



Young Literacy Leaders Transform Bradford's Educational Landscape through Innovative Programme

By Noreen Khan, December 2025

A groundbreaking initiative, the Literacy Lead Leadership Project, has taken off in Bradford, offering a beacon of hope for addressing the region's literacy challenges. Spearheaded by Neesie and funded by The National Lottery Reaching Communities fund, this transformative project aims to improve literacy rates across the city by empowering young people to lead the way in education.

In an inspiring turn of events, 12 dedicated young people

from New College Bradford have been recruited as Literacy Lead Ambassadors. These ambitious ambassadors are not only undergoing intensive training but are actively taking on the role of delivering engaging and innovative literacy classes in local primary schools. Their mission is clear: to uplift literacy levels and offer creative, practical solutions to address the underachievement that has long plagued Bradford.

The Challenge of Literacy in Bradford

Bradford faces significant challenges in education, particularly in literacy. According to recent statistics, over 40% of children in Bradford leave primary school without achieving the expected standard in reading and writing, which is above the national average. This literacy gap contributes to a larger issue of underachievement that affects the wider educational landscape in the city.

Bradford also has one of the highest levels of child poverty in the UK, with 36% of children living in low-income households, according to data from the End Child Poverty Coalition. This high rate of child poverty means that many families are unable to afford additional learning resources, which further exacerbates the literacy gap. Without strong literacy skills, children are more likely to struggle throughout their academic careers, impacting their future employment prospects and earning potential.

The economic consequences of poor literacy are significant as well. The National Literacy Trust estimates that low levels of literacy cost the UK economy around £2.5 billion annually in lost productivity. For Bradford, where literacy rates are below the national average, the impact is even more pronounced. As a result, improving literacy is

not just an educational issue, but an economic one as well.

The Literacy Lead Project's Solution

The Literacy Lead Leadership Project seeks to break this cycle by introducing an innovative solution: empowering young people from within the community to lead literacy education. By using the ambassadors as a bridge, the initiative is helping to reshape the educational experience for children in Bradford and creating new opportunities for improvement.

The primary schools participating in the Literacy Lead project are taking a bold step toward enhancing literacy outcomes. Schools such as Dixon Marchbank, Dixon Allerton, Beckfoot Heaton, Beckfoot Nessfield Keighley, and Hollingwood have all embraced the programme, recognizing the positive impact it is having on their students.

The Literacy Lead Ambassadors have been instrumental in developing creative and dynamic lesson plans that capture the interest of young learners. By focusing on interactive and innovative methods, they've made literacy lessons exciting and engaging, helping children become more confident and capable readers and writers.

"We've seen firsthand how the ambassadors' creativity has transformed the classroom environment,"

said a teacher from one of the participating schools.

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[teacher]

Engaging Parents for Greater Impact

The Literacy Lead Project is not just focusing on children; it's also reaching out to their parents. An integral part of the initiative is engaging families and providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to support their children's literacy development at home.

Parents, particularly mothers, have expressed immense gratitude for the opportunity to participate in weekly intervention sessions. These sessions are designed to equip parents with practical strategies to assist their children in improving their literacy skills. For many families, this has been a life-changing experience, as they gain the confidence and ability to engage with their children's learning in a meaningful way.

One mother shared, "Before this programme, I didn't know how I could help my child with reading and writing. Now, I feel much more confident. I can support him at home and help him succeed in school."

A Path to Greater Achievement

The Literacy Lead Leadership Project is creating a ripple effect of change. It's not only improving the literacy skills of young pupils but also fostering a sense of community, pride, and collaboration in Bradford. By targeting the root causes of underachievement and actively involving both students and parents, the project is helping to pave a new way forward for the city's educational future.

As the Literacy Lead Ambassadors continue their work, they are proving that young people can be powerful agents of change in their communities. With their creativity, passion, and commitment, they are leading the way toward a brighter, more literate future for Bradford's children.

This inspiring initiative stands as a shining example of how local collaboration, innovative thinking, and empowering young people can create lasting, positive change for generations to come.

