



A report for Bim and Pardeep Sandhu

Reading opens the door to a child's future

With support from people like you, Coram Beanstalk has been working for 46 years to help disadvantaged primary school children to read, developing the fluency and comprehension skills they will need at secondary school and throughout their lives.

Poor literacy levels are a national issue with localised 'hot spots' of underachieving children. Last year approximately 156,000 children left primary schools in the UK having failed to meet the expected reading standards for their age and this will have a very negative impact on their future life chances. We believe that no struggling child should be left behind to suffer the consequences of socio-economic exclusion caused by poor literacy and we work closely with schools to reach the children that need help the most.

Our vision is that all children have the essential skills to live successful lives and we believe that life is better when everyone can read well and express themselves with confidence.

During the last academic year our dedicated volunteers helped over 13,440 children in educational settings across eight regions of England.

The impact of your donation in Ealing

In August 2018, you kindly donated £7,500 from the Sandhu Charitable Trust. On behalf of everyone at Coram Beanstalk and the children we work with, I would like to thank you again for your generosity.

Your donation of £5,000 for the borough of Ealing funded the provision of 16 volunteer reading helpers who provided one-to-one reading sessions to 50 disadvantaged children, over a year. These children received 35 hours of literacy support through two 30 minute reading sessions per week. Your further donation for Grange Primary School, is fully funding Margaret, Adriene and Christine who are continuing their good work at the school.



I can simply describe our volunteer readers as wonderful and a valuable asset to the support with reading!

The readers whilst very professional display warmth and affection with the children that they read with and have taken the time to build a relationship with each child so that each child is happy and comfortable reading with them.

The readers are very conscientious and their attendance is excellent. We have asked the readers to support all the children with their comprehension during this academic year, as this is an area that we have found to be a concern, and I have listened to the readers using excellent questioning techniques to support the children with their understanding.

Debbie Roberts, Teacher, Grange Primary School

With your support we helped these children develop their reading skills. This in turn improved their self-confidence, their engagement in learning and their educational progress.

Our approach is simple, yet highly effective. Coram Beanstalk reading helpers are trained to recognise the challenges each child faces and over the year they tailored their sessions to meet the child's needs so that their reading skills and confidence improved. They also inspired a love of books and of reading for pleasure. Teachers commended the value of our work, highlighting the difference that consistent, regular, individual help made to children's progress, not just in reading but in their overall confidence, their social skills and their approach to learning.

"Beanstalk readers bring with their commitment and determination to help children to learn to read, both a great deal of pleasure and raised self-esteem to the children with whom they work. Those children grow in confidence. Their reading skills and enjoyment in reading certainly grow substantially. Their whole approach to learning becomes one in which they have a growth mind-set and increased will and motivation to learn. Their fluency and ability to engage more fully in books, in the library and learning increases so much."

Head Teacher



"Beanstalk volunteers support some of our struggling readers and vulnerable children. It is a joy to watch the children as they work with their Beanstalk readers. They enjoy a range of engaging books and resources and the children are animated in their learning. The support and nurture they get helps them to develop a lifelong love of reading."

Acting Head

Our work also had a direct impact on the people who gave up their time to volunteer with us. In a period of increasing economic and political uncertainty and when, as has been widely reported, feelings of loneliness and isolation affect many, volunteering plays an important role in maintaining wellbeing. Our reading helpers said they felt valued, they enjoyed being mentally and physically active, had opportunities to socialise and felt part of the community.

Kacper has gained a great deal from his Beanstalk sessions with Linda. He has grown in confidence and has experienced success. He has been motivated and now sees the purpose of regular reading. Linda has had a huge impact on Kacper as a reader.

Horsenden Primary School, Ealing



Challenges

2018 did not come without its challenges and we had a tough year, having to make some difficult decisions resulting in a restructure in November, which cut our staff by half. This has ensured that moving forward we are far more efficient, sustainable and effective allowing us to work flexibly and respond to need faster. The quality of our service is still a top priority with a new support team in place to cover all geographies and give our volunteers the confidence, skills and advice they need.

Monitoring and evaluation

To monitor the effectiveness of our work we collected information on service and impact through annual surveys sent to schools and volunteers. We measured the impact on children's reading levels through individual Reading Records which were completed at the beginning and end of the academic year.

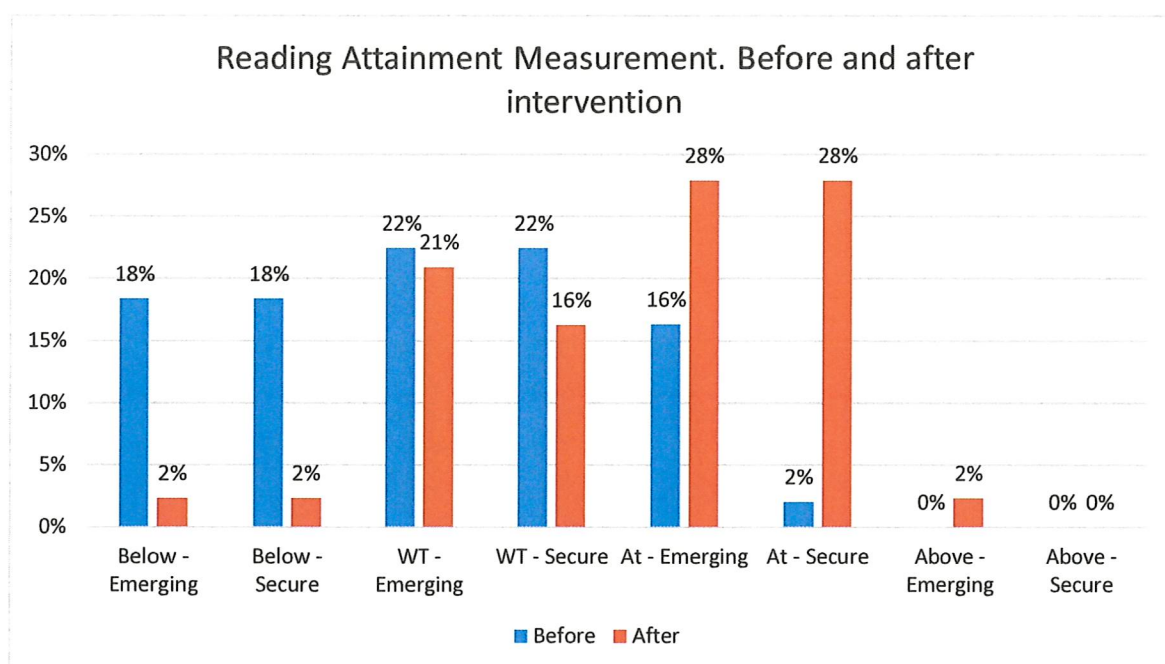
Coram Beanstalk "Reading Records" detail our bespoke 4 Point Scale which aligns with the Department of Education's curriculum reforms and assesses whether the child is "below", "working toward", "at" or "above" the expected level of reading for their age. Along with a survey of schools and volunteers, Coram Beanstalk can then collate evidence from multiple data sources to demonstrate our impact.

Soon to be published, the latest data for 17/18 shows that:

- Overall, 74% of children showed an improvement in their reading ability after working with a Coram Beanstalk reading helper.
- 88% of schools said reading helpers helped children to accelerate in their reading progress.
- 98% of schools said reading helpers increased children's enjoyment of reading.
- 98% of schools and 92% of volunteers said that the children's confidence had grown.

Coram Beanstalk's evidenced-based training equips the volunteer to not only help children to read books but instil in them a sense of agency and empowerment in their education and their lives. Reading helpers work with every child for a minimum of one year which means that children can build trusting relationships with their assigned helper. This bond allows every child to grow in confidence and develop a passion and love of reading. We are committed to a continuous review and assessment of our training and delivery to ensure we can give make a significant and long-lasting difference in the lives of the children we support.

Impact in Ealing:



Other news

- In February 2019 Coram Beanstalk joined the Coram Group of Charities, enabling us to create efficiencies and better achieve our goals of helping more children with vital one-to-one reading support. Coram Beanstalk will play a key role in realising Coram's vision of being a National Centre of Excellence for Children under the theme of education.
- In March 2018 we were delighted to announce that Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall would be continuing in her role as Beanstalk Patron. Throughout the year she has visited our work in Gloucestershire and Liverpool. (see left hand photo)
- Beanstalk had its first volunteer conference on Friday 2nd March – bringing together Reading Helpers from the South of England to listen to panel discussions on 'What makes a book brilliant?' and workshops on a variety of topics them to take part in. The feedback has been extremely positive. (see right hand photo)
- In June, we were delighted to announce a press partnership with i news, who ran stories during volunteer's week for Coram Beanstalk. As a result we saw a substantial increase in people applying as reading helpers.



"I believe passionately in encouraging a love of reading in young people of all ages. There is nothing quite like the thrill of opening a book and being transported into another world to meet new people and to discover their stories – it's like making new friends."

Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall