



Annual Impact Report

2025-2026



Message from our Chair

We are delighted to share another year of progress and exciting milestones at Literacy Pirates. In 2025–2026, we continued to grow our impact - reaching more children, strengthening our foundations, and building on our work to reduce educational disadvantage for young people across the UK.



This academic year, we supported 662 children, bringing our joyful, rigorous literacy programme to more young people than ever before. We were thrilled to take our work beyond London for the first time, reaching communities in Cornwall and Leeds. Every child we support represents a story of potential, confidence and opportunity, and it is incredibly rewarding to see our mission make a meaningful difference in their lives.

This has also been a year of significant change for Literacy Pirates. After almost two years on the Board of Trustees, I was honoured to become Chair. This charity's mission has always meant a great deal to me. I joined as a volunteer more than six years ago, and I feel privileged to help guide Literacy Pirates through its next chapter. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Nick, our previous Chair, for his thoughtful leadership.

We also marked the end of an important chapter as Jude Williams stepped down as Chief Executive after more than nine years of dedicated service. Jude's passion and belief in the potential of every child have helped shape Literacy Pirates into the organisation it is today. We are immensely grateful for everything she has given to this charity.

In June 2026, we welcomed our new Chief Executive, Kat Lee, who brings a wealth of experience working with children facing disadvantage and a deep commitment to improving

opportunities for young people. We are delighted to have Kat on board and look forward to supporting her leadership as Literacy Pirates continues to grow.

As Chair, I am committed to supporting this next stage of our journey and ensuring we remain true to what makes Literacy Pirates special: a programme built on expertise, joy, ambition and a belief in every child's ability to succeed. Our five-year expansion plan will help us reach more children in the communities where support is needed most.

Looking ahead, 2026-2027 will bring another important milestone: our first external evaluation. This will strengthen our evidence base and ensure we continue to expand sustainably while maintaining the quality and effectiveness of our programme. Our ambition is clear: to continue expanding Literacy Pirates across the UK, reaching 1,000 children each year by 2027 and 3,000 by 2030.

None of this would be possible without our incredible volunteers, staff, supporters, schools, families and partners. Thank you for believing in our mission and for being part of this journey.

Funmbi Ogundiwin
Chair of Trustees

Vision 2030

Last year, we launched **Vision 2030**, our five-year strategy to scale our programme nationwide. Moving from our grassroots origins in Hackney and North-East London to a fully national stage is a big leap, but the need is clear. Recent findings from the National Literacy Trust show a widening gap in reading enjoyment between economically disadvantaged children and their peers*, and

reading for enjoyment is key to improving literacy skills and future life chances. Our online literacy programme is uniquely placed to fill this gap. With our digital platform able to reach any child, anywhere, we have a moral responsibility to ensure that every eligible child in the UK has access to this lifeline.

Our three strategic pillars

01

National scale

Expanding beyond London by 2030, targeting the most isolated and high-need communities.

02

Amplified impact

Innovating our teaching methods with technology to drive even greater literacy outcomes.

03

Digital transformation

Expanding our reach while keeping our core operating costs low by investing in our digital and data infrastructure.

Year one progress & looking ahead

We have exceeded our first-year targets for pupil places and annual revenue, backed by a steadily growing volunteer network.

In Year Two, our focus shifts to impact and infrastructure:

- **External evaluation:** Launching in September 2026 to independently measure our quality and guide future improvements.
- **Tech infrastructure:** Investing heavily in best-in-class digital systems to optimize national online learning.

Our five-year goals for growth

	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Young people per year	650	900	1,300	1,600	3,000
Annual revenue	£1,100,000	£1,300,000	£1,500,000	£1,700,000	£2,000,000

* Source: [National Literacy Trust, Children and young people's reading in 2026, June 2026.](#)

It's the National Year of Reading!

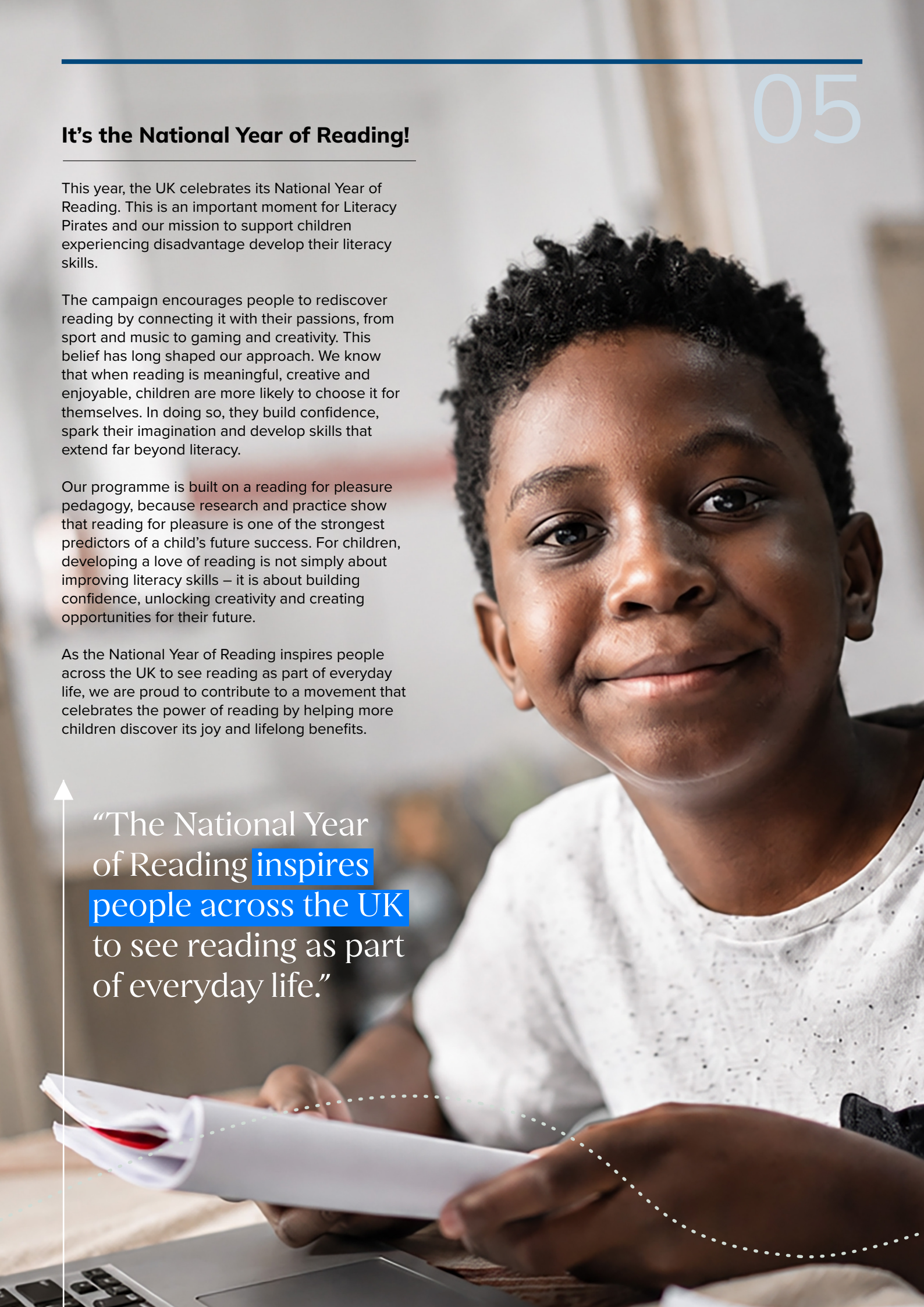
This year, the UK celebrates its National Year of Reading. This is an important moment for Literacy Pirates and our mission to support children experiencing disadvantage develop their literacy skills.

The campaign encourages people to rediscover reading by connecting it with their passions, from sport and music to gaming and creativity. This belief has long shaped our approach. We know that when reading is meaningful, creative and enjoyable, children are more likely to choose it for themselves. In doing so, they build confidence, spark their imagination and develop skills that extend far beyond literacy.

Our programme is built on a reading for pleasure pedagogy, because research and practice show that reading for pleasure is one of the strongest predictors of a child's future success. For children, developing a love of reading is not simply about improving literacy skills – it is about building confidence, unlocking creativity and creating opportunities for their future.

As the National Year of Reading inspires people across the UK to see reading as part of everyday life, we are proud to contribute to a movement that celebrates the power of reading by helping more children discover its joy and lifelong benefits.

“The National Year of Reading **inspires people across the UK** to see reading as part of everyday life.”





Our year in numbers

Academic year 2025-2026

We supported

662

children

We delivered

396

sessions

We worked with

45

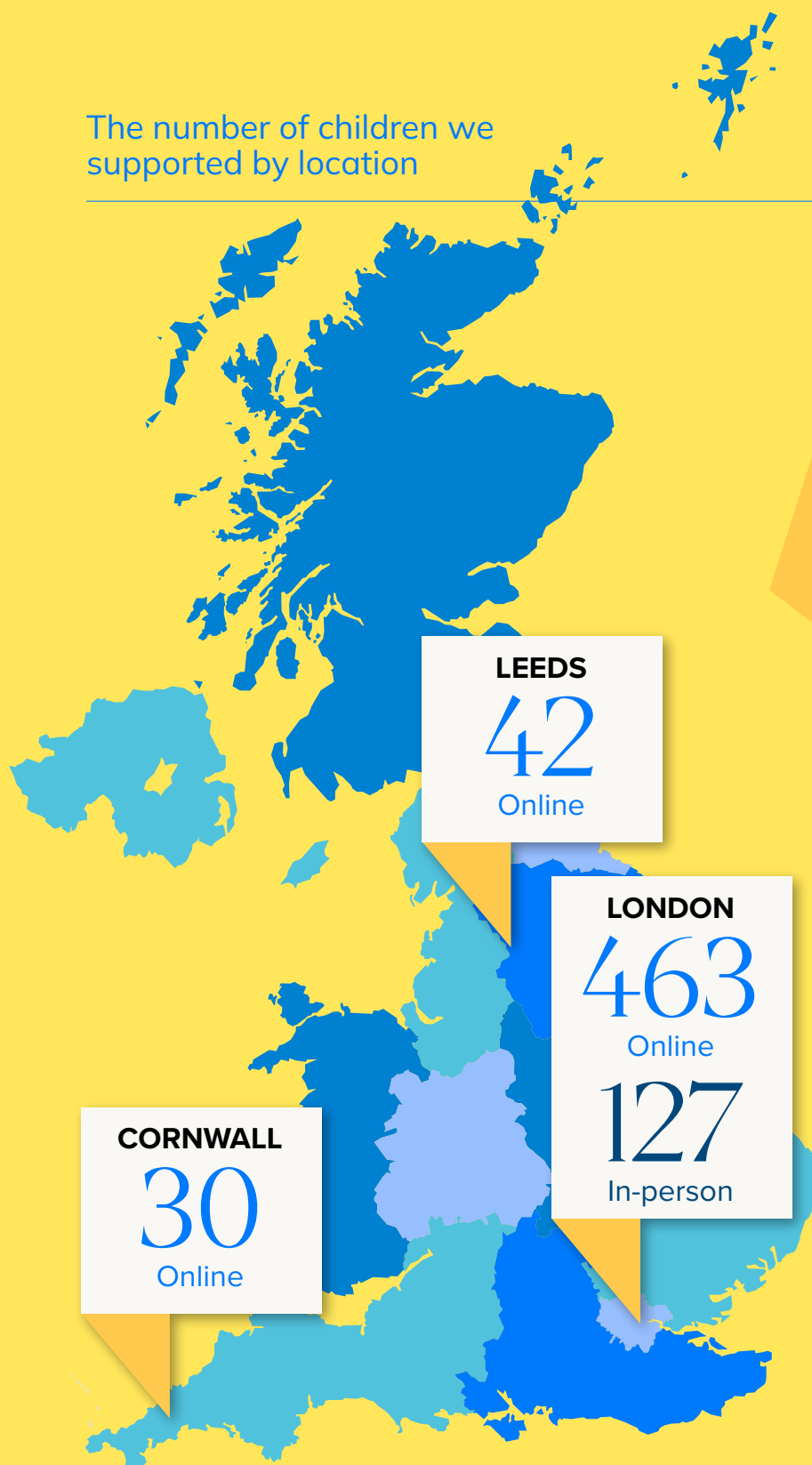
schools

We collaborated with

510

volunteers

The number of children we supported by location



Who we worked with

In the UK, socio-economic disadvantage is closely and persistently linked to poor educational outcomes. The children referred to us by teachers and schools reflect this: most qualify for Pupil Premium Funding (given to children from low-income households or with care experience), and many also speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) or have a Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND).

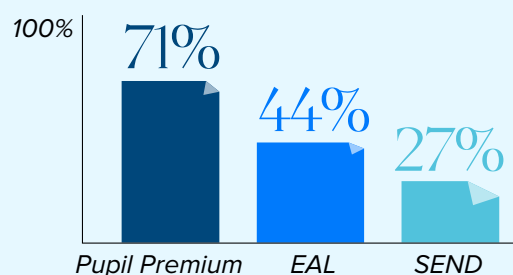
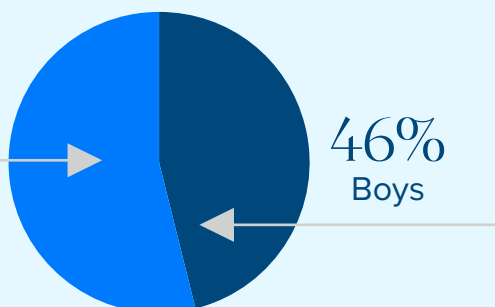
Focus on disadvantage and hard to reach

In 2025–2026, 71% of the children on our programme received Pupil Premium, 27% had SEND, and 44% spoke EAL. 60% were Black, Asian, mixed heritage or from other racially minoritised groups. These figures reflect our roots in inner London and our focus on children with the highest socio-economic needs. While the causes of low attainment are complex, we know that leaving school without age-related literacy skills can create significant barriers to future opportunities, affecting confidence, educational progression and the ability to fully participate in society. By developing strong literacy foundations, we help children build the skills they need to reach their potential.

Who we worked with:

We supported
662 children:

54%
Girls



Impact

How we measure impact

We treat literacy as a multi-faceted skill. By gathering data from families, participants and schools, we gain a fuller understanding of our impact.

Our goal is that by the end of the programme young people:

- Improve their literacy skills
- Increase their confidence
- Increase their perseverance
- Enjoy reading and read more

How we evaluate our impact²

01

The results of STAR tests that children take at the beginning and end of the programme.

02

Teachers report on decoding, fluency of reading, reading comprehension, and problem solving after the programme.

03

The results of a questionnaire in which children rate themselves as readers at the beginning and by the end of the programme.

Literacy

We use three validated tools to assess improvement in literacy skills.

Confidence

We assess increases in confidence using questionnaires completed by the children themselves, their families, and their teachers before and after the programme.

Perseverance

We assess increases in perseverance using questionnaires completed by the children themselves, their families, and their teachers before and after the programme.

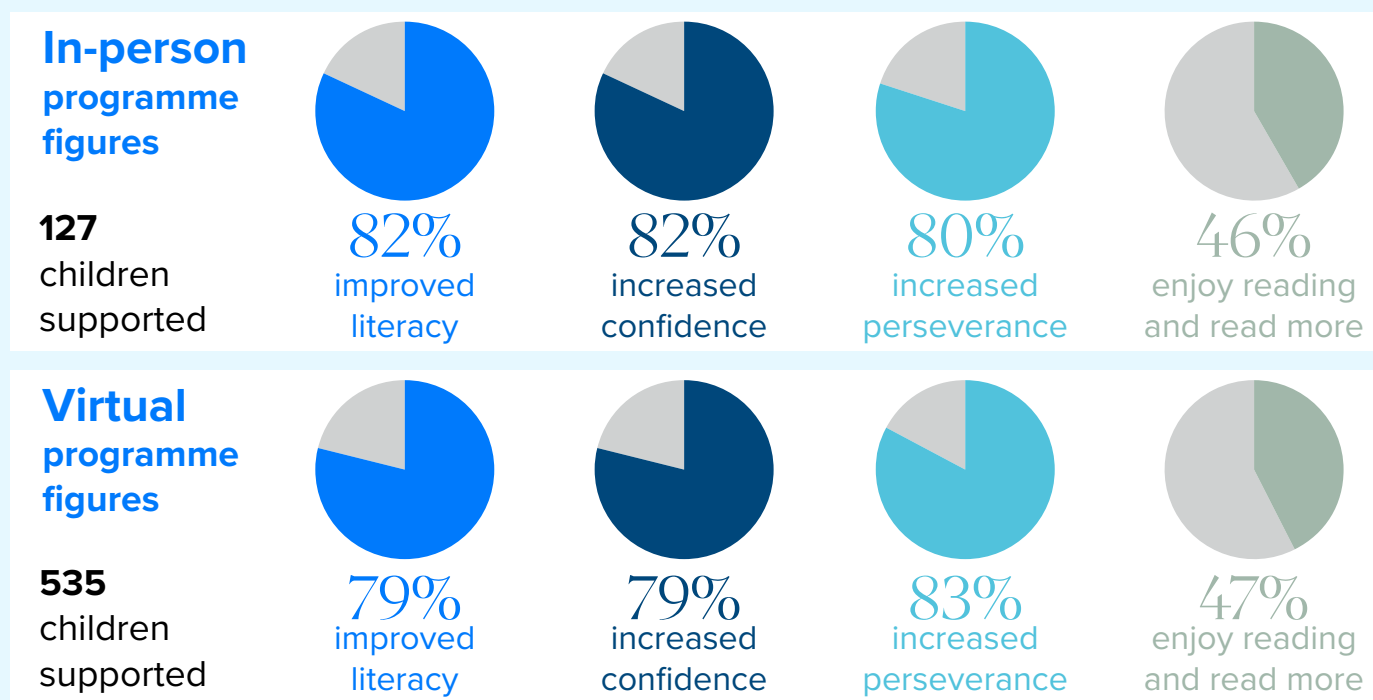
Reading enjoyment

We measure increases in reading enjoyment by using a questionnaire completed by the children themselves before and after the programme. Reading enjoyment is an important indicator for us, as the National Literacy Trust found that children who enjoy reading are twice as likely to have above-average reading skills.

2025 - 2026 impact

Behind every number is a child building confidence, exploring creativity, and discovering a love of learning. **Here's what we achieved together this year.**

Percentage of children showing improvement by the end of the programme



Our impact data shows that the online programme is just as effective as our in-person delivery in achieving our goals. **This means we can support more children across the UK by overcoming barriers to participation.**

What sets us apart

Literacy Pirates brings a unique model to literacy support, combining reading and writing development with the confidence and perseverance children need to succeed. Our programme combines rigour and joy: the rigour of evidence-based teaching practices refined over more than 14 years, and the joy of approaches like Reading for Pleasure and our Everyone a Writer method.

Every participant takes part in structured sessions designed by teachers. These are led by trained session leaders and supported by volunteers who together create a space where children feel challenged, encouraged and celebrated.

Through our virtual programme, we remove geography as a barrier to opportunity, reaching children who are isolated or living in areas with limited access to literacy support. The online programme is designed to be interactive, relationship-driven and rooted in real connection – not passive online learning. By removing geography as a barrier to opportunity, we bring literacy support to every child, wherever they live.

We also give children something lasting to be proud of, as their creative writing gets published in high-quality books. This helps them see themselves as authors, value their own ideas and build the confidence to share their voices.

Case study

Unlocking confidence through creativity at Earlsmead Primary School

During the 2025-2026 academic year, Alice, a teacher at Earlsmead Primary School in Haringey, London, referred 26 children to our programme. She selected pupils from her class that were falling behind, especially with writing.

One pupil from her class who stood out is Celina*, who in just one term made incredible progress. “Her writing went from below age-related expectations to meeting them incredibly quickly,” Alice says. As an English as an Additional Language (EAL) learner, Celina had previously struggled with vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure. Alice recalls being surprised when she read Celina’s contribution to the Literacy Pirates’ book, a published product children put together by the end of the programme. “I remember reading the book and thinking, ‘Whose writing is this?’ When I realised it was hers, I couldn’t believe it. She had absorbed everything so quickly, and the impact on her writing was huge.”

Alice says the enthusiasm children have for Literacy Pirates is unlike any other intervention she has seen. “The children are always excited to show me what they’ve written. They come back wanting to share their work, and they all speak so positively about the programme. I’ve never had a child complain about going to Literacy Pirates, which is something I can’t say about every intervention. They genuinely enjoy it.”

She believes one of the programme’s greatest strengths is helping children see literacy in a new light. “It takes children out of the mindset that reading and writing are just school tasks. Some children still talk about their Literacy Pirates book years after they’ve finished the programme.”

For Alice, that lasting enthusiasm is the programme’s greatest success. By building creativity alongside literacy skills, Literacy Pirates helps children develop the confidence to see themselves not only as readers and writers, but as authors with stories worth sharing. They take that confidence back into school, helping them succeed far beyond literacy.

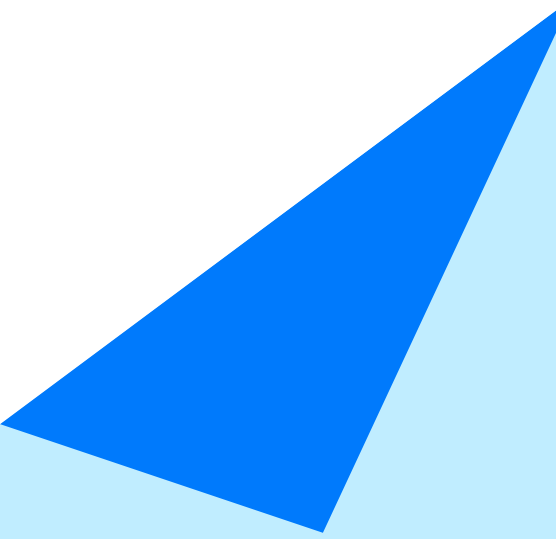
* The child’s name has been changed to protect their privacy.

“I often see a real disparity between children writing and reading. If children don’t read enough at home or don’t have access to books, their writing is heavily impacted. Many children lack the confidence and creativity to express themselves, and Literacy Pirates really helps with that.”

Alice



The programme helps children to see literacy in a new light.



“Thank you to our dedicated staff team and trustees – and to all the families, schools, volunteers, funders and supporters we have worked with this year. Thanks to you, all this was possible.”

Charity information

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Charity registration number 1145115

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