

## NewsWise evaluation report 2021-22: Executive summary

The Guardian Foundation, the National Literacy Trust and the PSHE Association developed the NewsWise programme in 2018, which is based on a shared mission to create a generation of news-literate children. The programme aims to empower children with the skills and knowledge to engage with news, to feel confident to ask questions and challenge misinformation, and to share their own values and opinions in a fair, responsible and truthful way. NewsWise provides free high-quality cross-curricular news-literacy education resources, including teacher training and webinars, newsroom-style pupil workshops, opportunities to hear from journalism students and professionals, lesson plans and online resources. Funding from organisations including Google allows the programme to be offered free to all settings teaching 9- to 11-year-olds across the UK.

This document summarises findings from a longer report<sup>1</sup> evaluating the impact of the fourth year of NewsWise from August 2021 to July 2022, a period of continued educational disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New developments included Initial Teacher Training (ITT) sessions, webinar training on talking to children about the news, with a focus on the war in Ukraine, and the adaptation of NewsWise resources for secondary students with special educational needs. During this time, NewsWise reached a total of **1,931**<sup>2</sup> pupils and **477** teachers in **36** primary schools, and **49,884** free resources were downloaded.

Findings from the fourth year of the NewsWise programme suggest it provides effective support for children's news literacy. For example, the percentage of pupils able to correctly identify two or more news stories out of three increased from 49% to 68% after taking part in NewsWise. NewsWise also supported pupils' wellbeing and civic engagement. Almost 3 in 4 (73.7%) teachers agreed it had helped decrease pupils' anxiety about news stories, while 3 in 5 (63.2%) felt it had increased pupils' motivation to make a difference in their community. Furthermore, more than 9 in 10 (96.1%) teachers who took part in a NewsWise teacher-training session said that they would recommend it to other schools. One teacher stated:

**“Our Year 5 and 6 have loved this project. They now have a good understanding of the impact that the media can have on society. A superb example of integrated purposeful learning.”**

In these worrying times, we have a responsibility to help children develop the news-literacy attitudes and behaviours that enable them to engage confidently and critically with the news. These findings suggest the NewsWise programme is an effective way of empowering children to become informed and responsible news consumers and creators.

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<sup>1</sup> Cole, A. Teravainen-Goff, A., Clark, C. and Picton, I. (2021), NewsWise evaluation report 2021-22, London, National Literacy Trust

<sup>2</sup> 1,770 pupils through workshops and a further 161 who were absent for workshops but took part in broader programme  
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## Summary of key findings

### Pupils have improved news-literacy behaviour

- After taking part in NewsWise, more than double the percentage of participating pupils said they would check whether a news story came from a news company or a person they trusted (**34.0%** to **72.2%**). In addition, more than double would check whether a news story was reported by other news companies (**28.4%** to **65.3%**).

### Pupils have increased news-literacy skills

- An increased percentage of pupils could identify whether news stories in a news quiz were fake or real after taking part in NewsWise. Before NewsWise, half (**49.2%**) of pupils scored two points or more out of three in the quiz; this increased to more than 2 in 3 (**68.0%**) at the end of the programme. The percentage of pupils who got no correct answers more than halved, from 13.6% pre- to 6.4% post-NewsWise.

### Pupils are more confident navigating the news

- While a third (**31.1%**) of pupils felt it was 'easy' or 'very easy' to tell whether a news story was trustworthy before taking part in NewsWise, this increased to almost 9 in 10 (**88.2%**) after the programme. This compared with **61.8%** of same-age pupils across the UK (17.0% 'very' and 44.8% 'quite' easy)<sup>3</sup>.

### Pupils have increased interest in the news

- The number of pupils interested in the news almost tripled following participation in the NewsWise workshop, with the percentage of pupils interested in the news rising from **22.3%** to **65.3%**.

### Pupils have an increased critical awareness of the elements of trustworthy news

- After taking part in NewsWise, the percentage of pupils who believed news stories should be balanced increased from **46.6%** to **57.0%**, while the percentage of pupils who felt that news should be truthful increased from **24.8%** to **55.5%**.

### Teachers felt that NewsWise had an impact on pupils' civic engagement and wellbeing

- 9 in 10 (**89.5%**) teachers agreed that taking part in NewsWise increased pupils' engagement with local, national or global issues and 3 in 5 (**63.2%**) agreed it had increased pupils' motivation to make a difference in their community
- 3 in 4 (**73.7%**) teachers agreed that it helped decrease pupils' anxiety about news stories.

### Teachers found the training and webinars to be of high quality

- **99.1%** of teachers rated the teacher webinars as 'excellent' (70.2%) or 'good' (28.9%).
- **All (100.0%)** teachers rated the NewsWise online pre-project training as 'excellent' (73.1%) or 'good' (26.9%) and **100.0%** felt more confident in supporting pupils' news literacy. **96.2%** of teachers agree that their understanding of news literacy improved.

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<sup>3</sup> The Annual Literacy Survey reached 62,193 respondents aged 8 to 18 in early 2022. Comparison is made with 9,369 Key Stage 2 pupils (aged 8 to 11), 7,486 of whom answered a question about news-literacy confidence. 16.0% found it 'very easy', 44.8% 'quite easy', 29.5% 'quite difficult' and 8.8% 'very difficult'.