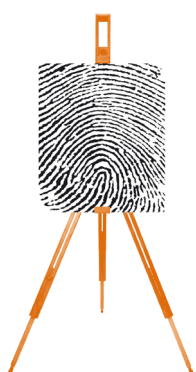


"This is an  
incredible  
service and  
**we are so  
grateful we  
found you.**"



# Impact Report 2020

Blind and Partially Sighted Children



Living  
Paintings

[livingpaintings.org](https://livingpaintings.org)  
**01635 299 771**

imagination

share engage

**belonging**

fun **empathy**

**equal footing**

inclusion **play**

read **learn** thrive

**understanding**

confidence

# Executive Summary

## CONFIDENCE

**99%**

have improved confidence thanks to Living Paintings; 89% significantly.

## ENGAGEMENT

**99%**

have an increased interest in learning.

## WELL-BEING

**98%**

experienced a positive change in confidence in socialising and making friends.

In order to measure the positive impact that Living Paintings has on the lives of blind and partially sighted children, we carried out our annual survey amongst our child library members of all different ages. As with previous years, a survey was distributed to parents, carers and teachers. Our purpose is to measure the difference that receiving our Touch to See Books makes to the lives of our young beneficiaries.

## Key results

For those blind and partially sighted children who receive Living Paintings' service:

**98%**

benefited from **improved confidence in reading**;

**96%**

are **more confident in joining in class activities and discussions**;

**99%**

benefitted from an **increase in shared experiences with sighted friends, family and peers**;

**97%**

benefitted from a **positive change in their confidence** in taking part in physical activities such as getting involved in playing games;



80% of children use Living Paintings Touch to See books daily or weekly.

# What people have to say

Drawn from the anecdotal responses received through this impact survey.

"Living Paintings provide an **invaluable service** for visually impaired children & young people.

My son has **improved** so much using their resources.

**Thank you so much!"**



"This is a **wonderful service**.  
I couldn't have done my last job so well  
without Living Paintings!"

"This is such a **valuable service** &  
the children we use it for have really  
benefitted. The books also support  
**inclusion** & other children developing an  
understanding of their friend's needs."

# What people have to say



"She loves all stories, but we are not sure how much she can see so she doesn't get the joy of seeing pictures in most books. But she **loves feeling the images** on yours.

She has just started to use her hands to explore any items put in front of her now and I am pretty sure this is because of Living Paintings."

"He doesn't have many activities to **stimulate** him due to his age & blindness.

These books really **enrich** his day and stimulate his development."

"They are **unique** – no other books are like them! You can read the same stories as everyone else, just in a different way.

It's so **important** to have this."

# What difference does Living Paintings really make?

## What do Living Paintings Touch to See books bring to your child?

"A sense of belonging in  
a class and their **growing  
confidence.**"

**Teacher**

"When he is sharing the  
books with friends, it gives  
him the chance to be the  
'expert' and explain them.

They also **bring the topics  
and stories to life.**"

**Teacher**

"**Sharing** a book instead  
of just listening to a story  
makes a huge difference to  
storytime, he likes to join  
in and loves feeling the  
pictures."

**Parent**

"[The Living Paintings  
Touch to See books] **bring  
confidence and calm**, and  
interest to him.

They allow him to **make  
connections** between the  
real world, his experiences  
and the stories."

**Parent**



"[Living Paintings books  
help with] sharing, **empathy,  
and enjoying a giggle!**"

**Parent**

"[Living Paintings provides opportunities to] share story books with peers, as the sighted peer can see the illustrations and text.

They then can **discuss them with each other**, where before they might have disengaged while looking at a page of braille that they couldn't access."

**Teacher**

"Living Paintings provides a more tactile stimulating way of engaging with books. Severe learning difficulties make stories uninteresting when you are visually impaired, moderately deaf and refuse to tolerate hearing aids, so it is nice to be able to help my child feel the books and interact more with the stories. It helps **engage him more.**"

**Parent**

"The touch and listen resources provide **inclusivity in lessons** and allow the whole class to do the same task, based around the Living Paintings resource."

**Teacher**

"The Touch to See books help to include them in reading sessions and **makes reading a more accessible and interactive experience.**"

**Teacher**



"Living Paintings helps to give them a **similar insight, to their sighted peers**, bringing exciting information and topics to life, so that they have a similar access to the curriculum."

**Teacher**

"Living Paintings provides the chance to feel and hear stories, **increase choice-making skills**, introduce the idea of a routine and enables the sharing of stories with a familiar adult."

**Parent**

"[Living Paintings] allow him to explore books and stories in a more tactile way, as this is how he learns best. He can associate **vocabulary** with a shape or texture that he can feel and this helps him to remember the words better."

**Parent**

"The books provide access to reading materials that can be shared with her peers and support workers. They support our efforts to make activities inclusive because the materials can be used with our sighted students too. The various formats also means that the resources can be **shared at home.**"

**Teacher**

"With Living Paintings he can understand things through touch, this is his preferred medium of learning and reading so it's the best way to engage him for how he learns and understands best. I would say Living Paintings levels up the playing field and so he **keeps pace with sighted peers on key subjects** and the latest topics like Harry Potter."

**Teacher**

"You give him a greater understanding of the subjects he is learning. Visual learning methods are inaccessible to him, so Living Paintings books have allowed **another dimension** to his learning and understanding of topics."

**Parent**



"You bring us an amazing, **accessible multi-sensory format**. Being able to see the really clear, high contrast pictures and feel the raised tactile images, while hearing the audio description is so helpful."

**Parent**

"You give access to the same books at an appropriate reading level for his age and ability in a format that is engaging to him and his peers. It is only in these books that he has the chance to experience raised images and this has **widened his access** to different tactile experiences."

**Teacher**



"[Living Paintings provides] Access to so many children's stories in a tactile format that otherwise my child would be without."

Braille books are not common place or affordable enough for us to provide her with the same **access to multiple titles** that Living Paintings give."

**Parent**

"For children with little or no sight and complex additional needs, making sense of the world is not easy."

The Living Paintings books add context and structure to the activities we do, increasing the child's **imaginative abilities** and enabling them to better understand what is going on."

**Teacher**

"You help to explain a topic in a different way to allow **access to the curriculum** that is being studied at the time."

**Teacher**

# A Teacher's Story

"I work as a Qualified Teacher for the Visually Impaired (QTVI) with one, 12 year old, student with severe vision impairment. She was born with Microcephaly which affected the development of her brain, including her ability to see. She is able to see colour, light and dark and can read highly contrasted 48pt type when very close up, but trying to read and decipher images is tiring and slow.

Because of her reduced memory capacity and visual impairment which are both part of the condition, her literacy attainment is equivalent to that of a much younger child. In addition, the inability to see her surroundings, the television or anything else that fully sighted children glean their information from has severely affected her knowledge and understanding of the world around her, as well as her social and life skills.

Part of our additional curriculum activities at school, and currently at home, have been the use of Living Paintings resources. Very early on I started ordering materials from Living Paintings for my student to practice her Braille reading skills, and to be able to access your Science books, which were a revelation to me and my understanding of her needs.



When my student read Handa's Surprise and looked very closely at the illustration of the elephant she said **"Oh, is that what an elephant looks like, I didn't know"**. Also, when exploring raised images of trees in a Science book, she felt and looked closely at a tree with leaves on and identified what it was, then she felt the one next to it and asked "why is it different, what's this at the bottom?" I explained that in the autumn all the leaves fall off the trees on to the floor, leaving the bare twigs and branches; she said that **she didn't know that, no one had told her before**.

These two incidents amongst others, made me realise (as somebody completely new to the field of visual impairment), how very limited her vision and therefore her understanding was. It made me even keener to explain everything clearly and to give her every opportunity to experience and understand things outside of school. So far we have joined other students with visual impairment in the county. We have had a sensory experience morning at a local garden centre and done some creative follow up activities. We have booked for her to go horse riding with other blind and partially sighted children in the area, have visited a local café and ordered and paid for food, and we are planning a visit to the seafront and the zoo next academic year. All these things have come about from a realisation of her limited experience, prompted by the Living Paintings books and the inspiration that your books have provided!

**We have, and will continue to order materials from Living Paintings which will help the student I work with to not only read Braille more fluently, but to gain knowledge and experience from both the stories and the brilliant Science books. I am sure that they will continue to serve as a source of inspiration for her and me as I seek to organise life experiences for her in the years to come."**

# Methodology

A survey was emailed and/or posted to 1,341 library members who borrow on behalf of children and young people, including teachers, parents and organisations. The survey was designed to be completed for and on behalf of up to a maximum of three children.



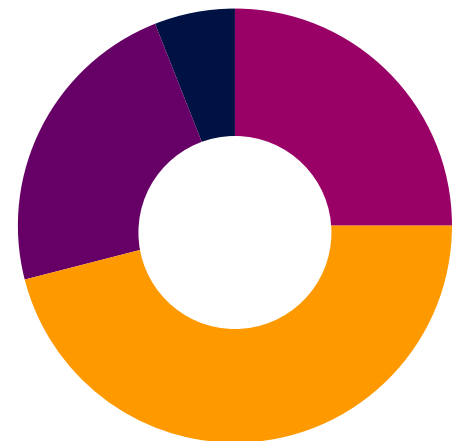
Responses to 177 surveys on behalf of 180 Living Paintings child beneficiaries have been received, representing an overall response rate of 13%. 78 surveys received were completed by parents or carers, and 77 were completed by teachers or learning assistants. 22 were filtered under "other" category which included people such as Grandparents, Social Workers, QTVI's and Sensory Outreach Workers.

Surveys are requested throughout the year dependent on the members' registration dates. This year our response rate, though excellent, is lower than last year largely because we have received fewer returns from teachers and learning assistants due to the disruption caused by Covid-19.

## About the survey respondents

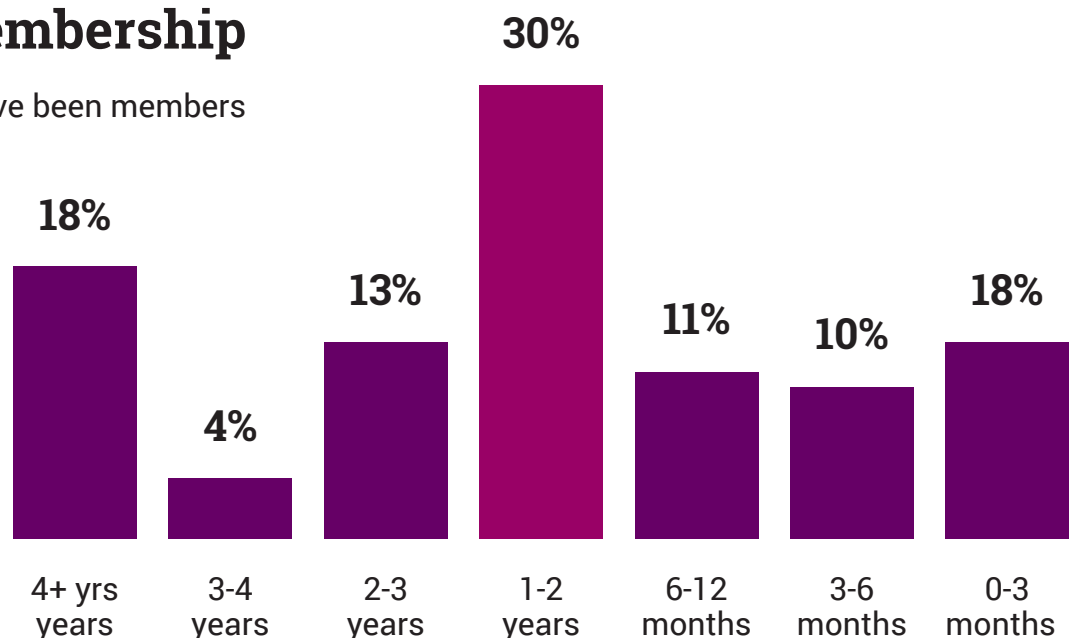
Of those respondents who provided the ages of their children, the results were as follows:

- 0-4 Years **25%**
- 5-9 Years **46%**
- 10-15 Years **23%**
- 16 + Years **6%**



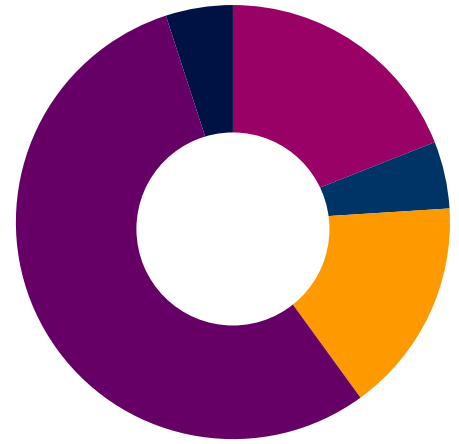
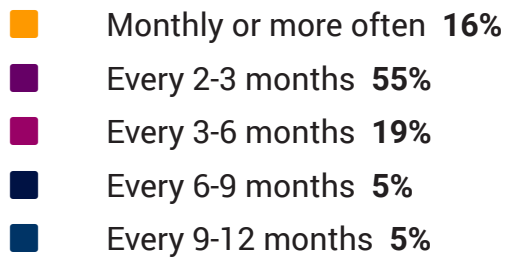
## Length of membership

**65%** of the children have been members for more than 1 year.



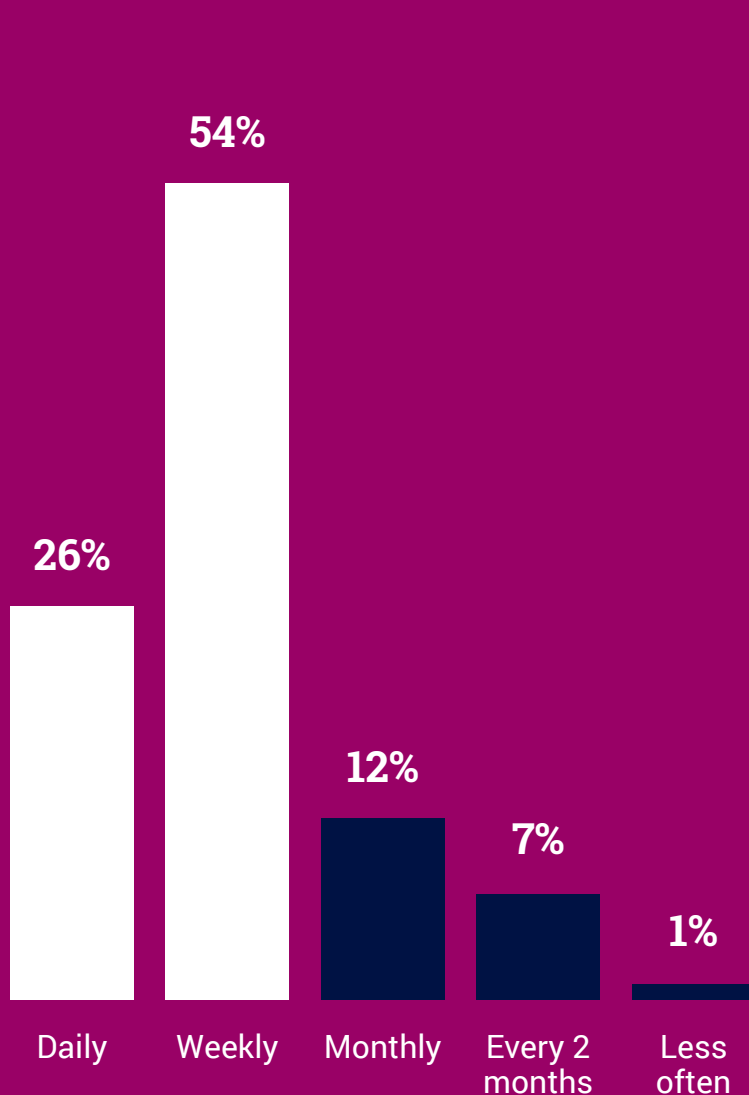
## Borrowing patterns

Regularity of borrowing from Living Paintings Touch to See book Library



*NB: The bias towards borrowing every 2-3 months reflects loan periods and pattern of school terms.*

## Book usage



# 80%

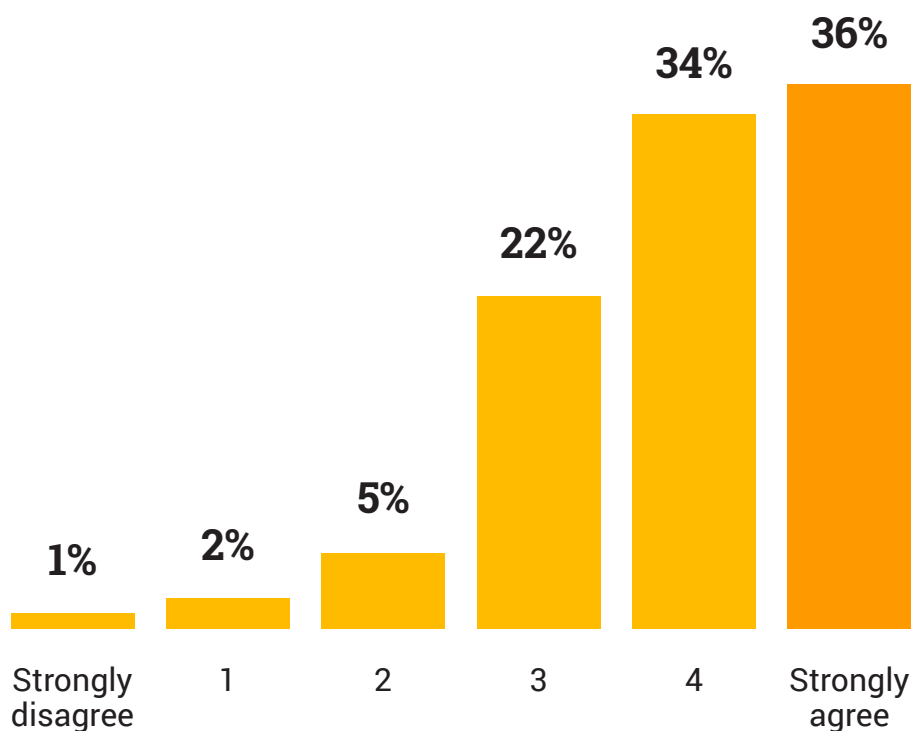
of children use  
Living Paintings Books  
daily or weekly.

# The results

We asked members to answer the following questions on a scale of 0-5, selecting 5 where they would strongly agree with the statement and 0 where they would strongly disagree.

## Interest in Learning

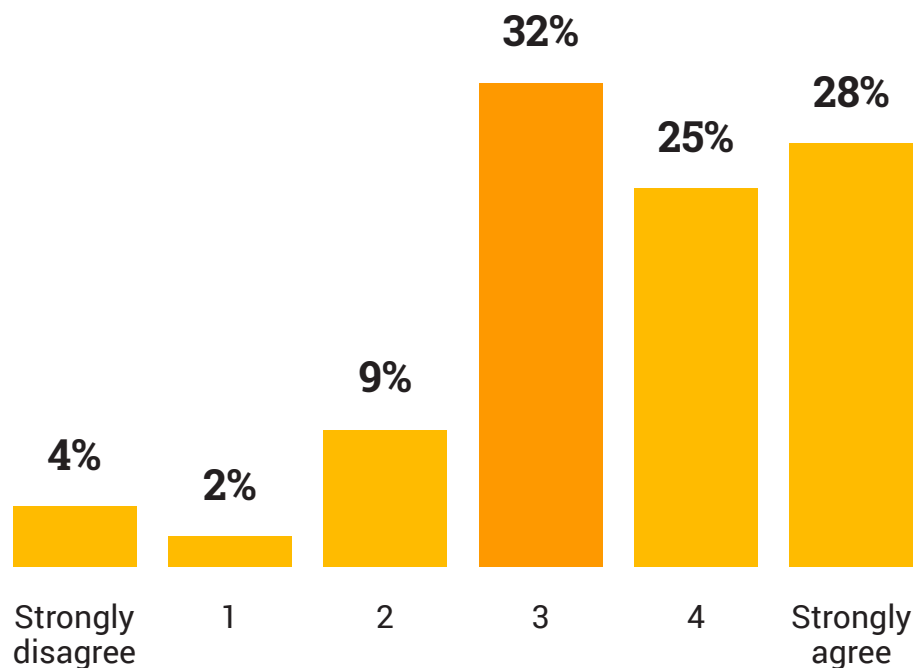
*In the last 12 months (or since joining Living Paintings Library) my child(ren)'s **overall interest in learning has improved** through using Living Paintings Touch to See books.*



"Being able to experience a book with so much **interest** through the tactile aspects has really **engaged** the child."

## Joining in Classroom Activities

*In the last 12 months, or since joining the Living Paintings library if less, my child(ren)'s **confidence has grown** in joining in classroom activities.*



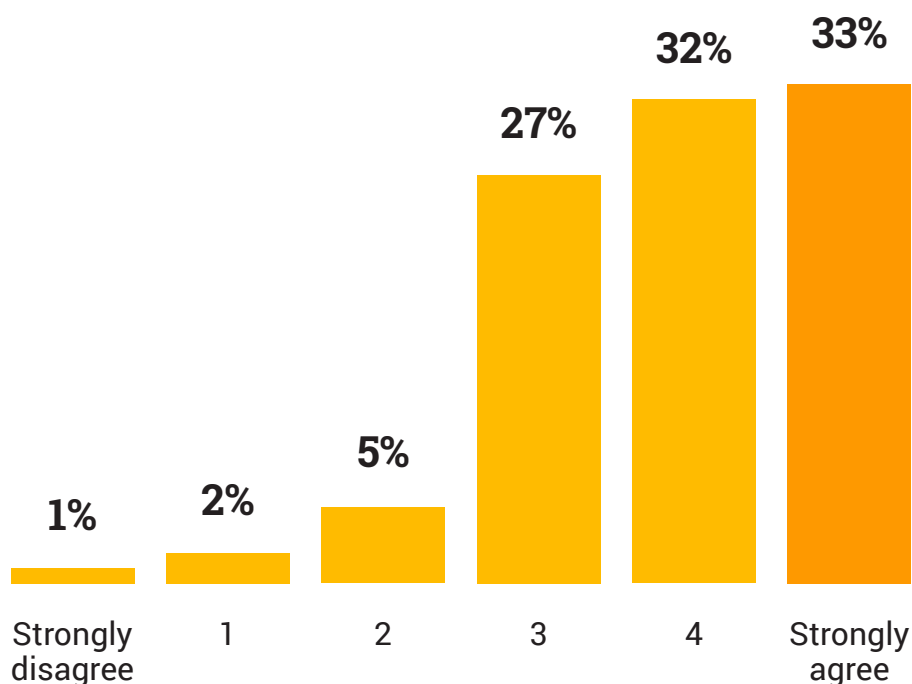
“At school, or socially, he can now **join in discussions** and be **involved from the start**. That makes such a difference as if he doesn't get involved then it's easy to become not part of the class or friendship group.”

“After using the introductory pack my student **loved setting up little scenarios** using a variety of objects and asking his peers “is it on top of, under, next to?” His peers would then **reciprocate** and set up a little scene and ask “where is the....?”

“Jacob loves the packs arriving and being able to see / hear and feel **the pictures come alive**. Joining in with classroom activities – even the school has noted and commented on this.”

## Engaging with Sighted Peers, Family and Friends

*I have noticed a positive difference in the last 12 months (or since joining Living Paintings Library) **in my child(ren) engaging with their sighted peers, family and friends** e.g. sharing reading, learning and discussions.*



“Our little boy enjoys a book and a snuggle, although he is non-verbal **his level of gesturing has really increased.**”

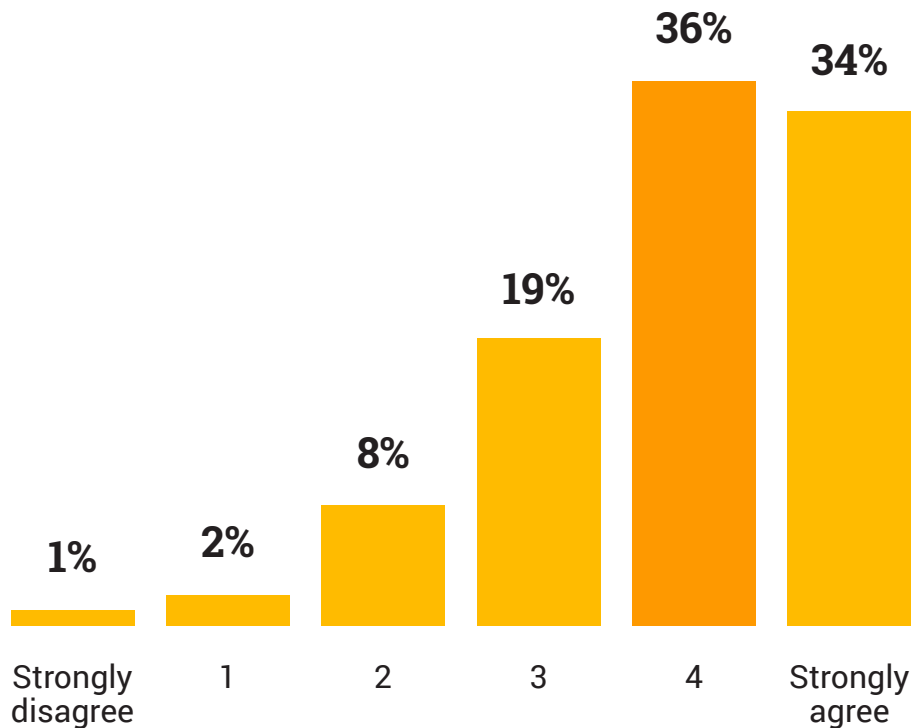


“Elena gets so excited when we order new books from Living Paintings, she **really benefits from them.**”

We love snuggling up as a family and reading these books together. I imagine the world is a scary place when you're visually impaired so having books to help explain things **makes things less scary.**”

## Improved Self-Confidence

*My child(ren)'s self-confidence has been **positively influenced** by using Living Paintings Touch to See Books.*



"You can immediately see children's confidence go up when they realise that the books are for them – it makes them **feel more confident to explore** the other activities."

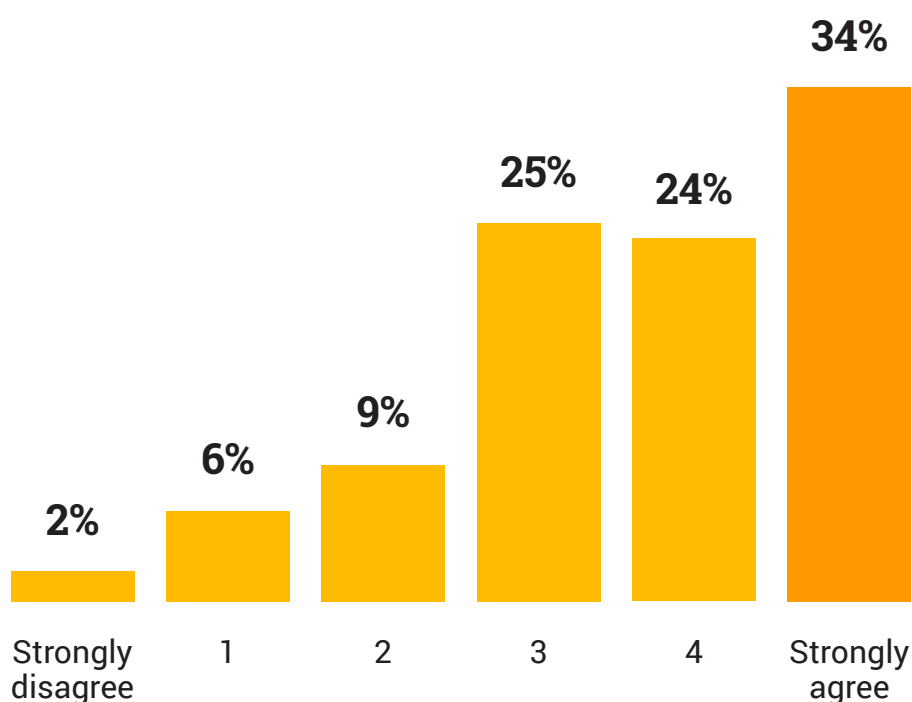
"The books have given our child a brand new bank of knowledge to help her in discussions, **expanded her vocabulary** and as such this has **built her confidence**."

"She says '**I can see it**' '**I can find that picture**' '**I can read it by myself**'. She is able to have a visual break by listening to the CD."

"The books enable the child to join in with other children in the overall theme of the activity and this can **boost their confidence a great deal**."

## Engagement with Reading

*In the last 12 months, or since joining Living Paintings library if less, my child(ren)'s **confidence in reading** has grown:*

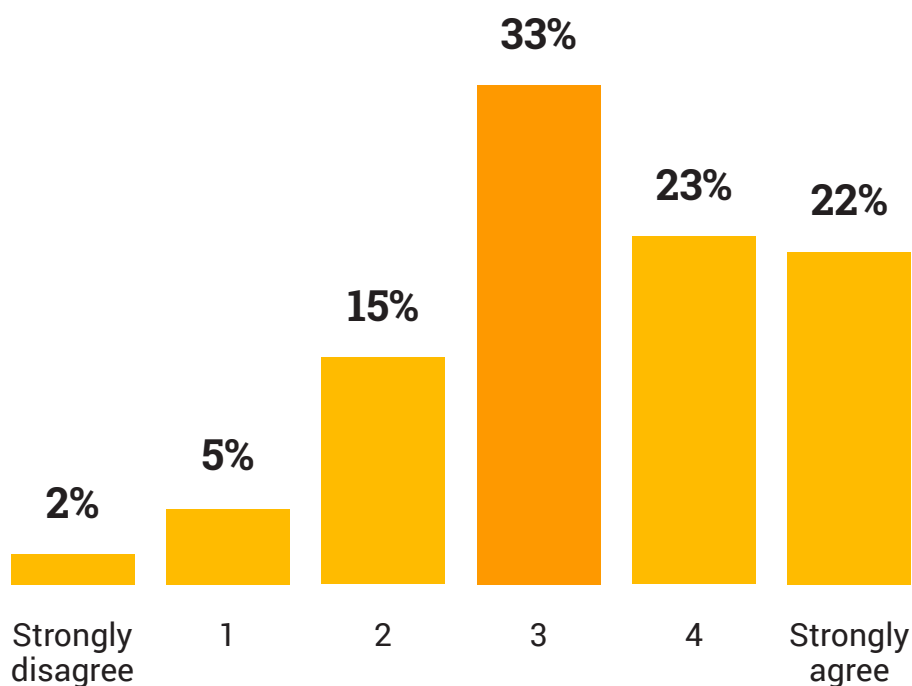


"My student was a reluctant reader of braille but he is now **becoming more confident in his reading abilities** and it is lovely to have such a large selection of books which means that we can choose titles that he is interested in."

"This child takes his book to read in bed which helps him practice reading braille, and also **improves his imagination skills.**"

## Socialising and Making Friends

*In the last 12 months, or since joining Living Paintings library if less, my child(ren)'s **confidence in Socialising & Making Friends** has grown.*

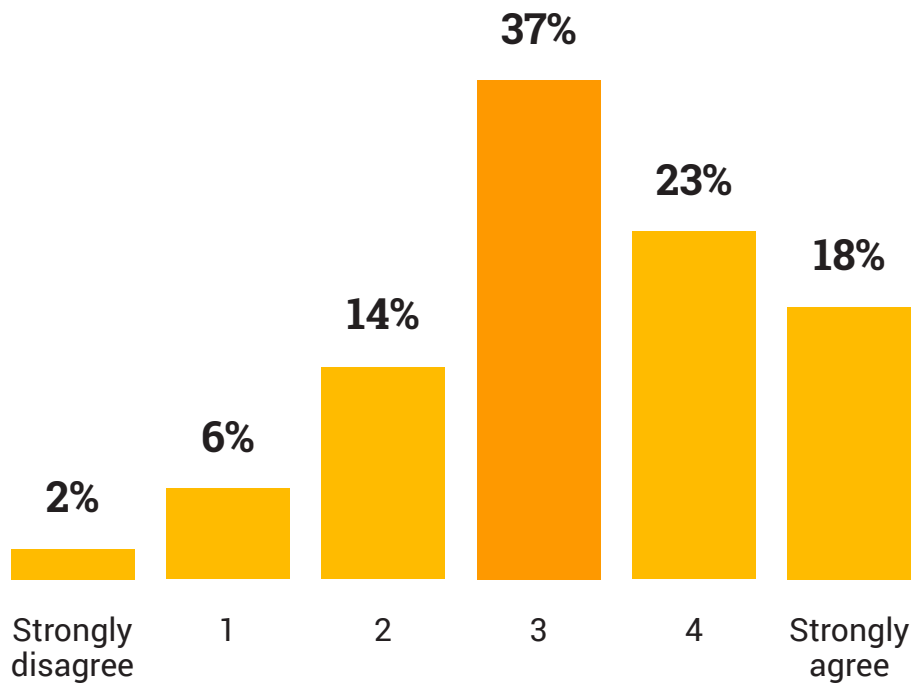


“The books **unlocked his interest** to other stories & he has found other children in his SEN group who also like the His Dark Materials series, & so it has given him something to talk about and **a chance to make new friends** during this really difficult time.”

“The 11 year old shared the books with sighted peers and was able to **identify more with feelings**, empathy and enjoyed giggling with a friend.”

## Taking Part in Physical Activity

*In the last 12 months, or since joining the Living Paintings library if less, my child(ren)'s confidence has grown in **joining in taking part in physical activity**.*



“She enjoys repeating back and **acting out stories** such as We’re going on a Bear Hunt with her sister.”

# Further anecdotal responses

"These are the same books used by peers in the classroom and can now be accessed by the child I support – **a real must for inclusion.**"

**Teacher**

"My child borrowed a book about Tudor life. We used this book to learn about Tudor houses, weapons, clothing etc, before going on a class trip to a Tudor house/experience day. The Living Paintings book enabled my child to develop an **understanding of concepts**, particularly large-scale things like houses which he cannot see, and this allowed him to enjoy the class trip (and the whole topic of Tudors in general) infinitely more than without it. Thank you so much to Living Paintings and also to the generosity of the amazing sponsors for bringing my child's learning to life!"

**Teacher**

"The full multi-sensory input from your stories and packs makes learning so much easier for my son and other people with a visual impairment. He feels like he is **on an equal footing** at last because it perfectly matches his way of learning."

**Parent**

"A huge thanks for providing such a wonderful 'service'. You are always quick to respond to requests and always send out books suited to age and visual needs. We love receiving our box of books especially during the current Covid -19 situation. We have **so much fun sharing books in our household.**"

**Parent**

"Thanks so much for all the hard work you do providing this service. It is much appreciated and we would be **lost without it.**"

**Parent**

"You provide extremely valuable resources which help us to support our autistic, blind pupil, enabling them to **enjoy reading** with their class. Thank you!"

**Teacher**

"Please continue this amazing service, I'm very grateful and thanks for the great support throughout. It's **the best service** we have used so far."

**Parent**

"This is an incredible service and we are so **grateful we found you.**"

**Parent**

"Highly valued service, we'd be **stuck without it!**"

**Parent**

"We are so grateful your library service is available to Audrey, the books are so much more than just books to her. We know **she will thrive** experiencing them - more so than with traditional books that she is unable to experience fully."

**Parent**

"I sincerely hope that Living Paintings can continue to provide this fantastic service that we honestly **can't find anywhere else!**"

**Parent**

# Case studies from two of our youngest beneficiaries:

## Matthew

"Matthew was born very unexpectedly at 35 weeks, but he was a healthy weight and doing well, he didn't wake for any feeds and when awake he mainly cried. The next day Matthew suddenly took a turn for the worse. His temperature rose dangerously high so he was taken to NICU. Matthew is our first child so we didn't know what to expect as new parents but it was not this fear and sadness at seeing him in a tank covered with wires. Matthew suddenly started to have seizures that could not be controlled. We were called to be with him. The next few hours were a blur of tears, offers of priests, wires and seeing our tiny baby fight for his life in front of our eyes. We almost lost him as quickly as he arrived.

We later found out Matthew had meningitis and sepsis which he was born with. This happens very rarely and sadly most babies' don't survive. The next 4 weeks were a rollercoaster of emotions, successes, achievements and just as many setbacks. Matthew fought so hard for his life. He suffered severe brain damage as a result of the meningitis and seizures. His mobility is severely affected as he has Cerebral Palsy and he is cognitively delayed.

Matthew is severely sight impaired. He has central visual pathway problems, and optic nerve damage which means what he does see struggles to make it to his brain. He also has cortical visual impairment which means his brain struggles to understand any messages that do get there, due to the severe brain damage.



Other children that are Matthew's age are immersed in language and words all day. Whether it's reading a bedtime story, going to the shops or playing with their toys. Matthew does not have this opportunity.

**When Matthew first felt a Touch to See book sent via 'Living Paintings' he was surprised and then over-joyed and felt all over the page.** He loves to read his special books now. Every time a new package arrives we will open the box as a family and

show Matthew each new story adventure in store. We use the books as a special reading time together. We will read the story and Matthew feels the pictures and braille, we have just started

encouraging him to use his "Peter Pointer" finger. It's just so wonderful that now he knows books have content. The Living Paintings books are all made so beautifully. Each book has the most beautiful raised tactile pictures. This really helps to bring the stories to life and just show how much love is put into each book.

We are not sure if cognitively Matthew will ever be able to read braille. He has started on his pre braille skills such as squeezing playdough and picking up items from a box. **But this does not stop him hungrily "reading" his stories and feeling the words on the page and "seeing" the story come to life, all thanks to the wonderful team at Living Paintings. I can't thank them enough for showing my son he can love books."**



# George

**George is 2 years old and has been a member of Living Paintings Library for a year. His mum Hanna wrote to us to share George's journey and to tell us how thrilled she was to discover our tactile library.**

"George was born at 23 weeks 6 days, weighing just 700 grams. Whilst in the NICU he would be checked weekly for an eye condition most common in pre term babies weighing less than 1250 grams called Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). Unfortunately, it was confirmed that George had ROP.

There are two types of treatment for ROP - injections in the eyes, or laser eye surgery. It was decided that laser eye surgery would be the best for George, and we were told a lot of the time it is successful. It didn't work the first time, so we tried again, but yet it was still unsuccessful. George took a trip in a helicopter to try and save his sight by going to see a specialist at the other side of the country.

George's vision looked hopeful and he was sent back to our own hospital where he went on to have another surgery for a cataract. The surgery was successful, but in the coming weeks after,

George's eye started to shrink and in the end his retina detached and he lost all vision in his right eye. Luckily he can still see a little bit with his glasses in his left eye.

George is now at home thriving. I contacted our local library to ask if they had any suitable books for George but unfortunately they didn't, so I was thrilled when I came across the Living Paintings Charity. They have books suitable for George's age and they come adapted with voice overs, braille and 3D pictures. George loves to read them with me and scratch and feel the pictures.

**We feel lucky to have found Living Paintings!"**



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