



Impact Report

2022 - 2023

learn to

love to

read

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Who we are – our vision

Working to support children's early literacy in Wandsworth

We are delighted to share our latest annual impact report. It is well recognised that improving a child's early literacy has a huge effect on their future life opportunities. We hope this report demonstrates the need for our work, the approach we take to meet that need, and our successes and challenges over the past academic year.

As an organisation we are just approaching our tenth birthday. Every year when I write this introduction, I say the need has never been greater. The really sad thing is that this is still true. In Wandsworth, 27% of Key Stage 1 and 25% of Key Stage 2 children did not reach the expected standard of reading when tested in summer 2023. Hundreds of children are falling short in reading fluency and confidence. The pandemic has had a huge impact on children's education, and a Key Stage 2 Disadvantage Gap Index figure of 3.2 shows that pupils from more difficult backgrounds are still less likely to succeed.

Learn to Love to Read is a local charity that supports children who are finding learning to read challenging or who are at risk of starting school poorly prepared for learning to read. Working in the London borough of Wandsworth since 2014, we work in partnership with primary schools, providing trained volunteer teams to improve reading levels, build confidence and inspire a love of reading. Understanding that early intervention is key, we run parent and toddler classes and work to engage parents in supporting their children's development. This year we have expanded the range of parent talks and workshops delivered to parents at our partner schools and have also increased the range of venues and the areas of Wandsworth where our early literacy classes are delivered.

We continue to be guided by our vision, 'every child a reader'. We use our five strategic pillars to target and refine what we do: embedded in the local community; serving the whole family; providing continuity of support; targeting the greatest need; and committed to quality delivery and measuring impact. During this academic year we had a consistent staff team, working together to deliver high quality services that make a real difference.



We would love you to join us in our mission to see 'every child a reader'. Perhaps you could become a reading volunteer if you live locally? Or perhaps you could offer vital financial support as a regular monthly donor, to allow us to budget and plan confidently for growth? If you are inspired by what you read here, please do get in touch with our Head of Operations, Matilda Tuke, matilda@l2l2r.org.

TERESA HARRIS
Founder, Learn to Love to Read

The need

Government statistics for 2022–23 show that while the percentage of children reaching the expected standard nationally in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 rose slightly to 68% (from 67% in 2021–22), the number of pupils meeting the expected standard of reading at the end of Key Stage 2 fell to 73% (from 75% in 2021–22). Pupils in Key Stage 2 experienced significant disruption to their learning during the pandemic, particularly at the end of Year 3 and in Year 4.

In Wandsworth, 73% of pupils met the expected standard in reading in Key Stage 1, above the national figure. The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 was also higher than the national figure at 75%, but showed a considerable drop from 2021–22 where the figure was 81%.

The government's Disadvantage Gap Index for children in Key Stage 2 fell from 3.23 in 2022 to 3.2 in 2023. However a comparison to the figure of 2.91 in 2019 demonstrates how the pandemic is still impacting disadvantaged pupils across the country.

National Literacy Trust research shows a 26% decrease in the number of children and young people aged 8–18 who read daily in their free time since 2005 (38% in 2005 vs. 28% in 2023), with only just over half reporting that they had been encouraged to read by their parents/carers and only one in five reporting they had read with their family.

Just two in five reported that they had enjoyed reading in their free time, the lowest level since the National Literacy Trust first asked the question in 2005.

The National Literacy Trust emphasises the continued need for the work of organisations like Learn to Love to Read with its comment:

“

Our previous reports cautioned that increasingly visible downward trends in reading enjoyment and frequency should be addressed urgently. Declining reading enjoyment across a growing number of children and young people must act as a wake-up call for all who support children and young people's reading for pleasure and the many benefits it can bring.

”

The cost-of-living crisis also continues to affect the families we work with. Research from the Centre of Literacy in Primary Education shows that book ownership increases parental engagement, yet according to the National Literacy Trust, one in three parents who are struggling financially as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, are buying fewer books for their children.

Our goals for 2022-23

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

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

6

Help children learn to love to read.

How we strive to meet our 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 face-to-face and online classes for 0 to 4 year olds, focusing on sounds, songs and stories, 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 talks and workshops.

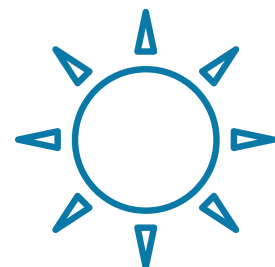


Training and supporting volunteers

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

Summer programmes

We offer reading-based play sessions for parents to enjoy with their children during the summer holidays.



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.
- 70 volunteers.
- 152 children supported in 8 schools.
- Nearly 3,000 1-to-1 reading sessions run this academic year.
- 193 families attended 24 sets of Early Years literacy classes.
- 321 parents attended 33 talks and workshops.
- 13 families attended 5 summer reading sessions over 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 read with children weekly for 20–25 minutes, 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 around literacy and reading.
- L2L2R holds summer reading programme sessions for parents and children in August.



Resources & inputs

- Nationally, in 2023 27% of children left primary school unable to read at the government's required standard.
- 32% of children finishing Key Stage 1 did not meet the expected levels in reading.
- Only 2 in 5 children aged 8 to 18 years say they enjoy reading.
- 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.

Theory of change



Changes and challenges in 2022-23

This year we were able to carry out the vast majority of our work face-to-face and our online offering was much reduced. However, we still continued to run two online sets of Early Years classes each term (out of a total of eight) for families who found it difficult to attend at a venue. We also continued to support our 11 volunteers who prefer to work virtually with children offering one-to-one reading support. The vast majority of new volunteers recruited this year have preferred to work face-to-face with children in our partner schools.

This year also saw a greatly increased emphasis on parental engagement for L2L2R. Always part of the charity's ethos, reaching parents directly became more difficult during school closures and in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic when schools were naturally disinclined to have too many visitors on site. This year we developed a strong programme of parental talks and workshops which were held both in our partner schools and other venues across the borough, including children's centres. These ranged in subject from Word Game Workshops aimed at parents of reluctant Key Stage 1 readers to talks on how to keep Key Stage 2 children engaged with reading.

A second focus for the year was forging relationships with new venues for our Early Years classes. Previously our Early Years classes had either been held in our partner schools or online. This year, out of the 24 sets of classes we ran, ten were run in new venues – mainly children's centres and nurseries.

We were keen to introduce our work in Battersea, an area of Wandsworth in which we had not had a presence in the past. We were able to carry out this work due to a small legacy grant from the Battersea Society. We started by building relationships with suitable venues in which to hold our Early Years classes and commenced these in the autumn term.

We ran a total of eight Early Years classes in Battersea in various venues throughout the academic year. Specific funding also allowed us to give 19 Battersea families access to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. This is a book gifting project which sends children of signed up families one book per month up until the age of five. Feedback has been positive and we hope to be able to offer this more widely to our families in the future should funding allow. Towards the end of the academic year, we also took on our first partner school in Battersea.

You can read more about all these innovations later in the report.

To broaden the reach of our Early Years classes, we also wanted to build relationships with social care professionals such as health visitors and speech and language therapists who could then refer suitable children to our services. This has been a slow process as these professionals have high workloads, and we have more work to do to build our profile within the sector and form these connections.

2022-23 highlights

One-to-one reading support

- 152 children supported across eight partner schools in Wandsworth, both face-to-face and virtually.
- Teachers reported that nearly a quarter of children receiving one-to-one reading support from an L2L2R reading volunteer showed an improvement over all four of the measured areas (reading ability, comprehension skills, enjoyment and self-confidence).
- 46% of children were reading at or above their expected age-related levels at the end of the academic year compared to 4% at the start of the year.
- Volunteer feedback showed nearly twice the number of children scoring 5/6 or 6/6 for reading skills and confidence at the end of the year compared to the start of the year.
- Volunteers reported four times the amount of children reading with expression at the end of the year compared to the start of the year.

Parental engagement

- 33 events attended by 321 parents.
- All attendees who provided feedback at the end of events rated them 5/5.

Early Years

- 96 Early Years classes delivered in 2022-23, across 24 sets of classes.
- 193 families engaged with the sessions, with 80% of families attending half or more of their set of four classes.
- 90% of parents who provided feedback rated the class 5/5 for usefulness with 100% rating them 4/5 or 5/5.
- 92% of parents who provided feedback would recommend the classes to other parents.
- 19 children aged 0-5 receiving monthly books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.



2022-23 highlights

Volunteering

- 7 volunteer training sessions run for 31 new volunteers in 2022-23.
- 70 volunteers supporting children in school and virtually.
- 97% of volunteers who gave feedback felt they had been well supported in their volunteering role by L2L2R.
- 94% of volunteers who gave feedback felt their volunteering had made a real difference to the children they worked with.

Summer reading programme

- Read and Feed: 5 summer reading sessions held in August 2023.
- 13 families and 26 children attended.
- Nearly 90% of parents and carers who provided feedback felt the sessions had helped them understand more about the types of activities they could do to promote a love of reading and reading skills with their children.



How we measure our impact

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 the academic year. The form asks specific questions around reading attainment, comprehension, confidence, enthusiasm and parental engagement (for children reading virtually). We were able to collect start and end-of-year data from volunteers for the majority of our children, although not for children who left school part way through the academic year.

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. Six out of our eight partner schools gave end-of-year feedback this year.



From past experience we have learned that collecting feedback for our Early Years classes via an online form sent after the classes is not particularly successful as parents might forget or not feel confident about completing online forms independently. Therefore this year, feedback 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. 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.

“

[L2L2R] are flexible and approachable. They are happy to discuss new ideas and they support their volunteers well.
- **SENCO, partner school**

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One-to-one reading support



What we do

Our volunteers work with their allocated children once a week, for 20–25 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 form 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.

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 a book matched to their level of reading ability. The volunteer will encourage the child to talk about the book, for example, what happened in the story, how it made the child feel, what specific words mean. Afterwards, the volunteer will work on a particular sound or word the child may have found difficult. At the end of the session the volunteer may 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. Volunteers follow the same framework, whether reading face-to-face with children in school, or virtually over Zoom.

One-to-one reading support

4x

the number of children on their way to becoming fluent readers at the end of the year compared to the start of the year

46%

of supported children reading at or above age related expectations by the end of the year compared to 4% at the start of the year

4x

the number of children scoring top marks for reading with expression at the end of the year compared to the start of the year

2x

the number of children approaching reading with confidence at the end of the year compared to the start of the year

As well as improving reading levels, our 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 even when unsuccessful are all part of every session.

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. This year, many of our volunteers attended extra training offered in person and online which introduced a variety of word games volunteers could play with their children to support their reading.

Our virtual volunteering programme started as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we've continued it as it means we are able to involve a wider range of volunteers – including those who are working full time – and it has enabled us to engage directly with the parents of children we support as we are working with families in their own home. Families are further supported through our virtual helpline which is open from 4–6pm.

Facts and figures

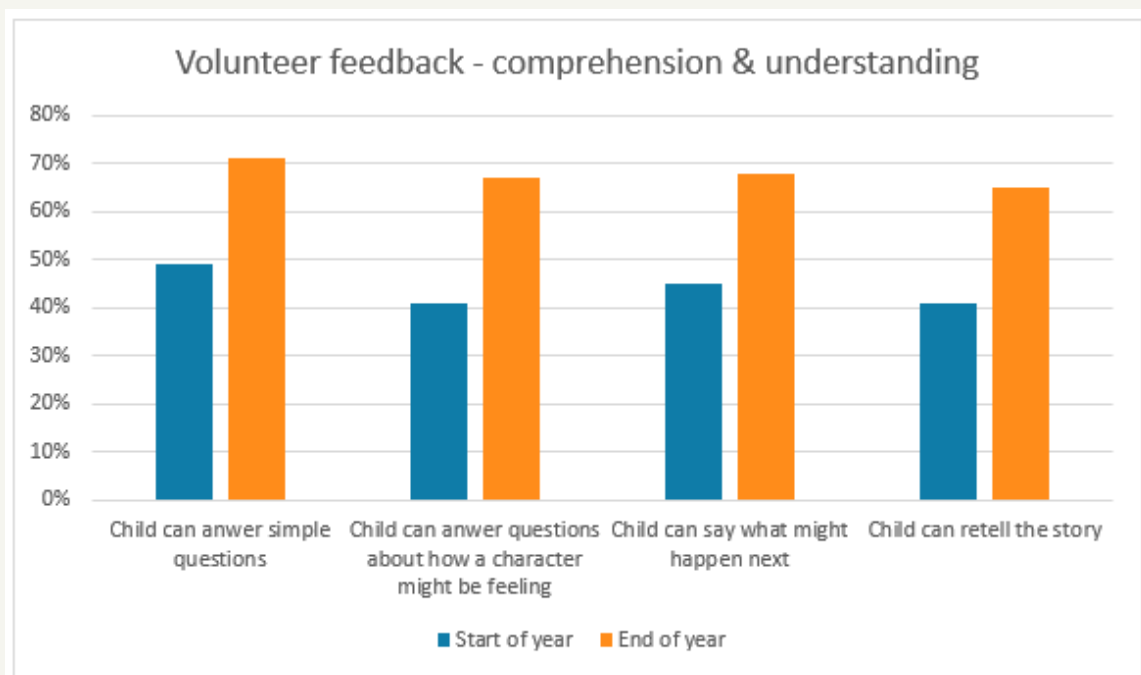
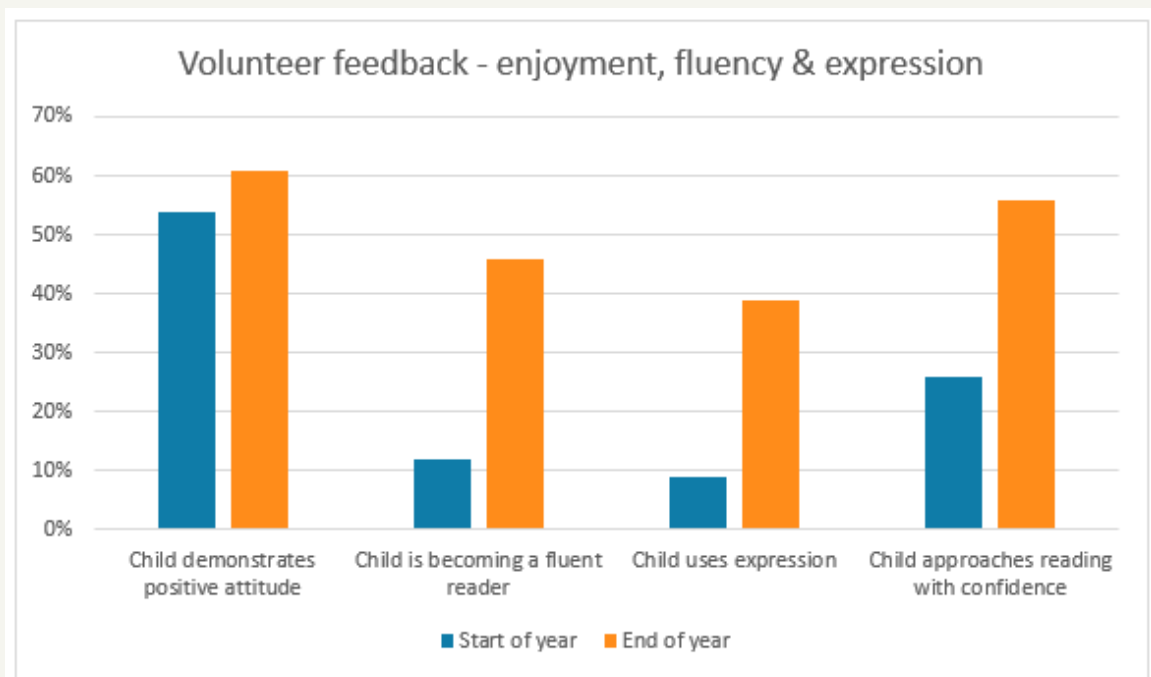
In the academic year 2022–23, 70 volunteers supported 152 children with their reading across eight partner schools – approximately 137 through face-to-face support in school and 15 with virtual reading sessions over Zoom. This is a slight reduction compared to the number of children supported in 2021–22 (170) because this year we were able to provide more children with support from two volunteers each week where numbers allowed. Forty per cent of children supported by volunteers were in Year 1, 35% in Year 2, 24% in Year 3 and 1% in Year 4.

Our volunteers ran nearly 3,000 reading sessions. We have sought feedback about children's progress from both teachers and volunteers, as well as informal feedback from the families of children read with virtually.

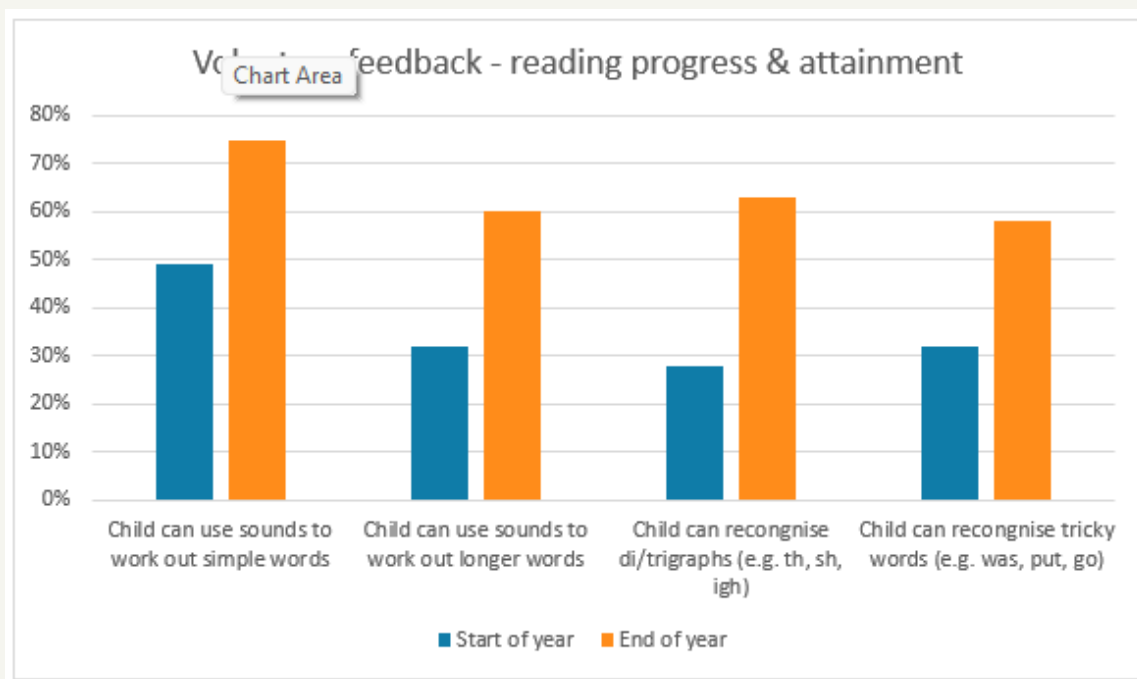
One-to-one reading support

Feedback from volunteers

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



One-to-one reading support



Outcomes

Teachers told us that nearly a quarter of children receiving one-to-one reading support from an L2L2R reading volunteer showed an improvement over all four of the measured areas (reading ability, comprehension skills, enjoyment and self-confidence) and 46% of children were now reading at or above their expected age-related levels, an enormous achievement considering that 96% of children referred to L2L2R started the year reading below their age-related expectations.

These figures were reflected in our volunteers' feedback which showed some impressive improvements, particularly around reading with expression where by

the end of the year 39% of children were scoring 5/6 or 6/6 compared to just 9% at the start of the year.

Volunteers also felt by the end of the year 46% of the children they read with were on their way to becoming fluent readers, compared with just 12% at the start of the year.

We also asked our volunteers if they felt that children came out of class for their reading session with a school reading book of the appropriate level for their reading ability. At the start of the year, volunteers felt only 59% of children's books were of the right level, but this had risen to a healthier 73%.

One-to-one reading support: what parents and volunteers say

"Dedication of the volunteers has fostered a love for reading even in reluctant readers."

Teacher, partner school

"We were happy with the reading journey with Volunteer M and feel J improved a lot. Now she is much more fluent and confident."
Parent of child supported virtually

"Volunteer C is the perfect match for E, he enjoyed every reading session with her, all the time looking forward for it. Apart from reading also they had really nice discussion about different topics which contributed to a friendly relationship. Regarding Volunteer C, I only have words of praise - punctual, reliable, kind, professional, friendly, full of positivity."

Parent of child supported virtually

"I really saw her bloom this year, her confidence grew, her voice was louder when reading, she was more prepared to offer answers, suggest what was going on in the text, her pace speeded up and she started to use expression in the last term."

Volunteer

"The girls and I are very grateful for the help we received from Volunteer P. A and M have improved so tremendously in their reading. If I [was] to rate Volunteer P, I will say 100% and thank you so much ... for your time and effort you put into the girls. We highly appreciate your kindness and support."

Parent of child supported virtually

"I really saw a big change in C's approach to reading. At the beginning of the year he was struggling to enunciate sounds out loud and focus on reading. He is now a more confident reader and his lovely personality has come through. He has become more chatty about the images in the books and seems more interested in the story."

Volunteer

"E has really grown in confidence with her reading and is much more engaged with the sessions than at the start."

Volunteer

"L is a curious reader, she reads many books in different languages in parallel. Her progress is impressive. It was a pure joy to read with her."

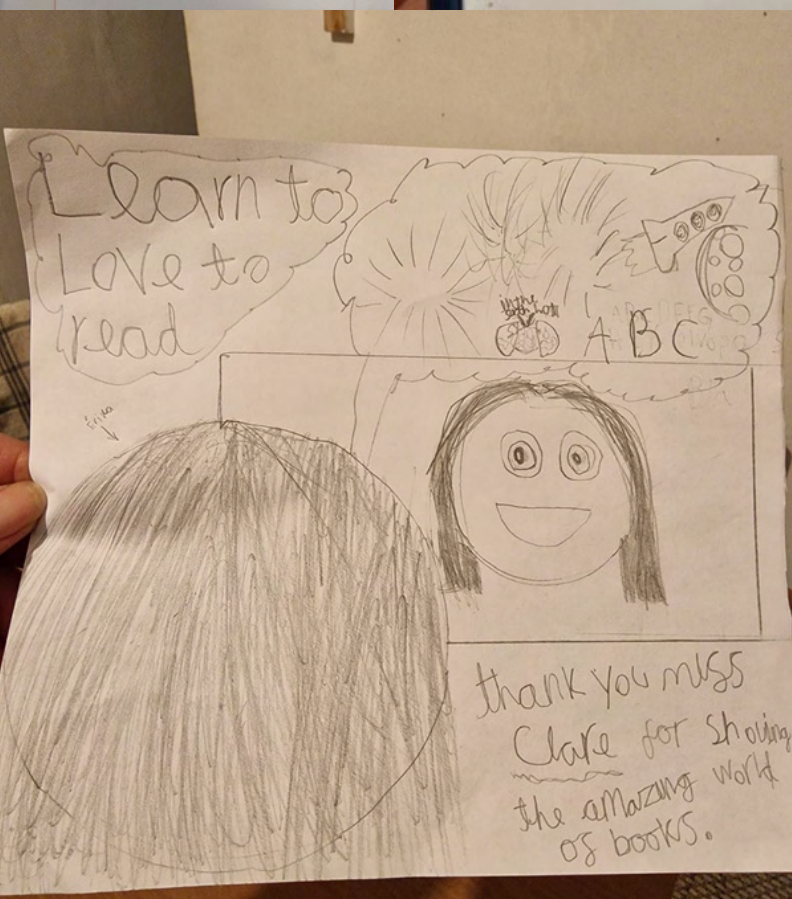
Volunteer

One-to-one reading support: what children say



✓ I like reading
I Love reading
✓ I really love
✓ Reading
Rho:yo

I have enjoyed reading with L2L2 Read
because
it is fun
We have fun
together



I Love
reading.
Mahreen
buns in

Case study

“Small steps lead to covering a large distance.”



Layla is in Year 4 and has been supported virtually since March 2023 by long standing L2L2R volunteer, Elisa.

Layla is tri-lingual as her mother is from Thailand and her father from England, so as well as English, she speaks Thai and Lao. Layla's parents were initially contacted by her school to see if they would like some extra reading support for Layla.

Layla's father, Keelan, felt as busy working parents they didn't always have enough time to devote to reading with Layla, and he comments: "It sounded to me the perfect way to build her understanding and confidence with reading."

Keelan feels that although Layla always enjoyed stories, through sharing books with volunteer Elisa she has become richer in her reading choices and is pulling ahead of her peers with her reading: "She has started acquiring a library. Books she really likes are kept with great pride in her belongings."

After two to three sessions, Keelan started noticing an improvement in Layla's reading which has had an immediate impact on her school work in general. Whereas before, she might have been reluctant to tackle homework, he found her love of stories and her comprehension had improved in 'leaps and bounds.' She started to enjoy both telling and writing stories, making her own illustrated mini booklets. Keelan says: "A couple of months ago, without any involvement [from me], she managed to finish her work; she's a self-starter now. A very big step for us."

He felt Layla would have continued to struggle and fall behind her peers without the support and that it's made a significant difference in her reading journey. He's been surprised by the speed of improvement too. "She can read, understand and listen more now. [I'm] really keen to see the green shoots of ownership and a self-sufficiency of reading, rather than her coming to me saying: 'Dad, please explain this to me - I don't understand.'"

Crucially, through observing Layla's sessions with Elisa, Keelan recognised that the more he could do with Layla, the more it would benefit her, and the more fun her sessions were, the more she engaged: "Elisa's sessions are like snowballs, it picks up more and more mass on its way... We are so fortunate with Elisa, her patience and just the way she does it."

So would Keelan recommend Learn to Love to Read's sessions to other parents?

"I would overwhelmingly and passionately recommend Learn to Love to Read ... I always end up talking about Learn to Love to Read with my friends and office colleagues when we discuss children, and the brilliant work you do."

Early Years



What we do

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 learning so they are ready to learn to read when they start school. Through experiencing sounds, songs and stories, children improve their communication skills, expand their vocabulary and increase their interest in sharing books.

Traditionally our classes have been offered to two to four year-olds. However in the summer term L2L2R decided to extend this offer and begin offering new classes to zero to two year-olds. A trial set of adapted classes was run in collaboration with Home-Start Wandsworth at the Battersea Arts Centre. This trial was successful and L2L2R is continuing to offer these classes throughout the 2023–24 academic year.

In the academic year 2022–23, L2L2R ran 24 sets of Early Years classes, 19 sets in person and five online. Each set of classes comprises four weekly sessions which last for 30–45 minutes, translating into 96 individual classes, 76 of which were in person and 20 online. Additional staff capacity meant that L2L2R was able to increase the number of classes run this year significantly (13 sets in 2021–22).

Five set of classes were run online with our partner charities CARAS and Home-Start Wandsworth, as well as sets of classes open to our whole community. Although the appetite for online classes has generally shrunk post pandemic, our charity partners told us that some families greatly value this format as they can find the pressure to be at a venue at a set time on a particular day very difficult. CARAS, though based in Wandsworth, supports refugees who may be housed in hotels outside the borough and online classes make it much easier for their beneficiaries to attend regularly.

Many of our face-to-face classes were held in our partner schools, but this year we also expanded our reach to include children's centres and nurseries across Wandsworth.

Early Years

Two hundred and forty-three families signed up to classes across the year, with 193 families (225 children) attending at least one class out of four. This means that 21% of families who signed up did not attend any class. Part of our feedback strategy for 2023–24 is to investigate the barriers preventing families who sign up from attending. We also plan to call families before the classes start to find out if personal contact will encourage those who might decide not to attend otherwise.

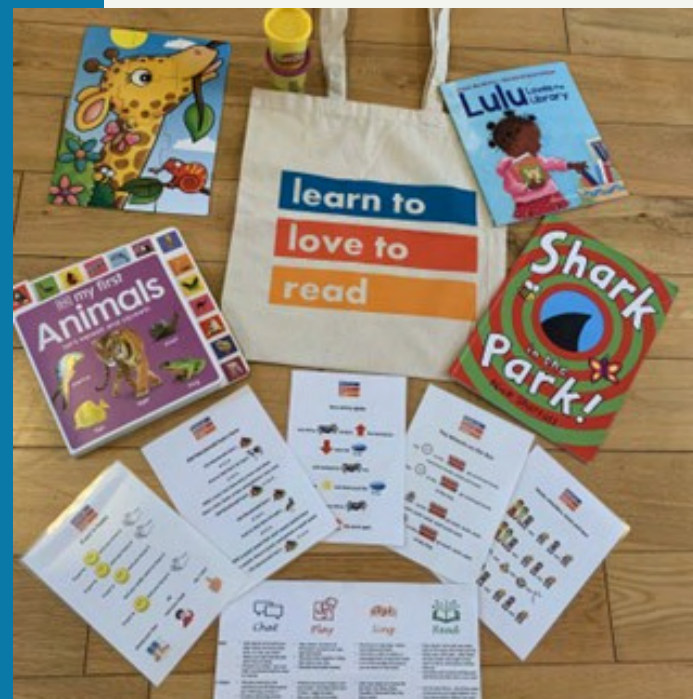
We were encouraged to discover, however, that 80% of families attended two or more classes out of the four, with 61% attending three or four classes.

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 new 0–2 classes, contents included age-appropriate toys and gifts such as stacking cups and peekaboo scarves, as well as books and song cards. Attendees of online classes received a similar pack through the post once they attended the first class.

Support for families also included regular messaging between classes, suggesting activities to do during the week as well as reminding about subsequent classes.

There is overwhelming evidence that children who are read to do better across a wide range of outcomes. Children from low-income families who do well across the curriculum at the end of primary school are twice as likely to have been read to early on. Reading to young children builds bonds and creates family rituals. It helps relationships form and supports the development of the brain and language skills from as early as two weeks of age.

Reading Together, Book Trust, Jan 2024



Early Years

Week	Sample messages sent to parents attending Early Years classes
Evening before class	Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow at 9:00am at [venue], love from Learn to Love to Read.
Week 1 After class	Thank you for joining us this week. Try to sing, chat, play and read with your child as often as you can so they start school ready to read. This week we read 'We Love Dinosaurs.' If your child likes dinosaurs you may enjoy listening to and learning more dinosaur songs with them: Dinosaur songs . Perhaps you could try and find more books about dinosaurs in your local library?
During week	Sharing stories and chatting about them together helps children learn new words. Be guided by the pages your child is interested in – don't worry about finishing a book or story. This week we read 'Maisy Goes to the Library'. Here are some more fun Maisy games and activities for your child to enjoy: Maisy games . There are lots of other Maisy books to enjoy – why not try looking for one at your local library?
Week 2 After class	This week we have been reading 'Cyril and Pat' by Emily Gravett. Here are some videos of Emily reading her book and showing you how she drew the illustrations. Emily reads Cyril and Pat , Emily draws Cyril and Pat (part 1) , Emily draws Cyril and Pat (part 2) .
During week	We hope you have had fun looking at your books together so far. Did you know that you can borrow up to 50 books from your local library for free? Enter your postcode here to find details of your nearest library. Click here for some books you could look for in the library but remember to let your child choose and go with what they are interested in: recommended books for Nursery-aged children
Week 3 After class	Playing with your child is one of the best ways to help them learn new skills. This week we played a memory game to develop your child's attention and observation. Here's a link to more tips to support your child's speech and language, including a memory game featuring household objects: NHS Start4Life
During week	Don't forget that chatting and playing with your child are really important – they help your child develop language and communication skills. Try to tell your child what you are doing whilst you are playing with them or whilst you are doing things at home or out and about. They learn so much from listening to you talking. Here are some ideas of how to use a trip to the park to develop your child's vocabulary: A trip to the park - BBC Tiny Happy People
Week 4 After class	Thank you for joining our classes this term. Try to sing, chat, play and read with your child every day. We hope you enjoyed the classes. We run our Early Years classes at schools, nurseries and children's centres across Wandsworth so keep an eye out for more classes on our website. We also deliver talks and events for parents in schools so please come along and see us again soon. www.learn2love2read.org.uk

Early Years

Book gifting and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

During 2022-23, we were fortunate to be awarded a legacy grant from The Battersea Society which allowed us to launch our work in this area of Wandsworth. In addition to the Early Years classes we ran in Battersea, we were also able to use this money to sign up 19 Battersea families to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

This is an international book-gifting programme that posts free, high-quality books each month to children from birth to age five, no matter their family's income. Though informal feedback, families have told us how much it means to their children to receive their very own book in the post each month. We very much hope to expand the programme to benefit even more of the children we support in the borough.



"The books are amazing, and I've been really impressed by the diversity, too. She's engaging with reading much more - she's not reading words yet, but she picks up books and pretends to read. We chat about the pictures. She enjoys books as much as toys now, and I can't wait for her to start school so that she can read even more."

Parent

"She's always excited to receive her new book each month, and it's lovely that it comes addressed to her. When a new one arrives, she wants to read it at bedtime that night."

Parent



Early Years

Focus group

In the summer term we also held our first Early Years focus group, where a small number of parents who had attended at least one set of classes were invited to join an online meeting where we put forward various topics for discussion. It was tremendously useful to hear what parents and children enjoyed most about the classes, whether they found the messaging between and after classes useful, how they heard about the classes, and how else we could support their children's reading journey in the future.

Parents had appreciated the ease of the booking process and the fact there was a responsive member of staff to answer calls or messages. They enjoyed the interactive nature of the classes and found the gift bag contents of books and games useful at home. Messaging between classes – with ideas of activities to do with their child, such as links to BBC's Tiny Happy People, an online book site and information about activities and shows in the local area – also proved popular.

As parents, we all want to support our children's learning but these sessions really helped me learn how to put the time in, to find time to play and read with my daughter at home.

Focus group attendee



Early Years

92%

of parents surveyed after attending the classes said they would recommend the sessions to other families

83%

of parents surveyed understood the importance of chatting, playing, singing and reading with their child in developing early literacy skills

90%

of parents surveyed rated the class 5/5, with 100% rating them 4/5 or 5/5

69%

of parents surveyed felt more confident in supporting their child's learning at home

Facts and figures

Feedback for 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, or via a telephone call for online classes.

We asked parents to rate how useful they found the classes and 90% of those who responded rated the classes 5/5, with 100% giving a rating of 4/5 or 5/5.

Following the sessions, 83% of parents felt they understood the importance of chatting, playing, singing and reading with their child in developing early literacy skills and 69% reported they felt more confident supporting their child's learning at home. Nearly all parents said they found the books to be the most useful items in their gift packs, and nearly two thirds of parents reported they had spent more time looking at books since attending the classes. Ninety-two per cent of parents who responded to the survey said they would recommend the sessions to other families.

Outcomes

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.

Early Years classes: what parents say



"Classes were really good and very organised. S enjoyed them a lot and looked forward to them every week."



"The classes are great! I've learnt many ways to incorporate playing, singing, chatting and reading with my children into our everyday lives, without it feeling forced or boring. I learnt something new after every session. Thank you!"

"My son and I enjoyed the online classes very much. You managed to capture my son's attention for most of the time which can be tricky sometimes. It was a very enjoyable and useful activity to do at home!"

"S really enjoys these classes and looks forward to them every week. She cries every time the session ends and we have to leave the meeting on Zoom. She loves singing and has developed a love for reading."



Case study

“Thank you for giving me the confidence to sit and read with my daughter.”



We spoke to a group of parents who attended two sets of Early Years classes at one of our partner schools. Here's what they had to say about the sessions:

Early Years classes have been running at West Hill Primary School for families with children in Nursery and Reception. After initially having a block of four sessions, these families were offered the chance to attend a second set of four sessions, so they had eight sessions in total. Several of the families commented on this, with the extended time helping them and their children really engage in the classes. The parents in the group came from a range of backgrounds and between them spoke English, Arabic, Somali, Urdu and Dutch.

Parents responses about the sessions were really positive with many saying how wonderful the books were: “We couldn’t believe the quality of the books that we were given each week.”

Several parents noticed the confidence of their child grow over the sessions: “My son is so much more confident now than we when we started coming. He never spoke in the class but now he speaks and sings every week.”

The classes have had a positive impact on parents reading with their children at home, both in terms of frequency and confidence. One parent commented: “We read the books that you gave us every night still.” And another said: “Thank you Learn to Love to Read for giving me the confidence to sit and read with my daughter. It is precious time together.”

The parents all would recommend the sessions and commented: “Please come back every week, we don’t want this to end!”

Volunteers



What we do: 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 also 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.

Facts, figures and outcomes

Feedback from volunteer training sessions is collected using an online feedback form after each session. In the academic year 2022-23 we ran seven volunteer training sessions covering both in-school and virtual volunteering – three in the autumn term, three in the spring term and one in the summer term – with 31 new volunteers attending. In addition, two sessions for virtual volunteers were run in June.

Volunteers

In response to volunteer feedback in the previous academic year, our Head of Family Programmes also ran two training workshops for volunteers entitled 'Word Game Workshop: engaging reluctant readers'. This focused specifically on easy games and activities volunteers could enjoy with children who were finding it hard to concentrate during their reading sessions. One session was run in person in our December 2022 volunteer coffee morning and one online in February 2023, with a total of 31 attendees. Informal feedback was extremely positive.

Out of those volunteers who completed feedback about the initial volunteer training session, all thought that there was enough opportunity to interact during the session and that it was about the right length. Ninety-four per cent felt the training covered everything they needed to know, and 100% rated the training 8, 9 or 10/10, with 90% rating it 9 or 10/10.

"The training session contained everything needed for the role – well-structured and organised."

"[I enjoyed] being able to interact with the other volunteers and it was a thorough presentation with plenty of time to ask any follow-up questions."

"I found it interactive, and liked how I learned a lot without feeling like it was an overload of information."

"It gave me more ideas on how to approach a struggling child and to keep encouraging to help the child love reading."

Volunteers

94%

of volunteers surveyed felt volunteering made a difference to the children they worked with

97%

of volunteers surveyed felt well supported by L2L2R staff

86%

of volunteers surveyed agreed their work had been fulfilling and satisfying

99%

of volunteers surveyed would recommend volunteering with L2L2R to others

What we do: Looking after our volunteers

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 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.

Facts and figures

In September 2022 we had volunteers working across eight schools in Wandsworth. We collect feedback from our volunteers via an annual online survey at the end of the academic year.

Ninety-four per cent of volunteers who responded felt that their volunteering made a difference to the children they worked with, with the vast majority (86%) agreeing that their work had been fulfilling and satisfying. Over two thirds felt that volunteering had helped them feel part of their local community and 99% would recommend volunteering with L2L2R to others.

When volunteers sign up, we ask if possible that they stay for a full academic year to support their children. While most do, there is inevitably some change, particularly at the end of each year. We were delighted therefore that when asked in July 2023, over three-quarters of our volunteers indicated they would be continuing to volunteer in the new academic year (with a further 16% not able to make a firm decision at that point).

Volunteers

Outcomes

In 2022-23, 70 trained volunteers worked across eight schools in Wandsworth, supporting 152 children. Nearly all felt well supported in roles where they believed they were making a difference, with the majority of volunteers continuing to offer ongoing support into the next academic year.



What volunteers say about L2L2R and the children they work with

"I enjoy seeing the progress in a child's reading. It feels extremely rewarding and it feels like I am doing something good in my community and helping a child's future schooling and progress."

"The support and staff development from L2L2R has been excellent and I have appreciated the opportunity to meet with other volunteers."

"Helping children learn to read brought me a personal satisfaction. Witnessing their progress and growth was truly heart warming and inspiring. What I particularly enjoyed was the connection I formed with the children. Seeing their excitement when they grasped new concepts or read a story was very fulfilling. The joy in their eyes made each moment of volunteering worthwhile."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed being able to give something back to my community and to help a few children increase their joy of reading. When I started with L2L2R this year I was initially nervous that I might do or say something wrong, but the children are so lovely and I can see that as each week goes by, they feel more comfortable with me and are happy, enthusiastic and excited to come out of their classrooms and sit and read to me. It has been a joy seeing them improve each week. I have loved every minute!"

"The school community have been very welcoming and L2L2R are obviously well-regarded. Everything has been extremely well-organised by L2L2R and communication is good."



"One of the things I most enjoy about delivering virtual reading support is the opportunity to engage with the whole family, including the reader's parents and siblings."

Case study



"I wanted to make a difference."

Long standing volunteer, Alan, reflects that he might not be able to change the world, but he can make things a little better.

Shortly after retiring as a police officer five years ago, Alan saw a poster about volunteering for Learn to Love to Read in his local library. Although his sport was keeping him busy, he was keen to do something a little different and give back to his local community. He's an enthusiastic adult reader so thought this might be the perfect opportunity. "Being in the police, you're always trying to help people, often vulnerable people and I wanted to continue to do this," he says. "I wanted to try to make a difference."

When Alan came along to the volunteer training session he soon noticed he was the only man in the room! He wasn't overly surprised but comments, "I have a son of my own and was always told that my reading to him added a different perspective, so I feel it's important for young boys to have male role model in their life." Given that over 80% of primary school teachers are female and a child may never experience a male teacher in their primary years, Learn to Love to Read's male volunteers can have an important role to play, even outside their main purpose of supporting children's reading.

Alan was apprehensive before starting to volunteer but soon realised that it's a learning curve and working out what works best for each individual child is key to success. The impact – and reward – can be huge:

"The children gain confidence. You're a stranger to them at the start. During COVID I read with a girl over Zoom. She was so shy and it took a long time to get her going, even with her mum by her side. As time went on, however, she became more confident and was a really good reader by the end. Her mum told me how grateful she was for the reading sessions, and how she had also seen her daughter's confidence grow –so much so that she would actually talk about how she was looking forward to the sessions each week."

So what does he feel is the best part of being a volunteer? "The satisfaction you get from it – I feel saintly after each session! But it's just a few hours out of one day a week." He loves seeing how the children develop. One of his children started this school year so shy he could hardly speak, but Alan happily reports that now, not only does he not stop talking, he's also really interested in what he's reading.

Case study

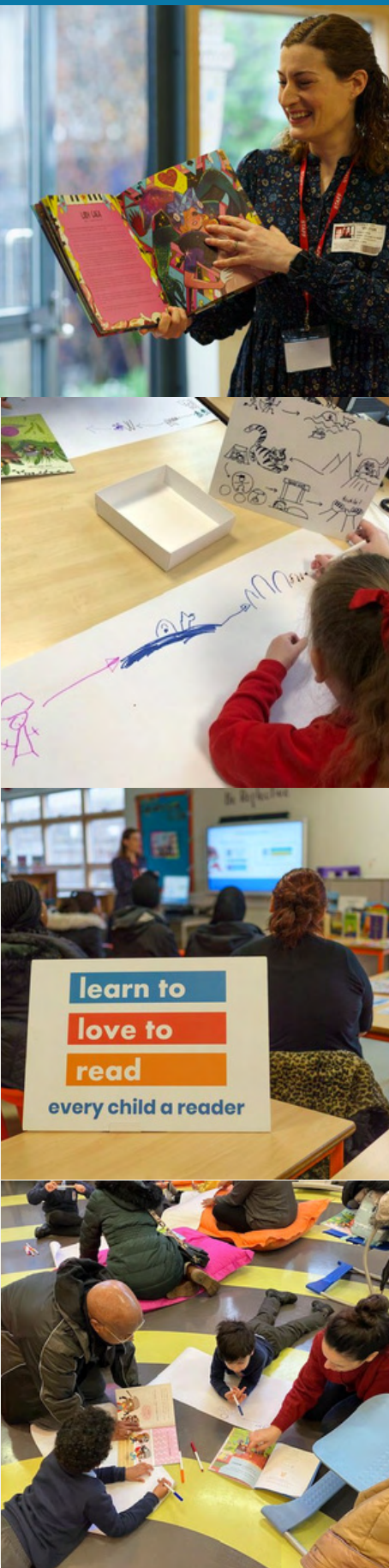
As a Year 3 pupil, a huge amount of this child's school career will have been disrupted by COVID and it's not hard to see the effects. As well as helping him with his reading, Alan's support is no doubt improving his social and conversation skills which may have been impacted by the school closures. "That one-to-one time is so important," he reflects.

Alan comes along to Learn to Love to Read's volunteer coffee mornings when he can and found Head of Family Programmes, Tara Coffin's recent Word Games workshop inspiring! "The training is useful and you need to know the basics, but different children need a different approach so you learn on the job too. Often I'll write down a sound or word we've worked on in the session and encourage the children to look at it during the week. They are really pleased with themselves when they remember it the next week."

Does he recommend volunteering with Learn to Love to Read? "Do it – it's great. You get a great sense of self-worth and it's doesn't take up a huge amount of time. We often don't fully understand how being disadvantaged can affect a child's life and it's so important we help where we can. I can't change the world, but I can make things a little better."



Engaging parents: talks and workshops



What we do

Building our engagement with parents was a main focus for L2L2R in the academic year 2022-23. Previously our main interaction with parents of the children we support has been through our Early Years classes (attended by both children and their parents) and through our volunteers who support children's reading virtually. This year we increased our focus in this area by running a series of parent talks, workshops and events in our partner schools, other Wandsworth schools, children's centres and online. They were given by our Head of Family Programmes, a qualified teacher.

Facts and figures

We ran a total of 33 events, five in the autumn term, 13 in the spring term and 15 in the summer term. They were attended by a total of 321 parents, 30 of whom were fathers and one of whom was a grandfather. Quick and simple feedback was taken by asking parents to put a sticker on a chart. All attendees rated the talks and workshops 5/5.

Outcomes

Informal feedback gathered at the events was overwhelmingly positive, with many parents staying afterwards to ask questions and commenting on how useful they had found the sessions. Many felt the talks gave them a wealth of ideas on how to support their child's reading and appreciated the games suggested in the Word Games Workshops. Teachers and venue staff also commented on the usefulness of the sessions and fed back that they had received positive comments from attendees.

Engaging parents: talks and workshops

Events held in 2022-23	Age group	No. run in year
Word Games Workshop: engaging reluctant readers. Simple and easy word games for parents to play with their children to engage them in reading.	Reception and Key Stage 1	8
What is reading and how can you support your child? Introduction to phonics and supporting children's reading.	Nursery and Reception	2
Help your child enjoy reading. For parents with children in Key Stage 2. Ideas and tips to keep older children reading.	Key Stage 2	6
Helping your child with reading. Coffee morning talk at partner school.	Key Stage 1	1
Getting ready for reading in reception. Helping parents understand how they can support their children's reading when they start school.	Nursery	13
BookTrust event (parents with children). Story and craft activities based around BookTrust gift book, received by each child.	Reception	3

What parents and schools said about talks and workshops



"It was so useful that I wish I'd sent my staff along to learn more."

***Headteacher,
partner school***

"Lovely concise workshops with practical activities one can actually do at home. I loved that you also gave us the opportunity to make resources there and then - the foam words were used straight away and will be so useful going forward."

Parent

"I had a lot of thoughts during the workshop on how I could apply what was being shown to my own child. I went home and played a few of the games the very same day."

Parent

"I thought I needed to be teaching my son sounds and words and didn't realise that there was so much I could do before that that would help him with reading in Reception."

Parent

Case study

“Books have been reintroduced to us as a family.”



Rochelle is mother to Neina, 6 years old, and Vincent, 2 years old.

Rochelle first discovered Learn to Love to Read when she attended one of our talks for parents about how to help your child with reading, delivered at Franciscan Children’s Centre in Tooting by our Head of Family Programmes, Tara. Rochelle described this talk as a “game changer” for her. “I’d dropped the ball in helping my children love reading and this talk made me see how doable and fun helping your child with reading could be and how important it is for your child’s future.”

The talk really made her realise what a difference reading with your child can make. She continues: “It was so helpful to see how a love of reading had benefited Tara’s own children and see some of the activities she did with them to make reading fun.” Simple tips like trying non-fiction books with more reluctant readers worked well for her son. “Books have been reintroduced to us as a family since that talk. We went to the library again (when we hadn’t for a while) and looked for books Tara had talked about. I have the library app on my phone to reserve books and I have put books all around the house in baskets now and they love dipping into the books at any time. I even read to my child as a gentle way to wake them up in the morning. One day I was reading ‘Shark in the Park’ to my child in the playground after school and a whole group of children joined us to listen to us read.”

During the talk, Tara suggested trying to have books to hand on journeys or when waiting. Rochelle commented: “Today we were waiting around for an appointment and having a Humpty Dumpty book and a Mr Men book in the bag is helping keep us occupied. We also do this on the train.”

Rochelle then attended a set of Early Years classes with Vincent at his nursery school. As part of the classes, attendees receive gifts of books and puzzles each week to use during the class and afterwards at home. Rochelle enjoyed learning about the games she could play with her child as well as building her knowledge about reading including the importance of distinguishing between different sounds in the environment before your child starts reading.

The family also attended Learn to Love to Read’s summer reading programme. Rochelle reported that it was great to see which activities the children chose and enjoyed, and how useful it was for Neina to read to one of our reading volunteers.

Rochelle loves sharing the knowledge and passion she now has for encouraging children to read and has even set up a community bookshelf at her housing estate. She enjoys watching the children take books to read and has noticed that other people have now started to put new books in the bookshelf for others to share.

Her daughter Neina is about to begin reading online with a Learn to Love to Read volunteer once a week and she is really excited to get started.

Summer programmes



What we did

L2L2R has long recognised that the summer holidays can be difficult for many families. In the past we have run a variety of programmes during the summer to encourage reading. In summer 2023, we produced a summer reading magazine for primary school age children which included age-appropriate language-developing games and activities for parents and carers to do with their children over the summer break.

We also launched a new summer reading initiative, Read and Feed. Run at and in conjunction with St Michael's Church in Southfields, this was a weekly hour-long stay and play session for children aged 0-10 years and their parents and carers. A wide range of literacy-based activities was offered, including crafts, a reading corner, word games, imaginative play-based toys and reading support from some of our regular reading volunteers. At the end of each session, each child was invited to choose a new or lightly used book to take home and keep. Following the sessions, all families were invited to stay for a free cooked lunch provided by St Michael's Church as part of its community lunch initiative.

The sessions ran weekly, for five weeks during August and feedback was gathered by paper form each week by event leaders.

Facts and figures

Thirteen families attended the sessions over the five weeks, with most attending between three and five sessions. Twenty-six children aged from five months to ten years attended with their parents/carers. Nearly half of the families attending were from our partner schools, and Home-Start Wandsworth, our partner charity, referred five families.

All parents and carers who attended and gave feedback felt that the sessions had helped their child to enjoy reading more or helped build the skills required before they start reading if they were not yet readers.

Summer programmes

100%

of parents who gave feedback felt the sessions helped their children enjoy reading more



86%

of parents who gave feedback felt the sessions helped them understand the activities they could do to promote a love of reading at home



They also all enjoyed staying for lunch. Eighty-six per cent of parents and carers felt the sessions had helped them understand more about the types of activities they could do to promote a love of reading and reading skills at home.

Parents reported that they had particularly enjoyed the variety of reading and learning-based activities on offer and valued the opportunity for children to keep up their reading practice in the summer holidays. They also commented on the friendliness and proactive approach of the L2L2R staff and volunteers.

Outcomes

Our summer magazines contained useful resources to help families keep their children engaged with reading and stories over the long holidays. By attending Read and Feed, 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.

As a new initiative, we were pleased with the outcomes of Read and Feed and families certainly appreciated having a regular summer activity and meal which did not incur a cost. To ensure we reached our target families, Read and Feed was publicised carefully throughout our partner community, however the attendance figures were lower than we had hoped, with less than half of sign-ups actually attending. There are plans to run Read and Feed again in summer 2024 and we will widen our publicity to ensure a greater number of attendees in the future.

What parents say about Read and Feed



"Seeing how happy F is and seeing him come out of his shell. Seeing F talk more. F said he enjoyed talking and drawing."

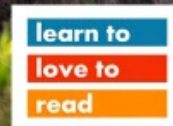
"The variety of activities so the children have been able to develop their reading skills without realising it. Also for N to keep up reading practice during holidays on a regular basis. Also great to encourage V to enjoy learning and reading-based activities."



Encouraging your child's reading this Summer



We would love to stay in touch with you to share occasional reading tips and invitations to events. To sign up please message us on 07859 883798 or email Samreen at L2L2R.samreen@l2l2r.org



2023

"The kids having the freedom to walk around and play and read. As I have three I can't always read with each at the same time."

Our thanks

We'd like to thank everyone who has supported us in the past and throughout 2022-23, 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.

Get involved

Donate

If you'd like to make a donation to help us continue to support children's reading in Wandsworth, please visit www.learn2love2read.org.uk/pages/11-donate or contact Matilda Tuke at matilda@l2l2r.org.

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 or contact Matilda Tuke at matilda@l2l2r.org with any questions.

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 or get in touch with Tara Coffin at tara@l2l2r.org. If you work with disadvantaged families in Wandsworth in any capacity we would love to hear from you!

Learn to Love to Read
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