

## Writing Roots Evaluation

### SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET

We are looking for primary schools to take part in a **heavily subsidised** randomised controlled trial of **Literacy Tree's Writing Roots** programme, supported by the **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)**.

Half of the participating schools will be randomly selected to implement **Writing Roots** in the **2025-2026 academic year**. While we believe the programme supports children's writing development, this independent evaluation will help us better understand its impact. As part of the study, we will measure children's writing progress.



#### Key partners:

- **EEF** are funding the evaluation.
- **Literacy Tree** will oversee programme implementation and delivery.
- **RAND Europe & University of Leeds** will lead the evaluation.
- All organisations are working in **close collaboration** to ensure a robust and supportive trial experience.

If your school is interested in taking part, we'd love to hear from you!

#### What is Writing Roots?

Writing Roots primary focus through its book-based pedagogy is to raise attainment in writing across a school from Year 1-6 by engaging and motivating children to write for a range of audiences and purposes using high-quality, diverse children's literature by significant authors. The training and plans will immerse children in a range of literary worlds and themes, heightening engagement and creating curiosity through process drama, discussion and debate. This allows them to see themselves represented and also explore the lives and experiences of others.

The carefully planned sequences of lessons provide opportunities to explore multiple writing conventions, which are embedded, and apply them into authentic writing for a range of real-life audiences. The writing outcomes are chosen for their pertinence and relevance to the particular point in the text (not chosen for their 'genre'), marrying the writing opportunity with the relevant conventions so that children see the purpose in the skills learnt. Skills and outcomes are revisited to practise and consolidate learning.

All National Curriculum requirements of grammar, spelling, vocabulary, literary language and composition are embedded, leading towards a variety of purposeful and exciting shorter, longer and extended writing outcomes where the audience and purpose is clear.

### **What does the evaluation involve?**

**Starting in September 2025**, this trial will involve 130 schools across the UK, exploring the impact of Writing Roots on writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pupil engagement. RAND Europe (a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision making through research and analysis) and the University of Leeds will be independently evaluating the impact of the Writing Roots programme on **Year 2 and Year 5 pupils**.

### **Summer 2025:**

- You will receive a Memorandum of Understanding and a Data Sharing Agreement setting out the responsibilities of the parties involved in the implementation and evaluation of the Writing Roots programme, and stipulating how data collected as part of the evaluation will be shared between the parties.
- Once signed, the University of Leeds will provide a privacy notice and information sheet to be shared with the parents and carers of eligible pupils.
- Finally, University of Leeds will share a data collection template for you to complete with pupil name, date of birth, unique pupil number, and gender.
- They will also collect writing samples from a writing task administered by teachers based on prompts provided to your school.
- For the purposes of their analysis of the efficacy of Writing Roots, the evaluation team will use Artificial Intelligence to mark scripts to assess pupil's writing.
- University of Leeds will ask you to upload the completed data collection template and any withdrawal forms on Egress – a secure file sharing platform.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Further details of how this will be managed safely can be found in the privacy notice.

- The University of Leeds will also ask your Year 2 and Year 5 teachers to complete a short online survey.

Once this baseline stage is completed, **your school will be randomly allocated by RAND Europe to deliver the Writing Roots programme ('intervention' school) or continue with business as usual ('control' school)**. There is a 50/50 chance of being allocated to either group. Completing the evaluation activities, even if allocated to the control group, is essential for us to understand the impact of the programme.

#### **During the trial:**

- The University of Leeds may ask to visit your setting to conduct observations of a writing lesson in Year 2 or Year 5 and interview selected staff (usually the Year 2 or Year 5 teacher and a member of the Senior Leadership Team).
- During this visit the evaluation team will be asking some schools to facilitate a small focus group of either Year 2 or Year 5 children and would like to see (and photograph) examples of their work in their exercise books.
- At the end of the academic year (Summer 2026), an assessment administrator from the University of Leeds will visit each school to administer a second writing task for Years 2 and 5. A self-efficacy survey will also be carried out in Year 5 classes. Invigilators have DBS clearance, have completed safeguarding training, and are used to working with children.
- Year 2 and Year 5 teachers will again be asked to complete a short online survey.
- For schools in the intervention group, teachers may also be asked to complete an additional survey in Summer 2027 to follow-up on teacher experiences of using Writing Roots.

#### **Schools are eligible to participate if they:**

- Are a primary school with all year groups from Year 1 to Year 6 (whole primary school).
- Are not participating in the following EEF trials: Pathways Literacy, Power of Reading, The OTTO Club or Rehearsal Room Writing
- Are not participating in any EEF whole-school trials
- Are not delivering or planning to deliver Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) provision
- Are not currently using Literacy Tree's Writing Roots programme
- Have not used more than two of Literacy Tree's products over the past two years

- Are not participating in any Literacy programme or training, and haven't for the past two years (including individual year group programmes)

### Why participate?

#### Intervention Group Schools:

- Receive over £3,500 worth of **resources, books, and training** for a heavily subsidised cost of approximately £500.
- Benefit from hands-on support from Literacy Tree consultants.

#### Control Group Schools:

- Receive a £500 payment for participating in the trial.
- Stay in touch with Literacy Tree and enjoy the opportunity to join at a reduced rate once the trial concludes.

#### All participating schools will:

- Be part of research aimed at improving writing outcomes and pupil engagement in primary English.
- Help shape the future of literacy teaching with evidence-based insights.

### What will be expected from intervention schools?

1. Whole-School Engagement: Adopt the Literacy Tree approach across all year groups (1-6), embedding it into the school's literacy teaching.
2. Data Collection: Support data collection to measure the approach's impact (training and guidance provided). There will be evaluation measures (writing assessments) in place for Year 2 and Year 5.
3. Training Participation: Ensure teachers attend professional development sessions provided by Literacy Tree.
4. Commitment: Stay engaged throughout the trial.

### Support you'll receive:

- Training and Resources: Comprehensive training sessions, tailored writing plans, and lesson templates for all year groups.
- Consultant Access: A dedicated Literacy Tree team to address challenges and answer questions.
- Regular Check-Ins: Continuous support to ensure successful implementation.

- **Post-Trial Opportunities:** Both control and treatment groups will benefit from a continued relationship with Literacy Tree. Post-trial treatment schools can continue membership with Literacy Tree, whilst control groups can start their Literacy Tree journey.

### What will be expected from control schools?

- **Data Collection:** Support data collection to measure the approach's impact (training and guidance provided). There will be evaluation measures (writing assessments) in place for Year 2 and Year 5.

### How will data be used?

All data will be treated with the strictest confidence – your school, staff and the children you look after will not be identified in any report arising from the research.

RAND and the University of Leeds are Joint Data Controllers and data processors for this evaluation. Their legal basis for the evaluation is “legitimate interest” and “performance of a task carried out in the public interest”.

The University of Leeds will retain anonymised data relating to lesson observations, surveys, interviews and pupils focus groups indefinitely for future research and teaching purposes. All personal information and any other data held on the project will be securely deleted one year after project completion. For research and archiving, RAND will share pseudonymised assessment data with the Department for Education, the EEF's archive manager, the Office for National Statistics and potentially other research teams. **A project-specific privacy notice will be provided with further details.**

At the end of the research project, this data will be submitted to the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service in the EEF data archive (this is managed by FFT Education). This will include data only identifiable to the Department for Education and no information will be archived that could be used to directly identify individual pupils (for further information, see [EEF's archive privacy notice](#)). Further matching to the National Pupil Database (NPD) and other administrative data may take place during later research.

### Timeline

<b>Expression of interest deadline</b>	May 2025
<b>MOU to be signed</b>	June 2025
<b>Baseline assessment writing task &amp; baseline Year 2 and Year 5 teacher on-line surveys</b>	June 2025

<b>Randomisation of settings into intervention and control groups. Inform settings of randomisation allocation</b>	July 2025
<b>Delivery of INSET online for whole school Year 1-6 (intervention schools only)</b>	September 2025
<b>Writing Roots programme delivery. Teach Through a Text year group specific training October and January (intervention schools only)</b>	September 2025 – June 2026
<b>Selected school visits by University of Leeds</b>	February – April 2026
<b>Endline assessment &amp; endline Year 2 and Year 5 teacher online surveys</b>	June – July 2026
<b>Intervention schools offered continued Literacy Tree membership</b>	July 2026
<b>Control group offered Literacy Tree membership for next academic year</b>	July 2026
<b>Initial report on impact of Writing Roots on Year 2 and Year 5 writing</b>	Spring 2027
<b>Follow-up online intervention teacher survey</b>	June 2027
<b>Final findings published (Year 6 SATs and teacher survey)</b>	Spring 2028

## Next Steps

To express your interest in participating, complete the [Expression of Interest Form](#) where you will:

- Provide key information about your school.
- Indicate your readiness to participate in the evaluation of Writing Roots.
- Indicate your availability for an introductory call to discuss the project with a member of the Literacy Tree delivery team.

This is a unique chance to revolutionise your school's literacy teaching while contributing to a major research initiative.

For further information, contact the team on at [eef@literacytree.com](mailto:eef@literacytree.com) or to find out more about what we do, visit our website at [www.literacytree.com](http://www.literacytree.com).