

# Essex Year of **REAding**

Where will your book take you?

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Project Directory



Essex County Council

**The Essex Education Task Force was established by Essex County Council in April 2021 as an independent body. At the heart of its work across Essex lie Renewal, Equality and Ambition.**

An initial budget of £1.5 million has already been invested in supporting the work of pre-school and early years settings, schools, further education, governors and the voluntary sector.

One major investment is the staging of the Essex Year of Reading 2022. A range of funded training programmes in reading for primary and secondary teachers have begun, with very positive feedback - and more to come. This is a Year of Reading which aims to reach all communities in Essex and all ages to encourage:

- Every community across the county to promote the importance of reading
- Every family to enjoy reading together
- Businesses, large and small across Essex, to promote the fun and joy of reading

We all know that reading confidently is a golden key to a lifetime's opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed not only the habits of work, but also those of leisure. Having spent more time at home for much of the past two years, we have all shown a renewed enthusiasm for reading and book buying.

More than 200 million print books were sold in Britain in 2020 - worth £6.4 billion.

The familiar pleasure of turning the pages of a book have not been replaced by screens. Thank goodness. The old-fashioned technology of the written word is the entertainment of the age - and for all ages.

Let's get Essex reading - in every family, every business, every community.

And what can this mean for schools?

Let us be properly ambitious for 2022.

Every primary school to say to itself: almost all children will, at age 11+, have a reading age which at least matches their actual age. We track reading ages from the early years to Year 6.



Every secondary school to say to itself: no matter the child's starting point, almost all will read at least in line with their actual age by the time they reach 16+. We track reading ages from Year 7 to Year 11.

Over the coming months a rich programme will unfold across the county to celebrate the joy and importance of reading.

Please join in the fun!

**Roy Blatchford,**  
**Chair of the Essex Education Task Force**

## Contents



## Authors visits to libraries

### **Project Lead: Juliet Pirez, Head of Libraries**

Essex Libraries are running numerous author events a part of the Essex Year of Reading. These take place across the county and are open to children and their families. Details of these and the other library events can be found at <https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/events/>

Further information: [wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk)



## Reading projects for looked after children

### **Project Lead: John Edgar, Virtual School Headteacher**

The Essex Virtual School is responsible for looked after children in Essex (616 of statutory school age, 43 early years and 320 Year 12 and 13). The Essex Year of Reading has funded in full a series of virtual author visits for the Virtual School that will not only give access to looked after children and children who have / had a social worker but also to the other children in their class to build upon earlier work undertaken with Michael Rosen.

Further information: [clare.davis@essex.gov.uk](mailto:clare.davis@essex.gov.uk)  
and [jane.mills@essex.gov.uk](mailto:jane.mills@essex.gov.uk)

## Writing and music workshops and publication opportunities for Children in Care

### **Project Lead: Chrissie Gavriel, Senior Analyst for Insight and Evaluation – Involvement**

Bringing together young people to create a book full of diverse creative activities from poems to raps to drawing in an intensive 6-week programme. The aim is to help young people get involved with reading and writing, aiding them to express themselves in a healthy way. We will be mindful of aiding their mental health throughout this process and will focus on holistic methods of writing and art practise. We would like to inspire young people and children as it is important for these young people to be able to have someone to look up to and being in care they may not be as exposed to role models as other individuals may be. Furthermore, we would like to invite authors / rappers to come and inspire our young people.

Further information: [jess.head@essex.gov.uk](mailto:jess.head@essex.gov.uk)

## Reading in Unusual Places – a celebration of reading everywhere!

### **Project Lead: Scott Hornsby, Senior Social Media Advisor, Essex County Council**

Across Essex Year of Reading the people of Essex from parents with babies to senior citizens will be encouraged to submit pictures of themselves for display and competitions.

Further information: [ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk](mailto:ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk)



## Current reading – a celebration of book loving

### **Project Leads: Louise Conlon and Katy McBride, Workforce Development Team**

Across the Council and beyond, the people of Essex from cabinet members to firefighters, teachers to social workers etc, will be encouraged to adopt a year of reading email signature to share what they are currently reading, book recommendations and favourite children's book.

Further information: [ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk](mailto:ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk)



## Reading celebrations: Queen's Platinum Jubilee

### **Project Lead: Jennifer Tollhurst, HM Lord Lieutenant of Essex**

The HM Lord Lieutenant of Essex and her Deputy Lieutenants will visit interested primary and special schools to read a story that features the queen as a child and leave a copy in each school for their library.

Further information: [enquiries@essex-lieutenancy.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@essex-lieutenancy.org.uk)



## Reading promotion with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

**Project Lead: Matt Hill,  
Education & Specialist Interventions Manager,  
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service**

Five specialist Education Officers will deliver joint Police & Fire educational lessons in schools to support the promotion of the Essex Year of Reading. In addition, 5 Community Builders and 6 Community Support Officers will work with communities. All community and school-facing staff will promote the Essex Year of Reading e.g. wearing badges and sharing links to website/ training materials etc. Essex Fire and Rescue summer safety competition will be co-branded with the Essex Year of Reading and will supply books as prizes (or virtual author visit).

Further information: [matthew.hill@essex-fire.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.hill@essex-fire.gov.uk)  
and [diane.thompson@essex-fire.gov.uk](mailto:diane.thompson@essex-fire.gov.uk)



Essex County  
Fire & Rescue Service

## Reading volunteers for Essex schools

**Project Lead: Kirsty O'Callaghan,  
Head of Community Resilience**

Essex Year of Reading have partnered with "Reading Volunteers" to recruit a team of volunteers to work in Essex schools. Reading volunteers in conjunction with the Council will advertise, interview and match Essex based volunteers with schools. Essex Year of Reading lead teachers will plan and deliver training for all volunteers.

Further information: [ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk](mailto:ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk)



## Promoting reading with wider school staff

**Project Lead: Clare Reynolds,  
School Crossing Patrol & School Meals  
Service Manager**

A number of projects are planned involving the School Meals and School Crossing Patrol teams to promote reading with young people. Projects include, but aren't limited to, recipe cards, world book day menu and reading and designing safety posters and 'school keep clear' leaflets.

Further information: [clare.reynolds@essex.gov.uk](mailto:clare.reynolds@essex.gov.uk)





## A library card for every child

### Project Lead: Juliet Pirez, Head of Libraries

Essex Libraries are working with colleagues to ensure that all Essex school children get their own library card in celebration of Essex Year of Reading. Schools will work with parents to sign children up for their entitlement and cards will be delivered through the school. In future we hope that library cards are aligned with the school admissions process.

Further information: [wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk)



## Books, magazines and newspapers to download

### Project Lead: Juliet Pirez, Head of Libraries

Essex Libraries and colleagues are working together for Essex Year of Reading to promote the apps Borrowbox, Libby and press-reader e-publication offerings. Together, these apps give library card holders access to thousands of publications without even needing to visit their local library.

Further information: [wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk)



## Discounted purchases

### Project Lead: Gareth Honeyford, Education Delivery Manager

As part of Essex Year of Reading we are working with book publishers, independent bookshops and distributors to secure discounted purchases for Essex schools. Andrew and Holt, who supply many UK libraries, have agreed a 25% discount for Essex schools. Letterbox Library, who do specialist book packs for different age groups around themes such as inclusion (No Outsiders Books), have offered a 20% discount.

Further information: [ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk](mailto:ian.fisher@essex.gov.uk)



## Enhanced spring book offer for Virtual School

### Project Lead: John Edgar, Virtual School Headteacher

Essex Year of Reading funding is helping to extend the existing spring book offer for nursery and post-16 young people to ensure that these young people also have access to their own books. Further work to provide access to texts and use books to aid transition between care placements is planned using Essex Year of Reading negotiated publishers discounts.

Further information: [clare.davis@essex.gov.uk](mailto:clare.davis@essex.gov.uk)  
and [jane.mills@essex.gov.uk](mailto:jane.mills@essex.gov.uk)



## Reading promotion in youth centres

### Project Lead: Bridget Craigen, Youth Service Lead (QA & Learning)

This project uses Essex Year of Reading funding and discounted purchase schemes to buy sets of age-appropriate books for youth centres. This includes a mobile youth centre for young people to choose books, read and discuss. In addition, posters will direct them to the Essex Year of Reading app, and library Borrowbox and Libby apps for e-books. A further project is story sessions for young carers and their families. Book reviews and competitions are being planned. Each quadrant will have a youth worker ambassador and young ambassadors to lead the work locally.

Further information:  
[bridget.craigen@essex.gov.uk](mailto:bridget.craigen@essex.gov.uk)



## Reading for children in receipt of an alternative education

### Project Lead: Julie Keating, Education Access Manager

Essex Year of Reading has funded the purchase of e-readers preloaded with books. These are for pupils receiving their alternative education through the wider alternative education market and who are currently not on a school roll.

Further information: [julie.keating@essex.gov.uk](mailto:julie.keating@essex.gov.uk)



## Reading to help understand dementia

### Project Lead: Maria Blanche, Dementia Partnership Delivery Lead

Essex Year of Reading is supporting a Year 4/5 story sack project for schools, “Archie with Alzheimer’s” – to support pupils in understanding dementia. There is another project featuring a dementia toolkit and a book bag in conjunction with Essex libraries.



There is funding for up to 7 pilot schools, and we will hold a waiting list if oversubscribed should additional funds become available. For schools that are interested in the Archie project please register your interest by email to [dementia.intergen@essex.gov.uk](mailto:dementia.intergen@essex.gov.uk) no later than Friday 29th April. The project runs over two academic terms and would commence at the start of the next academic year in September 2022. The Archie project is focussed on primary year groups 3, 4 and 5.

## Herts for Learning reading fluency project

### Project Lead: Roy Blatchford with seconded school staff

A small group reading intervention that focuses on improving reading comprehension through decoding fluency and prosody. The intervention lasts for 8 weeks and is taught for two 30 minute sessions. The first session focusses on prosody – this allows the development of the inner-voice, the inner picture and brings decoding to fluency level. The young people then read the passage again three times before the next taught session. As decoding is fluent, the working memory has further capacity to focus on comprehension. Session two involves teaching and developing comprehension strategies and using these to answer questions. Impact is measured through the YARC (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) test and Herts for Learning are showing 2.8 years of reading comprehension age gain per intervention.

Find out more information about  
**KS2 Reading Fluency Project | Herts for Learning**

Further information:  
**[a.taylor@shenfield.essex.sch.uk](mailto:a.taylor@shenfield.essex.sch.uk)**



## Thinking reading

### Project Lead: Roy Blatchford with seconded school staff

A 1:1 reading intervention for secondary schools that uses a range of phonic strategies, etymology and comprehension strategies to develop reading skills. This is for young people who have a reading age and a chronological age that are more than 2 years apart. Young people are identified through standardised testing, complete intervention testing and are then taught 1:1 for 30 minutes; 3 times per week. The young people remain on the programme until their reading age and comprehension age match. Students make a minimum of 2 months reading age progress per session; although data from a school using the programme are showing over 5 months of progress on average, per session, for young people.

Find out more information about **Thinking Reading**

Further information:  
**[a.taylor@shenfield.essex.sch.uk](mailto:a.taylor@shenfield.essex.sch.uk)**

## The Developing Reading Comprehension programme

### Project Lead: Rachel Pritchard, Lyons Hall Primary School

The Developing Reading Comprehension programme is a 4 day training course which is based on best practice and current research. Originally intended for primary schools, the content has been shown to be equally applicable to secondary schools. It has been highly effective in supporting schools across all key stages to implement a whole-school approach to improving reading, in particular reading comprehension. The aim is to ensure that teachers have the knowledge to support children so that they leave school reading at the expected level or beyond.



Key elements of the programme that develop comprehension include:

- fluency – with a focus on prosody
- vocabulary – in context and imported vocabulary to show understanding
- reading stamina
- reading for pleasure
- activating and generating prior knowledge, including for text structures.

Delegates share their learning and resources using an interactive platform and so practice is continually kept up-to-date. Teachers from across Essex and further afield have found that the strategies shared during the 4 days have had a significant impact on reading comprehension across the curriculum from early years to Year 11.

Further information: [rpritchard@lyonshall.org.uk](mailto:rpritchard@lyonshall.org.uk)

## Parent ambassadors

### Project Lead: Melissa Williamson, Adult Community Learning (ACL)

2 parent ambassadors are being recruited, funded by the Essex Education Task Force. One will be based in Harlow and one in Tendring. These will join the 2 already in post (Basildon and Colchester). Each ambassador will recruit 30 volunteers, who each recruit 10 more. All participants receive training through ACL. 2 Community Engagement Officers, one based in the south and one in the north of the county will have an information and guidance role and will aim to support parents to take up opportunities to enrol in family learning programmes and English programmes at ACL. Furthermore, ACL have developed a direct referral route for schools to signpost parents needing literacy support.

Further information:

[melissa.williamson@essex.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.williamson@essex.gov.uk)



## **The HM The Queen's Jubilee Reminiscence Reading project**

Using the Wayback Virtual Reality (VR)  
technology

**Project Lead: Maria Blanche,  
Dementia Partnership Delivery Lead**

This project will transport pupils back to the time period of the Coronation year of 1953, along with class readings through history, this project links to a local care home and builds on schools plans for their Jubilee celebrations' that connects with older people in their community. There is funding for up to the 30 schools, and we will hold a waiting list if oversubscribed should additional funds become available. For schools that are interested please register your interest by email to [dementia.intergen@essex.gov.uk](mailto:dementia.intergen@essex.gov.uk) no later than Friday 18th March 2022. For participating schools, the Wayback resources will be sent directly to schools to commence the project in April 2022.



## Language development in the early years

Projects are planned to maximise opportunities for babies and pre-school children to develop their language skills.

### Project Lead: Carolyn Terry

As part of the Essex Year of Reading, several projects are planned to maximise opportunities for babies and pre-school children to develop their language skills in partnership with their parents, carers, early years settings, reception classes and the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service. The projects will include a year-long programme of activities to introduce and inspire parents and carers to share stories in exciting and innovative ways by introducing story sacks, story stones, reading with me under a tree, storytelling by Essex celebrities and celebrating nursery rhymes, especially those that originated in Essex.

Further information: [carolyn.terry@essex.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.terry@essex.gov.uk) and [lisa.gridley@essex.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.gridley@essex.gov.uk)



## Care home partnerships

In this project primary school classes are paired with a care home.

### Project Lead: Maria Blanche, Dementia Partnership Delivery Lead

In this project, primary school classes are paired with a care home. Children read to care home residents, and they read stories back. This sharing of stories and related conversations both fosters language development, intergenerational learning, and language development. Furthermore, it connects people and alleviates potential isolation.

Further information: [maria.blanche@essex.gov.uk](mailto:maria.blanche@essex.gov.uk)

## Parent and child sessions

Essex libraries run regular sessions around adults sharing books, stories and rhymes with young people.

### **Project Lead: Juliet Pirez, Head of Libraries**

The majority of brain development occurs in the first 3 years of a child's life. Sharing books with babies and young children feeds their brain, helps them learn new words and grow their vocabulary. It is never too early to introduce them to the wonder of books. Sharing stories provides the building blocks a child needs for language development and directly impacts on their future language skills. When babies are read to, they are learning the sounds of language, the meanings of words and social communication. As well as that, it is an opportunity for connection, comfort, and fun.

Essex Libraries run a number of regular sessions around adults (carers, parents, grandparents, guardians) sharing books, stories, and rhymes with young people. Details of events can be found in local libraries or **on the Essex Libraries website.**

Further information: **[wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.clark@essex.gov.uk)**



## Memory Café

Essex Dementia Partnership is piloting a Memory Café in conjunction with Essex Libraries.

### **Project Lead: Maria Blanche, Dementia Partnership Delivery Lead**

The café for people living with dementia and their carers and families offers a safe space to relax and talk over shared experiences. Running alongside the existing library 'Parent and Child' sessions allows opportunities for intergenerational learning.

Further information: **[maria.blanche@essex.gov.uk](mailto:maria.blanche@essex.gov.uk)**



Over the course of the Essex Year of Reading we will be running a series of competitions encouraging the people of Essex to become authors, poets, illustrators and photographers. Details will be promoted during the year.



### Competition one: writing

**Write a short story with the theme of Essex in the past, present and future.**

**Length: no more than 750 words.**

Entries can be from an individual, pair or group and can be written by an adult where individuals are unable to write. Illustrations are encouraged. Storyboards or graphic novel style work are also welcomed.

All shortlisted entries will be published on the Essex Year of Reading app.

All winning entries will receive Year of Reading prizes and be included in a physical book for the author and school.

**All entries should be submitted by email or post to arrive no later than 5pm on Friday 6th May 2022.**

### Where to send entries

**By Email:**

**[Essex.yearofreading@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Essex.yearofreading@essex.gov.uk)**

**By Post:**

Essex Year of Reading Competition  
Essex Library Services,  
County Hall,  
Market Road,  
Chelmsford,  
Essex  
CM1 1QH

## How are entries judged?

We welcome entries from schools and other entries are welcome too such as youth groups, after-school provisions, parent groups or care homes.

### Entries are submitted by schools

Shortlisting can be carried out by English Leads before the winning entries are submitted into the competition for final judgement. Schools can shortlist 3 entries from each key stage and up to 3 entries from an 'other' category.

### Entries not from a school

Entries can be submitted directly (see 'Where to send entries to'). The shortlisted stories will be judged by a panel, which consists of; the Publisher, an Essex libraries staff member and an Essex Year of Reading staff member. All shortlisted entries, winners and their schools will receive certificates.

### Categories

The categories are:

- \* Key Stage 1
- \* Key Stage 2
- \* Key Stage 3
- \* Key Stage 4
- \* Key Stage 5 and Further education
- \* Special
- \* Other
- \* Community and adult sector
- \* Essex County Council employee
- \* Care home residents

Other category:

This allows schools to select a pupils work that is exceptional for them, due to special educational needs and disability, home circumstances or personal challenges, for example.

## Guidance for schools

Depending on the age and ability of pupils. Teachers are permitted to give pupils a title or narrow the focus. Provided the story fits broadly into this theme.

As an example, a story could be about:

- Colchester in Roman times
- An alien landing in Harlow in 2050
- A dog's adventure on Jaywick Sands
- A zombie apocalypse in Basildon

Teachers may wish to link in with cross-curricular writing, such as Essex in the time of the Romans or World War 2.

## Competition two: Dragon's Den

**Project Lead: Maria Blanche,  
Dementia Partnership Delivery Lead**

**Write a short proposal on your idea to link to developing a love of reading, and reading for pleasure and across the ages with older people including people living with Dementia.**

**Length: written content no more than 1-2 A4 pages.**

Entries can be from a school, or an early year setting and can be written by an adult where individuals are unable to write. The entry could also include pictures or a story board to show your ideas, we welcome different ways to be able to show and tell your idea. If there are any costs to your idea, please do include costs up to £50, we cannot guarantee to fund all ideas as there is a limited funding pot of Amazon vouchers in place.

A selection of different entries will be published on the Essex Year of Reading app.

## How are ideas judged?

The idea must link to promoting a love of reading across the ages, ideas could include in-person, in-post, and virtual ways to connect across communities.

We will aim to support as many different ideas as possible to happen, but may not be able to fund all. Once we have all the entries we will take into consideration different localities, ages, and stages to ensure we can fund as many ideas as possible across different areas, and from early years to further years.

We are keen to hear you own ideas, but as an example, an idea could be about:

- How the idea links with a local Care Home, or an Older Person Day Care Centre, community group or Memory Cafe
- How the idea creates opportunities for reading across young and older
- Creative based Activities

All entries will receive a 'Dragon's Den for Dementia Awareness' certificate for their group, class or early year setting.

**All entries should be submitted by email no later than 5pm on Friday 22nd April 2022.**

## Where to send entries

By Email: [dementia.intergen@essex.gov.uk](mailto:dementia.intergen@essex.gov.uk)



**The Essex Year of Reading app is an initiative to inspire young people and families across Essex to read at any time, wherever they are.**

The app is free and will give children, young people and adult learners who want to improve their literacy and parents/carers seamless access to a digital library full of engaging texts.

Pupil library – includes poetry and fiction and non-fiction stories

Literacy boosting library – includes high-interest, phonics-based reading support

Parent/carer library – includes guides on how to support children's reading and wider learning

The main features of the app include but are not limited to:

- an introductory guide with information about how to navigate the app and the Essex Year of Reading eg competitions, events etc
- Offline and mobile access – readers can download texts to read offline on a mobile phone or tablet, anytime, anywhere
- Interactive experiences and immersive engagement via audio readings, animations and quizzes
- Updates and new texts added throughout the year
- Signposting to other reading opportunities such as Essex Libraries

The Essex Year of Reading app uses everyday technology to inspire further reading and to build confidence, as well as to help increase the scope and accessibility of reading opportunities. The purpose of the app is not to act as a replacement for physical books but instead to be a gateway to reading in different media. As well as including digital libraries, the app will also include information about physical libraries and online and in-person events that will happen throughout the year in order to keep everyone taking part in the Essex Year of Reading up to date.



Essex Year of  
**REAding**

Where will your book take you?

