

# First Story Trustees' Annual Report

Year ending 30th June 2015



*Changing Lives Through Writing*

**FIRST  
STORY**

## What First Story means to me

First Story is Thursday afternoons,  
the gathering of students in our fantasy world,  
the secure ambience of Room 102.

It's the disfigured arrangement of chairs  
the awkward gestures of welcome  
the fatigue that evidences a hard day's work

First Story is a simple man,  
the plain attire of grey trousers and cardigans,  
the light Yorkshire accent.

The complete obsession with concrete and abstract  
the shy delight in his voice,  
and the scratch that occupies our 90 minutes

First Story is a notebook,  
the plastered pictures that layer its initial simplicity  
journeying bookmark.

the forged expression of my passion  
where my pen bled,  
rept and my soul fell

bag of

# First Story Trustees' Annual Report

For the period covering 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2015, the trustees – who are also Directors for the purposes of company law – are pleased to be able to present their report of the charity.

## Contents

The Year in Review	4
First Story's Mission	6
What We Do	7
Our Story	8
Odhran's Story	9
In Their Own Words	10
2014-15 in Figures	12
Activities and Achievements	15
Collaborations	18
Impact	20
Financials	22
Governance and Management	23
Schools and Writers 2014-15	24
Supporters	26
'Aqsal al Awal', by Sabah Hussein	27



First Story's Patron HRH The Duchess of Cornwall with students from Fulham Cross Girls' School

## The Year in Review

Sometimes the First Story office hardly seems to draw breath, there's so much going on. We keep doing all we can to inspire, promote and celebrate writing in schools.

This year we continued to develop our core programme, running residencies in 50 schools serving low-income communities in the East Midlands, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Greater London, Oxford and West Yorkshire. Over 1,000 young people took part in First Story writing groups. Many of them joined Philip Pullman, Mark Haddon and more than thirty other novelists and poets at our Young Writers' Festival in Oxford. Students from 38 schools later attended our Summer Residential – a week of writing workshops, readings and walks in the Shropshire hills, 78 unique young voices getting stronger by the day.

We were delighted to enter into partnership with Cheltenham Festivals to run three First Story programmes in Gloucestershire state schools. These students participated in an electrifying showcase as part of Cheltenham Literature Festival, performing their pieces alongside spoken word artist MC Angel.

Meanwhile, our National Writing Competition stimulated interest in creative writing across the country –

we received over 3,000 entries, from schools as far apart as Cornwall and Cumbria. The winning entry, by thirteen-year-old Mukahang Limbu, was published in *The Sunday Times*, and Mukahang was presented with his award by our patron HRH The Duchess of Cornwall.

As always, individual student writers like Mukahang came to the fore. Helen Woods and Jasmine Burgess, both from Oxford Spire Academy, won the Betjeman Poetry Prize and a Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award respectively. And in a reception room on the first floor of 10 Downing Street, Reem Hamade from the First Story writing group at Wembley High Technology College stood beneath a portrait of Elizabeth I and read a story called 'Palestine':

*I come from the smell of olives. I come from flight PI948, from the bright dawn light of arrival. I come from trees, warmth, war; I come from fights and bombs, from love and sorrow. I come from a small village; from broad spacious streets where vine leaves wrap around the branches that climb the walls of houses; from beautiful markets with stalls selling grapes and melons and strawberries. I come from the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque...*

No one who heard her, or saw the pageant of English history represented by the figures in the portrait and on

the podium beneath it, will ever forget it.

There was more. The First Story group at Feversham College in Bradford was featured on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*. And in our ongoing collaboration with the Royal Society of Literature, 10 distinguished RSL fellows including Tom Stoppard, Melvyn Bragg and Sebastian Faulks visited First Story schools to talk with pupils and teachers about writing.

The year ended with the news that Arts Council England had awarded First Story a major grant of £600,000 spread over three years to extend our programme in the North and South West. This funding allows us to scale up our work significantly, giving thousands more young people the opportunity to participate in our transformative programme. We're thrilled about this not just because of what the money will make possible, but because it represents a vote of confidence in the impact and potential of our programme. The Arts Council England grant is solely for expansion and so we remain reliant on generous donations of time, talent and money to sustain the programme in our existing regions.

Young people need to write – and not just because the ability to write well, with clarity and confidence, is an essential skill for further education and work. More than that, we know that writing can be both a source of pleasure and a source of power. First Story's work with students, teachers and writers across the country is proof of this, and with your help we hope to reach even more people.

*Mónica Parle*

**Mónica Parle**  
Executive Director

*Andrea Minton Beddoes*

**Andrea Minton Beddoes**  
Chair of Trustees



## First Story's Mission

First Story changes lives through writing.

We believe that writing can transform lives, and that there is dignity and power in every young person's story.

First Story brings talented, professional writers into secondary schools serving low-income communities to work with teachers and students to foster creativity and communication skills.

By helping students find their voices through intensive, fun programmes, First Story raises aspirations and gives students the skills and confidence to achieve them.

## What We Do

Every year at First Story we are proud to offer the following opportunities to students, teachers and writers across the country:



Intensive writing residencies in secondary schools serving low-income communities



Professionally published anthologies of students' work and book launch showcases for each school



Young Writers' Festival, residential courses, and creative writing events at universities and arts institutions



High-profile opportunities including the National Writing Competition, work experience placements and visits from Royal Society of Literature Fellows



In-school and regional Continuing Professional Development training for teachers and librarians



Support for writers and the wider literary community, including shadow writer programmes at universities



## Our Story

First Story has grown steadily from its early days in 2007 at its very first pilot school, Cranford Community College. By 2008, there were eight writers working in as many schools across London. By 2013-14, we were running 42 residencies in the East Midlands, Lancashire, London, Oxford and West Yorkshire. Last year, in 2014-15 we ran a total of 50 residencies in the East Midlands, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, London, Oxford and West Yorkshire, including an innovative new collaboration with Cheltenham Festivals to run three First Story programmes in Cheltenham and Gloucester.

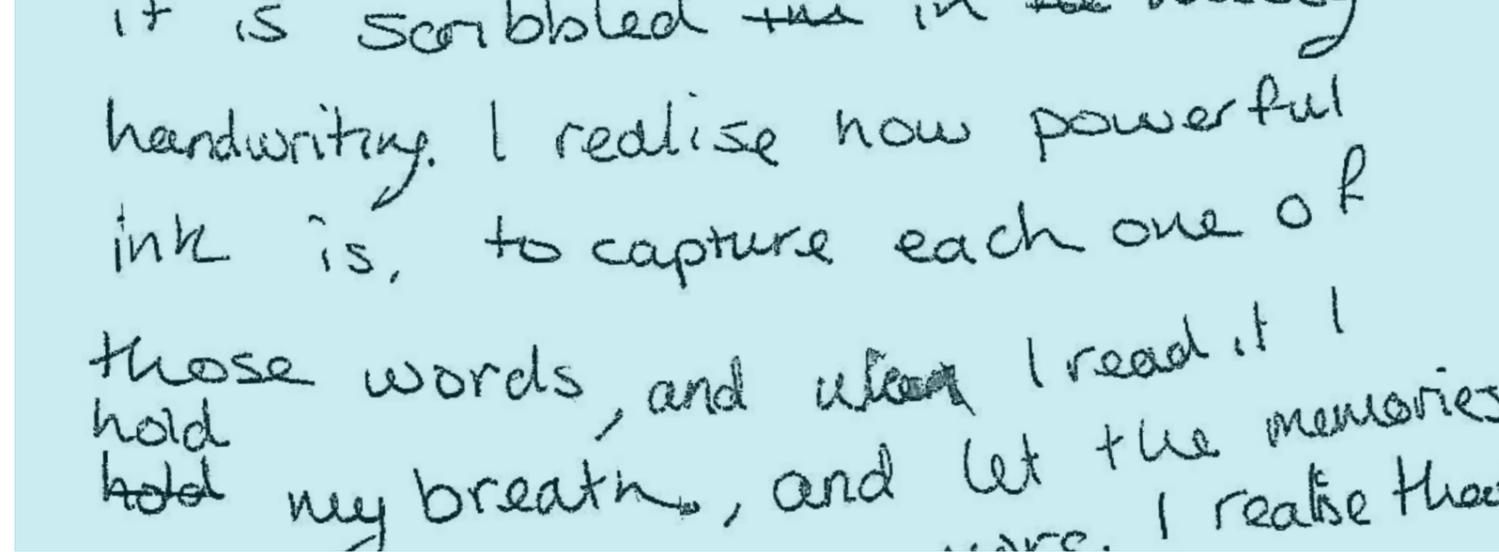
Since its beginnings, First Story has arranged 198 residencies in secondary schools serving low-income areas. In these schools, 150 acclaimed authors have teamed up with 400 teachers and librarians to deliver regular workshops across the academic year. Over 3,200 students have taken part in the weekly workshops, and an estimated 100,000 original stories and poems have been produced, spanning 210 anthologies, 100 postcards, and six award-winning six-word stories printed on pencils, plus many pieces winning national and international competitions.

First Story aims to serve young people most in need, to close the education and attainment gap between those in low-income communities and their more privileged peers. This year for the first time we ran programmes in Pupil Referral Units for students excluded from mainstream education, and in one of these we piloted a term-long programme of workshops. Next year, we intend to roll out more of these shorter programmes and rigorously test their impact, alongside our traditional year-long model and a new week-long intensive model, as part of the constant evolution and innovation of our model and to ensure we remain responsive to the needs of each individual school.

### The next chapter

We are delighted to be in a position to scale our programme, having been awarded a major Arts Council England grant for expansion. This funding enables us to develop significantly our programme in the North and to extend into the South West, serving an additional 1,500 young people directly in these regions and over 10,000 young people through other national and regional First Story events and activities. We will launch a national writing day to encourage every school-age child to engage in creative writing, and thereby amplify the awareness of creative writing on the national arts and education agenda.

While some expansion funding is in place for the next three years, we remain reliant on donations to sustain our existing programme and welcome support from those who share our vision.



## Odhran's Story

In 2014, we were delighted to establish residencies for the first time in Lincolnshire. At Banovallum School in Horncastle, a group of students worked with short story writer Dan Powell to create a vibrant anthology of work entitled 'Writing Outside the Box'. Their launch event at an independent bookshop included readings and author signings, which showcased the students' new-found confidence and pride in their writing. This shone through on the Summer Residential, and for one student in particular, Odhran Dutch, the year proved especially significant.

'I would like to thank First Story for the unbelievable changes that have occurred in my son. Odhran has Autism and has struggled to make friendships and show emotions throughout school life. With all the dedication and hard work of the First Story team he has now been able to make friends and write his emotions through short stories.

The work that Odhran has produced has shocked us and brought delight to Odhran, school and family. The trip that First Story provided away at the end of school term simply changed my son's life. His words were, when I picked him up, 'that has been the best experience ever'.

This has been an invaluable experience for Odhran and has helped his Autism on so many levels.'

**Sharon Dutch, Odhran's mother**

'First Story has been a magnificent journey and it has changed me for life. How wonderful it has been meeting new people and hearing the stories that go through their minds. I will never forget the emotions and memories I experienced being part of First Story. Never.'

**Odhran Dutch, student at Banovallum School, Horncastle**

'Taking part in First Story has had a dramatic and positive effect on Odhran. It helped him overcome some of the limits his Autism previously imposed, while giving him a voice to express his thoughts and feelings in a way that has brought him closer to the people around him.

Odhran is not alone in that respect. Each and every First Story student that it has been my pleasure and privilege to work with has grown in confidence during the course of the programme, all while taking great pleasure in the simple, powerful act of writing. Seeing the many students at the residential, all of them at the end of their First Story journey, all of them bright, confident young people with something to say and the means now to say it, loudly and proudly, really brought home to me the power of what First Story does.'

**Dan Powell, Writer-in-Residence at Banovallum School, Horncastle**



## In Their Own Words

'First Story is a place where test grades are long forgotten, and is where the juice of your creativity can be squeezed out. First Story is freedom for your imagination, and for the love of writing to be a piece of art, or a way of escape; anything your will moulds it to be.'

**Mukahang Limbu,**  
First Story student at Oxford Spires Academy, Oxford, and winner of First Story National Writing Competition 2014

'First Story has had a major impact on my life, it's given me confidence in my writing that I never had before. In English we are taught to write within a certain structure and to use certain forms of language, but with First Story, it's completely different. First Story teaches you that there is no specific guideline to your writing – it can be whatever you think, feel or want it to be. Rather than telling you what to write, First Story allows you to become a writer in your own sense.'

I had the pleasure to work with writer Laura Dockrill, who is not only one of the most amazing writers, but she is also one of the main reasons my writing is where it is today. We wrote stories, poems, jokes, we entered competitions and were given the opportunity to read our work to other schools and universities.

When I began First Story, I had no clue what I wanted to do in the future or where I wanted to be. But here I am this year attending university to study English with Creative Writing. Whether you want to be a writer, or go into science or any other subject, First Story will give you the confidence to become who you want to be.'

**Sania Riaz,**  
Alumna of Loxford School of Science and Technology, London

'First Story has literally saved my life. It has given me an outlet to deal with a lot of things that had been rolling around in my head for a very long time that I've not really had a way to express before.'

**Amy Edwards,**  
student at Barnwood Park Arts College, Gloucester

'First Story is unleashing the passion the girls have for their writing and their reading of their own work. I've never in all my experience of teaching seen anything quite like it.'

**Lisa Altobelli,**  
teacher at Feversham College, Bradford

'When I started, I was so shy, I didn't have any confidence whatsoever. I can really see how I have progressed and how First Story alone has helped me so much. I've been lucky enough to work with different writers and they have brought my work up to a level I could not have imagined.'

**Lauren Baker,**  
student at The Oxford Academy, Oxford

'First Story, for both the pupils and the adults involved, became more than a creative writing group. It became a sanctuary. It became a place where I, after a gruelling five-period day, went to remind myself of the beauty of words and the extraordinary minds of the students of George Green's. No data. No lesson plans. No behaviour problems. First Story was my therapy.'

**Lucy Preston,**  
teacher at George Green's School, London

'First Story should be granted to work in more schools because it is an incredible service and organisation which changes our lives.'

**Bhagya Sathsarani,**  
student at Judgemeadow Community College, Leicester

'First Story is all about getting children to understand how rich they are – that their stories are already inside them – and it's wonderful to be around when this most important lesson starts to work its magic.'

**Roland Chambers,**  
Writer-In-Residence at The Bridge AP Academy and Pimlico Academy, London

'The impact that First Story has had at NUSA has exceeded my expectations. In the writing sessions I have seen a side of the students that they keep hidden during class time. It is as if they are freed in some way to explore this skill on their own terms and by setting the agenda themselves (with the guidance and encouragement of the writers) they start taking themselves seriously as writers.'

**Clare Barlow,**  
teacher at Nottingham University Samworth Academy, Nottingham

'I have gained immense pleasure from meeting and working with the teachers and students, and reward for seeing their confidence rise, along with the standard of their work.'

**Peter Hobbs,**  
Writer-in-Residence at Wembley High School, London



# 2014-15 in Figures

---



**50** residencies ran in secondary schools across the academic year in the East Midlands, Lancashire, Gloucestershire, Greater London, Oxford and West Yorkshire.



**83** teachers and librarians supported First Story groups each week.



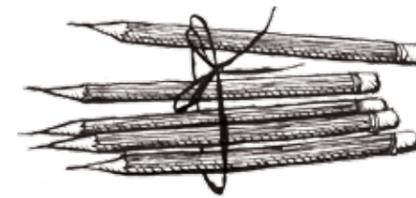
**50** anthologies of students' writing were published.



**786** students attended the First Story Young Writers' Festival  
**1,050** students participated in weekly writing groups.



**78** students were awarded fellowships to attend the Shropshire First Story Summer Residential Course.



Another **4,000** students experienced the programme by participating in our National Writing Competition, or attending a visit with a Royal Society of Literature Fellow, an assembly or an anthology book launch.



**1,644** books donated to First Story students through our collaboration with Give a Book.



We worked with over **1,300** additional teachers in dedicated in-school Continuing Professional Development sessions and through our work with partner organisations such as the National Association for the Teaching of English, the Prince's Teaching Institute and Teach First.



**£629,392** was raised to support students in schools serving low-income communities across the UK.





## Activities and Achievements

### Student Awards

Our First Story National Writing Competition became truly national, with students entering from schools across the country, from Sunderland to Pembrokeshire, and attracted over 3,000 entries. Mukahang Limbu's winning piece was published in *The Sunday Times*.

First Story students also had an outstanding year in other national writing competitions. First Story student Jasmine Burgess, of Oxford Spires Academy, was one of the winners of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award, which had a total of 7,603 entries from 78 countries. The Betjeman Poetry Prize was awarded to First Story student Helen Woods, selected from a total of over 3,000 entries, and First Story student Eloise Perrott won the Young Writers Power of Poetry Competition.

### Schools and Teachers

First Story worked with a total of 83 teachers and librarians on a weekly basis. We worked with an additional 660 teachers in our schools through dedicated Continuing Professional Development sessions provided by writers at First Story schools and a further 40 sessions at the First Story Young Writers' Festival. First Story librarian at Oxford Spires Academy, Katherine Whittington, was selected as a Teacher Trailblazer by the Poetry Society, as an acknowledgement of her commitment and contribution to developing best practice in working with poetry and young people.

In addition to our work in First Story schools, our writers trained six Teach First instructors who, in turn, used this training to inform the curriculum they delivered to the whole cohort of over 200 Teach First English teachers across the country. We also delivered workshops and talks through collaborations with the Prince's Teaching Institute, National Association for the Teaching of English and Hackney Pirates to over 400 teachers nationally.

In 2014-15, we worked with a total of over 5,000 students directly in First Story schools, and an additional 1,300 teachers (who each deliver to an average of 300 students per year) beyond the regular First Story workshops.

### Anthologies

First Story published 50 anthologies for our school groups in 2014-15. This could not have been done without support from several leading designers, typesetters and illustrators in mainstream publishing including Walker Books and Oxford University Press. Walker Books also ran an editorial work placement for one of our First Story students in their London offices.

This year, we also collaborated with designers from Penguin Random House to create a cover grid template for our anthologies. We are extremely grateful for the contributions, enthusiasm and originality of all our anthology collaborators.

### Festivals

First Story's Young Writers' Festival brought nearly 800 students and 94 teachers from around the country together at the University of Oxford. The students worked with 36 First Story writers-in-residence in intimate writing workshops and energy-filled poetry slams, and were addressed by internationally renowned keynote speakers Philip Pullman and Mark Haddon. Teachers also took part in Continuing Professional Development workshops led by Philip Pullman, Kate Clanchy and Ben Faccini.

*'What a privilege to spend time with these remarkable young women. First Story does indeed change lives. I can't speak for the girls, but mine is changed forever.'*

Christie Watson,  
Writer-in-Residence at Fulham Cross  
Girls' School, London

### Residential Fellowships

We awarded fellowships to 78 students from all our regions to attend the First Story Summer Residential Course at Preston Montford Field Centre in Shropshire. Over five days, the students worked with six First Story writers to take part in intensive writing workshops, one-to-one tutorials and a grand student reading on the final evening. Our National Writing Competition winners attended a dedicated Arvon residential in the Devon countryside.

### Creative Writing Events

Cheltenham Festivals hosted a First Story showcase at the Cheltenham Literature Festival, with students from all Gloucestershire schools performing their work. First Story students across the country also took part in regional writing events in universities and arts institutions, including the V&A, University of Nottingham, University College London, the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Courtauld Gallery, Keats House and the Wilson Gallery. Our University of Huddersfield event was featured on the BBC's *Woman's Hour* and renowned poet Lemn Sissay MBE addressed the students.

*'First Story helped me so much in improving my confidence. At first it was hard to read my poems to the class but by the end I was able to perform them to an audience.'*

Sajidah Ahmed,  
student at St Martin-In-The-Field  
High School for Girls, London

*'First Story presented me with opportunities I never ever dreamed of when I started.'*

Safeerah Mughad,  
student at Feversham College, Bradford

### Raising Our Profile

An important element of First Story's work is to raise the profile of creative writing in schools and across the education and literature sectors. We run national competitions, advocate for creative writing in the media and host events to give creative writing a nationwide platform.

Our Patron, HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, awarded a certificate to the winner of our National Writing Competition as part of our creative-writing event at Holland Park, and his piece was featured in *The Sunday Times* and *The Daily Mail*. First Story also featured in other national and regional publications including *Intelligent Life*, *Gloucestershire Echo*, *Yorkshire Post* and *Telegraph and Argus*. BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* showcased First Story pupils from Feversham College in Bradford alongside their writer-in-residence Kate Fox and broadcast their work to 3.9 million listeners worldwide. Students were also featured on BBC Radio Leeds and BBC Radio Gloucestershire.

We hosted a number of high-profile events with authors including 2015 Waterstones Book of the Year novelist Jessie Burton, Esther Freud and Lord William Waldegrave. Frances Osborne hosted a reception for First Story at 10 Downing Street to celebrate the work of the charity, and law firm Norton Rose Fullbright hosted our inaugural Discovery Drinks to raise awareness of First Story in the business community. First Story was delighted to be one of the official charity partners of Letters Live, a series of live events compered by Benedict Cumberbatch and Louise Brealey.





First Story alumna Harriet reads her poem at the Young Writers' Festival 2014, University of Oxford

## Collaborations

### Cheltenham Festivals

First Story entered into a partnership with Cheltenham Festivals to run three residencies in the Gloucestershire area. Through this collaboration, the students were able to attend an event at the Wilson Gallery in Cheltenham, work with University of Gloucestershire students on the designs for their anthologies and perform at the Cheltenham Literature Festival in October 2015.

### Teach First

First Story is a Teach First Innovation Partner. Through this affiliation, we are able to draw upon the huge range of support and expertise offered by Teach First to charities and social enterprises aimed at addressing educational inequality. Through this partnership, First Story writers-in-residence also trained Teach First trainees and ran Continuing Professional Development sessions for teachers across the country.

### The Royal Society of Literature

The Royal Society of Literature outreach programme enables a much larger numbers of students than attend our regular weekly sessions to engage in dialogue with some of the country's best writers. We hope that this, coupled with our core project in schools, will help to promote a culture

of reading and writing in secondary schools working with young people from low-income backgrounds. Since the beginning of the programme, high-profile authors such as Michael Frayn, Malorie Blackman, Tom Stoppard, Andrew Motion, Sebastian Faulks, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Stephen Kelman, Bernardine Evaristo and Melvyn Bragg have visited various First Story schools to give talks followed by lively Q&A sessions.

### Give A Book

Through the generous support of the charity Give a Book, First Story was able to give each student participating in First Story a book for free. The books were chosen by writers and teachers, with the students in mind. Give a Book and SAGE Publications also provided books for our First Story Young Writers' Festival, and so, across the year, some 1,650 books were distributed to our students. As one First Story student said, 'being given a free book made me interested in a wider variety of books outside of what I normally read.'

### Eton College

Poet Francesca Beard led creative-writing workshops over the 2015 spring term through a project with Eton College's Independent State School Partnership. The weekly workshops brought together students from several secondary schools in the Windsor and Eton area. The students recorded themselves performing their pieces at the end of the sessions for use in their portfolios when applying for higher education.

### The Sunday Times

The Sunday Times Literary Editor, Andrew Holgate, and the Children's Book Reviewer, Nicolette Jones, led a workshop on book reviewing for First Story students at Fulham Cross Girls' School. Andrew Holgate reported that the students were 'hugely impressive' and the girls said they 'could have stayed all day writing with Andrew and Nicolette – we loved it!'

### WordTheatre

First Story collaborated with WordTheatre in Schools (WITS), an organisation bringing actors and authors into schools to work with students. WITS brought actress MyAnna Buring into Oaklands School in London to read a collaborative poem written by the First Story group as part of their anthology book launch, and to speak to the students about the art of bringing words to life.

### Penguin Random House & Vintage

Directors of a number of Penguin Random House departments supported First Story to refine our public profile and communications, and we collaborated with their designers to produce a new cover template for our anthologies. The Director of Vintage Publishing, Rachel Cugnoni, judged entries for the First Story 100 Word Competition and awarded Vintage Classics to the individual winners, as well as donating libraries of books to the winning schools.

*'I feel inspired by the girls. The whole point of my job is to help bring to young people books that they will enjoy, and it is so heartening to meet readers who are both enthusiastic and discriminating, as the First Story group at Fulham Cross are. They are hugely fortunate to work with First Story, which is such a great initiative.'*

Nicolette Jones,  
The Sunday Times Children's Book Editor

# Impact

## Impact

In 2014-15 our evaluation of the programme established that First Story increases students' overall literacy, confidence and aspiration.

We conducted surveys at the start and end of the academic year, and analysed a sample of First Story students' English GCSE results.

**100%**

of teachers and writers reported that the programme increased students' confidence, self-esteem and sense of aspiration.

**98%**

of teachers and writers reported that students' imaginative and creative faculties were strengthened.

**91%**

of teachers and writers reported that students gained a more sophisticated, precise communication style.

**89%**

of students felt more positive about the possibility of going to university after attending First Story events.

**74%**

of students met or exceeded their predicted English grades in a sample of participating students.

# Students

## Examinations and Attainment

100% of teachers reported that some or most of their students' writing and reading improved beyond predicted levels.

67% of teachers reported an improvement in school attendance and engagement.

## Literacy: Confidence and Pleasure

93% of teachers and writers reported that students write more for pleasure.

71% of students felt more confident about working with new people, as a result of attending First Story creative writing events at arts institutions or universities.

# Teachers

100% of teachers reported that engaging professionally with First Story writers was extremely valuable for them and a source of motivation.

96% of teachers found the First Story project to be a source of practical and creative ideas.

61% of teachers said they write more for pleasure as a result of the programme.

We engaged with 83 teachers and librarians directly through the First Story programme and a further 1,300 in non-First Story schools, working with them to enhance creative writing teaching practices in the classroom.



## Financials

First Story received income in the year 2014-15 totalling £629,392 towards our programme in schools. The funding breakdown is as follows: £419,121 from individuals, trusts and foundations; £12,470 from corporates; £26,184 from fundraising events; £134,850 from participating school support or the Local Authority (LA); £20,833 from in-kind support; £15,539 from other sources including the selling of our publications; and £395 from bank interest. The majority (69%) of our income comes from the overwhelming generosity of our supporters.

We are proud to confirm that for every £1 donated to the charity, 83p goes directly to supporting our beneficiaries.



- Individual Donations, Trusts and Foundations Grants : 67%
- Corporate Donations : 2%
- Fundraising Events : 4%
- School Support : 21%
- In-kind Support : 3%
- Other Sources & Investments : 3%



- Programme Costs : 83%
- Fundraising Costs : 12%
- Administration Costs : 5%

## Governance and Management

### Constitution

First Story was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 29th January 2008 (registration number 6487410) and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The company is registered with the Charity Commission under the number 1122939.

### The Board of Trustees

The directors of the company are also trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the Board of Trustees. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, additional members of the Board of Trustees are elected at Board Meetings, based on a proposal discussed and approved by the Board of Trustees. Trustees are recruited on the basis that they possess the skills necessary to support First Story's work.

### Our Royal Patron

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

### Trustees

The trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Andrea Minton Beddoes, Chair  
 Anne Elizabeth Pryor Colocci  
 Robert John Waterloo Ind  
 Charlotte Mary Hogg  
 David Anthony Stuart Stephens, Treasurer (resigned 14th April 2015)  
 Susan Margaret Horner  
 Sophie Harrison, Teacher Trustee  
 Mayowa Sofekun, Student Trustee  
 Edward James Baden-Powell  
 Mary Elizabeth Tobin  
 James Victor Waldegrave, Interim Treasurer (appointed 14th April 2015)

### Advisory Boards

First Story has a National Advisory Board and Regional Advisory Panels that support the charity in making connections and providing advice on relevant fields.

### National Advisory Board

Andrew Adonis, Director of the Institute for Government  
 Julian Barnes, Writer  
 Jamie Byng, Publisher, Canongate  
 Alex Clark, Former Editor, Granta  
 Julia Cleverdon, Vice President, Business in the Community  
 Andrew Cowan, Director of Creative Writing, University of East Anglia  
 Jonathan Dimpleby, Writer and Broadcaster  
 Mark Haddon, Writer  
 Simon Jenkins, Writer  
 Derek Johns, Literary Consultant  
 Andrew Kidd, Literary Agent  
 Rona Kiley, CEO, Academy Sponsors Trust  
 Chris Patten, Former Chairman of the BBC Trust  
 Kevin Prunty, Headteacher  
 Zadie Smith, Writer  
 William Waldegrave, Baron Waldegrave of North Hill  
 Brett Wigdortz, CEO, Teach First  
 East Midlands

### East Midlands Regional Advisory Panel

Dr Sue Dymoke  
 Josephine Guy  
 Jim Hall  
 Jon McGregor  
 Catherine Rogers  
 Jill Tomasin

### North Regional Advisory Panel

Tim Appelbee  
 Syima Aslam & Irna Qureshi  
 Melvin Burgess  
 Simon Crump  
 Kevin Duffy  
 Dianne Excell  
 Christina Longden

### First Story Staff

The day-to-day operations of First Story are delegated to Mónica Parle as Executive Director. She is joined by nine other members of staff including a new part-time Operations Manager from January 2015. As a number of the roles are part-time, our full-time equivalent is eight.

# Schools and Writers 2014-15

## Schools and Writers 2014-15

### East Midlands

Babington Community Technology College	John Berkavitch
Banovallum School	Dan Powell
Cherry Willingham Community School	Steve Cawte
Judgemeadow Community College	Andy Craven-Griffiths
The Lancaster School	Andy Craven-Griffiths
Nottingham Academy - Greenwood Site	Jim Hall
Nottingham Academy - Ransom Road Site	Anthony Cropper
The Nottingham Emmanuel School	Paula Rawsthorne
Nottingham University Samworth Academy	Matt Black
Queen Elizabeth's Academy	Kevin Fegan

### London

Abbey Manor College	Emma Jones
Acland Burghley School	MC Angel
Beachcroft AP Academy	Anthony Anaxagorou
The Bridge AP Academy	Roland Chambers
Burlington Danes Academy	Josh Lacey
Cranford Community College	Ross Raisin
Fulham Cross Girls' School	Christie Watson
Forest Gate Community School	Anthony Anaxagorou
George Green's School	Kate Kingsley
Heartlands High School	Michelle Madsen
Holland Park School	Leo Benedictus
Islington Arts and Media School	Anthony Cartwright
King Solomon Academy	David Reynolds
Loxford School of Science and Technology	Alice Albinia
Oaklands Secondary School	Alice Albinia
Pimlico Academy	Roland Chambers
Queen's Park Community School	Edward Platt
Skinner's Academy	James Dawson
St. Augustine's CE High School	Philip Womack
Saint Gabriel's College	Francesca Beard
St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls	Caroline Bird
Wembley High Technology College	Peter Hobbs
Willowfield Humanities College	Caroline Bird
Woodside High School	Steven Camden
Floating Writer	Caroline Green

### Oxford

Cheney School	Julie Bolitho-Lee
Larkmead School	Tim Pears
The Oxford Academy	Alan Buckley
Oxford Spires Academy	Kate Clanchy

### Cheltenham Festivals Partnership – Gloucestershire

All Saints Academy	Cliff Yates
Barnwood Park Arts College	Jane Bailey
Gloucester Academy	Alicia Stubbersfield

### West Yorkshire and Lancashire

Appleton Academy	Nick Toczek
Bradford Academy	Stan Skinny
Buttershaw Business and Enterprise College	Andrew McMillan
Dixons Allerton Academy	Rachel Connor
Feversham College	Kate Fox
Matthew Moss High School	John Siddique
University Academy Keighley	Mark Illis

### Writers-in-residence – Achievements since 2008

#### Awards and prizes – winners

Amnesty International UK Media Award  
 Bath Short Story Award  
 BBC National Short Story Award  
 BBC Radio 4 'Opening Lines' Competition  
 Betty Trask Prize  
 Commonwealth Literary Prize  
 Costa First Novel Award  
 Dolman Travel Book Award  
 Eric Gregory Award  
 Fenton Aldeburgh First Collection Prize  
 Forward Prize for Poetry  
 Foyle Young Poets Award  
 Granta's 20 Most Promising Young British Novelists Under 40  
 Guardian First Book Award  
 Royal Society of Literature Jerwood Award for Non-Fiction  
 Somerset Maugham Award  
 The Sunday Times/Peters Fraser & Dunlop Young Writer of the Year Award  
 Salt Short Story Prize  
 Yeovil Literary Prize

#### Awards and prizes – shortlisted

Commonwealth Writers' Prize  
 Dylan Thomas Poetry Prize  
 Forward Prize for Best First Collection  
 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award  
 John Llewlyn Rhys Prize  
 Man Booker Prize  
 Ondaatje Prize  
 Picador Poetry Prize  
 Roald Dahl Funny Prize  
 Sir Walter Scott Prize  
 Waterstones Children's Book Prize  
 Whitbread Prize for Young Writers

#### Residencies and fellowships

The American School of London  
 Arvon  
 California State University  
 Cheltenham Literature Festival  
 The Cultural Olympiad  
 Glastonbury Festival  
 The Great North Run  
 The Poetry Café  
 The Royal Literary Fund  
 The Royal Society of Arts  
 The Royal Society of Literature  
 Somerset House  
 The University of Mumbai



## Supporters

With thanks to the many kind and generous supporters who enable First Story to carry out its vital work.

### Trusts and Foundations

Authors' Licencing and Collecting Society  
 The Bouttell Bequest  
 Clore Duffield Foundation  
 The Danego Charitable Trust  
 Drue Heinz Trust  
 Dulverton Trust  
 Esmée Fairbairn Foundation  
 Francis Terry Foundation  
 Garfield Weston Foundation  
 Golden Bottle Trust  
 John Lyon's Charity  
 John R. Murray Charitable Trust  
 Lake House Charitable Foundation  
 Laura Kinsella Foundation  
 Old Possum's Practical Trust  
 Robert Gavron Charitable Trust  
 Sands Family Trust  
 Sigrid Rausing Trust  
 Sir George Martin Trust  
 The Staples Trust  
 The Thomas Farr Charity  
 Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

### Individuals

Peter and Jane Aitken  
 Beth and Michele Colocci  
 Amy Gadney and Tim Bevan

Lady Katherine Gavron  
 Charlotte Hogg and Steve Sacks  
 Alice Jolly and Stephen Kinsella  
 John and Laurel Rafter  
 Betsy Tobin and Peter Sands  
 Alison and Neil Seaton

### Organisations and Partners

Arts Council England  
 Arvon  
 Boots Charitable Trust  
 Bromley House Library  
 Brunswick  
 Clifford Chance Foundation  
 Courtauld Gallery  
 Gateley LLP  
 Girdlers' Company Charitable Trust  
 Give a Book  
 Goldsmiths' Company Charity  
 Hemming Robeson  
 Impressions Gallery  
 Keats House  
 Mercers' Charitable Foundation  
 Oxford University Press  
 Penguin Random House  
 Pitt Rivers Museum  
 Psyche Interactive  
 Royal Society of Literature

SAGE Publications  
 Santander UK  
 Teach First  
 University College London  
 University of Huddersfield  
 University of Leicester  
 University of Oxford  
 University of Nottingham  
 Victoria & Albert Museum  
 Walker Books  
 Wilson Gallery

### Events Committee

Laurel Rafter, Chair  
 Simone Brych-Nourry  
 Beth Colocci  
 Jill Manson  
 Nathalie Perricone  
 Alison Seaton  
 Caroline Waldegrave  
 Valeria Vescina Warszewski

### Finance Subcommittee

Andrea Minton Beddoes  
 David Stephens  
 James Waldegrave  
 Pip Swindall

## 'Aqsal al Awal', by Sabah Hussein

(*'Aqsal al Awal' is Arabic for 'First Story'*)

Our minds are fizzy,  
 dwindling, turning  
 Writers feeding us lines  
 like  
 sunlight to plant  
 shoots  
 Our pens, a conversation on paper  
 Feet, a conversation with carpet

It is six am and I am  
 walking. Guilt etched on to my  
 skin because my 5:05 alarm  
 woke up my roommate, and

I pass staff, chirping  
 "morning" as she pushes her  
 food-filled trolley, her  
 white hair escaping from  
 her netted cap it is dancing  
 to a different tune, a  
 reckless serenade  
 from the last time  
 I saw her, I am

Out and a little bunny  
 and her child are  
 scurrying, they stop  
 perched, looking  
 around to see if  
 I'm a threat and I  
 stamp anyway, not because  
 I'm a threat, but because I  
 could be. Finally,

I am here sitting, a circle  
 of leaves surround me and  
 though my head is still  
 buzzing, unorganised  
 with experiments from  
 both science and literature,  
 I take a deep breath. And

breathe, away from  
 the cigarette skylines, deep  
 from my hips like  
 my mama said

Then, I realise:  
 I owe this to  
 Aqsal al Awal, teaching me  
 grammar and coma  
 placements, showing me  
 that sometimes  
 (just sometimes)

Colours described as  
 cars are better than  
 cars described though  
 colours, now

The trees around me  
 become wooden  
 tables, my  
 thoughts become the  
 future, and I am  
 thrown three years back

To the beginning of  
 this story, the first  
 time I sat there between  
 two friends, cakes  
 litter the tables and  
 I know I wasn't there  
 because of  
 "Gifted and Talented"  
 but I  
 don't care, lines

Coming from  
 Courttia Newland  
 sow themselves on to  
 our desks, encouragements  
 plastered on the walls  
 reminding me of homes and  
 fridges, now

I am standing in the circled  
 grass area and I  
 have so much to  
 say, so much to  
 be grateful for so

Thank you.

**Sabah Hussein,  
 Skinners Academy, London**

# *Changing Lives Through Writing*

First Story Limited  
39-41 North Road  
London N7 9DP

*Company registered in England no: 6487410*  
*Registered charity no: 1122939*

*Tel: 020 7481 7777*  
*Email: [info@firststory.org.uk](mailto:info@firststory.org.uk)*