

learn to

love to

read

Impact Report

2024-25



Table of contents



3

A message from our director

5

The need

7

Our vision and goals

9

2024-25 highlights

11

One-to-one reading support

19

Early Years

27

Parent engagement

32

Summer reading club

35

Volunteers

41

Partner schools

43

Theory of change

45

How we measure impact

46

Our thanks

A message from our director

We are delighted to share our latest annual impact report for the academic year 2024-25.

In recent months you may have read many news reports about the crisis we are facing as a nation as fewer children read regularly and enjoy reading. In fact, the Department for Education has named 2026 as the National Year of Reading to help build a culture where reading is for everyone, everywhere.



National Literacy Trust research, conducted in 2024, showed that:

- Only one in three (32.7%) children and young people aged eight to 18 say they enjoy reading in their free time (31% for children who are entitled to free school meals).
- Only one in five (18.7%) say they read something daily in their free time.



This academic year our wonderful reading volunteers have worked with 202 children to try and change these statistics. We also partnered with our tenth school meaning we are reading with more children than ever. We hosted our first author roadshow which enabled 1,398 children and 139 parents to meet an author in their own school. Feedback from schools, children and parents indicated that these visits really helped to develop a love of reading.

We have always recognised the importance of reading in the early years and this year we have delivered a record number of Early Years classes - 108. We have continued to fund families to enrol in the book gifting programme, The Dolly Parton Imagination Library, and in total we have gifted 1,250 books to children who have received support from us in different ways.

We know that parental support is vital in creating readers so we were thrilled to nearly double the number of families who attended our summer reading club this year, as well as welcoming 282 parents and carers to our different reading talks, workshops and events.

We could not do the work we do without the support of our amazing local community. We are so fortunate to have dedicated groups of supporters, volunteers and donors who recognise the importance of giving a child the gift of reading and the life chances this offers them.

We were delighted to be commended in the 'Best Charity' category at the Wandsworth Business Awards and to win a national Big Give Award for our creative fundraising work with our local community.

We look forward to working together to help make 'every child a reader' in Wandsworth and create a more equitable future for all children.

If you would like to know more about our work or get involved in some way, please get in touch at tara@l2l2r.org.

*Tara Coffin,
Director, Learn to Love to Read*

BookTrust research with families from low-income backgrounds in the UK in 2025 has shown that:

"If children experience early shared reading, they are more likely to read as they grow up. Reading in the early years has four times more powerful impact on a child's progress across the curriculum at age 16 than parental education or socioeconomic status."



The need

Overall 75% of children nationally met the expected standard in reading (up from 74% in 2024). However, in 2025, 32% of children nationally were considered to be disadvantaged at the end of their primary school years. The comparison in reading attainment between these children and primary school pupils not known to be disadvantaged is stark. Government figures show that while 81% of children known not to be disadvantaged met the expected standard in reading by the end of primary school, this drops to just 63% for those who are disadvantaged.

Similarly, while 80% of children nationally met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check, only 67% of disadvantaged children and 43% of children with special educational needs (SEN) met the expected standard .

It has long been recognised that children who read regularly experience a wide range of immediate and life-long benefits including improved speech and language, higher academic achievement, better well-being, enhanced social skills and stronger relationships. Reading also fosters imagination, empathy and creativity.

However, recent research by BookTrust has found that reading enjoyment starts to decline from Key Stage 1 (ages 5-7) and continues to do so as children progress through primary school. BookTrust found that while 70% of parents reported that their 2-4 year olds 'loved' or 'liked' reading, this dropped to 64% for 5-7 year olds and to just 51% by the end of primary school (age 11).

There are many barriers to reading enjoyment including a decline in shared reading as children get older, families struggling to make time for shared reading at home, parents lacking confidence to choose appropriate books, and screen time, homework and other interests impacting the amount of time spent reading. According to the National Literacy Trust, more children not receiving free school meals in primary school read daily (19.4%) than those who receive free school meals (15.8%).



However the National Literacy Trust's survey also showed parents' strong commitment and creativity in supporting their children's learning with resources such as libraries, schools and community services playing a key role in helping families stay engaged. Research suggested that while there had been a distinct drop in reading enjoyment, re-engagement could be possible if opportunities to read are personalised around interests, children are given the freedom to choose what they could read and good links to other media that children already recognised as part of their cultural life.

Given the widening attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers over the last five years, it is becoming increasingly important that children

from disadvantaged backgrounds receive reading support to enjoy reading, helping to level the playing field and overcome disadvantage – from Early Years, through primary school and into secondary education.

References

Department for Education: *Key stage 2 attainment 2024-25*

Department for Education: *Phonics screening check attainment 2024-25*

National Literacy Trust: *Children and Young People's Reading in 2025 (June 2025)*

BookTrust: *Primary school children's reading and the vital role teachers play in nurturing reading (2024)*

37% of disadvantaged children did not read at the expected reading level at the end of Key Stage 2, compared to just 19% of their non-disadvantaged peers.



Our vision

Every child a reader



Our goals

1

Improve literacy levels. Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world.

2

Develop early literacy skills so children start school ready to learn to read.

3

Build partnerships with local schools, children's centres and charities, to give all children the opportunity to have positive, frequent reading experiences.

4

Give parents the motivation, skills and confidence to support their children's reading at home.

5

Improve access to books and other literacy resources for families in their homes.

6

Unlock access to ambitious life opportunities by helping children become confident readers.

7

Help children learn to love to read.

How we strive to meet those goals



One-to-one reading support

We offer children in Years 1, 2 and 3 weekly one-to-one reading sessions with trained volunteers.



Early Years classes

Our classes for 0-4 year olds, focusing on songs, stories and speaking and listening games, help children to be ready to read when they start primary school.



Parent engagement

We use our existing parent connections to encourage ongoing parental involvement in their children's reading as well as reaching parents through regular parental talk, family workshops and messaging.



Book gifting

We regularly give new and lightly-used books to children across the borough.



Training and supporting volunteers

Volunteers attend a half-day training session, as well as receiving ongoing support from our Head of Volunteering through regular newsletters, termly meet-ups, our virtual volunteering support line and additional training.



Summer reading club

We offer reading-based play sessions for parent to enjoy with their children aged 0-11 during the summer holidays.

2024-25 highlights



2,246

Wandsworth children benefitted from our range of literacy programmes



706

adults attended talks, workshops and clubs



1,250

books gifted to children in Wandsworth



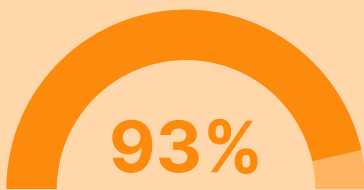
One-to-one reading support

202

children in Years 1-3 supported with reading across 9 partner schools in Wandsworth

4,166

hours of reading support provided by 71 volunteers



of children benefitted from the positive impact of their reading volunteer, as reported by teachers



of children had improved their confidence, comprehension and reading enjoyment by the end of the year, teachers said



over double the number of children were reading at the expected level by the end of the year (46%) as at the start of the year (21%)



Parental engagement



21

talks and workshops held throughout the year

282

families attended events



10

author visits held at all 10 partner schools

139

parents or carers attended author events

2024-25 highlights



Early Years classes

108 Early Years classes delivered over the year

255 families engaged with the sessions

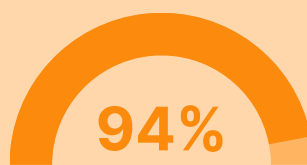
48 children aged 0-5 received monthly books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library



of parents who gave feedback rated the classes 4/5 or 5/5



of parents felt more confident helping their children learn at home



of parents had a better understanding of the importance of reading, singing, playing and chatting with their child



of parents would recommend the classes to others

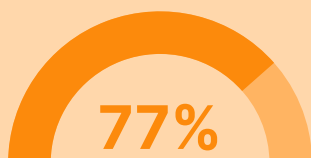


Summer reading club

4 sessions

56 children

30 adults



of families who gave feedback said the sessions had helped their children enjoy reading more



of families felt the sessions had helped them understand more about the types of activities that can promote a love of reading and reading skills



Volunteering & schools

71 volunteers

10 volunteer training sessions

30 new volunteers trained



of volunteers felt they had made a different to the children they worked with



would recommend volunteering with L2L2R to others



partner schools across Wandsworth



of schools felt L2L2R's work had a positive impact on reading progress in their schools

One-to-one reading support

Our volunteers work with their allocated children once a week, for 20-30 minutes. We focus on children in Years 1 and 2 and 3. Our in-school volunteers read with three children and our virtual volunteers read with one or two, depending on the time they are able to give. To ensure good relationships are built, volunteers read with the same children each week and the expectation is for them to volunteer for the entire school year. Where volunteer numbers allow, children are read with twice a week by two different volunteers.

Children are chosen for our reading support by their teachers – they are generally not reaching the reading levels expected for their age.

This might be because they are not read with regularly at home and/or English is not spoken by their family, because they have missed some schooling or moved schools often, or because they are just finding the early stages of reading challenging.



"H has made amazing progress! I think these one-to-one sessions have really helped her and developed her confidence. She is now working at year group level, after being new to English only last year!"

Teacher, partner school

When working with a child, volunteers follow a framework that allows the child to get the maximum benefit from the intervention time. First the child will read their school reading book or a book matched to their level of reading ability. The volunteer will encourage the child to sound out and blend sounds where necessary and ask questions about the text, for example, what they think might happen next in the story, how a character might be feeling or check understanding of vocabulary. Afterwards, the volunteer may work on a particular sound or word the child may have found difficult using their whiteboard. At the end of the session volunteers are encouraged to read the child a more challenging story or they may look at a factual book together. These are chosen from a box of our own books kept at partner schools, or from a more challenging section of our online reading scheme.

As well as improving reading levels, volunteers are aiming to inspire confidence and a love of reading in the children they work with. We want children to look forward to their reading time, so specific praise and encouragement and a recognition of effort are all part of every session, as well as sticker rewards at the end.

All our volunteers are trained, learning how children's reading is taught in schools, including the synthetic phonics system, and how to run a reading session. They are also given safeguarding training which is refreshed each academic year. Throughout the year, volunteers are offered additional ad hoc training sessions both in person and online, such as word game workshops and tips on how to engage reluctant readers.

"Reading transports W into a wonderful world of the imagination and she thoroughly embraces the plot and characters, with great insight... Rarely have I witnessed the unalloyed joy that reading a good book can give to a young person."

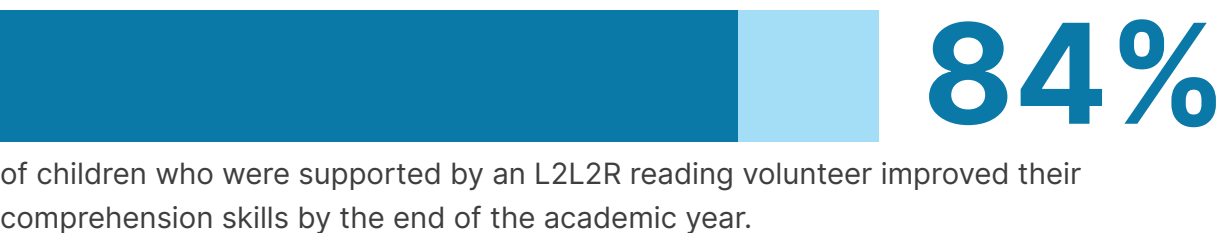
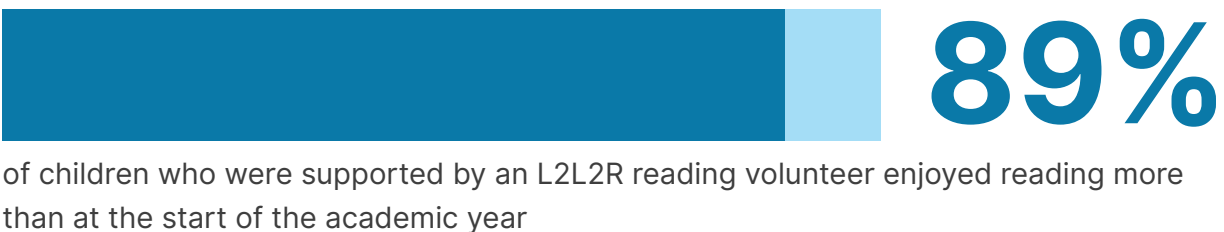
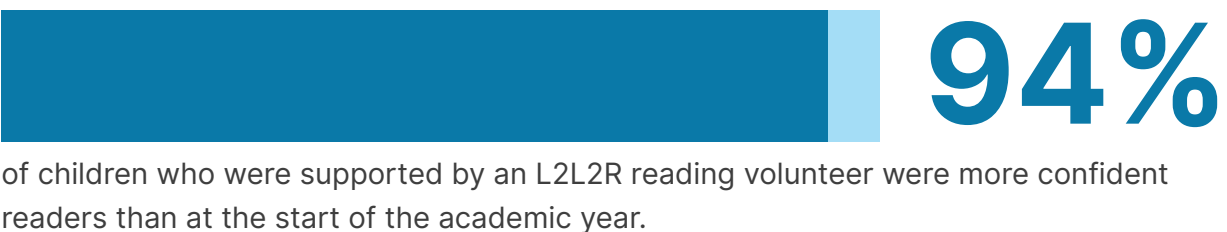
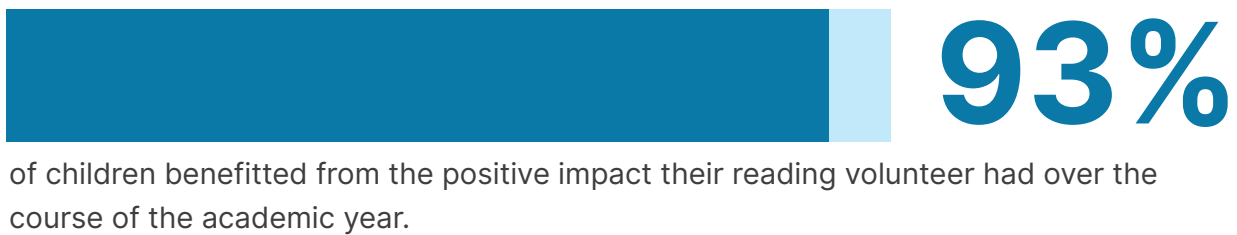
Volunteer



What we did

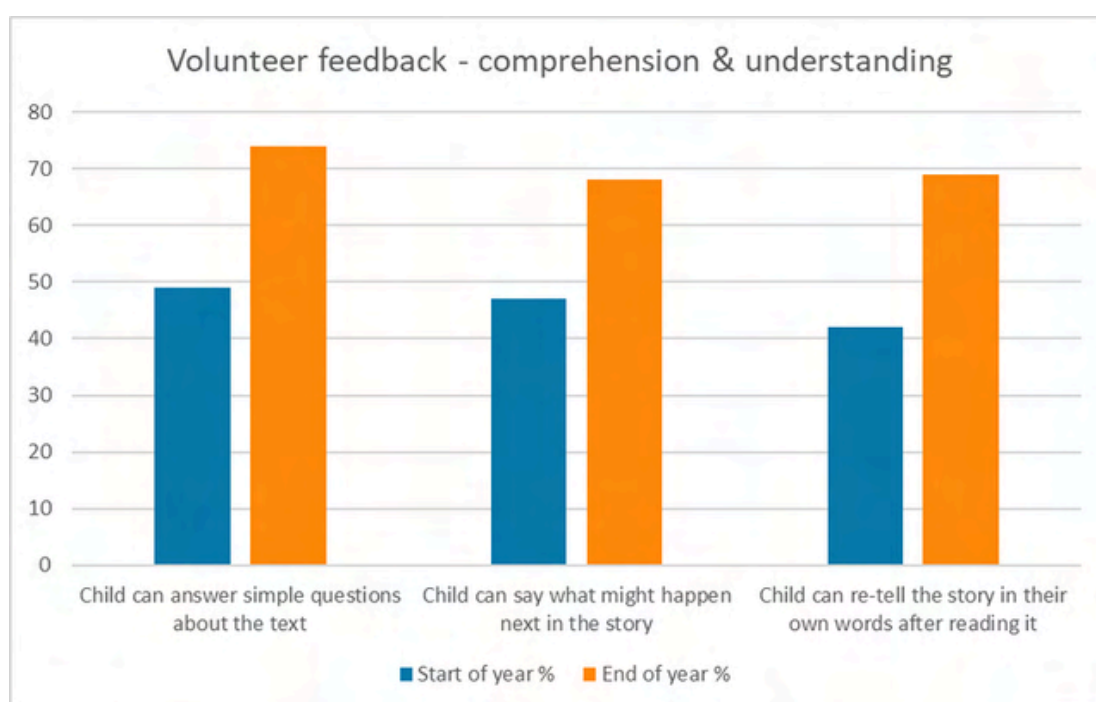
In 2024-25, 71 volunteers supported 202 children across nine partner schools in Wandsworth. Sixty-two volunteers worked with 188 children face-to-face in school, with a further ten volunteers supporting 14 children virtually. They held nearly 4,200 reading sessions (compared to just over 3,000 in 2023-24). Feedback on children's progress over the year is sought from class teachers and volunteers, as well as informally from the children themselves and the families of children read with online as this happens from home.

What class teachers said



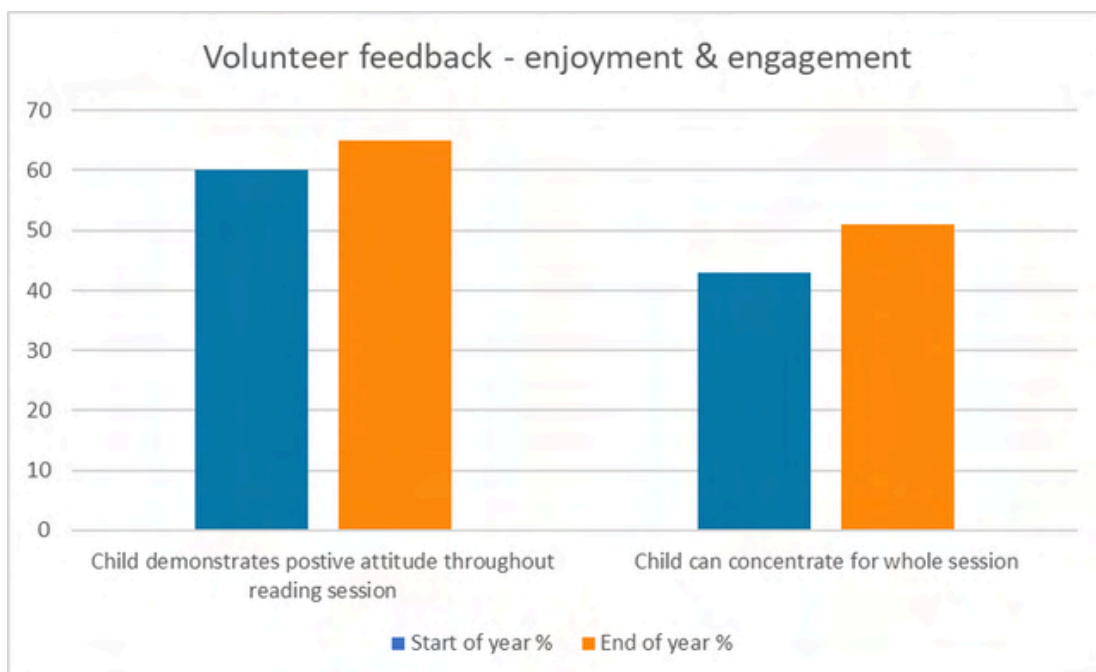
What volunteers said

Percentage of children scoring 5/6 or 6/6 at the end of the year, compared to the start of the year



What volunteers said

Percentage of children scoring 5/6 or 6/6 at the end of the year, compared to the start of the year



Pupil voice

Last year, in order to obtain feedback from all our stakeholders, we introduced our Pupil Voice sessions where L2L2R staff members visited partner schools to chat to children in small groups about their experiences with a reading volunteer. Last year's trial was such a success that we have continued to run these sessions in 2024-25.

Children were asked four simple questions:

- *Do you enjoy reading with your reading volunteer?*
- *How does your reading volunteer help you?*
- *Is it fun?*
- *How do you feel after reading with your volunteer?*

“

She showed me on a map the countries that we were reading about and I spotted my country. [Myanmar]

”

“

Sometimes when I read I forget about school and the sky and the world and get so into the story.

”

“

I don't want to go back [to class] as I want to keep on reading.

”

“

She's kind. She makes me feel good about reading.

”

“

She helps me by helping with words I don't know. We chunk it up

”

“

Yes [it is fun]. I love reading. I got a new book yesterday and I read it to my dad on his birthday.

”



How children benefitted

Teachers told us that they felt the support of a reading volunteer had had a positive impact on a child's overall reading for 93% of children supported. They also reported that 89% of children supported by an L2L2R reading volunteer had improved their confidence, comprehension and reading enjoyment by the end of the year. Nearly half of all supported children were reading at the expected level for their age at the end of the year, compared to just 21% at the start of the year.

Volunteers reported that over a quarter of children improved their abilities to use phonic knowledge to work out both simple and longer words, recognise di- and trigraphs (sh, th, igh, air etc.), as well as recognise tricky words (non-decodable words that cannot be sounded out using phonic knowledge e.g. was, put, the, go etc.).

Three quarters of children could answer simple questions about the text they were reading, compared to half at the start of the year. Volunteer feedback also indicated that by the end of the year two thirds of children were approaching their reading with confidence, compared to less than half at the start of the year.



"M has absolutely loved his session each week and his volunteer has been engaging and fun. His reading has improved and I think he has truly found a passion for reading this year! Thank you!"

Class teacher

Case study

Light-Angel was in Year 2 at a Wandsworth primary school. She was supported by one of Learn to Love to Read's virtual reading volunteers, Katharina, for over an academic year. Her father, Valentine, talks about her experience.

The family first came across L2L2R when they attended Early Years classes held at Eastwood Nursery in Roehampton. These classes, designed for parents and children aged 0-4 years old, focus on songs, stories, and speaking and listening games, all designed to help children get ready to learn to read when they start primary school.

When Light-Angel was in Year 1 at school, Valentine was keen to ensure that not only did she maintain her reading progress, but also that she continued to find it fun.

Light-Angel received one-to-one online virtual support from a trained L2L2R volunteer. These weekly sessions take place over Zoom once children have returned home at the end of the school day. Volunteers have access to an online library of graded reading books so children are reading books of the same level as their school reading books. At the end of each session, volunteers can share a more complex book which they can read to the child.

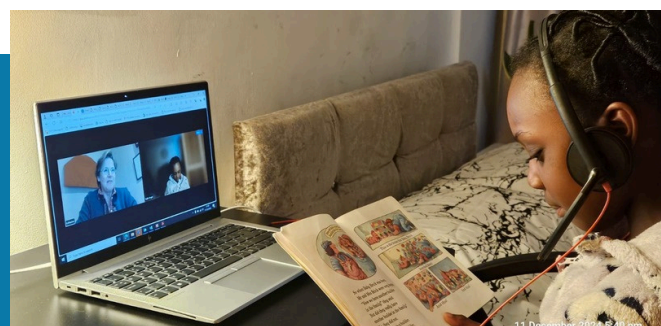
Valentine has really noticed a difference in Light-Angel's reading ability since having the sessions and comments that she enjoyed using the technology. He says: "[Light-Angel loved] the idea that she had to have to have this reading session all by herself, with an online teacher [who's] amazing and listening to her."

Light-Angel's reading volunteer, Katharina, comments: "Having my regular reading sessions with Light-Angel turned into some truly uplifting and memorable times in my week. Being prepared to learn and explore lots of different books and sharing the enthusiasm of reading over the last academic year was a wonderfully positive and reassuring experience. This was clearly greatly helped by a very supportive family and I think both sides felt equal disappointment when our sessions together had to end."

Since Light-Angel has been reading with a volunteer, Valentine has made sure he devotes time to read with her routinely and has ensured there's always something for her to read at home. He would recommend virtual reading sessions to other parents.

"She loved the idea that she had to have this reading session all by herself, with an online teacher [who's] amazing and listening to her"

Valentine, father



Early Years

L2L2R runs Early Years classes in collaboration with local charities, partner schools and partner organisations. Aimed at children aged between zero and four, attending with a parent or carer, these classes are designed to give parents the confidence and skills required to support their child's early literacy so they are ready to learn to read when they start school. Through songs, stories and speaking and listening games, children improve their communication skills, expand their vocabulary and increase their interest in sharing books.

This year, we ran 26 sets of classes (25 in 2023-25). Each set of classes comprises four weekly sessions which last for 30-45 minutes, translating into 104 individual classes.

Eight sets were run in Tooting, four in Roehampton and eight in Battersea. Classes were run in person at all our partner schools, at children's centres across the borough and in conjunction with Home-Start Wandsworth specifically for 0-2 year olds. New venues included Fayland Children's Centre in Tooting.

"I have seen a big difference in my children after attending each session. They love books and now want to always look at them and for me to read with them."

Parent



Two hundred and fifty-five families attended our Early Years classes (compared to 208 in 2023-24). As always a small percentage of families who signed up did not attend (7%) but this is much reduced from 2023-24 (16%). Overall 93% of families who signed up went on to attend at least one class, compared to 84% the previous year.

Each week families are given a gift book, song card and another resource such as puzzles, playdoh or a card game. By the end of their four sessions each family has a tote bag full of books and other resources to support their reading. For our 0-2 classes, contents included age-appropriate toys and gifts such as stacking cups and peekaboo scarves, as well as books and song cards.

Families are able to attend subsequent sets of classes if they wish and we have had a number of families asking to return, sometimes travelling considerable distances across the borough to do so.

This has been helpful for families whose children have additional needs and/or who find it hard to attend every week.

We ensure that the gift bag contents are varied over the year so families do not receive the same books and games in each set of classes.

Support for families also includes regular WhatsApp messaging between classes, suggesting activities to do during the week as well as reminding about subsequent classes. Parents can also opt in to receive monthly messaging with book and activity suggestions, once the classes are finished.

"Sally [class leader] is fantastic. She is kind, gentle and patient. She can make children engaged with the activities and she explains clearly the importance of parents' guidance for children's development in books and songs."

Parent



Early Years messaging

Sample messages sent to parents attending Early Years classes

After week 1

It's really important for young children to develop good listening skills, learning to discriminate between the sounds they hear around them.

Try to point out the sounds that you hear when you're out and about together during the week, such as a dog barking, a fire engine siren or a helicopter flying overhead:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/whats-that-sound/znnqmfrr>

After week 3

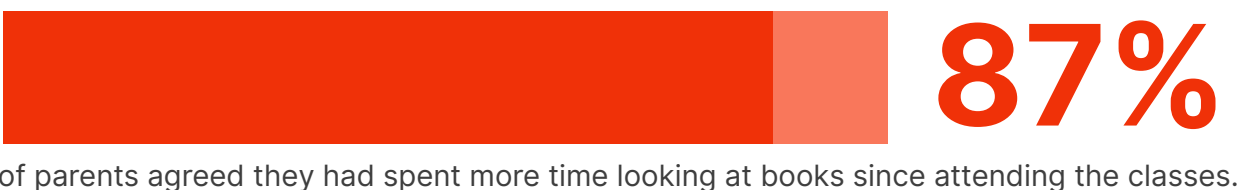
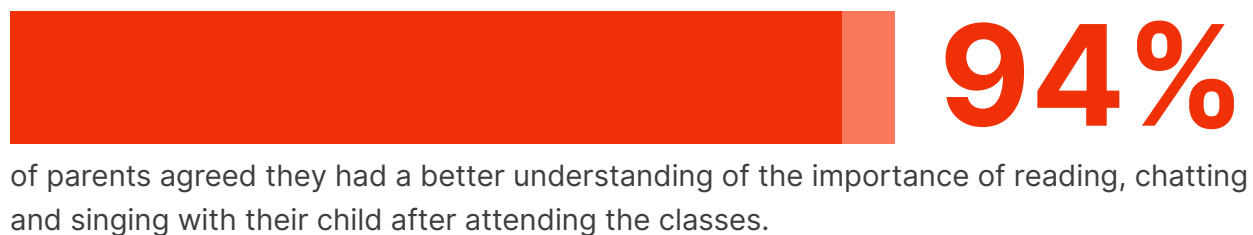
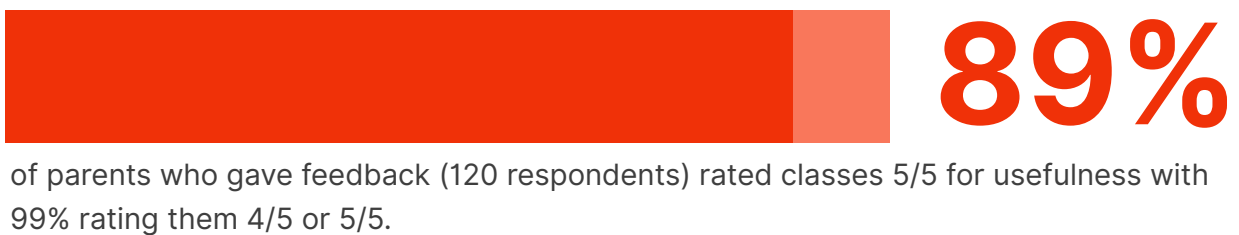
Sharing a book at bedtime may be the perfect way to end the day, but reading in an unexpected place can be exciting, too. Why not take a book with you on your next journey on a bus or train? Or whilst you are waiting for an appointment? Could you make a den to read in using a sheet or blanket and placing them over some chairs?

This week we read 1,2,3 Do The Robot by Michelle Robinson. Have a look at this short video of Michelle sharing some tips about reading with your child.

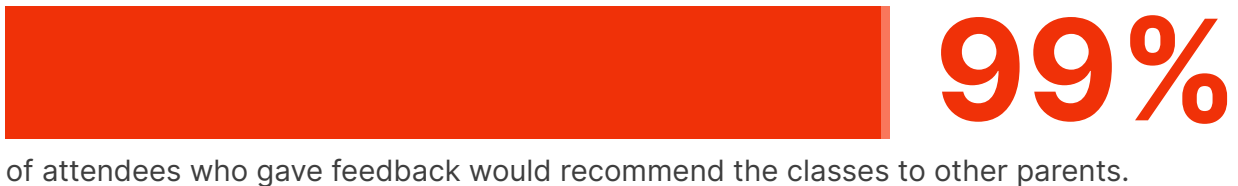
[Tips from Michelle Robinson \(click here\)](#)

How children benefitted

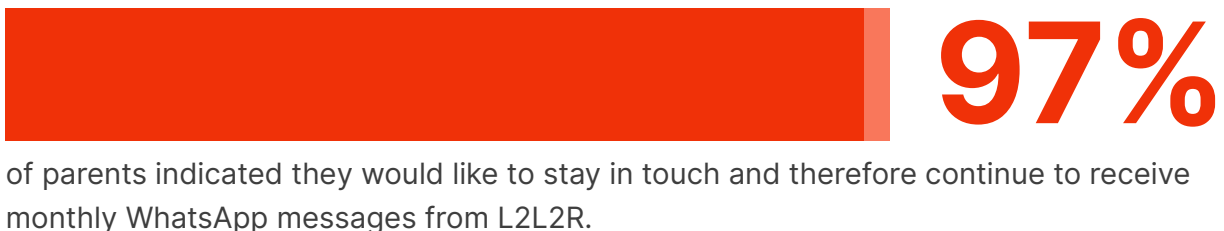
Feedback from Early Years classes was collected through a short paper survey, completed by families at the end of the set of classes, with support from the class leader where required.



How children benefitted



of attendees who gave feedback would recommend the classes to other parents.



of parents indicated they would like to stay in touch and therefore continue to receive monthly WhatsApp messages from L2L2R.

Nearly all parents said they found the books to be the most useful items in their gift packs

The classes continue to show a high impact on parental knowledge, confidence and behaviour. After attending the Early Years classes, parents were more engaged in their children's learning, with feedback figures demonstrating parents' increased understanding of the importance of reading, chatting and singing with their child and improved confidence in how to help their children learn at home.



Focus Group

We ran an online focus group in the summer of 2025, inviting families who had attended at least one set of classes. The nine attendees were sent a short Mentimeter survey beforehand as a starting point for the discussion.

Parents enjoyed receiving the books and other gifts to take home, as well as the friendliness of the teachers.

They appreciated the different tips given in the session which made them

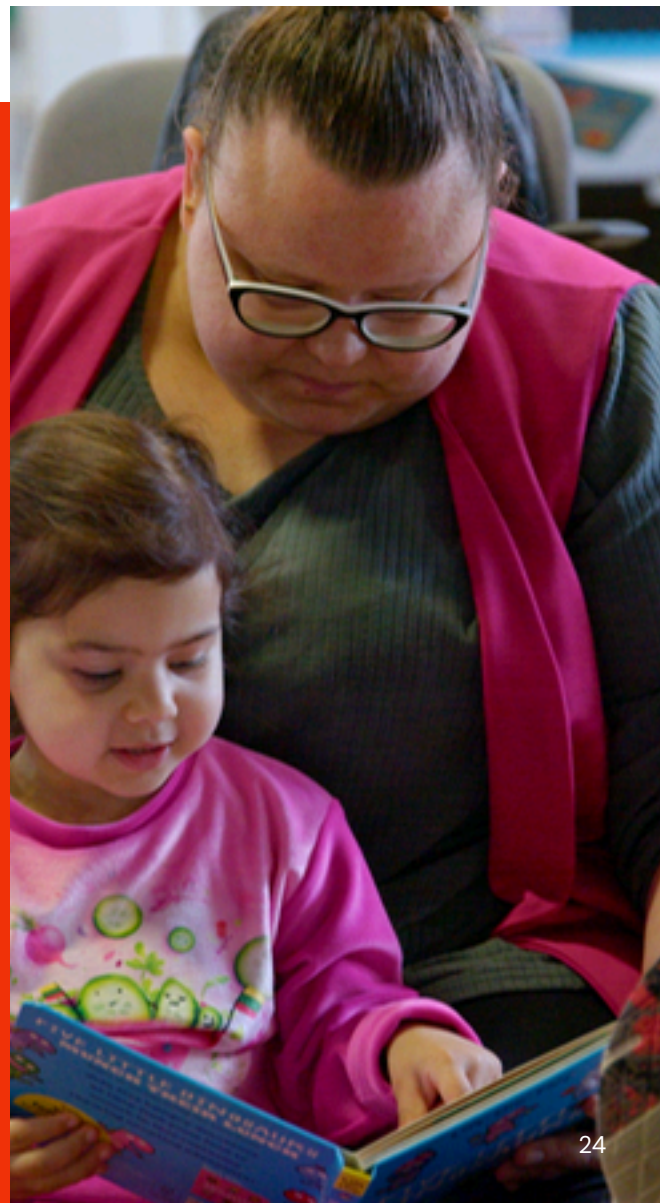
feel more confident reading at home and trying out some of the ideas they saw in class.

They looked forward to receiving our monthly messages with ideas of things to do at home. As a result of the discussion, we decided to run an online session about starting Reception and added a monthly message suggesting books to help children starting school.

“
My experience was fantastic, we played with puzzles at home and my son was reading the book again and again.
”

“
Love the opportunity to be present with my child, learning and interacting together.
”

“
I really enjoyed the songs and the style of teaching. The methodology was right on point for my child's development as regards reading.
”



Book gifting

During this academic year, we gifted 1,250 new and lightly-used books to primary school-aged children in Wandsworth. These ranged from books given at parent talks, our summer reading club and Early Years classes to books given at the end of the year to children supported by volunteers.

This year we have continued to use the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to support our families. This is a book-gifting programme that posts free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family's income.

In July 2025 we had 48 children registered. Wandsworth local authority recently received funding to enrol all families in the borough into the Dolly Parton Imagination Library so has now taken over administration of the programme.

Feedback from families has shown how much the books are appreciated and that the children looked forward to receiving a book in the post. As well as calling parents for feedback, we also sent a Mentimeter survey to find out about their experience. We received 24 responses, incentivised with a gift voucher draw.



“When we receive a book in the post, my daughter is over the moon. Each book is perfect for her age. [It] has improved her love for books and her vocabulary has improved huge amounts!”

“They will be treasured. When I was little I didn't get one book.”

“Since being signed [up]...it has truly been a blessing. So many diverse genre books sent to help open up [his] world. He gets so excited with every delivery.”

Case study

Andreea and her four year-old daughter, Sophia, attended Early Years classes at Ronald Ross Primary School, led by Learn to Love to Read's Family Programmes Manager, Sally. Sophia was in the Nursery class at Ronald Ross and her teacher suggested to Andreea that she might like to come along to L2L2R's Early Years classes which were taking place at the school. Andreea was keen to give it a go as, despite her and her husband both working full time, they like to try to spend as much time as possible with Sophia. She says: "I'm always [looking for] the best solutions or activities to teach Sophia to love to learn."

The classes are designed to give parents the confidence and skills required to support their child's early literacy so they are ready to learn to read when they start Reception. Through songs, stories, and speaking and listening games, children expand their vocabulary and increase their interest in sharing books. Each set of classes comprises four weekly sessions and families are given a book, song card and another resource such as a game or craft pack each week. By the end of their four sessions, each family has a tote bag full of books and other resources to support their reading.

Support for families also includes regular messaging between classes suggesting activities to do during the week as well as reminders for the next class. Andreea found the class leader helpful and friendly, and thought the classes were interesting, engaging Sophia well. She comments: "Sophia enjoyed reading stories at the end of the session and the fact that she received the book for us to read again was very helpful."

Andreea really appreciated the opportunity to help bond with her daughter: "Sometimes we are so busy with other things and we forget that the most important thing for them is our time." She also recognises that it can be beneficial to have someone else help parents learn how to support their children, "helping them learn to read and write through play."

Although Andreea would have liked the set of classes to continue over a longer period, she did feel she learned how to talk more about what she and Sophia are reading together, which they do often, and how to ensure Sophia understands the text and improve her comprehension. She says: "I always tried to read the books [we read in class] again with her at home."

Andreea felt the classes were a positive experience, both for her and Sophia, and concludes: "I want to thank you again for the initiative and for all the help provided."

"The most important thing for them is our time."

Andreea, mother



Parent engagement

In 2024-25 we continued our focus on parent engagement with our successful programme of parent talks and workshops. These events took place in our partner schools and online.

We ran a total of 21 talks (18 in 2023-24) which were attended by 282 parents across the school year (185 in 2023-24) - 11 in the autumn term, three in the spring term and seven in the summer term.

We ran nine Books & Biscuits workshops in our partner schools for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. During these workshops parents and children were encouraged to sample and talk about their favourite kinds of biscuits and discuss why they liked or didn't like them. They were then offered a variety of books to look at and then talk about what they liked or didn't like about the books.

These workshops were incredibly well received by both parents and the children who attended.

In the summer term we also trialled two detective workshops where children and their parents had to solve a series of clues and each received a magic spy pen to take home with them. These events were also very popular with great feedback from both parents and children.

Feedback was collected informally at the end of each session. Many parents had lots of questions and the comments were overwhelmingly positive. Parents particularly appreciated fresh ideas about how to encourage their children to read at home.

"Thank you. I have lots of ideas to try at home now. I'm looking forward to trying the foam word cards in the bath."

Parent



Talks and workshops

Events held in 2024-2025	Age group	No. run in year
Supporting your child with reading. Aimed at parents with English as a additional language.	Key Stage 1	1
Supporting your children with reading in Reception and Key Stage 1. Introduction to phonics for parents and supporting children's reading.	Reception and Key Stage 1	7
Books & Biscuits. For parents and children.	Key Stage 1 & 2 (separate events)	9
Family literacy morning. For Early Years staff team at partner school.	Reception & Early Years	1
Developing a love of reading through play. Online talk run for local authority (Wandsworth).	Key Stage 1	1
Detective workshop. For parents and children.	Key Stage 1	2

Author visits

Author visits can provide vital opportunities to engage children and young people with literacy. In 2023, National Literacy Trust research showed that one in five (21.3%) children and young people aged eight to 18 said that they had had an author visit their school, down 5.6% from 2019. Fewer children and young people from schools with a high percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSMs) said that they had had an author visit (16.7%) compared with children at schools with a medium (21.9%) or low percentage of pupils eligible for FSMs (24.7%).

Schools tell us they value author visits, but with numbers of children living in Wandsworth decreasing, many schools do not have a full roll, reducing budgets and creating challenging financial situations. This means schools cannot always afford 'extras' like author visits.

We wanted to excite and inspire children by meeting an author in person as schools report that author visits encourage children who didn't previously enjoy reading to read the author's books and then other books that they may have recommended.

Last year we were awarded a grant by the Julia Rausing Trust specifically for author visits in our partner schools. By bringing authors into schools to meet children and parents we can ensure disadvantaged families are able to access the same experiences and opportunities that more advantaged families can.

"Anjali's visit was brilliant. It was a real joy to open our school to parents and see them engage so enthusiastically with both the visiting author and their children's learning."

Teacher, partner school



How children benefitted

We held ten author visits at all our partner schools throughout the academic year. Most comprised a coffee morning for parents followed by an assembly for the children. Parents had the opportunity to ask questions, as well as purchase books if they wished. Each school was also given two signed copies of the author's book to keep in their school library so every child can borrow a book by the author they met.

Authors included:

- Professor Anjali Goswami (*Dig, Dig Dinosaur*)
- Thiago de Moaraes (*The Myth Atlas, Let Sleeping Gods Lie*)
- Smriti Halls (*Don't Call me Sweet, Rain Before Rainbows*)
- Claire Linney (*The Time Tub Travellers*)
- SF Said (*Tyger, Varjak Paw*)
- Onjali Rauf (*The Boy at the Back of the Class, The Night Bus Hero*)

Over the ten events, 1,398 children and 139 parents met an author in their school. Informal feedback indicated that staff, parents and children thoroughly enjoyed the experience and felt inspired as a result of this visit.

With parents taking part in this memorable experience, they could then talk about it later with their children and share the book together.

After the events, children knew more about what it's like to be an author/illustrator and for some children, this may lead them to do this job themselves one day. Feedback from staff, children and parents showed that they found the experience valuable, interesting and inspiring.

"The workshop went really well - the kids wrote some amazingly imaginative stories! I love the work you're doing with schools, it's so needed and so important!"

Claire Linney, author



“

All of the children I have spoken to told me that having their parents present for this visit made it even more special.

Assistant head, partner school

”



“

It was such a pleasure to meet Smriti. Her books are so important for our children to see themselves and people like them in books.

Parent

”



“

A year one child told me that after meeting Anjali they wished to be a palaeontologist and another told me they loved learning from experts.

Teacher, partner school

”

Summer reading club

We ran our summer reading club for the third year during the summer holidays 2025 at St Michael's Church in Southfields. Over the four 1.5 hour stay and play sessions we engaged with 56 children (28 in 2024) and 30 adults (18 in 2024) from 29 families (17 in 2024). These children attend 17 different schools or nurseries across Wandsworth.

Families were able to access activities suitable for babies up to 12-year-olds that developed social, speaking and listening, reading and creative skills. Each week had a different theme, and finished with a story and singing session. Families were supported by L2L2R staff members and regular reading support volunteers. After the session families could join the free community lunch at St Michael's Church.

It was pleasing to see an increase in uptake from 2024 and many were returning families. We asked adults to fill in a paper feedback form at the end of the sessions (giving support where necessary) and 13 families completed these.

Feedback was very positive with ten families telling us that the sessions helped their children enjoy reading more and all 13 families feeling that the sessions had helped them, as parents, understand more about the types of activities that can be done to promote a love of reading and reading skills. A suggestion for improving future sessions included a longer story and song time.

Families told us they particularly enjoyed the variety of activities, meeting new friends, the interactive nature of the sessions and seeing their children grow in confidence.



How children benefitted

By attending the summer reading club, children and their families were able to strengthen and consolidate their reading skills over the summer break, as well as take advantage of reading volunteer support each week. Once again, families appreciated having a regular summer activity which did not incur a cost.

Everyone who attended was also able to receive the hot lunch provided by St Michael's church for free each week, a real bonus for many parents struggling to feed families in the summer holidays.

“

Thank you so much for having these sessions. They've been really fun, engaging and a boost to see J doing craft activities.

”

“

We can't wait to come again. Thank you!”

”

“

This is my first time here and I really enjoy it. My son is in a peaceful, relaxing environment with a lot of activity. The staff members are very nice and helpful. Thank you so much.

”



Case study

In the summer of 2025, Learn to Love to Read ran its summer reading club for a third year. Run in conjunction with St Michael's Church in Southfields, we held a stay and play session each Wednesday morning in August for children aged 0-11 and their parents and carers.

Reading, craft and play activities were based on a different theme each week, with staff and trained volunteers on hand to support and read with the children and their families. After a story and song time at the end of each session, children were encouraged to choose a lightly used book every week which they could take home and keep. Families could also stay for a hot lunch as part of St Michael's Church community lunch initiative if they wished.

Former L2L2R reading support and summer reading club volunteer, H, attended the sessions with his two children, R (age 4) and J (age 5) both of whom are neurodivergent. He comments: "The summer L2L2R sessions are always extremely welcoming."

He feels that although his children have very different likes and needs, the "welcoming and calming atmosphere" meant both enjoyed their time at the sessions and were fully engaged in all the activities.

H also appreciates the variety of activities on offer and felt that, "there was a perfect balance of child led activities and adult led engagement."

While he thinks the sessions helped the children enjoy reading and books a little more, he particularly enjoyed watching R build the confidence to explore and interact with other children and adults. He also found it interesting to see the process from a parent's point of view, not just as a volunteer as he had in previous years. "It's great - and keep doing what you do best!"

*"A welcoming and
calming atmosphere."
Father of R & J*



Volunteer training

L2L2R trains all its volunteers in how best to support children's reading.

The training session takes place over Zoom and explores how reading is taught in schools today, including explanations and practical exercises to explain the synthetic phonics system. We discuss what each reading session should contain – focusing on a sound or word a child finds difficult, encouraging children to talk about the story they are reading and noting details of the session in the child's reading record, while giving specific praise and encouragement all the way.

We also give important guidance on safeguarding. We run separate sessions for those considering virtual volunteering to cover the technology they will need to use to run the sessions.

When a volunteer starts work in school, our Head of Volunteering or an experienced volunteer is on hand to guide them and introduce them to the children they will be reading with. We offer a practice Zoom session with a member of staff or an experienced online volunteer for those working virtually.

Additional training for volunteers is also provided throughout the year, often at our termly volunteer coffee mornings or online.

"From the very first email exchange, the team at L2L2R has been incredibly welcoming and supportive. I truly appreciate all the guidance, information, and encouragement you've provided."

Volunteer



Feedback from volunteer training sessions is collected using an online feedback form after each session. In the academic year 2024-25 we ran seven volunteer training sessions - three in the autumn term, three in the spring term and one in the summer term - with 30 new volunteers attending. In addition, ad hoc top-up training sessions were run for those wishing to support children online.

Ninety-five percent of attendees who gave feedback felt the training covered everything they needed to know and everyone thought there was enough opportunity to interact during the session, feeling that it was about the right length. All respondents rated the training either 8, 9 or 10/10 with 89% rating it 9 or 10/10.

We ran two online refresher sessions for current volunteers called "Ideas to support blending and fun word games" in November 2024. These were attended by 25 current volunteers.

For the first time we also hosted an online phonics training session run by Little Wandle Letters and Sounds, the reading scheme used by nine out of our ten partner schools. This was offered to current volunteers and was very popular with 33 attendees.

“

[I appreciated] the friendliness of the hosts... [it] made the session welcoming, interesting and enjoyable.

”

“

The training session was well thought out and informative. I felt I could ask questions and be given the knowledge in a way that was easy to digest.

”



Volunteer experience

Our Head of Volunteering looks after all our volunteers and communicates with them regularly to keep them up-to-date with L2L2R's news and with school information, as well as answering volunteers' queries.

This year 97% of respondents to our volunteer satisfaction survey agreed or strongly agreed that they feel supported by our Head of Volunteering and other L2L2R staff. We also run termly social get-togethers where volunteers can meet and exchange ideas and tips, as well as receive extra training. Virtual volunteers (and families) are further supported by our dedicated helpline operating Monday to Thursday during volunteering hours.

We held five coffee mornings and one evening summer party to which all our volunteers were invited. These were held around the borough in Southfields, Tooting, Earlsfield, Battersea and Putney. Volunteers tell us in their feedback that they enjoy the opportunity to meet other volunteers, chat to members of staff and attend any additional training sessions often run during the mornings.

"I have volunteered with L2L2R for ten years. I love being part of a friendly, supportive charity, with the shared goal of improving life opportunities for young people."

Volunteer



How volunteers benefitted

In 2024-2025 we had volunteers working across nine schools in Wandsworth. We collect feedback from our volunteers via an annual online survey at the end of the academic year.



of volunteers agreed that they felt their volunteering made a difference to the children they worked with.



of volunteers felt their work had been fulfilling and satisfying.



felt volunteering had helped them feel part of their local community.



of in-school volunteers felt appreciated and welcomed in the school where they volunteered.



would recommend volunteering with L2L2R to others.

How volunteers benefitted

When volunteers sign up, we ask if possible that they stay for a full academic year to support their children. At the end of the year, we ask volunteers if they would like to stay on into the new year. We were delighted that, when asked in July 2025, 83% of our volunteers indicated they would be continuing to volunteer in the new academic year in 2026 (with a further 14% not able to make a firm decision at that point).

At the end of the academic year 2024-2025, we had 71 trained volunteers working across nine schools in Wandsworth, supporting 202 children. Nearly all felt well supported in roles where they believed they were making a difference, with the majority of volunteers also feeling that their work had been personally fulfilling and satisfying.

"It has been a genuinely enriching experience working with the three children I had the privilege of reading with this year. Seeing their reading skills and confidence grow over time was deeply rewarding."

Volunteer



Case study

Keith has been a volunteer with Learn to Love to Read since 2023. Here he talks about his experience as a volunteer helping young children with their reading and how he feels supported as an L2L2R volunteer.

"After retiring from work, I wanted to participate in some voluntary work that would be supportive of my local community and hopefully, personally rewarding. I had been a volunteer for two years helping Year 6 children in reading and comprehension exercises when COVID abruptly ended that role, and post-pandemic I was looking to get back into supporting children's literacy.

"I wasn't sure what to expect reading with much younger children than I had in the past, but reading with Year 1 and 2 children is an absolute joy, which gets better as the weeks progress and you get to know one another. The phonemes and word blending training from L2L2R I found to be invaluable, and the main thing is to make the sessions fun for the children; not just listening to their reading, but sharing reading with them, letting the child choose a book they want to have read to them, talking about the stories, what they'd do if they were in the story. A child's imagination is boundless.

"It's lovely to follow the improvement in the confidence and fluency of a child's reading, and particularly the expression they put into the text.

"I feel very fortunate that I chanced to find L2L2R through a simple internet search. I was impressed with L2L2R's model of closely partnering with local schools, which means volunteers are welcomed by school staff as part of that partnership. The support volunteers receive by way of initial training and subsequent ad hoc sessions is excellent and the regular social gatherings and events L2L2R arrange for volunteers really builds a sense of community. Those meet-ups are also great opportunities to share and learn from other volunteers' experiences. I'd certainly recommend L2L2R to anyone interested in helping children develop their reading ability."

"It's lovely to follow the improvement in the confidence and fluency of a child's reading, and particularly the expression they put into the text."

Keith, volunteer



Partner schools

in 2024-25 we worked with ten partner schools across Wandsworth, nine of which had trained volunteers reading weekly with children one-to-one, in school and/or online. Our partner schools are spread across the borough - three in Tooting, two in Battersea, four in Southfields and one in Roehampton.

As well as reading volunteers, all schools receive a set of Early Years classes led by L2L2R staff during the year where they can invite nursery children and younger siblings of children attending the school. We also aim to run at least one talk or workshop each term/year which may be for Reception, Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. While talks are aimed at parents, workshops always involve children as well as parents. This year, due to specific funding, we were also able to run an author visit in each partner school.

Our partner schools appreciated the relationships volunteers form with pupils, together with their commitment and caring natures.

Schools felt L2L2R's knowledge of current children's literature, and guidance and policy ensured Early Years classes were effective, while offering a safe space and community for parents. They were impressed at how engaged families had been, coming back again and again, as well as spreading the word to others.

"Readers have developed great relationships with the pupils they work with, for some it is the highlight of their week."

Teacher, partner school



Feedback from our partner schools was gathered through a survey sent at the end of the school year. Representatives from nine partner schools gave feedback.



of partner schools felt the work of L2L2R reading volunteers (both those working in school and virtually) enabled schools to offer one-to-one support that would have been hard to provide otherwise.



of partner schools valued the additional services L2L2R provided for pre-schoolers and parents (Early Years classes, parent talks and workshops).



of partner schools felt L2L2R's work had a positive impact on reading progress in their school.



of partner schools felt L2L2R offered a professional and effective service.



of partner schools felt L2L2R offered good value for money.



of partner schools would recommend L2L2R to others.

Theory of change



Impact

- Children close the attainment gap between themselves and their peers.
- Children are not disadvantaged at secondary school and in future life by having low literacy levels.
- Children develop a lifelong love of reading.
- Parents are more likely to help their children with school work in the future.



Outcomes

- Children show progress in their reading skills.
- Children show increased desire to engage with reading through improved attitude and concentration.
- Children's self-confidence in their reading abilities and enjoyment of reading grows.
- Parents' understanding of the importance of their support grows.
- Parents' confidence in their ability to help their children learn increases.



Outputs

- Volunteers read with children once or twice weekly for 20-25 minutes.
- 71 volunteers.
- 202 children supported in 9 schools.
- Over 4,100 1-to-1 reading sessions run this academic year.
- 255 families attended 26 sets of Early Years literacy classes.
- 282 parents attended 21 talks and workshops.
- 1,398 children and 139 parents attended 10 author visits
- 56 children and 30 adults attended 4 reading sessions during the summer holidays.



Activities

- L2L2R forms partnerships with local primary schools who identify children who are below expected levels for reading.
- L2L2R recruits and trains suitable reading volunteers.
- Volunteers work one-to-one with children for 20-25 minutes each week, either in school or virtually via Zoom.
- Early Years literacy classes are run for children aged 0 to 4 years, referred by partner schools, children's centres, local charities and social care professionals.
- Gift packs containing books and activities are given to families who attend Early Years classes.
- L2L2R runs regular talks and workshops for parents about literacy and reading.
- L2L2R holds summer reading programme sessions for parents and children in August.



Resources & inputs

- In 2025 25% of children left primary school unable to read at the government's required standard.
- 37% of disadvantaged children did not meet the expected standard in reading in Year 6.
- Targeted intervention in Early Years and Key Stage 1 pupils and their parents, is key to helping children who are at risk of not meeting expectations in their reading.

Impact Map



How we measure impact

We collect feedback about all aspects of our work throughout the year. L2L2R measures the outcomes of its one-to-one reading support – both in school and virtual – by asking volunteers to complete an online child information form at the beginning and end of each child's intervention. The form asks specific questions around reading attainment, comprehension, confidence and enthusiasm.

At the start of the year we also ask our partner schools to give us information about the children they refer to us – their current reading level, whether they are below, at or exceeding expected levels, if English is their first language and any other details that might be useful for volunteers. At the end of the year we ask schools to comment on the children's progress.

We also held Pupil Voice sessions in some of our partner schools to find out what the children receiving volunteer support thought about the help they received. L2L2R staff chatted with small groups of children across the year groups who read with a volunteer to obtain informal feedback.

Feedback for our Early Years classes was collected by the class leader at the end of the set of four classes. This was either by the parent or carer completing a paper form themselves or the class leader supporting them to do this. We also used the same approach when collecting feedback after our summer reading programme. We also held a one-off online focus group in the summer term for selected families who attended Early Years classes. We used a Mentimeter survey prior to the event to collect information as a starting point for discussion.

Feedback from families signed up to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library was collected through a Mentimeter survey and individual telephone calls.

Feedback from parent talks and workshops was collected informally at the end of each session by the presenter.

Volunteer training, volunteer satisfaction, partner school and partner organisation feedback is collected via online forms either after each training session or at the end of the year.

Our thanks

We'd like to thank everyone who has supported us in the past and throughout 2024-25, especially those grant-making bodies which have supported us for a number of years.

We are also extremely grateful to the individuals who fund us on a monthly basis. Their unrestricted donations give us the security and flexibility to continue to develop our work.



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Get involved

Find us: @learn2love2read



Learn to Love to Read

Registered charity no. 1175288

www.learn2love2read.org.uk

Watch our film



Donate

If you'd like to make a donation to help us continue to support children's reading in Wandsworth, either as an individual or a local business, please visit www.learn2love2read.org.uk/pages/11-donate

Volunteer

If you're interested in becoming an L2L2R reading volunteer, you can find information and apply online here: www.learn2love2read.org.uk/pages/4-volunteer

Partner with us

If your organisation would like to find out more about how we might work together please visit: www.learn2love2read.org.uk/pages/3-partner-with-us. If you work with disadvantaged families in Wandsworth in any capacity we would love to hear from you!

