

# Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation Supporting Chapter One children in Doncaster



## JACOB, YEAR 2

Autumn-Winter term 2023-24



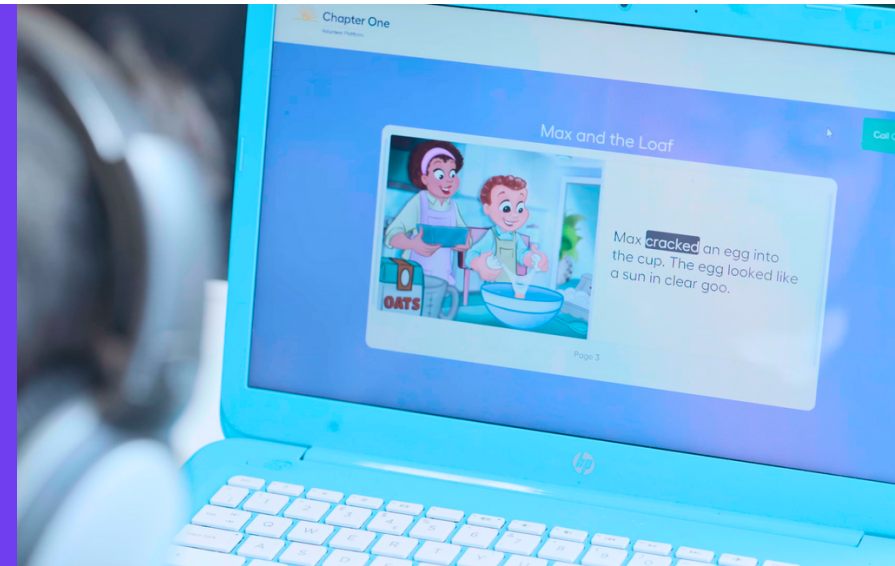
**stop  
hunger**

### Child and school background

Jacob\* is in Year 2 in **Hill Top Primary Academy** in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. Compared to the national average (23.8%), Hill Top school has a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (32.6%).

Jacob is paired with **Brian Arnold**, an online reading volunteer from Sodexo.

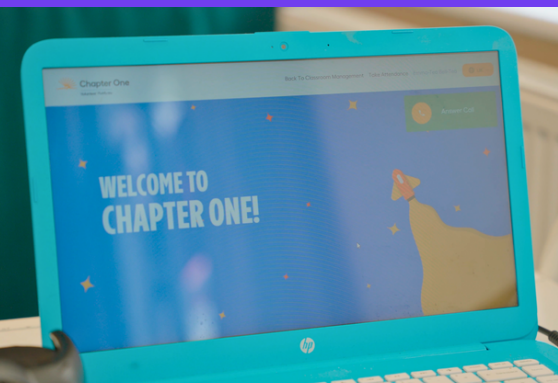
Jacob participated in Chapter One's Online Reading Volunteers Programme in Year 1 last year. The school began to see the benefits of the programme for him and so his Year 2 teacher, **Gemma Wood**, put him forward for the reading programme again in Year 2. Ms Wood said she chose Jacob to participate in the programme because he doesn't read at home very much and she feels this impacts on his love of reading. He was also not working at the expected reading level.



**AT CHAPTER ONE, WE TRANSFORM  
CHILDREN'S FUTURES WITH  
1:1 READING SUPPORT AT THE TIME  
THEY NEED IT THE MOST.**

When Chapter One interviewed his teacher and Sodexo volunteer, Jacob had been reading online for 30 minutes a week with his volunteer reader for the first term of the school year.

*\*Jacob is not the child's real name.*



## JACOB'S EXPERIENCE WITH CHAPTER ONE

At the start of Year 2, Ms Wood described Jacob as a quiet child who needed lots of encouragement to take part in reading in school and who would not tend to put himself forward to read in class activities. As the first term of the school year progressed, Jacob showed clear signs of developing **confidence in himself as a reader**.

"[Before] he would just say 'oh, I don't know what that says'. But now he'll have a go at chunking the word, breaking it down, and then putting it back together. So I think the [decoding] strategies are starting to now come into play and he's feeling more confident about using them." -

**Ms Wood, teacher**

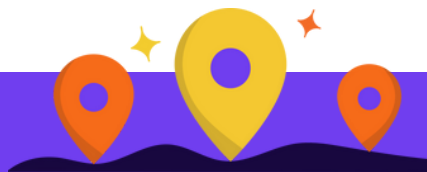
His increased confidence is also leading to **increased engagement in class**:

"I feel as though he's getting a little bit more confident to want to read out loud to the class, which is positive." - **Ms Wood, teacher**

Jacob's volunteer reader Brian also noted that he is participating very well in Chapter One reading sessions. Although there are a variety of engaging games available to play on the Chapter One platform, Brian said: "he just wants to read". Brian commented how this participation and engagement is helping Jacob to progress:

"I have moved Jacob up a level because he was flying through the books he was on...the next level is a lot more challenging." - **Brian, Sodexo volunteer**

Ms Wood alluded to **increased reading engagement at home**. At the start of the year, there was often no record of home reading but this has all changed for the better. Jacob sometimes approaches his teacher to add a story to his home reading record if he thinks his parent has forgotten to add it.



## Literacy and poverty rates in Doncaster

In 2022-23, **40% of 11-year-olds from disadvantaged families (compared to 22% of their more advantaged counterparts)** left English primary schools not reading to the **expected standard**. Budget cuts in schools mean that teachers' time is even more stretched in the classroom and many children do not have an adult at home who practises reading with them. This national picture is similar to the situation in Doncaster. In 2021/22, 32.4% of children in Doncaster were living in poverty, against a UK rate of 29%. Doncaster's Education and Skills Strategy 2030 states that, despite improvements, reading is the biggest area of challenge in Key Stage 2 (primary school years 3 to 6), with the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard currently well below the national average.

## MOTIVATION, READING ENJOYMENT AND CONNECTION



When Jacob hears the call and he knows it's going to be his time...he's straight up out of his seat from wherever he's been and he is motivated to come on to the calls, which is good.

When he comes back into the classroom, back into whichever part of learning we're doing, he seems happy and gives us a thumbs up to say that the [Chapter One] lesson's gone well.

I think it's a judgment-free environment where he feels that he can go, he can do some reading with his volunteer and have a go at the activities, and it's helping to build resilience that's showing in his reading.



**MS WOOD, JACOB'S TEACHER**