

Teachers' use of generative AI to support literacy in 2024

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Introduction

Recent developments in technology have accelerated the influence of artificial intelligence (AI)¹ on our lives. The ability of generative-AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude to both ‘write’ (generate new texts) and ‘read’ (e.g. summarise texts) in a human-like manner means they are set to play an increasingly important role in the literacy lives of children, young people and adults. Anticipating this, we are exploring how such platforms might influence, and even redefine, what it means to be literate in the digital age.

Following the launch of ChatGPT3 in November 2022, the potential impact of generative AI² has been of particular interest to those working in the creative industries and education. In November 2023, submissions received as part of a Department for Education (DfE) Call for Evidence suggested many teachers were already using generative AI for routine tasks and supporting learners with EAL or SEND, but they also had concerns about aspects of these tools including bias and inaccuracy (DfE, 2023).

Based on data from our Annual Literacy Survey, this report explores teachers’ attitudes, behaviour and confidence around using AI to support literacy, as well as complementing similar research with children and young people carried out in 2023 and 2024³. Later phases of the research will build on this large-scale trend data from children, young people and teachers to include qualitative findings from interviews and focus groups, and to further include perspectives from academics, business and industry leaders.

Findings from this ongoing research will inform the development of practical training, programmes and resources for schools to support the development of skills in working effectively with AI, such as co-creation and critical evaluation. As generative-AI tools become more pervasive and their capabilities expand and improve, it is essential to develop the evidence base for how this will create new challenges and opportunities for the literacy skills needed to participate in

¹ “The theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence.” (Oxford Reference Dictionary, n.d.).

² Generative AI can “create new content based on large volumes of data that models have been trained on, including audio, text, images and video” (DfE, 2023).

³ See “Children and young people’s use of generative AI to support literacy in 2024” (Picton et al., 2024).

democracy, the economy and society itself. We hope this research will provide timely insight into the influence of generative AI on literacy in the digital age.

Method

In 2024, we surveyed 1,508 teachers⁴ from across the UK, with the majority being from primary and secondary schools⁵. 1,228 teachers answered questions about generative AI as part of a wider survey of literacy provision in their school and their own literacy practices. We were also able to compare this with more limited data from 1,286 teachers in early 2023.

Key findings

Overall awareness and use of generative AI in 2023 and 2024

- Awareness of generative-AI tools and platforms increased considerably over the last year. Almost 9 in 10 (87.5%) teachers said they had heard of generative AI in 2024, compared with 1 in 3 (34.2%) in 2023. Of teachers who said they had heard of generative AI, the percentage who said they had used it increased from 3 in 10 (31.0%) in 2023 to 1 in 2 (47.7%) in 2024.
- More than three times as many secondary as primary teachers said they had used ChatGPT in 2023 (75.6% vs. 19.7%). However, this gap narrowed in 2024, mainly as fewer secondary teachers reported using generative AI than in 2023 (56.8% of secondary teachers compared with 30.9% of primary).
- Among teachers who used generative AI more than once a month, the most popular reasons were trying it out (76.7%), for ideas (53.6%) or to ask questions (50.0%). 2 in 5 (37.8%) had used it to create lesson content and 1 in 3 to generate model answers (34.7%) or for lesson planning (32.4%). Fewer had used it to make quizzes (26.7%), differentiate content (23.1%) or to translate text (10.4%), and just 1 in 20 (4.7%) used it for assessing work.

⁴ We use 'teachers' here as a shorthand to cover any professional working in a school, including librarians and teaching assistants as well as technical and administrative support staff, all of whom were invited to complete the survey.

⁵ First school/infants school n = 30, Primary school/junior school n = 531, Middle school n = 35, Secondary school/high school/upper school n = 781, Sixth form or other post-16 setting n = 39, All-through school n = 32, Other/not answered n = 60.

- Comparing teachers with young people's motivations for using generative AI, many more young people aged 13 to 18 reported using it for fun (74.2% vs 34.7% of teachers), to ask questions (71.0% vs 50.0%), for advice and help with a problem (34.2% vs 9.1%) or for a chat (44.4% vs 2.6%). However, a similar percentage of young people and teachers said they used generative AI for ideas and inspiration (56.6% vs 53.6%).

Teachers' attitudes to using generative AI in 2024

- More than 1 in 3 teachers said they were worried about their pupils using generative AI in both 2023 and 2024 (35.7% vs. 37.7%). Compared with primary teachers, more than twice as many secondary teachers said they were worried about pupils using generative AI in 2024 (45.1% vs 19.7%).

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- While almost 2 in 3 (64.8%) teachers felt generative AI could model good writing for their students, 1 in 2 (48.9%) also agreed that it was likely to have a negative impact on children's writing skills.

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- More than 1 in 2 (56.6%) teachers were concerned that generative AI could stop children thinking for themselves and 2 in 5 (42.3%) felt it could decrease children's engagement with learning. More than 4 in 5 (82.0%) agreed that students should be taught how to engage critically with generative AI tools.
- 3 in 4 (75.3%) teachers said they needed more training, support and resources to use generative-AI tools effectively. While 1 in 2 (50.0%) agreed that generative AI could help support assessment, very few (4.7%,

or 1 in 20) were using it for this purpose. Only 1 in 10 (9.9%) said their school had an AI use policy in place, and just 1 in 14 (7.3%) felt their school had found ways to minimise opportunities to plagiarise by using generative AI.

3 in 5 (75.3%) teachers want more training to use AI effectively, and 4 in 5 (82.0%) feel young people should be taught how to engage critically with generative AI

These findings provide some initial insight into how teachers' use of and engagement with generative AI has changed over the last year, and, together with its companion report⁶, how this compares with children and young people. They suggest that while most teachers have heard of generative AI, only around half have used it, which compares with 3 in 4 children and young people aged 8 to 18. While in 2023, many more secondary than primary teachers had used it, the gap had narrowed in 2024, mostly as fewer secondary teachers reported using generative AI this year. While our data did not allow us to determine the reasons behind this reduced use, we hope to explore this in later research.

Otherwise, many teachers reported using generative AI to experiment, for ideas and to answer questions. In addition, regarding support for a busy workload, 2 in 5 teachers reported using it to create content or resources for lessons and 1 in 3 for tasks such as lesson planning. However, while 1 in 2 believed AI tools could be used to support assessment, just 1 in 20 said they had used it to assess work to date. This may relate to availability or knowledge of effective tools in this area, or expertise and training. Indeed, 3 in 4 teachers agreed that they needed more training, support and resources to use generative-AI tools effectively.

In addition, many teachers were worried about the impact of generative AI on children's learning. 1 in 2 felt generative AI could have a negative impact on writing skills or stop children thinking for themselves, and 2 in 5 were concerned that it could decrease children's engagement with learning. More than 4 in 5 felt students should be taught how to engage critically with generative-AI tools, but

⁶ See Picton, I. & Clark, C., *Children and young people's use of generative AI to support literacy in 2024*, London: National Literacy Trust

just 1 in 10 said their school had policy on generative AI in place, and even fewer (1 in 14) said that their school had found ways to discourage plagiarism.

These findings suggest that, at this relatively early stage in the development and adoption of generative AI, a high number of teachers believe they would benefit from training to improve how effectively they use such tools, while also calling for children and young people to be supported to help them engage critically with generative-AI outputs. Such support is essential to ensure that both teachers and students have the opportunity to gain the vital skills they need to benefit from effective interaction with these new tools.

Teachers' use of generative AI to support literacy in 2024

We first asked teachers about their awareness and use of generative-AI platforms in early 2023, shortly after the launch of ChatGPT3 in November 2022. 1,286 teachers answered questions about awareness and use of ChatGPT (the main generative-AI platform at this point). As shown in Figure 1, 1 in 3 (34.2%) said they had heard of generative AI, and, of this group, 3 in 10 (31.0%) said they had used it. By 2024, while the number who had heard of generative AI had increased to 9 in 10 (87.5%⁷), there was a smaller increase in the percentage of this group who said they had used it, with 1 in 2 (47.7%⁸) saying this.

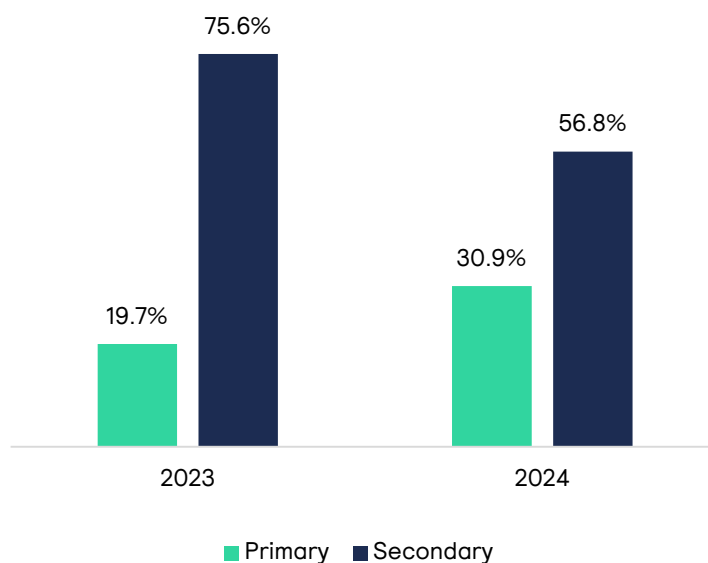
In 2024, nearly 9 in 10 (87.5%) teachers said they had heard of generative AI and 1 in 2 (47.7%) said they had used it

⁷ n = 1,228

⁸ n = 586

More than three times as many secondary as primary teachers said they used ChatGPT in 2023 (75.6% vs. 19.7%, see Figure 1). However, by 2024, this gap had narrowed, mostly because of a drop in the percentage of secondary teachers saying they had used it (56.8% reported using it, compared with 30.9% of primary teachers).

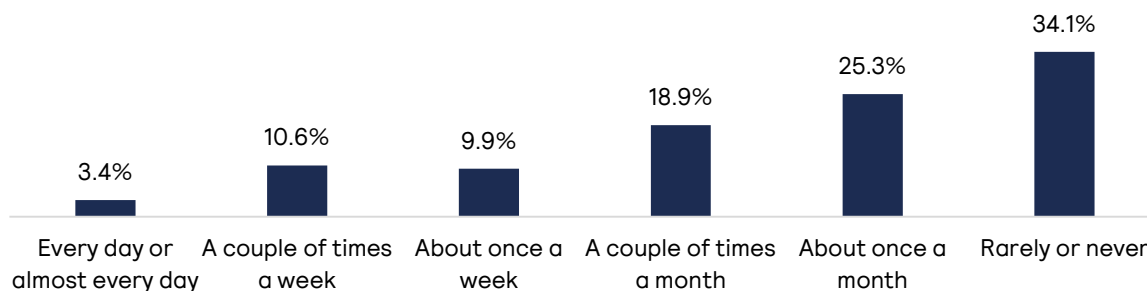
Figure 1: Percentage of teachers who had used generative AI in 2023 and 2024 by phase



Frequency of use of generative AI in 2024

While 1 in 2 teachers told us they used generative AI in 2024, when asked how often they used it, very few (3.4%) of this group said they did so daily (see Figure 2). Around 1 in 10 reported using it either a couple of times a week (10.6%) or weekly (9.9%), and more than twice as many around once a month (25.3%). However, the highest percentage of teachers reported that they ‘rarely or never’ used it, with 1 in 3 (34.1%) selecting this option. This suggests a considerable number may have tried using generative AI out of interest, but had then chosen not to use it beyond this point.

Figure 2: Frequency of use of generative AI for teachers in 2024



Motivations for using generative AI in 2024

A note on teachers' motivations for using generative AI in 2023

As ChatGPT was relatively new in early 2023, teachers who said they had used it were invited to share comments about what they had used it for. Around 100 teachers chose to leave comments, and thematic analysis suggested that more teachers were using it more for routine tasks than for creative purposes, with the main reasons for use given as lesson planning, asking questions, writing (e.g. letters or book reviews), creating quizzes, creative writing, research, summarising texts or just to 'try it out'.

In 2024, teachers who told us that they used generative AI at least once a month⁹ were invited to select their main reasons for doing so.

As Figure 3 shows, curiosity was the most popular reason for using generative AI, with 3 in 4 (76.7%) teachers saying they had used generative AI to experiment, try it out or see what it could do. Inspiration was also popular, with 1 in 2 (53.6%) teachers saying they had used generative AI for ideas, while 1 in 2 (50.0%) had used it to ask questions. 1 in 3 (34.7%) said they had used it for fun.

Generative-AI tools offer a variety of potential support for teachers, whether for purposes similar to those available through current search engines (such as asking questions) or for help more directly related to teaching (such as planning lessons, producing or adapting resources, making quizzes or assessing learning).

⁹ n = 386

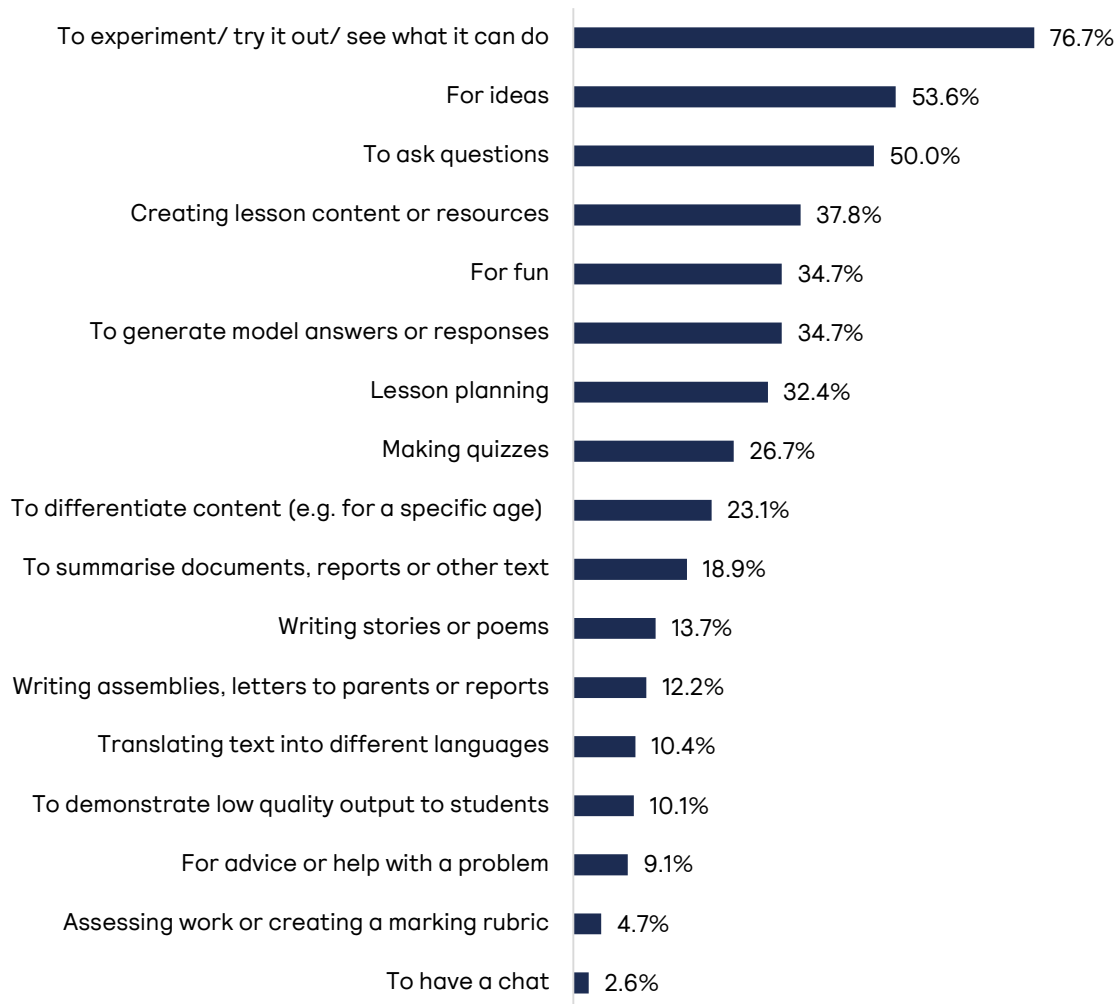
Saving teachers' time and reducing their workload are important topics of research in this area (see, e.g., Education Endowment Foundation [EEF], 2024).

However, fewer teachers said they had used generative AI for these reasons compared with more general purposes. 2 in 5 (37.8%) said they had used it to create content or resources for lessons, around 1 in 3 to generate model answers or responses (34.7%) or for lesson planning (32.4%), and 1 in 4 (26.7%) used it to make quizzes. Slightly fewer (23.1%) said they had used generative AI to differentiate content (e.g. to rewrite something at a level suitable for a specific age) and 1 in 10 (10.4%) had used it to translate text into different languages. At the same time, 1 in 7 (13.7%) had used it to write stories or poems, with a similar percentage (12.2%) using it to write assemblies, letters to parents or reports. However, only 1 in 20 (4.7%) said they had used it for assessing work or creating a marking rubric.

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Along with creating or adapting content, reading documents can be a time-consuming task, and almost 1 in 5 (18.9%) teachers said they had used generative AI to summarise documents, reports or other text. Learning to engage critically with AI outputs is also an important skill, and (as noted earlier) many teachers are concerned about hallucinations, confabulation and misinformation. 1 in 10 (10.1%) teachers said they had used it to demonstrate low-quality outputs (including misinformation) to students. Finally, almost 1 in 10 (9.1%) had used it for advice or help with a problem, and the fewest (2.6%) to have a chat.

Figure 3: Teachers' motivations for using generative AI in 2024



Of teachers who gave other reasons for using generative AI, most mentioned image creation, writing CVs and job applications, meal and holiday planning, help sending tricky emails, support for writing a CPD session on AI, and funding proposals.

Comparing teachers' and young people's reasons for using generative AI

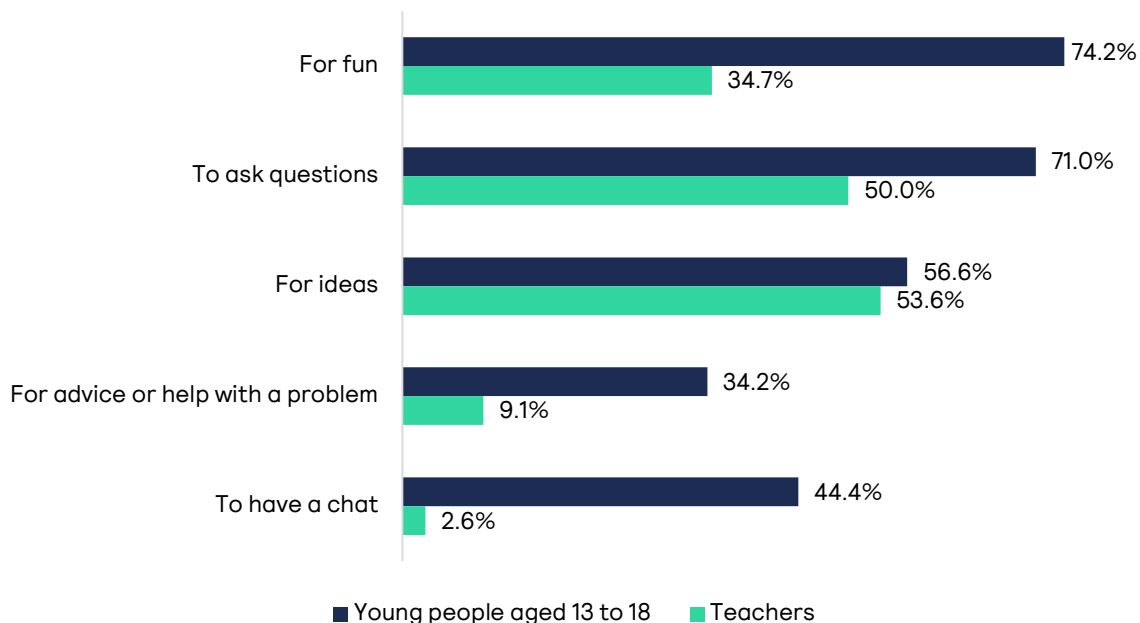
We also asked young people aged 13 to 18 about their motivations for using generative AI in 2024¹⁰. While the options suggested were slightly different for

¹⁰ See Picton et al. (2024), *Children and young people's use of generative AI to support literacy in 2024*

teachers and young people, it was interesting to note differences between the teachers' and young people's motivations for using these tools. For example, as shown in Figure 4, twice as many young people as teachers said they used generative AI for fun (74.2% vs 34.7%), and many more children also reported using it to ask questions (71.0% vs 50.0%). However, the percentage of teachers and young people using generative AI for ideas was almost identical, with around 1 in 2 (56.6% vs 53.6%) using it for this purpose.

Larger differences could be seen in using generative AI for advice and help with a problem, with three times as many young people as teachers saying they had used it for these reasons (34.2% vs 9.1%). One of the biggest differences was in using generative AI for conversation, with 2 in 5 (44.4%) young people saying they had used it to have a chat compared with just 2.6% of teachers.

Figure 4: Motivations for using generative AI in teachers and young people aged 13 to 18 in 2024



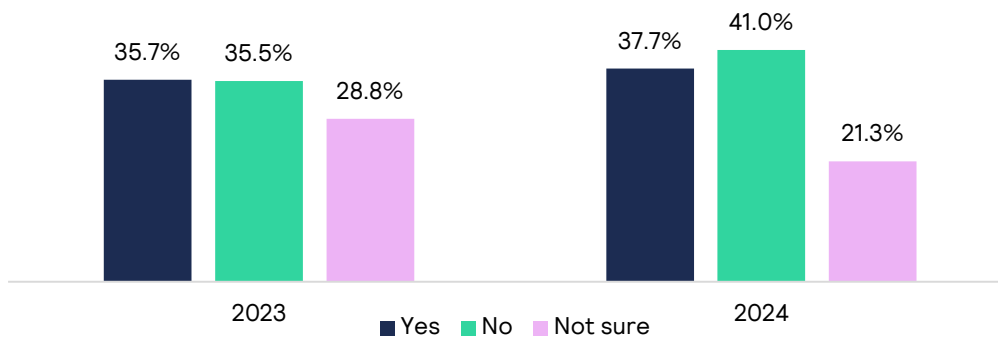
Teachers' attitudes to using generative AI in 2024

Teachers were invited to agree or disagree with statements relating to attitudes to their own, and their pupils', use of generative AI. Reports have shown that anything from 67% to 79% of UK secondary-school-aged students are using AI (see, e.g., [Ofcom, 2023](#); [RM, 2023](#)). Our own research found that, of those aged 13

to 18 who had heard of generative AI, the percentage who said they had used it more than doubled between 2023 and 2024, increasing from 2 in 5 (37.8%) to 3 in 4 (77.1%)¹¹.

Teachers were asked if they were worried about their pupils using generative AI, a question we had also asked in 2023. As shown in Figure 5, in 2023, similar percentages of teachers were or were not worried (35.7% vs 35.5% respectively), while 3 in 10 (28.8%) weren't sure. While fewer (21.3%) were undecided in 2024, similar percentages of teachers were and were not worried about pupils using it (37.7% vs 41.0%), although very slightly more said they were not worried.

Figure 5: Are you worried about your pupils using generative AI?



Compared with primary teachers, more than twice as many secondary teachers said they were worried about pupils using generative AI in 2024 (45.1% vs 19.7%).

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We also asked teachers to share views, opinions and experiences in relation to pupils' critical engagement with generative AI and writing, training needs and

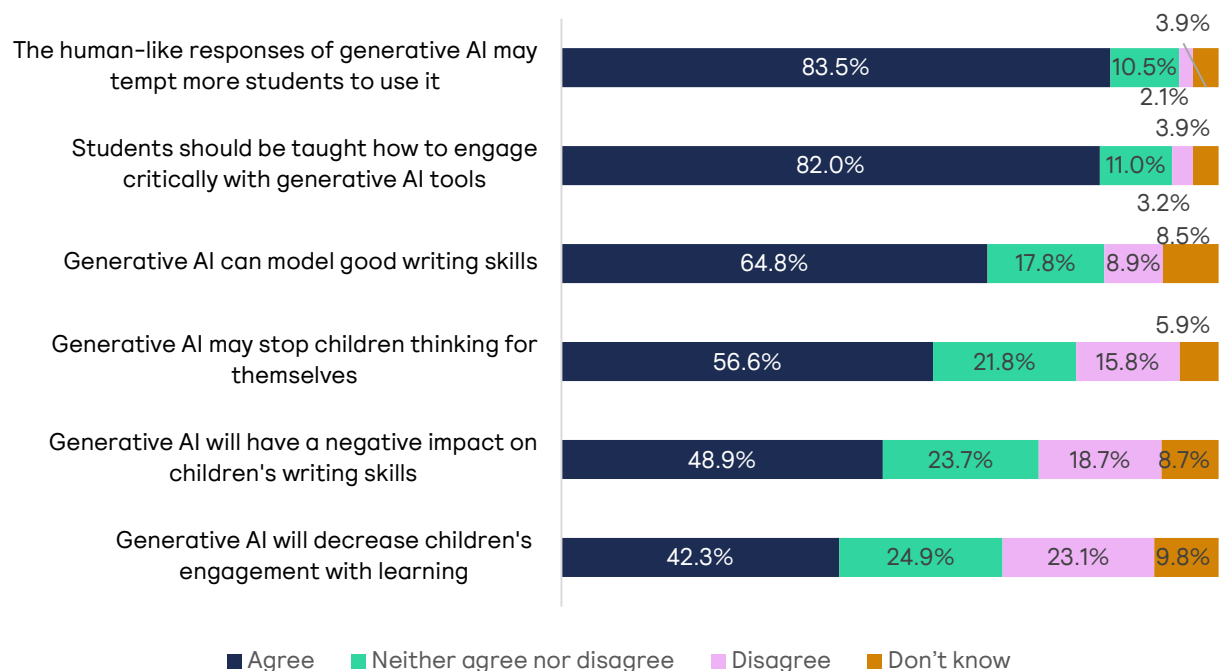
¹¹ Children and young people's use of generative AI to support literacy in 2024, Picton et al. (2024)

school policies, and perceptions of the broader impact of generative AI (such as in relation to the future workplace and the digital divide).

As shown in Figure 6, the most agreed-with statement was that the nature of generative AI, with its conversational human-like responses, was likely to tempt more students to use it. More than 4 in 5 (83.5%) teachers agreed with this statement. However, this may simply reflect a perception of the ease of interacting with generative-AI tools for children and young people rather than suggesting this results in (for example) plagiarism or lack of engagement with learning. Nevertheless, more than 4 in 5 (82.0%) teachers also felt that students should be taught how to engage critically with generative-AI tools. In addition, more than 1 in 2 (56.6%) felt generative AI could stop children thinking for themselves and 2 in 5 (42.3%) felt it could decrease children’s engagement with learning.

Academics have suggested that generative AI is “more than anything, a technology of writing” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2024). Findings also suggested a strong sense of the conflicting positives and negative potential of generative AI in relation to children’s writing. For example, while almost 2 in 3 (64.8%) teachers felt it could model good writing for their students, 1 in 2 (48.9%) also agreed that it was likely to have a negative impact on children’s writing skills.

Figure 6: Teachers’ attitudes to benefits and drawbacks of generative AI in 2024

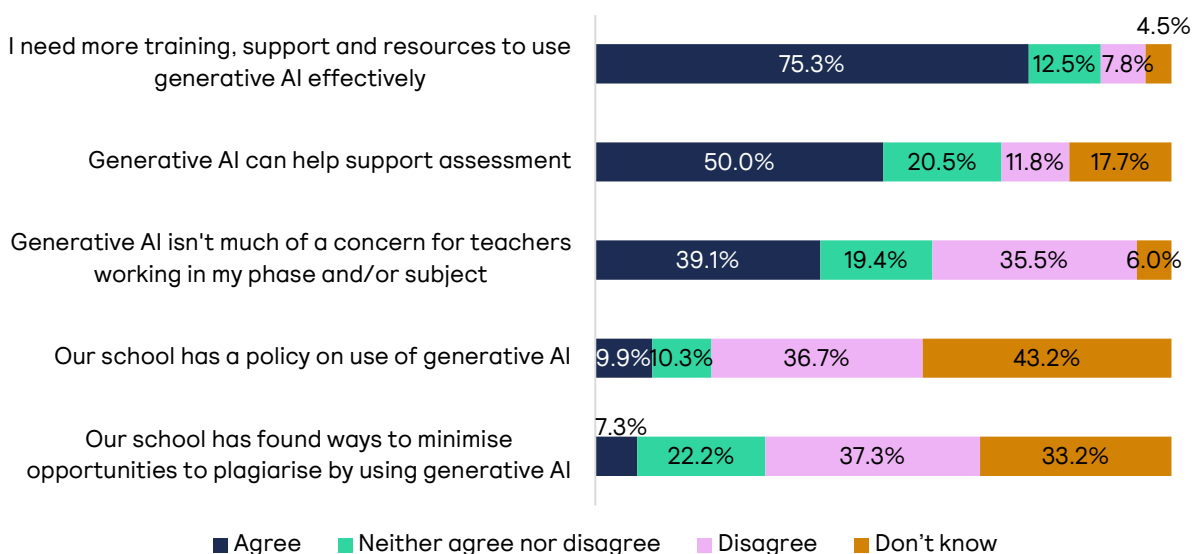


2 in 3 (64.8%) teachers agreed generative AI could model good writing, but 1 in 2 (48.9%) also felt it could have a negative impact on children's writing skills

We also looked at teachers' training needs and school policies. As shown in Figure 7, 3 in 4 (75.3%) teachers felt they needed more training, support and resources to use these tools effectively. While 1 in 2 (50.0%) agreed that generative AI could help support assessments, earlier findings (above) suggested very few teachers (4.7%, or 1 in 20) were using it for this purpose. While 2 in 5 (39.1%) teachers felt generative AI wasn't much of a concern for teachers working in their phase or subject, more primary than secondary teachers agreed with this statement (66.9% vs 29.4% respectively).

Research has found that 60% of schools have not spoken to students about using AI in relation to school or homework, and the same percentage of parents said their child's school had not informed them about plans to use generative-AI tools to teach students (Bissoondath, 2024). In our survey, just 1 in 10 (9.9%) teachers in the sample agreed that there was an AI policy in place in their school and only 1 in 14 (7.3%) agreed that their school had found ways to minimise opportunities to plagiarise by using generative AI.

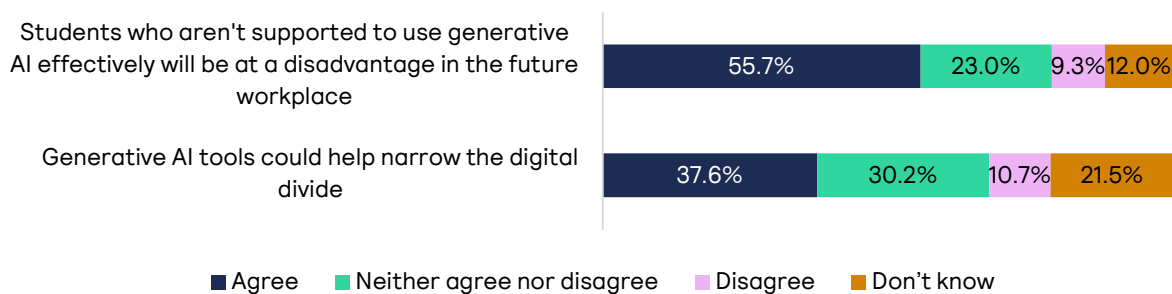
Figure 7: Teachers' perceptions of generative AI in relation to training and school policies in 2024



3 in 4 (75.3%) teachers felt they needed more training, support and resources to use generative AI effectively

Finally, as shown in Figure 8, more than 1 in 2 (55.7%) teachers agreed that students who weren't supported to use generative AI effectively would be at a disadvantage in the future workplace. Research has found associations between household income and children's awareness and use of ChatGPT ([Bissoondath, 2024](#); [Ofcom, 2024](#)). While 2 in 5 (37.6%) felt these tools could help narrow the digital divide, 1 in 3 (32.2%) disagreed with this statement. However, had this been phrased differently (e.g. 'generative-AI tools might increase the digital divide') it may have been clearer and possibly had different levels of agreement as a result.

Figure 8: Teachers' attitudes to broader impacts of generative AI in 2024



Summary and discussion

As with any new development in technology, speculation about the impact of generative-AI tools, including how they might reshape the literacy landscape, is varied. Some academics have emphasised the need to support children and young people to develop the critical evaluation and co-creation skills needed to work effectively with AI outputs ([McKnight, 2021](#)). Our findings suggest that this should be a priority for educators and policymakers.

At the same time, it seems that many teachers feel on the back foot when it comes to using generative AI effectively. This may be reflected in the decreasing percentage of secondary teachers saying they used generative AI in 2024 compared with 2023, and that 3 in 4 feel they need more training, support and

resources in this area. However, many teachers did report using generative AI for a broad range of reasons, from experimenting to idea generation. A considerable percentage also reported using it to support aspects of their everyday schoolwork, from creating lesson content to planning, differentiation and translation. This suggests there is potential for these tools to support aspects of some teachers' workloads, something being explored in more depth in other research (see, e.g., EEF, 2024).

While many teachers also saw the potential benefits of generative AI, such as for modelling good writing, they also had concerns about children and young people's use of generative AI. They were concerned about its potential negative impact on writing, that it might stop children thinking for themselves, or that it might generally decrease engagement with learning. Most (4 in 5) teachers felt students should be taught how to engage critically with generative AI, and more than half felt those who weren't supported to use these tools effectively might be at a disadvantage in the future workplace.

The findings suggest that, even at this relatively early stage in the development and adoption of generative AI, there is an appetite among many teachers to learn more about how to use these tools effectively and to support the children they work with to engage with them creatively and critically. We will continue to explore developments in this area, particularly in interactions between generative AI and literacy, in forthcoming months, using these findings as a foundation for broader discussions with educators, academics and business leaders.

About the National Literacy Trust

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