

learn to

love to

read

Impact report - volunteers

Our vision

Learn to Love to Read is a charity supporting children's literacy in schools. Working in the London borough of Wandsworth since 2014, we want all children to have frequent, positive reading experiences, and be enabled and empowered by learning to love to read.

In 2019, 27% of children in the UK left primary school unable to read at the government's expected standard (24% in Wandsworth). The far-reaching effect of children not learning to read properly makes for stark reading: The National Literacy Trust estimates that 16.4% (7.1 million) of adults in England can be described as having 'very poor literacy skills', often finding themselves locked out of the job market and unable to support their own children's learning. In the prison population, this number rises to one in two, far higher than the population as a whole (Learning & Work Institute).

Understanding that early intervention is key, we work in partnership with local primary schools, providing 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 sessions and work to engage parents in supporting their children's literacy. We believe that becoming a confident reader will change a child's life.

What we do: training our volunteers

Learn to Love to Read trains all its volunteers in how to best support Key Stage 1 children's reading in schools.

The training session explores how reading is taught in schools today, including explanations and practical exercises to explain the synthetic phonics system. Using a video of a sample Learn to Love to Read reading session, we discuss what each session should contain – focusing on a sound or word a child finds difficult, encouraging children to talk about the story they are reading and recording the session in the child's reading record, while giving praise and encouragement all the way. We also give important guidance on safeguarding.

When a volunteer starts work in school, our volunteer manager is on hand to guide them and introduce them to the children they will be reading with.

Facts, figures and outcomes for our training sessions

Since 2014, we have trained over 160 volunteers in this way and feedback is collected using a paper form at the end of each session. From January 2019 to March 2020 we trained nearly 60 new volunteers, 89% of attendees rating the training 9/10 or 10/10 with the remaining 11% rating it 8/10.



What attendees say about our training:

"The session was extremely well organised and full of positive information."

"I liked how interactive the session was – it made it more enjoyable."

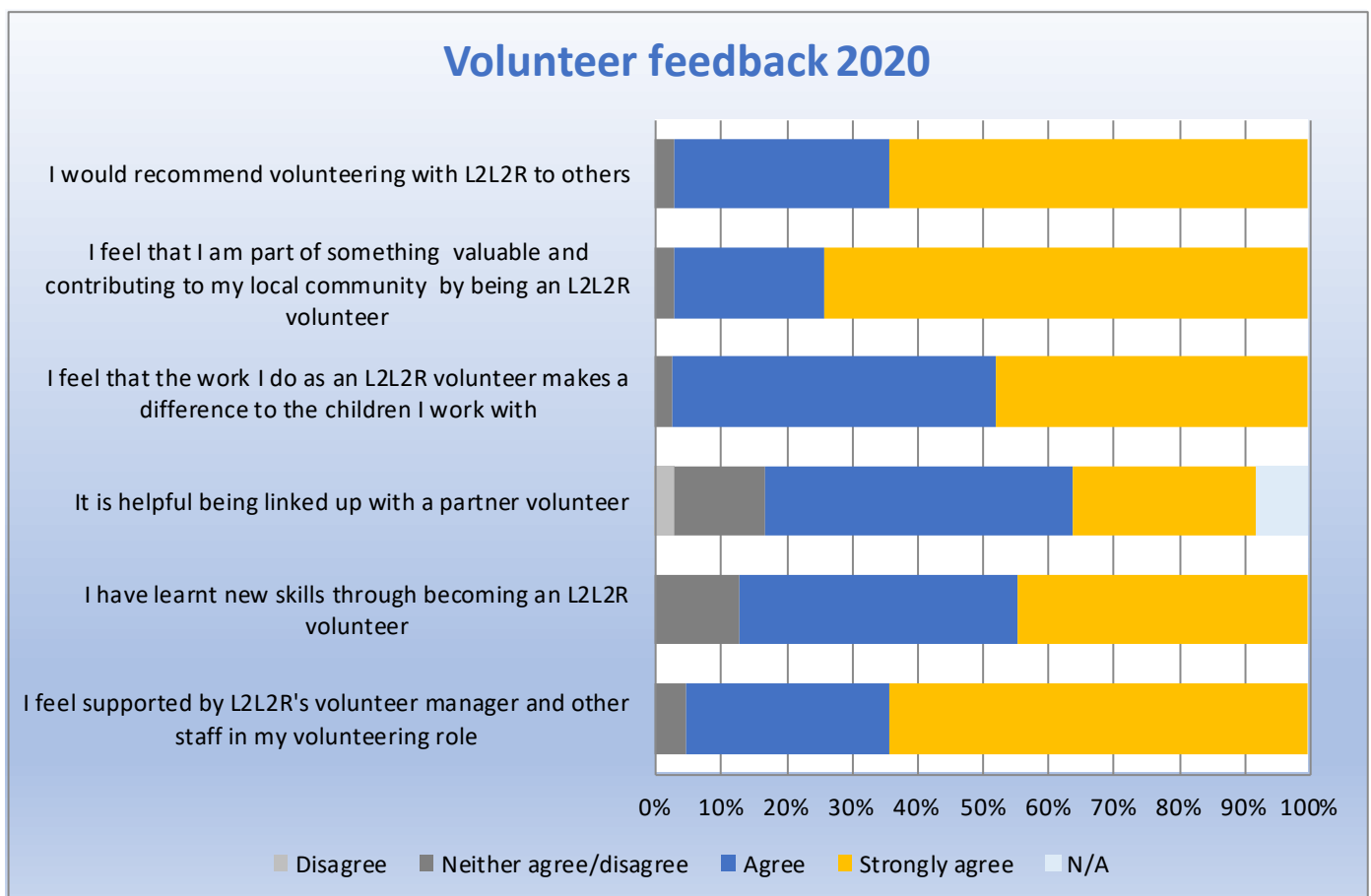
"This is all new to me so it is extremely helpful to learn how to read with the children."

What we do: looking after our volunteers

Our volunteers read one-to-one with three Year 1 or 2 children every week, for 20-25 minutes. To ensure volunteers build a good relationship with the children, we ask them to commit to volunteering for the entire school year. Each volunteer has a partner who is reading with the same three children so they can share comments about their children's progress each week in a folder kept at the school.

When reading with each child, volunteers follow a framework that allows the child to get maximum benefit from the 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 meant). 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 reads the child a more challenging story or they may look at a factual book.

Our volunteer manager looks after all our volunteers and communicates with them regularly to keep them up-to-date with Learn to Love to Read's news and answer volunteers' queries. In our volunteer survey, 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel supported by our volunteer manager and other staff. We run termly social get-togethers too where volunteers can meet and exchange ideas and tips.



Facts, figures and outcomes of volunteer satisfaction

In March 2020 we had volunteers working across seven schools in Wandsworth. We collect feedback from our volunteers via a regular online survey and the overwhelming majority find volunteering for Learn to Love to Read a positive experience where they feel they are not only making a real difference to the children with which they work (97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed), but also contributing to their local community by being part of something valuable (97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed). Overall 97% of respondents would recommend volunteering with Learn to Love to Read to friends and family and on average respondents rated their experience of volunteering as a 9/10.



"I feel motivated and inspired by [L2L2R's] initiatives and ambition to broaden the offering. Above all, I really enjoy my weekly sessions with the children and seeing their confidence and skill levels grow."



"It has been a privilege to see how our three youngsters have developed since September."



"This is a really well-organised charity with a clear and direct aim; it is a pleasure to volunteer with L2L2R and, as an ex-teacher, I am confident of the tremendous impact this sort of intervention can have."



"I strongly believe that every child should be able to read fluently before they leave primary school. That is my aim, and the reason I volunteer."



"I feel this is a fantastic charity with which to be involved, and I like the fact that it is local to the area and I feel supported in my role."



"I enjoy seeing happy children progress in their reading. They get more confident by the week and like to demonstrate and share their knowledge."



"I love seeing the children's enthusiasm increase and their trust in me develop."

