

ISSUED: 27 September 2018

News Release

Reading, Raising, Amazing: 28,000 Leicester children unite in city's first mass Readathon

Boy wizards and hungry caterpillars are on the curriculum across Leicester next week as some 28,000 pupils in schools and colleges join forces for the city's first-ever mass Readathon, which will also bring the power of stories to Leicester Children's Hospital at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

The event, one of the first of its kind in the country, is being organised by Leicester-based literacy initiative *Whatever it Takes* with charity Read for Good, which has been running its Readathon in individual schools since 1984. Some 67 schools across Leicester are signed up to participate in the mass sponsored read and the event spans both Leicester's *Everybody's Reading* festival and *National Libraries Week* from 1-12 October.

Read for Good Chief Executive, Justine Daniels said: "Learning to love to read as a child is one of the greatest things you can do. For some children our Readathon is the spark that inspires a lifelong love of reading and for many more, it's a fantastic way to reinforce and revitalise reading habits. Leicester already goes above and beyond as a city to get every child reading so we're not surprised that schools have embraced our Readathon too."

Children taking part in the event will be sponsored to read whatever they like – from comics to classics – with the emphasis on reading what they love. Twenty per-cent of whatever a school raises will be used to buy books for its library, 10% is going to support *Whatever it Takes* wider work on literacy projects in the city and the rest funds Read for Good's unique programme bringing a regular supply of books and storytellers into all of the UK's main children's hospitals, including Leicester Children's Hospital.

Leicester Children's Hospital's Ward Leader, Danny Riley said: "Read for Good's storyteller and bright-orange mobile bookcase are well-known at Leicester Children's Hospital where the service has been running since 2014. We love the loop of children in our schools reading to bring stories into our hospital. The power of stories to entertain and uplift is something I've seen first-hand at our hospital with Read for Good."

Project Managers for *Whatever it Takes*, Kate and Nicky said: "We are incredibly excited to be joining forces with Read for Good to run Leicester's very first city-wide Readathon. Promoting a love of reading is at the heart of everything we do and if we can raise some money for a great cause at the same time, then that's an added bonus. We've got events at the

racecourse with some amazing authors and both weeks will culminate with a citywide drop everything and read (DEAR Leicester, both Fridays at 2pm) involving city councillors, libraries and even Haymarket theatre.”

For more information or to sponsor a child in a Leicester school visit:

<https://readforgood.org/leicester>

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Editor’s Notes

Read for Good is a children’s literacy charity with the main mission of motivating children in schools to read for fun. Schools have been running its Readathon since 1984, raising £28 million and several generations of readers. Money raised helps fund Read for Good’s unique programme bringing the power of stories to all 30 of the UK’s major children’s hospitals. This year, Read for Good will give away 25,000 new books and arrange more than 200 days’ worth of professional storytelling in hospitals as well as donate more than £100,000 to school libraries.

Whatever it Takes (WiT) is the Leicester city-wide reading initiative to get every child in Leicester reading. The initiative is a collaborative approach to improving literacy levels across the city and is dedicated to ensuring that as a city we are reading for pleasure.

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Photo caption:

28,000 children around the city are gearing up to get reading and raising on the Leicester City Readathon 2018. Pictured: pupils at Highfields Primary School (x2), Montrose Primary School and Judgemeanow Community College, plus Read for Good storyteller, Helen Appleton at Leicester Children’s Hospital with the charity’s mobile bookcase.

