



# READING STARS

National  
Literacy  
Trust

## 2013 REPORT





Premier League Reading Stars is delivered by the National Literacy Trust, the only national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. We run literacy projects in the poorest communities, campaign to make literacy a national priority and support schools.



### Partners and Funders

The main sponsor of the programme, the Premier League also facilitates its delivery through club and player engagement.



Arts Council England also funds the programme and encourages the involvement of writers and artists, providing young people with opportunities to interface with the arts.

#### Other partners:

- Premier League Productions
- Sport Relief
- Browns Books for Students
- Match Attax

# INTRODUCTION

The National Literacy Trust's Premier League Reading Stars has now been running for 10 years. During this time, hundreds of thousands of children and families have been inspired by the power of football to develop a love of reading. Although the programme has grown and evolved over this period, the premise remains the same: harnessing the motivational power of football to inspire young people to read more and to improve their literacy skills. The reading intervention targets children and young people who are not yet fans of reading but who are passionate about football.

## Dramatic results for children

In 2013 we undertook an in-depth research study into the impact of the programme. There was a dramatic effect on young people who had previously struggled with literacy, which was even greater than in 2012:

- **3 out of 4 children made at least 6 months' progress in just 10 weeks. 1 child in 3 made a year's progress, or more**
- **The number of children who enjoy reading 'very much' tripled as a result of taking part**
- **The number of children who read every day doubled**
- **7 out of 10 say that they are now proud to be readers**
- **Nearly half joined their public library**
- **2 out of 3 say that as a result of taking part they now have a favourite author**
- **Nearly 9 out of 10 participants said that seeing Premier League footballers read has made them want to read more**

*"The great thing about the Premier League Reading Stars programme is that we've had a look at the evidence and it shows that more young people, particularly, but not exclusively, boys, are reading as a result; reading for enjoyment and reading at a higher level. It's wonderful that this initiative has a programme with yielded success*

*so quickly. It's a real tribute to the Premier League's commitment, and the enthusiasm of its stars, that they've been prepared to give up time to inculcate a sense of reading culture into the next generation. It's been fantastic."*

Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education

*"The schools we work in are those that have the most to gain from the programme; they have low achievement in literacy and high numbers of children from poorer homes. I'm very proud that we are both partners and sponsors of this effective programme. Now we're having an even wider impact as everyone can watch their football heroes reading online and answer their challenge questions to win rewards."*

Richard Scudamore, CEO Premier League

*"Many schools have got difficult budget decisions to make about whether they are going to implement things like this – they couldn't ever get close to producing their own type of rewards-based reading system that would have this kind of effect on children. So I think it's really important that this kind of scheme is allowed to continue and grow, because there's still so many more schools that it could have an impact in."*

Di Pumphrey, Associate Headteacher, West Thornton Primary School



*"It has genuinely helped transform some of our boys' reading habits forever."*  
Reading Stars teacher

**3 OUT OF 4 CHILDREN MADE AT LEAST 6 MONTHS' PROGRESS IN JUST 10 WEEKS.**

# THE NEED

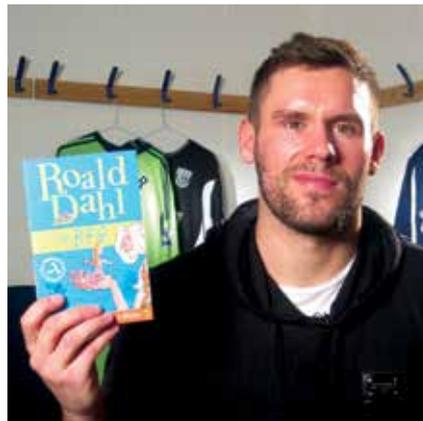
Current statistics show that one in five children leaves primary school without the reading skills that they need for secondary school – we also know that low literacy levels, particularly among boys, are linked to low motivation to read. National Literacy Trust research shows that the encouragement of footballers can inspire children and young people, especially boys, to read more. Premier League Reading Stars is designed to work with this influence to change attitudes to reading, to inspire children to read more and consequently improve their literacy skills.

## Our goals for the children and young people we support

- Improve their attitudes to reading
- Increase their confidence as readers and their perceptions of their own abilities
- Inspire them to read more
- Increase their social interactions around reading, for example discussing reading with family and friends
- Increase their access to libraries and books
- Increase their confidence as writers and their perceptions of their own abilities
- Improve their speaking and listening skills



*The Premier League Trophy*



*Ben Foster  
West Bromwich Albion*

HALF OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE JOINED  
A LIBRARY BECAUSE OF THE PROGRAMME

## CASE STUDY



*"He wouldn't write, he wouldn't read... his work is unbelievable now."*

### Cordell just keeps getting better

Cordell, 10, found reading hard and frustrating before he took part in the programme. Working closely with a teaching assistant, improving his reading through Reading Stars has brought a wide range of benefits for him.

*Cordell says: "When I first started doing it [reading], it was boring. Now I'm in Reading Stars it's better. Because I'm reading football books instead of just fairy tales. The first time I started reading I struggled a lot and now I've got better."*

*Cordell's teaching assistant says: "When I came to work with Cordell I found it quite challenging. He wouldn't write, he wouldn't read. Every time it was reading time he would go shy; he wouldn't want to do anything. And then, from when he started doing this [Reading Stars]... his work is unbelievable now. He now reads in front of a class when before he wouldn't even read to a teacher. Which has then improved his behaviour. He had behaviour issues to start off with; I think this was because of his reading. He doesn't get into trouble at all now. It's thanks to you... because you can see what it's doing to kids. It's brilliant."*

## THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE HELP

In 2013, 34,000 pupils and students took part in Premier League Reading Stars. We worked with state primary and secondary schools, public libraries, football clubs and Pupil Referral Units. We targeted schools not reaching the national average in literacy and those with large numbers of children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The schools then selected pupils who would benefit the most from the programme: young people who loved football but were less keen, or less able, readers.



*"I didn't read, now I read 3 books a day."*  
Reading Stars participant

# THE REACH IN 2013

Premier League Reading Stars was established in 2003. In the last 10 years over 83,000 young people and their parents have taken part in the programme and its wider activities have reached a further 800,000 young people. Originally a programme run in public libraries, since January 2012, it has been delivered by primary and secondary schools, libraries, football clubs and Pupil Referral Units.

**In 2013, 1,000 free packs were distributed to 979 schools, libraries, pupil referral units and football clubs.**



— 525 primary and middle schools



— 360 secondary schools



— 46 libraries



— 35 pupil referral units



— 7 other settings (looked after children, virtual schools)



— 6 football clubs

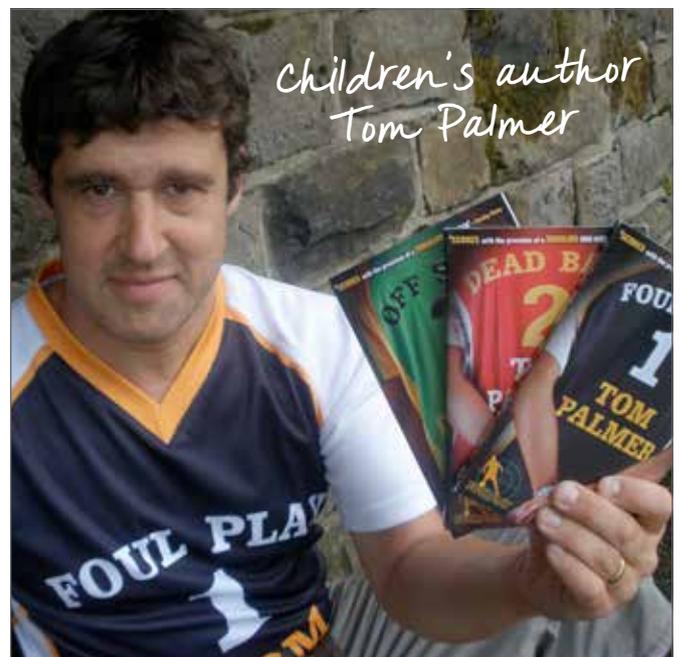
# 34,000

young people took part



 = 1000

**We know of 29 individual authors who went into schools, but 1 in 3 schools reported having an author visit as part of their Reading Stars activity.**



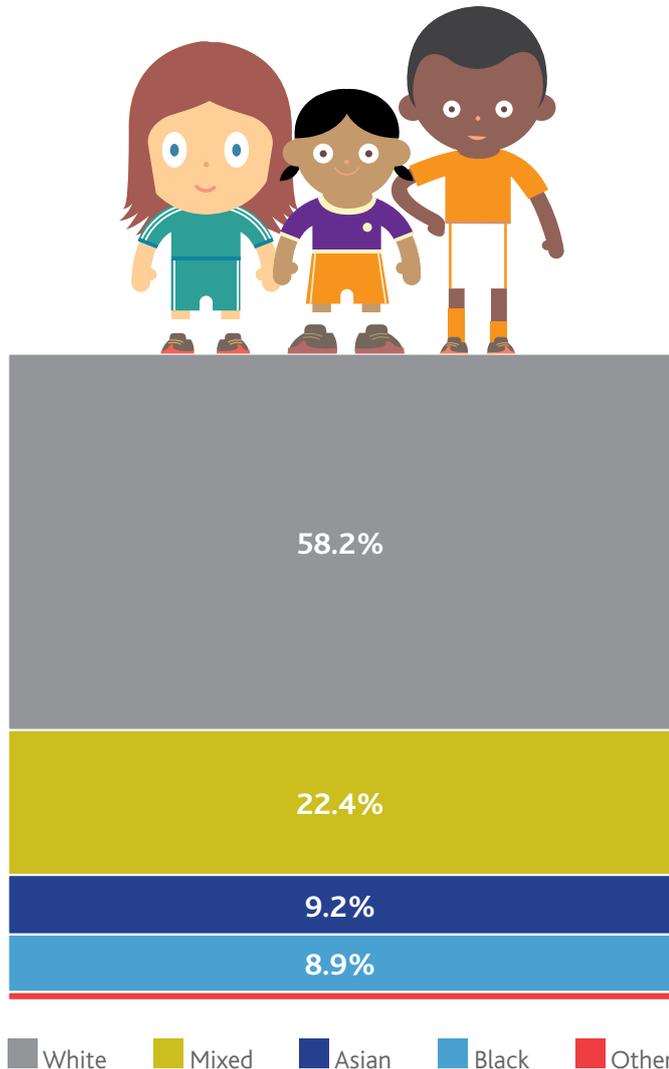
Many of the children (35%) were from low-income families



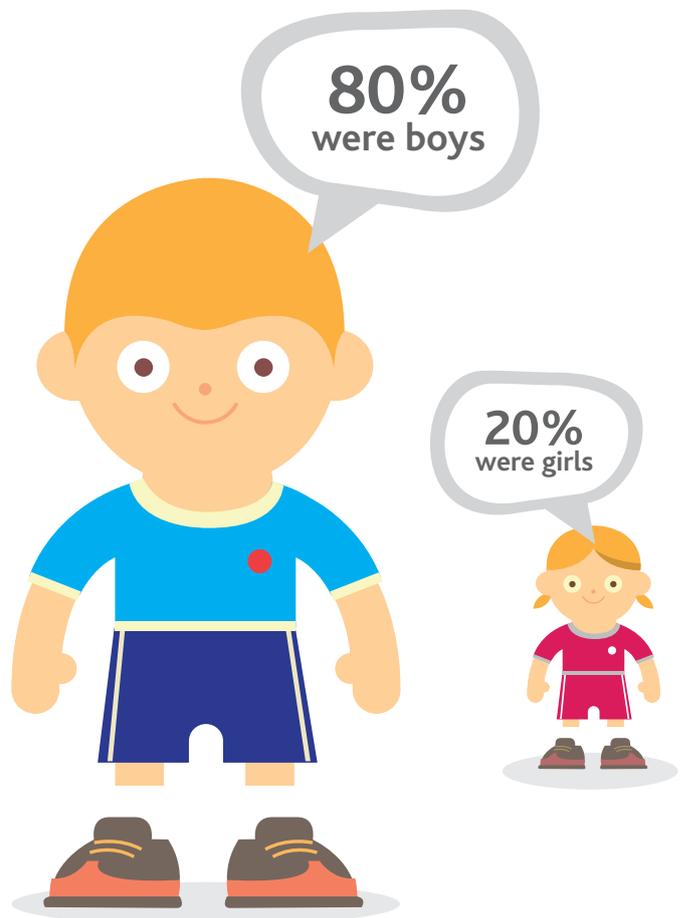
More than 26,000 online challenges were completed



The children's ethnicity



The young people were aged 7 – 15 years



\*Statistics based on the 918 young people who took part in our evaluation.

# THE IMPACT

This year we evaluated the programme by collecting participants' attainment data from before and after the programme, and by asking them, their teachers and librarians, to complete a questionnaire. In addition, some schools provided data for children who didn't take part, providing a control group to help us extrapolate the impact of Reading Stars.

## We had a dramatic impact on children's reading skills

3 out of 4 children made at least 6 months' progress in just 10 weeks. 1 child in 3 made a year's progress, or more. The programme typically ran over 10 weeks. During this time **63%** of the pupils made up to a year's progress in reading (1 or 2 sub-levels) and **11.5%** made more than a year's progress (3 or more sub-levels). This is a wonderful achievement for young people whose reading skills were not improving prior to taking part in the intervention.



*“Of the 45 children that have gone through the programme all except one have made better than average progress – average being 2 sub-levels.”*

Reading Stars teacher

We also compared children who took part with a similar group of children who did not. Our data shows that children who took part progressed more in their reading than children who did not take part. Data from 2012 showed that 10 times as many participating children made progress in reading compared with those who did not participate.

## We helped children enjoy reading

The number of children who enjoy reading “very much” **tripled** as a result of taking part in the programme.

By the end of the programme **81%** of pupils said they enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot, compared with only **38.4%** at the beginning of the project. Furthermore, three times as many students said they enjoy reading very much at the end of the programme than did at the beginning of the programme. As National Literacy Trust research shows enjoyment of reading is linked to children's attainment, this is very significant. Boys in particular were more likely to enjoy reading after taking part.



*“The Reading Stars programme has been amazing! I have never seen some of my pupils, including the girls, so enthused by reading and eager for their next session.”*

Reading Stars teacher

## CASE STUDY



*“The programme has turned Adam into a football-mad reader.”*

### Adam's love for Chelsea scores a love for reading

Adam, 11, is a massive Chelsea fan who loves watching football and talking about football. Although reasonably able in English, prior to taking part in Premier League Reading Stars, Adam didn't enjoy reading. His teacher selected Adam for his football enthusiasm and for the challenge of making him a reader...

Adam says: *“I've never really liked reading. I'd start books but never finish them, whereas now, once I start I can't stop. I think Premier League Reading Stars has really improved my vocabulary.”*

Adam's teacher says: *“Adam was one of the first to arrive to each session. When I bumped into him in the corridor, he would always mention Premier League Reading Stars, and double-check the next session was still on. The programme has turned Adam into a football-mad reader. I think he'll continue to read as he continues to move through secondary school, and I think it'll improve his achievement across a range of subjects.”*

## We increased children's confidence as readers

By the end of the programme 91.4% described themselves as being either very confident or confident readers. 7 out of 10 felt that they had become better at reading.



*"It has made me confident and made me want to read more books instead of just playing games all day and watching TV."*

Reading Stars participant

## We increased the amount that children read

Twice as many children and young people read daily outside of class as a result of the programme. Over the course of its delivery nearly a third of participants read 10, or more, books.



*"I didn't read, now I read three books a day."*

Reading Stars participant



*"I am reading books more than playing my Xbox."*

Reading Stars participant



*"It has made me read loads more and has encouraged me to get my family to read more."*

Reading Stars participant



*"Now I read more than I used [to], in my spare time I never ever hardly used to read but Reading Stars has inspired me to read."*

Reading Stars participant

## The footballers inspired children to read

83.5% said seeing Premier League footballers read made them want to read. 3 out of 4 young people wanted to read the players' favourite books, and 9 out of 10 enjoyed taking their online challenges.



*"It was fantastic to see their [the children's'] idols inspire them to read more often/wider range."*

Reading Stars teacher



*"I read more books now because my favourite person reads too."*

Reading Stars participant



*"There's no doubt that involving the football players is a tremendous hook for the boys."*

Reading Stars teacher



*Christian Benteke  
Aston Villa*

## We introduced children to books, newspapers, websites and comics

Young people were introduced to a wide range of texts. As a result, they now read a greater variety of materials outside class and a wider range of fiction.



*“The children are now engaged in reading about topics which they are interested in – they seem to have realised that reading can be an enjoyable process. Many have begun to read non-fiction texts, such as newspapers or football matchday programmes. It is safe to say that many of these children would not have kindled this passion for reading without the Premier League Reading Stars scheme.”*

Reading Stars teacher



*“Premier League Reading Stars has changed my life because I didn't used to read any types of books but now Premier League Reading Stars encouraged me to read books, informative, fiction and I also read some websites.”*

Reading Stars participant

## Children learnt how to choose books

3 out of 4 said they now feel better equipped to choose books they will enjoy, and 7 out of 10 say that they are now better at choosing books that are at the right level for them.



*“The teachers constantly comment on the positive impact the scheme has had on the children's reading and note that those taking part are now more confident in choosing books for themselves.”*

Reading Stars librarian

## Children now have a favourite author

As a result of the project 2 out of 3 young people now have a favourite author.



*“If you walk into these schools or go into a library and see someone with a copy of your book you realise the power of these stories and books in general. And football. Because football is the catalyst for them to pick up a book. As an author, to feed that new hunger for reading is fantastic.”*

Dan Freedman, author

## We increased children's library use

The programme provided an opportunity to visit a public library and encouraged library use. 47% joined a public library as a result of the programme and 38% of those who were already members now use their library more often. 49% of those who were already going to their school library now use their school library even more often.



*“I have thoroughly enjoyed delivering this brilliant programme to my local schools, and would recommend it to other children's librarians as it improves partnership working with the schools and raises awareness of new ways of working/ services. The difference it has made to children's literacy levels has been amazing.”*

Reading Stars librarian

## We supported children's writing

3 out of 4 said they now enjoy writing more and write more often as a result of the programme/the reading journals.



*“One student was well-known for his poor behaviour in lessons. We have seen a complete turn around – he has joined the public library and very proudly showed off his library card; he has written several quite emotional and sentimental poems since.”*

Reading Stars teacher



*Education Secretary  
Michael Gove and author  
Dan Freedman*

## Girls benefited from the project too

Although boys form the target audience, 20% of Premier League Reading Stars participants were girls selected by their teachers for the programme. Many teachers found that girls responded with enthusiasm to the project, and benefited greatly from taking part.



*"There are several pupils who have made massive improvements in their reading levels and their enjoyment of reading has increased. Two in particular, twin girls, whose first language is not English, really took to the project and we will use them as ambassadors for next year. They completed all the challenges, read more widely and use the library more than they did. It is very heartening to see that they enjoy reading so much now! Thank you!"*

Reading Stars librarian

## We helped children develop a range of transferable skills

As well as a marked improvement in literacy and reading age, many teachers reported an improvement in a range of cross-curricular skills, including speaking and listening, teamwork and leadership.



*"Children gained in confidence over the project and learned how to work as a team. Some children showed real leadership skills. The project helped to raise self-esteem."*

Reading Stars teacher

## We helped to improve behaviour and attitudes and had a wider impact on children's lives beyond literacy

Teachers have remarked on the personal change, including enhanced social skills and more positive school behaviour, as well as technical development of their pupils. The programme seems to be especially beneficial to students with behaviour issues and other difficulties; it has raised self-esteem and inspired a sense of pride in reading and learning.



*"In one case, a child who was a very reluctant reader and showed very negative attitudes to school work in general, is now much more positive in his attitude to lessons, appears much happier in lessons, and told me with pride last week that he had read six times in that week."*

Reading Stars teacher



*"Jordan enjoyed the challenges and printed certificates. Before he started, he would not sit down and some staff refused to teach him on a 1:1 basis. Now he is taking books home to read, completing the match reports and is a happy chap who gets on with his work."*

Reading Stars teacher

## The children became ambassadors for reading

42% of the young people encouraged others to read and 7 out of 10 now feel "proud to be a reader". 6 out of 10 now view reading as a "cool" activity.



*"I tell my little brother that reading is good and important for you and now he reads his reading books that he gets from school."*

Reading Stars participant

## We had an impact on whole families

The programme also reached into the participants' homes, and had an effect on whole families. Since taking part pupils are reading with parents or younger siblings too. Our evaluation shows that 2 out of 5 are also talking more about reading with their families.



*"One particular student, an EAL Year 7 boy who found reading in English too challenging, explained how his dad now sits with him every evening and reads him a book. He said that even his dad reads regularly now because he was always going home telling his dad about what we were doing in each session. It has made me so proud."*

Reading Stars teacher



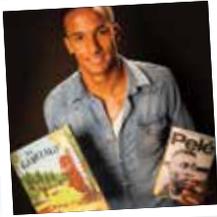
*"One Year 7 boy ... says he is now teaching his younger brother to read at home because he feels he is good at it now."*

Reading Stars teacher

# THE PROGRAMME

## How it works

Premier League Reading Stars is a game of two halves: online challenges set by players and a 10 week reading intervention programme supported by a resource pack. At the heart of the programme are players' recommendations for good reads. Each club selects its own Reading Star to talk about their favourite children's, and adults', books.



Scott Sinclair

The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

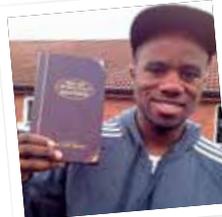
Pele: the autobiography by Pele



Jonny Evans

The Hardy Boys: The Tower Treasure by Franklin W Dixon

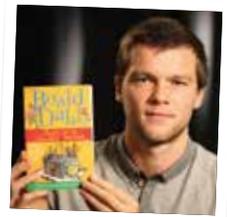
Jack and Jill by James Patterson



Gael Bigirimana

Children's Bible (Usborne Children's Bible) by Heather Amery and Linda Edwards

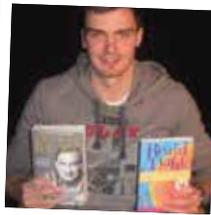
Hinds' Feet on High Places by Hannah Hurnard



Jonny Howson

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl

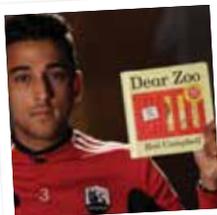
Roger Federer: Quest for Perfection by Rene Stauffer



Adam Johnson

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl

Blessed - The Autobiography by George Best



Neil Taylor

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell

Messi: The Inside Story of the Boy Who Became a Legend by Luca Caioli



Clint Dempsey

Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle and Jill McElmurry

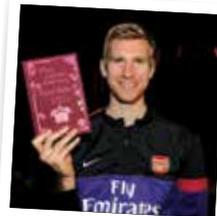
The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien



Ben Foster

The BFG by Roald Dahl

The Green Mile by Stephen King



Per Mertesacker

Hans Christian Andersen: Fairy Tales

A Life Too Short: The Tragedy of Robert Enke by Ronald Reng



Stephen Ireland

The Lord of The Rings by JRR Tolkien

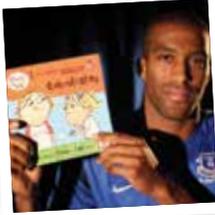
Back from the Brink: The Autobiography by Paul McGrath



Ross Turnbull

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl

Rafa: My Story by Rafael Nadal



Sylvain Distin

Charlie and Lola: I am really, really concentrating by Lauren Child

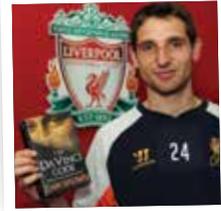
The Secret by Rhonda Byrne



Mark Schwarzer

Megs & The Complete Left Foot by Neil Montagnana and Mark Schwarzer

Boris Becker - The Player: The autobiography by Boris Becker



Joe Allen

Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes: and how she came to tell them illustrated by Axel Scheffler

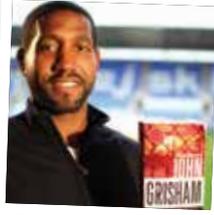
The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown



Ryan Nelsen

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr and John Archambault

On China by Henry Kissinger



Mikele Leigertwood

Fantastic Mr Fox by Roald Dahl

A Time to Kill by John Grisham



Jos Hooveld

Jip en Janneke: Two kids from Holland by Annie MG Schmidt and Fiep Westendorp

Ajax Barcelona Cruyff - The ABC of an Obstinate Maestro by Frits Barend



Charlie Adam

The Broons and Oor Wullie

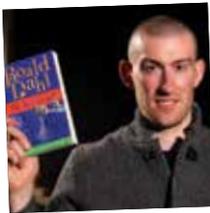
Scholes: My Story by Paul Scholes



Matthew Taylor

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl

Bravo Two Zero by Andy McNab



David Jones

The Witches by Roald Dahl

The Complete Roman Army by Adrian Goldsworthy

85% OF CHILDREN  
READ MORE NOW  
THEY KNOW THAT  
FOOTBALLERS READ

## THE FIRST HALF: PLAYERS SET READING CHALLENGES

The 20 Reading Stars, one from each Premier League club, were filmed setting three literacy challenges, which formed the 60 multiple-choice quizzes on [www.premierleaguereadingstars.org.uk](http://www.premierleaguereadingstars.org.uk). These challenged young people, anywhere in the world (young people from over 100 countries took part), to watch their football heroes reading and to answer the questions and win rewards. Any child who completed all of a player's challenges was entered into a competition to win exclusive signed player memorabilia, ranging from shirts and boots to photographs.



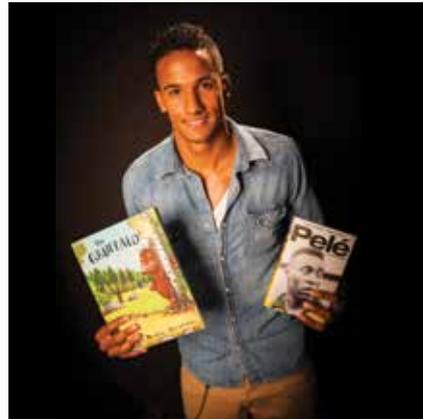
*"The inspiration that they can get from the footballers, from the Reading Stars, from the Premier League... is just quite awe-inspiring. For children to go: 'he's reading a book. Maybe I want to go and pick up a book'. It's changing lives."*

Reading Stars teacher



*"Another boy... loved the online challenges and when he won certificates he asked if he could print them to put on his wall at home."*

Reading Stars teacher



Scott Sinclair  
Manchester City



Per Mertesacker visits  
Islington Library, 7 March 2013



*"If football can help young people to enjoy reading then that's great and I am happy to play a part."*

Per Mertesacker, Arsenal defender

26,000 ONLINE CHALLENGES WERE COMPLETED  
BY CHILDREN FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

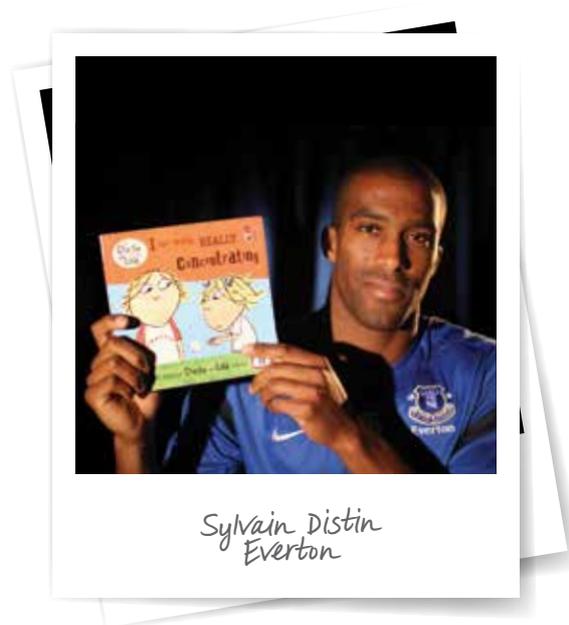
## THE SECOND HALF: THE READING INTERVENTION

The schools selected for the programme were those with low levels of literacy and high numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals. Pupils who were less keen or less able readers were chosen to take part. Teachers, librarians and coaches were given a programme guide (The Tactics Book), and training by well-known children's authors, to deliver 10 football-themed literacy sessions. Over the 10 weeks, the children were introduced to new authors and types of reading materials from football fiction to matchday programmes.



*“We found the programme to be very well organised and the training for teachers excellent. We found all of the resources easy to use... The pupils enjoyed doing the tasks at home and the programme really did engage the pupils to read more often and a wider range of reading materials.”*

Reading Stars teacher



Sylvain Distin  
Everton



34,000 YOUNG PEOPLE TOOK PART IN THE READING  
INTERVENTION

# THE PROGRAMME PACK

The young people were motivated by exclusive Premier League branded materials including certificates, badges, pens, bookmarks and reading journals (known as Training Logs) and even shirt-shaped post-it notes. Participants competed to do the most reading challenges to win stickers for a special goal wall chart.



“We found all of the resources easy to use and follow and it was really nice to have the incentives for the pupils.”  
Reading Stars teacher



6 OUT OF 10 PARTICIPANTS SAID THAT THEIR READING JOURNALS MADE THEM MORE CONFIDENT AT WRITING



"The children loved the posters and certificates."

Reading Stars teacher

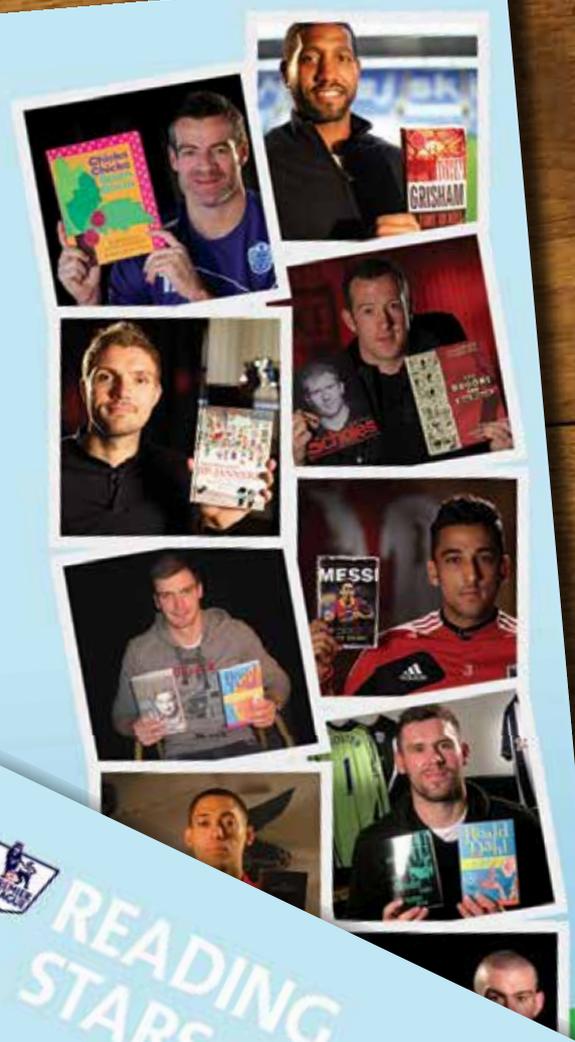
# CONGRATULATIONS

on taking part in



# READING STARS

J G Richards  
Sir Dave Richards  
Chairman, Premier League



National Literacy Trust

# READING STARS

# TRAINING LOG



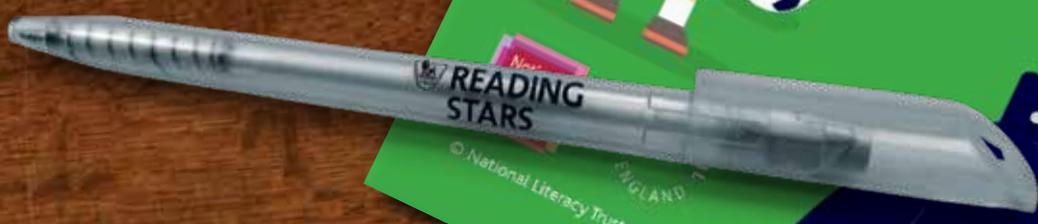
READING STARS

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"Students love the Premier League merchandise provided, works as a good incentive to get them reading!"

Reading Stars teacher



Premier League Reading Stars attracts significant media attention, helping us to reach more people and change their perceptions of reading. This year media coverage appeared in national and regional newspapers, in football magazines, on official club websites and on TV and radio. The coverage reached an audience of over 6 million people and would have cost over £175,000 for the equivalent advertising space.

## TEN YEARS ON!

On 7 May Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, Premier League Chief Executive Richard Scudamore and ex-England and Chelsea star, Graeme Le Saux visited a Reading Stars school east London. Graeme was one of the first Reading Stars when the project was launched a decade ago and he was excited by the progress that has been made since. *"There's nothing better than coming into the school and watching the kids coming through the 10-week course and seeing the direct benefits that Premier League players up and down the country are having on children after engaging with them to read. When you have role models you like to emulate them and... the power that it has is amazing. Young people who weren't previously interested in reading suddenly look at their hero and think, 'Wow, if he's reading I'm going to read'."*

## The Shields Gazette

Children in South Tyneside urged to read



## Premier League's top books



# IN

## The Sun

Michael Gove 'delighted' by reading project



# THE MEDIA

## The INDEPENDENT

Surprising book choices of footballers

## The Telegraph

Pupils read more because footballers do

# parentdISH

Is it just me? • Pregnancy & Birth • Babies • Kids • Teens • Family • Food • Fun • Blogs • Celeb • Video

### Campaign with Premier League has a dramatic effect



Reading Stars is a huge success





Sign up for our free email newsletter at  
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**CREATING  
CHANCES**

