



# Helping children learn to love to read



2020 – 2021

## ***"Every child a reader – this is our vision for children in Wandsworth"***

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 want all children to have frequent, positive reading experiences, and be enabled and empowered by learning to love to read.

Poor reading skills in childhood often result in limited literacy as adults, bringing well-recognised risks and missed opportunities; there is a proven increased likelihood of unemployment, low wages, obesity and depression. Outcomes are poor for those who never get to grips with the written word.

The academic year 2020 to 2021 began several months into the pandemic and ended with restrictions still in place. COVID-19 has particularly impacted disadvantaged pupils. As a result of school closures and interruptions, the gap in average reading attainment in Years 1 and 2 between those eligible for Pupil Premium and their peers had grown to a shocking seven months by spring 2021, representing a COVID-19 increase of around three months (National Foundation for Educational Research interim report). We generally work with schools that serve a disadvantaged pupil population, with high levels of Pupil Premium, Free School Meals or EAL families. The reading levels of the children currently being referred to us for support are significantly lower than we've seen in the past.

We work in partnership with local 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 develop early literacy skills through our Early Years parent and toddler classes and work to engage parents in supporting their children's reading. We are excited to tell you about our work and our impact in this highly unusual academic year. If, after reading this report, you would like to support our vision of making every child a reader, we would love to hear from you.

**TERESA HARRIS**

*Founder, Learn to Love to Read*





# Theory of change

learn to

love to

read

## The need

- In 2019 (last available figures), 27% of children left primary school unable to read at the government's required standard (24% in Wandsworth).
- 16.4% (7.1 million) of adults in England can be described as having 'very poor literacy skills'. In the prison population, this number rises to 50%.
- Targeted intervention with 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.



## 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.
- Training is run for parents in partner schools with children in Nursery, Reception and Year 1.
- Online Early Years literacy classes are run for younger siblings of children at partner schools and children referred by local charities and professionals.



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## Outputs

- Volunteers read with children weekly for 20–25 minutes.
- 50 volunteers.
- 100 children supported across 7 schools.
- 1,100 reading sessions this academic year.
- 100 parents trained at 7 training sessions.
- 15 Early Years literacy classes run and 52 families attended.



## Outcomes

- Children show progress in their reading skills.
- Children show improved attitude and concentration as they engage with reading.
- Children's self-confidence in their reading abilities and enjoyment of reading grows.
- Parents' understanding of the importance of their support, and confidence in their ability to help their children's learning, increase.
- Babies and toddlers are introduced to vital early literacy skills.



## Impact

- Children start school better prepared for learning to read.
- 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 confident and motivated to support their children's ongoing learning.



# 2020–2021 highlights

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## One-to-one reading support

In the academic year 2020–21, L2L2R volunteers supported 100 children with their reading across seven partner schools in Wandsworth, both face-to-face and virtually. Our virtual reading programme also enabled us to give access to online reading books to children and families at home for the first time.

- Our volunteers led 1,100 reading sessions during 2020–21.
- Nearly 70% of children were scoring the highest marks for reading with confidence by the end of the year, compared to just 50% at the start of the year.
- 73% of volunteers reported that their children were excited about books by the end of the year, up from 56% at the start of the year.

“

*A is such a confident reader now that he is asking to read chapter books! He looks forward to reading sessions and asks about any words he does not understand. He is eager to improve and has made great progress - I am very proud of his achievements.*  
- Volunteer

”

## Early Years

In the academic year 2020–21, L2L2R ran 15 Early Years literacy classes via Zoom, in partnership with three local charities, CARAS, Home Start Wandsworth and Contact.

- 52 families attended in total.
- 75% of parents who responded to our survey felt more confident about helping their children learn at home.
- 81% rated the classes 5/5, with 100% giving a rating of 4/5 or 5/5.
- All parents who responded to our survey would recommend the Early Years classes to other parents.

“

*Really tangible actionable advice, wrapped up in a lot of fun.*  
- Parent

”

100%

of parents who responded to our survey would recommend our Early Years classes to other parents

95%

of parents surveyed said the virtual reading sessions had made their child a better reader

# 2020–2021 highlights

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## Volunteers

L2L2R trains all its volunteers in how best to support children's reading in schools. In 2020–21 we ran 12 volunteer training sessions for 50 of our volunteers.

- Attendance across all sessions was 125 – 94% scored the training 8, 9 or 10/10.
- 97% of volunteers who gave feedback felt they made a real difference to the children they worked with.
- 100% of volunteers surveyed would recommend volunteering with L2L2R.

“

*I think it's good for the heart and for the soul, for both kid and adult.*

*- Volunteer*

”

## Working with parents

L2L2R runs interactive training sessions, either in school or virtually via Zoom, to show parents how to support their Nursery, Reception or Year 1 child's reading.

- 7 parent training sessions run in 2020–21.
- Nearly 100 parents attended.
- 100% of parents who completed our survey said they would recommend the sessions to other parents.
- 80% of parents gave us a score of 5/5 in helping them feel more confident about reading with their child at home.
- All parents reported that the sessions helped them support their own child's reading.

“

*The way it was done by text message was so useful ... no matter what we were doing we stopped and did it. It was really quick, just two minutes.*

*- Parent*

”

## Summer programmes

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 children in Wandsworth to keep reading over the long break. In summer 2021, we ran two such programmes – Simple Sounds and Story Walks.

- 126 parents signed up to our Summer Sounds holiday phonics programme.
- 1,800 views of our phonics videos.
- 221 clicks on our Story Walks videos.
- 94% of parents who responded to our survey said they would sign up to similar future programmes.



# Our thanks

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We'd like to thank everyone who supported us throughout 2020-21, and especially these grant-making bodies, some of which have supported us for a number of years. Without you we could not have achieved any of the important work outlined in this document.



We are also extremely grateful to the individuals who support us on a monthly basis. Their regular 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 [Donate | Learn to Love to Read](https://www.learn2love2read.org.uk) (learn2love2read.org.uk) or contact our Founder Teresa Harris on [teresa@l2l2r.org](mailto:teresa@l2l2r.org).

## Volunteer

If you're interested in becoming one of our reading volunteers, you can find more information and apply online here [Volunteer | Learn to Love to Read](https://www.learn2love2read.org.uk) (learn2love2read.org.uk) or contact [matilda@l2l2r.org](mailto:matilda@l2l2r.org) with any questions.

## Partner with us

If your organisation would like find out more about how we might work together please visit: [Partner with us | Learn to Love to Read](https://www.learn2love2read.org.uk) (learn2love2read.org.uk) or get in touch with [anna@l2l2r.org](mailto:anna@l2l2r.org).

If you work with disadvantaged families in Wandsworth in any capacity we would love to hear from you!

Find us: @learn2love2read



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