



Impact Report

2023-2024 highlights

learn to
love to
read

Who we are - our vision

Working to support children's early literacy in Wandsworth

We are delighted to share our latest annual impact report for the academic year 2023–2024. This year we celebrated our tenth birthday. Our charity has grown from small beginnings where our founder, Teresa Harris and her friends, approached a Wandsworth primary school, with the offer of supporting children who struggled with reading.

In 2023–2024 L2L2R has grown to a team of 69 volunteers reading in eight partner schools across Wandsworth and seven part-time staff. In addition to supporting 178 children with their reading in schools, we are supporting hundreds of children and their families from 0–11 years old with parental talks, workshops, events and messaging, and we are now delivering 96 early years classes a year in schools, nurseries, children's centres, community centres, libraries and with partner charities.

Our vision of 'Every Child a Reader'; being able to read and also enjoying reading; continues to guide us.

We know from recent exam data (2024 KS2 attainment data, gov.uk) that, nationwide, 45% of children entitled to Free School Meals are leaving primary school without reaching the expected level of reading. A widening attainment gap means that even more children could fall behind their more affluent peers in their education and literacy skills, which can go on to have a lifetime impact.

In 2023, the National Literacy Trust published research which shows that over half (56%) of children and young people aged 8 – 18 don't enjoy reading in their free time. This is an all-time low statistic since they began surveying children in 2005 and is down 15.2 percentage points from its height in 2016.

The challenge to achieving our vision continues but we are confident that the work we do – supporting children's reading and fostering a love of reading – is helping to change lives.



We hope you enjoy reading about our achievements and challenges in the academic year 2023–2024 and the continuing need for our work.

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

The need

According to government statistics, the number of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 6 nationwide remains similar to past years at 74%, meaning that once again, nearly 25% of children left primary school last summer unable to read well. Wandsworth figures, as usual track slightly above the national figures with 79% of children meeting the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 6 (75% in 2022–2023), but this was still below the 81% reported in 2021–2022.

At the end of Year 1 all children take a phonics screening check to assess their phonics knowledge. Last year, once again a fifth of children did not meet the expected standard nationally (20%) with figures slightly lower in Wandsworth (16%). For disadvantaged pupils, however, the national figure increases to 32%. This gap has remained broadly similar to the year before.

In *The Benefits of Reading*, BookTrust notes that reading supports children to overcome disadvantage. Those growing up in poverty are likely to remain in poverty as adults, and a child growing up in poverty who is read to at age five has a significantly higher chance of economic success in their twenties than their peers who are not read to. Disadvantaged children who achieve highly at the end of primary school are also twice as likely to be read to at home in the early years, compared to their peers.

In recent research with early years families from low income backgrounds (*Children's Reading Habits in the Early Years & The Role of Multiple 'Reading Influencers' in Supporting Children's Reading Journeys*) BookTrust also found that although 95% of parents see reading as important for their child, over a quarter of parents (28%) don't find reading with their child easy and a fifth don't feel confident choosing a book their child will enjoy. This research is borne out in Coram Beanstalk's 2024 survey of 1,000 Mumsnet members which found that children from low income households are less likely to read by choice (64%) than high income households (76%).

BookTrust also observes that children are more likely to become independent readers when they experience reading with multiple people – including family members, teachers or other trusted people in families' lives, however many fathers and grandparents feel they lack confidence and knowledge in supporting children's reading journeys and teachers report that they have limited time to discover new books and inspire children in their schools.

If children experience early shared reading they are more likely to continue to read as they grow up. Reading for pleasure 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.

Our goals for 2023-2024

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 classes for 0 to 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 talks and workshops.

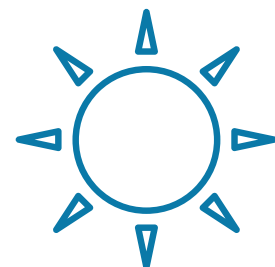


Training and supporting volunteers

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



2023-2024 highlights

One-to-one reading support

- 178 children supported across eight partner schools in Wandsworth, both face-to-face and virtually.
- Teachers reported over 90% of children supported by a reading volunteer had improved their confidence, comprehension and enjoyment of reading by the end of the academic year.
- 42% of children were reading at or above their expected age-related levels at the end of the academic year compared to 10% at the start of the year.
- Teachers felt that the support of a reading volunteer had a positive impact on a child's overall reading for 92% of children.
- Volunteer feedback showed over three times the amount of children reading with expression at the end of the year compared to the start of the year and three times the amount of children were on their way to becoming fluent readers.

Parental engagement

- 18 events attended by 185 parents.
- Verbal feedback overwhelmingly positive.

Early Years

- 100 Early Years classes delivered in 2023-2024 – 25 sets of four.
- 208 families engaged with the sessions, with 77% of families attending half or more of their set of four classes.
- 92% of parents who provided feedback rated the classes 5/5 for usefulness with 99% rating them 4/5 or 5/5.
- 88% of parents who provided feedback would recommend the classes to other parents.
- 41 children aged 0-5 receiving monthly books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.



Volunteering

- 6 volunteer training sessions run for 30 new volunteers in 2023-2024.
- 69 volunteers supporting children in school and virtually.
- 96% of volunteers who gave feedback felt they had been well supported in their volunteering role by L2L2R.
- 98% of volunteers who gave feedback felt their volunteering had made a real difference to the children they worked with.

Summer reading club

- 5 summer reading sessions held in July & August 2024.
- 17 families with 28 adults and 18 children attended.
- 100% 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.



What people say about us

"That was so helpful. As English is my second language I was not taught phonics so don't know what I am doing, but I have lots of ideas now."

Parent attending talk



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

Parent of child supported virtually

"I loved my time here. I really, really enjoyed the different activities you could choose from and how interactive the whole thing was. My favourite parts are the story time, when we sang the songs and made the bookmarks."

Child attending Summer Reading Club



"M is a super star - her reading ability, concentration and determination have hugely increased. Her confidence in choosing a book that she wants to read all by herself, without support, is impressive."

Volunteer

"The staff are amazing. My children love coming to the activities every week."

Parent attending summer reading club

"S has benefitted hugely from L2L2R's [support]. She found it challenging to express her ideas and contribute to discussions. Now she is more confident and eager to share her thoughts."

Class teacher



“When I get stuck on words, the nice lady gives me more time to remember and doesn’t rush me.”

Child supported by volunteer in school



“As I’m dyslexic, it took a great deal of pressure off my mind in the class as it is such a relaxed environment and it put me at ease. The class helped me understand that I didn’t just have to read the book word for word which is hard for me as I’m dyslexic. It made me not worry about reading to my child.”

Parent attending Early Years classes

“She picks up books and ‘reads’ them in a way she never used to.”

Parent of child receiving Dolly Parton Imagination Library books

“It’s been a joy and privilege reading alongside the children. Seeing their growth in ability, confidence, and love of reading has been hugely satisfying. I too have grown in confidence, ability and I love books even more!”

Volunteer

“Friendly staff, great volunteers, really helpful partnership when working with parents.”

Partner school



Case study

“I find reading easier now and I read more at home.”



Freddie’s aunt, Stacey, first heard about Learn to Love to Read in summer 2023 when she brought her nephew, Freddie (8), to our weekly summer reading club.

L2L2R’s summer reading club was launched in 2023 and runs in conjunction with St Michael’s Church in Southfields, with a stay and play session running each Wednesday morning in the summer holidays for children aged 0–11 and their carers. Reading, craft and play activities are based on a different theme each week, with staff and volunteers on hand to support and read with the children and their families. After a story and song at the end of the session, children are also encouraged to choose a lightly-used book each week which they can take home and keep. Ten families are then able to stay for a hot lunch as part of St Michael’s Church community lunch initiative (places are allocated on a first come first served basis).

The club had been recommended to Stacy by a teacher at Freddie’s school, one of L2L2R’s partner schools. Stacy and Freddie came along to the sessions throughout the summer holidays in 2023. They also visited the local library where Freddie completed the summer reading challenge for the first time. Freddie was so proud that he brought his medal along to the final session to show the staff and volunteers.

Stacy and Freddie enjoyed their first year so much that they couldn’t wait to come back for every session in 2024. Stacy describes the club as: “Really good. Freddie’s reading more and it made us go to the library and read more as a family. I would definitely recommend it to other families.”

At the reading club in 2023, Freddie met L2L2R reading volunteer Claire and the pair hit it off immediately. Stacy comments: “Claire is really good with him. Freddie looks forward to seeing Claire every week; he loves her.” They teamed up again in 2024, with Freddie telling us that he particularly enjoyed colouring, drawing and sharing books with Claire and the other volunteers.

Claire and Freddie got on so well together that Claire changed the school she usually volunteered in during term time in autumn 2023 so she could support Freddie – and other children at his school – every week. Freddie says he finds the reading support he receives at school very helpful, saying: “Claire talks about the book and makes it fun. I find reading easier now and I read more at home.” Claire is looking forward to supporting Freddie in school in the 2024–2025 academic year.

Case study

“After each class I put some time aside to do the suggested activities which was great bonding time for me and my younger kids.”



A has four children aged 6, 3, 2 and 7 months. She first came across Learn to Love to Read during the COVID-19 pandemic through a nearby Children’s Centre.

Her eldest child had a speech delay at the time but clearly loved listening to A reading books so it was suggested she came along to one of L2L2Rs Early Years classes. She’s gone on to attend another set of classes with her younger children too, attending four weekly sessions aimed at children aged 2-4 at her local library. She recalls both children enjoyed the classes: “One of mine especially loved the toys they were given and my other child loved the songs we sang.”

A goes on to say: “I really enjoyed the classes as they refreshed my mind with activities which I did with my eldest child but not the younger ones. Also new activities were shown which I never have tried. The classes were 40 minutes which was not too long at all as the time flew very quickly.”

The library where the classes were held was very close to her house and A really appreciated that the venue had nappy changing facilities and space for her baby’s buggy. She also loved the fact that there were plenty of cafes nearby to grab coffee or lunch afterwards.

After the classes A noticed that her younger child was singing the songs they learnt at home and the other showed a greater interest in books, pulling more out to read and asking to play with the Play-Doh that was part of the gift pack. A also deliberately made time at home to do some of the activities that were suggested during the classes. As well as finding it was a great opportunity for bonding with her younger children, she also began reading more to them, using many of the links sent to class attendees via WhatsApp in between the classes to practice their listening skills.

All Early Years class attendees receive a gift pack with books, puzzles and toys used during the classes. A’s children loved these resources, and she comments: “Tara, who led the sessions, also gave me a book which is proving to be really helpful for all my children with pictures to talk about and ask questions which is helping to improve my children’s level of understanding of who, what, why questions as well as questions requiring children to ‘have a think.’” (You Choose your Dreams by Nick Sharratt and Pippa Goodheart)

The classes A attended were small groups of children and their parents/carers. While there was space for a few more, she was glad there weren’t too many as it was the first time her children had taken part in a group activity session and she didn’t want it to be too overwhelming for them.

So would A recommend Learn to Love to Read’s Early Years classes to other parents? “I would highly recommend these classes to new parents as well as parents who have not attended for a few years as they are also good as refresher courses.”

Our thanks

We'd like to thank everyone who has supported us in the past and throughout 2023–2024, 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.

The Battersea Society
Capsticks
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The Leathersellers' Foundation
The London Community Foundation
The JJ Charitable Trust
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Read more

If you'd like to download and read the full version of this impact report please visit <https://www.learn2love2read.org.uk/pages/5-facts-figures> or scan the QR code.



Get involved

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, scan the QR code 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, scan the QR code 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, scan the QR code 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!



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