



# **Birmingham Stories Year 1 Interim Report July 2020**

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## Introduction

This interim report covers the funding of Birmingham Stories by the University of Birmingham from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 – the first of an initial three years of funding. Although there are 6 weeks remaining of the funding year, given the impact of Covid 19 and the forthcoming school holidays it is unlikely that there will be any further significant activities or data captured between now and the end of funding year which are not already referred to in this document. It is anticipated that evaluation data will be strengthened during Year 2 through the Local Annual Literacy Survey as well as other programme related surveys and focus groups which were due to happen prior to Covid 19.

## Background to Birmingham Stories

A Hub is a minimum 10-year commitment to develop a community of confident and ambitious young people with the literacy skills they need to succeed in life. This hub is a local-area approach to breaking the cycle of low literacy and poverty in Birmingham. Founded as a partnership between the National Literacy Trust and the University of Birmingham, it will show the impact that can be made on the literacy levels in Birmingham through research-based programmes, volunteering and bringing new resources to the area.

While all of our Hubs utilise the findings of the NLT's extensive literacy research, this Hub marks a step-change in our way of working to date. The Birmingham Hub, called Birmingham Stories, is the first Hub to work closely with a higher education institution at every stage of its research, design and execution. The Hub's programmes and approaches will be informed by current and emerging research from this research-intensive Russell Group University, working closely in particular with experts in English Literature, English Language, Creative Writing, Education and Teacher Education. Through the Hub, the NLT's research team and UoB will also co-produce new research, including analysis of the effectiveness of the hubs model to date that will enhance the way we work in future. The Hub will realise the potential of the wider university – from raising aspirations in local schoolchildren to fostering student engagement with the community – to show the transformative effects that a civic institution can have on the educational aspirations and attainment of its home city and region. The Hub will focus on priority groups in specific areas in order to maximise our impact, and will also have wide-reaching benefits by bringing to the city a range of existing NLT programmes that engage early years, primary and secondary school students.

## Our Vision

Birmingham Stories brings together the expertise of the National Literacy Trust and the University of Birmingham to deliver a new kind of Literacy Hub. Academic research and the resources of a civic university are deployed through a Hub to raise the literacy levels of teenagers and adults facing significant challenges. Building on the growing evidence of the role of emotions, empathy, the power of storytelling and the potential of digital technology, the Hub seeks to widen the definition of reading well and to promote a more holistic sense of the reading experience. Through community engagement, volunteering and regional campaigns Birmingham Stories will help people to improve their life chances and break the cycle of poverty; it will also foster new collaborative research to shape the experience of future generations.

## Key Goals

The Outcomes Framework sets out the key goals for the Hub:

1. A city-wide campaign to promote a love of reading building on the growing evidence of the important role that emotions, empathy, story writing and digital can play.
2. Raise literacy levels among teenagers (working through settings).
3. Raise literacy levels among teenagers (through working directly/digitally with them)
4. Raise Literacy Levels in Adults and Families (through working directly/digitally with them).
5. Building the research base in literacy and the experience of fiction through new collaborative research by UoB and NLT.
6. Partnership working with UoB and wider community and business networks across Birmingham.

Where possible the work of the Hub will target activity in 5 wards of Birmingham, identified based on need: Erdington, Nechells, Aston, King's Norton North and King's Norton South.

## The benefits of an innovative collaboration

Birmingham Stories represents the first time that NLT has collaborated with a HEI to establish a hub, and research is at the heart of its work. Unlike other hubs where, typically, a local authority funder effectively commissions the NLT to work in the region, this hub is envisaged as a research partnership. Several of its key programmatic activities are based in research conducted in the School of English, Drama and Creative Studies, and researchers from both organisations have worked closely together to refine these UoB-led projects, to update existing NLT programmes and to devise brand new initiatives, all of which are then rolled out across in the city.

From the outset, the National Literacy Trust and University of Birmingham agreed that a central aim of the hub was to learn from one another and to inform one another's practice. During Year 1 this has led to a unique governance structure being established which enables the various parts of both organisations to collaborate and meet regularly through co-chaired working groups around themes such as research, fundraising and partnerships and communications. Indeed, this is the first time an NLT hub has featured a separate Research Committee, ensuring UoB research serves as a cornerstone to any resulting programmatic impacts. These co-chaired working groups (**See appendix 1**) are overseen by the Senior Steering Group which has members from both organisations as well as other external agencies and ultimately feeds into the Funder Reporting Group. This collaborative approach has ensured that, as the programme has developed, the relevant stakeholders have been able to respond to particular needs and to change approaches where necessary; it has also marked a significant shift in organisational practice at the NLT, one which forms the basis of the EDACS-based Impact Case Study 'Birmingham Stories' due for imminent submission for the University's REF 2021 return.

In order to strengthen the partnership working, a number of Task and Finish groups were set up which brought together expertise from both organisations to review the UoB-led and NLT programmes. These groups met three times each to discuss programmes and identify shared practice and identify potential joint working. This resulted in some key changes being made to the Outcomes Framework and a commitment to continuing to joint working around the three areas of working with teachers, teenagers and adults.

There are many examples of how both organisations have effectively worked together and shared links with external organisation to enhance the work of the hub. Potentially the strongest examples can be evidenced below in relation to the response to Covid 19 and the work across both Digital Literacy Champions and Social Media Campaigning. The close working relationships between project leads, communications leads and lead researchers has resulted in high levels of student engagement and has ensured that social media is being used to promote key pieces of research as well as local partner organisations. This gives a strong platform to build on collaborative work in 2020/21.

## Programmes and Activities

During Year 1 Birmingham Stories developed a stable of activities and programmes aimed at engaging target schools and communities. Innovative research based projects have been accompanied by with pre-existing NLT programmes to help inform the practice of each organisation.

## Student Literacy Champions

An innovative adaptation of the Literacy Champions programme which runs across a number of NLT hubs, this is based on recruiting student volunteers from the University of Birmingham to work with schools and adult learning services. Volunteers are then given the training they need to develop engaging storytelling programmes for and act as mentors to inspire reading for pleasure. Building on the research of Dr Kate Rumbold this has included champions supporting adult learners to engage emotionally with texts through Shakespeare.

In 2019/20 42 students signed up as Champions with 25 attending training sessions. This resulted in 10 Student Literacy Champions co-designing and delivering Reading for pleasure sessions in two schools as part of World Book Day with 45 pupils attending and positive feedback received.

In partnership with Birmingham Adult Education Service and the Library of Birmingham, 4 Student Literacy Champions worked with 10 adult learners at the Library of Birmingham on 10th March which included a guided tour of the Shakespeare Memorial Room.

Prior to Covid 19 five schools were signed up for sessions led by the Student Literacy Champions as well as additional dates planned in with Birmingham Adult Education Service. However, these sessions had to be cancelled.





## Digital Literacy Champions

Following on from the high levels of interest from students, young people and adults and in response to Covid 19, Birmingham Stories shifted focus to training up Digital Literacy Champions to promote literacy in their community through digital means.

Since April 2020, 25 Digital Literacy Champions have been trained up and have taken part in over 20 training and co-creation sessions to create content for the Birmingham Stories social media platforms to engage teenagers and adult around literacy. Feedback from the Digital Literacy Champions is included in the evaluation data later in the report.

### Key Evaluation Findings:

- Initial data has been collated from 10 Digital Literacy Champions who completed the post-reflective survey following training.

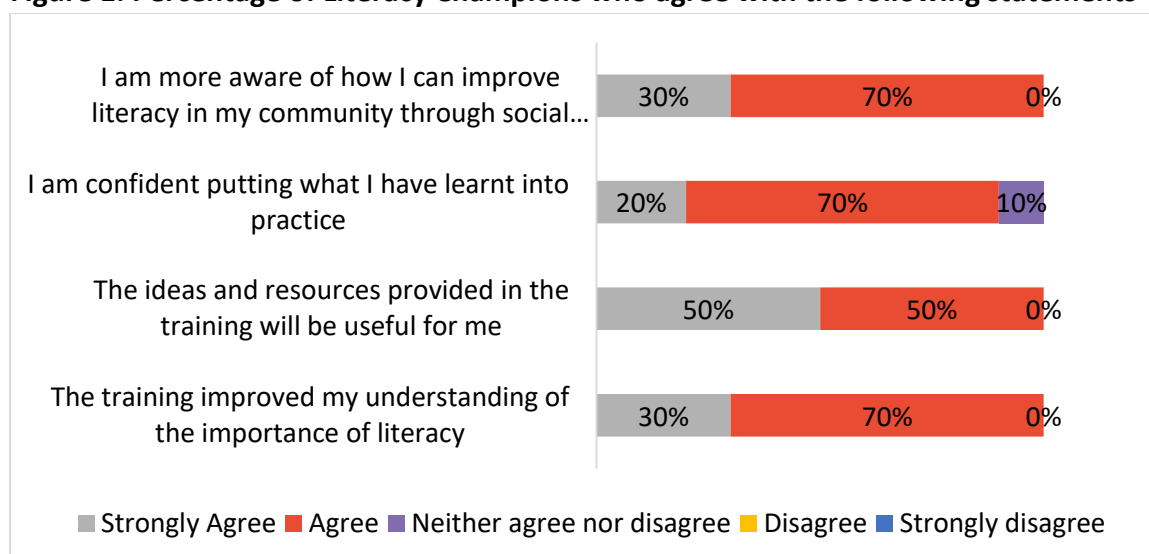
The training was positively received by the respondents. All Digital Literacy Champions rated the training positively, with 50% rating it as “excellent” and 50% rating it as “good”.

- All participants felt that the trainer met the needs of the group, with 90% saying they met them “very well” and 10% saying they met them “well”.
- As a result of the training Digital Literacy Champions now know how they can promote literacy online, with 30% strongly agreeing and 70% agreeing that they are “more aware of how they can improve literacy in the community through social media” (see Figure 1).
- The training enhanced the participants’ understanding of the importance of literacy, with 30% strongly agreeing this was the case and 70% agreeing with this statement (see Figure 1).

“Learning about the aims of Birmingham Stories was incredibly useful and how the project hopes to highlight these through social media. Was then really useful to see a few examples of posts from groups from other areas to gain a bit of insight how this has previously been put into practice.”

Digital Literacy Champion

**Figure 1: Percentage of Literacy Champions who agree with the following statements**



## Story Exchange

Led by Ruth Gilligan and designed by Narrative 4, this project brings together young people from across the hub target wards and uses personal stories to foster empathy, understanding and a sense of self-worth.

The Exchange brings together young people from two different schools to share their stories. Each school recruits 8 students who want to take part from Year 10 and/or 11. A preparatory session is held at each school in advance of the Exchange. The Story Exchange then takes place between the two groups in a neutral space. The programme is completed with a third reflective session held back at each individual school.

In 2019/20 Four schools were signed up to participate in the programme locally with further plans in place to run an exchange with another Hub area drawing upon the Birmingham participants and potential participants in Bradford. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 only one exchange was able to take place between Aston University Engineering Academy and Nishkam High School. The exchange element was held at Edgbaston Cricket Ground with the final review and evaluation session part having to be cancelled.



## Story Writing Competition

A city-wide story writing competition was planned to invite young people to write about their heroes. Due to be launched by Jess Phillips in March the competition has now been moved to October. The young people's writing is to be used as part of Professor Michaela Mahlberg's corpus linguistics research and will study how people write about empathy.

## Literacy for Learning

11 secondary schools in Birmingham are involved in Literacy for Learning, which is a two-year CPD programme focused on developing a community of practice in the leadership and teaching of literacy within the curriculum in secondary schools. The programme has been successful in building effective professional relationships with schools and other strategic partners such as the Birmingham Education Partnership, whose shared goal is to improve literacy, particularly for disadvantaged young people. The majority of training and CPD has been face-to-face. However, in response to Covid 19, the programme moved to an online training model, with 4 sessions delivered virtually this summer. Overall attendance figures at training events this year have exceeded 230 with further evaluation data included later in the report.

The National Literacy Trust evaluated the delivery by administering surveys after each training session, and conducting an online focus group to investigate how the initiative had impacted the professional practices of teachers working in Birmingham. A summary of the findings from the survey and focus group are included below with further details included in **appendix 2**.

### Key Evaluation Findings:

#### GCSE Workshop

- 47 teachers completed the post-training survey following the Literacy for Learning GCSE workshop.
- The training was well received by participants, with 7 in 10 (70.2% saying it was “excellent” and 27.7% saying it was “good”. In addition, 95% of participants would recommend this training to another colleague.

#### Leadership Training

- A total of 18 teachers from Birmingham schools completed the survey for the Leadership Workshop.
- All (100%) of the teachers reported they would recommend the training to colleagues. The participants rated the leadership workshop positively with 43.8% rating it as “excellent” and 56.3% rating it as “good”.
- The training achieved some key learning outcomes: 80% of respondents agree or strongly agreed that the training improved their understanding of issues around literacy leadership (with 26.7% strongly agreeing and 53.3% agreeing).
- 93.3% participants reported they felt confident putting what they had learnt into practice.

#### Oracy Training

- 56 Birmingham teachers completed the post-training survey after taking part in the Literacy for Life workshop.
- All teachers rated the oracy training positively, with 74% rating it as “excellent” and 26% rating it as “good”. Almost all (98%) would recommend the Oracy training to other schools or settings.



### Language and Writing Training

- 39 teachers working in Birmingham school completed the post-training evaluation.
- 37.8% of teachers rated the training as “excellent” and the remaining 62.2% rated it as “good”. 97.4% of the participants would recommend the language and writing training to another colleague.
- The participants’ understanding of key concepts improved, when asked if their understanding of issues around writing and literacy had improved as result of the training 44.1% strongly agreed and 55.9% agreed.

### Literacy for Learning Birmingham Focus Group Discussion

In May 2020 the Evaluation Team conducted online focus group discussion with six teachers who had been implementing Literacy for Learning in Birmingham. The focus group was recorded and transcribed. Some of the key findings include:

- **Strategic guidance:** Teachers felt that the initial planning phase was highly valuable. Participants mentioned how it was useful to have visits from the National Literacy Trust to discuss how they would strategically implement a literacy agenda in their setting.

I think the in-school support that Helen (Literacy for Learning Lead) has provided has been really valuable, though ... The initial meetings helped us to really think quite critically about what we were trying to do in school think it’s just been really useful to actually have time allocated to think in-depth about literacy, and, also, the cross-disciplinary nature of it – not just having English teachers there, but teachers from across the curriculum, and learning and sharing with them, that was really useful.

- **Cross-curricular approach:** Teachers felt that the initiative had achieved some key outcomes in their setting because it had a cross-curricular approach, and emphasised the importance of literacy to support pupils’ learning across all subjects.
- **Time and space for strategic thinking:** several practitioners discussed how having the opportunity to network with colleague away from the school was valuable and allowed them to think of issues of literacy more strategically.
- **Networking with other schools:** Another valued outcome of the programme was the opportunity to network with other professionals in the area, and learn best practices from other professionals.

“it’s that peer space, the balance between having lots of information that’s really useful at the training alongside time to work with peers across different schools, and then our different subject specialists can work in small groups there, and then bring it back to the school.”

## Young Birmingham Poets

We work with secondary schools, inspiring young people to write and share poetry. 10 classes of KS3 students have enjoyed a memorable day out our partner venues, The MAC, Library of Birmingham and Edgbaston Cricket Ground. Poets were visiting schools when lockdown was announced.

This programme involved working with secondary schools to get students writing and performing their own poems. Students from Key Stage 3 enjoyed a memorable day at partner venues such as The MAC, Library of Birmingham and Edgbaston Cricket Ground.

In 2019/20 6 schools took part in the programme including attending a day's CPD and supporting students to attend the memorable experience visits. Local poets were due to go into schools to inspire students with their poems before this was cancelled due to Covid 19. This will resume in 2020/21 with young people's poems being recorded and turned into an audio book in partnership with Audible.



## Words for Work: Post 16

Where possible the National Literacy Trust aim to bring in relevant programmes to Birmingham to support the wider work of the hub, Words for Work is focussed on working with teenagers around employability so had a natural fit with the hub outcomes.

Words for Work challenges the inequality in employment opportunities for young people, giving them the communication skills they need to be successful in the workplace. Research shows that young people entering the workplace often lack the speaking and listening skills

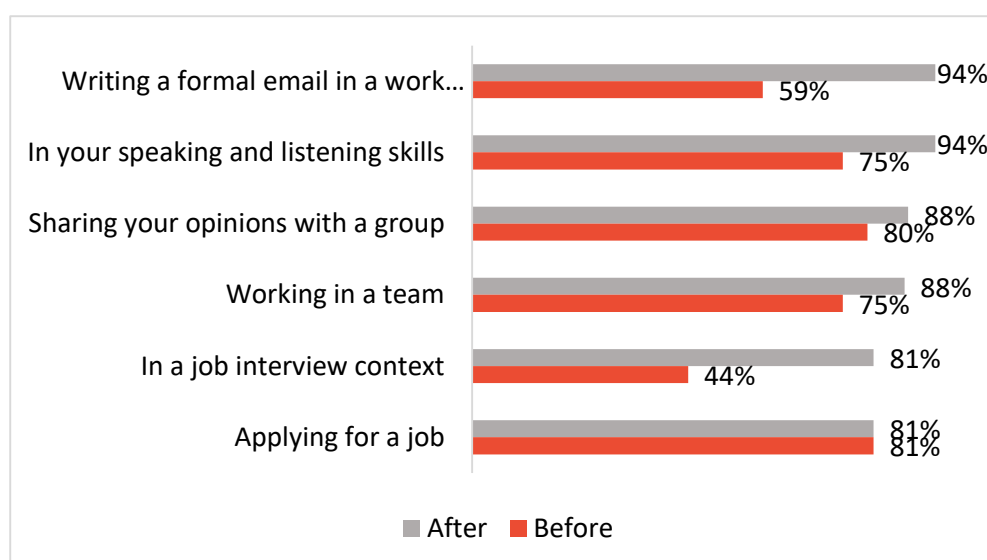
to communicate successfully. The programme improves young people's oral and written communication skills through activities lead by teachers and supported by corporate volunteers, giving young people confidence in their own abilities and raising their career aspirations. The programme has been designed to work with all post-16 students and is particularly beneficial for functional skills learners.

Words for Work was delivered in Birmingham during the funded period with financial support from local businesses. The Hub manager supported the programme through helping to identify and recruit schools as well as working with the programme manager to support the businesses who hosted the sessions and provided volunteers to help run them. In 2019/20 25 Birmingham students completed the programme, and completed the post programme evaluation.

### Key Evaluation Findings:

- All students rated the programme positively, with 71% rating the programme as 'very good' and 29% rating it as 'good'.
- All (100%) students said they have a better understanding of what may be expected of them in a job interview.
- 94% students said they understand workplace communication better as a result of Words for Work. 81% told us that they now know how to deliver a formal presentation.
- Figure 2 shows student confidence in key employability skills before and after taking part in Words for Work: Post-16. It shows how students told us they were 'quite confident' or 'very confident' before and after taking part in the programme.
- The programme has increased students' confidence in literacy and oracy skills they will need for the world of work. Before the programme 59% of students were 'confident' or 'fairly confident' to write a formal email in a work context, but after the programme this figure increased to 94% (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Impact on students' confidence in their literacy and oracy skills**



## Words for Work during school closure: Behind the cover audio Book Club

In response to school and college closures across the UK, we launched our audiobook club, Behind the Cover, for young women aged 16+.

Behind the Cover uses audiobooks from celebrated women writers to support young women's literacy and wellbeing at home. The books will explore a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences and themes relevant to young women today, to help them navigate this uncertain time.

Our research review shows that audiobooks can benefit young people's reading skills, mental wellbeing and emotional intelligence. They are easy to access during a time when physical books are out of reach for many people.

67 young women based in Birmingham participated in our audiobook club during school closure.

## Campaign and Social Media

Campaigns to raise awareness and affect behaviour change are central to the activities of NLT Hubs. They underpin and amplify the effects of the programmatic activity, as well as extending the reach of the Hub's key messages throughout the community. Much of the campaign work is nudge-based, revolving around key messaging designed with local partners in response to local needs. Central to Birmingham Stories is the idea of creating a city-wide campaign to promote a love of reading building on the growing evidence of the important role that emotions, empathy, storytelling and digital can play.

## The Launch

The Campaign Launch and Stakeholder Launch took place on 18<sup>th</sup> October with over 70 people attending the Stakeholder Launch at the University of Birmingham.

A panel of local role models launched the new campaign in front of 200 school pupils at the University of Birmingham School. The event opened with a speech from Preet Gill, MP for Edgbaston, about the importance of literacy in everyone's lives. The rest of the panel included Aston Villa footballer, Natalie Haigh, member of local singing sensation, Sons of Pitches, Joe Novelli, former Birmingham poet laureate and boxer, Matt Windle, and author and Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, Ruth Gilligan.

Each spoke to the pupils about their own lives and careers, and how stories, books and literacy have helped to get them where they are today. Matt Windle even performed a poem about his own life journey. Pupils then had the opportunity to ask questions to the panel, leading to some fantastic discussions before the event came to an exciting end when

Natalie Haigh handed out free tickets to the Aston Villa v Sheffield United women's game on Saturday 19 October.



## Covid 19 Digital Campaigns

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, campaigns and communications activity had to pivot online. This this was done strategically after careful consultation and collaborative planning with the University with Birmingham Stories Facebook and Instagram launching on Monday 8th June.

Two to three posts a week relate to research conducted by the three research leads, Dr Kate Rumbold (emotions), Professor Michaela Mahlberg (empathy) and Dr Ruth Gilligan (storytelling). The remaining content shares National Literacy Trust resources from Family Zone or Zone In as well as local insights sourced by the Hub Manager. The current focus is working with local Digital Literacy Champions to create authentic, engaging posts that will educate and inspire young adults, adult learners and families.

The #MyBirminghamStory campaign will be launching in the summer with Warwickshire County Cricket Club, asking well-known figures to share their Birmingham stories. There are also discussions with other high-profile local football teams to extend this campaign to their players.

# Campaign Data

## Overview

Birmingham Stories launched on Monday 8 June on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

In just over one month, the two channels have gained a combined following of **90** (29 on Facebook, 61 on Instagram). These numbers are correct as of 9<sup>th</sup> July.

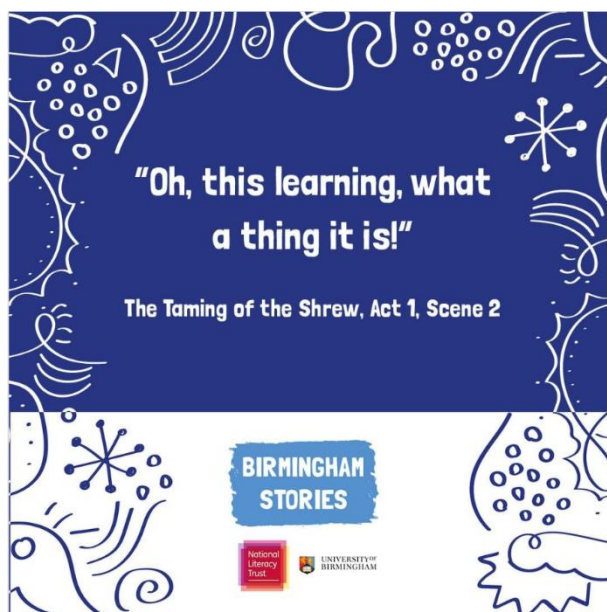
Content has focused on the key themes of empathy, emotions and storytelling. There is a collaboration between key academics and the content. For example, we working closely with Michaela Mahlberg on a series of CLiC inspired prompts, turning insights from the corpus linguistics tool that we hope will engage our primarily teenage audience.

## Facebook: the numbers

- Likes/ followers: **29**
- Total reach since launch: **856**
- Top performing posts: NHS celebration, with a reach of [172](#), Dickens' anniversary ([164](#)), followed by Hari's donation of books ([134](#))
- Ruth's video for National Writing Day was watched 35 times

## Instagram: the numbers

- Followers: **61**
- Total reach since launch: **482**
- Top performing post: Ruth's National Writing Day [video](#) – reach of 69 and 50 views of 1 minute video
- The most shared post is the recent The Taming of the Shrew [quote](#) – shared privately 5 times





## Developing partnerships

Building effective partnerships with local organisations and businesses are vital to achieving system changes through the Hub. Developing and maintaining a network of key partners enables the Hub to broaden reach, build long term capacity within the communities and access new sources of support. In the last year, Birmingham Stories has engaged a wide variety of partners across the education, community and business sectors.

Active partners sit on our Operations group, meeting quarterly, to discuss how to work together as a group around the theme of literacy through engaging activities. This happens by Birmingham Stories influencing existing partner programmes and partners using their networks to widen the scope of our projects.

The Operations group has met twice in 19/20 with 11 community partners attending as well as the Jubilee Centre, School of Education, and the Student Experience team. Collaborative projects have been run with sports teams such as the Aston Villa Foundation, local publishers the Emma Press, and smaller charities like Windswept Workshops (run by two Student Literacy Champions).

As well as engaging community organisations Birmingham Stories has also developed links with the business community through launching the Literacy Business Pledge in December in partnership with KPMG. This partnership and development work is now being done collaboratively with the University through the Partners Group which has met on two occasions.

## Covid 19 Response

As referenced throughout the report, in response to Covid 19 Birmingham Stories adapted delivery to a multi-modal approach. This involved working closely with the University and other partners to identify areas where programmes could be delivered online as well ways to meet the need of vulnerable children and families without access to digital.

The digital response initially centred around National Literacy Trust's national online offerings through Zone In and Family Zone. However, this response has since been developed through local social media channels. This work has been supported by the online recruitment and training of Digital Literacy Champions, who are now creating content aimed at teenagers and adults in Birmingham.

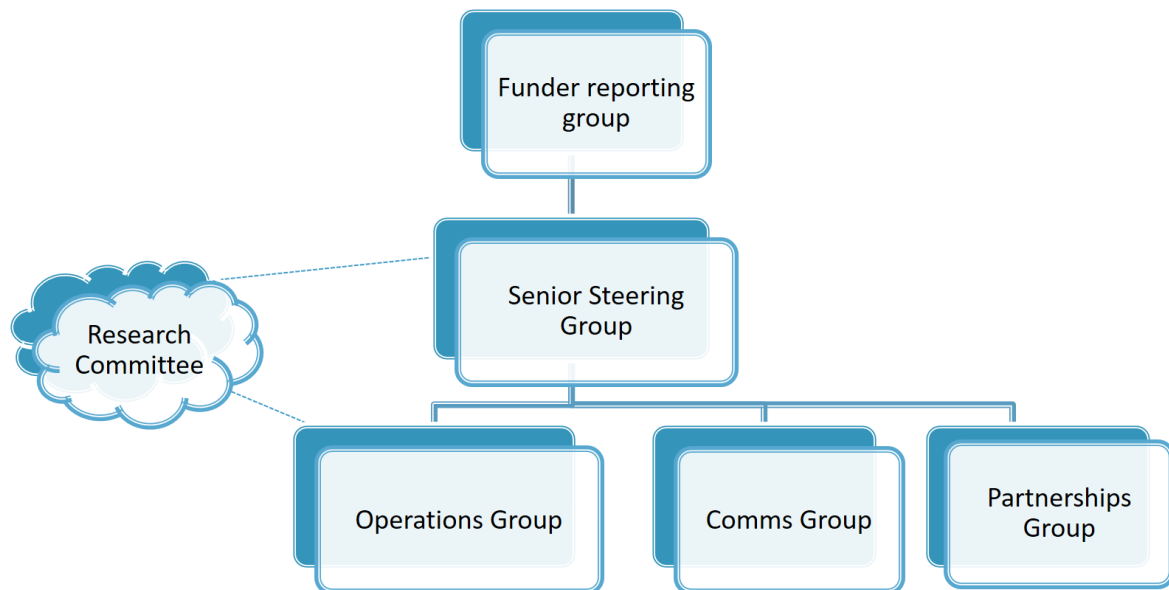
Alongside the digital response, NLT have worked nationally to create physical resources for families and young people as well as partnering with businesses and publishers such as KPMG and Bloomsbury to donate books and magazines. The Hub Manager has then worked with local partners including food banks and community groups to direct these donations to vulnerable families. This has been further supported through securing local funding from the Active Wellbeing Society and building links with local publisher Emma Press. Overall this has meant that over 2,000 resources have been given out through Birmingham Stories with a 2,500 currently in process of being distributed and a potential of a further 9,000 still to be donated to the hub.

## Conclusion

In spite of the challenges of bringing two organisations together and those posed by Covid 19 these initial findings show the value of the collaboration and the positive impact the Hub is already starting to have on Birmingham. Undoubtedly, there is a lot more that the Hub can achieve in the coming years particularly in relation to strengthening links with schools and communities but the groundwork that has been done to link both organisations, the partnership building and the impact of the programmes and campaigns that have been run so far shows a strong positive trajectory.

## Appendix 1: Governance Structure

The diagram below outlines the innovative and collaborative approach to governance in the Birmingham hub.



## Appendix 2: Literacy for Learning Evaluation Findings

The National Literacy Trust evaluated the delivery by administering surveys after each training session, and conducting online focus group to investigate how the initiative had impacted the professional practices of teachers working in Birmingham.

### Key findings from the post-training surveys include:

#### GCSE Workshop

- 47 teachers completed the post-training survey following the Literacy for Learning GCSE workshop.
- The training was well received by participants, with 7 in 10 (70.2% saying it was “excellent” and 27.7% saying it was “good”. In addition, 95% of participants would recommend this training to another colleague.
- The training achieved some key outcomes for participants. Specifically, all participants agreed to some extent that their understanding of literacy requirements of GCSE had improved as a result of the training, with 58.7% strongly agreeing with this statement and 41.3% agreeing.
- Participants felt confident to put what they had learnt into practice in their setting, 53.3% strongly agreed that they felt confident and 46.7% agreeing.

#### Leadership Training

- A total of 18 teachers from Birmingham schools completed the survey for the Leadership Workshop.
- All (100%) of the teachers reported they would recommend the training to colleagues. The participants rated the leadership workshop positively with 43.8% rating it as “excellent” and 56.3% rating it as “good”.
- The training achieved some key learning outcomes: 80% of respondents agree or strongly agreed that the training improved their understanding of issues around literacy leadership (with 26.7% strongly agreeing and 53.3% agreeing).
- 93.3% participants reported they felt confident putting what they had learnt into practice.
- The qualitative feedback was also positive, and teachers emphasised how they valued the opportunity to network with other colleagues:

“Time to reflect, discuss, etc with other colleagues. Project info was very clear and excellent advice”

“The opportunities to network always appreciated. Facilitators clearly experts in their field, delivering relevant and useful material. Interesting thought provoking and good pace.”

#### Oracy Training

- 56 Birmingham teachers completed the post-training survey after taking part in the Literacy for Life workshop.

- All teachers rated the oracy training positively, with 74% rating it as “excellent” and 26% rating it as “good”. Almost all (98%) would recommend the Oracy training to other schools or settings.
- The training increased participants’ understanding how oracy can support learning. When asked if their “understanding of issues around oracy had improved” all participants agreed, with 45.8% strongly agreeing and 54.2% agreeing.
- Participants felt confident to put what they had learnt into practice, with 39.6% strongly agreeing they felt confident and the remaining 60.4% agreeing they were confident.

### Language and Writing Training

- 39 teachers working in the Birmingham Hub completed the post-training evaluation.
- 37.8% of teachers rated the training as “excellent” and the remaining 62.2% rated it as “good”. 97.4% of the participants would recommend the language and writing training to another colleague.
- The participants’ understanding of key concepts improved, when asked if their understanding of issues around writing and literacy had improved as result of the training 44.1% strongly agreed and 55.9% agreed.
- All participant feel confident putting what they had learnt into practice, with 38.2% strongly agreeing and 55.9% agreeing.
- When asked what was the most valuable aspect of the training many mentioned specific knowledge acquired during the day, and several discussed how it was useful to understand how writing can support learning in their subject:

“writing tasks, discussions about register. continuum, how this can be applied in own subject”

“analysing writing styles: genre, purpose, audience, stages and the potential plans that can support these. Teaching sequencing of genres”

### Literacy for Learning Birmingham Focus Group Discussion

In May 2020 the Evaluation Team conducted online focus group discussion with six teachers who had been implementing Literacy for Learning in Birmingham. The focus group was recorded and transcribed. Some of the key findings include:

- **Strategic guidance:** Teachers felt that the initial planning phase was highly valuable. Participants mentioned how it was useful to have visits from the National Literacy Trust to discuss how they would strategically implement a literacy agenda in their setting.

I think the in-school support that Helen (Literacy for Learning Lead) has provided has been really valuable, though ... The initial meetings helped us to really think quite critically about what we were trying to do in school think it’s just been really useful to actually have time allocated to think in-depth

about literacy, and, also, the cross-disciplinary nature of it – not just having English teachers there, but teachers from across the curriculum, and learning and sharing with them, that was really useful.

- **Cross-curricular approach:** Teachers felt that the initiative had achieved some key outcomes in their setting because it had a cross-curricular approach, and emphasised the importance of literacy to support pupils' learning across all subjects.
- **Time and space for strategic thinking:** several practitioners discussed how having the opportunity to network with colleague away from the school was valuable and allowed them to think of issues of literacy more strategically.
- **Networking with other schools:** Another valued outcome of the programme was the opportunity to network with other professionals in the area, and learn best practices from other professionals.

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