

ARCh

Established in 2008, ARCh is a highly regarded, multiple award-winning Oxfordshire charity. It has proven track record of obtaining results after one year of twice weekly support for children via vetted, trained, resourced and supported reading helper volunteers.

Vision: To inspire a love of reading in Oxfordshire's children which will enhance their well-being and improve their life chances

Strapline: 'Inspiring Children to Read'

ARCh is currently supporting around **120 out of 269 primary schools** in Oxon. They always prioritise schools in most disadvantaged areas. Whilst not all schools want to work with ARCh , there are currently 46 schools on waiting list – some in areas of high-level deprivation. Some would like multiple volunteers.

ARCh can play key part in levelling up for children – there is much research evidence that these children, particularly the youngest (now at KS1 stage) suffered the most during the period of school closures due to the pandemic and their own school survey in summer 2022 confirmed this.

There has been a more significant decline in reading levels in Oxfordshire at KS1 than at KS2. A decrease from 77% to 69% in pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed (TA) reading, and of these a decrease from 27% to 21% in those meeting the higher standard

'Key stage 1 attainment by region and local authority' in Oxfordshire between 2018/19 and 2021/22

Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading TA	77%	69%
Percentage of pupils meeting the higher standard in reading TA	27%	21%
Percentage of pupils working towards the expected standard in reading	17%	21%

Each year ARCh ask all schools to complete an annual evaluation of the service. Teachers are asked to rate the improvement seen in pupils for a number of measures as excellent, good, satisfactory or no improvement. From a total of 99 sent out, 46 surveys were completed (46.5% reply rate).

The charts below show the proportion of children that improved during the year:



96%



94%



96%



96%

School Volunteer: ARCh is a long-term intervention with each Reading Helper providing 2 half hour sessions for a child each week for the entire year. Sessions are 1:1 and provide personalised mentoring support according to each child's individual need. They involve sharing books, games and conversation. Reading Helpers spend time getting to know their children as individuals, discovering their interests which enables us to source books which will engage them in reading.

Children are selected by the school for many different reasons but the children they work best with are those

- Underachieving
- Not seeing themselves as readers
- Lacking in confidence/self-esteem
- Have little support at home
- Have poor communication skills
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Who will benefit from long term mentoring support from an interested adult

The volunteers do not need particular qualifications or experience. They need to be patient, enjoy reading and have the appropriate interpersonal skills to help children and liaise with school staff. All volunteers must understand and observe ARCh guidance and our safeguarding and confidentiality policies.