

Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation Supporting Chapter One children in Glasgow



MUSA, AGED 5

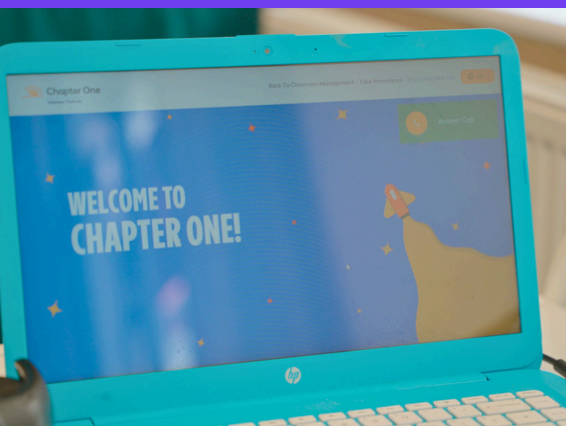
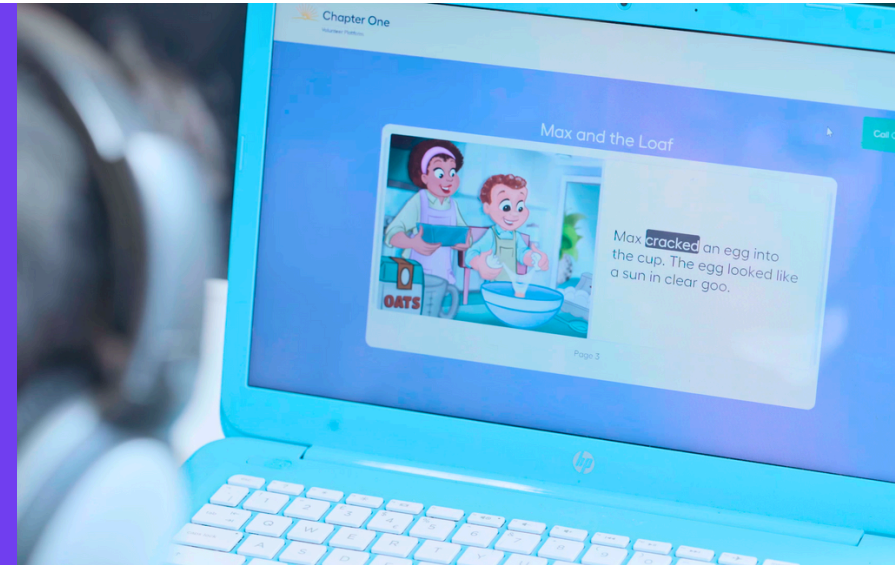
Spring term 2023-24



CHILD AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Musa* 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.

Musa is paired with **Kate Nicholl**, an online reading volunteer from Sodexo. His teacher **Jessica Cox** explained that she put Musa forward for the Chapter One Online Reading Volunteer Programme due to his low reading confidence. Although Musa comes from a very supportive home environment, English is not his first language, and Ms Cox commented that Musa struggled with pronouncing some sounds – which meant that he often got nervous about getting things wrong when reading in class. Ms Cox felt that Chapter One would boost his confidence and benefit his speaking and listening skills.



Musa began his Chapter One online reading sessions in November 2023. We spoke to his teacher, Jessica Cox at the beginning of February 2024 and to his Chapter One volunteer Kate Nicholl in early March 2024.

**Musa 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.**

MUSA'S EXPERIENCE WITH CHAPTER ONE

At the start of the year, Musa was not reading at the expected level or at the level of other children in the classroom. Both Ms Cox and Kate reported that Musa found reading a struggle. For Musa, reading was slow and difficult as he needed to sound out every single word and there were many words that he needed help with.

However, since his Chapter One reading sessions began, both Ms Cox and Kate have seen an improvement in Musa's **recognition of words**. For example, Kate said: "Now there's a number of words that he recognises straight away and doesn't have to spell through [sound out]. Any of the words that he does struggle with, he ...used to get frustrated, but he won't [now]. He'll keep going and make sure he gets the right word."

Kate added that, compared to the start of the programme, Musa now enjoys challenging himself to have a go at reading longer words. His teacher, Ms Cox, added that his improved recognition of words has led to **better reading fluency**: "His fluency has definitely got a lot better, it's not as bitty or stop and start."

Reading has also had a good impact on Musa's **writing** too – Ms Cox says: "He's now able to...write those tricky words when he's writing sentences, he recognises them."

Kate was aware that Musa was initially hesitant about taking part in the reading programme, but both Kate and Ms Cox explained that Musa's **enjoyment of the Chapter One reading programme has increased**.

Ms Cox noted that: "He's actually quite excited to go to the sessions... And he's beginning to make jokes and things like that on the calls, so you can see that he's enjoying it."

Ms Cox has also noticed Musa's **increased reading enjoyment** in the classroom: "He's more interested when he's reading, it's not like I just want to get through my sentence of the book and it's done, he's actually more engaged in looking at the pictures and listening to other children read as well so that he can pick up on the story."



“ NOW HE IS TALKING THROUGH THE STORY BEFORE WE EVEN GET ONTO THE WORDS... AND WE’RE HAVING NICE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE PICTURES, AND HE’S BEEN A BIT MORE OPEN ABOUT HOW IT RELATES TO HIM. ”

- Kate Nicholl, Musa’s volunteer

Back in November Kate explained that Musa was reluctant to engage in conversation with her during their sessions. For example, Kate attempted to encourage Musa to describe the pictures of the stories, but he seemed reticent. However, she more recently noted changes in his **communication and oracy skills** in relation to reading stories.

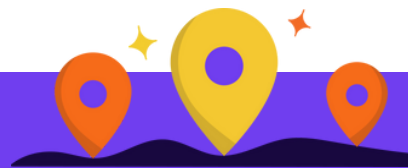
He is now engaging more with the stories and has also developed **confidence to engage in conversation** with Kate: “...[I see him growing his] confidence in engaging with somebody that [he doesn’t] see every day. And ...asking questions, and that’s been the difference. So, for example, one week I couldn’t read with him because I was [abroad] ... And so when I [returned], and let him know that I’d been away ..he said, Oh, that’s so exciting! And [we had] a conversation around it, which was lovely.”

Both teacher and volunteer noted Musa coming out of his shell. For Kate, this increased confidence relates to having a go at reading more challenging words, or to increased confidence to talk about the stories or to engage in conversation in general. For Ms Cox, Musa’s increased confidence is now evident in the classroom too: “When it comes to reading in our classroom ...he’s becoming a lot more confident in group situations.”

GLASGOW IS THE SCOTTISH CITY WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF PEOPLE LIVING IN DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES, AND APPROXIMATELY ONE QUARTER OF CHILDREN IN GLASGOW ARE LIVING IN POVERTY.

27%

of children do not reach the expected levels of attainment in Scottish primary schools.



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.