

Read for Good

Impact Report 2022/2023

Photo of a school pupil holding a pile of books.

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Read for Good – a year in numbers...

- Approximately 500,000 children & young people engaged in our programmes
- Books worth £347,839 given to schools & hospitals across the UK
- 350,000 children & young people took part in Readathon®
- 21.5 million minutes of reading logged on Track My Read®
- 48,834 children in hospital reached with brand-new books & storyteller visits
- 100,000 children & young people attended our online author events

Thank you: To the fantastic organisations who support our work including Scholastic Book Clubs, National Book Tokens, the publishers, authors and illustrators and funders who share our belief that reading improves children's lives.

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Welcome (letter from Cressida Cowell, MBE, Award-winning author & Read for Good Patron)

I've worked with Read for Good over many years, from launching their marvellous books and storytelling service in Evelina Children's Hospital in London in 2015, through to supporting the highly effective Readathon in schools.

Read for Good has long understood the connection between reading for pleasure and good mental health and happiness.

Their purpose is clear. Read for Good believes that the more children read for pleasure, the fairer our society will be. They do this by increasing children's access to a wide and vibrant range of wonderful books, and by making reading as appealing as possible to children of all ages and abilities. Books should look like sweets, not sprouts, and Read for Good gives children in hospital access to the most exciting new books, as well as much-loved classics; their Readathons make reading fun for thousands of children across the UK.

As Children's Laureate, I saw overwhelming evidence that the huge, long-term benefits of reading for pleasure are life changing. For every percentage point your literacy level goes up, you're more likely to be happier, healthier, wealthier, more likely to own your own home, more likely to vote, less likely to be in prison. OECD research from 2002 shows that reading for pleasure is one of only two key indicators in a child's later economic success, irrespective of their socio-economic background.

However, many children do not have access to a primary school library; children in hospital also deserve access to the best books.

Read for Good has worked tirelessly over many decades, supporting schools, hospitals and communities to ensure reading is accessible, attractive and fun.

Signed by Cressida Cowell

Cressida Cowell MBE

Award-winning author & Read for Good Patron

Photo of Cressida Cowell with a quote:

"For every percentage point your literacy level goes up, you're more likely to be happier, healthier, wealthier..."

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Why reading matters

Reading for pleasure can level-up life chances regardless of socio-economic background – it can change a child’s life. Children who choose to read for fun are more likely to achieve academic success, get better jobs and lead happier lives.¹ It’s a simple, effective and low-cost solution, accessible by most children and young people. But to instil a life-changing love of reading, children need **access** to the best, new books; they need a vibrant and diverse **choice** of reading materials; and they need to be **inspired** to read, especially when their lives are already so busy. This is where Read for Good comes in.

Read for Good’s mission is to enable, empower and motivate children and young people to discover the joy of reading.

Photo of two children sharing a book.

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For nearly 40 years, Read for Good has helped teachers and school librarians to inspire a love of reading with Readathon – high quality, well-considered resources and the all-important motivation of helping children in hospital. Our unique work in hospitals – providing seriously ill children with the magic of books and stories – demonstrates the incredible impact reading for pleasure can have on a child’s wellbeing and happiness. Read for Good wants to extend our reach and accessibility, ensuring all children can access that magic.

Quote: “Our pupils loved taking part in the Readathon. It really motivated them to read more and they took obvious pride in the money that they raised to help children in hospital.”

Ms Sampson, Holly Park Primary School

Despite a golden age of children’s publishing, children’s reading enjoyment is in worrying decline and our work remains vital. We’re responding with more ways to help more children foster a life-changing love of reading

Our Theory of Change

Reading for pleasure can change a child’s future so our mission is to **enable, empower** and **motivate** children and young people to discover the joy of a life-changing love of reading.

What we do ...

Our experience tells us that we can make the biggest impact by:

Access - giving free books and stories to children in schools, hospitals and the wider community

Choice - encouraging and enabling children to read whatever they like

Inspiration - producing a wide-range of resources, tools and support for education and healthcare professionals

All our programmes are completely free & open access.

So that ...

Education and healthcare professionals:

- believe every child can become a passionate reader
- feel valued, supported and celebrated in championing reading for pleasure
- are empowered to create inspiring opportunities for children to read for pleasure

Our work provides vital support to schools & hospitals.

Leading to...

Children and young people who:

- are motivated to give reading a try
- feel pride in their reading journey (and don’t feel judged)

- see themselves as readers
- feel connected to a wider community
- experience the joy, relaxation and escape that stories bring

Our vision is that children develop a life-changing love of reading.

Resulting in...

Brighter futures for children and young people through:

- a life-long love of reading
- improved academic and social outcomes
- better mental health and wellbeing

Reading for fun is the single most important indicator of a child's future success & one of the best routes out of poverty (according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development 2002).

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Photo of a school pupil with a pile of books.

Quote: *“We’ve done Readathon since 1995! We love that so many pupils keep reading & engaging with books afterwards – kids who never set foot in the library have been converted to book lovers.”* Mr Whiteway, Notre Dame School, Sheffield

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In schools

We offer a wide range of pragmatic, tried-and-tested tools, activities and resources to support schools to encourage children to read for pleasure. All our programmes are created with both the child and the professional in mind. We aim to avoid reading for pleasure becoming a 'school subject' or a 'homework chore'. Schools can freely access Readathon®, Track My Read®, and *Brilliant Boxes of Books* along with a rich and vibrant range of online resources.

Readathon

Our sponsored read has been encouraging pupils to read for nearly 40 years. The principles on which it started are still true today: reading for pleasure means that children must be able to choose what they read, without judgement or assessment. Reading to raise money to help get books and storyteller visits to children in hospital provides the essential motivation and reward for taking part.

Quote:

"The great thing about Readathon is that you can read absolutely anything!"

Michael Rosen, author

We send bright orange Readathon kits to schools – packed-full of resources and goodies to make it easy for teachers and parents, and to encourage pupils to become passionate readers.

Quote:

"Setting up our Readathon was so straightforward – there were clear instructions and excellent resources – it practically ran itself!"

Teacher, Holly Park Primary School, London

Quote:

"The fantastic resources really get students excited and motivated. It's heartening to see how keen they are to support children in hospital – it really brings out the best in them. Parents love seeing good reading habits re-ignite in their teenagers and a love of literature rekindled. Our GCSE results reflect that, the kids that read, are the kids that succeed."

Teacher, Notre Dame High School, Sheffield

We gave £78,352 of Scholastic Book Club vouchers to Readathon Schools.

We gave £11,600 of National Book Tokens to schools to reward star pupils.

Case Study - Star pupils

Over their last three Readathons, book-loving siblings Fiza and Sohaib from Old Moat Primary School in Manchester read an amazing 328 books between them! Having started at 80 books in 2021, they clocked up an impressive 140 books in their last reading challenge.

Quote:

"You learn so much reading!"

Fiza

The school's Deputy Headteacher and Head of English Victoria Collier tells us that running Readathon has really encouraged them to read more. We can't wait to hear how many books they read next time!

Quote:

"You can get lost in a book - they can take you anywhere."

Sohaib

Photo of Fiza and Sohaib with a Readathon certificate.

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Photo of four school pupils unpacking a Brilliant Box of Books.

Track My Read

Track My Read Track My Read® is a free, easy-to-use online tool for schools and families to engage and motivate children to read for fun. It's designed to encourage daily reading and invites users to share how their reading made them feel. Importantly, Track My Read values all reading – ensuring a child's choices and opinions are heard, valued and respected. As well as encouraging positive reading habits, it prompts great conversations about books and stories.

Over 13,000 pupils using Track My Read.

Over 225,000 reading sessions logged.

Quote:

"Track My Read was a HUGE success – we achieved nearly 3 times our original target of 15,000 minutes!"

Ms Ford, Codsall Community School, Staffordshire

Brilliant Box of Books

In recent years, strained budgets mean that schools are simply not able to invest in good quality reading for pleasure books. 1 in 7 schools does not have a library, and where libraries do exist, books are often out-of-date, inaccessible or poorly displayed.

Responding to the dire shortage of good quality books that children want to read, Read for Good provides an ongoing service to schools and community settings in need, offering a box of brand new, well-curated books to help boost their reading for pleasure stocks. The books are carefully selected to offer an appealing range of titles designed to bring joy to teachers and pupils. Up-to-date books ensure children see themselves in stories and build their understanding of worlds beyond their own.

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Read for Good donated **25,401** books worth £158,934 to **276** schools and settings in need in 2022/2023.

As well as providing the books, we send teachers a series of engaging videos designed to optimise the use of the books with their pupils. We also supply well-thought through resources like our Reading Journey posters, created to inspire children who might never have chosen a book before.

Quote:

“Just as we broke up for summer, we gave books from our Brilliant Box of Books to three children who lost their mum last year. One of them told me that reading helps her to forget for a while. Never underestimate how much a simple gesture might mean to a child.”

Hadley Learning Community

We reached **276** settings in need with brand-new books.

Providing **25,401** brand-new books worth an amazing £158,934.

Quote:

“The impact of these books will be far reaching for a long time, thank you for making so many children happy!”

Ms Bunn, Selly Park School, Birmingham

Regional focus

We delivered a range of focused activity in Gloucestershire and Leicester, with communities in both regions being challenged to read for one million minutes! To support this we delivered events with an inspiring range of authors and illustrators including Andy Seed, Emma Carroll, MG Leonard, Matt Goodfellow, Sarah McIntyre and Comics Laureate Stephen Holland.

Resources and training

We pride ourselves on the provision of high-quality resources, designed to engage pupils and make life easier for teachers and librarians. Importantly, we ensure all our resources and tools are free to access. Our *Books We Love* website page presents hundreds of easy-to-access book reviews, to inspire reading choices, which sit alongside our *Author Events Showcase* packed-full of inspiring author and illustrator films.

In addition, we provide storytelling in schools, teacher training for PGCE students and storytelling training for professionals working with children.

Author events

Listening to an author or illustrator speak about their work can be incredibly inspiring for pupils and teachers. Read for Good has hosted events from authors including Cressida Cowell, Dr Alex George and Sir Michael Morpurgo who celebrated the 40th anniversary of his book, War Horse, with an exclusive online event that was attended by over 650 schools.

Quote:

"Our Y8 boys enjoyed hearing Michael Morpurgo talk and his books have been flying off our library shelves ever since!"

Mosslands School, Wallasey

Our exclusive online author events have reached over 100,000 pupils in over 650 UK schools this year!

Photo of children from St John's College Junior School in Cardiff enjoying listening to Sir Michael Morpurgo.

Inviting & inclusive libraries

Reading for pleasure is more important for a child's success than their background: a disadvantaged child who reads will outperform an advantaged child who doesn't. Yet, if a child doesn't have access to books they want to read, how are they to discover a love of reading?

1 in 7 primary schools has no library – that's more than 750,000 children across the UK who don't have an inspiring space to access books at school. Behind this statistic is the fact that there is no set definition of a school library. As a consequence, the school libraries that do exist vary hugely in quality and accessibility.

In response, we worked in partnership with Gloucestershire Libraries and inclusive book supplier *Little Box of Books* to transform 15 targeted school libraries across the county, reaching more than 3,000 children in the greatest need. We delivered 4,500 books in total, provided each primary school with 2-3 days of specialist support and a year-long subscription to Phoenix Comics. The project transformed “unloved” and “neglected” spaces into “welcoming” libraries where children want to spend their time.

Quote:

“In my class, I have a child with significant learning difficulties. He loves football and found the book about Marcus Rashford. He was desperate to take it home and show his mum and has talked about ‘the football man’ ever since. He wants to play with him and find more ‘football books’.”

Quote:

“They [the children] love the library and love being in there. They have used the word ‘wow’ a lot when getting various books off the shelves.”

The inclusive books had a significant impact, with children seeing themselves in the stories they read.

Quote:

“One of our refugees found a book about a refugee – his face when reading it was magical.”

100% said their pupils were enjoying reading more, and reading more often.

85% of schools said the new books had encouraged reluctant readers to read more.

Quote:

“A reluctant reader in my class now wants to spend all their lunchtimes and playtimes in the library lost in a book.”

Teacher, Gloucestershire school

Two photos showing the library space 'before' and 'after' at St Matthew's Church of England Primary School.

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Photo close up of a child reading a book.

Tailoring our work to different settings

Read for Good ran pilot initiatives with three specific setting types, tailoring our programmes to support their specific needs, with surprising results. Working with a Hospital Education Service, a Pupil Referral Unit and a Special School supporting children and young adults with complex learning needs, we used a combination of Track My Read, our *Brilliant Box of Books* and other resources to engage pupils in reading for pleasure. These settings serve children who are often ignored and excluded from mainstream provision. We supported each setting to optimise our existing tools and resources for their pupils.

Students at Gloucester Forest Alternative Provision school were challenged to read for 2,000 minutes as a group. They smashed their target, motivated by the goal of unlocking brand-new books. Staff reported that the project, with its emphasis on reading both silently and aloud, improved the pupils' reading, speaking, listening, and comprehension skills. They went on to describe the fact that the books were valued and treated with respect and not destroyed, as 'phenomenal' in an environment where almost everything else gets damaged.

Cotswold Chine special school pupils are not able to access online resources so we supported them to run a paper-based reading challenge including large format reading trackers that were put up around the school. Pupils united in reading for 11,810 minutes and the organiser noted the positive effect reading for pleasure was having on pupils.

Quote:

"Given our pupils' development histories & education experiences it's been extremely positive to reframe attitudes to reading – there's been tangible & lasting impact."

Teacher, Cotswold Chine School, Stroud

In hospitals

Each year, over a million children are admitted to hospital in the UK, many with long-term conditions and complex care needs. Children of lower socio-economic status have poorer health outcomes and higher hospital admission rates. Studies show that children in hospital suffer not only illness or injury, but also the consequences of educational deprivation.

Quote:

"This service is vital to a child's hospital experience, giving them an escape from this scary, unknown environment into a world of fantasy."

Healthcare professional

Reading for pleasure can level-up life chances regardless of socio-economic background - it can change a child's life. For children in hospital, the power of a book or story goes even further, providing comfort during some of the most challenging times in a child's life.

Read for Good provides the UK's 30 major children's hospitals with a regular supply of brand-new books and magical storyteller visits. Evidence from over 2,000 statements from hospital professionals, parents and carers, and children and young people in hospitals across the UK's four nations tells us that our books and storytellers have a significant impact on children's health, wellbeing and education.

Quote:

"Thank you for helping me feel better."

Young patient, Great North Children's Hospital, Newcastle

Our service provides vital distraction and entertainment for children and their families, already disadvantaged by illness or injury. Feedback from parents, children, staff and storytellers evidences our impact in mitigating missed schooling, increasing book ownership, reducing isolation and anxiety and making children and their families happier, and even improving the recovery of children in hospital.

We provided **26,732** brand-new books to fill our mobile bookcases.

We delivered **221** storyteller visits to children in hospital.

Photo of Read for Good storyteller and child.

The impact of storytelling

Read for Good's nine professional, experienced storytellers made regular visits to each hospital, delivering a total of 221 storytelling days in the year. The sensitivity, insight, and artistry our storytellers use to judge the right approach for each child is an absolute wonder.

They love sharing stories and rhymes with newborns up to young adults, tailoring their approach and drawing in families and staff to join the fun. They provide belly-laughs for children who need to be uplifted and calming stories for children who need to be soothed. The profound impact our storytellers have in a children's hospital should not be underestimated.

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Photo of smiling patient in hospital bed enjoying a tale from a Read for Good storyteller.

Quote:

“Our storyteller is very much integrated into the clinical environment; the play team and clinical teams will use his skills to aid distraction during obs, relieve anxiety before surgical procedures and create shared, positive experiences for families.”

Healthcare professional

Storytelling can be a simple way to break down communication barriers. To broaden the reach of our storytelling programme, we developed a 30-minute online training course. This teaches participants the skills to create an instant connection with a child, putting them more at ease, even in the most traumatic of circumstances such as an A&E Ward. This training is freely available to anyone via our website.

“The storyteller training was really uplifting and gave great ideas for how to improve children’s experience of hospital in really simple and usable ways.”

Psychologist

“I love the storyteller visits so much – they do sensory stories for me as I can’t see or hear very well.” – 11-year-old patient, Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading

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The year ahead

Read for Good's impact in 2022/2023 has been significant, bringing solutions, support and even joy at a time when schools and hospitals are experiencing enormous challenges. However, as children and young people's reading enjoyment continues to decline, alongside an increasing mental health crisis, we must work harder, and with even more creativity to address the need.

Our vision is that all children and young people develop a life-changing love of reading towards a more equal society.

Read for Good is launching a new 5-year strategy to support our vision that every child should develop a life-changing love of reading, towards a more equal society. We aim to increase our reach to 1 million children every year, leveraging our tried-and-tested programmes, and introducing new ways to reach under-represented children. Our programmes continue to be dedicated to reading for pleasure, and free to access.

Quote:

"Reading for pleasure can change a child's future. We will continue to work tirelessly to equip and support professionals with the highest quality, well-branded, tried-and-tested tools and resources to inspire children and young people to read."

Justine Daniels, CEO Read for Good

A well-governed organisation

Read for Good's work is underpinned by good governance with the safeguarding and wellbeing of children at its core. Our Board of Trustees brings decades of experience to ensure our charity is working effectively and efficiently. The core team of committed staff are able to work with agility, responding to changing needs, supported by a network of talented storytellers and loyal volunteers.

Finance

We achieve all that we do because of the generous support of schools running Readathon (and the families and friends that support the young people taking part), grants from trusts, and donations from supporters who share our passion. We have rigorous processes in place to ensure the funds are used responsibly and effectively, and spent in the best possible way to make the most difference to the lives of children.

Pie charts showing the following percentages:

Expenditure 2022/23

Schools 40%

Hospitals 42%

New projects 2%

Overheads 12%

Fundraising 4%

Total expenditure: £1,008,958

Income 2022/23

Schools 44%

Trusts 47%

Individuals 3%

Legacies 4%

Other 2%

Total income: £1,004,086

These percentages are based on initial figures, pre-audit and excluding gifts in kind adjustments.

We rely entirely on donations from individuals, trusts and organisations and the money raised by schools running Readathon. To support our work please contact **barbara@readforgood.org** or visit **readforgood.org**

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Photo of two school pupils sharing a book.

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Read for Good logo

Quote:

“Readathon has inspired my daughter to set her own reading challenge and I’ve been amazed at how motivated she is to achieve her goal. Thank you to Read for Good for helping us to create a great new reading routine!”

Joanna, mum of 7-year-old pupil, Bristol

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