh trustee, we were truly honoured.

Ian went on to become our Chair — a role in which he excelled. It was a real pleasure to work with him and we learned so much from his insight, wisdom and experience.

Above all, we came to understand why he was held in such high regard by so many across Oxfordshire.

Ian will be very much missed by so many people in our county.

Our thoughts and sympathy go to his widow Carolyn and daughter Chloe.

Registered number: 07962217

Charity number: 1146276

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**Assisted Reading for Children**

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**UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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**Prepared By:**  
Barnes4Business Limited  
Chartered Certified Accountants  
12 Murdock Road  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire  
OX26 4PP

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**TRUSTEES**

Saira Ali (resigned 12 November 2024)  
Ian Hudspeth  
Susan Hine (resigned 12 November 2024)  
Honor Somerset (resigned 11 March 2025)  
Margaret Stevens  
Jane Williamson  
Derek Thornhill (resigned 15 March 2025)  
Benjamin Morel-Allen  
Curtis Leung (appointed 9 July 2024)

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

Gobles Court  
7 Market Square  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire  
OX26 6AA

**COMPANY NUMBER**

07962217

**CHARITY NUMBER**

1146276

**ACCOUNTANTS**

Barnes4Business Limited  
Chartered Certified Accountants  
12 Murdock Road  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire  
OX26 4PP

**ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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| Balance Sheet                              | 9        |
| Notes to the Accounts                      | 10 to 15 |
| Detailed Statement of Financial Activities | 14       |

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

**STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

**FORM OF THE CHARITY**

Assisted Reading for Children (ARCh) is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The trustees are also the directors for the purposes of company law and are appointed by the members at the AGM.

**PRINCIPAL AIM**

ARCh is an educational charity whose aim is to help primary school children achieve a confident level of literacy by imparting a love of reading through regular, personalised, mentoring support from trained volunteers.

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

About half of our income comes from subscriptions paid by schools for the services of our unpaid volunteers. The level of the subscription is kept as low as possible. This source of income is linked directly to the number of our volunteers in schools, and therefore relates in a relatively stable way to the overall level of activity of the charity. Following a period during which, in recognition of school budgetary pressures, the subscription was not increased in line with the costs of supporting the volunteers, the trustees agreed a plan to bring it back into line. It was raised this year, and we expect to raise it again in the following two years. The remaining income comes from grants and donations. These are a more irregular source of income, but grants or donations from a number of sources are repeated from year to year.

About 75% of our expenditure goes on staff costs, for the central office staff and for the fieldworkers who directly service our volunteers.

**RESERVES POLICY**

As a charity ARCh is regulated by the Charities Commission which asks us to state our reserves policy. It is our aim to hold unrestricted reserves so that we can be confident of our financial position and meet all obligations for at least 6-12 months. Some specific funds from donations or grants are held in a Designated Fund, and used to support the objective requested by the donor(s). The balance of our reserves are held as unrestricted general funds and can be spent on anything in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

**PUBLIC BENEFIT**

In exercising their powers and duties the trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, in particular in relation to the enhancement of education.

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**

**OPERATIONS REPORT 2024-2025**

**Overview**

We began the year with around 200 active volunteer reading helpers in April 2024.

**Working with schools and volunteers**

We increased the financial contribution we ask schools to make towards the ARCh service to £480 per volunteer per year, to be reviewed annually.

Demand for ARCh support continued to increase. The effects of disrupted schooling and reduced social interactions on young children caused by the Covid pandemic continue to be felt, as the babies and pre-schoolers from 2020 start school.

We conducted our usual annual schools' survey to measure impact of ARCh support over the year, in association with Research Oxford. We launched a new format Impact Report, to complement our usual Annual Report.

**Volunteer recruitment and training**

We continued to work towards our target of a net gain of 90 new volunteers, funded by Oxfordshire Community Foundation's Step Change grant. Despite considerable success in recruitment, progress has been slower than expected, partly as a result of high turnover. A decision was made to extend the Recruitment Officer's contract for a further year, until January 2026.

We continued to hold interviews and training for the majority of new volunteers via Zoom, but also provided in-person training options. We also conducted face to face Recall and Refresher training in Safeguarding, and Phonics workshops.

By April 2025 there were 270 volunteers on our database, 242 of them active.

**Other initiatives and collaboration**

Our successful Company Volunteer scheme with Oxford University Press continued into its 13th year, with a visit to their offices for children supported via the scheme in July 2024.

It has proved hard to engage other organisations in our employer-supported volunteering scheme. Disappointingly, a number of companies who had pledged support via the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership did not follow through.

We have succeeded in extending the diversity of our volunteer workforce, particularly through new employee volunteers, and 6th form and student volunteers.

Thanks to funding, we were able to buy an extended range of books and games to reflect the diversity of the children we support.

**Recognition and awards**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**

ARCh was Highly Commended in OCVA's Volunteer Organisation of the Year and one of the three finalists in the Cherwell Business Awards Charity and Community category.

At the July 2024 meeting we welcomed guest speaker Caroline Derby from Oxford University Press who spoke about the Raise a Reader project which, in conjunction with the National Literacy Trust, has installed libraries into schools in deprived areas. We were honoured that Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire Robert Buckeldee presented awards marking the long service of a number of volunteers.

In December 2024 everyone at our volunteer meeting was entertained by three speakers – Korky Paul, Chip Colquhoun and Mario Coelho. Our three speakers and some of our reading helpers kindly agreed to talk to about the importance of reading and their ARCh experience on film, shared via social media.

At our Spring 2025 volunteer meeting on the theme of oracy, our Recruitment Officer Emma Orton explained how oracy is now being developed in schools, and presented practical ideas for volunteers to try in their sessions.

**Presentations and media presence**

On several occasions ARCh was featured on BBC Radio Oxford and Greatest Hits Radio, and in the local press.

**Staffing**

We welcomed three new Field Workers: Caroline Carpenter (Bicester & Thame) in June, Cathy Penny (Oxford) in December and Kathryn Schmidt (West Oxfordshire) in February 2025.

**SMALL COMPANY PROVISIONS**

The report was prepared in accordance with the special provisions within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 23 September 2025



Margaret Stevens  
Trustee

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ASSISTED READING FOR CHILDREN**

I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2025 .

**RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER**

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants .

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to an audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS STATEMENT**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS STATEMENT**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and

- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

.....

Date: 23 September 2025

Kelvin Barnes FCCA  
Barnes4Business Limited  
Chartered Certified Accountants  
12 Murdock Road  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire  
OX26 4PP

*Barnes4Business Ltd*  
*K Barnes*

**Statement of Financial Activities  
for the year ended 31 March 2025**

|                                                      | <b>Unrestricted<br/>funds</b> | <b>Restricted<br/>funds</b> | <b>2025<br/>Total</b> | <b>2024<br/>Total</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                      | <b>£</b>                      | <b>£</b>                    | <b>£</b>              | <b>£</b>              |
| <b>Income</b>                                        |                               |                             |                       |                       |
| Income from generated funds                          |                               |                             |                       |                       |
| Donations and legacies                               | 102,739                       | -                           | 102,739               | 76,702                |
| Income from Investments                              | 4,577                         | -                           | 4,577                 | 4,303                 |
| Income from charitable activities                    | 91,603                        | -                           | 91,603                | 77,175                |
| <b>Total Income and endowments</b>                   | <b>198,919</b>                | <b>-</b>                    | <b>198,919</b>        | <b>158,180</b>        |
| <b>Expenses</b>                                      |                               |                             |                       |                       |
| Costs of generating funds                            |                               |                             |                       |                       |
| Expenditure on Charitable activities                 | 210,470                       | -                           | 210,470               | 176,766               |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                                | <b>210,470</b>                | <b>-</b>                    | <b>210,470</b>        | <b>176,766</b>        |
| <b>Net gains on investments</b>                      |                               |                             |                       |                       |
| <b>Net Income</b>                                    | <b>(11,551)</b>               | <b>-</b>                    | <b>(11,551)</b>       | <b>(18,586)</b>       |
| <b>Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets</b> |                               |                             |                       |                       |
| <b>Net movement in funds:</b>                        |                               |                             |                       |                       |
| <b>Net income for the year</b>                       | <b>(11,551)</b>               | <b>-</b>                    | <b>(11,551)</b>       | <b>(18,586)</b>       |
| Total funds brought forward                          | 162,090                       | -                           | 162,090               | 180,676               |
| <b>Net funds carried forward</b>                     | <b>150,539</b>                | <b>-</b>                    | <b>150,539</b>        | <b>162,090</b>        |

This statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities

**BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2025**

|                                                       | Notes | 2025<br>£      | 2024<br>£      |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>FIXED ASSETS</b>                                   |       |                |                |
| Tangible assets                                       | 2     | 2,319          | 3,354          |
| <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>                                 |       |                |                |
| Debtors (amounts falling due within one year)         | 3     | 6,504          | 4,590          |
| Cash at bank and in hand                              |       | <u>143,568</u> | <u>160,677</u> |
|                                                       |       | 150,072        | 165,267        |
| <b>CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year</b> | 4     | <u>1,852</u>   | <u>6,531</u>   |
| <b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>                             |       | <u>148,220</u> | <u>158,736</u> |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>          |       | <u>150,539</u> | <u>162,090</u> |
| <b>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</b>                           |       |                |                |
| <b>Unrestricted funds</b>                             | 6     |                |                |
| General fund                                          |       | 70,383         | 119,064        |
| Designated funds                                      |       | <u>80,156</u>  | <u>43,026</u>  |
|                                                       |       | <u>150,539</u> | <u>162,090</u> |

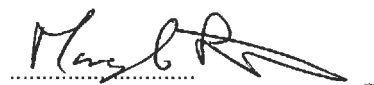
For the year ending 31 March 2025 the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

**Approved by the board of trustees on 23 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by**



Margaret Stevens  
Trustee

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**1a. Basis Of Accounting FRS**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2016 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK FRS 102 (Charities SORP FRS 102 as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016).

Assisted Reading for Children meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

**1b. Incoming Resources**

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income, the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy, and any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met or fully within the control of the charitable company.

**1c. Resources Expended**

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

**1d. Allocation And Apportionment Of Costs**

All costs relate to the single activity of the charitable company and are recognised accordingly.

**1e. Fund Accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Designated funds are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

### 1f. Depreciation

Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets over their estimated useful lives.

Equipment straight line 33%

### 1g. Pension Costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension charge represents the amounts payable by the company to the fund in respect of the year.

## 2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

|                         | <b>Equipment</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|
|                         | <b>£</b>         | <b>£</b>      |
| <b>Cost</b>             |                  |               |
| At 1 April 2024         | 40,986           | 40,986        |
| Additions               | 301              | 301           |
| At 31 March 2025        | <u>41,287</u>    | <u>41,287</u> |
| <b>Depreciation</b>     |                  |               |
| At 1 April 2024         | 37,632           | 37,632        |
| For the year            | 1,336            | 1,336         |
| At 31 March 2025        | <u>38,968</u>    | <u>38,968</u> |
| <b>Net Book Amounts</b> |                  |               |
| At 31 March 2025        | <u>2,319</u>     | <u>2,319</u>  |
| At 31 March 2024        | <u>3,354</u>     | <u>3,354</u>  |

## 3. DEBTORS

|                                      | <b>2025</b>  | <b>2024</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                      | <b>£</b>     | <b>£</b>     |
| Amounts falling due within one year: |              |              |
| Other debtors                        | 6,504        | 4,590        |
|                                      | <u>6,504</u> | <u>4,590</u> |

#### 4. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

|                 | 2025         | 2024         |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
|                 | £            | £            |
| Other creditors | 1,852        | 6,531        |
|                 | <u>1,852</u> | <u>6,531</u> |

#### 5. LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. Each member gives a guarantee to contribute a sum not exceeding £1, to the company should it be wound up. At 31 March 2025 there were 5 members.

#### 6. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

|                                                   | Brought<br>forward | Incoming<br>resources | Outgoing<br>resources | Transfers | Carried<br>forward |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|
|                                                   | £                  | £                     | £                     | £         | £                  |
| General fund                                      | 119,064            | 133,167               | (181,848)             | -         | 70,383             |
| Designated Fund - ARCh Development Fund           | 21,910             | 2,240                 | (5,334)               | -         | 18,816             |
| Designated Fund - Step Change                     | 11,618             | 34,000                | (17,388)              | -         | 28,230             |
| Designated Fund - ARCh Area-Specific Support Fund | 9,498              | 29,512                | (5,900)               | -         | 33,110             |
|                                                   | <u>162,090</u>     | <u>198,919</u>        | <u>(210,470)</u>      | <u>-</u>  | <u>150,539</u>     |

##### **Designated Fund - ARCh Development Fund**

Funds allocated for working on expanding our work with the most disadvantaged children in the county.

##### **Designated Fund - Step Change**

Funds received to introduce and support the new post of Recruitment Officer.

##### **Designated Fund - ARCh Area-Specific Support Fund**

Grants and donations designated for recruiting and training volunteers for specific geographical areas are held in the Area-Specific Support Fund until the volunteers have been successfully placed in schools. We aim to ensure that this is achieved within two years of receipt.

**7. COMMITMENTS AND GUARANTEES**

At 31 March 2025 the charitable company was committed to making payments of £117,142 under non-cancellable operating leases for the remainder of the applicable lease terms (2024 : £129,712) in respect of office rent and office equipment hire.

**8. AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

The average number of employees during the accounting period was 12 (2024 : 10).

**9. TRANSACTIONS WITH DIRECTORS**

No directors were reimbursed expenses during the accounting period (2024 : 1 director for £36).

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## Assisted Reading for Children

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### Incoming Resources for the year ended 31 March 2025

|                                                | 2025           | 2024           |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                                | £              | £              |
| <b>Incoming resources</b>                      |                |                |
| <b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b> |                |                |
| <b>Voluntary Income</b>                        |                |                |
| Corporate Donations                            | 3,150          | 778            |
| Private Donations                              | 14,439         | 14,889         |
| Grants                                         | <u>85,150</u>  | <u>61,035</u>  |
|                                                | 102,739        | 76,702         |
|                                                | <u>102,739</u> | <u>76,702</u>  |
| <b>Investment income</b>                       |                |                |
| Interest received                              | <u>4,577</u>   | <u>4,303</u>   |
|                                                | 4,577          | 4,303          |
|                                                | <u>4,577</u>   | <u>4,303</u>   |
| <b>Charitable Activity</b>                     |                |                |
| School Subscriptions                           | <u>91,603</u>  | <u>77,175</u>  |
|                                                | 91,603         | 77,175         |
|                                                | <u>91,603</u>  | <u>77,175</u>  |
|                                                | <u>198,919</u> | <u>158,180</u> |

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## Assisted Reading for Children

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### Expenses for the year ended 31 March 2025

|                                    | 2025           | 2024           |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                    | £              | £              |
| <b>Expenses</b>                    |                |                |
| <b>Costs of generating funds</b>   |                |                |
| <b>Charitable Activities</b>       |                |                |
| Donations for school subscriptions | 11,234         | 4,400          |
| Advertising and Marketing          | 506            | 1,097          |
| Bad debts                          | 180            | -              |
| Heat and light                     | 2,762          | 4,315          |
| Rent                               | 15,172         | 15,026         |
| Salaries                           | 146,830        | 117,728        |
| NIC employer (wages and salaries)  | 4,613          | 2,329          |
| Pension contributions              | 3,180          | 2,348          |
| Staff Expenses and Training        | 5,001          | 4,569          |
| Volunteer Expenses and Training    | 2,817          | 1,951          |
| Equipment leasing and maintenance  | 718            | 1,294          |
| Computer costs                     | 3,448          | 3,759          |
| Professional fees                  | 3,598          | 3,695          |
| Insurance                          | 1,575          | 1,478          |
| Event and Fundraising Expenses     | -              | 688            |
| Stationery & office supplies       | 4,042          | 3,621          |
| Telephone                          | 943            | 963            |
| Bank charges                       | 120            | 121            |
| Other interest                     | 7              | -              |
| Sundry expenses                    | 2,388          | 2,203          |
| Depreciation of equipment          | 1,336          | 5,181          |
|                                    | <u>210,470</u> | <u>176,766</u> |
|                                    | <u>210,470</u> | <u>176,766</u> |