

Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation

Supporting Chapter One children in Glasgow



AHMED, AGED 5

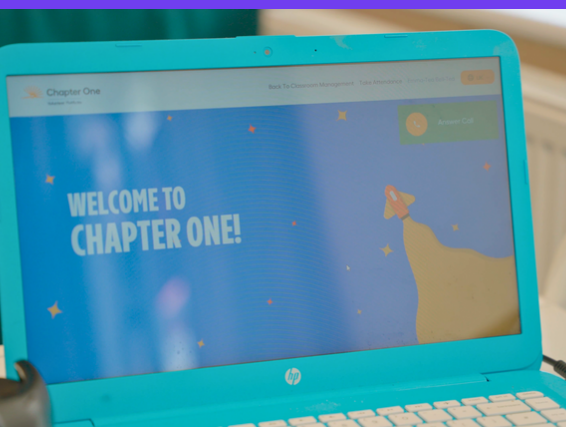
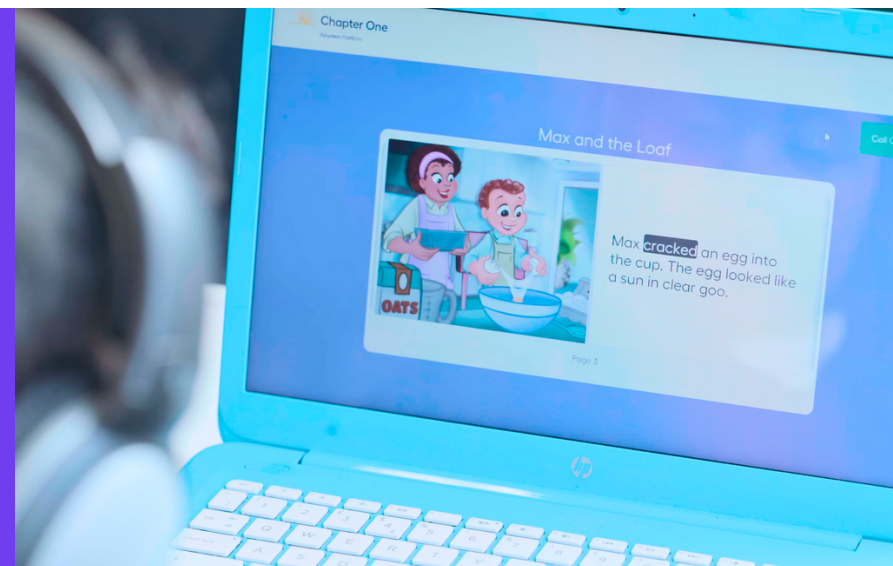
Spring term 2023-24



CHILD AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Ahmed* is in Primary 2 at Blackfriars Primary School, in the heart of South Glasgow. Approximately 64% of the school population live in the two lowest areas of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Over half of the children in this school have English as an Additional Language.

Ahmed is paired with **Gayle Ogilvie**, an online reading volunteer from Sodexo. He, and his family, do not have English as a first language and, according to Ahmed's Primary 2 teacher, **Jessica Cox**, this means that Ahmed gets his only reading practice at school. Ms Cox therefore decided to put Ahmed forward for the Chapter One Online Reading Volunteers Programme to provide him with a little extra support and because he was lacking in confidence in reading.



When Chapter One interviewed his teacher and Sodexo volunteer, Ahmed had been participating in Chapter One's online reading volunteer programme since October/November 2023, so for approximately four months.

**Ahmed is not the child's real name.*

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

AHMED'S EXPERIENCE WITH CHAPTER ONE

At the start of Primary 2, according to Ms Cox and Gayle, Ahmed struggled with reading fluency. Gayle noted that he read a story hesitantly, word by word. His teacher noted that he had difficulty in recognising tricky words which meant that he would often read at a slow pace.

However, since his participation in Chapter One, both his teacher and volunteer have seen changes in his **reading fluency**. Ahmed has now become more confident in recognising tricky words and his reading pace is discernibly quicker.

Gayle says: "There's definitely more fluidity ..., it's not just a group of words, he's actually putting the sentence together, and reading it as one." She also believes that, with her prompting, Ahmed now seems to understand the importance of re-reading the whole of the sentence once he has mastered all the words in it, a technique that helps him to make sense of the text.

Ms Cox also pointed out an increased **expression** in Ahmed's reading. The monotone voice he used in the past has gone, and he is now changing his tone.

Ahmed is building **reading comprehension** too. Whereas before, he was unable to answer questions in relation to a story, he is now able to both answer and ask questions.

Gayle has also seen this, and puts it down to his **increased reading confidence** and willingness to give things a go: "As his confidence is growing, he's making comments as to what might be happening in the scenario around the stories. So that comprehension is there as well."



MOTIVATION AND READING ENJOYMENT

At the start of the Chapter One programme, Ms Cox noted that Ahmed was not really excited to start his reading calls, which she attributed to his overall lack of engagement with reading. Similarly, Gayle saw Ahmed as initially quite nervous in Chapter One sessions.

However, both Ms Cox and Gayle have noted a real **increase in motivation and engagement**. According to Ms Cox: "It's almost like he's kind of counting down, [before his reading session, he is] quite excited for it!"

According to Gayle, Ahmed now shows up ready and very willing to begin his sessions: "Now he is ready to get started – he knows what he is there for. There's no reluctance. As soon as we're in the session, he's ready, which is really good."

“

THERE IS DEFINITELY A WILLINGNESS TO TRY RATHER THAN WAIT. SO, AS SOON AS WE'VE TURNED THE PAGE, HE WANTS TO TRY AND SOUND THE WORDS OUT.... HE MIGHT NOT QUITE GET IT RIGHT EVERY TIME, BUT HE KNOWS THE PROCESS AND I THINK THAT'S BEEN REALLY GOOD TO SEE THAT CONFIDENCE GROW IN HIM

”

- Gayle Ogilvie, Ahmed's volunteer

Gayle mentioned that Ahmed was becoming more engaged in reading activities in Chapter One sessions: "I would say that his enjoyment of the activity of reading feels as if it's definitely growing...he seems to be more engaged as time has gone on."

This **increased engagement** in Chapter One sessions is mirrored in school too. Ms Cox noted that, at the start of the year, when Ahmed was involved in group reading in school, he was very quiet and did not really engage with the text. Now he is much more engaged, reading, answering and asking questions about the texts.

Gayle also commented on an increased engagement within their interactions. She attributed this to some extent to the 'Meet and Greet' session, whereby both Gayle and Ahmed saw each other online for the first time. She described this opportunity as a 'turning moment in our interactions'.



At the start of Primary 2, according to Ms Cox, Ahmed was a quiet member of the class. She believes his participation in the Chapter One reading programme has **improved his communication and listening skills**: "I've certainly recognised recently that he's a lot more inclined to answer in class than he was before, so I think [Chapter One reading practice has] spilled over into his talking and listening and he's able to form sentences a lot better as well."



Literacy and poverty rates in Glasgow and Scotland

Glasgow is the Scottish city with the highest numbers of people living in deprived communities. A [report](#) in 2023 found that approximately one quarter of children in Glasgow are living in poverty. Data from the Scottish government (2022-23) showed that approximately 27% of children do not reach the expected levels of attainment in Scottish primary schools. The gap in attainment between richer and more deprived areas of Scotland remains at 20.5%.

A study in 2023 by the National Literacy Trust in collaboration with Scottish Book Trust showed that only 2 in 5 (41.5%) children and young people in Scotland enjoyed reading in their free time, meaning that nearly 3 in 5 (58.5%) did not enjoy reading. In addition, only approximately 1 in 4 (27.1%) reported reading daily (or almost daily) in their free time, meaning that 3 in 4 do not.