

Impact Report 2019

Blind and Partially Sighted Children



Well Being ~ Learning ~ Friendships ~ Engagement
~ Self Confidence ~ Love of Reading ~ Achievement

Executive Summary

In order to measure the positive impact that Living Paintings has on the lives of blind and partially sighted children, we have carried out a fresh survey amongst our child library members of all different ages. As with last year, this year's survey focussed on the following three main outcomes that we want to measure in our work for blind and partially sighted children and young people:

- Change in the learning experience
- Engagement with sighted peers, family and friends.
- Levels of confidence.

Highlights from the survey results

✓ **98% of blind and partially sighted children have improved confidence thanks to Living Paintings; 90% significantly**

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

- ✓ **98% have attained an increased interest in learning; 90% significantly**
- ✓ **95% benefited from an improved confidence in reading; 83% significantly**
- ✓ **96% were more confident in joining in class activities and discussions; 83% significantly**
- ✓ **97% have benefitted from an increase in shared experiences with sighted friends, family and peers; 84% significantly**
- ✓ **95% have experienced a positive change in their confidence in socialising and making friends; 78% significantly**
- ✓ **95% have benefitted from a positive change in their confidence in taking part in physical activities such as getting involved in playing games; 73% significantly**



"To find Living Paintings and have access to a library of books specifically made for readers who are visually impaired is amazing!"

Methodology

A survey was emailed to library members who borrow on behalf of children and young people, including teachers, parents and organisations. Paper copies of the survey were also posted out to library members. Emails and hard copy mailings were sent to 1,527 members requesting their participation and the survey was designed to be completed for and on behalf of up to a maximum of three children.

To date, 310 surveys containing responses on behalf of 323 Living Paintings child beneficiaries have been received, representing an overall response rate of 20%.

101 surveys received were completed by parents or carers, and 161 were completed by teachers or learning assistants. 48 were filtered under “other” category which included people such as Grandparents, Social Workers, QTVI’s and Eye Clinic Liaison Officers.

In keeping with the same question set as the survey sent last year, it has allowed us to compare the responses so that we are able to identify the areas where we have continued to make a real impact on our beneficiary’s lives.

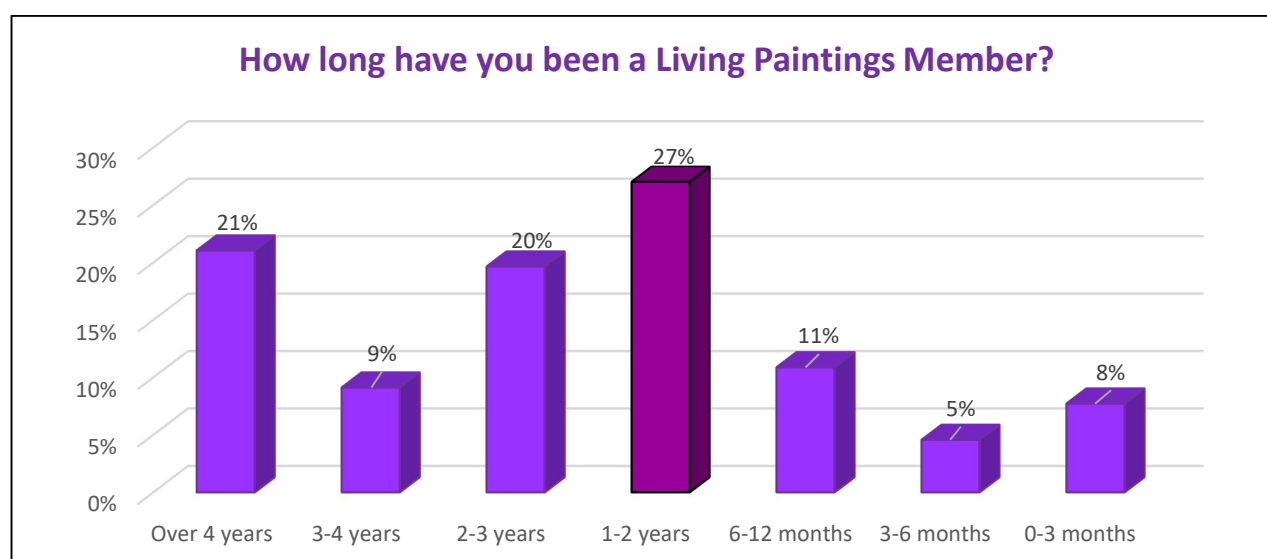
About the survey respondents

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

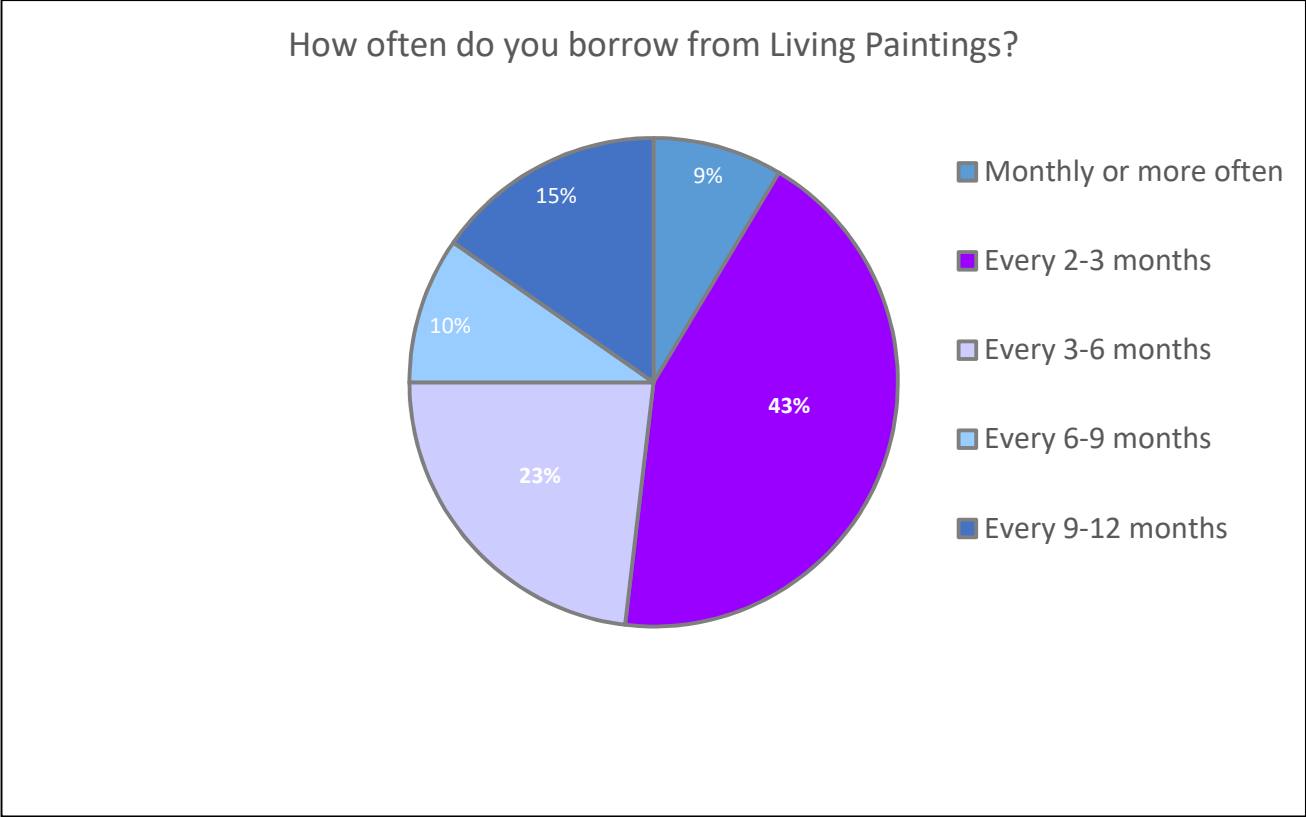
0-4 Years	5-9 Years	10-15 Years	16 + Years
54 18%	133 45%	91 30%	21 7%

Length of membership

77% of the children have been members for more than 1 year



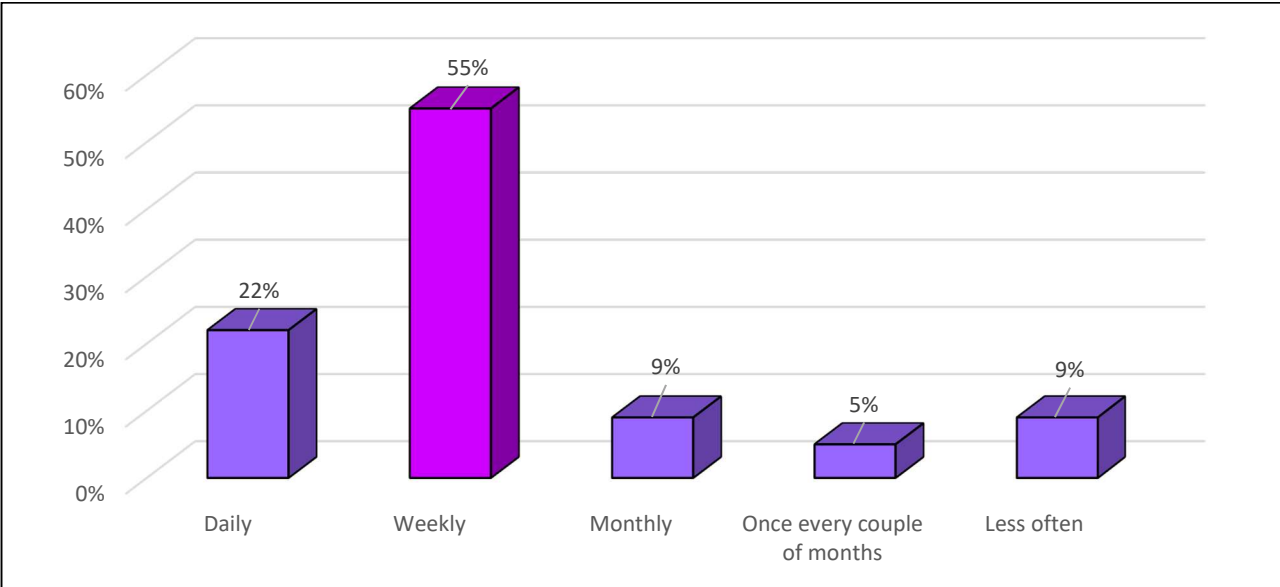
Borrowing patterns



NB: The bias towards borrowing every 2-3 months reflects the pattern of school terms.

Book usage

77% of the children who responded use Living Paintings Books daily or weekly.



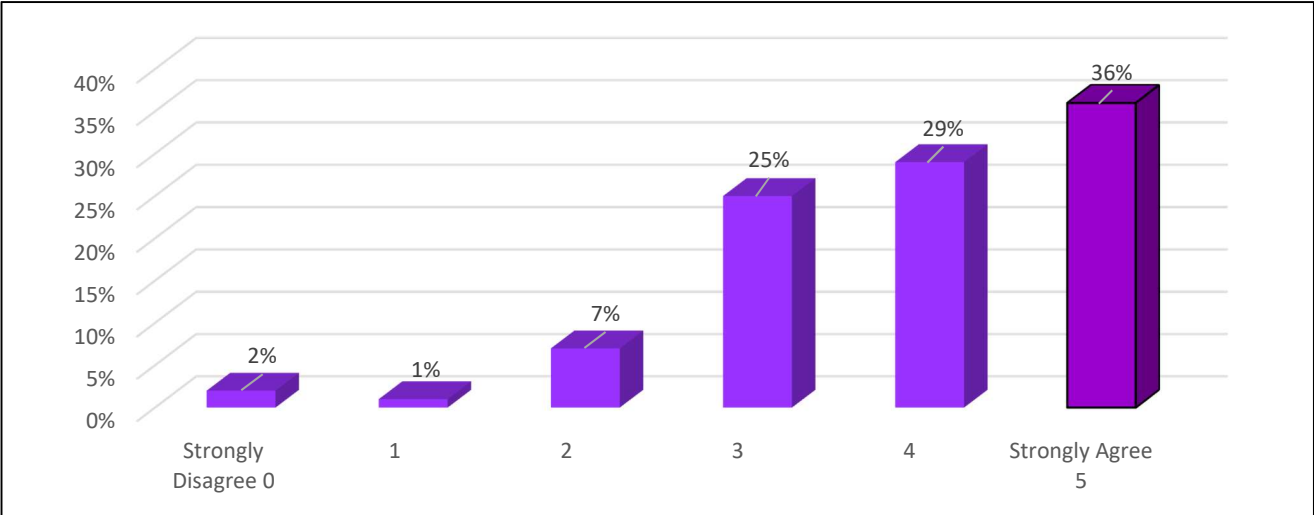
"I personally want to thank Living Paintings for bringing my child to life through reading and enjoying story time every night"

Survey 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.

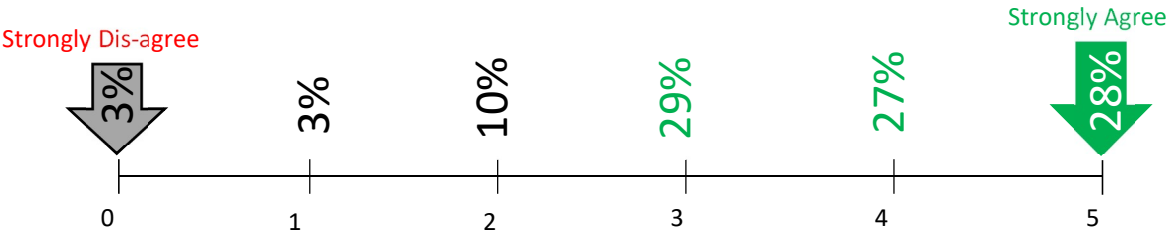
Learning and Engaging with others

In the last 12 months (or since joining LP Library) my child(rens) overall interest in learning has improved through using Living Paintings library books



“Living Paintings books are a little box of magic. My pupil was highly motivated to explore, touch and 'read' the books. This level of interest was the first break through in tolerating his new staff sharing an experience. They built on this to go from strength to strength. The progress was such that staff were able to attend his ophthalmologist appointment and through their shared work at school get the first ever measurable results for his visual impairment.”

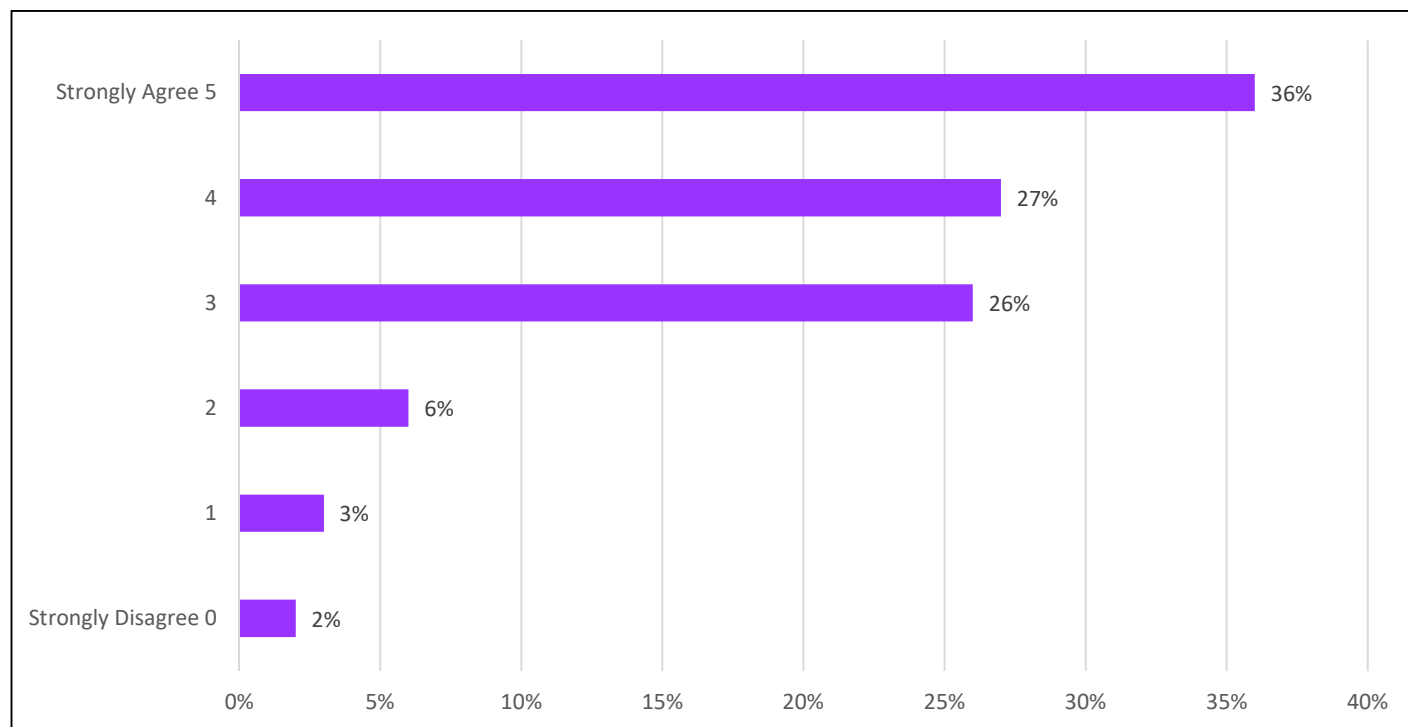
I have noticed a positive difference in the last 12 months (or since joining LP Library) in my child engaging with their sighted peers, family and friends e.g. - sharing reading, learning and discussions



The child has experienced a greater amount of communication with other children & adults as a result of using Living Paintings books. She tries to say and sign the words she knows and her vocabulary has been extended too. She has a unique set of needs and so far Living Paintings books are the best resource I have found for enabling and furthering her communication.

About the children's self-confidence

I feel my child(ren)s self-confidence has been positively influenced by Living Paintings Books

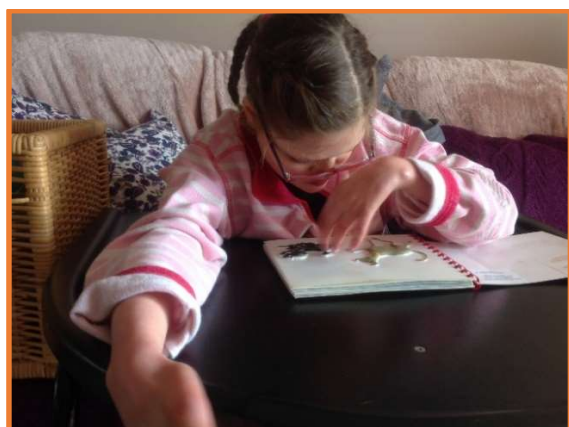


"Being able to read alongside her sighted peers has contributed to her confidence. Her sighted peers often give her compliments about how clever she is to be able to read in braille."

"To be able to access a book which has tactile information whilst the class are accessing the same book in print, makes all the difference to their confidence, inclusion & learning."

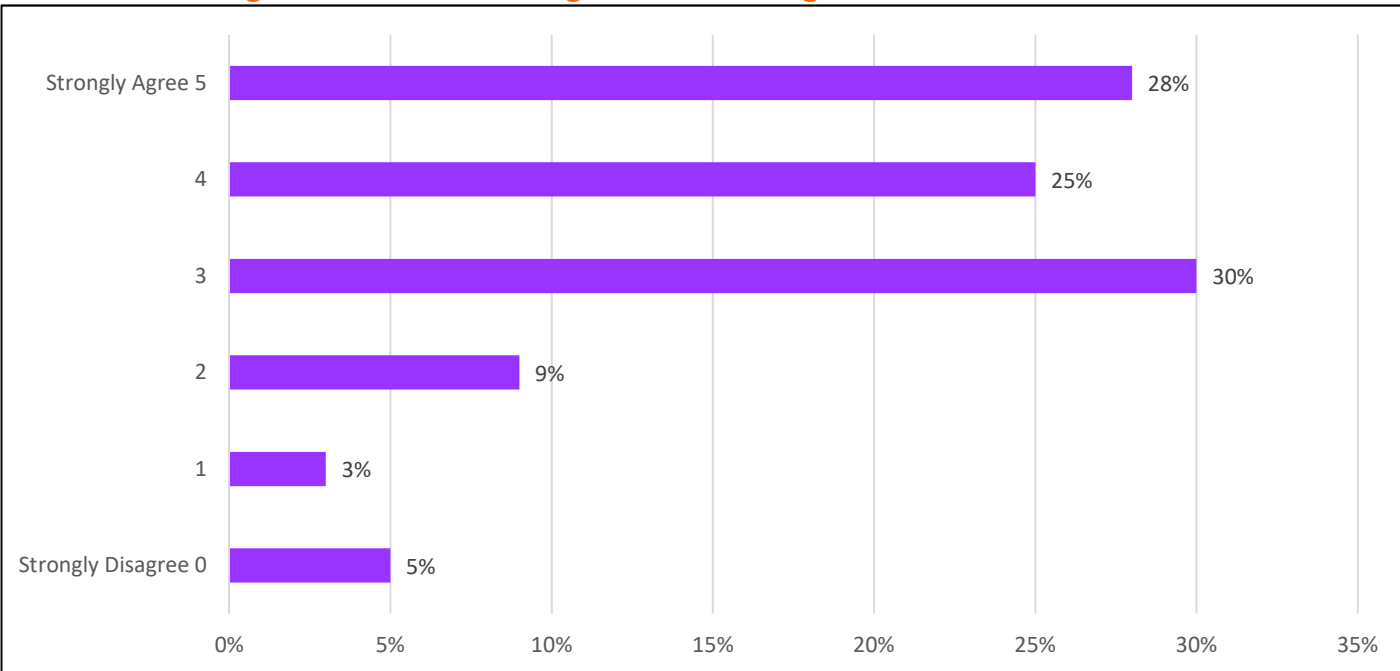
"It made a huge difference when the class are doing shared reading and they have the same book as the class in a tactile version."

"The books have enabled communication with others which has greatly improved her confidence & enjoyment of play sessions."



"Over the years Living Paintings have added really special experiences for Phoebe. We are so grateful to have this resource freely available to us and we very much hope it can continue for us and other families that undoubtedly benefit."

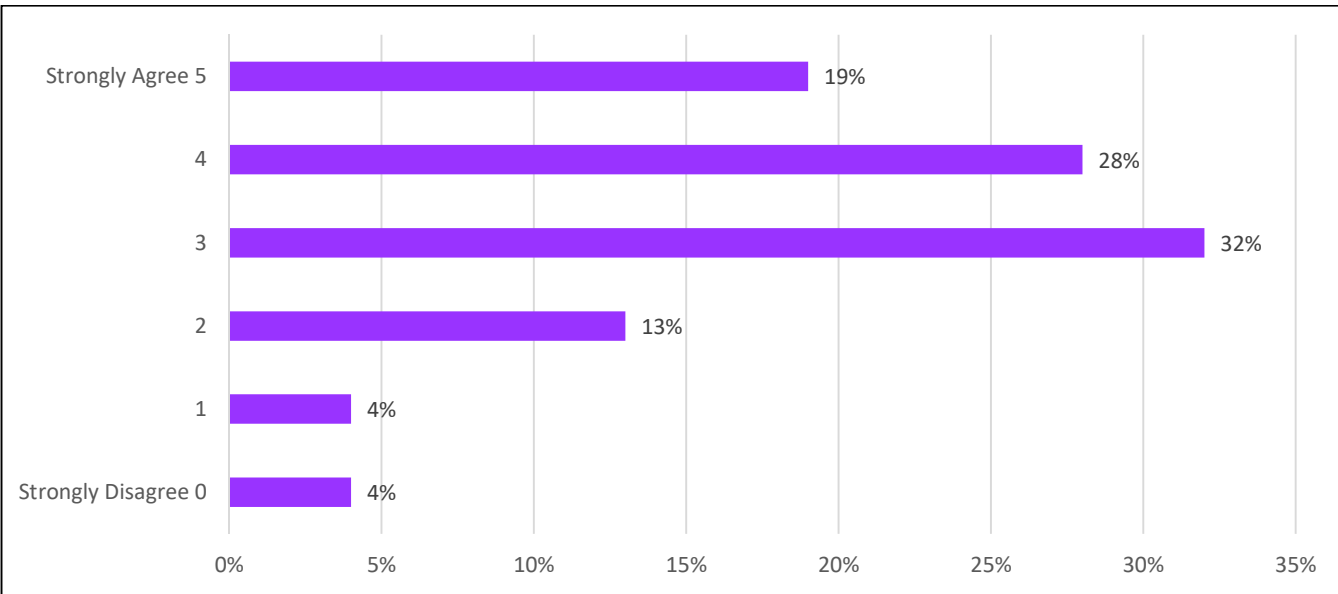
In the last 12 months (or since joining LP Library if less) I feel my child(rens) confidence has grown in the following area – Reading



“The child I work with is starting to read independently, has increased reading confidence and is more motivated to read.”

“My child was very keen to show other family members her reading the Living Paintings book when they came to visit”

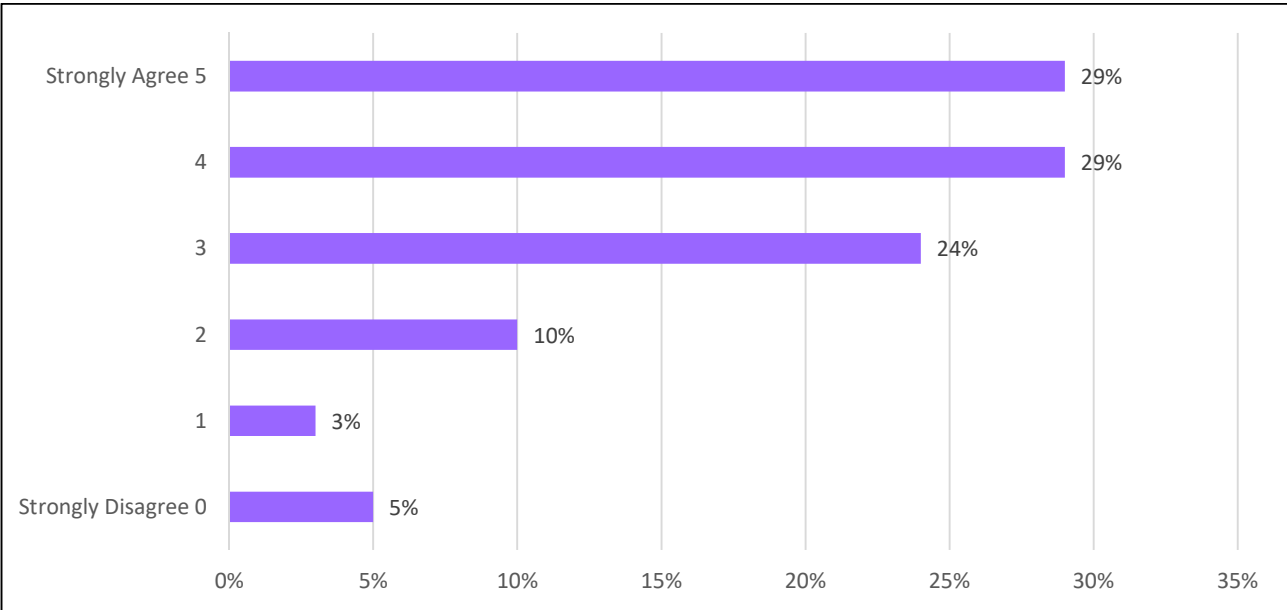
In the last 12 months (or since joining LP Library if less) I feel my child(rens) confidence has grown in the following area – Socialising/Making friends



“My child loves to talk about her books to the other children”

“The student shared a pack with her peers. The whole group benefitted and it helped the student’s social interaction.”

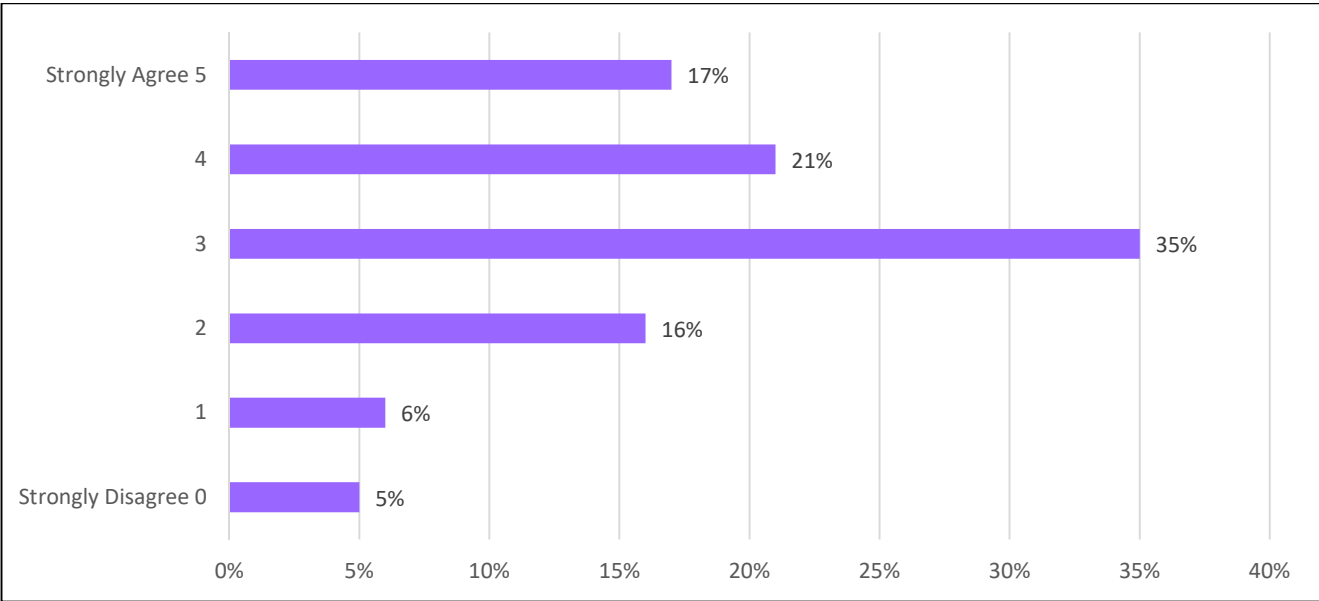
In the last 12 months (or since joining LP Library if less) I feel my child(rens) confidence has grown in the following areas – Joining in classroom activities



“The child is able to talk and laugh with the other children over a book and can work as part of a group during topic based learning to feel included”

“The boy I work with is always so keen to stand up & tell the whole class about the amazing things he has learned after reading the books - he feels he is able to 'see' the images as they do through your brilliant books.”

In the last 12 months (or since joining LP Library if less) I feel my child(rens) confidence has grown in the following areas – Physical Activity



“Jai has been able to recite stories we have read via your books, he is able to tell friends at school about the magical books that he enjoys, and bringing them to life in the playground with imaginary play.”



"I'm in Year 2 and love your books because I love tactile pictures and I can read Grade 2 Braille. Thank you for giving us such amazing books this year. Next year we're going to borrow some more!"



"My daughter's concentration and listening skills are really developing, and we look forward to sharing many more lovely reading experiences together, enabled by such a wonderful charity."

"She really liked 'Fun with Spot' one of the first books we received, and in this particular book she was fascinated by the cut-up toast and the toothbrushes, she enjoyed this book as she could relate it to her daily life."

What difference does Living Paintings really make?

What do Living Paintings Books bring to your child(ren)s life that they didn't have before?

"Understanding and to be able to explore using his hands. The bright colour helps his brain to adjust to what is on the page – it's AWESOME!" Parent

"Tactile information not normally accessible for her. A more multi-sensory experience, therefore enriching her learning experience at school" Teacher

"He can remember parts of the story and make sounds for certain animals when we ask him to." Parent

"Independence, autonomy, access to exploration and experience that is the spark for more and wider exploration and learning. They also inspire staff to develop literacy access by modelling elements of the books." Teacher

"In depth understanding of previously vague subjects to them. Challenge someone to describe the international space station and then listen to what Ted can tell you about it, all thanks to Living Paintings." Parent

"Excitement and conversations she can have with her friends." Teacher

"The opportunity to read a variety of books." Teaching Assistant

"Connects child with classroom learning, especially when things are very visual in content, e.g. the human body. Sighted peers enjoy using the resources alongside the blind child which supports social inclusion." Teacher

"The tactile images are so important to help creativity in a world they cannot see. The audio descriptions are excellent, these books help in lesson preparation and save so much time." Teacher

"The ability for us as Father and Daughter to read together, enhancing our quality time" Parent

"Access to story books and the imagery that helps develop imagination and understanding. To be treated the same as fellow students." Teacher

"Options. A more level playing field. A smile on their faces." VI Teacher

"I think they feel loved." Parent

"To be able to use better descriptions & help make words more real." Parent

Parts of our survey asked for free flow, anecdotal responses. Here is a selection of some of the comments made:

“You’re all amazing – we’d be lost without you!” Teacher

“Thank you so much for the books and learning packs, I hope your service can continue all of Jacob’s life.” Parent

“Our pupil was delighted that something chosen specifically for him, has been used with his whole class and for an assembly.” Teacher

“Due to the tactile and multisensory approaches within the resources, our pupils are enabled to develop a real sense of their world, using the other senses in a safe environment, enabling them to rehearse situations they may experience in real life and discuss ways they would be able to manage / navigate the world in which they live.” Teacher

“Our student is really keen and wants to learn, she is always curious about feeling the pictures. When we have listened to the audio it has been great to see her slowly concentrate on each part of the picture and really start feeling the images from left to right in preparation for braille.” Nursery Teacher

“Without Living Paintings, he would never experience sharing books in a physical way. Having learning difficulties meant that books didn't have any meaning and now they bring a story, characters and something to share with another person.”

“Your books have been fundamental to enable us to provide our pupils with access to books their peers are accessing with high quality tactile pictures and braille. It has also been vital for parents who have accessed books at home.” QTVI

“We borrowed books about the solar system during a school topic & took them with us on a visit to the planetarium. Holding the tactile drawings on his lap to touch during the show really brought the presentation alive for him & he was one of the first children in the class to learn the planets in order.” Teacher

“After using the accompanying audio CDs, we noticed our son began humming tunes, something he had never done before.” Parent

“My older daughter loves listening to the descriptions again and again. She can build up a deeper understanding of the world around her which sighted people take for granted through seeing. Descriptions of scenes and actions happening that cannot be touched or have no relation to what is nearby and can be learnt about through tactile interaction are invaluable to her.” Parent

Case Studies

As an extended part of our monitoring and evaluation process we undertook a number of case studies with our library members and have selected four to share with you here.

Sarah, VI Teacher

The books and topic packs provided by Living Paintings are fabulous. They allow children with vision impairment to access the same books as their sighted peers and to share them with their school friends, siblings and families. The added bonus of the CDs or USB sticks with the descriptions or the story mean that the children can also access them independently.

The two children I have used them with most recently are both in primary school. The older child is aged 10. She has experienced rapid sight loss in the last 3 years and is now blind. Her sight loss is part of a recently diagnosed wider condition which impacts on her mobility and learning too. She really enjoys receiving the Living Paintings boxes with the books in and is always excited to open them and find out what is inside. She has benefitted from the topic boxes, such as the Tudors and loves listening to the CDs with the descriptions and explanations of the images. She listens to them carefully and follows her way around the tactile pictures. The topic boxes are particularly useful for her as it gives her greater understanding of the images that the other children in her class are using. They reflect the topic well and it is great how a character from the era narrates the descriptions and explains how the object was used in their time.

She also really enjoys the story books and I often choose stories with which she was familiar when she could see. She enjoys reading the braille and exploring the images and has also read one or two of the books to the children in reception class so they can see the braille and the tactile pictures too, this helps the wider school community to understand how braille allows her to access books. The child also enjoys taking the story books home as her younger sister can share them with her too.

Laura, Adult working with VI children

The books and packs provided by Living Paintings are not only unique but a real lifeline to many of the children that we work with, opening up a world of education, interest and understanding in a fully accessible way.

When we learn about the world around us, 80% of this is done so through our sight. Without this, Vision Impaired children need a huge amount of extra stimulus through touch, sound and other senses to make sense of their world. They need to work much harder to achieve this understanding and those caring for and teaching them need to find creative ways to enable this. Living Paintings fills this gap in a very wide variety of subjects, giving these children a real window to the world. We use Living Paintings resources to supplement the activities we provide and this enables the children to get the very most out of all they do.

Imogen



Imogen is 10 years old and has been a member of our library since January 2016.

Imogen's mother says "Imogen has congenital nystagmus and is registered blind. Due to her low level of vision and nystagmus, Imogen is a cane user, brailist and touch-typist. She has an access worker at school to help with adapting educational materials. Imogen has very sporadic and reduced peripheral vision and is photophobic meaning that she struggles in varying light levels and with depth perception.

Imogen is a happy and sociable girl who loves spending time with her family and friends, this can be in places such as the park, restaurants and at 'brownies' to name a few, she's a busy bee.

Imogen's visual impairment affects her accessing what a lot of us take for granted, all the coincidental learning, for example on a car journey you can commonly hear "look there's a cow in the field", "oh yes mummy, a moo cow" is what you'd expect 'normally' but for Imogen she can't see the cow so doesn't know where it is, what it looks like and the shape of it. This means that Imogen needs this to be described to her so she can build an image in her mind. Adults need to use vocabulary to explain what and why so that Imogen can have a bank of explanations to call on when needed - "yes mummy is the cow black and white?" can then be the response.

Living Paintings enables Imogen to hear and create her own images of objects, places, people and things. For example, she can use her sense of touch to feel around the raised pictures and follow the description enabling her to feel the 'checks' in Rupert bears scarf, or sunflowers in Van Gogh's painting. All of this enables Imogen to paint a picture in her 'mind's eye!' These learning experiences are able to be shared with her younger sister and she can recall on these pictures in her mind when sharing and telling stories with friends and in school. Thank you Living Paintings for your collections."

Jai-Ryan

Jai-Ryan is a 6 year old boy who has been a member of Living Paintings since he was 2. Jai was born at 23 weeks and so because of his prematurity he suffered with Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), which causes blood vessels to grow in the Retina, which can lead to blindness.

Jai's mother tells us "Jai had his eyes lasered as a treatment for ROP, which made his eye sight Myopic (extreme short sightedness). When he was just 12 months old he was diagnosed as having Hydrocephalus (fluid on the brain) which swelled and added pressure on to his eyes - this ended with a detached Retina on his good eye (right eye). Jai was operated on for the detachment and he now has a buckle on that eye, but because of the pressure and detachment Jai has also lost sight in that eye. Jai does have some sight in his left eye but as it is extremely myopic, Jai can only see to the end of his nose.



Jai has a wonderful, full life at home. He is independent to an extent at home but he still requires a lot of support. Jai's home life consists of Mum, Dad, and Grandparents on both sides. He also has one uncle, three aunties, 17 cousins and 5 godparents and all of these people feature heavily in his life. There are barriers with having a blind child at home, mixed with a majority of all the people in our family being profoundly deaf - which causes communication barriers for us all, not only Jai.

When it comes to Reading books from Living Paintings, Jai is able to do this with anyone, no matter of their disability. Jai is able to feel his way around the book, and direct anyone that cannot hear or speak the story. Using the DVD enables Jai to take the lead in reading with Dad, but when he is reading with Mum she is able to talk through the book which allows the characters to come to life by acting out their voices and actions, which entices Jai into reading a lot more. The books have been adapted so well, allowing the main characters and objects of the book to come to life. One book can take days to read with a VI child especially one that wants to feel every page.

Jai has such an active imagination, which is brought to life through these books, he also memorises the stories and takes them to his school to act out to his friends in the playground. His school is especially for visually impaired children and Jai and his friends have created a story about going to the moon. When Jai received Goodnight Spaceman from Living Paintings, he was unable to put it down, his imagination went into overdrive, as he was able to feel the planets, rockets, moon and the spacesuits. He truly believes he will be the first blind child on the moon!

It is extremely important to us as a family that Living Paintings continues with the highest support especially for VI readers. We cannot thank Living Paintings enough for bringing our child to life through these books, and for this we are eternally grateful."