



National Literacy Trust Network

Feedback and Impact 2014-15

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National Literacy Trust

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Introduction and methodology

The National Literacy Trust Network has been running as a successor to Reading Connect for three years. Data is monitored on a quarterly basis by the programme team, successfully capturing outputs and managing them. However, outcomes aren't studied as often. Although the programme team regularly seeks feedback from users at local meetings, via emails, via occasional surveys, and by having an open communication approach with all members at all times, the programme has never been formally evaluated. As a result, both Network managers and Network users lack a comprehensive picture of how the Network is used and perceived in schools, its strengths and weaknesses, and its potential for development or change.

The National Literacy Trust strives to improve literacy for disadvantaged children by creating a supportive environment in the community and in schools. The Network is aimed directly at school practitioners. This evaluation therefore strives to measure outcomes on professionals, rather than on pupils.

The evaluation was conducted internally by the National Literacy Trust's monitoring and evaluation team using a mixed-methods approach with a quantitative online survey and qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

Qualitative investigation

The FGD were conducted at Network meetings with members and non-members between December 2014 and March 2015. In total, five FGD took place with a total of 28 professionals. They included primary and secondary teachers, members of management teams (directors, department heads, head teachers, etc), literacy coordinators, and consultants. The prompts can be found in the annex.

Quantitative survey

The online survey was available between September 2014 and March 2015. It was advertised by email via Network updates to all members. In total, 105 people responded but only 103 responses were valid (completed enough questions). Tables 1 to 5 below describe the profile of respondents, bearing in mind that in some cases the respondent could tick several boxes, which affected the total responses in Tables 2 and 3.

The split between primary and secondary school is fairly even (48% vs 47%). Most respondents work in maintained schools or academies (33% and 33%). We had more literacy coordinators than teachers in the sample, and 15% were school librarians (almost all of whom were in secondary schools).

Table 1: Phase of school

Primary (including infant, first and junior schools)	50	48%
Middle	1	1%
Secondary (including those with and without sixth forms)	48	47%
All-through	4	4%

The results from the survey can be compared with statistics from Network memberships. In April 2015, 54% of memberships were held by primary schools and 28% by secondary schools, which means secondary schools are clearly over-represented in our sample. Meanwhile, 2% of memberships were held by early years settings, who are not represented here at all.

Table 2: Type of school

Maintained school	40	39%
Academy	34	33%
Mainstream school	22	21%
Local authority	20	19%
Educational consultant	10	10%
Independent school	5	5%
PRU	4	4%
Special school	3	3%

Table 3: Job title

Literacy coordinator	37	28%
Teacher	23	17%
School librarian/LRC manager	20	15%
Senior manager	19	14%
Head of department/faculty	10	7%
Consultant/adviser	10	7%
Head teacher	9	7%
SENCO	4	3%
Other	2	1%

Table 4: Job title by school phase¹

	Primary	Secondary
Literacy coordinator	23	13
Teacher	17	4
Senior manager	8	11
School librarian	1	17

Table 5: Job title by type of school

	Maintained school	Academy	Independent school	Mainstream school	PRU	Local authority
Teacher	10	5	0	3	0	5
Lit. coord.	15	10	0	5	1	10
Senior mgr.	10	4	0	7	0	4
Sch. librarian	4	10	2	3	0	0

¹ Only 94 respondents provided their job titles. Because the sample is under 100 individuals, we are not presenting the data in percentages.

Challenges and limitations

In April 2015, the National Literacy Trust Network had 1,848 members. The sample of this evaluation therefore only reflects the opinions and practices of a selection of Network members and as such should not be mistaken for an accurate representation of the views and practices of all Network members.

One serious bias of this evaluation is that it fails to capture the opinions and feedback of “inactive” Network members. By “inactive”, we mean the members who did not connect to the Network in the first term of 2015, and the many users who do not open the fortnightly email updates or don’t attend local meetings. The questions that we would like to ask these users include why they pay the Network membership fee but fail to use the offer? What could encourage them to make better use of the available resources? What else do they use instead of the National Literacy Trust Network to support the teaching of literacy in their schools? How do they ensure that their pupils are benefiting from high-quality literacy practices? Unfortunately, this report is unable to answer any of these questions because these inactive users have not responded to the online survey or attended any of the FGD.

1 A highly praised service

1.1 Positive feedback

Among FGD participants who have used the Network or use it regularly, feedback is generally extremely positive. Teachers and literacy coordinators, as well as department heads, report they find it useful, comprehensive, well made, and the contents to be of high quality. The Network is used both for activities in the classroom and for more strategic purposes such as policy design:

"I used it for the World Cup. We were reading the Tom Palmer book in class with Year 4 and they were really enthusiastic about it." (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

"I really like it. I read the blogs and I also dip into it, and in terms of resources it's the main one I use." (Secondary teacher, South London, December 2014)

"I used it when I updated the literacy policy because it helped get relevant quotes, which was extremely useful." (Secondary teacher, South London, December 2014)

"We run a couple of research projects so we can use the logo "working with the National Literacy Trust". We got involved in the EAL blog, which is great. The support from the research is also really good. You can easily get in touch with other people doing the same thing so it's very useful." (Primary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

"I know my Head of Department has used some of the resources, but not necessarily the classroom resources. She said she found them very useful and interesting." (Assistant head teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

The feedback is also positive among survey respondents. They were asked about different aspects of the Network and whether they found them useful (see Table 6). The literacy guide for schools seems to be the most successful part of the Network, with two thirds of respondents rating it as very useful. Emails, resources and blogs, and the whole-school literacy audit are regarded as very useful by half of respondents. However, it is interesting to note that 20% of respondents haven't used the audit, and very few viewed local meetings and working with the National Literacy Trust logo as particularly useful. However, again, a large percentage of respondents didn't know about or have never used these features.

Table 6: Please rate how useful you find the features of the Network

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Literacy guide for schools	66%	19%	1%	6%
Fortnightly email updates	52%	37%	2%	4%
Resources and blogs	51%	39%	0%	5%
Whole-school literacy audit	47%	25%	2%	20%
Discounts	22%	30%	2%	42%
Local meetings	17%	10%	9%	58%
'Working with National Literacy Trust' logo	11%	18%	8%	56%

Desegregating the data by job titles or school phase provides some interesting insight into which resources are more useful to whom. Two main trends emerged:

- Senior managers and literacy coordinators seem to find most Network offers more useful than teachers do. That is especially true for the local meetings, the whole-school literacy audit, and the ‘working with the National Literacy Trust’ logo.
- It is also clear from the survey that secondary-school respondents seem to find the Network more useful than their peers in primary schools.

1.2 An expert offer, embedded in practice

Content on the Network is generally very well trusted. It is considered useful because of its quality and the fact that it is created or vetted by experts. The expertise of the National Literacy Trust is highly praised and seems to constitute a key element of why and how the Network is used by practitioners:

“You want the academic material to be accessible and manageable. I know from colleagues that they miss the academic challenge we used to get during training, where it was all about research and theory. And then when you actually teach, you disengage with the research.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“We need to trust what’s on the Network. The National Literacy Trust definitely count as experts. When you look at the report, you know it’s based on research. The value of the Network is that the info on it is vetted and evaluated, things are piloted and researched in-depth, and it’s great research.” (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

“You want something like this that you can trust.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“The value of your website is that it has a very good reputation, it’s trusted and it’s respected. The evidence and research there can help convince people more senior to get on board.” (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

However, all participants also agreed that they needed the expertise to be relevant to classroom practice. Teachers appreciate materials, ideas or information that they can use directly with their pupils.

“You want both the experts and the research, and the on-the-ground practical what’s going on in other classrooms, with other teachers. I want to hear from colleagues as well as experts. You need to be engaged with the theory and the practices in the classroom.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“I’ve been to a CPD session organised by the National Literacy Trust called Reading to Learn. Francine was telling us that it’s important to start with summary, especially for weaker readers, and it’s been massively helpful. They feel more confident talking about the text and I’ve had more students contributing answers because they are less afraid of being wrong. It removes the barrier of language so you can work on reading comprehension and text enjoyment. Reading to Learn has been very helpful.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

This is reflected in what teachers describe as their “wish list” for Network contents. We asked participants what they would like to find on the Network, whether or not they currently use it. Their answers mostly covered practical classroom materials:

“I must say there wasn’t an awful lot on spelling and grammar, levelling and assessing. I think you did a course to make teaching grammar more fun. We had someone come and help in staff meetings and do a spelling course, and the messages are the same everywhere. But I think it’s about unpicking it a little more, especially about how you assess spelling and grammar.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“Lancashire does an intro to literacy handbook, and I think that’s good for people who are new to literacy. So maybe a literacy coordinator handbook would be good. Because it’s a massive area to coordinate, a toolkit would be useful.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

“More writing-based activities because there’s a lot of reading, which is brilliant, but it’s also about helping reluctant writers.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“I like to use videos, print outs and read interesting articles or interesting discussions taking place.” (Secondary teacher, Northwest England, March 2015)

“More info on the Year 3 booklist, suggestions for KS, or things like that. Then I can look it up on Amazon and have a quick read. There are lists of things out there, and there are a couple on your website, but they’re not comprehensive. I want to know what there is out there to tie in with the new history curriculum – the stone age! What a nightmare!” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“For me, anything practical, (...) it has to be really practical, and link up directly with what happens in class, that’s the initial connexion that then leads to other resources, and you can use everything else.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

Coordinators and participants in management positions have also listed the usefulness of some Network tools for the design of literacy policies, and for developing a whole-school approach to literacy.

“Doing a whole-school audit to find out the needs is the first step. Then you have a little cry and then you come up with your action plan.” (PRU head, Essex, March 2015)

“The reading connect audit was very useful because it was based around a tool that we know works and is validated by research and experimental evidence, but you could also apply it to your own school and your own context. That’s what Ofsted wants.” (Primary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“The audit is very good because you can do it before and then do it again later and it gives you feedback on where you are, where you were, and where you want to go, so you can see how your school is progressing. It gives you helpful suggestions about what you need to do next.” (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

1.3 A tool for Continued Professional Development

The topic of continued professional development (CPD) came up on several occasions. It appears that teachers and managers (coordinators, department heads etc) value the Network because it contributes to developing the skills and knowledge of practitioners at various levels. They consider it an integral part of teacher CPD, bearing in mind that it is used in conjunction with other tools and resources:

“It’s good for your own CPD and for looking at recent research, so it’s where I go first. And to inform what you’re doing in school.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

“I’m going to be the new literacy coordinator next year, and right now I’m an NQT, so this is all new to me. The literacy guide was the first thing I went to because literacy was new to me. About six months ago, I also went to the audit.” (Secondary teacher, Northwest England, March 2015)

“We use the Network as one of the many tools we use to develop our teachers within our school and to access research, and embed research into our practice. We do a lot of action research and the Network fits in there. The National Literacy Trust is one of the things we

use to be informed and evidence-based in how we teach.” (Primary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“We pay for the Network membership with English department money or from the CPD budget.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“It’s helped me to formulate my ideas and, as we’re going to redo the literacy policy and the whole-school approach, I’ll be taking bits from it. It’s one of the things we can use and then pick what’s relevant for us, the context of your school, and what you need and what works.” (Assistant head teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

Some participants also outlined how the Network can be useful when promoting literacy CPD among colleagues with different levels of literacy. They admit, however, that the process can be difficult due to the lack of interest in literacy from colleagues in other subjects.

“I think it could be a starting point. Organising whole-school CPD is hard. But having an NQT meeting every so often, using the Network, sharing resources, that would be a lot easier. And over time you’d hope these NQTs would keep using it. But to get everyone in the whole school using it at once is unrealistic at this point.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“As the literacy person, that’s one of your first ports of call, and then I’ll email people and ask them if they are interested. I tend to signpost them, as the literacy leader in the school.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

“I have introduced people and colleagues to the Network, but I don’t know how they’ve taken it on. I can probably flag it a bit more and remind people. It’s on my list of things to do.” (Primary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“We obviously have a sale to make here, to other teachers who are not on board with literacy. If this could be part of an upward spiral, where we could encourage non-English teachers to feel that literacy is part of what they’re doing and that they can contribute in more ways than just ticking off a box and getting rid of it. We have to sell literacy to the whole school and, if the Network helps us do that, then it’d be very useful. If this were a tool for a whole-school approach, then it’d be very good. It gives you stimulation too, keeps you going.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“I’ll pass a lot on to our head. I’ve emailed the literacy guide, just generally keeping him up to date, and the coordinators as well, just to keep them informed. I find that people (teachers) from each subject tend to be focused on theirs, and as the literacy person, that’s your first port of call.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

Responses to the online survey seem to corroborate the fact that school practitioners use the Network to improve their skills and practices (see Table 7). Six in 10 respondents agree that their Network membership had improved their subject knowledge on literacy, while seven in 10 agree that it has increased their understanding of whole-school literacy strategies. Two-thirds agree that it helped them improve awareness of literacy among colleagues. Half agree that the Network has improved their confidence as a literacy leader. Interestingly, only 29% of respondents agree that their membership, despite its outcomes on knowledge, has led to changes in the way they teach literacy.

Table 7: Impact of the Network on knowledge and practice

<i>Membership of the Network has...</i>	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	N/A or don't know
increased my understanding of effective whole-school literacy strategies	72%	15%	3%	3%

helped me to increase awareness of the importance of literacy amongst my colleagues	66%	19%	5%	3%
improved my literacy subject knowledge	63%	23%	6%	2%
increased my confidence as a literacy leader	50%	23%	5%	15%
changed the way I teach literacy	29%	46%	8%	10%

Once again, the data can be explored in greater detail when comparing responses by job title or school phase. All tables are available in the annex:

- Overall, senior managers tend to provide the most positive answers, acknowledging how much the Network has changed and improved their knowledge and skills. Conversely, teachers are less likely than any other job category to have noticed changes in knowledge, understanding or practices due to their Network membership.
- No difference is noticeable in the answers from primary and secondary school respondents.

To conclude, the general feedback on the Network from users who responded to the survey and attended the FGD is very positive. Members particularly appreciate the literacy guide for schools and find that the Network has helped improve their understanding of whole-school literacy. During meetings, participants focus on the fact that Network resources are appreciated for their expertise.

2 Network usage statistics

The online survey allows us to draw a picture of Network usage for active members, which can be compared with data from the website itself. This is gathered by the programme team as part of their monitoring work.

Overall, 42% of respondents have been members for less than one year, which means they are not quite regulars and have not yet had to decide whether to renew their membership. On the other hand, 35% of respondents have been members for more than two years and can therefore be assumed to be more committed, and possibly more knowledgeable about Network offers.

When looking at duration of membership by job title (see Table 8), school librarians are more likely than any other respondents in other positions to have been members for over two years (68%). This might be an inheritance from Reading Connects, the Network's predecessor, which was more geared towards libraries and librarians. It is also consistent with the findings outlined above, which reveal that more school librarians and senior managers tend to rate Network features as useful or very useful.

Table 8: Duration of Network membership by job title

	Less than one year	More than one year	More than two years	Don't know
Teacher	55%	30%	15%	0%
Lit. coord.	59%	16%	22%	3%
Senior mgr.	42%	16%	37%	5%
Sch. librarian	16%	16%	68%	0%

Regarding logging on to the website to access resources, about half the respondents declared they did so at least once a month (52%). 18% report that they log on at least once a week, and a similar percentage logs on at least once a term.

Despite the fact that school librarians are more likely to be long-term members, or maybe because of this, they are the least likely to connect to the Network once a week. This can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9: How often do you log onto the Network? By job title

	At least once a week	At least once a month	At least once a term	At least once a year	Never
Teacher	14%	57%	10%	10%	9%
Lit. coord.	30%	40%	22%	3%	5%
Senior mgr.	26%	37%	21%	11%	5%
Sch. librarian	5%	63%	21%	11%	0%

Table 10 shows that respondents in primary schools tend to log on slightly more frequently than those in secondary schools. Nearly twice as many connect to the Network once a week. This is surprising since fewer primary schools rate Network resources as useful than respondents in secondary schools (see 1.1 above). However, 6% of primary school teachers also said that they never log on to the Network.

Table 10: How often do you log onto the Network website? By phase of school

	At least once a week	At least once a month	At least once a term	At least once a year	Never
Primary	22%	48%	16%	8%	6%
Secondary	12.5%	58%	23%	6%	0%

3 Barriers and challenges

One aim of the FGD was to find out more about what stops teachers and other practitioners from using the Network, the barriers to membership renewal, the factors that explain the low attendance at Network meetings, and the low response rate to emails, surveys and other solicitations. This was made difficult by the fact that participants in the discussion were obviously more committed and engaged, and who could not speak on behalf of their less active peers. We therefore tried to find out more about what engaged members struggled with, and what they would like to see less or more of on the Network.

3.1 Spreading the word

An unsettlingly high number of participants, considering the FGDs were combined with Network meetings, did not know the Network existed. This is despite the fact that almost all were members of the Network (except in one meeting that was organised by a member to inform colleagues in neighbouring schools about the service). Several admitted to never using the Network or having used it only once. Others only recently found out that their school had a membership, and many were unclear about which part of the website “the Network” referred to:

“It’s a good website with lots of great resources but I was wondering about the locked options.” (PRU teacher, Essex, March 2015)

“Which network do you mean? The small one that you have to log on? I lost my log-in so I had to go look for it and I haven’t used it again since.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“I’ve used this site in the past and got lots of information from it, but without logging on so I guess I didn’t have full access. I remember finding great stuff on school libraries.” (Secondary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“We’ve been signed up to the Network for two terms, and we only found out about it six weeks ago. So we haven’t logged in and haven’t used the resources.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

About multiple log-ins, the response was generally underwhelming, and it doesn’t seem to be a well-used or relevant offer. Either members don’t know how to create or use multiple log-ins, or they prefer to create one for the whole school, which seems to be more convenient.

“Again, I would love to know how to do that because I’ve mentioned it to other teachers and a lot of them are keen, but I don’t know how to do it and couldn’t find where. I’m sure there’s stuff in there that I’d really like.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“I’ve just created a general account with the school account so you don’t have to ask who has the password, what’s on the site etc.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“We just have a generic one for all the teachers. And hopefully it’s been used by everyone. It’s supposed to be anyway!” (Primary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

In the survey, when asked whether other members of the school were signed up to the Network, 45% of respondents said that other members were signed up, while 28% admitted that they didn’t know, despite the fact that they shared the information but can’t be sure that their colleagues took up the membership. Additionally, 12% of respondents said they didn’t know it was possible to have multiple log-ins, which is what was reflected in the FGDs.

Table 11, which covers the same question but presents the data by job title, shows that teachers are less confident than other post holders about whether their colleagues are using the school's Network details (only 38% responded yes). Senior managers are also more likely than other practitioners to admit that although they have shared the information, they do not know if it is being used, which is surprising considering their position.

Table 11: Other school members signed up to the Network by job title

	Yes	I don't know but I have shared it	No, I haven't shared this with colleagues	No, I didn't know it was possible	N/A individual membership
Teacher	38%	33%	5%	14%	10%
Lit. coord.	41%	27%	5%	16%	11%
Senior mgr.	47%	41%	6%	6%	0%
Sch. librarian	53%	32%	0%	10%	5%

This is a good example of a Network function aimed at sharing the resources within a school that is under-exploited due to a lack of awareness. It betrays once again a lack of understanding of how the Network operates and what it can do for a school.

3.2 Too much information?

While the amount of information on the Network may be one of its selling points, a few hints dropped mid-sentence by participants during the focus group discussions suggest that it might also constitute a deterrent for less experienced users:

"There's so much on there. It's really easy to get lost. Lost in a nice way, as in 'I've been reading something really interesting for the past three hours but what was I looking for originally?'" (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

Although this is mostly speculation, it is worth considering that the scale of the Network is daunting for first-time visitors. Likewise, the regularity of updates sent by emails might be lost on those who do not dedicate enough time to reading them.

"Sometimes you get the email from the Network but I'm not in the habit of going into that every time, so I'm my own worst enemy because I don't investigate. Maybe we need more training, to be taken through the entire website, be shown around to start the habit and develop a routine. I need to be given homework or a deadline, otherwise I will put it off. I can see it's an excellent resource but I'm not into the habit so you stick with the websites you know and don't spend time exploring." (Secondary teacher, North London, December 2014)

"We have used the whole-school audit but there was a lot of red and it was too far from the position we're in (I found myself head of literacy after our literacy coordinator went on maternity leave) It didn't help me focus so I came away from that. I've used some of the research to find out a bit more about reading or areas of literacy." (Assistant head teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

It is difficult to draw conclusions on this as FGD participants were experienced and active Network users who did not seem to be put off by the amount of information on the website, or the level of detail in the school audit. But these testimonies may be sufficient to formulate the hypothesis that the Network website is possibly too densely populated with data and not user-friendly enough to engage less enthusiastic members.

3.3 Too little money

The issue of budget is often brought up in surveys, when members are asked what stops them or what might stop them renewing their membership. It could be that there is no budget for literacy, or that it is spent on other interventions aimed at the children. The Network membership fee, however, is far from prohibitive.

“The Network is so cheap at £100 and the amount of resources that you get is incredible. And the audit is great too.” (PRU head, Essex, March 2015)

“In my school, there is no money for literacy at all. I have to improve literacy but I have to beg for every penny.” (Literacy coordinator, Essex, March 2015)

The online survey asked whether respondents intended to renew their memberships: 71% said yes and 28% were unsure (of whom 63% are from primary schools). Teachers were more likely than other practitioners to say they were unsure about it (48%). Almost 40% said that a lack of budget would be a barrier to membership renewal, which was the most likely obstacle to Network membership of all proposed options (see Table 12).

Table 12: Main barriers preventing membership renewal

Lack of budget	40	39%
Lack of time to make use of the benefits	25	24%
The Network does not fit my needs	4	4%
We are using alternative networks and/or resources	2	2%
Literacy is not a priority in my school	0	0%
I am leaving the school/organisation I work in	0	0%
None	41	40%

However, the question of budget links to the value assigned to the Network and, more specifically, the impact it is deemed to have on teachers and pupils. Furthermore, it is about how this impact is demonstrated and evidenced. Indeed, money is directly tied to efficacy, and the ability to justify the cost:

“And it’s not just about what Ofsted is going to say. There are also interventions, such as the reading support groups, where we need to have a support teacher in there. Obviously it costs money for the teacher to take a smaller group apart and work with them. So it’s not just the head teacher mentioning when Ofsted comes, it’s also that we have to prove the impact that the group is having if we’re going to keep spending money on it.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

This is also reflected in the online survey, where, when asked “What would ensure that you renew your membership?” only 30% of respondents requested price reductions and discounts, whereas 40% expressed a wish for higher quality. Additionally, 11% said their renewal rested on their ability to demonstrate the impact of their Network membership.

Table 13: What would ensure that you renew your Network membership?

Quality of offer	39%
Budget	30%
Demonstrating impact	11%
Reminders	6%
No barriers	6%
Other	6%

The subject of impact and evidence will be further explored in part 5.

3.4 Difficulties in engaging other colleagues or schools

It is also possible that Network usage is limited by the fact that literacy teaching is of little importance in some schools, or limited to one or two disciplines or teachers. Almost all focus group participants bemoaned the lack of interest or skills from their colleagues in other departments on how to support pupils' literacy development:

"I have incredible reluctance from other teachers to integrate literacy into anything. If they're not English teachers, they don't believe they teach literacy. So they won't take anything from their budget. I've just done a training session on punctuation for the teachers. Even with the RE teachers or history teachers, it was shocking. Same with grammar." (Literacy coordinator, Essex, March 2015)

"You could give them books that you read and loved, which is easy to do as an English teacher but not so much with other teachers!" (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

"I don't mean to be patronizing, but I know that some of my science colleagues don't know how to use an apostrophe! The feedback we get from our teachers is that they don't want to teach it because they don't know about it themselves." (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

Everyone seems to agree that involving all teachers for a whole-school approach to literacy is capital. A few positive examples and options do arise, however, and it might be judicious for the Network content to reflect this:

"It's really about how you can engage all the school, how you can make sure literacy is a priority for all your teachers. You need to make everyone feel that they can contribute and that they are helping because it's important." (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

"The Ofsted framework has been useful because it makes everyone a literacy teacher. And we judge them on how literacy is progressing for their pupils, so they all have to be on board. They can't afford to be reluctant." (PRU head, Essex, March 2015)

"Grammar has been embedded in my school, and science teachers or any other subject teachers are asked to challenge the children about their grammar. We have a grammar lesson each week for the kids, and we're linking that with what we're reading at the moment. All the teachers will know about it, and we ask them to use it in their assessments in their own subjects." (Primary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

"When you get inspected by Ofsted, they don't just look at the English scores anyway. They look at the whole school and all the results. They look at the independent application, especially in secondary." (Secondary teacher, Northwest, March 2015)

"When we mark papers, we also highlight literacy errors, and then give them time to improve, to go back and redraft their paper taking into account the mistakes that were pointed out and how to fix them. That is supposed to be whole-school, but it's done inconsistently across subjects. Although we have a refresher every year, not everyone does it and it's up to you how you use it, but the literacy elements are supposed to be consistent across the board." (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

"It was also useful to show the teachers that the textbooks are for a reading age much higher than the reading age of their pupils, so they can't keep up in any subject if they don't have literacy. It's a strong motivation for other teachers to get involved." (Secondary teacher, Essex, March 2015)

“They can do literacy in disguise, like a biography in science or an information text in RE, so they are addressing literacy but not in an obvious way.” (Secondary teacher, Essex, March 2015)

Likewise, if the Network is supposed to put teachers and practitioners in touch with one another via the platform and with local meetings, this is made difficult by the lack of existing links between schools in an area. It appears that colleagues from different schools rarely communicate or consult each other, despite a few exceptions:

“Coming from outside, I’m surprised how silent schools are. The sharing of good practice doesn’t happen as much as it should.” (Community development consultant, North London, December 2014)

“I haven’t had much of a chance with other colleagues in other schools. I haven’t branched out with other schools because I’m used to working in Essex. And most teachers have lots of friends who teach. Where you get your ideas from, you’ll always have your colleagues to talk to.” (Primary teacher, Essex, March 2015)

“And we don’t have much time anyway, so you can’t really link up with other schools if they’re not doing the same thing as you. It’s not really going to work and I’ve never taught the same thing two years in a row.” (Primary teacher, Essex, March 2015)

“If you look at the training, there’s so much pressure. People will do training for their schools but I wonder if there are opportunities for cross-school training: there are lots of ideas in different schools, but how would you hear about it if you just focused on your own school? So I wonder how you can encourage schools to share more and work together more.” (Community development consultant, North London, December 2014)

To summarise, it is undeniable that there are barriers to Network usage both at individual and school level. First and foremost, too many practitioners do not know about the Network or about its various functions, including members who don’t know about multiple log-ins or admit that they get lost in the data on the website. Further, practitioners bemoan the lack of interest or commitment to literacy in their schools and explain that they find it difficult to network with colleagues in other schools. In that respect, it might be possible to have the National Literacy Trust Network play more of a networking role between members.

4 Options for development

4.1 Other resources used alongside the Network

Knowing that the Network is used along with numerous resources to support literacy teaching, we asked participants where else they went for ideas, information and inspiration. Below are all the resources that were cited throughout the FGD:

- TES
- National Association for Teaching of English (NATE)
- English and Media Centre
- BFI
- UKLA
- Literacy Shared
- Pixel
- Teachers Pay Teachers (teacherspayteachers.com)
- Twinkl
- Teach Starter
- Lend me your Literacy
- Laura Candler's blog
- David Didau's website, Twitter, Facebook page and books
- Publishers such as Pearson
- Amazon for book summaries and ideas

TES was cited most widely but it was also the most criticised for the lack of quality control on uploaded materials.

"What I like about TES is that it's a springboard for ideas. We can use it to see what other schools are doing and check we're on the right page to see what other schools have interpreted from what little there is from the exam board. It's useful for a literacy worksheet as well, little snippets of things, quick homework, little starters, little videos to get things started." (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

The Education Endowment Fund and Institute for Effective Education only came up once when mentioned by a literacy consultant in the northwest of England. Teachers in southwest London who were asked about it said they had never heard of either. Yet both organisations are widely known in literacy research and do a tremendous amount of work to analyse the outcomes and impact of literacy interventions. Both are aimed at schools, helping them to choose their literacy projects.

4.2 Social media or space for more networking

Several respondents spontaneously mentioned their use of social media and online platforms to support their literacy teaching and CPD. They expressed an interest in seeing more links or similarities between the National Literacy Trust Network and other outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

"I also access info from Facebook or from my smartphone because it's convenient and easy." (Secondary teacher, Northwest England, March 2015)

“Using Twitter as the Network, throw things out there, open up a discussion for an hour on Twitter, or something like that. So we can all share, for example, who’s reading this in school at the moment, or what book are you doing with KS3, you know rather than spending hours on Google looking for something.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“Maybe a Pinterest model: it’s really quick and very visual. The visualization and immediate aspect are very convenient.” (Secondary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“Sometimes the Twitter discussions are quite useful: @englishchat @englishchatuk, for example. I’m sure there’s a literacy coordinator one. You go on Twitter for half an hour, you look for the hashtags, you just read little bits, you post using the hashtags and people will reply or comment. If you then link to blogs or post out the exchanges to a blog, you’ll find all the Twitter conversations together sometimes.” (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

“I have quite a few people on Facebook who I follow. There’s one thing called ‘sharing materials’, which is a group anyone can join. I saw it and I joined. They post a lot of stuff on it.” (Secondary teacher, Northwest England, March 2015)

“I know a lot of teachers get their inspiration on there [Pinterest]. They photographed other places and then used that as their inspiration because you need to see it sometimes.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

4.3 Making the Network more of a network

This might seem contradictory to the complaints detailed above on lack of engagement from colleagues and lack of communication between schools, but there seems to be a demand for more direct sharing among Network members on the Network itself. It seems participants would be interested in hearing from the experts whose input they value and also from other teachers, possibly in a less in-depth or elaborate way that’s more practical and anecdotal. This impression is mitigated by the fact that discussing something in a meeting is different from putting it into practice, and the fact that participants in these FGD tend to be active members. Nonetheless, despite these restrictions, it is worth noting that a significant number of participants throughout all discussions asked for more participation from their peers on the Network.

“Maybe the Network could be a platform where we can inform local schools about what we’re doing. Like a forum or a little email chain.” (Secondary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“It’d be really useful if we could have an area where we can upload resources for each theme so we can share with colleagues (like primaryresources.co.uk). You can just go on there and type in what you want and find out what other people have uploaded. I’d be very interested in downloading what other people are doing, and I’d be willing to upload and share as well.” (Primary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“I just feel that everyone is constantly reinventing the wheel, and I know that’s not necessary. I know I could use other people’s work for inspiration and for sharing instead of just googling stuff over and over again.” (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

“Because there’s a lot of good practice out there. And it’s not being shared.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

“Maybe create a Literacy Trust app?” (Secondary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“The thing I like to do when I go into another teacher’s room is look at the display. If we had that, it’d be great to see what teachers have done with their displays. It’s only my third year of teaching so I’m not that experienced but I go to a website like Twinkle and there’s lots of

display stuff but you don't know if it's going to be useful." (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

"It'd be nice to have a discussion area where we can put up topics and questions and get feedback from colleagues. For example, we were having a discussion at the beginning of this meeting about how you measure impact. One of us asked this question and we all shared what we do in our schools, so you can get feedback from colleagues. I'd use that. I think it'd be very useful. I know people are using Twitter more and more, but this feels like a safer platform with a more targeted audience." (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

"I know some of the teachers in the school contribute to stuff like TES, so I'm sure they'd be quite happy. If we asked around SMT, people would come forward to do stuff, depending on how often that was and how much, but I think it'd be interesting and I think people have been looking for that." (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

A significant caveat should be noted: although practitioners would be interested in hearing from their colleagues, they would also expect the materials uploaded by peers on the Network to be checked and approved by the experts from the National Literacy Trust.

"I'd be more reassured if it was vetted by the National Literacy Trust. There's a lot of rubbish out there, whereas a website like yours comes with the trust that you can rely on those resources." (Primary teacher, South London, December 2014)

"It'd have to be checked by the National Literacy Trust so you wouldn't just find some random stuff that people upload, because then, as in TES, the quality can be extremely variable. Sometimes what you find is great and sometimes I can't believe what I find on there. Whereas if it were put up by the National Literacy Trust, I'd know I could trust it." (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

"I think as teachers you do stuff, but you don't know if it's the best. At the moment, we're into half-displays. We want something organic. It doesn't have to be perfect, so we don't want to share because we're not sure what we're doing is good. I mean, if someone likes it, that's great, but I wouldn't go ahead and show my display or what I'm doing in my classroom. I wouldn't know that it's good enough." (Primary teacher, South London, December 2015)

"But if you were to go on a site like the Network and know it's been vetted, it's really good, it's high quality, and it's something that's deemed to be the best practice. You could give out that universal log in then, and other colleagues could use it then. Because it tends to be the coordinators who use it more, because you need to know what's good, and sometimes, colleagues don't know or are not sure. So it would have to be teachers' contributions, but checked by the National Literacy Trust, to make sure what's out there is good quality." (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

5 The challenges of demonstrating impact on pupils

It is positive to know that teachers and other practitioners value the Network, appreciate its content and formats, and consider it an important aspect of their learning and practice. However, this is not quite sufficient since the overall goal of the National Literacy Trust and its programmes (including the Network) is to improve pupils' literacy. We therefore asked participants how important it is to demonstrate impact, and whether they thought the Network impacted on pupil outcomes.

5.1 The importance of demonstrating impact

What came up first and foremost in every group discussion was how important it is for practitioners and schools to measure impact and to demonstrate impact. Participants seemed to feel that everything they did with pupils had to be followed by positive outcomes, which had to be measured, recorded and provided to Ofsted inspectors or senior management. It was equally clear that impact could almost only be captured with quantitative attainment measures, or at least they seemed to be the only measures that were useful.

“What I’m struggling with is the impact: how do you measure the impact? What kind of things do you look for and what do you do to measure the impact of your literacy policy?” (Assistant head teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“It’s good because it measures impact quantitatively and conveniently.” (About the Reading Plus programme, PRU teacher, Essex, March 2015)

“I can certainly feel the impact of what we’re doing. I can see that speaking and listening has massively improved in the classroom across the past two years, but how can you prove that? And how can we prove that across the whole school? And with the students who are reading more, and there are so many of them, how can we look at how many books the children are reading? And the next question is going to be, how is that helping them? I mean as an English teacher we’ll say of course it’s helping them but...” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“Big demand for evidence. Primaries are actually more evidence-based. Tremendous pressure to prove impact.” (PRU head, Essex, March 2015)

“The problem is that when Ofsted comes they don’t want to hear that we’re using programmes that have been evaluated and proven to work. They want to know if they’re working for us, and how we’re using them in our school. With Accelerated Reader, for example, I have attempted to show my head the research that supports it and previous evaluations that show it’s effective, pages and pages from Renaissance Learning who’ve run the programme and shown why this is great. He doesn’t care. He wants to prove that our children’s reading age has improved, and he wants a numerical thing. And that’s not necessarily a good thing, but that’s how it is. We need to show Ofsted that we have increased our children’s reading age by X number of months, so we have to play the game to a certain extent.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

5.2 Is the Network impacting pupils?

Some teachers are absolutely certain of the impact their Network membership has on pupils; others have doubts. All agree that it would be impossible to evidence.

“There’s a reason why we work with you as a local authority. It’s because you’ve got good stuff and it’s helped us and it’s helped schools as well. I think we’re pretty convinced in Liverpool that being part of the National Literacy Trust Network is a good thing. The learning

partnership wouldn't have paid for the membership if they didn't think it was right. But I know you might have to prove that to other people.” (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

“You'd have to have it mapped into your CPD plan. What you do, where the information comes from, and how you observe changes in classroom practice through your observations or your word scrutiny. So when you're evaluating, you can see where it's supposed to create change, and where it has. I think it comes down to your professionalism.” (Assistant head, Northwest England, March 2015)

“You can make the resources as successful, as good and as trusted as they can be, but then how I use them and how someone else uses them could be totally different. People do things differently and you can't control that.” (Secondary teacher, Northwest England, March 2015)

“What you could do is offer an evaluation system to measure the impact within your school.” (Secondary teacher, Northwest England, March 2015)

“I think it keeps you updated because things move so quickly and obviously you put a lot of research up there. It keeps you on top of your game, which then impacts on the pupils in your school because you are keeping at the forefront of everything and keeping on top of the new initiatives. And that impacts massively. I work in a very deprived area but last year we got 79% through the phonics screening check. In similar schools, you'd expect 30-40%. But I know I'm quite informed by that and by the National Literacy Trust Network.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

5.3 Can the Network help reach the pupils who need it most?

In the online survey, respondents were asked which pupils they believed benefited most from the Network.

We know that not all children are equal in learning literacy and some struggle more than others. National attainment statistics reveal that boys and children on free school meals perform less well on average. This statistical understanding of the UK literacy context may or may not be reflected in a classroom of 30 pupils where many boys may perform very well in English, and girls might struggle with other aspects of school. Teachers may not identify their pupils as ‘those on free school meals vs others’, especially when they are aware of their situations at home, their relationships with the other children, their personalities etc. In short, teachers may be more likely to think of their pupils as individuals rather than categories.

As a result, although evidence shows that on average boys and children on free school meals do less well than their peers in literacy, teachers do not seem to link poor literacy with family income or gender (see FGD below). It follows that they do not see the Network as having a particular effect on one category of children. Half the respondents believe that all children benefit equally from the Network membership (via teachers and other practitioners), and 30% consider that the membership is beneficial to any and all children who struggle with literacy (see Table 13). Table 13 also shows that only 12% and 14% of respondents respectively believe that Network membership can be beneficial to Pupil Premium children and boys.

It is worth noting that in the ‘other’ responses to this question, one participant said “Me!”, outlining the fact that Network membership benefits practitioners more or more directly than the children. Another respondent said “Literacy among staff also benefits”, which is consistent with feedback from the FGD.

Table 13: In your experience, who benefits the most from your Network membership?

EAL children	2	2%
SEN children	11	11%
Pupil Premium children	12	12%
Boys	14	14%
Any children who struggle with literacy	31	30%
All children benefit equally	55	53%

Interestingly, teachers are slightly more likely than other colleagues to think that boys benefit from the Network, and school librarians are more likely to believe that all children benefit equally. Respondents in primary schools are more likely than their secondary counterparts to think that the benefits are for all children rather than a specific group (53% vs 35%).

Responses in the FGD fit in well with those in the survey, while providing a more in-depth understanding of how teachers view their pupils struggling with literacy and how they perceive the Network’s impact. We asked participants about the pupils in their schools and classrooms who needed help the most and why.

“Children who don’t have books at home or aren’t from a family where reading is important, that’s the main difference. They have the internet and a computer, but they don’t have books. They know how to use a computer but they don’t read.” (Primary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“Our issue comes from limited vocabulary and poor spoken English, and that’s not just an EAL issue, that could be children whose parents are English. The children can have creative ideas but they have great difficulty finding the words and that has a huge knock-on effect on their writing. We have children who are very good at the technical parts of reading but their comprehension is low. The things they don’t understand are shocking: some don’t know what a wave is because they’ve never been to the seaside. We’re always surprised by what they don’t understand and don’t know of the world.” (Secondary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“That links up with not having a book-rich culture. Children should know now that reading is something you do for pleasure, not just something you do at school. I also think some of the staff forget that we don’t just teach them to read because they need to learn phonics. They also need to learn to read for pleasure. The majority of kids said they read because they need to reach a higher level, not because they want to or enjoy it.” (Secondary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“It’s not about whether they’re boys or girls, it’s really about their attitudes to reading and the books at home.” (Primary teacher, North London, December 2014)

“When you’re in a deprived community, that’s where you see children who have never had a book of their own before. So I think deprivation plays a significant part in forming a book-poor environment. We also need to work with parents, to teach them to read with their children.” (Community manager, North London, December 2014)

Interestingly, they did not immediately identify the most at-risk groups as boys, EAL, or children on free school meals.

We specifically asked about children receiving Pupil Premium funding as they consistently underachieve in literacy compared with their better-off peers. More precisely, we asked participants if they felt that Network membership could positively affect Pupil Premium children in their literacy attitudes and skills, and therefore if Network membership could or should be paid for by the Pupil Premium budget. Despite a notable exception (below), the general response was rather negative.

“Pupil Premium money can definitely be used to support literacy if they need it. And they do. In mainstream schools, you can definitely take it out of the Pupil Premium budget. But you need to demonstrate impact; you have to prove that you’re having an impact on these pupils.” (PRU head, Essex, March 2015)

“In primary schools you couldn’t get away with using Pupil Premium funds for it because it’s a tool for teachers, not for Pupil Premium children. Unless you had rigorous tracking data that shows that these particular children are improving more and that it’s thanks to the membership, and for the Pupil Premium kids to track their progress in literacy. But then that would be indirect because it always comes from the teachers anyway. And also it is for everybody, not just for the Pupil Premium students. (Primary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“For Pupil Premium funding, you’ve got to be able to evidence every one of your Pupil Premium expenses, and Ofsted will go through it with a fine-tooth comb and will look at every nickel. The big thing at the moment is Ofsted recommending Pupil Premium reviews. So you’d have to have a really strong research-founded impact that that membership has impact on the pupils. If you had some research that says it’s made a massive impact, that people have used it to make an impact on Pupil Premium students, and it was directed exclusively towards improving the progression of those pupils, then I think you’d have a sound argument for it, but I don’t know.” (Literacy consultant, Northwest England, March 2015)

“You can’t really prove that the Network has an impact on the children in isolation; we don’t know that it’s affecting the Pupil Premium kids or the other kids. It’s difficult to isolate it over and above anything else that you are doing. You don’t know that this specifically has an impact on children or Pupil Premium children rather than not. I know some schools have to justify their spending very strictly, and can find it difficult to either spend this much money or to justify it.” (Secondary teacher, Southwest London, March 2015)

“Say you had something like an intervention that you’d worked on, that upleveled these children, something that you purchased, that could be Pupil Premium money. Say for example, that Premier League Reading Stars. That’s making a difference specifically for these children, so you could buy that with the Pupil Premium budget. It’s that thing about being able to track the precise impact.” (Literacy coordinator, Northwest England, March 2015)

“I think it’s a moot point. I don’t think it really matters if it comes from an English budget or a CPD budget or Pupil Premium. I wouldn’t think it would actually come from a Pupil Premium budget.” (Assistant head, Northwest England, March 2015)

As can be seen in Table 14, which corroborates findings from the FGD, only 4% of respondents used the Pupil Premium allocation to pay for their Network membership, while 10 times as many (41%) used the literacy budget. It is surprising that the CPD budget does not appear in the ‘other’ category, and that as few as 4% of respondents use the department budget (i.e. the English budget).

Table 14: Which budget did you use to purchase your Network membership?

Literacy budget	41%
Personal funds/budget	14%
Don't know	14%
School library budget	13%
Pupil Premium allocation	4%
Department budget	3%
Other	3%
Local authority	2%

Young Readers Programme (National Literacy Trust free membership)	2%
General school budget	2%
Catch up premium allocation	1%

In conclusion, it is difficult at this stage to establish whether or not the Network is impacting pupils' literacy attitudes, behaviours or skills. Some practitioners are confident that there is an impact, but it is definitely indirect as it happens via improving the skills and practices of teachers and literacy coordinators. At any rate, it would be virtually impossible to evidence that link.

There is also doubt over whether pupils on free school meals or eligible for Pupil Premium benefit (indirectly) from the Network. Although evidence suggests that children from deprived backgrounds struggle with literacy more than their better-off peers, practitioners in school don't identify their struggling readers or writers by their social background. As a result, they are doubtful that whole-school literacy improvement would be beneficial for poorer pupils.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears quite clearly from both the online survey and the FGD that the Network is highly valued by the users who have participated in the evaluation. All involved practitioners seemed to find the resources comprehensive and useful, and wanted to use them as an inherent part of their on-going training. The survey reveals that managers and literacy coordinators find the Network even more useful than teachers do, notably for tools aimed at promoting a whole-school literacy approach and at improving policies.

The FGD provided the opportunity for an interesting debate on the importance of the National Literacy Trust's expertise vs the value of sharing information more informally among colleagues. There seems to be high demand for a networking tool among practitioners, particularly when promoting local linkages. However, this is balanced against Network data, which shows that a vast majority of users are somewhat inactive and therefore unlikely to participate in Network activities.

Even more strongly, the FGD revealed the need for practitioners to demonstrate the positive outcomes of their work for pupils. Participants broached the question of how the Network fits in with this requirement. In general, most seem convinced of the value of the Network resources and their positive impact on knowledge and skills among practitioners, which in turn benefits children. Few are convinced, however, that this can be effectively demonstrated. Likewise, if children who receive the Pupil Premium are more likely than their peers to struggle with literacy, FGD participants and survey respondents do not consider that they are the main beneficiaries of the Network's positive outcomes. This is translated, notably, in how budgets are allocated to pay for the Network membership fee, where the Pupil Premium fund is rarely considered.

This may be the topic of a future evaluation: exploring the pupil aspect of Network outcomes rather than its immediate effects on practitioners. Indeed, the reason why practitioners strive to remain up to date with literacy news and events, why they seek resources and training opportunities, or why they look to share information and images with colleagues, is to benefit their pupils. Although the correlation between well-trained and engaged teachers or literacy coordinators and improved pupil literacy skills may seem obvious, more research is needed to evidence the link with certainty.

Annexes

1. Focus Group Discussion prompts

Intro
Where do you teach, and in what type of school?
Why or how did you become a member of the Network?
Opinion on the service itself
What do you think of the Network's service or offers?
Prompt with: case studies and resources, fortnightly emails, audit, literacy guide, local meetings, discounts, logo etc
What would you add to the service/offers if you could?
What would you remove or change?
Do you plan on renewing your membership next year? Why or why not? Who makes that decision? What contributes to making the decision? What are the main barriers?
Literacy teaching and pupil impact
Has your membership affected how you perceive literacy teaching? How so, or why/why not?
And how you teach? Prompt with: more evidence-based? More informed? More creative?
Do you think your knowledge or use of resources on literacy affects the children you work with? Why or why not? If yes, how so? If not, how could we be sure to have a positive impact on children? Do you have any measures in place to find out about the impact on children?
Which of your pupils need the most support with literacy and why? Are they getting all the help they need? How can we make sure that we reach them?
Do you pay for your Network membership with Pupil Premium funds? Why or why not? If not, which budget do you use?
Cascading with colleagues and whole-school approach
Do you share Network resources with colleagues? How, when, where? Why? Which colleagues? How do they respond?
Has your Network membership affected how you perceive your school's literacy approach? Prompt with: do you have a whole-school literacy approach? Is literacy a priority in your school?
If yes: Have any changes occurred? Which ones? How?
If not, why not? Would you like to see any changes? Which ones? How could we support you?
Has your membership had any impact on how you communicate with management on literacy issues? If yes, how so? If not, why not? What service could have a positive impact on how you talk with your management about literacy?
Inter-school use
Why is it called 'the Network' in your opinion?
Does it function as a network? Prompt with: does it help put you in contact with professionals and colleagues from other schools?
If yes, does that add value, and do you find that useful?
If not, why not? Do you wish it served this purpose? How would you suggest taking the existing Network in this direction?
Conclusion
Any other comments? Anything that we haven't covered?

2. Survey questionnaire

Phase of your school/schools that you work with	Primary
	Secondary
	Middle school
	All-through
Type of school/organisation (please select all that apply, e.g. for a community special school tick 'maintained school' and 'special school')	Maintained school (including community, foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled)
	Academy (including free schools, UTCs and studio schools)
	Independent school
	Mainstream school
	Special school
	Pupil referral unit
	Local authority
	Educational consultant
Approximately how long have you or your school/organisation been a member of the Network?	Other (please specify)
	Less than one year
	More than one year
	More than two years
How often do you log onto the Network website?	Don't know
	At least once a week
	At least once a month
	At least once a term
	At least once a year
Are other members of your school/organisation signed up as part of your Network membership?	Never
	Yes
	Don't know, although I have shared this with colleagues
	No, I haven't shared this with colleagues
	No, I didn't know that was possible
Please rate how useful you find the features of the network.	N/A - I have an individual membership
	Fortnightly email updates
	Literacy Guide for Schools
	Resources and blogs
	Whole-school literacy audit
	Local meetings
	Discounts
Please state to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below. Membership of the network has...	Working with the National Literacy Trust logo
	improved my literacy subject knowledge
	changed the way I teach literacy
	increased my understanding of effective whole-school literacy strategies
	helped me to increase awareness of the importance of literacy amongst my colleagues
In your experience, who do you think benefits the most from your membership?	increased my confidence as a literacy leader
	EAL children
	SEN children
	Pupil Premium children
	Boys
	Any children who struggle with literacy
All children benefit equally	

	Other (please specify)
Is there anything you'd like to tell us? We welcome all feedback from our members.	
Which budget did you use to purchase your Network membership?	Literacy budget
	Pupil Premium allocation
	Catch up premium allocation
	School library budget
	Departmental budget
	Don't know
	Other (please specify)
Do you intend to renew your membership of the Network?	
In your experience, what do you think are the main barriers that might prevent you from renewing your membership? (Please tick all that apply.)	Lack of budget
	Lack of time to make use of the benefits
	The Network does not fit my needs
	Literacy is not a priority in my school
	I am leaving the school/organisation I work in
	We are using alternative networks and/or resources
	None
Other (please tell us the reason)	
What would ensure that you do renew your membership?	
Name of school/organisation	
Your name (optional)	
Network membership number (if known)	
Your job title (please select the option closest to your role and choose multiple options if applicable)	Teacher
	Literacy coordinator
	Head of department/faculty (or other middle management role)
	Senior manager (including assistant or deputy head)
	Headteacher
	SENCO
	School librarian/LRC manager
	Teaching assistant
	Consultant/adviser
Other (please specify)	
Can we use your feedback as quotes in National Literacy Trust materials?	Yes
	No

3. Survey tables by themes

Table 15: How useful do you find local meetings? By job title

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Teacher	24%	10%	10%	57%
Lit. coord.	32%	11%	8%	49%
Senior mgr.	26%	21%	5%	47%
Sch. librarian	16%	5%	5%	74%

Table 16: How useful do you find local meetings? By school phase

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Primary	20%	9%	7%	64%
Secondary	17%	13%	13%	57%

Table 17: How useful do you find discounts? By job title

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Teacher	29%	33%	0%	38%
Lit. coord.	32%	22%	3%	43%
Senior mgr.	37%	26%	0%	5%
Sch. librarian	32%	21%	5%	42%

Table 18: How useful do you find discounts? By school phase

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Primary	27%	38%	0%	36%
Secondary	24%	28%	4%	43%

Table 19: How useful do you find the 'working with the National Literacy Trust' logo? By job title

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Teacher	10%	29%	9%	52%
Lit. coord.	17%	28%	8%	47%
Senior mgr.	11%	26%	16%	47%
Sch. librarian	21%	5%	10%	63%

Table 20: How useful do you find the 'working with the National Literacy Trust' logo? By school phase

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Primary	11%	18%	4%	66%
Secondary	13%	22%	13%	52%

Table 21: How useful do you find the whole-school literacy audit? By job title

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Teacher	33%	19%	5%	43%
Lit. coord.	49%	27%	0%	24%
Senior mgr.	32%	47%	0%	21%
Sch. librarian	53%	26%	0%	21%

Table 22: How useful do you find the whole-school literacy audit? By school phase

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Primary	46%	26%	2%	26%
Secondary	57%	28%	0%	15%

Table 23: How useful do you find resources and blogs? By job title

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Teacher	57%	29%	0%	14%
Lit. coord.	65%	27%	0%	8%
Senior mgr.	53%	32%	0%	16%
Sch. librarian	63%	37%	0%	0%

Table 24: How useful do you find the resources and blogs? By school phase

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Primary	54%	35%	0%	11%
Secondary	57%	44%	0%	0%

Table 25: How useful do you find the literacy guide for schools? By job title

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Teacher	57%	24%	5%	14%
Lit. coord.	67%	22%	0%	11%
Senior mgr.	74%	16%	0%	11%
Sch. librarian	79%	21%	0%	0%

Table 26: How useful do you find the literacy guide for schools? By school phase

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Primary	71%	20%	2%	7%
Secondary	78%	20%	0%	2%

Table 27: How useful do you find the fortnightly email updates? By job title

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Teacher	33%	52%	5%	9%
Lit. coord.	41%	51%	3%	5%
Senior mgr.	42%	37%	5%	16%
Sch. librarian	79%	21%	0%	0%

Table 28: How useful do you find the fortnightly email updates? By school phase

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful	Don't know or never used
Primary	48%	41%	2%	9%
Secondary	63%	35%	2%	0%

Table 29: Impact of the Network on knowledge and practice by job title

<i>Network membership has...</i>		agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	don't know
improved my literacy	Teacher	62%	14%	19%	5%

subject knowledge	Lit. coord.	62%	22%	13%	3%
	Senior mgr.	84%	0%	11%	5%
	Sch. librarian	74%	26%	0%	0%
changed the way I teach literacy	Teacher	15%	55%	25%	5%
	Lit. coord.	28%	56%	14%	3%
	Senior mgr.	50%	33%	11%	6%
	Sch. librarian	37%	37%	0%	26%
increased my understanding of effective whole-school literacy strategies	Teacher	65%	15%	15%	5%
	Lit. coord.	81%	11%	6%	3%
	Senior mgr.	84%	0%	11%	5%
	Sch. librarian	74%	21%	0%	5%
helped me to increase awareness of the importance of literacy amongst my colleagues	Teacher	71%	5%	19%	5%
	Lit. coord.	70%	16%	8%	5%
	Senior mgr.	74%	11%	10%	5%
	Sch. librarian	68%	32%	0%	0%
increased my confidence as a literacy leader	Teacher	48%	29%	14%	9%
	Lit. coord.	65%	24%	5%	5%
	Senior mgr.	68%	16%	10%	5%
	Sch. librarian	37%	26%	5%	32%

Table 30: Duration of Network membership by job title

Less than one year	43	42%
More than one year	21	20%
More than two years	36	35%
Don't know	3	3%

Table 31: How often do you log onto the Network website?

At least once a week	18%
At least once a month	52%
At least once a term	20%
At least once a year	7%
Never	3%

Table 32: Other members of schools signed up to the Network

Yes	46	45%
Don't know - although I have shared this with colleagues	29	28%
No - I haven't shared this with colleagues	3	3%
No - I didn't know this was possible	12	12%
N/A - I have an individual membership	13	13%
Total	103	100%

Table 33: Do you intend to renew your membership of the Network?

Yes	71%
Not sure/haven't decided	28%

No	1%
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Table 34: Do you intend to renew your membership of the Network? By phase of school

	Yes	Not sure/haven't decided	No
Primary	61%	37%	2%
Secondary	85%	15%	0%

Table 35: Do you intend to renew your membership of the Network? By job title

	Yes	Not sure/haven't decided	No
Teacher	52%	48%	0%
Lit. coord.	65%	35%	0%
Senior mgr.	74%	21%	5%
Sch. librarian	89%	11%	0%

Table 36: Do you intend to renew your membership of the Network? By type of school

	Yes	Not sure	No
Maintained	72%	28%	0%
	26	10	0
Academy	82%	18%	0%
	27	6	0
Mainstream	64%	32%	5%
	14	7	1
LA	68%	26%	5%
	13	5	1
Consultant	80%	20%	0%
	8	2	0

Table 37: In your experience, who benefits most from your Network membership? By job title

	EAL children	SEN children	Pupil Premium children	Boys	Any children who struggle with literacy	All children benefit equally
Teacher	0%	9%	9%	13%	17%	52%
Lit. coord.	2%	7%	9%	7%	31%	44%
Senior mgr.	0%	5%	5%	0%	32%	58%
Sch. librarian	0%	5%	0%	10%	25%	60%

Table 38: Who do you think benefits most from your Network membership? By school phase

	EAL children	SEN children	Pupil Premium children	Boys	Any children who struggle with literacy	All children benefit equally
Primary	2%	7%	7%	15%	16%	53%
Secondary	2%	10%	13%	8%	33%	35%