



Writing Roots

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

The Writing Roots project is a research project between the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Literacy Tree, RAND Europe and the University of Leeds that looks at a whole school writing skills programme for primary aged pupils.

We gained full support from your child's school to take part in the Writing Roots research project, but if you don't want us to include your child in this research, you need to tell us. You can do this by filling in the 'I don't want my child to take part' form on page 5 or by emailing us at WritingRoots-research@randeurope.org.

The full details of the **Writing Roots** research project are below.

What is Literacy Tree's Writing Roots programme?

Writing Roots is a whole-school book-based curriculum and professional development programme aimed at improving writing outcomes for pupils aged 4–11 (Year 1 to Year 6). Through daily one-hour lessons, pupils engage with diverse texts and explicit teaching of writing conventions to improve confidence, motivation and stamina whilst developing their writing skills via interactive activities, grammar teaching, and opportunities for authentic writing experiences. The programme is designed as an alternative to the 'genre-based' approach to teaching writing which is common in primary schools, whereby pupils spend a unit learning about and emulating a particular genre. It also aims to raise the profile of writing in schools more generally, encouraging schools to consider how they foster a writing culture and make pupil writing visible. The impact of the programme rests on the idea that motivation and engagement are pre-requisites to the development of writing skills.

What does the research involve?

The Writing Roots research project aims to understand if the programme improves children's writing skills and confidence. RAND Europe and the University of Leeds will be the independent research team. Schools that take part will be randomly assigned to either the intervention group, receiving Writing Roots, or the control group, continuing their usual practices.

We will aim to understand if the programme is successful by using established writing tests for Year 2 and Year 5 students. Writing samples will be collected at the end of the 2024/2025 academic year with class teachers and again at the end of 2025/2026 with trained administrators from the University of Leeds. Pupil will also be requested to complete a writing self-efficacy survey in summer 2025. Additionally, the University will visit selected schools to gather insights into children's experiences with Writing Roots. All involved researchers and administrators will have completed safeguarding and data protection training, including recent DBS checks.

What do I need to know?

It is up to you if you want your child involved but you have to tell us if you don't want your child to take part.

If you choose not to include your child in the research, this will have no impact on your child or the lessons they receive, or on whether the school uses the Writing Roots programme or not. It means that their data will not be collected for the evaluation, or if their data has already been collected it will be destroyed. If you change your mind at any point before the end of the project (December 2028), you will be able to withdraw your child's data without having to say why.

We won't tell other people anything specific about your child.

We assure you that all information relating to you and your child will be treated in the strictest confidence and processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Any sharing of the research findings (e.g. through reports, academic publications, and presentations) will be in an anonymous format.

We will not mention your child's school or your child's name in any report or publication coming from the research.

We will carefully look after the information we have about your child and their school

We will collect details about your child to help with our analysis, including details on whether they are eligible for Free School Meals, have English as an Additional Language, or whether they have a Special Educational Need. We will also collect data about your child's school, such as location and Ofsted rating.

All information about your child will be pseudonymised. Pseudonymised means that personal information will be removed and replaced by researchers with meaningless identifiers. This means that children cannot be easily identified. The 'key' that matches the meaningless identifiers to names will be stored securely in a password protected folder accessible only by researchers on the project using a password protected computer. All information about the school and your child will be accessible only to researchers on the project. All personal, identifiable data will be destroyed one year after the end of the study.

As part of the process to mark children's writing, pseudonymised writing scripts will be scored using an AI marking tool that is held on US servers. To avoid sending personal, identifiable data outside the EU we will be pseudonymising writing scripts (see above) meaning that no personal data will leave the EU.

Data collected as part of EEF-funded evaluations are archived in order to estimate the long-term impact of the programme. At the end of the research project your child's data will be shared with the Department for Education, the EEF, FFT Education (EEF's data processor for the EEF data archive) for future research.

To ensure that all processing is fair and lawful, the research team have completed a Data Protection Impact Assessment. It has also received ethical approval from RAND Europe's ethics board (Ref: 022807.021) and from the University of Leeds Cross-Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Faculties of Business, Environment & Social Sciences) (Ref: 2583). Further details relating to data protection,

third parties, and confidentiality are provided in the Privacy Notice. Please read this information carefully.

Please note: If during the collection of data we gather information that raises concerns about you/your child's safety or the safety of others, or about other concerns as perceived by the researcher, the researcher may pass on this information to another person such as the school's data protection officer.

Potential benefits and risks to taking part

There are no potential benefits or foreseeable risks to your child taking part. The writing task is similar to those usually undertaken in school and your child will still participate in the programme if the school receives Writing Roots. The project overall will help us to understand what works to improve writing skills in primary schools. However, if your child chooses not to complete the writing task they are entitled to do so.

What do I need to do now?

If you are happy with all of this, you don't have to do anything. If you are happy for your child to complete the activities and for your child's school to share your child's data with us, as described above, then you do not need to do anything.

If you aren't happy to get involved, then you need to tell us.

If you do NOT want to share your child's data as described above, please complete the attached 'Parent/guardian: I don't want my child to take part' form and hand it to your child's teacher who will then let us know.

You are free to withdraw your child's data for use in this research project at any time before the end of the project (December 2028). You can do that by either writing to the school (who will then contact the evaluation team) or emailing the evaluation team directly at: WritingRoots-research@randeurope.org.

Please note: Children whose parents have indicated that they wish to withdraw their child's data from the research (e.g. the writing tasks) will still participate in the programme.

Questions or concerns

If you need to know anything else, please contact us.

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your child's data is being processed, please feel free to contact the lead researcher, Elena Rosa Speciani at WritingRoots-research@randeurope.org. If you still have questions about the way your child's data will be processed, please contact our Data Protection Officer at REdpo@randeurope.org.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

PARENT/GUARDIAN: I don't want my child to take part

Only fill this form in if you do not want your child to take part in the evaluation

If you are happy for your child to take part in the research project (e.g. the writing tasks, self-efficacy survey) and for your school to share your child's data with us, as described in the information sheet, then you do not need to complete this form.

If you do **NOT** want to your child to participate in the research project, please complete and return this form to your child's school. Your child may still participate in the programme, even if you indicate that you wish to withdraw your child's data from the evaluation.

If you do not return a completed form, we will assume you are happy for your school to share information for use in this research and for your child to participate in the research.

I **do NOT** want my child to participate in the research or for my child's data to be shared for the Writing Roots research project. (Please tick)

Child's Name (Please print clearly).....

Parent/Carer Name (Please print clearly).....

Signature

Date

School Name

Name of school staff member processing the withdrawal

HAND IN TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL