



Spring NEWSLETTER

Issue 44 Jan 2023

Wishing you all a wonderful New Year full of happy reading!

Perhaps you have already made your New Year Resolutions, but it is not too late to make another!

Could you help us spread the word of our work by making it your mission to tell at least one person what we do and challenge them to do the same? In this way we can get Oxfordshire talking about ARCh!

Please do forward this newsletter to any friends/family who might be interested in becoming an ARCh volunteer.

Do something amazing
this year and share the
magic of reading



End of term volunteer meeting



We enjoyed a festive volunteer meeting in December, with a presentation from ARCh trustee Jane Harley on the The Word Gap and the Raise a Reader campaign (website: [Raise a Reader | Help Children Read for Pleasure | OUP](https://www.raiseareader.org.uk/)) which is being rolled out to schools in disadvantaged areas across the country. The campaign is being run jointly by the National Literacy Trust and Oxford University Press.

Ten schools in Oxfordshire are participating this year

St Christopher's C of E School, Cowley
John Henry Newman Academy
Bayards Hill School
St Frideswide C of E School
Rose Hill Primary School



Orchard Meadow Primary School
Wood Farm Primary School
Dashwood Banbury Academy
Cherry Fields Primary School
Hill View Primary School

We were honoured to have High Sheriff Mark Beard attend the meeting. He thanked all volunteers and presented a special long service award to Jackie Gould who has recently retired from ARCh after an amazing 21 years helping children at Dunmore Primary in Abingdon.

Jackie was one of the dedicated volunteers who came along with us when we set up ARCh in 2008 following the national charity Volunteer Reading Help's withdrawal from Oxfordshire and four other counties in the south of England.



How far we have come since then!

April 2023 marks the 15th birthday of ARCh

We are planning a whole year of special events to celebrate the occasion!

- **An event for schools (jointly with another local charity Quest for Learning)**
- **A thank you meeting with afternoon tea for volunteers on 28th March (please make a note in your diaries now!)**
- **A fundraising event in June**



ARCh Trustee Honor explains further:

"On 1st April ARCh will be 15 years old. Thanks to the dedication of Jane, Elaine, staff and volunteers the charity has grown and now helps around 750 pupils a year. Children now need our help more than ever, especially following the interruption to schooling during the Covid pandemic. We will be celebrating the anniversary with some events, including a fundraising drinks reception, a gala dinner and a special event for volunteers.

*We'll be launching fund-raising initiatives in order to expand our work and reach more children eg. **Pledge a tenner** – on the £10 note the quotation from Jane Austen says "**I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading!**" (From Pride and Prejudice)." More info to follow on this.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Do you know a company, church, community group, village fete which would like to adopt us as their charity of the year?

Do you know any keen runners who might want to run in support of ARCh in the Oxford half-marathon?

Do you, or anyone you know, want to run a bake sale or do a sponsored walk? Or a sponsored anything?

Do you know any caterers who might want to support our work by offering a good deal at one of our events?

If you have any ideas, do let us know at the office, and let's start spreading the word.

YOUR SUCCESSES

If you have any success stories, nice comments from staff or children, please let us know – we always want to show what an amazing job our volunteers do.

MOST IMPORTANTLY – you already help in the best way, and that is volunteering, so thank you for all the work you do.”

Over the last 15 years ARCh has:

- trained around 800 volunteers
- supported over 120 primary schools
- helped around 10,000 children
- won multiple awards including the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

We are so proud of our achievements, thanks to all the wonderful volunteers, trustees, funders, supporters and schools we work with.

Look out for more news on our events to raise awareness of ARCh throughout the year!

“Thank you for all the brilliant reading sessions”

Volunteer David Jones was reunited with Fred – one of the boys he worked with many years ago.

Fred sent a personal note of thanks to his former ARCh volunteer David, the now 17-year-old Fred Potts said: “Thank you for all the brilliant reading sessions; they truly helped me when reading aloud and encouraged me to read more. Thank you so much.”



ARCh volunteer David reading with Fred at his primary school.



Fred, now aged 17 enjoying time reading

We would welcome other anecdotes/stories from all of our volunteers; please send in your contributions.

We want to hear from volunteers – what do you think of our newsletters? What do you want to read about? What would like to see more/less of ? Are they too long? Would you like more frequent ones?

ARCh training room

We were delighted to launch our training room in November! The room is Suite C, in Gobles Court, just across the landing from our office in Suite E!

We have had funding to help kit out the room and have just had our first team meeting for 2023 in the comfortable surroundings.

With this facility we will be able to hold more in-house training and workshops.



Safeguarding

We ran three refresher sessions last term – all thought provoking sessions.

At one of the sessions lockdown procedures (the non-Covid type!) were discussed as one volunteer had experienced them at first hand. In this instance a stag had got stuck in the school grounds and was highly agitated the school went into lockdown so the children didn't witness anything upsetting. Although a lockdown event is highly unlikely do ask about your school's procedure the next time you are there. The school office staff should be able to tell you. Always best to be prepared!

Remember to check the names of Designated Safeguarding Leads in your school and read through the ARCh Safe From Harm Code regularly. Always pass on anything you are not comfortable with – whether it is about a child, or a staff member to the appropriate member of school staff and to ARCh. All reports are kept strictly confidential. Always err on the side of caution.

Our Safeguarding policy is being reviewed so please ensure you read through the updated version when it is issued. Please also make sure you are up to date with all your safeguarding training – you can always check in with us if you are unsure.

Increasing our volunteer base!



We are piloting a project training 6th formers in St Edward School Oxford as ARCh volunteers. Four students are supporting 8 children in Wolvercote Primary School and feedback so far from all concerned is excellent!

Thank yous

Huge thanks to staff at Aplan Witney who adopted ARCh as their charity of the year in 2022! They ran multiple fundraising events, culminating in their 50km walk which raised over £2500 for ARCh. We were also delighted to welcome four of their staff on board as volunteers, helping children in The Batt School, Witney.



We hope other branches of Aplan, and other businesses in Oxfordshire, will follow their example.

Former ARCh field worker Janet Money continues to support our work in a variety of ways. Janet's church adopted ARCh as their chosen charity and we are to receive proceeds of their collections and donations of games. Thank you Janet and all!



Susanna Pressel has adopted ARCh as one of her charities to support in her year as Oxfordshire County Council Chair and we were delighted to receive a donation of £1,000 from the charity supper she hosted.



To volunteers Chris Poad and Catherine Rolfe who manned an ARCh table at their school's (St Frideswides Oxford) open day. As it was on a Saturday they drew quite a crowd of children with their books and games activities! Great ambassadors for ARCh – as we know all our volunteers are!



More thanks

To all who voted for ARCh in the Oxford Mail Cash for Charities campaign. We are pleased to report that we are to receive **£2153** to spend in books and games! Keep a look out for news stories in the local press on this!



Thank you to Eynsham Primary volunteer Hazel Geatches for donating these books



Thanks to our recent funders

Beeching Trust

Neighbourly/ Marks & Spencer

Ashford School PTA

Thank you to volunteer Carol Bradford who donated copies of the book *The Cloud Children* written by her late father



Thanks to Bert (pictured with High Sheriff Mark Beard) and Lynne for having stalls at our volunteer meeting and donating proceeds to ARCh!

Remember there are a number of ways you can help raise funds for ARCh at no cost to yourself;

If you are using Amazon to shop please go to <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> and support ARCh

Easyfundraising

If you save this as your home page:

<https://archassistedreadingforchildrenoxfordshire.easysearch.org.uk/>

ARCh will receive donations

and if you make purchases online via one of their thousands of retailers here

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/archassistedreadingforchildrenoxfordshire/?invite=EXRO6F&referral-campaign=c2s&utm_campaign=admin-trigger&utm_content=srt

they will donate to ARCh too - as simple as that!

LoveReadingforKids

<https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/> Please do take a look at this site

Anyone who buys books (all at 10% discount) can nominate a school - or charity in our case – and then they receive 25% of sales. This credit can then be used to buy more books. Please remember to choose ARCh when you buy!

Reminder re paired/single book use

We are continuing to offer a mix of paired & single copies of ARCh books to volunteers.

Pairs are still clearly labelled Helper/Child for all ages and abilities & banded together. Any pairs selected by volunteers MUST be taken as a pair & NOT broken up please. Volunteers are welcome to use just one of a pair if selected in their session; the other copy being kept in their box or at home and then returned as a pair, preferably secured by an elastic band, please.

Paired book use in reading sessions: Paired books are useful to help build a child's confidence in handling, using and ownership of the book they have chosen to read sitting on their own. In particular older children respond to this.

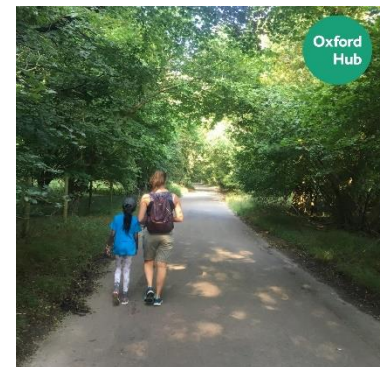
Returns: Paired books MUST be returned as a pair, ideally banded together, please. This makes sorting and shelving books easier.

Please help us continue to offer the choice of paired/single copy books by remembering these requests. Thank you!

Big Brothers Big Sisters Spotlight:

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a volunteering mentoring and befriending programme, run by Oxford Hub, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council. The aim of the programme is to support children to thrive in life and achieve their goals, by creating long term friendships. Young people across Oxfordshire between 7 and 11 years old are matched with a volunteer "Big Sibling" to do fun activities with, 2 to 3 times a month for at least a year. After the first year the pair may decide to continue - some matches which have been going for up to 5 years! To find out more about the programme head to:

www.oxfordhub.org/bbbs



School Survey Results

At our December meeting we shared the results of our 2022 School Survey. Teachers were asked to rate the improvement seen in pupils receiving ARCh support over the year. Highlights were as follows:

96% of teachers reported improvements in children's confidence in and attitude to reading

96% reported noted increased self - confidence/self-esteem

94% reported improved reading performance

Thank you!

Do check us out on our social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook:



<https://www.facebook.com/ARChOxfordshire/>



<https://twitter.com/Archoxfordshire>

Please do have a look and follow, share and retweet/like our posts!