

Learn to Love to Read: what teachers think



Our vision

Learn to Love to Read (L2L2R) is a registered charity supporting children's reading in schools. Working in the London borough of Wandsworth, we want all children to have frequent, positive reading experiences, and be enabled and empowered by learning to love to read. Working in partnership with local primary schools, we provide trained volunteer teams to improve reading levels, build confidence and inspire a love of reading. We develop early literacy skills through our parent and toddler classes and work to engage parents in supporting their children's literacy with our parent training and family events. We believe that becoming a confident reader will change a child's life.

Our goals

We want to:

- Build partnerships with local schools.
- Work with Key Stage 1 children and their younger siblings.
- Give parents the motivation, skills and confidence to support their children's reading at home.
- Reduce the number of children whose opportunities are limited by poor reading skills.
- Help children to learn to love to read.

How we started



Learn to Love to Read was founded in 2014 by Teresa Harris. Teresa first became interested in children's literacy when her own two children found learning to read difficult. She became a reading volunteer and later gained a Postgraduate Certificate in Difficulties in Literacy Development. Wanting to broaden the impact of her work in the local community, she began to recruit and train volunteers, developing a unique programme designed to reach whole families. As well as instigating twice-weekly one-

to-one reading sessions with Year 1 and 2 children in partner schools, Teresa developed 'Sounds, Songs and Stories' – early literacy classes for parents and toddlers. To further engage parents, the charity also runs parent training which gives some simple ideas of how to support children at home. And occasional family events are also offered, where Year 1 and 2 children and their siblings come with their parents or carers to listen to a story and enjoy different craft activities.

The need

According to the Department for Education, 24% of children left primary school in Wandsworth in 2019 unable to read at the expected level (27% nationally) and it is estimated that there are nine million working-aged adults in England with low literacy or numeracy skills, or both. Even by the age of three, disadvantaged children are, on average, already almost a full year and a half behind their more affluent peers in their early language development (Read on Get on, 2014).



Research by Dr Reid Lyon, formerly of the National Institute of Health, shows that intensive early intervention can increase the reading ability of 90% of low-performing readers, and engaging parents and children in mutual activities that include book reading, but are not limited to it, may constitute the richest potential for supporting children's early literacy development (Susan B. Neuman, Guiding Young Children's Participation in Early Literacy Development, 1997). This is backed up by the Department for Education's own findings in 2008, which show that children with interested parents pull ahead of the rest whatever their starting point and that educational failure is increased by lack of parental interest.

What we do: partnering with schools

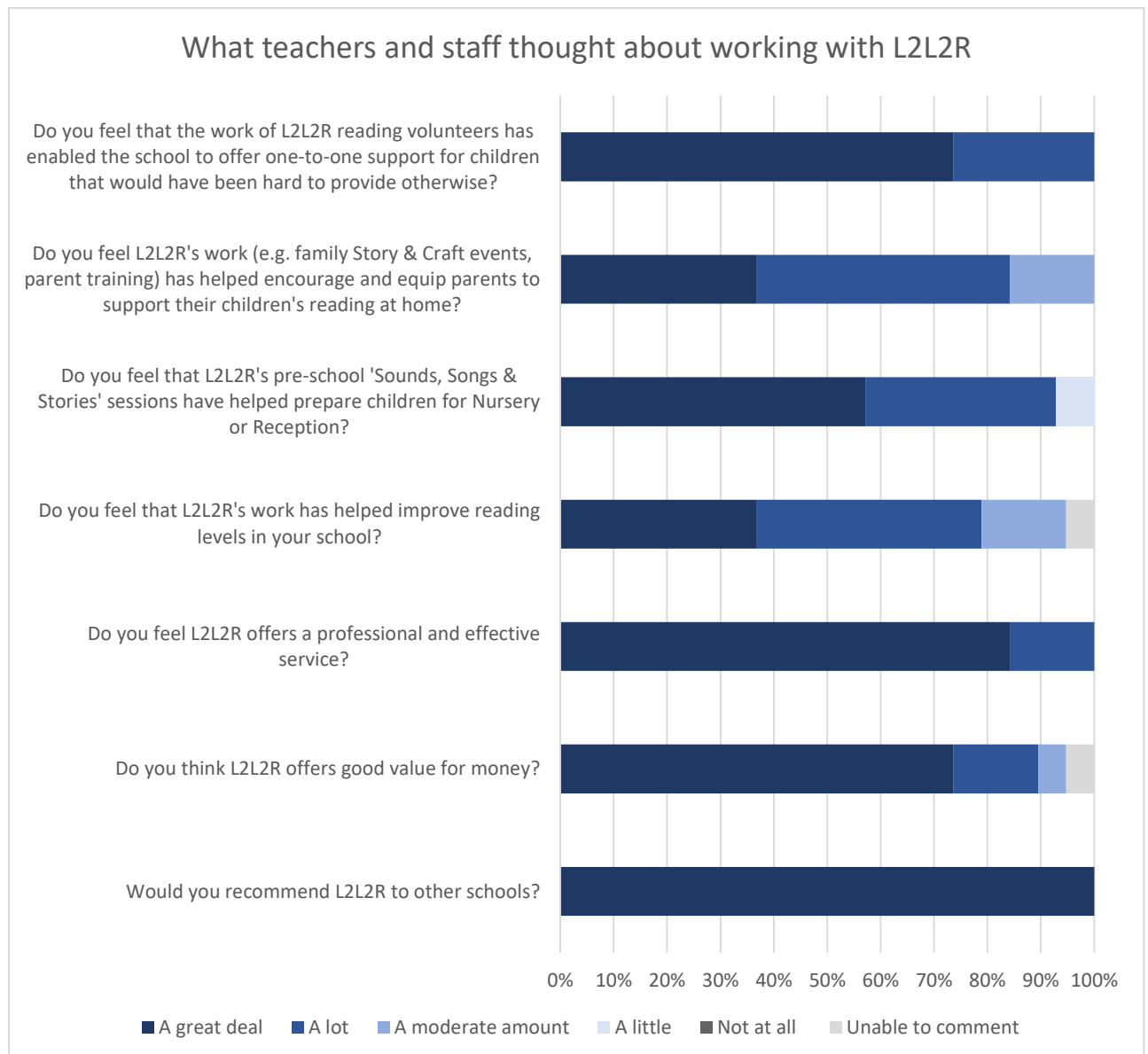
Our work with our partner schools in Wandsworth uses early intervention and a whole family approach to improve children's reading. The development of this essential functional skill will in turn allow these children to build their self-confidence, achieve academically and access ambitious life opportunities.

Facts, Figures and Outcomes

We asked key staff, who work with us at our partner schools about their experiences of Learn to Love to Read and how they felt our work impacted the children and their families. With a 100% response rate to our online survey, the replies were overwhelmingly positive. Responses came from a range of staff including class teachers, SENCOs, heads of Early Years, literacy leads, deputy heads and head teachers.

All staff felt that having L2L2R's reading volunteers in school enabled them to offer one-to-one support for the children that would have been hard to provide otherwise. Comments showed they really valued the relationships the children formed with their volunteers over the school year. Nearly 80% of staff told us that L2L2R had helped improve reading levels in their school either a great deal or a lot. L2L2R's other work (family events, training, etc.) was also highly valued with 80% of responses indicating they helped equip parents to support their children's reading at home either a great deal or a lot.

100% of staff felt that L2L2R offered a professional and effective service. This figure was reflected in the many comments about our volunteers' commitment, reliability and passion for their work and our staff's excellent organisation and communication. 100% of respondents would definitely recommend L2L2R to other schools.



What teachers and school staff said they like best about working with Learn to Love to Read

"[The volunteers] are quickly self-directed and incredibly reliable. Their ethos of pairing individual children with the same adults leads to productive and trusting relationships."

"I love that the children have the same person every week, they form good bonds and attachments with them. The L2L2R staff are professional and share any concerns well. They use a lot of praise so the children enjoy reading with them."

"The children's enjoyment of stories and rhymes and the opportunity for them to take books home to share with their parents."

"The skill and enthusiasm of the volunteers who help the children 1:1 as well as those of the staff member who leads our L2L2R parent and toddler group, who has been wonderful."

"Kind and friendly volunteers doing amazing one-to-one work with our children. I have seen huge improvements in the reading skills of the children involved and the children enjoy their time with L2L2R."

"Always willing to offer further support. Parent sessions have been very successful."

"Professional, knowledgeable, skilled, great communication, dedicated staff, clear ethos and vision of the organisation."

"Having the volunteers develop relationships with the children they work with. This helps the children understand that there is at least one adult who looks forward to reading with them and this of course leads to the children looking forward to reading. Unfortunately, not all children have this type of set routine in their home lives. Thank you for making this possible. "

Partner with us



If you are part of a Wandsworth primary school that faces similar needs and challenges and are interested in partnering with Learn to Love to Read, please get in touch by completing our form on our website <https://www.learn2love2read.org.uk/pages/3-partner-with-us> or emailing Teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk

Schools pay an annual subscription of £1,500 to partner with us.

Learn to Love to Read is currently funded by subscriptions from schools, grants from trusts and foundations, and individual donations.