

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

Children's
Book
Project



inspirrific
the power of gifting your pre-loved books

TRUSTEES, OFFICERS & PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

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Charity Number

1183092

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Daniel Misra-Jones (appointed October 2025)
Ann-Janine Murtagh (appointed June 2025)
Elizabeth Norton
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Foreword

The past year has been a dynamic one for the Children’s Book Project as we continue to tackle book poverty and strive to create a fairer society, where every child is able to be the proud owner of books they choose for themselves, and is introduced to the transforming power of reading.

Our mission has an ever more urgent social imperative with research from the National Literacy Trust published in October 2024 revealing that only 34% of children and young people are reading for pleasure. Around one million children in the UK do not own a single book of their own and at the same time, vast numbers of perfectly good books are pulped or end up in landfill each year. We address both problems at once, creating a route that stops books becoming waste and redirecting them straight into the hands of children who will treasure them.

A sustainable, circular gifting model

Our ambition is to create a sustainable model for the passing on of pre-loved and surplus books to ensure every child has the chance to have a favourite book of their own at home.

We encourage all families to donate books, we engage with publishers to view every surplus title as a gift waiting for a reader, and we help communities host book gifting events that spark a lifelong love of reading.

Our bright yellow year

This year we shared our vision with the support of JCDecaux who donated 200 billboard spaces nationwide in March for our bright yellow **inspiffic** campaign - with joyful illustrations generously shared by Wonderbly - it championed the power of passing on pre-loved books. This is a message now echoed across our gifting boxes and overall communications.

We accelerated the impact of our work with a strong focus on our distribution. We centralised our operations to support our Birmingham and Leeds hubs, launched ‘Pop Up Hubs’ in Nottingham and Bristol and distributed a record number of books thanks to an incredible network of over 700 donation points across the UK.

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This combined with the extraordinary platform Asda provided in 388 stores meant we reached families nationwide and exceeded every gifting target we set. We gifted over half a million books this year – with a total of 549k books via 658 schools, community groups and prisons. Each gifting event was delivered with rigour ensuring every book is checked for quality, boxed and then presented within an event created to ensure an engaging experience for the children to support wider literacy initiatives within schools.

The importance of our volunteers

We're proud to have achieved these goals with the support of a primarily volunteer-based workforce, led by our committed team leaders, and we simultaneously introduced and embedded effective processes across all aspects of our operations to support our planned growth in 2025-2026.

We continue to place huge importance on the value of our extensive network of schools, corporates and wider stakeholder groups and this year developed discrete communications with each of these. We worked closely with teachers to develop the most impactful resources to accompany our Discovery programme supporting the impact of our gifted books. We defined our corporate partnerships offer and diversified our sources of funding. We also forged stronger relationships with charities across the literacy sector to ensure we play a strategic role in the upcoming National Year of Reading in 2026.



Looking ahead to 2026

Our culture and purpose drives our mission. We were delighted to welcome new supporters to join our work. We benefited from the engagement of our valued corporate and community partners. We were delighted that student volunteering extended this year with more young people keen to undertake community hours. We were also excited to have our first patron, Lauren Laverne join us. We welcomed two new Trustees bringing fresh perspectives to our future plans, working closely with our established and committed Board, and appointed Ann-Janine Murtagh as the new Chair of Trustees in June.

In the year ahead, we're launching One Million Stories, our boldest campaign yet. It will give more than 125,000 children across 1,000 schools and community groups the chance to choose and take home books – a milestone made possible entirely through the innovation, generosity, and belief of our partners, volunteers, team leaders and trustees.

The next chapter is bold but necessary. We're not just gifting books. We're changing childhoods. The challenge ahead is significant and we will rise to this fuelled by the energy from the children we see alight with excitement at every gifting event. At the heart of each event lies a powerful moment: a child choosing a book they love and taking it home to keep forever.

Join us—and help write book poverty out of the story.

What we do

The Children's Book Project is a registered charity in England and Wales, number 1183092, incorporated on 24th April 2019.

Our object is to advance education of children up to age 14 by supplying books to those that would not otherwise be able to afford them, and by creating sustainable reading communities amongst targeted groups through the provision of regular inclusive book gifting events.

Also to advance public education about environmental matters related to re-use & recycling of pre-loved children's books.

Objects & activities

We receive new and gently used books from publishers and from book buying families donated via 'book drive' events held in schools and other settings and at specified drop off points.

All donated books are checked for quality and relevance to ensure their suitability and then curated by age and reading stage (for children aged 0-14 years).

Liaison with targeted schools and community groups enables us to establish the book and reading related needs of the families and young people they support and for us to directly support these with donations of good quality, relevant books and the resources to put on book gifting events.

These include initiatives in conjunction with groups that support vulnerable mothers of babies under one-year, young people in reform institutions, food bank users and (indirectly) children with a parent in prison.

Our books are accompanied by unique and child-led creative delivery mechanics that support organisations to gift books in the most compelling way(s).

These include our BookSparks cards, Book Huts, Pop Up Bookshops, Book Bundles, packs for gifting to mothers with under 1s & Book Bags to support gifting amongst refugee families.



“Your books have helped families form stronger bonds with each other & opened up a world of storytelling and knowledge that have been inaccessible before.”

Literacy Lead, W10

Trustees' report

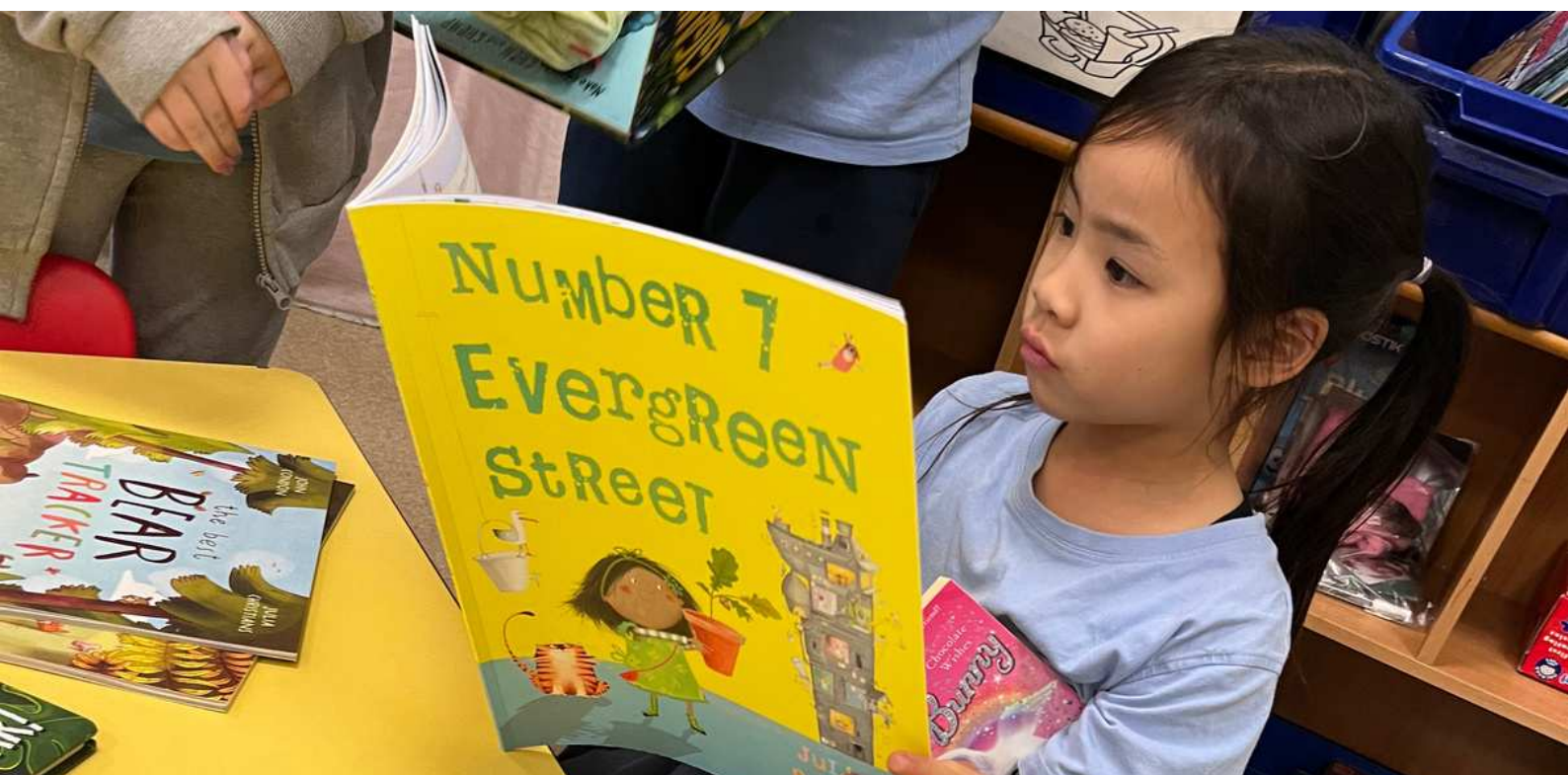
The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2025. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2019)".

Public benefits statement

The Trustees have considered the activities and achievements of the charity for 2024-2025 and its plans for 2025-2026 against the Public Benefit Guidance issued by the Charity Commission. They agreed that the public who benefit directly from the work of the charity are those children aged 0-14 years that receive books through the Children's Book Project that might not otherwise be able to afford them. Book ownership in childhood directly correlates with a greater propensity to identify as a reader and to read for pleasure, whilst multiple opportunities for children to choose and take home books they are excited about and motivated to read positively impacts their reader identity.

Furthermore, Trustees note the incremental impact to eligible settings and the communities they support by the year on year support the charity is able to offer, in as much as it permits them to dovetail gifting events with their wider reading for pleasure initiatives. Trustees also agree that children benefit directly, but there are also benefits for parents, caregivers, family members and the wider community.

Trustees note that the increased opportunities for families to donate their pre-loved books nationwide this year supports greater wider public understanding of the positive impacts of reuse.



Our goal

Our vision is for a fairer society where every child owns books and loves to read. We do this by re-homing pre-loved and publisher donated books so that every child can grow up surrounded by stories and proud to be a reader.

We believe in the positive impact of book ownership. We give children the opportunity to choose multiple books that excite them, take them home, and build their own bookshelves. With the support of book buying families nationwide and our publishing partners, we gift to children an exceptional variety of new and pre-loved titles. Through our long-term relationships with schools and community organisations, we help create book-rich environments where book ownership can be taken for granted.

We want to educate families about the impact of reuse reuse and normalise book “hand-me-downs”, inspire publishers that every surplus book can find a valuable home, and ensure that the book gifting events hosted by schools and communities inspire a lifelong love of reading.

Our strategy

Our work is guided by three key strategic principles:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Engage book buying families and the publishing industry | <i>Make book donation easy and instinctive</i> |
| 2. Create book-rich communities | <i>Work with the most disadvantaged groups and commit multi-year support to each.</i> |
| 3. Retain granular, user-led programmes | <i>Collaborate at a micro level to ensure gifting is always nuanced, relevant and impactful</i> |

Our model

Sustainability is at the heart of our purpose, offer and operations, both in terms of how we run our warehouses and how we retrieve pre-loved books and redistribute to schools. Our ‘hub and spoke’ model operated from each of our three hubs maximises efficiencies at each site in terms of weekly throughput of books and minimising the miles that books travel (reaching us and being gifted onwards).

Our hubs permit us to build relationships with and add value to the local communities in which they are based, whether from a volunteering or book gifting perspective or simply by virtue of the numbers of corporate volunteers visiting the area in order to join one of our days.

Our messages to donor families celebrate the power of every pre-loved book in terms of the potential each has to engage another child. We don’t just make it easy for families to gift their books: we also explain to them the impact that their books will have.

147k
children aged
0-14 years
received books
from us this year



1. Engage book buying families

Ease of donation is facilitated via an online map of permanent dedicated donation points that in turn are hosted by partner organisations including 288 Asda stores, 30 branches of Winkworths, 12 Banner school uniform stores, construction site hoarding drop points and numerous one-off supporters such as libraries. These permanent drop points act as a regular reminder to families of the value of their pre-loved books and are available as and when each family chooses to pass on their own.

In addition, over 300 'book drives' conducted nationwide each year invite community groups such as schools and Brownie packs to donate their pre-loved books within a particular timeframe. These provide an effective means of corralling families to respond to a campaigning message and to celebrate their collective contribution. They 'disrupt' with a clear campaigning call to action and capture the attention of families we might reach via our permanent donation network.

Our drop points:

- Offer wide geographical reach and a wide variety of settings with accessible opening hours.
- Are in largely residential areas accessible on foot whilst many permit car access and larger donations
- Include postal and at home collection mechanics.

With limited marketing budget we make good use of 3rd party advocacy and partner channels to drive awareness amongst families of the potential impact of their pre-loved books. We were extremely fortunate this year to benefit from support from JCDecaux's community channel which gave us access to 200 advertising hoardings each week nationwide for four weeks in March.

- Bookseller (online and retail) advocacy
- Improved SEO to ensure prominence in recycle searches
- Council / recycling body reciprocal links
- 3rd party advocacy and awareness raising activities
- Ambassadors / patron
- Recycling bodies

658
settings including
467 primary schools,
51 community
groups &
6 food banks



“We did our first Pop Up Bookshop today and it was truly wonderful. The children were amazed at all the books available and couldn't believe they got to take some home to keep! Thank you so much. You have no idea the positive impact it will have.” Head Teacher, B23

2. Create book rich communities

As we grow, we seek to build long-term relationships with every school, prison, food bank, community group and other settings that we support. We want them to view our donations of books and their ability to put on gifting events as an integral element of their literacy and reading for pleasure provision that they can count on and dovetail with their wider activity.

Long-term relationships with hundreds of organisations necessarily requires a robust approach to our outbound communications and to database management. We often need to engage new staff as our key contacts move on, and work hard to ensure that the continuing relevance of our offer to their children and families as their needs change or our partner's priorities change.

3. Retain granular, user-led models

All our programmes are developed in conjunction with practitioners to ensure their relevance and appeal to the children and young people they support, and are designed to be easy to implement, even with limited resources. We run several discrete gifting programmes: for each educational phase, for prisons, for foodbanks and for wider community groups, all acknowledging the respective capacities of each setting to engage with their community and all underpinned by our core principles.



Every partner is invited to provide feedback on the gifting events they put on using our books and we regularly review this feedback to understand how we could improve our processes, communications or programme resources. We also engage in regular dialogue with a panel of advisory teachers to ensure that our programmes are pertinent to their needs and remain valuable. In June 2025 our primary school panel's input helped refine our Discover programme for the 2025-2026 year.

In addition Trustees recognised two further focus areas:

Support the move to centralised operations

The charity restructured at the start of 2024-2025, centralising its operations to build consistency across its hubs in terms of processes, outputs and volunteer experiences. This remains a focus and one that the Trustees supported with the introduction of a risk register, by the appointment of a Finance Director so that finance could be brought in-house and by the development of a bespoke inventory system.

Sustainable staffing model

The Trustees recognise the incredible, ongoing value of the support given by volunteers to the charity but at the start of 2024-2025 also noted the need to invest in staff to ensure sustainable, scalable delivery and to support succession planning.

Our partnerships

We are proud that our single-minded gifting model enables us to collaborate with many other charities so that our joint offer is amplified and meaningful to our beneficiary audiences. Our programmes are designed to be relevant within a wide range of contexts so that schools, prisons, food banks and other settings can all use our books to best meet the needs of the families they support and dovetail our books with their existing literacy and reading for pleasure initiatives.

To date we've gifted over 1.7 million books to children aged 0-14 years across England and Wales. Each one has been gifted within the context of a book gifting event put on by a local provider that is best placed to engage that child and / or their family, and each book has been chosen by a child excited to share it with someone at home.

Our work is only possible through the partnerships we build with the recipient organisations that gift our books onwards, and by the generous organisations that support us in a myriad of ways to amplify our voice, support our logistics and crucially, to access the beautiful new and pre-loved books we are able to gift onwards. Each one of our partner organisations is as committed as we are to putting books in bedrooms and we are hugely grateful for their support.

“Many of our children have never experienced entering a book shop, or for some, even a library. Having the opportunity to select a book, from such a wide choice, and to be told that they can keep it forever, at no cost, is momentous. It means the world to our children.”

Head Teacher, EC1

Publishers

The incredible support we receive from the publishing industry gathered momentum this year with a 27% YOY increase in the volume of books donated from both the larger and smaller independent publishers and to Clays, the printer. 184k books surplus to publisher requirements were received and gifted onwards to children with few books of their own.

By donating books to us, the industry reaches children that can't access contemporary titles beyond the curriculum, that lack confidence and an informality around books and that may not feel reading is for them. They are widening their reach, helping to eradicate book deserts and creating readers of the future. Huge thanks to every publisher that donated books to us this year.

Particular thanks to Bonnier Books for choosing us as their 2024-2025 nominated charity. Bonnier's continued support has enabled us to commit to more schools and prisons and with their help we've been able to gift to an additional 80k children this year, whilst their staff have also joined our regular volunteering slots at our London hub and at two London prisons.



Activities

We give books to communities that support >40% families in receipt of income support and in the UK's 25% poorest postcode areas, as determined by IDACI data. This year 47% of our recipients were living in poverty, and we know that this picture doesn't tell the full story. We reach young people via the settings that know them best and that in turn can use our books to put on an exciting, inclusive book festival. These are thriving, successful settings that work very hard to ensure the very best outcomes for the children they support.

Our work in schools

Mostly primary schools, we also reach children via pre-school groups, secondary schools, special schools, alternative provision, pupil referral units, community groups and food banks. More of our partner London schools were in the outer boroughs this year. Families are leaving central London due to the high cost of living and housing crisis, which has a disproportionate impact on lower income families.

Our Discovery programme ran in 120 London schools this year, giving 48,000 children the chance to each take home six books of their own. 75% of our recipient organisations this year are in their second, third or even fourth year with us. We build long-term relationships with communities and accompany children on their reading journey as they develop.

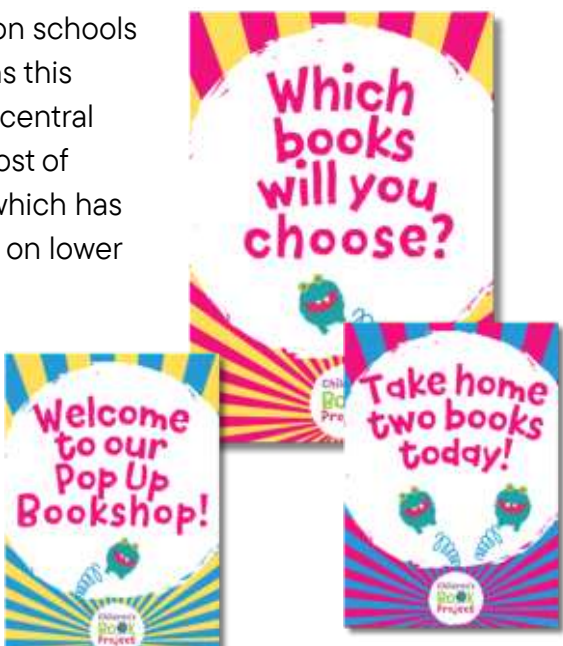
Additionally 182 primary schools across West Yorkshire, the West Midlands, Bristol and Nottingham put on a Pop-Up Bookshop this year, inviting each child to select two books to take home.

All our gifting events foster autonomy, social browsing, exposure to a wide range of genres and titles and a celebratory, inclusive and fun atmosphere. In every Discovery school every single child could put their head inside one of our bright green Pop-Up Book Huts to see what books it contained, could visit their school's free and dedicated Pop-Up Bookshop and browse for a bundled pair of books they could swap with a friend.



More of our partner London schools were in the outer boroughs this year. Families are leaving central London due to the high cost of living and housing crisis, which has a disproportionate impact on lower income families.

182 primary schools across West Yorkshire, the West Midlands, Bristol and Nottingham also put on a Pop Up Bookshop this year, inviting each child to select two books to take home.



Activities (cont.)

Our work in prisons

Research shows that maintaining family ties while a person is in custody significantly reduces the likelihood of reoffending. Crucially, our prison programme is designed to foster these vital relationships. Children's books provide a low-pressure means for parent and child to share positive, uncomplicated experiences: to engage in "normal" activity in an abnormal situation, helping to advance the importance of shared reading within families and bringing some happiness into what can be a very distressing time for a child. Significantly, they are a physical confirmation to the child that they are being thought of.

In addition to expanding our reach into new prisons, we have increased the volume of books delivered to ensure they are made available at events such as Family and themed days, reading festivals, and for prisoners to take home during temporary releases on weekends. This approach provides children with repeated opportunities to build their own personal bookshelf.

We also offer a wider selection of paired books – two copies of the same title – distributed to prisons where permitted. This setup has meant one copy is kept in the cell while the other is sent home to the child. The books are then read together over a call or enjoyed separately and discussed during the next visit or call.

Our incredible volunteers

We are very proud of the volunteering experience we offer to corporates, community and group volunteers and immensely grateful for the many hours they contribute to our work. They are the engine of our charity, and this year contributed an incredible 25,142 hours across our three hubs as well as remotely. Volunteer feedback and insight feeds back into improving the model year on year, to underline learning and evolution.

Up to 170 volunteers attend our group volunteering events every week and we work hard to ensure that teams leave with a full understanding of our mission and a sense of accomplishment. Increasingly group volunteers return to spend a further day with us: testament to the passion and organisation of our Team Leaders that run each event.

Our on-site volunteers help to quality control our donations, then organise books by reading stage prior to boxing curated donations for each of our partner organisations. A group of 20 volunteers might sort and box as many as 2,500 books during their session.

We have a long-running Saturday session held solely for young people seeking to complete their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering component or to complete Community Service in support of their UCAS submission. These sessions are always over-subscribed, and many young people return year on year, with some even having trained as Volunteer Coordinators on leaving school.

Our remote volunteers will have responsibility for a discrete area of need, whether running our social media communications, liaising with organisations running a book drive or as Trustees.



Achievements 2024-2025

Book gifting



529,397 books gifted via our three hubs

To 147k children

Via 750 gifting events

In 467 schools, 27 prisons, 51 community groups, 6 food banks and many smaller orgs



Key volunteering stats:



3,853 people volunteered with us nationwide this year

Collectively they gave 25,142 hours of their time

100% of corporate volunteers felt their contribution was valued

100% of volunteers would be very likely to recommend us to others

Delivered £348k in terms of their social impact (social ROI)



External recognition and support

Asda: This year saw the regional pilot of Asda's support roll out firstly to Bristol and London and then nationwide, with customers invited to drop books into a dedicated donation trolley. Community Champions in each store supported local roll out with books collected centrally and redistributed to each of our three hubs. Asda's support delivered 345,134 books in the 2024-2025 year. Their support enabled us to put on the equivalent of an additional 345 primary school gifting events including two books for every child.

Bonnier Books UK: We have been very grateful to Bonnier Books for their continued support this year. Their commitment has ensured that the volume, quality and range of the books we can give has increased again year on year and has exposed children to new titles they wouldn't otherwise have access to.

Heart Breakfast: In March 2025 we were fortunate to once again be selected as Heart Breakfast's featured charity on World Book Day, with listeners invited repeatedly throughout the show to visit our website and find a local donation point. Over 10,000 books were donated during the show.

JC Decaux: In March 2025 we were also given the incredible opportunity to be featured on 200 billboards nationwide each week for four weeks. JCDecaux's Community Channel gave us 25m impressions across the four weeks with a total equivalent media value of £383k.



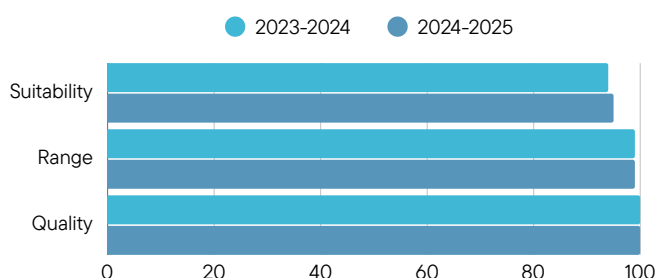
Lauren Laverne: In June 2025 we announced Lauren Laverne as our new patron. Her appointment is intended to amplify awareness of the transformative power of children's books - whether inspiring families to donate books they've outgrown or galvanising the publishing industry to support the cause through advocacy and surplus stock donations.

Our impact

How we measure impact

We employ several measures to determine success with data collection all underpinned by our Salesforce database.

- Number of books gifted to our beneficiary audiences
- Perceived quality and relevance of the books we gift
- Broad profile of our recipient audiences
- Reported impact amongst specific cohorts of young people
- Reported impacts amongst our recipient audiences
- Volunteer engagement throughout the year
- The quality of our volunteer experience
- Our social value, as reported by the Social Value Consultancy



Termly evaluations amongst our recipient organisations help us to understand the impacts of our books amongst the communities they support. We probe engagement with our book gifting events, ensuing book chatter, increased appetite for reading or inclination to read a range of titles and on wider families' own engagement.

We also conduct **termly teacher focus groups** and this summer term learned that **some of the children we reach lack the confidence to browse or choose books of their own**. We've used this insight to refine our 2025-2026 model to better support social browsing and initial interaction with our books.

How we share our impact data

Our annual impact report for 2024-2025 was published on our website in August 2025, with hard copies sent to key funders and advocates. Our Volunteer Manager additionally provides key corporate partners with impact data specific to the work undertaken by their staff at each of our three hubs. We use impact data to support forward planning (both targeting decisions and design of gifting mechanics / supporting resources). We also share collected data extensively with funders to demonstrate the impact of their support with us and according to their specific needs.

Our social value

Our social return on investment has been calculated, revealing that for every £1.00 we spend, we deliver £4.77 of social value. In the 2024-2025 this equates to £2.2m worth of value in terms of cost / benefit savings to education and wellbeing benefits to children and families.

Review of the charity's financial position

The Trustees meet 3 times a year with the basis to review the financial status. A brief financial overview / status is also shared with the Trustees by email every 6 weeks during school term times. Trustees have reviewed the charity's financial position at the end of the financial period, with the following commentary:

Income and expenditure

- Total income increased from £363k to £583k, a rise of 60%. This rise was primarily due to the increased success in securing grant income and large individual corporate donations. These streams have been further supported by a rise in corporate volunteering and match funding support £46k via The Big Give.
- Total expenditure of £478k represents a 91% increase on prior year, reflecting the growth in services delivered over the year and the increase in staff costs of £134k required to deliver these services (2025: £260k 2024: £126k)
- We ended the year with total Cash in Bank of £378k, including a reserves account balance of £163k.
- Generous support from Literacy Capital continues to represent a large proportion of total income for the financial year (17%) but this has reduced from prior year (25%) representing our continued diversification of income to prevent an over reliance on any single donor . We aim to continue diversifying income through existing channels and engagement with new supporters.

Reserves policy

- The Trustees duly consider the uncertainties around funding when setting the Charity's reserves policy. The Trustees aim to generate reserves that are sufficient to underpin the commitment to the continued growth and development of our services. As such the Charity's reserves policy states that we aim to have 5 months' forecast expenditure over the coming 12 months.
- As a result of the growth of the charity's range and scale of activities, the Trustees consider the minimum level of unrestricted reserves should be increased this year to £278k. The accounts show unrestricted reserves at 30 June 2025 of £304k, in line with this policy . In addition, the charity had restricted funds of £15k at 30 June 2025.

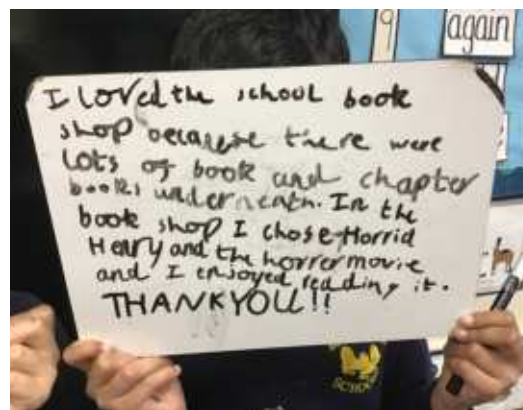


How the charity is funded

- Our funding sources are diverse, and we are grateful for the support we receive from corporates, grant giving bodies and trusts and from individuals.
- Fundraising objectives were exceeded due to the support of Literacy Capital which in turn allowed us to unlock wider match funding via The Big Give and to a robust corporate volunteering programme. Individual fundraising was more successful YOY with greater numbers of people choosing to run for us. Significant direct support in kind was also received from various third parties.
- Fundraising underpins all our income generation. Our part-time fundraising manager works tirelessly to engage with the widest pool of funders and to identify how/ in which ways their support might dovetail with our needs. She is adept at ensuring they remain abreast of the impact of their funding.
- Our funding policy sets out clear principles on the funds we will / won't consider and our process for conducting due diligence on new potential funders.

Key sources of funding 2024-2025

- National and local grant giving bodies and trusts (both unrestricted and restricted)
 - William Wates Foundation
 - Kensington + Chelsea Foundation
 - Camden Growth Fund
 - The Peckham Settlement Fund
 - The Earls Court Community Fund
 - The Norton Rose Fulbright Charitable Trust
 - City and Metropolitan Welfare Charity
- Public company grant-giving programmes (unrestricted)
 - Literacy Capital PSG
- Corporate volunteering donations and fundraising activities (largely unrestricted)
- Individual fundraising activities (largely unrestricted): Royal Parks Half Marathon & other events
- One-off individual donations (largely unrestricted)



Transformational funding partner



Literacy Capital plc is an investment trust listed on the London Stock Exchange, which uniquely for an investment fund of its type has been set up with a charitable objective: 0.5% of its net assets are donated every year in cash to literacy charities across the UK. Literacy Capital's three year commitment to support our core costs enables us to focus on efficient and cost effective development of our two hubs in Leeds and Birmingham and to redress our skew towards London delivery. This in turn, will be integral to our ambition to gift one million books next year to children living in poverty, allowing them to identify as readers, engage with reading for pleasure and develop key literacy skills. We are hugely grateful to Literacy Capital for their transformational support.

Wider partnerships

Thank you too, to the many individuals that have given us their time and talent this year and to the organisations that have given us pro bono support.

Particular thanks to Anglo Doorstep Recycling, Asda, Awesome Books, Better World Books, Bookmark Reading Charity, Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply, Error, Local Globe, RBKC, Serco Group Plc, Westway Trust and Wonderbly Personalised Books.



Risk management

Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the company, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks.

The system of internal controls is designed to provide reasonable assurance against material statement or loss. The Children's Book Project's internal controls include:

- An internal audit function
- Annual budgets approved by Trustees
- Regular consideration by Trustees of financial results, variance from budgets and performance
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duty
- Identification and management of risk
- Strategic Plan

Business relationships

This year we benefited from support in kind from several organisations:

- A social value lease with RBKC that permitted us to access discounted warehouse space in W10 against a set of mutually agreed local engagement targets (books gifted and volunteering hours delivered). As part of our relationship with RBKC's social value team we also agree to offer mentoring support to other local groups where necessary and respond wherever practical to gifting opportunities in the borough.
- Mondi Group (previously Schumacher) donated warehouse space at its factory in Birmingham, B37
- The Wheels Project in Bristol donated a van for our use in Birmingham.

Structure, governance & management

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), incorporated on 26th April 2019, governed by a Constitution and the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and the General Regulations. The Trustees, who are its only voting members, and who served during the year and up to the date of this report were:

- Ann-Janine Murtagh (Chair of Trustees)
- Chris Shepard (outgoing Chair)
- Remi Baker
- Stacey Dobson
- Lisa Harrington
- Anthony Mannix
- Elizabeth Norton

The Chair and CEO support a planned induction of all new Trustees via face-to-face and virtual meetings with the Executive Team and wider team / Board of Trustees. Trustees are regularly invited to attend book sorting or other events. Ad hoc external training opportunities for Trustees are shared with Trustees as these arise.

Day to day management is delegated to the CEO, Liberty Venn and the Finance Director, Kate Charlton.

As of June 2025 we employ 14 staff on a part time basis whose roles could not easily (or reliably) be fulfilled by volunteers. These individuals largely undertake operational roles and help ensure that we respond to opportunities as they arise as well as reliable, timely delivery against our commitments. This year we evolved our operational structure to support planned growth outside London. The remuneration of key management is decided upon by the board of Trustees.

Appointment or election of Trustees

The management of the company is the responsibility of Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Articles of Association. Under the Articles the number of Trustees is at least three and not more than seven. There are currently seven Trustees. None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. Trustees are selected to ensure varied expertise and perspectives:

- The needs of our audience and teaching staff / practitioners that support them
- The specific requirements of schools and other organisations that work with and support young people
- Diverse perspectives
- Charity financial planning and best practice
- Business and logistical planning
- Knowledge of the publishing sector.

Appointments including the appointment of our new Chair of Trustees is the responsibility of the Trustee Board with involvement of the executive leadership team. They are made following advertisement internally and externally and with the input and support of existing Trustees. Trustees all receive written and verbal advice of the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. On their appointment all signed to confirm their understanding of this.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Disclosure of information to independent examiner

Each of the Trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the independent examination, but of which the independent examiner is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the independent examiner is aware of such information.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Ann-Janine Murtagh

11th February 2026

Ann-Janine Murtagh

Chair of Trustees

Date

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

Year ended 30 June 2025

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30 June 2025 which are set out on pages 21 to 33.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

Alex Stone

.....
Alex Stone FCCA
Edmund Carr LLP
146 New London Road Chelmsford
CM2 0AW

12th March 2026

Statement of financial activity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

		2025		2024	
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	2	393,881	187,240	581,121	362,043
Investment income	3	1,781	-	1,781	546
Total income		395,662	187,240	582,902	362,589
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	4	285,354	173,440	458,794	250,601
Raising funds	4	19,434	-	19,434	-
Total expenditure		304,788	173,440	478,228	250,601
Net income and net movement in funds		90,874	13,800	104,674	111,988
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		213,344	1,200	214,544	102,556
Total funds carried forward		304,218	15,000	319,218	214,544

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Balance sheet

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

			2025	2024
	Note	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible fixed assets	6		3,107	6,910
Current assets				
Debtors	7	24,230		2,227
Cash at bank and in hand		377,845		213,550
		402,075		215,777
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	85,964		8,143
Net current assets			316,111	207,634
Total assets less current liabilities			319,218	214,544
Net assets			319,218	214,544
Funds for the charity				
Restricted funds	9		15,000	1,200
Unrestricted funds	10		304,218	213,344
Total charity funds			319,218	214,544

These financial statements were approved by the board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 11th February 2026, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

Ann-Janine Murtagh

11th February 2026

Ann-Janine Murtagh
Chair of Trustees

Date

Statement of cash flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities;			
Net movement of funds for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		104,674	111,988
Adjustments for;			
Depreciation		4,703	4,470
Investment income		(1,781)	(546)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	7	(22,003)	(2,227)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	8	77,821	4,276
Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities		163,414	117,961
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(900)	(11,429)
(Profit) / loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets		-	2,206
Dividends, interest and rent from investments		1,781	546
Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities		881	(8,677)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		164,295	109,284
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		213,550	104,266
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		377,845	213,550

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 30 June 2025

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of accounting

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2019.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered charity (registration number 1183092). The charity's registered office is listed on page 1.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for at least 12 months from the date of approving the accounts.

Incoming resources

Income from donations and grants, including capital grants, is included in incoming resources when these are receivable, except as follows:

- when donors specify that donations and grants given to the charity must be used in future periods, the income is deferred until those periods.
- when donors impose conditions which have to be fulfilled before the charity becomes entitled to use such income, the income is deferred and not included in incoming resources until the pre-conditions have been met.

When donors specify that donations and grants, including capital grants, are for particular restricted purposes, which do not amount to pre-conditions regarding entitlement, this income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

1.Accounting Policies

Resources Expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and includes VAT as the charity is not VAT registered. The majority of costs are attributable to specific charitable activities. Governance costs are associated with the governance arrangements of the charity.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Motor Vehicles - 20% straight line

Equipment - 50% straight line

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid.

Creditors

Creditors are recognised when the charity has a present obligation arising from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount.

Operating leases

The cost of and income from operating leases is charged and credited to the profit and loss account on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Funds accounting

Funds held by the charity are either:

Unrestricted general funds - these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds - these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity.

Taxation

As the Association is a charity, it is exempt from taxation - other than VAT, which is included in the relevant costs in the Statement of Financial Activities - to the extent that any income and gains are applied to its charitable objectives.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

			2025	2024
2.Donations and legacies	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Grants: Trusts and Foundations	185,537	181,496	367,033	188,745
Corporate volunteer donations	124,349	-	124,349	82,612
Other donations	21,048	5,744	26,792	25,102
Fundraising events and online donations	52,710	-	52,710	49,029
Book recycling	2,103	-	2,103	785
Gift aid	1,939	-	1,939	875
Donated books in (Public)	4,391	-	4,391	2,315
Donated books in (Publisher)	903	-	903	1,200
Donated assets	900	-	900	11,380
Total	393,881	187,240	581,121	362,043

			2025	2024
3.Investment income	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Bank interest receivable	1,781	-	1,781	546
Total	1,781	-	1,781	546

Notes to the Financial Statement (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

			2025	2024
4.Expenditure by fund account	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
Expenditure on charitable activities:	£	£	£	£
Books in & out costs	28,210	31,311	59,521	19,158
Volunteer expenses	5,011	1,391	6,402	6,230
Wages/Salaries	131,831	90,204	222,035	122,837
Employers NIC	17,011	1,000	18,011	1,162
Premises Costs	22,805	29,550	52,355	23,502
Fundraising, communications and promotional	12,393	-	12,393	6,093
Advertising & marketing	9,340	-	9,340	14,436
Motor / Travel Costs / Drivers	31,043	17,504	48,547	23,440
Insurance	906	-	906	830
IT & Web costs	2,684	2,479	5,163	4,793
Office running costs	4,797	-	4,797	5,645
Professional services	1,453	-	1,453	1,368
Interest payable / bank charges	1,194	-	1,194	13
Depreciation	4,703	-	4,703	4,470
Fixed asset disposal	-	-	-	2,206
Books donated	-	-	-	3,515
Trustee reimbursement	-	-	-	122
Total expenditure on charitable activities	273,381	173,440	446,821	239,820
Expenditure on raising funds:				
Wages/salaries	19,434	-	19,434	-
Total expenditure on raising funds	19,434	-	19,434	250,601
Governance				
Accountancy fees	11,973	-	11,973	10,781
Total	304,788	173,440	478,228	250,601

Included in Accountancy fees are fees payable to the independent examiner of £3,465 (2024: £2,000)

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
5.Staff costs	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£
Wages & salaries	241,469	122,837
Social security costs	14,472	1,162
Employer pension contributions	3,249	-
Other employee benefits	1,138	2,042
	<u>260,617</u>	<u>126,041</u>

The average head count of employees during the year was 12 (2024:9). The Charity considers its key management personnel to comprise the Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer. The total employment benefits including employer pension contributions of the key management personnel were £24,327 (2024: £19,865). No employees had employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2024: none).

6.Tangible Fixed Assets	Fixtures & Fittings	Motor Vehicles	Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cost				
As at 1 July 2024	-	4,880	6,500	11,380
Additions	-	400	500	900
Disposals	-	-	-	-
As at 30 June 2025	-	5,280	7,000	12,280
Depreciation				
At 1 July 2024	-	1,220	3,250	4,470
Charge in year	-	1,287	3,417	4,703
As at 30 June 2025	-	2,507	6,667	9,173
Carrying Amount				
As at 30 June 2025	-	2,773	333	3,107
As at 30 June 2024	-	3,660	3,250	6,910

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

7.Debtors	2025	2024
	£	£
Prepayments & accrued income	12,848	2,227
Trade debtors	11,382	-
	24,230	2,227

8.Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2025	2024
	£	£
Social security and other taxes	11,927	1,088
Accruals	10,899	7,055
Wages & salaries	19,129	-
Deferred Income	29,990	-
Trade creditors	14,019	-
	85,964	8,143

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Balance as at 1 July 2024	Income	Expenditure	Balance as at 30 June 2025
9.Restricted funds	£	£	£	£
London Discovery Programme	1,200	120,603	(121,803)	-
Share a Story Prisons Programme	-	39,500	(24,500)	15,000
Boots Charitable Trust - Nottingham pop ups	-	8,143	(8,143)	-
Shroeder Charity - Leeds & Birmingham pop ups	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
AXIS Foundation - book donation stations	-	4,000	(4,000)	-
Serco - contribution to van insurance	-	3,744	(3,744)	-
Wates Construction - contribution towards rent	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Hammersmith United Charities Resilience Grant - contribution to NI costs	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
Groundwork UK - Leeds pop ups	-	2,250	(2,250)	-
Northern Trains - Small Grants Funds - Leeds	-	500	(500)	-
Bentley Advancing Life Chances Fund - Leeds	-	500	(500)	-
Total	1,200	187,240	(173,440)	15,000

London Discovery Programme:

Our flagship Discovery Programme supported 120 primary schools all with >40% pupil premium in London during 2024-2025, gifting each a termly donation of carefully curated books and accompanying resources to support three high impact gifting events across the school year. Participating schools receive the equivalent of two books per child per term so that by the end of the year every pupil had the chance to choose and take home six books of their own.

Share a Story Prisons Programme:

Our prison programme seeks to provide every prisoner with the means to connect, reconnect and build bridges with the children and young people in their family through the powerful medium of stories, illustrations, and imagination. Using regular gifts of carefully chosen beautiful new books to bridge the gap between a child and their parent in prison, the programme supported 28 prisons in 2024-2025 and was a valuable strand of every prison's Family and Significant Others strategy.

Pop Up Bookshops in cities nationwide including Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, London and Nottingham

250 eligible primary schools with >40% pupil premium each received two books per child plus the resources to put on a Pop Up Bookshop gifting event for their pupils this year. These events are designed to give children the autonomy, skills and confidence to browse for and choose books of their own to take home, share and keep.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Balance at 1 st July 2023	Income	Expenditure	Balance at 30 th June 2024
	£	£	£	£
9.Restricted funds (continued)				
Prior Year				
Camden Giving	2,000	-	(2,000)	-
Kensington & Chelsea Foundation - Discovery RBKC	-	12,982	(11,782)	1,200
BlueBay Grant	-	1,500	(1,500)	-
Rotary Club Putney - Heathmore Primary School	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
The Hilden Charitable Trust - Share.a Story	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Liz & Terry Bramall Foundation	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Peskin - London	-	500	(500)	-
Redrow - Oxford	-	800	(800)	-
Total	2,000	23,782	(24,582)	1,200

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

10. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted	Restricted	As at June 2025
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	3,107	-	3,107
Current assets	387,075	15,000	402,075
Current liabilities	(85,964)	-	(85,964)
Total	304,218	15,000	319,218

	Unrestricted	Restricted	As at June 2024
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	6,910	-	6,910
Current assets	214,577	1,200	215,777
Current liabilities	(8,143)	-	(8,143)
Total	213,344	1,200	214,544

11. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 Jul 2024	Cash Flows	At 30 June 2025
	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	213,550	164,295	377,845

12. Operating leases

At 30 June 2025 the Charity had total operating lease commitments of £107,132, of which £50,558 falls due within 1 year, relating to the lease of the Charity's property hubs in London and Leeds and a van (2024: £9,333). The amount of non-cancellable operating lease payments recognised as an expense during the year was £46,125 (2024: £18,172).

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 30 June 2025

13.Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees received any remuneration during the period. Expenses totalling £Nil (2024: £122) were reimbursed to trustees in the year.

No trustee had any personal interest in any transactions entered into by the charity during the period.

14.Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions during the year (2024: £Nil).