

Get Hounslow Writing Evaluation Report 2024/25

Pedagogical underpinning for Get Hounslow Writing

There has been a 26% decrease in writing for enjoyment since 2010, and in 2023 only 34% of children and young people aged 8 to 18 enjoyed writing in their free time. The situation is the same for teachers, with only 56% enjoying writing compared to 89% enjoying reading (National Literacy Trust, 2024). Teachers who enjoyed writing were also more confident in teaching writing and teachers who identify as writers provide more powerful classroom writing instruction, yet few teachers place their writer identity central to their practice. Providing opportunities to develop teachers' writer identity is crucial because, when teachers write, they understand the ways of their writers (Cremin & Baker 2010; Cremin & Oliver 2017; Myhill et al 2021).

Project Aims

Developing the 'will' to be a writer and build a network of teacher writers:

- To consider the value of writing to support teacher wellbeing
- To shift in position of being a teacher of writing, to a writing teacher
- To develop confidence in sharing writing and providing feedback to peers
- To understand how to develop a classroom community of writers
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the writing process, the craft of writing and how to integrate these into planning
- To explore and value cultural writing experiences

Attendance and engagement

The five GHW sessions were divided into Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 groups. There was a fairly even split of attendees between KS1 and 2 with 16 and 17 teachers respectively. Over the course of the year this number dropped by 6, reasons given were mostly to do with cover issues – either for the attending teacher, or that teacher was now needed to cover other classes. All teachers engaged fully with the project, engaging with writing within sessions, completing gap tasks and sharing how they had implemented their golden nuggets of practice. The GHW padlet was used very effectively as a one-stop shop for sessions, resources, and additional pedagogy and readings. Some participants also posted their own writing in this space. The majority of teachers completed baseline and repeat end of project surveys for the children in their class, with less doing this for themselves. The number is large enough to enable analysis of changes in attitudes regarding enjoying writing, and writer identity.

Baseline and end of year survey comparisons: children

Similar numbers of responses were recorded for the baseline (31) and end of year (25) surveys.

Writer identity

This is a key aim of the GHW project. There were no children who initially identified as not being a writer, but some felt they were not very good at the start of the project whereas no children felt that way at the end. The percentage of children who identified as good or OK writers increased by 16%. This demonstrates a positive shift for all children in the key area of their own writer identity, with all children developing their positive view of themselves as writers.

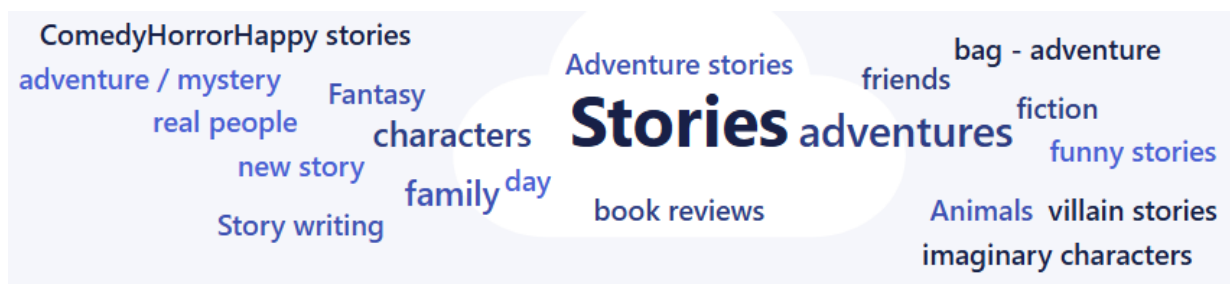
Writing for enjoyment

45% of children started the year loving writing, and this number had increased by the end of the year. Additionally, fewer children stated that writing is OK to do and zero children ended the year saying they were not bothered or didn't like writing, a decrease of 10%.

Importantly, children are now writing for enjoyment more frequently; 90% writing for enjoyment in the last month compared to a baseline of 65%, with only 10% in the last three months, and 0% in longer time frames.

The survey questions asking about the kinds of writing they do in their own free time, and what they like to write about produced similar results. Stories increased in popularity (27% and 36% respectively) with a wide range of writing still being enjoyed.

Baseline responses



End of year responses



Children did not enjoy 'long' writing and handwriting, but in the end-of-year survey this was joined by newspaper reports, persuasive writing and 'diaries about other people'.

Additionally, when asked if they thought their teacher knows about what they are interested in writing about, there was a marked increase from baseline to end of survey with 'yes' moving from 44% to 75%.

In both sets of surveys children continued to mostly enjoy writing at home including their bedroom and garden, closely followed by school including the playground. Other places focused on the environment being calm, quiet or safe. This could link to children's perception of how writing helps with their wellbeing with a large increase of 25% agreeing 'yes' and a 24% decrease of children not being sure. Cultural writing could also link to this; children said their daily opportunities to write about different cultures increased (7% - 14%), and those who responded 'hardly ever' decreased from 21% - 9%. However, children responded that cultural writing opportunities within a week or month decreased over the year, a point to consider moving forward.

Sharing writing

All children were sharing and talking about their writing with their classmates by the end of the year, most commonly 'sometimes' increasing by 24% and 'several times a week' increasing by 16%. By the end of the year, no children responded that they hardly ever shared their writing.

Their teacher as a writer

Children continued to hear their teachers share their thinking as they write with small increases in the number of children experiencing this 'a lot' or 'sometimes'. By the end of the year, this was the case for all children with no children responding 'a little' or 'never'. Regarding teachers sharing their own writing for enjoyment with the children, there was an 11% increase by the end of the year of this happening 'within the last month', with a decrease across longer time periods. However, the number of children saying that their teacher never shared their writing for enjoyment with the class remained static at 12%, another point to consider moving forward.

The children were asked to describe their teacher as a writer. Those enthusiastic teacher-writers who love to write and to do so when they have time had clearly communicated this enjoyment to their class before the start of GHW with these numbers remaining broadly the same (58/59%; 29/32%). The number of children who felt their

teachers wrote because they had to and that their teacher may be a writer decreased over the year, and no children ended the year not knowing that their teacher is a writer.

Baseline and end of year comparisons: teachers

The teacher survey was divided into two parts: the teacher personally as a writer, and then as a teacher-writer. Half the number of teachers completed the end of year survey as did the baseline (16/32), however broad comparisons have still been made.

Writer identity

There was a strong shift towards a stronger personal writer identity with 33% of teachers rating themselves as 6 or under on a 1-10 Likert scale at the baseline, and none doing so at the end of year survey. Those teachers rating themselves as 9 or 10 on the scale continued to hold that strong positive identity with the biggest movement being into the 8 rating where 24% of teachers started the year, and 56% finished.

The teachers also rated themselves as writers. None saw themselves as poor or non-writers, and over the year the amount who identified as moderate decreased, whilst very good writer identities increased by 16%.

How the teachers thought their pupils viewed them as writers reflected this with the largest percentage being enthusiastic, love writing and keen when they have the time at baseline with 67% and end of year 94%. Although 20% of teachers thought at the baseline that their pupils would see them as writing because they have to as a teacher, or not considered this concept at all, by the end of year no teachers thought this. This reflects the data collected from the children's surveys.

Writing for enjoyment

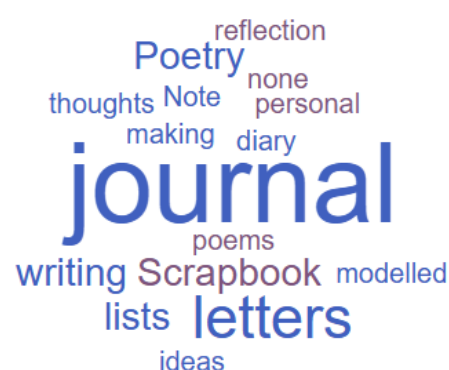
All teachers initially rated themselves as 6 or above on a Likert scale of enjoying writing. Over the year the percentage at this lower end dropped, with a large increase at the upper end of the enjoyment scale of 16%. The frequency of writing for enjoyment has increased considerably, with a positive upward movement of 75% of teachers writing for enjoyment in the last month; and the 33% who never or infrequently wrote for pleasure now all do so.

The types of writing that teachers enjoyed writing in their own time did not vary too much over the year, with journaling continuing to be the most enjoyed type of writing for enjoyment amongst the teachers.

Baseline



End of year



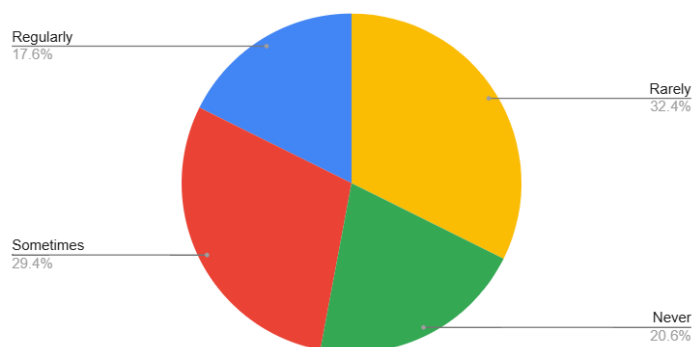
Teachers have begun to develop their perceptions of the benefits of writing for wellbeing with small positive movement away from the lower end of the Likert scale, and increasing at the upper end. The middle section however remains fairly static.

Confidence in providing culturally inclusive writing opportunities has also increased: 21% of teachers in the baseline said they were not confident which moved to 0% over the year, and there was a near doubling of teachers feeling very or fairly confident to provide these up to 88%. This is slightly at odds with the children's survey responses and is an area to consider moving forward.

This may also link to teachers' knowledge of their pupils' writing interests; baseline responses acknowledging that 42% of teachers rated their knowledge at 6/10 or lower. By the end of year this low level had reduced to 0% with positive doubling of percentage rises in all levels above 6. This positive trend continued with the teachers' perceptions of whether they thought their pupils enjoy writing. 42% of teachers rated pupil enjoyment as 5 or less at the baseline, again reduced to 0% by the end of year. Although no teachers gave a 10, there were large increases from 7-9 from a baseline of 51% to 94%. This teacher perception of pupil enjoyment reflects the children's survey responses.

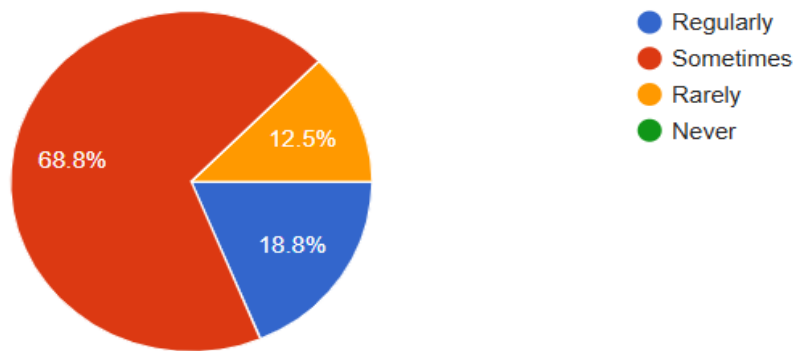
Sharing writing

baseline



These charts demonstrate that whilst teachers' regular sharing of personal writing with other people has remained fairly static at 18%, by the end of the year all teachers shared their personal writing with a decrease in 'rarely' and an increase of 40% in 'sometimes'.

end of year



At the start of the year the majority of teachers either discussed their own writing with their pupils within the last month (44%) or never (38%), however by the end of the year this had shifted quite dramatically with all teachers either discussing their own writing with their pupils in the last month (88%), or in the last three months (12%), however this is at odds with the children's survey responses. Linked to this is teachers discussing their writing and thinking as they live write, good practice which teachers have been doing throughout the year. In line with the children's surveys, by the end of the year teachers were providing pupils with opportunities to discuss their writing with each other daily or several times a week.

Teachers as writers

GHW is set in the pedagogy that teachers who write, teach writing best. Teachers were asked to what extent they felt their behaviours and practices as writers were significant to developing their pupils as writers. The highest Likert rating of 10/10 was given by broadly 52% of teachers in both the baseline and end of year surveys, although 12% rated this significance at 7 or lower. Those teachers who had rated it at the lower end moved their responses to higher levels by the end of the year with all responding at 8 or above. This is a positive indication of the importance the teachers of Hounslow already place on their writer identity in influencing pupils' writer identities and also the shift that has taken place within this knowledge and understanding.



Wider teacher reflections

Teachers were asked three additional questions on the end of year survey. Responses have been grouped into themes as demonstrated by these word clouds and demonstrate the impact that Year 1 of GHW has had on teacher writer identity; how this project has inspired them to adapt planning accordingly; and the wide ranging impact that teachers participating in GHW has had on their pupils as writers.

To what extent has GHW impacted you (teachers) as a teacher-writer?



To what extent have you adapted planning in school?



What impact has GHW had on your pupils as writers?

Moving forward: areas for development

Teacher participants

Many responded that they thoroughly enjoyed the year and had nothing to add. Suggestions that were made focused around more opportunities to share gap tasks and writing; and to partner more with other schools. A few participants would also like more ideas and writing activities, potentially given at the start of the year; and also to have a mixed KS1 & 2 session to hear about writing across the school.

Areas identified within survey analysis

Both children's and teachers' surveys were extremely positive regarding the impact GHW has had on writer identity and writing practice in school, however there were three areas of which warrant attention. Firstly, there is discrepancy between surveys regarding culturally inclusive writing with 88% of teachers stating they feel very confident to include this; however, children stated that their opportunities for cultural writing on a weekly or monthly basis decreased over the year (although daily increased to 14%). Secondly, there was greater movement in the children's surveys than the teachers regarding the benefits of writing for wellbeing, with teachers being fairly static in their response. Finally, although all teachers stated that they share their writing with their pupils, this was not the children's perception.

It will be worth digging into these further to explore the reasons for the discrepancies, and making the importance and impact more explicit within sessions for the next cohort.

Moving forward: into Year 2

GHW is a 3 year project, with a new cohort starting in October 2025. Areas identified from this evaluation report will feed into any session changes made for this cohort. The finishing first Year 1 cohort will now progress on to become Year 2 writing ambassadors.

Year 2 writing ambassadors will take the pedagogy and practice from GHW and develop this to impact change within their schools. Many participants spoke about expanding the changes they made to their classroom practice into the whole school and over Year 2 ambassadors will be engaging with the action research cycle to do this: they will identify an AREA, PLAN for change, ACT upon this plan and COLLECT DATA to measure success. Throughout the process, we will guide and support ambassadors over 6 sessions, and work more explicitly with four teachers to track their action research.

Some final words

Headteachers reported that pupils in their schools really enjoyed the creative writing opportunities and moving away from just technical aspects. One said *writing for pleasure is as important as reading for pleasure.*

Teachers stated:

It has been a very valuable experience and one I would encourage others to participate in. I am far more aware now of the children in my class and their interests as writers.

I have reflected on why I like writing and tried to create those experiences for the children..[and] to consider different ways of allowing children to engage in the writing craft.

The children have a greater autonomy of what they write about. They now thoroughly enjoy writing.

GHW has impacted me as a teacher-writer significantly. I feel more confident moving forward with leading English because of this course and I hope that colleagues can see themselves more as teacher-writers too.

The St Mary's University Primary English team are delighted with the success of this first year of delivering Get Hounslow Writing and are excited to hear and see the changes to writer identity and writing practices happening in the participating schools. We look forward to repeating the year with a new cohort, and taking action research into writing ambassador schools.

Finola Utton
St Mary's University
July 2025