

Infosheet

For Schools and Volunteers

Literacy Volunteers 1996-2021



Literacy Volunteers

Over two decades of service to children

April 2021

Message from the CEO - Dawn Claypole

It's April 2021 and just over a year since we started living with Covid!

I just can't quite believe it's been an entire year, I'm sure you'll join me in wondering what has happened in this time. What we thought of as a minor interruption has changed the way we work dramatically and all I can say for those of you waiting to go back to school is hang on in there- it's not long now!

By the time you read this it's my understanding that some Volunteers will have been able to go back to school and you can rest assured that we are contacting your schools to get the rest of you back in as soon as we can.

Thank you to you all and thanks to all schools and teachers for the hours and hours you've spent

supporting Nottinghamshire's children with their education throughout these times

We've been busy here delivering our '**Learning to Love Books**' programme and our '**Primary Story Box**' project so there's plenty to tell you about as you read on. Plus I am especially pleased to include a worksheet that should help Volunteers all design and deliver exciting, Covid safe sessions in schools.

DEAR SCHOOLS - IF YOU HAVEN'T YET THOUGHT ABOUT HAVING YOUR VOLUNTEER BACK IN, PLEASE GIVE US A CALL, MANY OF THEM ARE READY AND RARING TO GO.....

Funding and Support for Literacy Volunteers



We have been working flat out to increase our income so that we can try to ensure our survival as a much needed and long standing Charity in Nottinghamshire. We would like to thank the following organisations for their recent support and or funds at this time:-

Browne Jacobson Charitable Trust and Craig Sharples- for funding support for one to one readers in school and for taking an interest in our wider work.

Small Steps Big Changes and Sheona Dalton - for your continued support for Learning to Love Books

Boots Charitable Trust - for funding an expansion of our Learning to Love

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Books Programme

Capital One and Dave Richards - for funding towards our family early years weekly Zoom sessions

The Southwell Lions- for funding for book boxes for children in Southwell

The Nottingham Literacy Hub and Charlotte Malik - for being an absolute champion on our behalf!

Nottingham Community Foundation, The Thomas Farr Charity, J N Derbyshire Trust, The County Council Community Fund and The Sir John Eastwood Foundation - for their grants and contributions

Mapperley Rotary Club - for their donation for our speaker

Teleperformance and Katie Guy Clarke in Newark for buying us copies of these fabulous books for returning Volunteers to use with their children as they go back to school.



Nottinghamshire's Lost Words Project - a great opportunity for Schools

Natalie Braber, Professor of linguistics from Nottingham Trent University, has received Arts Council funding for 'Nottinghamshire's Lost Words'. This project aims to engage local school children with local language and dialect.

Supported by local artist, Hannah Sawtell and poet, Andrew Graves, they'll be running workshops with local schools. Using dialect as a tool to engage with poetry and illustration, the project aims to have an empowering and inspiring effect on young participants - providing an accessible way into forms they might otherwise feel excluded from. It will enable them to engage in dialogue around the value of local words in expressing thoughts, leading to a deeper appreciation of language.

The work produced will be celebrated and shared in a library touring exhibition around Nottinghamshire libraries.

If your school is interested in a live zoom session with the artist and poet or is interested in receiving a legacy pack which will help you run your own projects based on Nottinghamshire's lost words, please contact Natalie on natalie.braber@ntu.ac.uk.

Schools will need to follow their own safeguarding procedures for working with this project



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2006

Message from the Chair - Julia Gunn

The last year has been extremely challenging for Literacy Volunteers, however we now have some very exciting new partnerships and projects to explore in the months ahead.

Thank you so much for being part of the LV team as we begin to get back into schools and share our love of reading with children. We envisage a new surge of support will be needed in schools and communities and would like to ask for help in recruiting new volunteers.

If each of you could recommend us to another possible volunteer that would really help us get back on our feet as quickly as possible.

We would be very happy to have an informal chat about LV and talk about some of the ways of getting involved - contact Linda Patterson at contact@literacyvolunteers.org.uk.

Here's to a sunny Spring 2021!



Preparing and Returning to School

Following the March Network Meeting on Zoom, attended by

41 Volunteers, we have now put together information and ideas to help you prepare to return to school.

We have a process in place before a Volunteer goes back into school. This involves the school and Volunteer reading our risk assessment and completing some checklists. The process covers from a Volunteer

arriving at school, signing in, moving round the school, when/where/how they will work with their children, right through to leaving at the end of the session.

The Volunteers who have already returned, have all really enjoyed their sessions and told us the process was thorough and reassuring. They also found that the children were really happy to see them and they especially wanted to chat. Volunteers reported that the children have adapted really well to the new measures in their schools, including handwashing and social distancing.

Some schools have allowed Volunteers to use their treasure chest contents including books and games and other schools have preferred a Volunteer to use school books and paper and pencil games only. A child and Volunteer may have their own paper instead of working together on one sheet. Whatever way is agreed with a school it seems to be working well for everyone.

We have recently updated our paper and pencil games sheet for Volunteers and put together some ideas to help you with your sessions - we have sent these as attachments for you all to have a look at and use.

Volunteer comments:

Robert Gent at Horsendale Primary.

After a few brief weeks in December, followed by a further three-month lockdown, school is back. There's an email from Emma: would I be willing to go back if the school agrees? I've had my first jab and had a close look at the school's risk assessment - I'm happy that they have done whatever they can to create a safe environment. Both sides are enthusiastic, so I turn up on 15th March, excited, nervous and not sure exactly what to expect.

I need not have worried. The welcome is as warm as ever, the school's systems and Covid protocols are working smoothly and, most importantly, the children are thrilled to see me. My two Year 6 pupils, in particular, tell me that they have been worried that we might not meet again before they move on to 'big' school. We have a warm and friendly catch-up.

Of course, there are compromises. I have to wear a mask when moving around the school; I spend valuable time cleaning tables and chairs after each session; the children's favourite board games are a no-no and are replaced with pen and paper; social distancing makes

our shared reading slightly less natural. The logistics of fitting five individual sessions into a two-hour slot are challenging; staggered break times and home times mean I have to be flexible - school staff have a lot on their plate and communicating with me is not their top priority!

This primary school, where I have volunteered for almost seven years, has a high proportion of key workers' children and those who are vulnerable, and at times during lockdown attendance has been around 45% of normal capacity. At the same time, teachers and teaching assistants have done an amazing job in creating online learning, nurturing relationships and promoting the school's inclusive ethos through social media. I am filled with admiration for what they have achieved.

All the same, it's great to be back and to be able to enjoy being part of school life. There really is no substitute for that shared experience. Inevitably, things are not quite the same as they used to be and the adjustments are challenging, but to see the children's faces; to hear that they've missed me; to feel I'm making a difference, that's the reward, isn't it?

Literacy Volunteer at Carrington Primary.

My return this week was wonderful.

The children were so pleased to see me. It's been 3 months since I saw them last and the full value of what I do was so obvious when I saw that they hadn't done any further reading since I read with the children at the end of term last year.

When I went into school it was like going home, it felt so good.

The school has excellent infection control systems in place and the children automatically know to wash hands and are all Covid aware.

I felt extremely welcomed and valued by the teachers.

I would encourage our Volunteers to return if they are well enough to do so, as those children need us so much and the difference we make was abundantly clear, and if I had any reservations, they flew out of the windows (which were all open to ensure optimum ventilation and fresh air).



Doorstep to Digital

You might remember from the last Infosheet that we were just starting to work on this project, delivered in partnership with the National Literacy Trust.

We're really proud that we have now sent out all of the Read on Nottingham at Home packs to 1000 families across Nottingham City!

It was a huge logistical challenge and we worked with 35 schools, community groups, nurseries and pre-schools, childminders and the network of Read on Nottingham Literacy Champions to ensure we were targeting the most vulnerable families across the city who would benefit most from the packs.

Primary Story Box Project



Our Primary Story Boxes have gone down really well with the children and families from our member schools. This was confirmed by the hugely positive feedback received from the schools and children. We very much hope to be able to send out more boxes to schools in the future when funding allows and continue to make an impact and encourage and promote children's love of books and 'reading for pleasure'. Here is a selection of children's and schools' comments we'd like to share.

'I love my book box and the pens are really great!' 'I feel happy when I look in the box.' 'This is the best box ever - I can't believe my eyes!' 'I read it with my mummy each night.' 'I loved it, we have brought more from Amazon.'

'The children have loved their story boxes. Most of the children have completed the activities in their packs. One boy told me he loves his book and reads this for 5 minutes every night with mum. Another child told me that she loved her book and wouldn't normally pick that type of book to read at home. The children have enjoyed their books so much that they have been reading them during our DEAR reading time (drop everything and read) which has been lovely to see.'

'One of our pupils relished having a special box and a book of her very own that she has been able to take from school and keep forever at home. When I commented on her reading, mum became very excited to tell me how much her daughter had loved the reading box. So much so that mum has found an online subscription where she will get a book and activity delivered once a month. That one box has made such a huge impact on this child and the whole perception of reading in the family home. Thank you.'

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with families very grateful for the care taken over ensuring the books were really tailored to the ages of their children:

"I'm absolutely over the moon with our pack. It's fantastic! I have a 6-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy. So the pack is perfect for their ages. I'm also really happy with new cook book that we have been using loads during lockdown."

"I think this is a great thing to do because it helps a lot of the families that don't have a lot to spend on essentials"

The support didn't end with the book packs and families have been offered ongoing literacy help over email, text and WhatsApp.

There were also some online Zoom sessions which are now continuing weekly with the Learning to Love Books together families, we have live story-telling, hints and tips and are perfect for families with children aged 0-4.



Learning to Love Books

Learning to Love Books is continuing to prove very popular with all our families who have signed up to this successful story box project. Since we started sending out the Learning to Love Books boxes in March 2020, with at that point only a handful of families signed up, the 'Learning to Love Books' has continued to grow and develop; and now not only do we have 99 families and 109 children who are benefitting from this well thought out and creatively managed literacy development project, we also have a weekly zoom that supports the families and extends both the story book and the activities we provide. The feedback we receive from many of our families has been hugely complimentary, comments such as:

'We are receiving the boxes and enjoying every bit of it. We have made it a family thing.'

'Thank you so much for my son's lovely box. He absolutely loves 'Penguin' and has even started trying to say 'penguin' after reading it (sounds like "piggin" but he's getting there!). The accompanying resources are so well curated - they will definitely all get used.'

Check out our Facebook page if you want to see more photos and comments of our families enjoying the 'Learning to Love Books' story box project.

During this challenging period the Learning to Love Books team have been very busy liaising with schools, nurseries and local organisations such as Refugee Roots, St Ann's Chase centre and The Family Mentoring service. This ongoing working relationship with our partners and community has proved highly effective in ensuring we reach the families that will benefit most from our literacy project. In addition we have been delighted to team up with the **Doorstep to Digital project** in offering our weekly zoom sessions on a Thursday bringing together families from both the **Doorstep to Digital** and **Learning to Love Books projects** and extending the invitation to some of **Read On Nottingham's** Literacy Champions.



LATERAL FLOW TESTING

As Literacy Volunteers are steadily returning to schools now, we have found that most schools are asking Volunteers to do a Lateral Flow Test each week before they come into school.

Area Co-ordinators are organising with each Volunteer and their School how this process will work for them. Many schools are happy to provide the tests for the Volunteers but Volunteers can also access free tests from other avenues. A couple of suggestions are a local pharmacy or order online <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Children in Schools/Children's Wellbeing DO YOU NEED AN UPDATE OR REFRESHER?

If you haven't refreshed or updated your Safeguarding training in the last 3 years and you haven't been contacted yet by your Area Coordinator, please get in touch with them as you will need to update your knowledge and skills in this area.

As you return to school don't forget that many children may be feeling sad or concerned about being away from school and their friends for so long and/or be worried about what's happening in the world. They may want to talk to you about this. It's good to talk, so let them talk to you and if you can - please also encourage

them to pass their worries on to their class teacher. If you think your child is overly concerned it may also be good to share with them that you feel it wise to let the teacher know yourself and that this is part of making sure their worries can be addressed.



VOLUNTEER NETWORK MEETINGS

We are still running Volunteer Network Meetings via Zoom this term. **Please let your AC know you would like to attend and we will email you meeting details and the link.**

Meeting 1 – Wednesday 12 May at 10am – Meeting for all Volunteers. Theme – Q & A. AC Emma Collis

Meeting 2 – Thursday 13 May at 10am – Meeting for all Volunteers. Theme – Q & A. AC Sue Marriott

Meeting 3 – Wednesday 19 May at 10am – Meeting for all Volunteers. Theme – Q & A. AC Emma Trowbridge

Meeting 3 – Wednesday 14 July at 10am – Meeting for all Volunteers. Theme – Catch Up. All AC's

NEW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking for new Literacy Volunteers/ Story Sharers.

If you know of anyone who is interested please ask them to make an enquiry contact@literacyvolunteers.org.uk.

Next zoom training sessions are:

**11 & 18 May 2021
16 & 23 June 2021**

Spring Summer Term School Term Dates 2021

City Schools Term begins 19 April 2021, Term ends 27 July 2021

Half Term 31 May to 4 June 2021 inclusive

County Schools Term begins 19 April 2021, Term ends 28 July 2021

Half Term 31 May to 4 June 2021 inclusive

Derbyshire Schools Term begins 19 April 2021, Term ends 22 July 2021

Half Term 31 May to 4 June 2021 inclusive

To contact the team: Literacy Volunteers, Woodthorpe Grange, Woodthorpe Drive, Nottingham NG5 4HA

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Chief Executive: Dawn Claypole. **Office Manager:** Linda Patterson. **Senior Area Co-ordinator (City North, Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield):** Sue Marriott. **Area Co-ordinator (City East, Gedling, Rushcliffe) and Trainer:** Emma Collis. **Area Co-ordinator (City West, Broxtowe, Derbyshire):** Emma Trowbridge.

Project Co-ordinator: Lorna Jaggard. **Early Years Co-ordinator:** Marie Ainsworth.