

# News wise

Pilot report 2018



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## Executive summary

The NewsWise programme was developed as a collaborative partnership between Google, The Guardian Foundation, the National Literacy Trust and the PSHE Association. It was created as a response to calls for children's news literacy to be better supported in a digital age, and based on a shared mission to create a generation of news literate children. This report covers outcomes from the **pilot phase** of the project, the practical aspects of which started in early 2018. The first year of the programme is due to come to a close in April 2019, at which time a fuller report will be made available.

In the short time that NewsWise has been in existence, a small team of Programme and Project Managers have created an exciting suite of resources to support children's news literacy. These include a **practical workshop** and resources for children of upper primary age, a **teacher training session** and 16 **lesson plans** and resources (the 'unit of work'). The NewsWise programme launched digitally in June 2018, with an editorial in *The Guardian*, a Twitter account [@GetNewsWise](https://twitter.com/GetNewsWise) and website: <https://www.theguardian.com/newswise>.

**547** pupils in schools across England and Wales have now benefitted from taking part in a NewsWise workshop, learning about news literacy while preparing their own news reports. As this report shows, along with having fun (the most common word children used to describe their experience of NewsWise), children developed a deeper understanding of **why and how news stories are created**, and became much more confident about **reading, talking about and sharing** news. **76** teachers received face-to-face training from an expert member of the NewsWise team, helping schools to support news literacy across the curriculum and ensuring a more sustainable impact. **10 out of 10** said they would recommend NewsWise training to other schools, with 9 in 10 rating it 'excellent'.

There is clearly a great need to support news literacy in the digital age, and a keen interest from schools looking for ways to support children they work with in this area - more than **300** schools have now registered an interest in taking part in the NewsWise programme. With our immense thanks to Google for their support, and all NewsWise partner organisations for their ongoing and enthusiastic input into this exciting new programme, we look forward to reaching many of them with the launch of the main programme in September 2018.



## Introduction

The rise of digital technology over the last decade has brought unprecedented levels of change in how news is created and experienced (*Fake News and Critical Literacy*, National Literacy Trust, 2018<sup>1</sup>). While traditional, regulated sources of news, such as TV, radio and print, remain popular across all demographic groups, global studies indicate that young people in particular access news stories increasingly through digital and social media (Newman et al., 2017). This new media landscape is inherently more collaborative and participatory, offering previously unavailable opportunities for news production, distribution and consumption. The resulting recalibration of the notion of ‘authority’ has brought both benefits and challenges to today’s news consumers. Of particular concern has been the impact of ‘fake news’<sup>2</sup> on public trust in journalism (Saunders, 2017), leading to calls for children and young people’s critical, media and news literacy skills to be strengthened to help them to navigate the contemporary news environment.

Schools, families and media organisations have a shared responsibility to help children learn how to assess and evaluate the news they encounter, and each has a role to play in fostering skills and confidence that will empower them to become responsible news creators and consumers. Central to this is an awareness and understanding of the methods and motivations behind news production, or the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of modern journalism.

**“We need to empower and inspire children to become active participants in their communities and to tell their own stories, develop journalism and digital skills – those core skills.”**

Ben Hicks, The Guardian Foundation (National Literacy Trust APPG, 2018)



<sup>1</sup> <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/fake-news-and-critical-literacy-final-report/>

<sup>2</sup> “...completely made up, manipulated to resemble credible journalism and attract maximum attention” (Hunt, 2016)

## News literacy in the digital age

Children and young people have grown up with the online world as a constant, convenient source of information, but may not necessarily have the knowledge and skills to assess the reliability of what they find there. Indeed, surveys conducted by the National Literacy Trust in 2017 found that not only did many children lack confidence in their ability to identify fake news<sup>3</sup>, but only 2% were able to identify fake and real news stories presented as part of a quiz correctly.



Gender and socio-economic background were found to be associated with performance for primary-aged children, with a gap of almost 10 percentage points between girls and boys (with girls performing better) and between pupils from more or less advantaged backgrounds (with those not eligible for free school meals performing better than their peers)<sup>4</sup>. These findings mirror the gap found in broader literacy assessments in this age group, suggesting a link between literacy and news literacy skills, and emphasising the need to target interventions in schools serving children from less advantaged backgrounds, as these pupils would have most need of support.

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<sup>3</sup> 52% primary, 48% secondary

<sup>4</sup> Boys 48%, girls 58%; FSM 48%, non-FSM 58%



## The NewsWise project model

Several areas of need have been identified in relation to improving children's and young people's ability to engage effectively with the digital news environment (*Fake News and Critical Literacy*, National Literacy Trust, 2018<sup>5</sup>). These include:

- **Time:** the need for specialist educators and media experts to support busy teachers in educating children in how to better evaluate news<sup>6</sup>
- **Training:** the need for teachers to be given opportunities to learn about key news literacy skills, supported by tools and techniques around critical literacy to allow them to teach such skills effectively<sup>7</sup>
- **Resources:** the need for resources, including real world examples of news, to equip children with recent and relevant experience in interpreting and evaluating news sources<sup>8</sup>
- **Experience:** the need for children to be given chances to get involved in the production of news, as a practical way to empower children to take responsibility for news creation, allow them to develop an understanding of how news is produced, and consider different perspectives and concepts of truth.

The NewsWise programme responds directly to each of these findings, providing **expert workshops, teacher training** and **resources** to develop children's news literacy skills.



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<sup>5</sup> <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/fake-news-and-critical-literacy-final-report/>

<sup>6</sup> 85% of teachers believed the media, including people with a journalistic and/or digital background, had a role to play in improving children's critical literacy skills

<sup>7</sup> Supported in the evidence review initiating the Commission and in written submissions

<sup>8</sup> 55% of teachers felt the national curriculum did not equip children with the skills they needed to identify fake news, and 26% felt critical literacy skills as taught in school were not relevant to the real world

The programme is targeted at children aged 9 to 11, the youngest generation of news readers, providing strong foundational skills for children before any increase in digital and social media use associated with eligibility to join popular social networking platforms. Funded and supported by Google, NewsWise is a collaborative partnership utilising the complementary skills of The Guardian Foundation, the National Literacy Trust and the PSHE Association in designing and delivering a programme advancing a shared objective of promoting news literacy in children and young people across the UK.



### **Overall aim of the NewsWise programme**

To create a generation of news literate children within five years.

### **Definition of news literacy**

“The ability to judge the credibility and reliability of news reports – and why that matters.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Project structure 2018**

The NewsWise programme consists of three main elements:

#### **Workshop**

Creates a ‘newsroom’ experience in schools with pupils taken on editorial roles, identifying trustworthy stories and creating reports in real time.

#### **Teacher training**

Supporting teachers to deliver news literacy lessons in schools through examples and tips and setting out the pedagogy behind the project.

#### **Unit of work**

16 lesson plans with ready-made resources and using real examples, designed to be used in English, PSHE or topic time, and mapped to the curriculum and PSHE Association’s programme of study, providing busy teachers with effective and engaging ways to teach news literacy.

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<sup>9</sup> Center for News Literacy, Stony Brook University School of Journalism, USA

## Project content

### Workshops for pupils in Year 5 or 6

School-based workshops involve two two-hour sessions (one morning, one afternoon) run by the NewsWise team. The workshops use real examples and the latest technology to allow pupils to step into the world of the newsroom: taking on different journalistic roles, working as a team, assessing the trustworthiness of news stories, making tough editorial decisions and working to tight deadlines.



### Teacher training sessions

All participating schools receive a free twilight teacher training session made available to all staff. The teacher training session aims to embed practical knowledge about teaching news and critical literacy skills across the curriculum.

### Unit of work

The NewsWise unit of work consists of 16 lesson plans, each of which will be freely available for all schools to download and use, regardless of whether or not they have taken part in workshops and teacher training. The unit of work includes sessions on understanding the purpose of news, navigating news reports and identifying misinformation, bias and opinion, and understanding how news can manipulate our emotions and behaviours. The unit culminates with lessons on creating real, authentic and responsible news reports, giving children a chance to have a voice in their school community and beyond. The unit of work can be delivered over one or two terms as part of scheduled English or PSHE lessons and/or topic time. The resources can be adapted by each school to suit the particular needs of its pupils.

Figure 1: Examples of workshop content and unit of work resources

Learning Objective & Outcome	Starter Activity / Initial Assessment	Teaching Input	Learning Activity
To know what news is and what makes a story newsworthy Pupils can define what news is Identify the difference between examples of public and private news Use the news criteria to justify why a news story should be reported	Kick start the unit by welcoming pupils to 'Journalist Training School' and play the Mission Video. Give pupils their 'NewsWise Training Journal'. See 'Creating a Newsroom' resource for ideas about turning their classroom into a newsroom. News or Not? Pupils sort the flash cards into 'news' and 'not news' considering the reasons for their choices. What counted as news? What didn't count? How did you make your decision? Are things which happen to us individually 'news'?	Journalist Training School Content First and foremost, journalists need to know what news is! They must also be able to decide whether a story is newsworthy or not when choosing stories to report. News is new information that people want or need to know. There is a difference between personal news and public news (eg "I want to see a football match last night with my family" vs. "Arsenal lose in shock defeat against Luton Town"). News companies use News Criteria (see resource) to decide if a story is newsworthy (interesting) or not: Subject: who the story is about Time: when the story happened Surprise: whether the story will surprise people or inform them of something new	Pupils work in role as 'desk editors' (who select news stories for their section of the publication), evaluating the newsworthiness of potential stories (see Newsworthy News?) and deciding whether to report on them. Pupils use the News Criteria to make judgements and justify their choices. Challenge: Pupils decide on one news story to feature on their front page. Why do you feel this is the most newsworthy story? Plenary Discuss and share the pupils' choices. How did you decide which stories were newsworthy? Which one news story would you report on the frontpage? Return to the class definition of news and add any additional understanding. Introduce and discuss the fourth news criteria of place - news reports could be for international, national or local audiences.

Lesson Resources: News or Not? News Criteria Newsworthy News?



## Outputs

Over the period of the pilot (April 2018 – July 2018) and first year of the project (September 2018 – April 2019), the programme aims to reach:

- **80 workshops** in **40 schools** (two workshops per school)
- **2,400 pupils** and **400 teachers** in total (i.e. 10 teachers and 60 pupils per school) through workshops and teacher training sessions
- **500 downloads** of the unit of work

Between April and June 2018, NewsWise ran **20** workshops reaching **547** children in **10** primary schools serving areas of disadvantage across the UK. In addition, **76** teachers received training in how to teach news and critical literacy across the curriculum. All schools have received 16 lesson **unit of work** resources, ensuring a sustainable impact on schools, teachers and pupils.

In the pilot period, the programme received **more than 300** expressions of interest from schools across the UK. Schools were invited to take part based on need<sup>10</sup>, and in addition to workshops and resources, teachers received expert training and access to our online practitioner network.

## Objectives

Three main objectives were set at the outset of the NewsWise programme, as listed below.

The programme aims to reach children and young people from all communities to:

- **Deepen their understanding of why and how news is produced.** Children will:
  - Learn about reasons for news (e.g. information sharing, income generation, other agendas)
  - Develop their awareness of different aspects of news (factual, opinion, regulated, unregulated), different news formats and media outlets and what journalists and news producers do (fact-checking, editing etc.)
- **Enable them to navigate the news through active and critical engagement**
  - Active engagement (output measure)
  - Critical engagement – skills and confidence e.g. increased comprehension, ability to think critically about news stories (i.e. to assess, analyse and evaluate), confidence to question authority
- **Empower them to tell their own news stories**
  - Increased ability and confidence to share their own news



<sup>10</sup> Higher than average percentage of students eligible for Pupil Premium/(FSM) and lower than average reading attainment. This is used as a proxy for deprivation

## Evaluation methodology

An evaluation framework was designed to measure the programme’s success in reaching the objectives outlined above. Changes were evaluated through pupil and teacher surveys, designed to capture impact of **workshops, teacher training** and **resources**. Children and teachers were asked to complete surveys online wherever possible due to the restricted time available for manually entering surveys completed on paper.

Pupils were asked to complete surveys before and after workshops, and after taking part in the unit of work. Teachers were asked to complete surveys after workshops, to provide a teacher’s perspective of outcomes for pupils, and after running the unit of work (see **Figure 2**). In addition, those taking part in teacher training were requested to complete a short feedback form (standard practice for continuing professional development (CPD) sessions) to indicate the level of potential for a sustainable impact on schools through changing teaching practice.

Figure 2: NewsWise pilot survey points

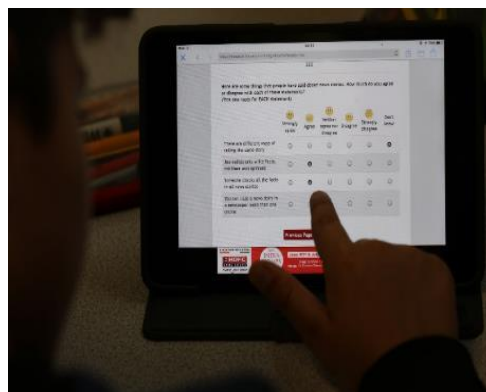
	Time point	Purpose of survey
Pupil	Pre-NewsWise	To establish a baseline allowing comparison with post-workshop and/or post-NewsWise pupil surveys
	Post-workshop	To evaluate short-term changes (i.e. over the course of the workshop) in children’s news literacy
	Post-NewsWise	To evaluate longer-term changes (i.e. after delivery of the unit of work) in children’s news literacy
Teacher	Post-workshop	To evaluate changes over the course of the workshop from the perspective of a professional adult
	Post-NewsWise	To evaluate longer-term changes (i.e. after delivery of the unit of work) in children’s news literacy

Pupil pre-NewsWise survey responses were received from **460** pupils, an impressive response rate from 547 overall workshop participants. Post-workshop responses were received from **339** pupils, an attrition rate well within that expected of a programme of this nature. However, teacher survey response rates were disappointing, with only four post-workshop responses, and 10 of a possible 76 teacher training feedback forms.

To date, only a small number of post-NewsWise surveys have been received from pupils (48) and teachers (5) as anecdotal feedback suggests that teachers feel they have yet to complete enough of the unit of work to make this survey relevant. These will therefore be followed up in the new academic year, with pilot schools given another opportunity to complete post-NewsWise surveys once they have had to the chance to complete an appropriate amount of unit of work sessions.

## Survey problems and solutions

Some schools experienced issues with the online pupil surveys (for example, low availability of laptops and tablets, or a high proportion of pupils in the early stages of learning English). Given these challenges, the response rate for pupil pre- and post-workshop surveys, and the very low rate of 'skipped' questions<sup>11</sup>, was commendable and testament to the efforts of the NewsWise team, teachers and pupils in helping us to evaluate the impact of a new programme.



## Key findings and impact

The pilot has shown a high level of impact on participating children's attitudes and skills in relation to news, giving them the skills they need to be confident news consumers. By focusing on schools in areas of disadvantage, the project supports ongoing, sustainable outcomes for communities most in need across the UK.

## Highlights

- **10 out of 10** teachers would recommend the NewsWise training session to other schools, with **9 in 10** rating it 'excellent'
- **86%** of pupils rated the NewsWise workshop as **good** or **very good**
- More than three quarters (**76.3%**) said they had a better idea of **why** news stories might be created after taking part in NewsWise
- More children also showed a deeper understanding of **how** news stories are created, with the percentage aware of the need for fact-checking increasing from **61.5%** to **75.6%**, an increase of 22.9%
- More children were **confident** about their ability to spot fake news, with under half (**47.2%**) saying it was 'easy' or 'quite easy' before taking part in a NewsWise workshop, and more than three quarters (**76.2%**) saying this afterwards; an increase of 61.4%
- **Three-quarters** of children also said they were more confident about **reading news** (78.4%), **talking about news** (76.1%) and **challenging** family and friends about news they weren't sure about (73.6%) having taken part in a NewsWise workshop
- The percentage of children who thought news stories should be balanced increased by **46.2%** pre- to post-workshop (51.7% pre, 75.6% post), and **8 in 10** (79.2%) said they would think more about **whose points of view** had been included in a news story.

"I thought it was a very good workshop because it helped me understand more about the news and what is fake news and real news... I went home last night and read a newspaper!" - Pupil

<sup>11</sup> Most questions had fewer than 10 pupils skipping, suggesting most respondents were keen to try and provide an answer to all, or most, questions

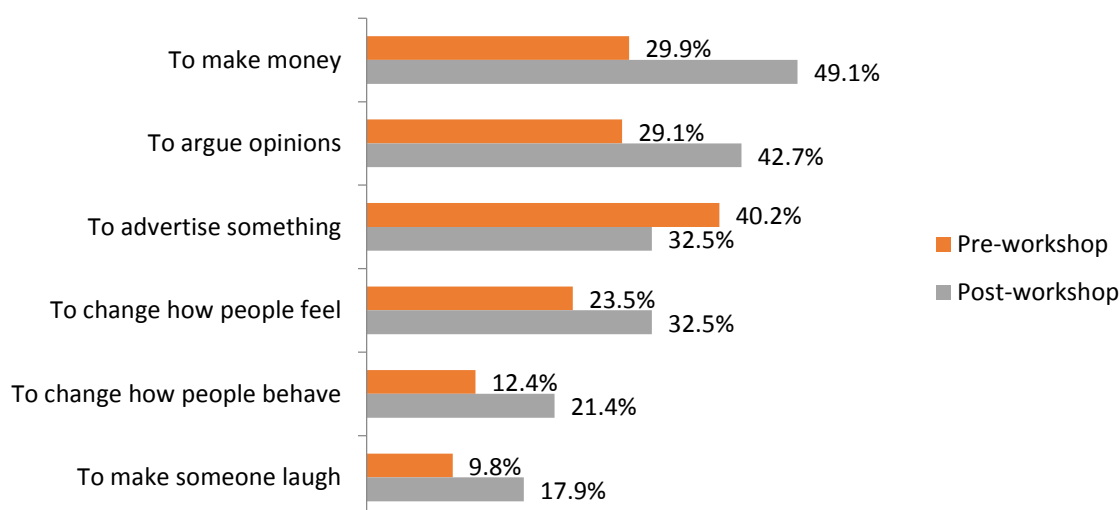
## Impact of NewsWise workshops on pupils

Firstly, it was encouraging to find that almost **9 in 10 (85.3%)**<sup>12</sup> pupils enjoyed their experience of taking part in a NewsWise workshop, rating it as either ‘very good’ or ‘good’. Indeed, when asked to comment on this, the most common word children used was ‘fun’. At the same time, matched survey responses<sup>13</sup> indicated that a significant percentage of children showed an increased understanding of **why** news might be produced, and an increased awareness of **how** it is produced having taking part in a NewsWise workshop, in keeping with the programme’s main objectives.



Indeed, more than three-quarters (**76.3%**) of pupils responding to the post-workshop survey said they had a **better idea of why news stories were written**. Children’s pre- and post-workshop surveys showed a significant difference in the percentage who thought reasons for creating news might include to make money, with under one-third thinking this before a workshop and almost half afterwards (see **Figure 3**). Significant differences were also found in the percentage of children who thought reasons for news creation could include “arguing opinions”, or to change how someone feels, how they behave or make them laugh. The percentage who thought advertising might be a reason for creating news decreased post-workshop, as children learned about the links between this and fake news (see **Figure 3**).

Figure 3: Children’s understanding of reasons why news might be produced

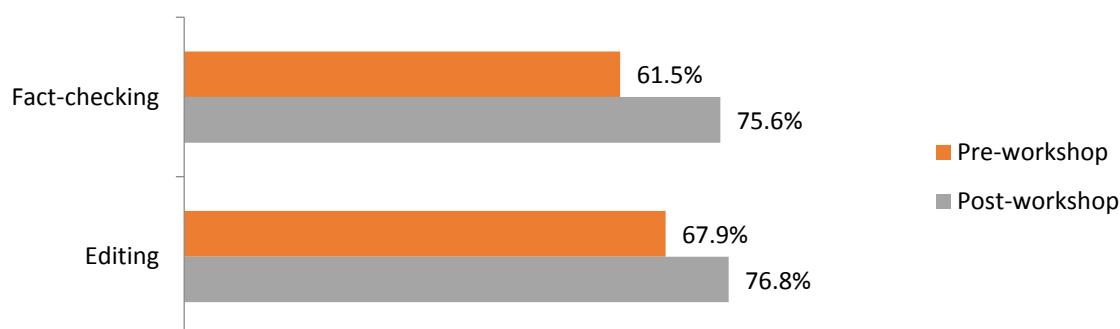


<sup>12</sup> 46.3% ‘very good’ and 39.0% ‘good’

<sup>13</sup> n = 234, boys = 105, girls = 108 (other = 1, rather not say = 20); eligible for Free School Meal s= 36, not eligible = 150 (don’t know = 28, rather not say = 20). Only statistically significant findings ( $p \leq .005$ ) have been included in this report. No systematic differences were found by gender or socioeconomic background; these will be explored with the larger sample at the end of the main NewsWise programme

Children’s pre- and post-workshop survey responses also indicated a **better awareness of how news is created**; specifically, what journalists and news producers do. In particular, participants were more aware of the importance of **finding and checking facts** and of the role of **editing** when creating news stories (see **Figure 4**) after the NewsWise workshop. Furthermore, post-workshop, a significantly higher percentage of children agreed with the statements: “Journalists only write facts, not their own opinions” (**26.2% pre, 47.2% post**) and “Someone checks all the facts in news stories” (**45.7% pre, 70.0% post**).

Figure 4: Children’s awareness of the need for fact-checking and editing when creating news



Children were asked to name people needed to create news before and after the workshop. **Figure 5** shows word-clouds featuring the most common responses. The top three responses were editors, journalists (an example given in the question) and reporters, both pre- and post-workshop. However, the fourth and fifth most named roles in the pre-survey were photographers and writers, whereas these were replaced by sub-editor and team editor post-workshop, indicating a more nuanced awareness of the range of roles and stages involved in creating a news story.

**“I learnt a lot about the news and was fascinated during the lesson. I now know jobs that go into making the news. Now I can tell my parents more about the news than they know about!” - Pupil**

Figure 5: Children’s awareness of people needed to create news

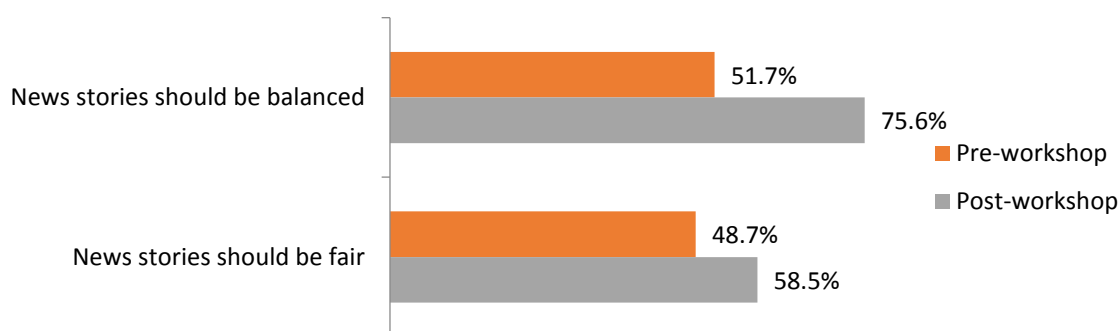




In addition, children showed an **increased critical engagement** with news, with a higher percentage saying that news should present a balanced and fair picture. The percentage that thought news stories should be ‘balanced’ increased by **46.2%** pre- to post-workshop, while children saying news should be ‘fair’ also increased significantly (see **Figure 6**).



Figure 6: Children’s critical engagement with news



Furthermore, having taken part in the workshops, there was a significant increase in the percentage of children who showed **increased skills and confidence** in **questioning** the news stories they came across. Children were more likely to say they would **make a range of checks**<sup>14</sup> to determine if a news story was trustworthy having taken part in a NewsWise workshop. Before taking part, the most popular check children made was to see if a news story appeared anywhere else, with **7 in 10 (70.1%)** doing this, increasing to more than three-quarters (**77.4%**) afterwards.

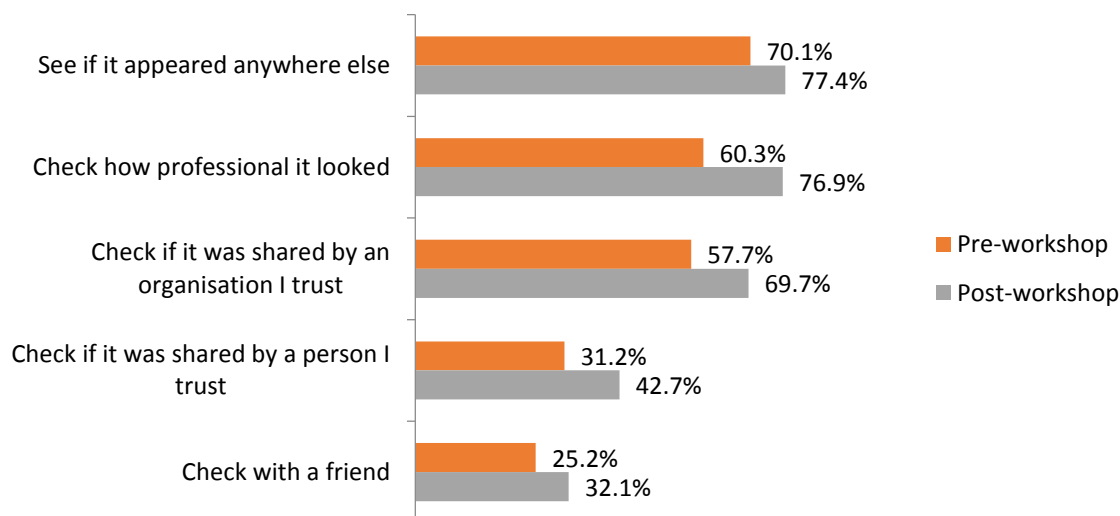
However, the biggest increase was seen in the number of children saying they’d check **how professional** a news story looked, which increased by **27.5%**. There were also significant increases in children saying they’d check if a news story came from **an organisation they could trust**, or was **shared by someone they could trust**. Finally, the proportion who’d check a news story with a friend increased from **1 in 4** in pre-NewsWise surveys to almost **1 in 3** in post-workshop surveys (see **Figure 7**).

Interestingly, the percentage who said they wouldn’t make any checks at all also increased very slightly, from 3.0% before to 7.3%, after the NewsWise workshop.



<sup>14</sup> Children said they’d make an average of 3.9 checks in pre-surveys, and 4.4 in post-surveys

Figure 7: Checks children would make to help work out if a news story was trustworthy



Encouragingly, more children also showed **an improved confidence** in their ability to tell if a news story is trustworthy having taken part in a NewsWise workshop, with a much higher percentage saying it was ‘very’ or ‘quite’ easy to tell if a news story was trustworthy after the workshop (see **Figure 7**).

Figure 7: How confident children are in telling if a news story is trustworthy



When asked if this had changed compared to before the NewsWise workshop, **74.6%** thought they would *now* find it easier (4.9% thought it would be harder, 20.5% felt the same as before) and **86.3%** agreed with the statement “I now feel more confident about spotting fake news”. In addition, nearly three quarters (**73.6%**) of children said they felt more confident to **challenge family and friends** about news stories they weren’t sure about.

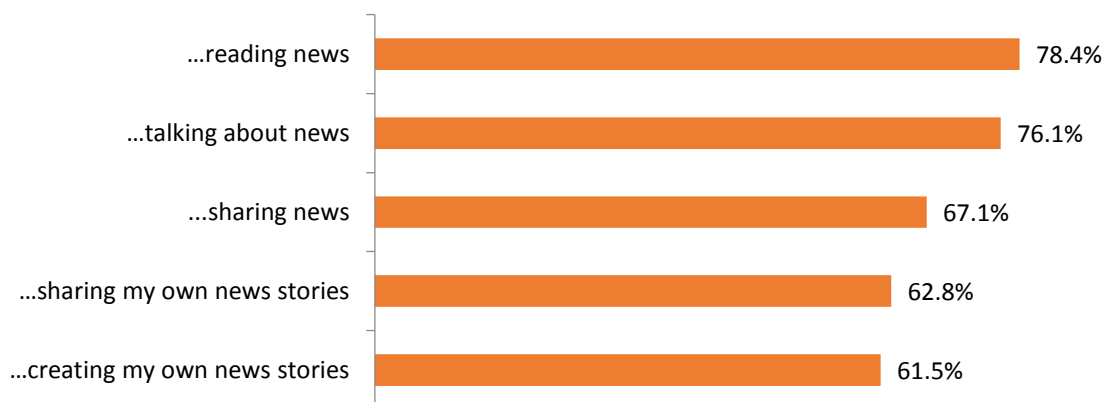
“...the NewsWise workshop was amazing! I want to be a journalist when I am older and this has really helped me how to tell between fake and real news and how to present a news story.” - Pupil

Additional reflective questions indicated further positive impact in several areas, most prominently children’s awareness of whose points of view have been included in a news story. **8 in 10** (79.2%) children said they would think more about this having taken part in a NewsWise workshop). Children also felt more confident about various aspects of their

**relationship with news**, with 8 in 10 saying they now felt more confident about **reading** news, and more than three-quarters felt more confident **talking about** news. Almost 7 in 10 children felt more confident about **sharing** news, and 6 in 10 about **sharing** and even **creating their own** news stories (see **Figure 8**).

Figure 8: Children’s confidence in reading, talking about and sharing news

“I now feel more confident about...”



Children were also given the opportunity to comment on their thoughts and feelings about the news after taking part in NewsWise workshops. Comments included:

**“I feel more confident about reading the news or looking at the news. I also think that it is now really important to read the news to know what is going on around the world.”**

**“I feel so much better about the news now because I used to be scared of reading the news... but now I feel better knowing what is fake news and what is real news. So thank you for helping me realise that there is no reason too [sic] be scared of reading the news.”**

**“I didn’t watch a lot of news but now I will.”**



**“I loved it! I learnt lots of news facts and I felt like a proper news reporter!”**  
- Pupil

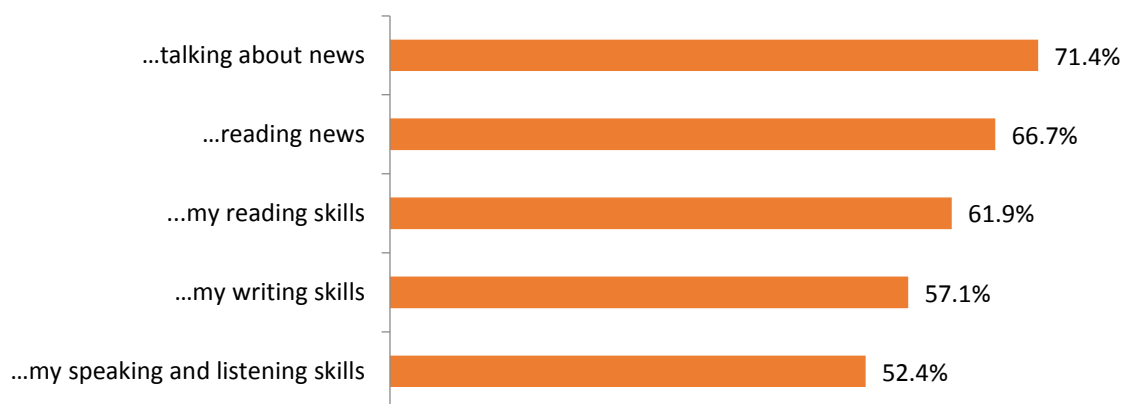
## Insight into longer-term outcomes from children’s (six-week) post-NewsWise surveys

Only one school has been able to complete both pre and post-NewsWise surveys to date, so findings can only give a very limited insight into changes persisting six weeks after initial involvement in NewsWise. However, it was interesting to note that a high percentage of children, having taking part in NewsWise, felt more confident about talking about, reading and sharing news. Moreover, children were more confident about their overall reading, writing and speaking and listening skills (see **Figure 9**), indicating that participation in NewsWise has the potential to impact on **children’s confidence in their wider literacy skills**.



Figure 9: Children’s confidence in reading, talking about and sharing news and in reading, writing, speaking and listening six weeks after initial involvement in NewsWise

“I now feel more confident about...”



## Teachers’ perceptions of child outcomes

**Four** complete responses to the teacher post-workshop survey were received, and while it is not possible to draw out percentages, there were very positive comments about the workshops and their impact on pupils:

“...structures giving firm deadlines thoroughly enjoyed by all the children. Loved every second!”

“**M. is not a strong English student... The workshop tapped into his interest of technology... and current affairs... This really engaged him and through the ...presentation**

“Really well structured, with well-timed, pacy activities. The kids loved the QR scanner and the iPad which added a mature element to the workshop.” - Teacher

he was able to excel. Follow on work would produce much better writing than M. sometimes produces.”

“The sessions ...hooked the children's interest in relation to the news. I felt the parts ...that focused on researching a story and making notes ...helped with news literacy particularly. This made students ...practice taking effective notes and identifying key information for a news story.”

“Made me think ...about ...how we sometimes shy away from current affairs ... but how they could be used to produce quality writing whilst addressing PSHE.”

## Wider teacher outcomes and feedback

In order to reach the main NewsWise objective of creating a generation of news literacy children, it is essential that the programme not only seeks to support child outcomes directly, but to encourage a sustainable impact by having a positive impact on teachers and schools as well. Teachers receive **training, resources** and **ongoing support** to achieve this, encouraging schools to promote news literacy across the curriculum. With regard to the teacher training, 10 feedback forms were received from teachers who had participated in these sessions<sup>15</sup>.

“Fantastic CPD and a great learning opportunity for children.” - Teacher

Responses were overwhelmingly positive:

- **10 out of 10** teachers would recommend the NewsWise training session to other schools
- **10 out of 10** felt that the NewsWise session was relevant to the curriculum
- **9 in 10** teachers rated the NewsWise teacher training session ‘**excellent**’ (the highest category available)
- **7 in 10** said the training had contributed to their professional development ‘**very much**’ (the highest category), with the remaining 3 teachers saying ‘quite a lot’

“I would be really enthused to teach this learning journey with my class.”

“Great ideas to use in the classroom to develop pupils’ oracy skills.”



“One student ...never really joins in activities was so focused and involved and absolutely loved the workshops.”  
- Teacher

<sup>15</sup> Of a potential maximum of 76 teachers, from 2 of a potential 10 schools



## Teachers' perceptions of longer-term outcomes

**Five** teachers<sup>16</sup> responded to a 'post-NewsWise' survey, intended to capture longer-term programme outcomes following a workshop, training and delivery of the unit of work. As mentioned earlier, studies indicate that **time** and **resources** are needed to allow the effective teaching of critical literacy skills, so the provision of high-quality, ready-to-use lesson plans in the unit of work is a central part of the NewsWise programme. Although all teachers mentioned that they'd yet to complete more than half of the lessons included in the unit of work (due to time constraints in summer term), feedback based on what they had been able to deliver, and their experiences of NewsWise as a whole, was extremely positive:

- **5 out of 5** teachers rated the unit of work as "excellent" or "good"
- **5 out of 5** felt more confident about teaching news literacy
- **5 out of 5** said NewsWise had increased pupils' engagement with news and journalism
- **5 out of 5** felt pupils had increased skills and confidence in thinking critically about news stories, and a better understanding of different aspects of news
- **4 out of 5** felt pupils had increased skills in writing their own news reports

Comments included:

**"The quality of resources meant that pupils had access to fantastic and age appropriate models throughout the unit - this enabled them to feel confident and equipped when writing their own news reports."**

**"Children were astonished that all that they read is not true - this aspect of their literacy was great to explore with children who are about to go to secondary school."**

**"Current and relevant for all - especially to make the children question the validity of what they hear/read/watch."**

Teachers also told us about the longer-term impact on individual pupils' literacy:

**"L is a child who does not readily enjoy reading or writing but during and after the NewsWise input he was very interested in current news programmes and would come in and tell me what he had seen and why it was/wasn't important. He was able to bring a news edge to his writing and was keen to complete all tasks."**

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<sup>16</sup> From 5 of the 10 schools taking part in the NewsWise pilot workshops

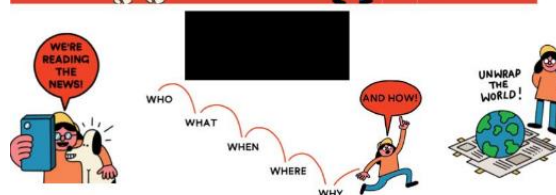
## Digital, social media and press coverage



The NewsWise website and Twitter account were both launched in June 2018. To date, we have 144 followers on Twitter, and have received 1243 views of the NewsWise homepage.



An editorial piece on NewsWise and news literacy in Guardian Education in June received over 11,000 views online, and over 150,000 in hard copy.



## Reflections and recommendations

Highlights of the pilot period include:

- The design and delivery of NewsWise workshops, teacher training and unit of work resources reaching 10 schools, 76 teachers and more than 500 pupils in areas of disadvantage across the UK
- Evidence of a number of positive changes in children's understanding of why and how news is produced, and an increased confidence in reading, talking about and sharing news, in keeping with the programme's main objectives
- Positive feedback from teachers and children on all elements of the programme, with many wonderful comments about the impact of NewsWise both on individual children and whole classes' news literacy

Key areas of development include:

- **Digital and technology:** iPads were used in the last couple of workshops in the pilot 10 schools and have been very popular. The team is working out how to make these more integral to the workshop by getting an Apple TV and MiFi to enable internet connection, and aiming to be able to enrol schools in Apple Classroom to broaden the scope of workshops. The website will be expanded to include news sections and content, including 'What I do' videos from editorial staff. A long-term aim is to create a **web-based app** for teachers so that they can make their pupils' reports look professional. We are also considering setting up an Instagram account.

- The monthly blog may also become a **newsletter**, to be used as a community-building tool and help establish how many people we are reaching regularly in an engaged way. This could include a ‘fun and friendly’ update on the project and regular sections such as ‘fake news of the month’, a quote from a pupil and opportunities to contribute ideas and thoughts. Ideally the first newsletter will coincide with the September 2018 launch event.
- **Unit of work** resources will be made available to download from the NewsWise website without the need to sign up, and the PSHE Association are likely to make it available from their website in the same way as they do for other recommended resources. Both NewsWise and the PSHE Association will be able to monitor numbers of downloads, but will not be able to determine email addresses to capture any evaluation or feedback. Resources downloaded from the National Literacy Trust website require a login, which may potentially allow for links for resource evaluation to be sent out.
- A **‘teacher champion’** programme is being developed, with 10 teacher champions being recruited to share best practice and champion the project at network events.
- Journalists are struggling to find time to visit schools in a volunteering capacity for NewsWise. The team will set up and pilot ‘NewsWise Live!’ using video conferencing technology to enable classes to connect live with news outlets such as The Guardian and see, hear and learn more about what their jobs involve.



#### Areas for improvement include:

- **Evaluation methodology will be refined** to make it easier for busy schools to provide information about impact of the project. Following a suggestion from the NewsWise team, the teacher survey time points will be consolidated into a single post-NewsWise survey, completed as part of a ‘reflective’ learning session at the end of the unit of work. Pupil surveys will include fewer questions, based on those found to be most valuable and informative for the pilot evaluation. Schools with technical constraints will be given an option of having children complete paper surveys and those with children at an early stage of learning English will be advised to allow pupils to skip any questions they find difficult.
- Impact relating to the objective on **empowering children them to tell their own news stories** has not come through strongly at pilot stage. The team will encourage and support schools through the unit of work to the “create your own reports” stage and will showcase examples of pupils’ work on the NewsWise website.

## Conclusion

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to **Google** for their support for the pilot and first year of the NewsWise programme. Even at this early stage, it is clear that children taking part in NewsWise have more a deeper understanding of, critical engagement with, and confidence around, news creation and consumption after taking part in the project. All teachers involved in running the project felt it was effective in engaging their children with the news and journalism, and noted a positive change in pupils' skills and confidence in thinking critically about news stories having taking part in the programme.

The project also had a positive impact on teachers and schools, increasing teachers' confidence in teaching news literacy and providing them with resources to help them do so. Teachers spoke highly of the quality of the resources, their relevance for all pupils and their popularity with children, noting both their own enthusiasm to teach the learning journey and their pupils' enjoyment of it.

**"I hope other schools are able to enjoy this experience as much as we did." - Teacher**

Children's comments reinforced this impression, with several mentioning the fun they had in workshops, the authenticity of the experience ("I felt like a proper news reporter") and an increased engagement with the world of news ("I think it is now really important to read the news to know what is going on around the world"). Other comments also indicated that the programme had helped to improve some children's wellbeing ("Thank you for helping me realise that there is no reason too [sic] be scared of reading the news") and that others were going on to share their learning with family members ("Now I can tell my parents more about the news that they know about!"), widening the impact of the programme beyond its immediate beneficiaries.

These outcomes would not have been possible without the support and collaboration of all partners in the design of the programme; **The Guardian Foundation**, the **National Literacy Trust** and the **PSHE Association**, and our shared mission to improve news literacy across the UK by supporting the next generation of news consumers. An impressive number of schools, teachers and pupils have already experienced NewsWise workshops, training and resources delivered with expertise and enthusiasm by a small, but energetic, NewsWise team. We are keen to build and develop on the many successes of this pilot project period as we enter the launch of the main programme, and look forward to reaching even more children and schools facing the most serious literacy challenges.

**"I thought it was a very good workshop because it helped me understand more about the news... I went home last night and read a newspaper!" - Pupil**

## Appendix 1: pilot project locations



## Appendix 2: pilot child beneficiaries

Partner school	Location	% eligible for FSM	Child numbers
Linton Mead Primary School	London (Thamesmead)	20.7	60
Rushbrook Primary Academy	Manchester	23.4	50
Torriano Primary School	London (Camden)	27.0	51
Marlborough Primary School	Falmouth	7.8	60
The Baird Primary Academy	Hastings	33.9	57
Shaw Wood Primary	Doncaster	16.6	59
Timberley Academy	Birmingham	51.5	58
Pentrepoeth Primary School	Newport		58
The Bemrose School Primary School	Derby	24.0	36
Whitemoor Academy	Nottingham	21.4	58
Hazlehead School	Aberdeen		55
Kingswells Primary School	Aberdeen		61
<b>Total</b>			<b>663</b>



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